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ASSESSING PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND THEIR COMPLIANCE WITH THE MASTER PLAN OF RUFUS GIWA POLYTECHNIC, OWO

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Abstract
This study focused on the qualitative assessment of physical development projects in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo, to ascertain its level of compliance with the reviewed Master Plan of the institution. It embraces both primary and secondary sources of information. A critical study of the reviewed Master Plan was done. The existing physical development projects in the institution were observed; it goes further to compare the Master Plan and the existing physical development projects in the institution. The concept of Development Control was reviewed and the research gap was established. Eyeballing techniques were used to establish the structural differences between the Master Plan and the existing physical development projects. The study revealed that only 19.4% of the 32 introduced physical development projects between the year 2003 and the year 2024 were adjudged to have complied with the reviewed Master Plan. Based on its findings, the study recommends that appreciable measures or policy guidelines could be used to assist the authority in adhering strictly to the adoption of the Master Plan in the introduction of future development projects in the institution.

Keywords: Master plan, physical development, compliance, projects and policy.

Background to the Study

Luciano (2020) informed that the term "master plan" is often used ambiguously. However, the original master plan of a city envisions the future of a city in a rigid manner. It is a blueprint-based plan accompanied by an explanatory report. The blueprint depicts the end state of a city. In the same vein, Fred (2020) stated that, conceptually, the master plan is comprehensive; that is, it integrates various aspects of planning like housing, transportation, infrastructure etc. And that, all the aspects considered to affect the quality of life of people and all the interrelationships between various aspects; Multidisciplinary:, it encompasses various disciplines of studies, like social aspects, economics, environment, engineering, architecture etc.; he further stated that a master plan is a long term document which clears out the vision for the prospective year for the city and plans out development for future; he informed further that, master plan focuses on rational use of land; that is, demarking land for the use most optimal for the activities at a place. And that, it efficiently uses resources to meet the present and future requirements of the citizens; in addition to that, Kelly (2024) posited that a master plan is another valuable resource that can help you more easily get where you want to go. In furtherance to that, Ruchi (2023) inferred that the master plan also known as the comprehensive plan provides a long-term vision for the community's development. That assists in guiding the people on how to use the lands appropriately within the municipal orders. It also helps to protect public health, safety, and general welfare. He stated further that, it may be divided into district plans. It is produced by the City Planning

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Commission and Department during a period of study normally lasting several years. In a related development, Kent (2015) defined Master Plan as the official document of a municipal government which sets forth its major policies concerning the desirable future physical development of a community from the foregoing, a land use plan or master plan for physical development could be described as a policy document with written statement and drawn plans, that state the physical and economic planning development sustainability of designated spatial geographic areas, now and in future over a specified period, taking cognizance of the physical, demographic, socio-cultural and economic potentials of the area, making provision for a inbuilt mechanism for monitoring and revision of the plan. In furtherance to that, Agbaeze (2003) inferred that the purpose of a master plan is to promote growth, guide and regulate present and future development of towns and cities with a perspective of 20-25 years.

In a related development, a critical look at the definitions and explanations above has provided an insightful note that, the Master Plan gives decision-makers a steady point of reference for taking action. It also provides facts on existing conditions and trends, which enable decision-makers to better understand the impact of their decisions. It goes further to envision the intended growth and permits the institution to identify what is important and how it should be protected.

Talking about what is important and its protection, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic has converted the well cherished organised open space that was used as a Passive Park at the front of the former rector's office to a cattle ranch; A development that is not only an affront of dignity but also inimical to the health of the polytechnic community. Further, the management has converted the poly market to the lecture hall, without adequately providing another market for the polytechnic. This has led to the indiscriminate location of business spots everywhere on campus. This development has made the institution to be unkempt with no permanent structures all over the campus. From the foregoing, it is the focus of this study to draw the attention of the management board of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic to the facts that, most of the newly introduced physical development projects do not align with the plans and vision of the institution. These observed facts, if not controlled may lead to haphazard development shortly. It is against this background that this study was conceived to assess the level of compliance with the master plan of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo, and the existing physical development projects in the institution.

2.0. Literature Review

This study reviewed works on the concept of development control. It informed that development control means the process of managing or regulating the carrying out of any works on land or making of any material change in the use of any land or structures and ensuring that operations on land conform to spatial development plans as well as policy guidelines, regulations and standards issued by the planning authority from time to time to achieve a purposeful utilization of land in the interest of the general welfare of the public.

Adeyemi et al. (2019) worked on Development Control as a Tool for Urban Sustainability in South-Western Nigeria. They focused on the capital cities of the three randomly selected states from the six states in the region. They obtained data from both public and private agencies and analysed, using descriptive statistics. They discovered that development control in

South-Western Nigeria had challenges like; poor funding, inadequate tools and equipment, lack of Master Plan, political interference, and lack of data and information. They recommended that development plans be prepared to channel the growth and development of cities in the region. And that, planning agencies in charge of development control must ensure adequate compliance and guarantee urban sustainability.

In a related development, Osita (2019) worked on development control challenges and land use compatibility: professionals' concerns and implications for health and safety. He investigated the challenges, consequences and gains of complying with the set standards for development control in Oyo State, Nigeria. He recommended that the planning authority should always maintain some balance with private developers to salvage the situation without losing the basics that make a city liveable.

In the same vein, Aluko (2011) worked on Development Control in Lagos State: An Assessment of Public Compliance to Space Standards for Urban Development. He highlighted the meaning, context, relevance, and problems associated with development control in the Lagos metropolis, concerning space standards under the Urban and Regional Development Law 2010. He also investigated the technical skills of personnel engaged in the enforcement of the Law.

Although the efforts of these great scholars could not be waved aside, it could be deduced that most of their studies and discoveries rally around development control in cities. Little attention has been given to the assessment of development control in Nigerian higher institutions. It is therefore the intention of this study to bridge this gap in literature, by assessing physical development projects and their compliance with the Master Plan of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo. However, this study focuses on making suggestions that will aid in the formulation of a policy framework that will help the management of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic to adhere strictly to the adoption of the institution's Master Plan, for future development.

Methodology

Sampling Strategies

To achieve the specific objectives of this study, three main sampling techniques were adopted. They are the eyeballing research method, Google Earth imagery and personal interview. The eyeballing research method was used to obtain a rough estimate of the newly introduced physical development projects using no quantitative (numerical or mathematical tools) but only a visual inspection. Google Earth imagery was used for the proper location of all existing features in the study area and critical study of the available Master Plan. A question guide was used to obtain information from the Physical Planning Unit of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic. Research schedule, a variant of the question guide instrument involving face-to-face meetings with the director of the Physical Planning Unit (PPU) was adopted in an attempt to explore the advantages of personal contact and the higher response rate often associated with the method. A simple percentage method was used to calculate the degree of compliance.

Results and Discussion

Investigation revealed that two Master Plans have been produced for the usefulness of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo, formerly known as; The Ondo State Polytechnic, Owo since the establishment of the institution (Director, Physical

Planning Unit, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo, 2024). The first was produced by Denito Planning Associates, number 10 Agunloye Street Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria in the year 1978. The second was a review version of the 1978 Master Plan. That was produced in the year 2003 by the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria. The reviewed Master Plan was designed for 25 years. That is, between the year 2003 and the year 2027.

The Identified Physical Development Projects Introduced in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo between the years 2003 and 2024.

New Rectory, Online buildings, commercial Banks, 800 seats lecture theatre, Millennium lecture theatre, Mass Com building, Maths and Stats department, SUG building, Artisan/Art and Design building, ICT, Faculty of Agricultural Technology (FAT), Faculty of Applied Sciences (FAS), RUGIPO FM, Rector's Quarters, Hostels around FAT area, 4 in 1 lecture theatre, Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS), Faculty of Business Studies (FBS), Central Mosque, RUGIPO water factory, RUGIPO bakery, Cattle Ranch opposite former rector's office, New Electric Power station opposite former rector's office, Public Administration building adjacent Maths and Stats, New building under construction beside Maths and Stats, ASUP building, RUGIPO CMS buildings, RUGIPO Sports Complex/Unit, Adekunle Ajasin Auditorium, New buildings for CMS behind old Auditorium, RUGIPO Library, on-going Faculty of Engineering complex.

The Observed Differences in Figures 1 and 2

Ondo State Polytechnic Owo (OSPO) Consults

Figure 1 revealed that OSPO consults and activities were to be located in the western part of the polytechnic. It is to be located at the extreme, which is supposed to be at the boundary of the Polytechnic and Emure Ile, where the Polytechnic gave to some Hausa people and it is named Shasha Owo. It is very close to the Akure – Benin Expressway, where some Ebira women are currently selling yam. It was designed to be directly opposite but very far from the Faculty of Environmental Studies (Fig.1).

But this is not the case as the activities like; RUGIPO bakery, RUGIPO water, Artisan, and OSPO consults and printing section were supposedly the so-called OSPO consults. However, they were located indiscriminately in the study area. Some beside students' hostels, some very close to the school library and invariably causing noise and air pollution to the immediate environment.

The Location of Place of Worship

Another notable misplacement of projects/activities in the study area is the place of worship. Almost all the big lecture halls and old auditoriums have been permanently secured for Christian fellowship centres. The Muslims built their mosque adjacent to block E girls' hostel which is also a very busy academic environment. Meanwhile, two distinct places were allocated for them as places of worship. One is supposedly located at a place close to the None Academic Staff Union (NASU) building is currently occupying. The other place allocated for a place of worship is beside Poly Market.

The Location of Banks

Zenith and Polaris Bank are commercial institutions which supposed to be located in an area that was allocated for commercial activities. Instead, Zenith Bank was located in the place that was originally allocated for the School of General Studies. While Polaris Bank was located on the land that was allocated for students' hostels.

None Academic Staff Union (NASU) Building: The NASU building is supposed to be located very close to the present Academic Staff Union of the Polytechnic (ASUP) building. That is the place allocated for Union buildings and Activities. Instead, they (NASU) decided to build opposite the students' hostels, near the main gate. It is worthy of note to indicate that the present location of the NASU building does not conform to the reviewed master plan, including the Online stands. The Online activities are commercial activities that are supposed to be located at a place inside Poly market.

Mass Communication Department and Others

It is necessary to place on record that, buildings and activities like; the Mass Communication Departmental building, Millennium lecture theatre, new Faculty of Applied Science (FAS) offices and lecture hall were all located on the land that was designed for Rufus Giwa Polytechnic senior staff quarters.

Cooperative Multipurpose Society (CMS) buildings

The three buildings erected by Progress, Success, and Peace & Unity were all supposed to be located in the commercial areas of the Polytechnic, as indicated in the reviewed master plan. Instead, Success and Progress built theirs on the land allocated for students' hostels. While Peace and Unity and Senior Staff CMS sited theirs behind the old Auditorium.

Cattle Ranch Opposite Old Rector's Office.

There was nothing like a cattle ranch in the reviewed 2003 Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo master plan. Currently, over 200 cattle have been consistently grazing on the open space that spans from opposite the old rector's office through the adjacent RUGIPO sports complex to the end around the staff school. This land covers about two hectares. It is a development which many people consider to be a very dirty one, among the whole newly introduced physical development in the polytechnic.

Adekunle Ajasin Auditorium

It contains a very big administrative hall and offices that were originally designed for administrative activities which are supposed to be located around the new rectory area. Instead, it was located on the land meant for the school sports unit.

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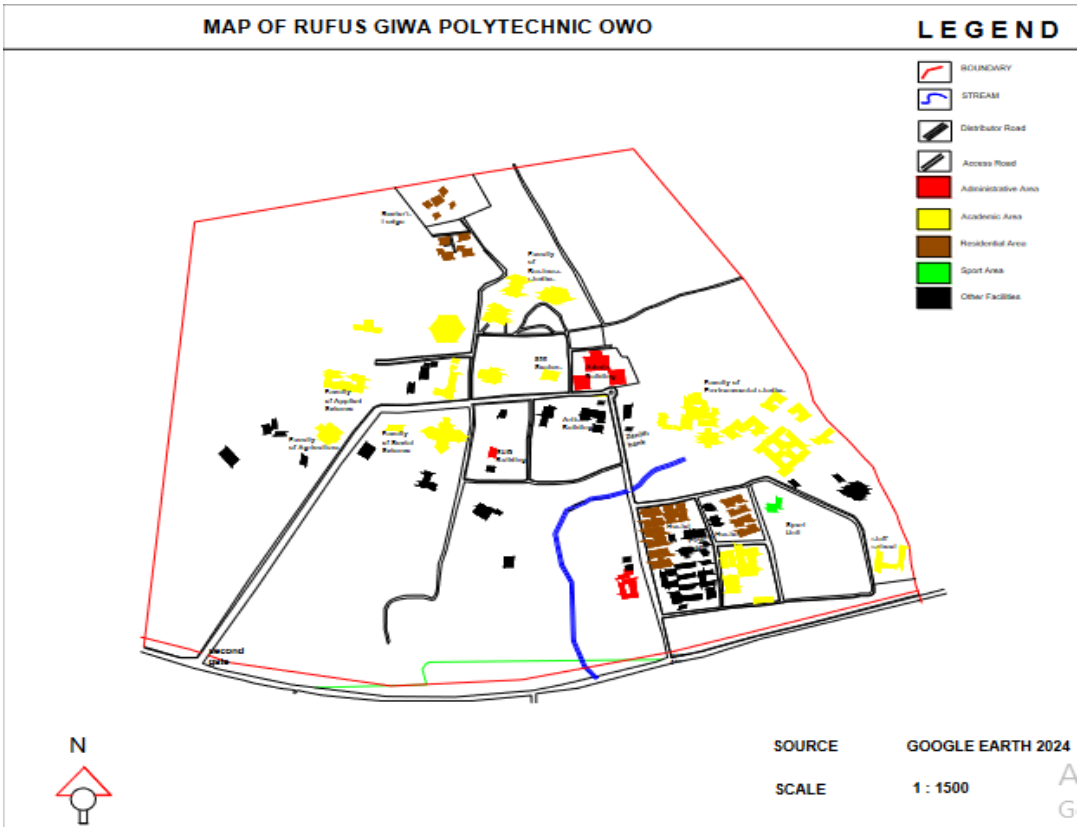

PLATE I: Existing Physical Features of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo.
Source: Google Earth Imagery and Author's Input (20

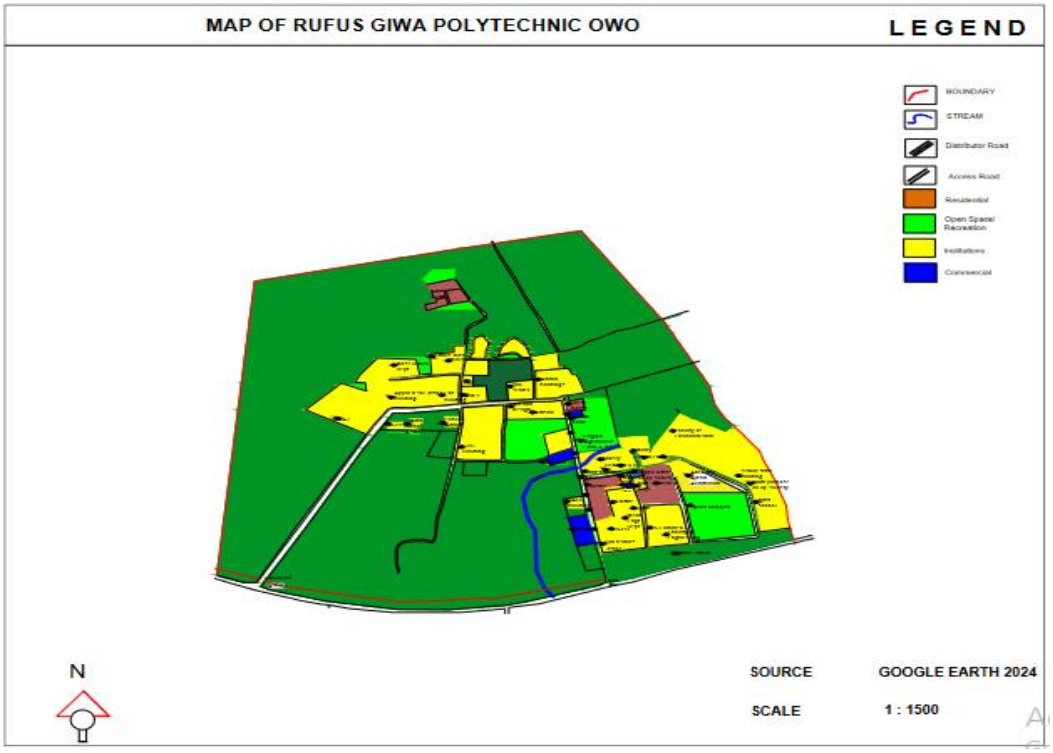

Figure 1; the differences Observed in the Study Area
Source: Google Earth Imagery and Authors' Input (2024)

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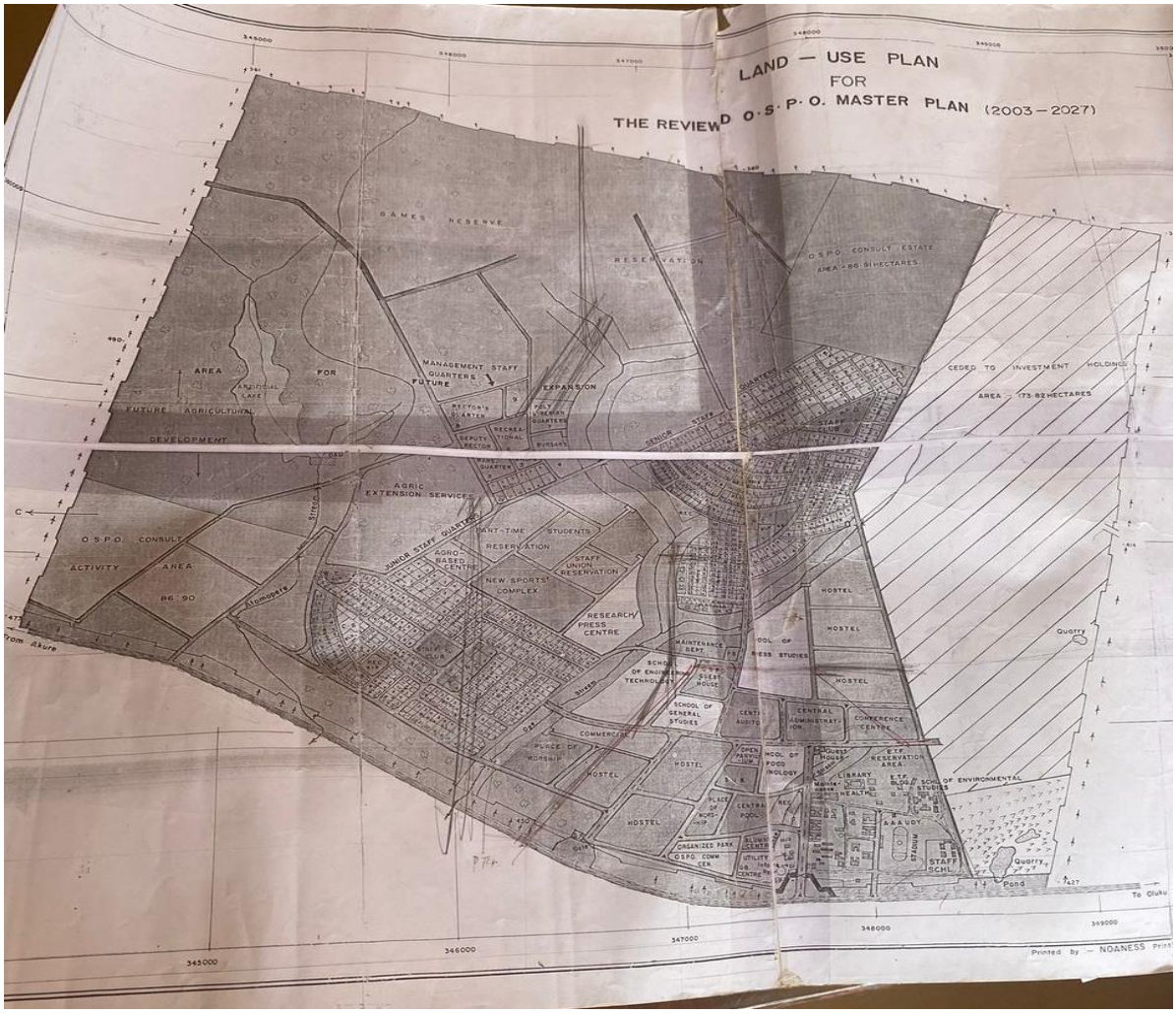

Figure 2: The Reviewed Master Plan of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo
Source: Physical Planning Unit, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo (2024)

Determination of the Degree of Compliance

The focus of this study is to determine the degree of compliance between the introduced physical development in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo, and the reviewed 2003 master plan for the institution. It was discovered that thirty-one (31) physical development projects were introduced in the polytechnic between the year 2003 and the year 2024. Investigations further revealed that only 6 of the introduced physical developments were adjudged to have complied with the reviewed master plan for the polytechnic.

The 6 physical developments that were adjudged to have complied with the reviewed master plan include; new Rector's quarters, Poly market, a new rectory, 800 seats lecture theatre, 4 in-1 lecture/office building, and the Academic Staff Union (ASUP) uncompleted building.

It could be deduced from the analysis above and overleaf that only 19.4% of the 32 introduced physical developments between the year 2003 and the year 2024 were adjudged to have complied with the reviewed Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo Master Plan. From the foregoing, the degree of compliance is calculated to be 30^0 (Figure. 3).

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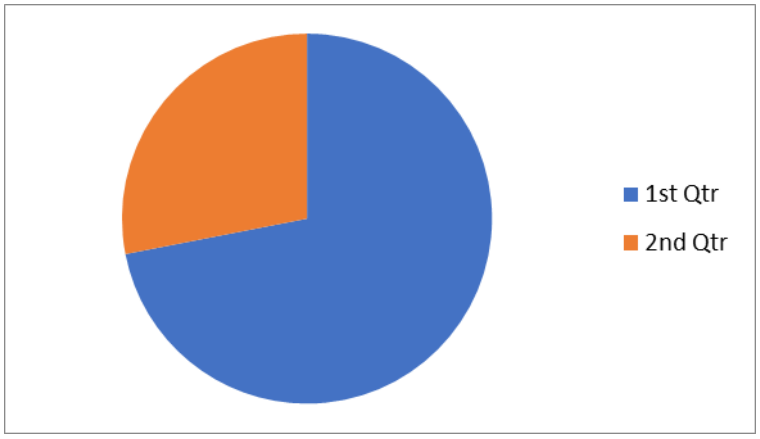

Figure 3: Determination of the Degree of Compliance with the Existing Master Plan
Source: Authors' field survey, 2024

Conclusion

This study assessed physical development projects and their compliance with the Master Plan of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo. Its main focus is to draw the attention of the concerned authorities to the level at which the recently introduced projects have derailed from the space standards set by the Master Plan of the institution. So that appropriate measures could be taken.

The study revealed that only 19.4% of the 32 introduced physical development projects between the years 2003 and 2024 were adjudged to have complied with the Master Plan. The remaining 80.6% did not comply. The conversion of that beautiful organised open space in front of the former Rector's office to a cattle ranch is regarded as an affront to dignity. In a related development, the RUGIPO market was replaced with the school of Engineering that is under construction without building another one. This has led to the indiscriminate location of business spots all over the campus. The development is a nuisance to the aesthetics of the institution. The study recommends that the school authority should adhere strictly to the implementation of the institution's Master Plan for future development.

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