

## **‘The study of land use: The case study of Bruges city, Belgium’**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The objective of this study is to understand the concept of land use planning by taking example of one of the old city of Europe ‘The Bruges city’. Land use is the important phenomenon in town planning process. The land is arranged in a way to make people’s life easy. Due to industrialization people migrates to urban area. Migration mainly depends on the availability of employment, batter quality of life, different infrastructure facilities etc. So the area having more facilities becomes conjuncted while the other area in the city left empty. The city should be planned to ensure proper management of land use so that positive outcomes can be achieved. The paper contains study of Bruges city planning which is the good example of land use planning. The study also contains the economic development and heritage city planning by preserving different heritage in the original condition.*

**KEY WORDS:** *land use, heritage city development, Bruges city plan, sustainable development, master plan, redevelopment, urban renewal*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

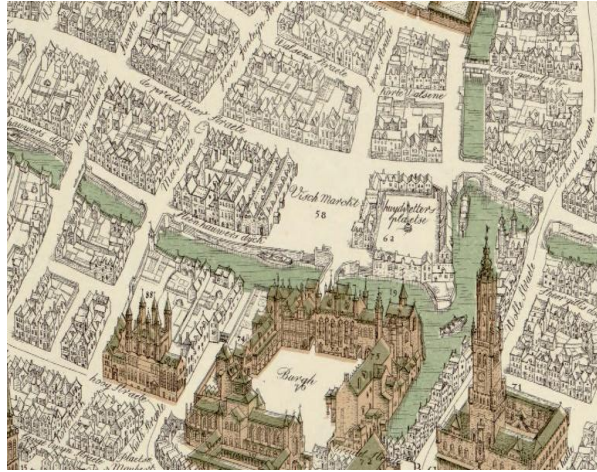
Bruges city in Belgium is the capital of west Flanders. The land area of the city is about 13, 840 hectors 1075. It is the seventh largest city of the country by population (1,18,284 population). The street plan having the small-scale city and canal system is its most important characteristic. The city’s architectural heritage is also the key feature of the city because it had surprising numbers of medieval buildings and fabric preserved.

Bruges was a developed commercial port in the 14<sup>th</sup> century the greatest port of western Europe, reaching its peak in 15<sup>th</sup> century. Between 1200 and 1500 Bruges was one of the most economic capitals of north-west Europe. Due to commerce of its harbour and proximity to the sea. The old city’s boundary was formed by embankment. The embankment was improved by addition of nine city gates from which four gates were survived. These gates were connected by roads which leads to centre of city and became important commercial streets.

At the beginning of 14<sup>th</sup> century, Bruges was one of the most important cities of Europe. The source of its economic importance lay in the fact that it was the principal market for northwest European trade at that time. As rich merchants were established around the burg in the town around burg was developed called “Bryggja”. The market was the place where the municipal autonomy was displayed. In thirteenth century the “Brlfry” with the halls was symbol of economic wealth. Mansions, small houses were built side by side. Around fourteenth century maximum people were shifted to this area and by the beginning of sixteenth century the disintegration of metropolis began.

### **WHY BRUGES CITY?**

Bruges is one of the important old medieval city of Europe. The city is located near the seashore. The city is also one of the world heritage city. The city has different place of tourist attraction and the water ways also plays important city. The city’s location and its topography are the attraction for planners. As the water ways, medieval buildings, industries, tourist places and other features planning together is the difficult task for planning. So for understanding the land use planning Bruges is the best example.



(source:<https://www.vintage-maps-prints.com/products/old-map-of-bruges-belgium-brugae-flandorum-1562>)

At the end of 1960 the situation of Bruges was as follows:

- The struggle between old town and surrounding boroughs.
- Functional loss of many buildings in old city.
- Few job opportunities and little industries in the city.
- An impoverished inner city population due to new rich built villas in the suburbs.
- High proportions of empty house.
- Many slums.
- The absence of local urban development policy.

By the second half of nineteenth century the new plan for a harbour connecting Bruges to sea was established. In 1907 the new Zeebrugge harbour was inaugurated. Gothic architecture was the inspiration for restoration and new projects. Due to harbour facility many factories were attracted. In 1971 the 'Department of historical monuments and urban renewal' was established in order to guide the architectural and building projects. In 1972 the master plan of the city was made.

## II. STRUCTURAL MASTER PLAN:

The aims of the master plan were:

- To attract the city dwellers, housing and living condition should be improved.
- The historical inner city must be developed and the large scale business in suburb must be removed.
- To make the commercial condition more attractive shops, stores, cafes etc. should be provided.
- The architectural heritage and townscapes should be prevented.
- To provide traffic plan for better transportation the traffic policy was formed. This aim was achieved by forming traffic loops.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

The master plan was converted in to spatial policy and legal documents. This was the crucial element to prevent heritage. For this process the city was divided into different zones of interest. The attention is paid to these zones to preserve the heritage and also high quality urban renewal. For each zones it must be cleared the policy plan to achieve the objectives of planning. The sub zones are discussed in this portion.

The main observation was the interference between the suburb and the city centre. The city centre should not be approached as the isolated island, but must be developed in relation to surrounding, because the city may be connected with regional, national and international perspective was important to world heritage. To fulfil the requirement of the plan the intrinsic heritage value of Bruges urban landscape must be considered. **The vision of the future for the world heritage therefore goes hand in hand with a vision for dynamic and contemporary urban development.** [1]

To achieve different goals the plan was divided into four zones. These zones have their own points of attention for world heritage. These zones needed legal policies in relation to UNESCO recommendation. These policies must be used for management of world heritage.

The zones are:

- The cultural landscape
- The regional urban area
- The heritage zone
- The area of strategic urban importance. [2]

### **2.1 The cultural landscape around the city:**

The cultural landscape was highlighted during the evaluation period. The city centre acted as an administrative, economic and cultural centre for surrounding area from centuries. So the cultural landscape was important for organization purpose. It concerns a particularly pleasant region that is extremely suitable for hiking or trips by bicycle or boat. In the region the authorities offered tourism routes, cycle paths and accommodation which leads to physical and mental connection towards the landscape.

- According to landscape decree 1999 the "anchorage place was the region that belongs to most valuable landscape." On Bruges' territory, one anchorage place has currently been indicated (Maleveld and Abbey of Male) and 11 anchorage places have been specified in the landscape atlas.
- The cultural landscape dimensions can be incorporated in the policies by adding in master plan.
- With regard to organisation and opening up, this link can be strengthened by taking the following action:
- A coordinating vision with regard to the cultural landscape
- Continuing to identify strategic anchorage places (Flemish Government).

### **2.2 The regional urban areas:**

The suburb and the urban area are crucial as they form the sphere of the city the urban area should be developed in proper manner. The regional area cannot be separated by the city centre. In accordance to Municipal spatial master plan the regional urban area was defined. The concept was entered in the policy as for provision of the facilities to these areas. At present there are already large scales facilities as trade centre, recreational facilities, medical facilities and higher education institutions. In future these facilities should be managed in systematic manner.

The following points were taken into consideration:

- The regional urban area cannot be detected from/ the city centre.
- The high quality construction should be done in such a way that the characteristics silhouette of the world heritage city centre is not obstructed.
- Important and historic routes must be determined.
- Different canals should be organised properly.

The following steps were taken while preparing the master plan.

- Determining the sight lines with special perspective of the city centre and implementing a vision of maximum construction height.
- Continuing the importance plan of visual impact studies and the accompanying application of the municipal building regulations.
- Translating the heritage reflex and visual impact studies into spatial implementation plan for the outskirts.

### **2.3 The heritage zone:**

The heritage zone combines the city centre and the surrounding water canals and the buffer zones.

Since the heritage zone forms the core of the development model drawn up, it has the most actions..

- The point of departure is the historic urban landscapes that are implemented by a layered set of legal instruments.
- Integrate the heritage reflex and preservation in policy documents and plans by elaborating a consistent Heritage Evaluation Plan.
- Draw up legal instruments for the protection of the urban landscape.
- Draw up Management Plans for the 'Beguinage' and the 'Belfry'.
- Draw up Conservation Plans for existing and future urban landscapes.
- Continue the listing procedure for monuments and urban landscapes.
- continue the procedure for inclusion in the Heritage Inventory of the Flemish Heritage Agency.
- Drawn up Detailed Survey Plans for the 9 city neighbourhoods.
- Continue the grant policy for the restoration of non-listed buildings with heritage value.
- Awareness for projects in buffer zone.

### **Buffer zone:**

the buffer zone is basically the restricted area. As it serves the restriction of the development it was used for prevention of world heritage property. If the buffer zone is considered a second layer of Bruges patrimonial zone, a dual approach is proposed.

Considering that the Bruges' buffer zone is only a narrow border between the city centre and the surrounding urban area and mainly falls together with the above mentioned urban areas of strategic importance and gate areas, the same actions are to be applied

- The importance of visual impact studies and the corresponding application of the Municipal Building Regulations
- Draw up a legal instrument for developments in the strategic development areas: Spatial Implementation Plan
- Draw up a vision on the maximum construction height in relation to UNESCO's 'Historic Urban Landscape Recommendation.
- draw up a legal instrument for the buffer zone in casu the gate areas by means of a Thematic Spatial Implementation Plan.

### **2.4 Strategic development area:**

Some zones are crucial in the city so these must be taken into consideration. These zones are important for the world heritage city and urban development. The first is the urbanized area of city gates. These gates are important as they connect the city centre to suburb. The integration of these gates in the landscape was the idea to expand the condition in thematic spatial implementation of plan.

Points of attention:

- Special affection to cycling and pedestrian routes (i.e. optimization of different traffic flows.)
- Access via water and water traffic.
- Attention for architecture and urban heritage.
- Stratification of historic urban landscape.

These areas fall outside the heritage zones but should not be neglected.

Second was the development area where the vision of future urban renewal is very important.

In view of their proximity to the World Heritage zone, special attention needs to be paid to the proposed urban development areas. The modified Municipal Building Regulations already explicitly specifies that visual impact studies need to be carried out for high constructions: - city centre UNESCO World Heritage zone: highest point 15 m - in the buffer zone: highest point 20 m - outside the buffer zone: highest point 30 m [3]

The following objectives should be included:

- Draw up a legal instrument for the gate areas
- The importance of visual impact studies and the corresponding application of the Municipal Building Regulations
- Draw up a legal instrument for developments in the strategic development areas
- Draw up a vision on the maximum construction height in relation to UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape Recommendation.

### **III. STRATEGIC APPROACH:**

The goal of the Bruges city was to reach UNESCO's recommendations and continue the management of world heritage city. Different agencies and committees were established to continue the development. **The advisory committee of urban beauty, GECORO, the Flemish heritage agency and the municipal heritage agency** were established. **The UNESCO committee of experts** was established in 6 June 2011.

### **IV. DETAILED SURVEY PLAN:**

The detailed survey plan are policy documents for handling building application and urban renewal project. They offers guidelines and preconditions to gear the specific character of neighbourhood within total vision of the city. In 2013 the start was made by the revision of the detailed survey plan for west-Bruges neighbourhood plan.

### **V. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY:**

The strategy should focus on all the inhabitants of the city and should use various means and channels of communication. In this way the city will provide the information and create support and develop an appropriate participation process.

## **VI. CONCLUSION:**

The land use planning is the important phenomenon in urban land use planning. The concept of this study is impressive but as the land area and type varies from place to place the concept of planning also very for different cities of different countries. The infrastructure facilities plays important role in land use planning for making the life of people easy. The transportation pattern of the city should be well planned. Different zones of the city having more importance should be considered for batter development of the city and its economy. The Bruges city in Belgium is the great example for land use planning.

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