

CHAPTER · VIII

AN URBAN DESIGN PROPOSAL IN THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
FOR BORELLA TOWN CENTRE

Conditions in the past were such, that urban design was mostly influenced by aesthetics alone. This resulted in functional inefficiency and in other environmental problems some of which we have met with while considering the repercussions of the unplanned, haphazard self-development of Borella that has taken place hitherto. As a result of such bitter experience, it is now generally accepted that urban designers must concern themselves not merely with aesthetics but with the following factors that are vital for proper town design :

1. Viability
2. Functional efficiency
3. Satisfactory town form
4. Comprehensive, physical development

It is on these lines therefore, that this commercial project (which, admittedly, is only a part of a full urban design) is attempted in this study.

It should be recognised that any commercial project worthy of the name must obviously contribute to the commercial development of the town while, at the same time, solving the existing commercial problems of the area.

Identification of the demand for commercial development

Locationally, Borella is called upon to cater to all the surrounding residential areas in addition to its present commercial area which as we discovered earlier, developed mainly in an unplanned and unsupervised manner and are therefore now in great need of scientific re-structuring and development. Borella's catchment area covers not only the residents and activities in Borella, but also those in Cinnamon Gardens, the Town Hall area, Punchi - Borella, Narahenpita, Welikade, Jawatte and parts of Dematagoda, Rajagiriya, Kotte and Battaramulla. Since a pre-requisite of commercial activity is finance and since high-income groups reside in the areas surrounding Borella, there is all the more reason for the demand for the commercial development of Borella. Another interesting feature of Borella is the considerable number of medical establishments in its surrounding area. The sprawling General Hospital on one side, the popular Castle Street Maternity Hospital on another, the Lady Ridgeway Children's Hospital in the heart of Borella itself, the country's largest Ayurvedic Hospital on its periphery - all these understandably give rise to a crying demand for easily obtainable medical goods and services which include druggists, florists,

private ambulance services, oxygen banks, blood banks, hotels and taxi ranks and many other utilities. That such demand not only exists but that it is growing is further proved by :

1. The high land values that prevail in the commercial area.
2. The high rental values in the commercial area.
3. The intense concentration of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
4. The increasing demand for new commercial buildings.
5. The great number of residences that are being converted into commercial buildings.
6. The glut of pavement hawkers and mobile boutiques.



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QUANTIFICATION OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE DEMAND  
FOR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Catchment area population

It is important to accurately gauge the demographin situation in the catchment area of Borella Town Centre, in order to arrive at a realistic estimate of the magnitude of the demand for its commercial development. This study regarded the catchment areas as all adjacent local authority areas and took into account 40% of their population, as those using the Borella Town Centre. The break-down of the population in the catchment area of Borella is as follows :

|    |                     |               |
|----|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. | Borella             | 28,125        |
| 2. | Cinnamon Gardens    | 17,262        |
| 3. | Narahenpita         | 14,268        |
| 4. | Welikada/Rajagiriya | <u>14,544</u> |
|    | Sub Total           | 74,199        |

40% being the proportion coming from the following catchment areas :

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Battaramulla/Talangama                | 7,231         |
| 2. Etulkotte/Pitakotte &<br>Baddagana    | 12,464        |
| 3. Dematagoda/Peliyagoda &<br>Mount Mary | <u>11,764</u> |
|  | 31,459        |

Total population of Catchment area 105,658

(It is this population of the catchment area that is taken as the basis to calculate the per capita commercial floor area for Borella)

Total commercial floor are of Borella -

Town Centre-220,000sq ft

Catchment area population -105,658

Per capita floor area -2.08 sq ft



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The National Census figures indicate that there has been a continuous growth of population in the area under study. However, the rate of such growth during the inter-censal periods has varied between 3.8 % and 8.6% during 1946 / 1979. An examination of the Census data on this basis indicates that the main reason for the increase, is migration into Borella from areas outside it. - Such migration is, in itself, an indication of the need and the demand for the commercial development of Borella.

#### Demand projections

In attempting to predict the commercial requirements of the catchment area in the future, it is necessary

to be as accurate as possible in the

1. Prediction of probable demographic changes
2. Prediction of probable changes in the commercial floor area requirement per capita.

This is because it is the changes in these two factors that will actively influence the commercial requirements of the catchment area during the projected period.

1. Prediction of demographic changes

In this matter it seems highly advisable to be guided by and to base predictions on the population Census and Statistics. On such projections, the probable population of the catchment area would be as follows:

 Projected population of the catchment area (1981-2001)  
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| <u>Year</u> | <u>Population</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 1981        | 106,000           |
| 1986        | 122,875           |
| 1991        | 139,751           |
| 1996        | 158,542           |
| 2001        | 177,360           |

Source: Based on data published in "The Population of Sri Lanka - Dept. of Census & Statistics.

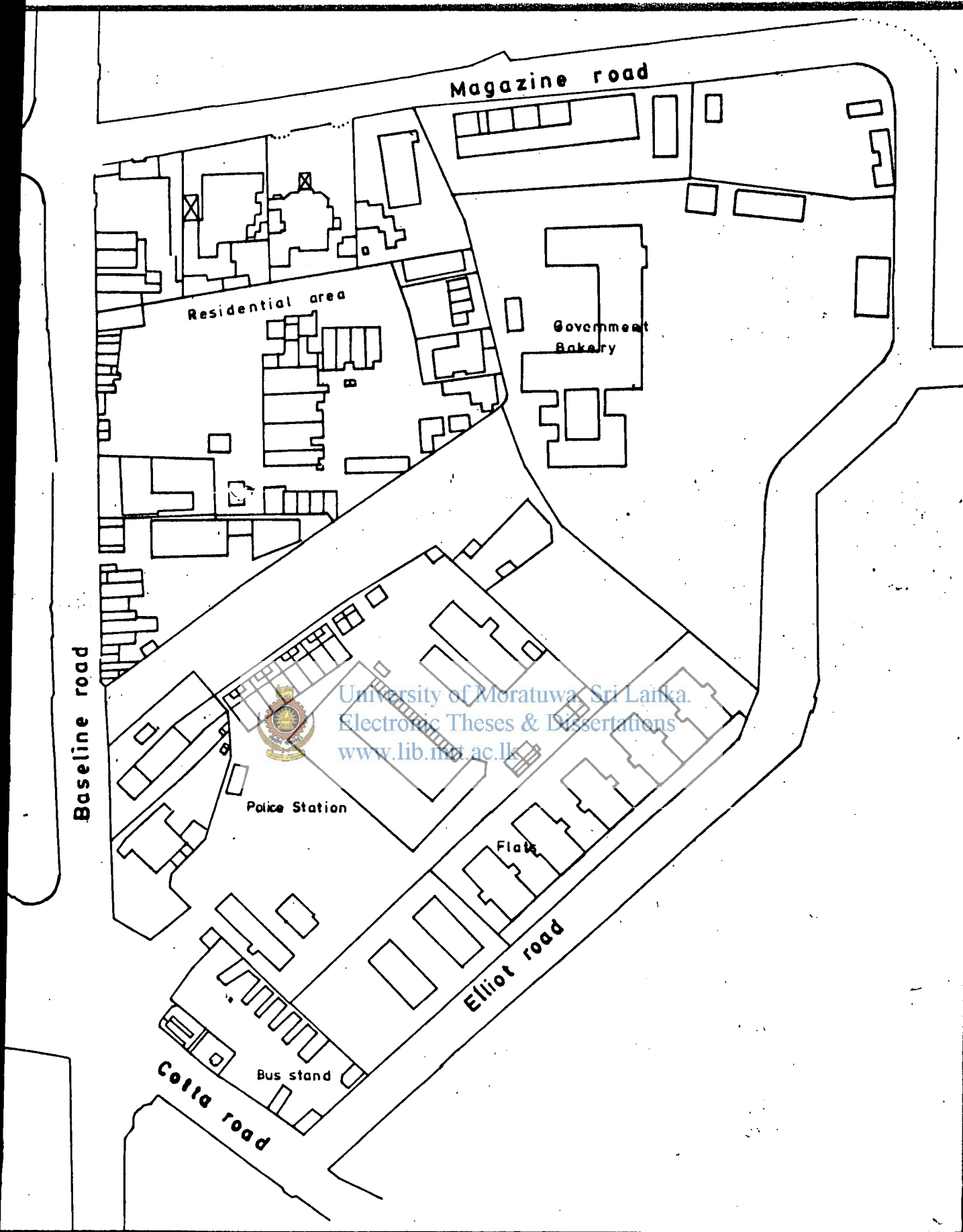
2. Prediction of the changes in commercial floor area per capita

The following methods were mainly adopted in predicting an approximate per capita demand for commercial floor area, till the year 2001.

- a. Extrapolation of the present per capita commercial floor area in Borella.
- b. The analogical approach.
- c. Examination and application (where appropriate) of other comparable urban standards.

A close relationship may always be observed between the standard of living in a commercial area and the amount of commercial floor area per capita in that area. This relationship is always a direct one. The pattern of changes in the standard of living and the development of socio-economic conditions are most difficult to forecast with the use of the extrapolatory method, especially in the present case where the period (1981-2001) is so long. However, by a combination of the above three methods and on the basis of general development trends together with a comparison with other towns which have already achieved a high degree of development under conditions that Borella is likely to encounter in the projected period. I have arrived at an average per capita demand of 2.08 to 2.60 sq ft between 1981 and 2001, for Borella. Based on this estimate the demand for commercial floor area in Borella in the year 2001 would be in the region of 460,000 sq ft. Since the present area is 220,000 sq ft,

\*  
The present 1982 per capita floor space was increased by 25% when using a norm for computing the requirement for future.



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**COMMERCIAL PROJECT AREA- EXISTING BUILDINGS**

a further 240,000 sq ft would normally have to be provided for by the year 2001. But in view of an approximate floor area of 100,000 sq ft that may be expected to be provided in the next 20 years by the new market and other commercial buildings presently under construction, only the balance 140,000 sq ft would have to be targetted for in the development plans of this study.

To provide such additional floor space, a financially viable commercial building complex sited in the commercial centre of Borella is proposed.

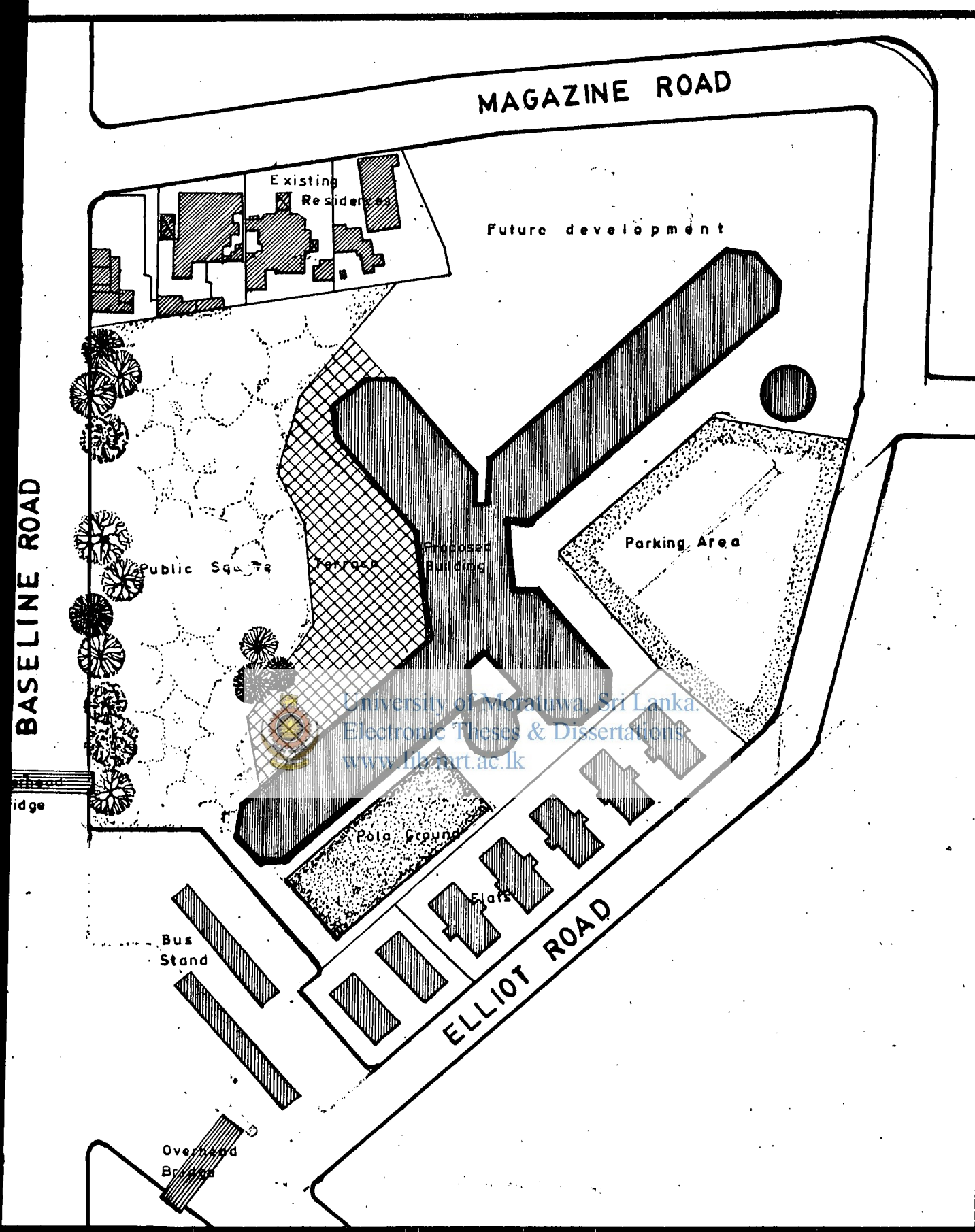
#### THE PROJECT SITE

This is envisaged as a triangular area with Baseline Road, Elliot Road and Cotta Road forming the three sides of the triangle. Most of this area is presently occupied by :

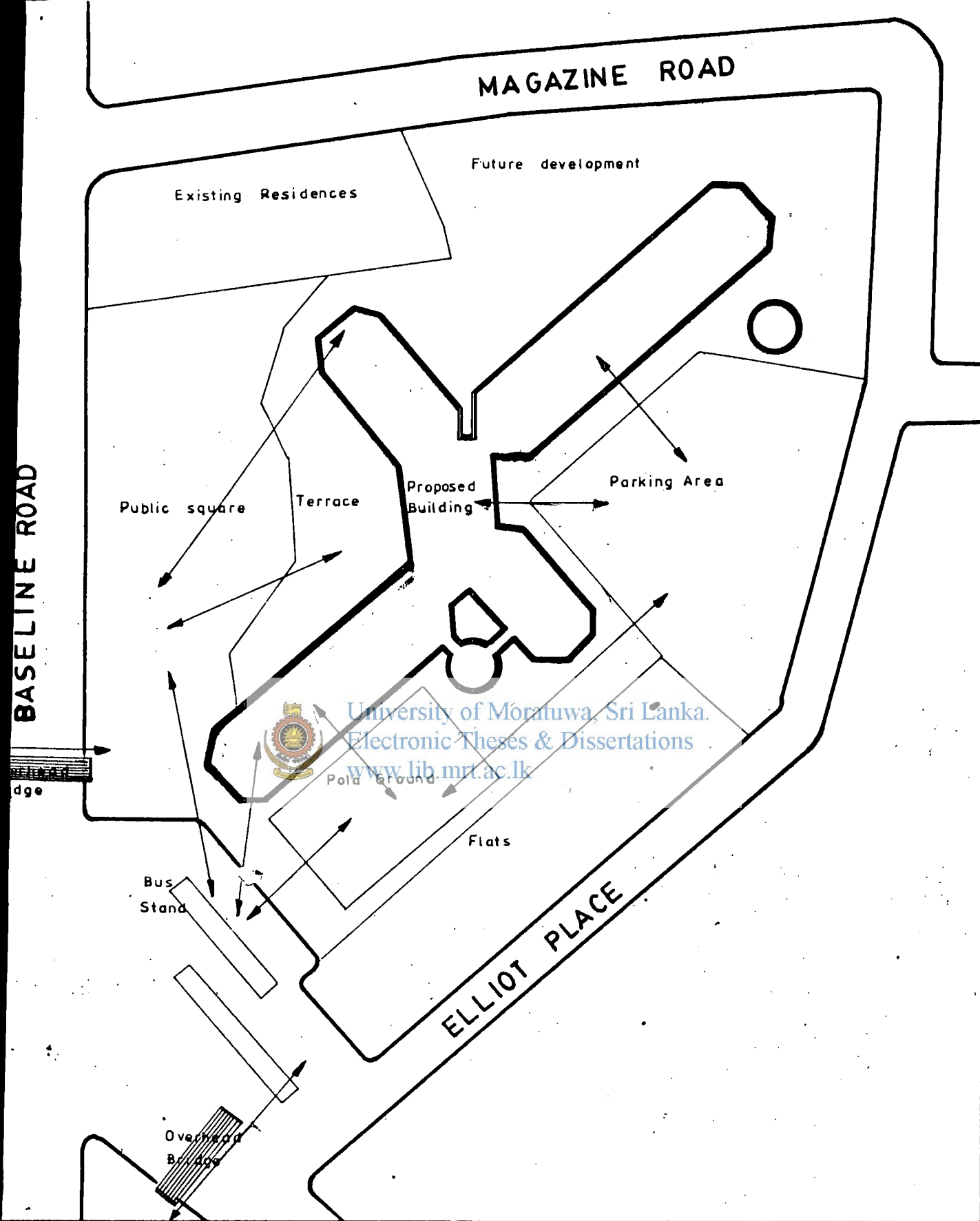
1. The Police Station
2. The Government Bakery
3. Seven blocks of government flats on - Elliot Road having 102 apartments.
4. Elven private residences.

As the total extent of the triangular area is 7.6 acres. Out of this, 6 acres have been demarcated for the proposed new development of a commercial complex, and it will be necessary to :





PROPOSED COMMERCIAL BUILDING COMPLEX.



**INTER RELATIONSHIP OF ACTIVITIES**

**-Commercial Building Complex.**

- a. Shift the Police Station away from the site as stated earlier.
- b. Acquire 5 of the 11 private residences referred to above, for demolition to provide building space.
- c. Acquire all three of the above-mentioned commercial buildings for the same reason as above.

The proposed commercial complex is planned to include:

- a. A main commercial building of four floors with a total floor area of 300,000 sq ft. The ground and first floor will be used for commercial purposes. The second floor for residential purposes. The third & fourth floors will carry residential apartments. Provision will also be made for a basement which will function as a car park for private and service vehicles and as a maintenance area.

Apart from the main commercial building, there is also envisaged :

- b. A public square :

This is a long-felt need in Borella as Campbell Park, as noted earlier, is not only un-ideally situated but is also of insufficient size. The public square is planned to be 2.5 acres in extent and

will face Baseline Road. It would be essential to landscape this square extremely well to provide a welcome relief from the spectacle of buildings around it, and to present a pleasing environmental quality to the otherwise highly commercialised junction.

c. Pola Grounds :

This would be the third feature of the proposed commercial complex. It will be sited between the main commercial building referred to in (a) above and the Bus Terminal. The Pola Grounds will be of the "open - terrace" type though a few sheltered areas will also be provided.

- d. Car Park :  University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.  
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This is expected to meet a great need and will be situated on Magazine Road and will be large enough to accommodate 125 vehicles at a time.

e. Stand for private passenger vans and taxis :

This would be sited on Baseline Road along the public square and will serve to solve part of the traffic congestion while also being more convenient for the travelling public.

THE OVERALL LAYOUT

The layout enables pedestrians and vehicles to have different approaches to the complex thereby making

entrance to it safer for pedestrians and quicker for vehicles. The former will approach the complex either from the proposed Bus Terminal or from Baseline Road, while the latter may approach it, through Magazine Road or from Elliot Road, and park behind the commercial complex. The Pola Grounds ( or open market) is also centrally located between the car park and the Bus Terminal thereby facilitating easy access to it.

The complex is conveniently linked to the Municipal market on the opposite side of Cotta Road through one of the overhead bridges provided for. The other overhead bridge will, as conveniently, connect the complex with the main access & dispassing over Baseline Road .

The public square which is planned to have landscaping and terracing of a very high order is fronting the commercial complex. On account of this, the commercial complex is expected to provide a welcome break to the environment. It is confidently expected that the design and location of the public square will make the general public enjoy shopping in the area and also contribute directly to raise the standard of living in Borella.