

Annexure 11

A note on the land use and design development pattern of Administrative Area

1. Concept

The administration area of Auroville is located in the Industrial Zone, closest to Matrimandir. It has been assigned 7 hectares, 1.4% of the city area, and is to accommodate all the city administration offices, their supporting facilities, and housing for 1500 persons.

2. Context – Location in the Industrial Zone

The 126 hectares Industrial Zone of Auroville, 25.7% of the city area, has four broad functions assigned, each to occupy distinct areas in the zone according to the nature of activities, namely economic, Crown area, administration and vocational training.

The economic area will be for non-polluting manufacturing units, including cottage industries; the Crown area for hostels, dormitories, guest-houses and supporting activities for the zone, administration area for the Town Hall, administration offices and housing; and the vocational training for vocational area for vocational training centres and research institutions including laboratories.

The above-mentioned activities represent the broad usage of each sub-zone, and the supporting facilities of each of the activities should also find their place in the sub-zone to facilitate efficiency. Further, an assigned proportion of housing is distributed in each sub-zone, to prevent deserted areas of the city at night.

3. Features of the Administration Area

The administration area curves around the Matrimandir, so all the main functions of collective organization are directly in contact with Auroville's centre, and its influence. The curved belt has public buildings partly inter-connected to each other, along the inner side facing Matrimandir, and another belt of residential buildings along the outer side of the curve. Between the two belts of two and occasionally three floor high buildings, there is a wide and continuous green space for recreation. This space will also accommodate the necessary common infrastructural support for both sides of the built spaces, such as wastewater treatment plants etc, but in such a way that the atmosphere is like in a public park or garden.

At one end of the zone is located the Centre for International Research in Human Unity (CIRHU) complex, which itself is seen as the concentration of research done within Auroville (Cultural Zone), and relevant research done in the rest of the world (International Zone). Thus CIRHU, envisaged as the interface between Auroville and the world, is located at the convergence of the two above-mentioned zones.

Functions to be accommodated

There will be distinct prominent buildings for the main functions of administration and efficient organization of Auroville, and there will be intermediate buildings accommodating the supporting facilities that are common to the administration zone as a whole, such as cafeteria, exhibition spaces, photocopying, binding and telecommunication facilities, etc.

The following areas have been identified as the main functions required for the organization of Auroville, and will have their corresponding office spaces there:

1. Town Hall
2. Municipal Services (water, electricity, telecom, transport)
3. Economy
4. Planning, architecture and construction regulation
5. Education
6. Department of Unity and Mediation (conflict resolution)
7. Office of Matrimandir (finances, maintenance of buildings and gardens, security, preparation of visitors information...)
8. Scientific research (energy, ecology, reforestation, flora, fauna, technology)
9. Relations with villages and bioregion
10. Internal and external relations (policies for visitors, guest houses, information and archives, press, etc.)
11. Art and culture

The above list is a proposal still under study. Further work is going on to ascertain the actual township requirements and space needed.

Massing

The innermost row of buildings is proposed as a series of closely connected buildings for visual continuity, not higher than ground plus two storeys, with the exception of the main Town Hall. The main administration buildings could be built up to the maximum height, whereas the supporting ancillary functions common to the whole could be ground plus one, making them lower and less important structures that could be interspersed between the main buildings.

Interconnection

The administrative buildings will be visually connected as a comprehensive whole. The ground floor façade will provide a continuous covered walk-way/promenade for public circulation, with the Matrimandir on one side and the reception/exhibition areas of each main building on the other side. Wherever possible, walkway bridges will be provided, even on upper floors, for easy circulation and further enhancement of the visual continuity of the whole.

Public Participation

In order to ensure that the administration area of Auroville does not acquire the bureaucratic atmosphere of ministerial buildings in most cities, care must be taken not to allow too much segregation of the administrative offices and the citizens at large. This will be achieved by the following:

1. The visual contact and orientation to Matrimandir as the centre around which the curve of building mass is distributed.
2. The promenade that will encourage the residents to walk in the immediate vicinity of each of the administrative buildings.
3. Exhibition spaces that will be provided in the ground floor of each work area to keep the residents in touch with current affairs.
4. Supporting ancillary functions as mentioned above that will be interspersed between the main buildings will be also available to the residents at large.

The above will ensure that the administration area of Auroville will be a lively and active zone involving all the residents and encouraging their active participation. Close contact with the residents of Auroville will facilitate better organization.