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# University of Nairobi

**Dept. - Architecture**

# 1975/76

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OBJECTIVES:

The design thesis study was intended to investigate the viability of a "Community School" - a facility to serve as a school and as a community centre - for the fast growing Mumias community. This Joint Development was to result in maximum range of educational, social and s recreational facilities by combining the functions of the building complex thereby extending the facilities available to both; avoiding wasteful duplication of structures and space; and integrating activities. To avoid this wasteful duplication, spaces are to be organised such that the community can use them when the school pupils are not using them. For example the lecture rooms are to be clustered so as to be used as clustered meeting rooms as well in the evening; the library and the multi-purpose hall are to be sited such that they are easily accessible to both the pupils and the community. Having both communal and school facilities together will integrate the activities of both resulting in a more harmonious society. From the study it was concluded that a community centre will merge better with a Secondary School since the facilities in the later can be utilized by the adult population without requiring any adjusting. The secondary school also serves a larger area ~~serves a larger area~~ hence the community can be better organized around this.

LOCATION AND ACCESS:

Initially the site set aside for the Secondary School was to be used but this turned out to be too secluded for a community facility. Hence a more centrally placed site within major pedestrian traffic area was chosen with main access to face the trading centre.

SITE PLANNING AND LANDSCAPING:

Behavioral characteristics of the community are to be incorporated. Grassy courtyards with trees for shade to be included so that people can loiter, meet and talk casually in them. Buildings to be organized around these courtyards which are also to serve as waiting spaces for the various facilities.



### CONSTRUCTION:

Initially the building complex was to be double storey and designed to resemble any other in any township in the country. However, it was later concluded that a design with traditional hut character would be more impressive, prominent and acceptable to the Munias Community. Due to possible technological problems in the construction the traditional circular hut form was substituted by square units and joined together in groups for economy and to integrate functions. However, the roofs remain separate to break possible long roof monotony and retain some traditional touch. Construction of the structure to consist of timber for the roof and reinforced concrete columns and beams and concrete blockwork for the walls. These are relatively simple for utilization of local skills. Roof covering and floor finish to be corrugated asbestors and p.v.c. tiles respectively.

### ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS AND SERVICES:

Joinining and grouping of the units introduced environmental and major roof drainage problems than initially anticipated thus providing a bitter learning experience for the authour. Ventilation and lighting hoods were then included on top of the main units to aid in ventilating and lighting internal spaces. Roof drainage was ultimately resolved by including internal down-water pipes for gutters between units, otherwise rain water to flow down the over hangs from other foof surfaces.