

CS STUDIO ARCHITECTS

MASIZAME LIBRARY AND RESOURCE CENTRE CRADOCK, EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE 1982 - PRESENT

PROJECT BUILT FOR MASIZAME

Buildings already constructed for Masizame (section 21 company – not for gain): crèche (480 children), multi – purpose resources centre, skills training workshops, Micra – Cradora Health committee – a community health centre.

PROJECT IN THE PLANNING STAGE

Structure plan for the integration of the three historically divided communities, 1 000 low cost housing units, shopping complex, small business hives, petrol station and a community college are among some of the first phase priorities. The project is called Cradock Vision 2000 and is the first of its kind in South Africa which takes the challenges of the RDP into consideration and shapes the principles into practical solutions for the reconstruction of society.

CONTEXT

Cradock, a rural town with an estimated population of 60 000 residents, is 260km from Port Elizabeth, the closest city, and 800km from Cape Town.

The unemployment rate is extremely high and has been increased by the drought over the past three years which has caused many farmers in the areas to retrench the labourers. This has caused a large informal settlement. As with most of our cities and towns. Cradock's planning displays the legacies of apartheid where forced removals separated people and placed buffer zones of open land between race groups.

Cradock is also referred to as the birth place of the ANC and the location where the freedom charter was first formally planned.

SITE

As Masizame originated from within the "black" community the organization approached the local authority for land in the buffer zone. After much debate the land was allocated to them. The site is 1.5 ha and it is surrounded by a residential area and adjacent buffer zones.

PROCESS

Under extreme repressive conditions we started working with a group of residents, who had come as migrant labourers to seek employment in the Western Cape. Meetings were held in secret as any planning of this nature was seen as subversive. No funding was available from within South Africa and only after many organization development workshops were carried out, could fundraising proposals be drawn up and a process of fundraising be embarked on. It wasn't until 1986 that this proved to be successful and Masizame could build phase I of the scheme. Today, the fruits are visible in the overall integrated restructuring process manifested in the Cradock Vision 2000 initiative.

DESIGN

It was agreed that the Masizame Centre was to be constructed around a public square. The first three buildings, namely a crèche (1986), a library (1992) and skills training workshops (1994), have been completed and provide for a range of much needed community facilities.

A fourth building, a health centre, was planned as a first of its kind where government health authority was working hand in hand with a community health education group under one roof. The community health committee focuses on primary health care and extension services for the elderly and disabled.

The building is designed as two separate blocks around the central waiting area which also works as a multi – purpose space. The building was completed in May 1995. The largest project CS Studio Architects has embarked on is the Cradock Vision 2000. This is in response to the political change in the country and the environment which has been created by the Reconstruction and Development Programme which is conducive to integrated holistic planning. This project has a structure plan which will provide the guidelines for future developments, The Cradock Vision 2000 will focus on project to be implemented within the next five years.

VISION 2000

CRADOCK

CONCEPTUAL HOUSING DESIGN
IN PROGRESSION

