

CS STUDIO ARCHITECTS

COMPLEMENTARY LEARNING CENTRE (CLC)

LOCATION: KEETMANSHOOP, SOUTHERN NAMIBIA

DATE: 1996 - 1997

BACKGROUND

Keetmanshoop is situated in the southern part of Namibia. At the time there were \pm 20 000 inhabitants. Although there are a large number of school leavers each year, there are a comparatively low percentage of income generating activities and job opportunities for the youth and adults within the community. CLC is a non-government organization controlled by a board of trustees. They cater for Grade 7 to 12 learners along with career guidance, computer training and HIV Aids Programmes for the broader community. Crucial to the project was the use of local unemployed people in the building project. Funding was secured in February 1996 from Intermon, a Spanish funding agent.

DESIGN

The site is situated in a buffer zone, which separates two communities. However, it is central to Keetmanshoop's residents. The site is very big and it was decided to build on the north-west corner of the site in order to give an urban context to the project. The site is characterized by a large amount of rocks and small boulders and by little vegetation, which is typical for this arid region where temperatures soar to \pm 40°C at midday and drop dramatically at nightfall.

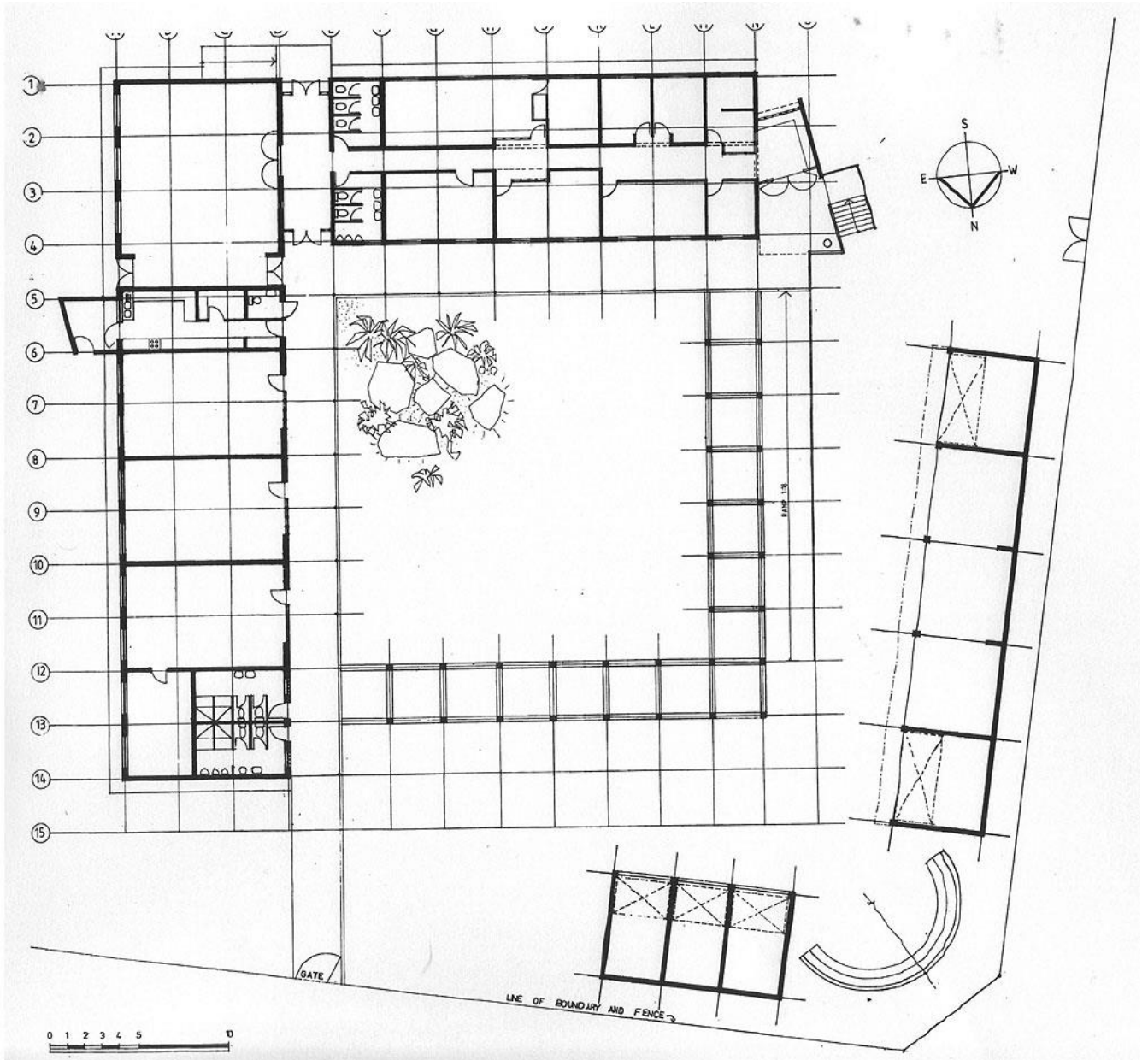
A workshop was organized with the CLC board and the architects, to formulate a brief and accommodation schedule. A building committee was established out of elected people from the broader community to oversee the entire project from inception to completion. A second workshop was held to finalize the design and to discuss the tender and building process.

The building consists of a south wing which houses the reception, four offices, a meeting room, a library/resource room, a computer room and ablution facilities. The east wing houses three classrooms, a hall with kitchen facilities and an additional ablution block. The central square is lined by a pergola on the north and west sides and a 3m wide covered stoep on the east and south sides. The stoep provides sufficient shade on the north and west sides of the building. The building was set out to accommodate an existing boulder formation which has been made into a rockery with indigenous plants. The superstructure consists of a concrete foundation and cement bricks for internal and external walls with plaster on both sides. Bricks were made by the local Development Brigade, a government job creation project.

Ninety five percent of the workforce throughout the construction process was employed from local and surrounding areas. The building was completed in September 1997. CS Studio Architects worked in association with Lentin Architects, an architectural company based in Swakopmund, Namibia.

Like most NGO's in South Africa and Namibia, there has been little to no financial support for community-based projects in recent years. This had a negative impact on the project.

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