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UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
HOUSING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT

HRDU
UDC
691.327
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**COST OF
CONCRETE BLOCK WALLS**

First Edition

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Second Edition

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Date : November, 1979.

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C O S T O F C O N C R E T E B L O C K W A L L S .

Introduction.

Walls built in concrete blocks will, no doubt, continue to play a major role in the construction of houses in Kenya. Although in certain areas of the country other materials are available for building "permanent" walls, like burnt bricks and natural stone, the use of concrete blocks is predominant, both for contractor-built structures and for "self-help" development.

Although concrete blocks are not expensive in an absolute sense, there is a wide gap between the cost of non-permanent wall structures (mud and wattle, sun-dried bricks, etc.) and concrete block masonry. For this reason research on alternative materials (e.g. stabilised soil blocks) and construction methods is relevant and may lead to adequate wall construction at lower cost.

Nevertheless, in view of the predominance of the use of concrete blocks, proper understanding of the cost aspects is of importance especially for the self-help developer (e.g. the plot allottee in a site and service scheme). In this short paper costs of various sizes and types of blocks, and the cost of masonry walls in various thicknesses are analysed and compared. Purchase prices and costs of transport (within the Nairobi area) have been obtained from suppliers whose names and addresses are listed in Appendix E.

Block sizes and types.

HRDU analysed the various aspects of metrication of concrete blocks in 1970 (1), the results of which led to the publication by the Ministry of Works of the STANDARD SPECIFICATION FOR METRIC SIZED CONCRETE BLOCKS FOR BUILDING in September 1972. Since the publication of this Standard Specification the use of metric size blocks has increased by a large extent, but blocks in "imperial" sizes are still being produced and serve a large proportion of the market for this type of product.

(1) Metrication of concrete blocks, Per Houlberg, HRDU, 12.12.1970.