



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

DESIGN FOR CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

L A M U / KENYA

Documentation of a combined historical studies/measured drawing and design programme for conservation and development conducted with 3rd year architectural students during the 1978 / 79 session

edited by

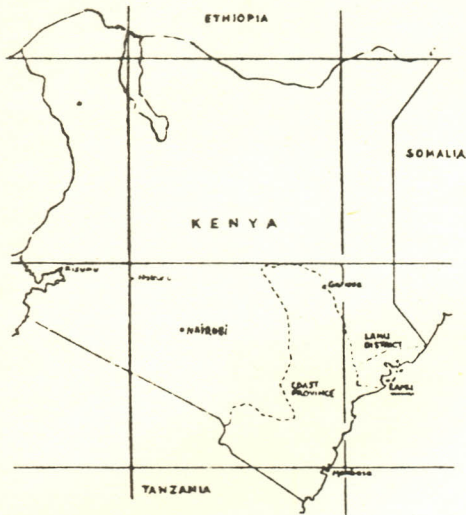
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INTRODUCTION

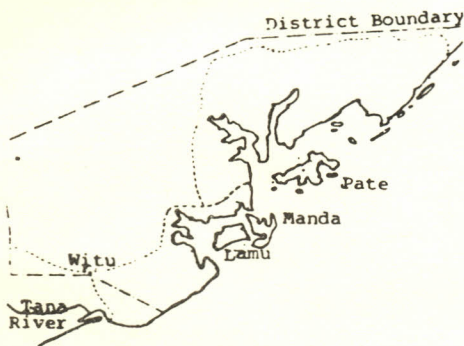
Kenya's Coast Province



This document "Design for Conservation and Development" summarises results of a joint teaching/learning programme in conservation and redevelopment - as a part of a development oriented architectural education programme. It consists of a historical studies and measured drawing programme and a design programme using the measured drawings of an existing house which will be converted to serve as a Study and Research Centre for the University of Nairobi. The innovation of this programme is our proposition to use a historical studies and measured drawing programme as input into a design programme, which aims at the conservation and revitalization of the existing structures.

A study programme of this nature should be located within a strong cultural context. Lamu offered an excellent choice.

Along the coastline of the Indian Ocean in Kenya and East Africa as a whole, urban settlements have evolved for over a thousand years. In past centuries they were poles of regional and international trade and cultural exchange across the oceans. These early East African settlements gradually evolved into urban centres - seats of the Swahili Culture, made up of local and foreign ingredients, that co-alesced into a culture of strong east african identity.



Lamu District

Search for identity in settlement organisation and architectural expression is a challenge for the student and teacher of architecture, here and elsewhere. Visitors to most african cities are confronted with anonymous internationally styled agglomerations of luxurious buildings, or equally anonymous collections of makeshift shelters, where rural immigrants try to establish a foothold, close to areas of "development" concentrations. Critical visitors to the Department of Architecture posed the question as to what we do towards the development of an architectural identity in the country. Such provocative questions must be faced, if we are to achieve something more than monotonous shelter for unknown people in locations we seem to know little about, or merely semblance of "style" and not content.

An important educational tool towards the understanding of identity in settlement pattern and built form are historical studies and measured drawing in a strong cultural context. Ideally, such studies should take the student away from his habitual environment, where he is in danger of losing his capacity to question and analyse the forces which shaped his place of residence. Historical studies should oblige the student to understand the variety