

Construction KENYA SHOWCASE



SEPTEMBER 2023

MAESTRO ARCHITECTS

Marking 20 Years with Mega Projects

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- KIRICHWA PLACE BY MUTISO MENEZES INTERNATIONAL
- CRACKING THE CONSTRUCTION CODE IN WESTERN KENYA
- JAMES KIMATHI - EXTRAORDINARY ACHIEVEMENTS
- PROJECT COST CONTROL





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Author Nashon Okowa (centre) poses with Amnesty International Kenya Executive Director Irungu Houghton and Building in Kenya Co-author, Robyn T. Emerson at the launch of his new book.



IQSK's Cynthia Mulaku with Tanzanian and Nigerian delegates at Tanzania Institute of Quantity Surveyors (TIQS) Zanzibar convention.



Prime CS Musalia Mudavadi, Transport and Infrastructure CS Kipchumba Murkomen and UK FCO Minister Hon. Andrew Mitchell during a recent site visit to the Nairobi Railway City project.



Architectural Association of Kenya President Florence Nyole (right) with a delegate at the recent Africa Climate Conference (ACS) in Nairobi.



Delegates follow proceedings at the Women In Construction (WIC) Forum 2023 held at Barabara Plaza in Nairobi.



A multi-agency team on a recent routine inspection of a construction site in Nairobi to ensure deep excavation does not interfere with surrounding buildings.



A delegation from the Engineers Board of Kenya (EBK) led by the Registrar/CEO Eng Margaret Ogai (4th on front row) attended the 20th Annual Engineers Day (AED) in Dar es Salaam.



Triad Architects Director Arch. James Gitoho (left) and AAK Vice President Arabbu Ndege at the UIA 2023 World Congress of Architects in Copenhagen, Denmark .



NCA Executive Director Eng. Maurice Akech gives a keynote address during a Contractor Workshop on Timber Grading and Utilization of Bamboo in Construction.



The Building in Kenya team recently held an edition of their Mjengo Clinic series at the CTM Showroom in Mombasa.



Laxmanbhai Construction Limited Directors plant a commemorative tree as part of the company's celebrations to mark its 70th anniversary.



In its continuing efforts to improve traffic flow in urban areas, KURA is dualling Limuru Road from Forest Road to Muthaiga.

LAXMANBHAI CONSTRUCTION LIMITED MARKS 70 YEARS IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY



The Board of Directors. From left: Mr Virji K. Raghwani, Mr Arvind M. Raghwani, Mr Manji K. Raghwani (Managing), Mr Khusal R. Raghvani and Mr. Ramji K. Raghwani.

LAXMANBHAI Construction Limited, one of the best known names in Kenya's construction industry, is marking its 70th anniversary this year.

Established in 1953 by Laxmanbhai Bhimji K. Raghwani, Laxmanbhai Construction Limited is among the few construction companies founded before Kenya attained independence that not only managed to survive the transition to self-rule but also achieved monumental growth.

"Wherever we work, our clients and consultants value our trademark commitment to excellence, quality, innovation, sustainability and safety," said Managing Director Mr Manji Raghwani in an interview with our sister publication, *Construction Review*.

Over the years, Laxmanbhai has been involved in key projects across the country. They include Britam Towers, Teleposta Tower, Rahimtulla Trust Tower, Lonrho House and Nyayo House. Several five-star hotels like The Stanley, English Point Marina, Villa Rosa Kempinski, Hemingways Hotel Karen and Crowne Plaza Hotel Annexe are among Laxmanbhai's key projects in the hospitality sector.

In the education sector, Laxmanbhai has done Brookhouse International School, Gems International School, Aga Khan Academy, Aga Khan University Centre among many more.

ENG. JAMES MWANGI APPOINTED FIDIC VICE CHAIRMAN

ENGINEER James N. Mwangi has been appointed as Vice Chairman of the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC).

In his new position, Eng. Mwangi is expected to drive transformative leadership and positive change within the international engineering community.

Eng. Mwangi is the Chief Executive Officer at Nairobi-headquartered energy solutions consultancy firm, Kurrent Technologies Ltd. He is a consulting mechanical engineer with many years' experience predominantly in the oil, gas, power generation and renewable energy sectors.

FIDIC is the global representative body for national associations of consulting engineers and represents over one million engineering professionals and 40,000 firms in more than 100 countries worldwide.



Engineer James Mwangi

NAIROBI GEARS UP FOR IFLA CONGRESS

THE International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) World Congress 2023 will be held as a concurrent event in Nairobi, Kenya and Stockholm, Sweden on 28th and 29th September 2023.

IFLA is a global body of landscape architects represented through national member associations spread through Africa, the Americas, Europe, Asia Pacific and the Middle East. IFLA's mission is to promote the landscape architecture profession within a collaborative partnership of the allied built-environment professions. The Architectural Association of Kenya (AAK) is a member of IFLA.

The World Congress in both Sweden and Kenya will be open to both physical and online audiences.

Due to economic and political barriers, participants from different parts of the world have in the past faced difficulties in participating in IFLA World Congresses. At the same time, countries where the profession is already strong have dominated as host countries, which has resulted in a strongly limited global perspective and presence. These realities informed the decision to stage dual hosting.

The IFLA Congress in Nairobi will run together with the annual Architectural Association of Kenya convention that is normally held around this time of the year.

NEW BOOK ADVISES REAL ESTATE INVESTORS



Nashon Okowa, author of *The 7 Rules of Real Estate Investment*, signs copies for guests at the book launch in Nairobi.

CONSTRUCTION Project Manager, author and industry commentator Nashon Okowa has launched yet another book that seeks to arm real estate investors with valuable information before they commit their money into projects.

“I’ve been in this industry for long and have seen the pain of carelessness in real estate”, said Mr Okowa at the book launch held in Nairobi at the end of August.

The 7 Rules of Real Estate Investment, advises investors to thoroughly conduct feasibility studies, set expected return on investment and carry out due diligence “ruthlessly”.

The author also advises against compromising on location. “The factor that most people overlook today while in the excitement of real estate investment, yet it is, by a long way, the most important

in determining price, value, desirability, profit and just about everything else is location”, he argues.

The author, who launched another book *Don't Buy That House* last year, goes on to advise investors to not only sell the sizzling as most investors do, but also sell the steak. He says the sizzling is glittering details about a project and the steak is the substance, which despite being what really matters, is often eclipsed by rosy descriptions of the project including impressive renders.

Mr Okowa, a former Chairman of the Association of Construction Managers of Kenya (ACMK) and a director at Beacons Consultants also advises investors to hire reputable project teams and bring on board professional project managers to take charge of delivery.

Kirichwa Place, Kilimani

Fusing Functionality with Ambience

KIRICHWA PLACE is a modern residential apartment development in Kilimani. A project by Mutiso Menezes International, the spatial design and configuration of the various apartment typologies exhibits unmatched superiority in both size and interrelationships.





The Kenya Power Pension Fund (KPPF) is a fund for permanent and pensionable employees of Kenya Power, Kenya Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd, and Nuclear Power and Energy Agency. It pays cash benefits to contributors upon retirement, and where applicable, to the dependents of deceased members.

As part of its investment strategy, the Fund has been engaged in property development mainly targeting upmarket areas. Past developments include Bogani Park, Loresho Ridge and Runda Park.

Kirichwa Place is the latest investment by the Fund. Sitting on 1.66 acres on Kirichwa Road, off Ngong Road in Nairobi, the development consists of 288 apartments of 2 and 3-bedroom configuration.

- 3-bedroom with DSQ and plinth area of 163 square metres – 96 units
- 2-bedroom with DSQ and plinth area of 122 square metres – 64 units
- 2-bedroom with plinth area of 109 square metres – 128 units

**Mutiso Menezes international (MMI)
picked as Architects**

The client (KPPF) wished to fill a niche and a deficit in the housing market that is evident in Nairobi. Additionally, the Nairobi Integrated Urban Development Master plan



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in the "Kirichwa Place" Development as the
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(NIUPLAN) advocates for further densification along Ngong Road, as well as encouraging mixed use and compact development within residential areas such as Kilimani.

Cognizant of these two key factors, MMI embarked on employing a multidisciplinary approach to create a project that is contextual, within the tenets of functionality in design, as well as within the threshold of cost vis-à-vis the return on Investment.

With an impressive portfolio of projects in its sleeve, MMI passed the client's test to deliver. The 49-year-old architectural consultancy has successfully executed numerous projects across various building types ranging from Commercial, Office, Institutional, Residential, Hotels, Hospitals and Civic. Notable projects handled in the past include:

- Kenya National Assembly Towers
- Crystal Rivers Mall
- College Of Insurance Leadership Centre
- KCAA Headquarters
- US Embassy Gigiri
- The Nairobi Hospital/UN- Covid-19 Centre

Other services offered by the consultancy include:

- National and regional planning
- Rural and urban planning and development



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- Environmental Impact assessment studies
- Site selection
- Feasibility and pre-investment studies
- Preparation for master development plans
- Project definition, appraisal and evaluation

Kirichwa Place Architectural Features

Architecture has a core mandate to deliver among other things, comfort and space. Comfort in this context is in terms of light, temperature, glare and humidity, all which MMI has optimally designed for. For instance, the balconies, other than serving the functional purpose, have been designed as sun shading element.

The spatial design and configuration of these apartment typologies exhibits unmatched superiority of both size and interrelationships. The living spaces have been crafted with a focus on comfort and family well-being.

Green considerations

Modern design requires that architects incorporate relevant sustainability elements. MMI was alive to this principle and therefore included the following aspects in their design of Kirichwa Place:

- Energy efficiency through use of North-South facing solar water heating panels.
- Naturally lit and ventilated spaces
- LED Smart lighting fittings
- Landscaped areas

What is a typical unit like?

The architects have created spacious lounge, kitchen and dining areas, a breakfast counter and large windows for natural lighting. The units feature balconies that create an ambient indoor/outdoor link. Depending on the configuration, some units have domestic staff quarters. All the residences feature exquisite finishes.

Common Facilities

These include: a standby generator, CCTV, perimeter wall, two high speed elevators per block (8 in total), a restaurant

and a swimming pool. Others are a gym and children's play area. There is a common roof terrace and ample parking.

Access to the development

The development is accessed from Kirichwa Road. It is 500 meters from the Kirichwa Road-Argwings Kodhek Junction and 250 metres from Kirichwa Road-Ngong Road junction.

Construction timelines

Ground breaking took place on 15th July 2021 and the project is expected to be handed over on 11th March 2024, all factors remaining constant.

Challenges faced by Project Team and how they were resolved

According to MMI, the site accommodates a Nairobi City Water and Sewerage sewer line that at one time was clogged up, therefore resulting in flooding. This caused a temporary closure of the site. To solve this problem, the client, with the advice of the lead consultant is exploring the option of doing a new sewer line. This will be a good addition to the existing County sewer infrastructure since it will be available for use by other developers.

Pricing and buyer options

2-bedroom apartment

Cash Purchase (Full Payment): KSH. 12,500,000,
Installment Purchase: KSH. 13,500,000
Mortgage Purchase (Individually sourced): KSH. 14,500,000

2-bedroom apartment with DSQ

Cash purchase (Full payment): KSH. 13,500,000
Installment Purchase: KSH. 15,500,000
Mortgage Purchase (Individually sourced): KSH. 16,500,000

3-bedroom apartment

Cash Purchase (Full Payment): KSH. 16,500,000,
Installment Purchase: KSH. 17,900,000
Mortgage Purchase (Individually sourced): KSH. 18,900,000.

Arch. KenAlois M. contributed to this article.



Project Team

Client: *Kenya Power Pension Fund (KPPF)*

Architect: *Mutiso Menezes International (MMI)*

Quantity Surveyor: *Karkan Patnership*

Civil/Structural Engineer: *Otieno Odongo and Partners*

Services Engineer: *Norkun Intakes Ltd*

Interior Designer: *Image 360*

Main Contractor: *Landmark Holdings Limited*

Mechanical Sub-Contractor: *Volcanic Plumbing Works*

Electrical Sub-Contractors: *Central Electricals Int.*

Lifts Subcontractors: *Schindler Ltd*

Mechanical Sub-contractors: *Raerex (EA) Ltd.*

Bore hole drilling Sub-contractors: *Sparr Drilling*

James Kimathi

Extraordinary Achievements



Arch. Dr. James Kimathi at his Marbella Karen Place in Nairobi.

Dr. James Kimathi has achieved what any ARCHITECT would probably aim to achieve in life - monumental projects at home and beyond, awards of honour and accomplishment, a loving family and spiritual fulfillment.





The Tanzania Ports Authority Headquarters building in Dar es Salaam, a landmark project by Arch. James Kimathi. (Image: @indaressalaam)

Like other children born upcountry, Arch. James Kimathi had a typical upbringing and start to his educational journey. He was born in 1946 in Meru and attended Githongo Primary School. In 1963, he sat for the Kenya African Preliminary Examination (KAPE) exams. He joined Nkubu Boys High School where he sat for his Cambridge School Certificate in 1967.

Kimathi then joined Medical Training College (MTC) in 1968, in what could have led him in a totally different professional trajectory. He pursued a Diploma in Public Health which was offered by The Royal Society of Health. It was while at MTC that he enrolled for a Building Construction Course which was offered by City and Guilds of London Institute but taught at the Kenya Polytechnic (now Technical University of Kenya). As a Public Health Inspector, a course in Building and Construction, was very useful then, earlier in his career and later on in life when he decided to pursue architecture. This course was going to equip him for a career as a Public Health Inspector since inspecting buildings for hygiene was going to be part and parcel of his anticipated career. At MTC, he won the coveted award of BEST ALL ROUND STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARD in 1971.

Upon leaving MTC, Kimathi joined the University of Nairobi to study Architecture. He was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in Architecture in 1974, and in 1976 a Masters degree in Architecture from the same University.

From 1976-1978, he worked as a Graduate Intern in Ministry of Works and was registered as an Architect in 1978 after which he started his own architectural firm. He is currently the Managing Director, K & M Archplans.

He is a member of the Royal Society of Health and a lead expert on Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Audit.

Architect Kimathi has served in different capacities as a leader in the building industry in Kenya and the region. He served as one of the Directors of the Kenya National Housing Corporation from 1998-1999. He also served as chairman of the Architectural Association of Kenya (Architects Chapter) in 1989 and is currently a Fellow of the Architectural Association of Kenya. He has been an oral examiner of professional exams at the Board of Registration of Architects and Quantity Surveyors in Kenya.

Achievements

Kimathi has been a Lead Consultant in design and project management of architectural projects. He has been able to contribute immensely to East Africa’s architectural landscape through his iconic and sustainable works. His most notable works are seen through the Parliaments of Kenya and Tanzania. In the year 2000, he was awarded the first prize for the design of the new Parliament building in Dodoma, Tanzania. This architectural icon is the epitome of national heritage and sovereignty of the people of Tanzania. This project saw Kimathi embark on a whirlwind global tour of developed countries to carry out benchmarking among the best legislative buildings in the world.

In 2004, he also won the first prize for the modernization of the Kenya National Assembly Debating Chamber. It was necessary to upgrade the Debating chamber in order to accommodate a new seating arrangement, introduce modern technology and incorporate state-of-the-art interiors.



Tanzania Parliament building in Dodoma



Debating chamber of the Kenya Parliament



A render of the Lavinton United Church in Nairobi



The Rock City Shopping Mall in Mwanza, Tanzania

Kimathi has also undertaken modernization of the Meru, Laikipia and Machakos County Assembly Chambers. It is for these reasons that he has become an expert on Parliaments and their Architecture.

Kimathi's experience in high rise commercial projects saw him design the 35-floor award winning Tanzania Ports Authority Headquarters. The high rise building in Dar es Salaam is iconic and defines the city's skyline as one of the tallest buildings in East Africa.

The ultra-modern Rock City Shopping Mall in Mwanza, Tanzania, covering about 50,000m² is another of his iconic buildings. This modern mall has been designed along the global emerging trends of shopping malls. The Mall houses state-of-the-art cinema halls, anchor shops, food courts as well as surface and basement parking.

Many other projects have been designed and implemented under Architect Kimathi. Over time he has developed his own architectural style with which he can be identified. His contribution to the regional

architecture has been captured in three books - *Parliaments and their Architecture* (published by Images of Australia), *The Journey* and *The Sketching Architect* (published by Timely Printers).

Besides giving overall direction to his firm, Architect Kimathi is now largely involved in mentorship of young professionals. His premises, Marbella Karen Park, has hosted such mentorship programs.

On 16th December 2016, Arch. James Kimathi was awarded an honorary Doctor of Arts in Architecture by Meru University of Science & Technology in recognition of his enormous contribution to the built environment. This text is largely a citation from the conferment.

(Images: courtesy)

COVER FEATURE

Maestro Architects

Marking 20 Years with Mega Projects





A casual meeting between two former workmates 20 years ago led to the creation of MAESTRO ARCHITECTS. Determined to succeed on the big stage, the duo, Charles D. Ogeto and Peter Kimathi, eventually weathered the challenges that typically confront most start-ups to make Maestro a respected architectural practice in the country, taking on and delivering mega projects.

We spoke to Managing Director Charles Ogeto (pictured) on Maestro's remarkable journey.

Maestro Architects was established by Architects Charles Ogeto and Peter Kimathi following an impromptu meeting at a restaurant in Kilimani, Nairobi in late 2003. Ogeto had known Kimathi from their days together at Githunguri & Partners, where the former worked before going into private practice. “I was an architect at Githunguri & Partners firm while Kimathi was a student intern”, says Charles. “We became quite close while engaged on several projects at the office”.

As they compared notes and caught up at the then Kula Kona restaurant, the two architects mooted the idea of joining hands to form a practice that would be able to take up major jobs and, as Charles puts it, “join the big boys club.” They thought of the name Maestro, denoting master – as in a building master. The firm was then registered and they set up shop at Mirage Plaza on Mombasa Road, where they still operate from to this day. The rest, as they say, is history.

Today, Maestro Architects can comfortably claim a seat on the apex of the architectural practice in Kenya. With an impressive portfolio of projects spanning across different genre, the firm now has the capacity to undertake projects of any magnitude. Maestro has been busy with projects in both Government and the private sector, undertaking design of offices, institutions, apartments, private residences, warehouses, mixed-use developments, religious buildings and others. Among the most significant projects the firm has handled is the Business Bay Square (BBS) in Eastleigh, Nairobi, reputed to be the largest mall in East and Central Africa. The mall, a US\$ 130 million investment by Ten Commodities Wholesalers Limited, will formally open its first phase in December this year. *(See a detailed feature*

on the BBS Project in an upcoming issue of our sister publication, Construction Review).

But it wasn’t a rosy beginning.

“The first five years was a struggle,” reveals Charles. “We were not known. The jobs were not coming. And we thought if this continued, we would have to close.” After a visit by a seasoned architect David Mutiso of Mutiso Menezes International, Charles says the duo got a lot of encouragement. “This is how you start,” Mutiso told the budding partners.

The two decided to change tact and go for government works. “To work for government, one had to tender and that required a number of documents. We visited the Ministry of Public Works and asked for a sample tender document, which we read like the Bible”.

Armed with some knowledge and the requisite documents, the firm made its tender debut in 2010. “We initially made a lot of mistakes”, remembers Charles, noting that tenders are quite complicated and one can be disqualified on simple grounds such as a missing document or lack of pagination.”

Eventually an opportunity came to tender for a project by the then Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) which is now known as Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). The Institute needed a headquarters building with a media centre and a hotel. Maestro put in their bid. But as fate would have it, the tender was cancelled three times by the PPOA (now the PPRA) over anomalies. When it came to putting in bids for the fourth time, perhaps

“To work for government, one had to tender, and that required a number of documents. We visited the Ministry of Public Works and asked for a sample tender document, which we read like the Bible.” - Charles Ogeto

The founders of Maestro Architects, Charles Ogeto (left) and Peter Kimathi.



aware that Maestro were by now fatigued, the client asked the firm not to give up but to submit yet again.” So we did it grudgingly since, as you know, tendering also has costs. We did it and forgot about it.”

Soon after, a man appeared at Maestro offices asking to see Charles. “It turned out to be the notification of their KIE tender win.” This marked the beginning of Maestro’s engagement with Government. Since then, the firm has handled many assignments and is still working on government projects.

MAJOR PROJECTS

KIE/KICD Headquarters

This was an expansive government project consisting of a Headquarters Complex, a Media Centre and a hotel as well as auxiliary facilities. The contract sum was in excess of Ksh 4.7 billion at the time of award. It was to be implemented in phases. The first phase containing the offices and a few

other facilities is already complete while the others are to be built during the second and third phases. The works commenced in August 2013.

“This project was an eyeopener”, says Charles. “It thrust us onto the big stage and introduced us to the Government way of doing things, including collaboration with different state agencies.”

Kisumu Urban Projects (KUP) – Model Schools

This project, an initiative of the Kisumu County Government in conjunction with the Governments of Kenya and France (AFD), involved the creation of five model schools in rural areas. “We were selecting dilapidated schools and redesigning them to modern learning institutions with all the facilities necessary.” The project began in 2015 and was substantially complete by 2018.

The schools selected for redesign were Angira, Rota, Thim Bonde, Rweya and Got Nyabondo, all in Kisumu



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County. The design involved master planning for classrooms, ECDE, sports facilities, Administration and other facilities. The schools were done without having to demolish the existing facilities, which continued being used as the projects were underway. Demolitions were done only after completion of the new works. In one instance (Rweya), a new temporary school was constructed to hold the students and teachers facilities due to the dilapidated nature of the existing facilities and expansion of the adjacent road.

The schools were contracted to different contractors including Polish Contractors (Thim Bonde), Comacon Contractors (Rweya), Guumba Contractors (Got Nyabondo), Zhonghao Overseas (Angira) and Henan Hansheng (Rota).

Kenyatta National Hospital Staff Sacco - Apartments

This project involved the development of high-end apartments in the Westlands suburb of Nairobi. There were 50 two-bedroom units spread over 6 floors. Maestro's initial advice to the client was to build high-rise apartments as they had foreseen the possibility of such developments coming up in the future in that area. "Unfortunately, the budget was constrained, says Charles. "So we ended up doing a low-rise design, which nonetheless came out very well." However, as predicted, the area eventually began witnessing high-rise buildings such as the GTC Towers that dwarfed the apartments.

The construction was undertaken by Dickways Construction Company, with Central Electrical, Anthopi Mechanical, Unidata Systems, Maryatt + Scott, Hyperteck Electrical and Insta Pumps as sub-contractors.

Kenya Medical Supplies Agency (KEMSA) – Offices and Modern Warehouse

This is an ongoing project that commenced in 2018 and is one of Maestro's largest. The Kenya



The KICD Headquarters – Phase 1 – Office Block



KUP: Angira Primary School



KUP: Rota Primary School



KUP: Rweya Primary School



Kenyatta National Hospital Staff Sacco apartments, Westlands



The KEMSA warehouse under construction



The KEMSA office block under construction



Another view of the KEMSA office block and warehouse

Medical Supplies Agency (KEMSA) is a state agency charged with procuring, storing and distributing drugs and medical supplies for public health programs countrywide.

KEMSA required a state-of-the-art headquarters and modern warehouse to decongest their current premises. Maestro Architects won the competitive open tender. The design required an integrated master plan that featured state-of-the-art facilities that included automation of warehouse activities, climate control (ambient temperatures), fire station and a hazardous materials store, among others.

Construction of the warehouse was facilitated by The Global Fund and Government of Kenya.

The complexity of the project, especially the warehouse requirements, necessitated a benchmarking tour of Europe by the Maestro team. The team visited warehouses in Belgium and Denmark where they gained invaluable insights at global organizations such as Johnson & Johnson and DHL.

Phase 1 of the project (the warehouse) is now essentially complete and the project team is working on the final stages of Phase 2 that consists of the state-of-the-art offices with a helipad for emergency supplies.

KCAA height restrictions capped the development at a maximum of seven stories due to the adjacent Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.

The main contractor is Vaghjiyani Enterprises Limited with Volcanic Plumbing, Master Power Systems, Seven Fourteen, Top Choice Surveillance and Ever Fortunes as the sub-contractors on Mechanical and Electrical works and HVAC.

(NB: Images courtesy of Maestro Architects)



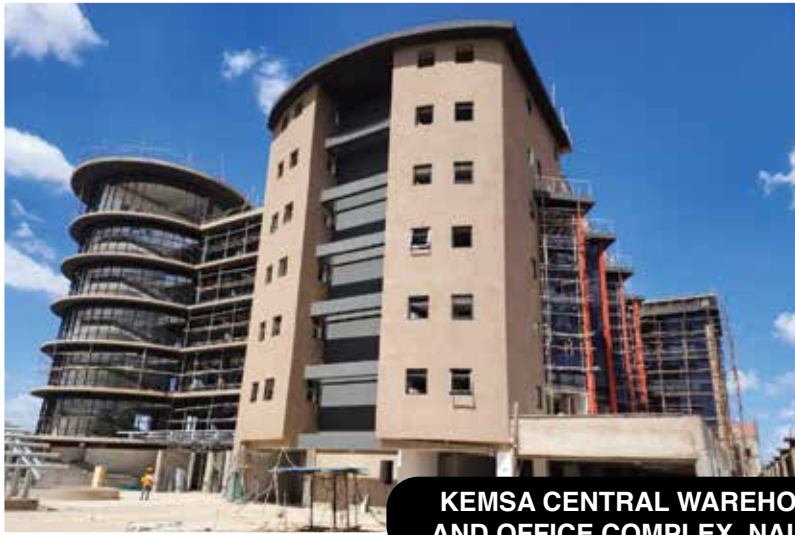
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An architect's impression of the Lapfund Crater City Mall, Nakuru

On the Desk - LAPFUND – Crater City Mall, Nakuru

The LAPFUND project, currently in final design stage, is an extensive development in Nakuru set on 19 acres (where Eveready Battery Factory was situated) and featuring an industrial park, offices, residential houses, entertainment center, commercial mall and a hotel, among others. It will be known as Crater City Mall when complete. This will be one of the most consequential developments in the country and will change the face of Nakuru City.

Maestro Architects were recently prequalified to participate in an architectural competition ratified by BORAQS to design the Kenya Judiciary Academy. Maestro Architects emerged the winners of the design competition and were awarded the contract.

Other Completed or Ongoing Projects

Other projects by Maestro Architects include:

- East African School of Aviation Chapel – Embakasi, Nairobi (completed)
- St Veronica Catholic Church Syokimau, Machakos

County (completed)

- Villa Vista commercial development – Meru County (ongoing)
- The Rolling Chaa, Hotel and Spa Resort – Nyamira County (ongoing)
- The Wild side Active Living, Recreation Centre Mombasa Road, Nairobi. (completed)

The EASA Chapel

The East African School of Aviation (EASA) in Embakasi, Nairobi, has a multinational student population from all over Africa.

The management wanted to accommodate the students in an interdenominational chapel, which could be interchangeably used by all Christian disciplines for worship. “Our response was to draw inspiration from nature, free forms (rocks) and leaves (roof) with a twist to the tower which completes the poetic composition with lighting on the curved surfaces following the Fibonacci series in

size”, states Charles. Modern EPS and steel construction were used due to time constraints and budget.

The main contractor was Lexis International Ltd with Relcon Power Systems Ltd and Denmar Plumbing Contractors as the sub-contractors for MEP works.

St. Veronicah Catholic Church, Syokimau

St Veronicah Catholic Church is a community church under the Catholic Diocese of Machakos. With the ever-growing Catholic population of Syokimau, it was desirous of the church leadership to have a modern church to accommodate all the new members immigrating to the new suburbs.

Maestro Architects led by Architect Charles Ogeto won the Selective Design Competition organized by the church committee. The design was meant to evoke memories of the Noah’s Ark attracting worshippers in twos (couples) and to deviate from the typical church designs. With a capacity of over 3500 pax, it is now a highly desirous location for church weddings and other related activities and has become a permanent landmark in the Syokimau suburbs.

Villa Vista - Meru

Villa Vista is a commercial development in Meru County, on the Meru–Maua Road, opposite Kenya Methodist University (KEMU). It features expansive gardens that span across a local stream which has been incorporated in the design. As a hybrid commercial hub, Villa Vista offers offices, hotel accommodation, shopping facilities, entertainment joints, food courts and kids Fun Park with activities being interlinked via foot bridges and road bridges across the valley to create an amazing location for a one stop family recreation.

The Rolling Chaa

The Rolling Chaa is a cozy boutique hotel nestled on the sloping hills of Kemera location of Nyamira



East African School of Aviation Chapel (entry view)



East African School of Aviation Chapel (rear view)



The Rolling Chaa – view from the swimming pool area



The Wildside Active Living Recreation Centre, Nairobi



Villa Vista (an ongoing commercial development in Meru)



St Veronica Catholic Church, Syokimau



An architect's impression showing how the final Business Bay Square development in Eastleigh will look like. (DLR/Maestro)

County. The name Chaa is coined from the sound of flowing water that emanates from a spring at the tip of the land which flows to join River Ekemera (Gucha).

Rolling Chaa is envisioned to cater for the urban traveler who seeks high quality modern facilities with an exquisite touch – health and spa, gym and pool, fire pits, local guided tours on quad bikes, bicycles and a mix of agricultural activities-picking tomatoes, milking cows, lighting the fire pit, etc.

Maximum accommodation is to be limited to 30 rooms with high-end finishes and luxurious accommodation.

Wildside Active Living

The Wildside Active Living is a sports-oriented community recreation center to get the youth out of the house and away from gadgets to actively engage in sports. It features football turfs, swimming pool, table tennis, scrabble, chess, pool games, etc. It is designed for active engagement and refreshments. The area, Syokimau, Mombasa Road section, is rapidly developing with high-rise apartments with no social or sports amenities for families to relax and uplift youth spirits. The Wildside Active Living therefore provides a suitable environment and facilities for physical and mental reinvigoration as visitors watch animals at the adjacent Nairobi National Park with a magnificent view of Ngong Hills silhouette.

WHAT NEXT FOR MAESTRO ARCHITECTS?

As Maestro Architects celebrate 20 years of impacting the built environment in Kenya and the East African region, the future indeed looks bright. As a lean but a highly dynamic team, the Practice has been able to accomplish in a few years what many others take much longer to build. A clear definition of roles is critical for the office directors and staff and this is very evident at Maestro.

According to Charles, sustainable cities are the future of architecture and architects must embrace sustainability and green architecture by continuously improving their skills.

Maestro Architects must chart the course that will guide the business in the days ahead. According to Charles, the future is likely to take the shape of collaborations and joint ventures. And rather than taking on supervision works directly, Maestro envisages a situation where they appoint teams including other architects to deliver a project. “The role of Maestro would be design and contract management”, says Charles.

“Maestro offices would be a coordinating hub for these operations which will encourage young architects to join in the collaboration”, he concludes.



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Cracking the Building Code *in Western Kenya*

There has been misconception that in order to attain certain standards when constructing in areas outside Nairobi, one has to contract the well-established contractors based in the capital. But this myth is constantly debunked by firms such as Kisumu-based **AHZURIAH CONSTRUCTION LIMITED**, a young contractor with a proven record of quality delivery.



Mr Duncan Simani, Managing Director, Ahzuriah Construction Company Limited



Some recent projects undertaken by Ahzuriah Construction Limited.

Ahzuriah Construction Company Limited is a testament to the vision and determination of Engineer Duncan Simani, who founded the firm in 2019.

Driven by a desire to offer classy, outstanding, luxurious, and modern construction services to the western part of Kenya, which had been lacking adequate construction expertise, Engineer Duncan Simani set out to establish a company that would prioritise trust, integrity, and client satisfaction above all else. This article delves into the journey and accomplishments of Ahzuriah Construction Company Limited, highlighting its growth, commitment to quality, and its aspiration to become a leading construction company in Kenya and beyond.

Founding Philosophy and Growth

Ahzuriah Construction began its journey in 2019 as an Interior design contractor. Over the years, the company has faced numerous challenges, yet each obstacle has been an opportunity to accumulate skills, know-how, and valuable experience in design and build solutions, project management, and engineering works. Today, Ahzuriah Construction proudly serves as a main contractor for projects of various sizes, specializing in domestic,

industrial, and commercial projects. The company also provides design inputs and engineering solutions to add value for its clients.

The motivation to establish Ahzuriah Construction arose from Engineer Duncan Simani's previous experience running 'Simani Properties Ltd,' a real estate firm based in Kisii and Kisumu. The disappointment faced by his clients due to unreliable architects and contractors led to the decision to create a construction company that would prioritize quality, communication, and timely execution of projects.

Core Values and Client-Centric Approach

Ahzuriah Construction's core values revolve around providing clients with an "I am assured" experience when they entrust the company to execute their projects. This assurance comes from clear communication, meticulous planning, and a commitment to meeting the client's objectives. The company's project management and execution philosophy involve creating detailed schedules and resource plans, closely tracking project progress, and maintaining strict supervision to ensure the highest quality of work. The ultimate goal is to complete and commission projects on time, leaving clients satisfied and confident in their investment.



Left: celebrating teamwork at Ahzuriah. Right: interiors of a complete project

One of the key aspects that set Ahzuriah Construction apart is the emphasis on uniqueness and creativity in every project. By being involved from project inception, the company can deliver distinctive and innovative solutions tailored to the client's needs, ensuring that no two projects look alike.

The Simani Group of Companies

Ahzuriah Construction Company Limited is a subsidiary of the esteemed Simani Group of Companies, founded in 2016. The Simani Group's journey began with Simani Property Management Ltd in 2016, followed by Simani Real Estate Co. in 2018, and finally, Ahzuriah Construction Company Limited in 2019. While Simani Real Estate provides comprehensive real estate services, Ahzuriah Construction specializes in a wide range of construction services, including interior decorations, architectural works, general construction, property renovations, and civil engineering works.

People and Training

The backbone of Ahzuriah Construction's success lies in its dedicated team. Led by a working director with over ten years of experience in the building industry, the company's management consists of various teams, including commercial procurement, project management, admin/

finance, planning and design, and project operations. Regular meetings allow for feedback gathering, adaptation to changing business environments, and continuous improvement of work processes.

The company's commitment to its employees' growth and development is evident through its comprehensive training program. Employees receive the necessary technical and management skills training, ensuring they execute their duties with confidence and competence.

Market Assessment and Expansion

The construction market in Kisumu has witnessed significant growth since 2020, fueled by improved road networks and the emergence of real estate companies. Ahzuriah Construction has played an essential role in this expansion, contributing its expertise to projects not only in western Kenya but also in neighbouring countries such as Rwanda, Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and other parts of Kenya.

One challenge faced by the construction industry in the region is the scarcity of certain building materials, especially high-end finishing materials. Nonetheless, Ahzuriah Construction overcomes these obstacles by



The Ahzuriah team on site

sourcing materials from various locations, including Nairobi, Dubai, and Italy, ensuring that the quality of their projects remains top-notch.

Future Aspirations

Looking ahead, Ahzuriah Construction Company Limited envisions becoming the leading construction company in Kenya, revolutionizing the industry by incorporating cutting-edge technology in building smart cities across Africa and beyond. The company's core principles of integrity, ambition, and innovation drive them to take small yet determined steps towards these grand aspirations.

Conclusion

Ahzuriah Construction Company Limited stands as a beacon of trust and reliability in the Western Kenya construction industry, offering top-notch services that exceed client expectations. Through its commitment to uniqueness, excellence, and creativity, the company has garnered praise and admiration from its clients, with positive reviews and 5-star rating on google. With a vision to lead the construction landscape in Kenya and beyond, Ahzuriah Construction continues to stride forward, building dreams and transforming communities with integrity and innovation.

The construction market in Kisumu has witnessed significant growth since 2020, fueled by improved road networks and the emergence of real estate companies. Ahzuriah Construction has played an essential role in this expansion, contributing its expertise to projects not only in western Kenya but also in neighbouring countries.

Project Cost Overrun

How to avoid the trap

Avoiding construction project cost overruns requires careful planning, monitoring, and management throughout the project's lifecycle. Here are some key strategies to help you prevent cost overruns.

Detailed Project Planning

- Develop a comprehensive project plan that outlines all project requirements, scope, and objectives.
- Conduct thorough feasibility studies and site assessments before starting the project to identify potential risks and challenges.

Accurate Cost Estimation

- Create accurate cost estimates for all aspects of the project, including materials, labour, equipment, permits, and contingency funds.
- Consider inflation and market fluctuations when estimating costs.

Robust Risk Management

- Identify and assess potential risks to the project, such as weather conditions, unforeseen site conditions, or regulatory changes.
- Develop risk mitigation plans and allocate contingency funds to address unexpected issues.

Clear Scope Definition

- Clearly define the project scope and ensure that all stakeholders have a shared understanding of what is included in the project.

Competent Project Team

- Hire experienced professionals, including architects, engineers, contractors, and project managers, who

have a track record of successful project delivery.

Effective Communication

- Maintain open and transparent communication among all project stakeholders to address issues promptly.
- Establish a change control process to evaluate and approve any changes to the project scope or budget.

Regular Monitoring and Reporting

- Implement a robust project management system to track progress and costs regularly.
- Use Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and reporting tools to identify cost variances and deviations from the project plan.

Quality Control

- Ensure that quality standards are maintained throughout the construction process to avoid rework and additional costs.

Contingency Planning

- Have a well-defined contingency plan in place to address unexpected issues without causing significant budget overruns.

By implementing these strategies and maintaining a proactive approach to project management, you can significantly reduce the risk of cost overruns in your construction projects.

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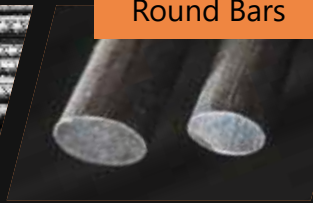
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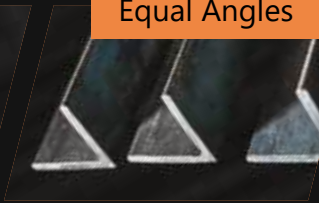
TMT Bars



Round Bars



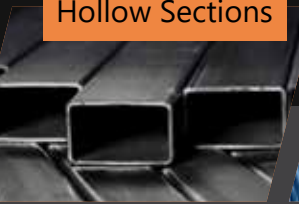
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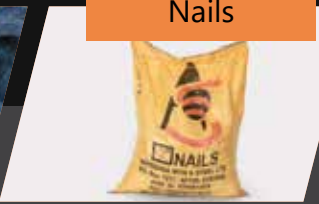
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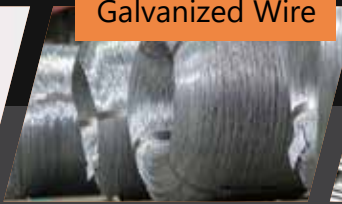
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