

first two qualified architects to graduate from what is now Nairobi University, and in 1963 he won the competition organised by the Ministry of Works and the Institute of Architects for Kenya's Uhuru decorations.

His first important architectural work, however, was as Graham McCulloch's assistant in the designing of the original lodge at Keekorok, and adding a couple of extensions to Tree-tops.

He rejoined Graham McCulloch when he returned to Kenya after spending two years studying Town Planning at Liverpool. Now Braz has been in business on his own for exactly four years this month, and he has certainly made a tremendous impact in his speciality — low-income housing.

His own favourite scheme is Kibera New Village on the outskirts of Nairobi, which he enthusiastically describes as having "perhaps the most advanced housing of its type for this part of the world." Because "it accepts housing as a problem. It accepts the fact that there isn't enough money to build individual housing, and that no amount of policy will prevent sub-letting, so you design to sub-let".

"You allow a man to develop the scale and size of his house according to his requirements."

Braz's most recent venture is the planning of a whole project for the Commonwealth

Development Corporation, comprising a complete town of 5,000 dwellings situated between Nairobi River and Jogoo Road. He considers it "quite an interesting Town Plan" because it provides lower-middle class mortgage housing with all the fringe benefits of public open space, children's playgrounds, convenient bus-stops, and so on. Different architects will be doing different chunks and each will provide different designs. We have done the broad planning strategy. The contractors will be on the site in the next few weeks."

It would be a terrible omission in anything written about Braz Menezes if no mention were made of the Lamu Coffee Shop attached to the Sunflower Health Food Restaurant in Bruce House, Nairobi. This delightful little rendezvous was the first to impart the idea that pastels and plastic are not a necessary accompaniment to an inexpensive coffee session, and the upshot is that the Lamu is equally popular with locals and tourists alike.

Braz feels that Nairobi is now large enough to support more interesting places in which to eat and drink, and that whilst for obvious reasons city hotels have to retain a certain amount of international character, there is more scope for original design in lodge accommodation on a small scale.

He is certainly in the vanguard of those who are trying hard to get this message across.