

New Kareedouw Public Library

Kareedouw, Eastern Cape

THE WORKPLACE ARCHITECTS

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Client: Department of Roads and Public Works, Eastern Cape

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Quantity Surveyor: Thabo Senyolo and Partners

Electrical Engineer: Eyethu Consulting Engineers

Art Consultant: The Trinity Session

Health and Safety: Occumed [Claire Deacon & Assoc.]

Contractor: Amber Peak Trading, CLNL Construction

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Text: Bryan Wintermeyer

33°57'13.2"S

24°17'32.4"E

The new public library in Kareedouw in the Eastern Cape forms part of a precinct of municipal buildings. Situated along Keet Street in the slightly elevated southern part of the town, it looks northwards with dramatic views of the Langkloof Mountains.

The building consists of two parts: a new public library component with accompanying administrative and service areas, and a small public conference component with ablutions. These components are linked by an external space that becomes the organiser of circulation and main access to the facility.

The building is positioned to form a defined public space between the existing municipal buildings and the new library. Originally it was a loose arrangement of municipal buildings, parking, a gravel road, a group of trees and a small children's play area. The new facility better defines the north and east side of the public space by formalising the approach road and providing a small parking area.

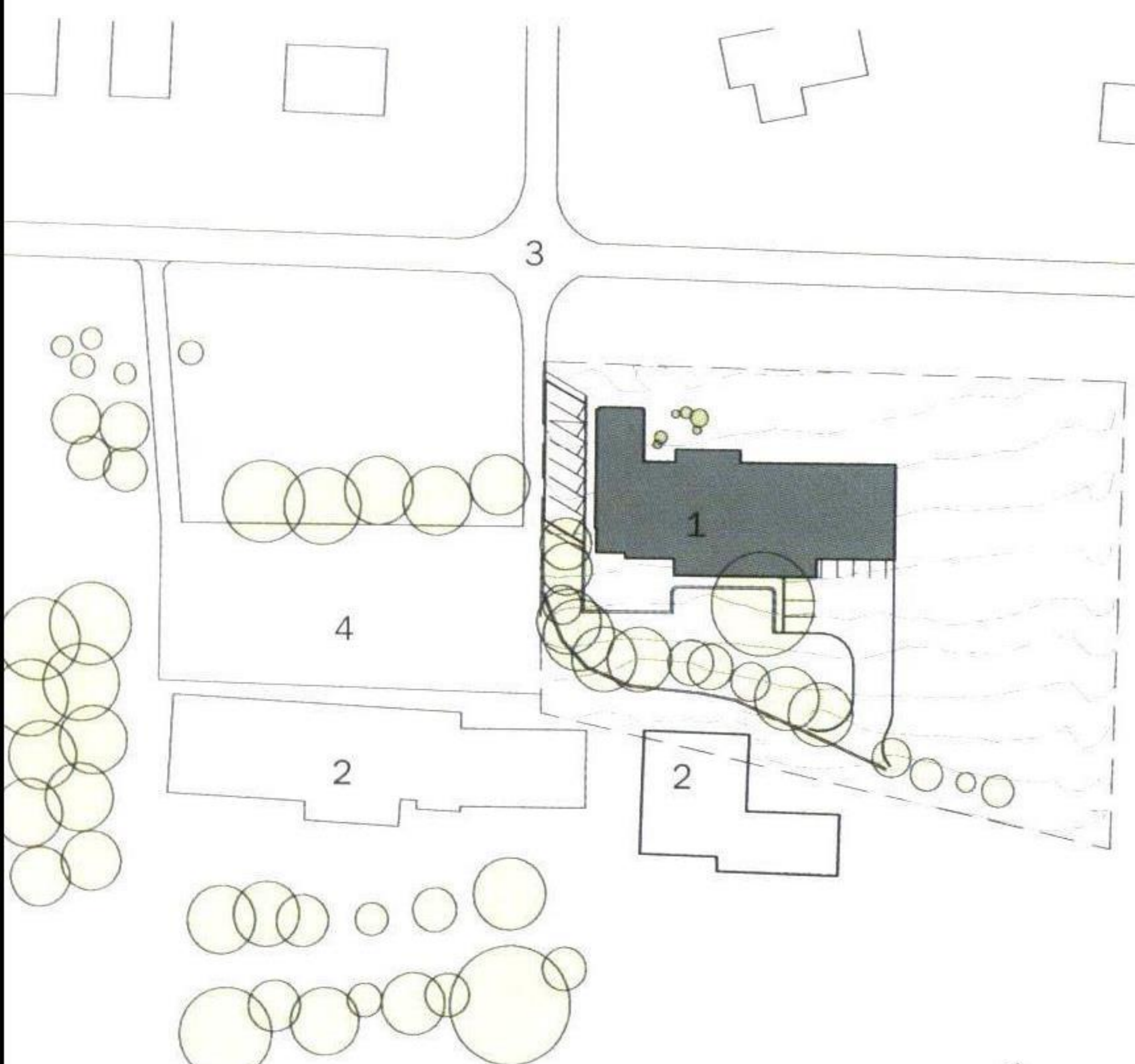
The treed public space, the east/west orientation of the building and the south entrance to the new library are a direct and appropriate response to the climate [very hot in summer and cold in winter] and the prevailing winds [to allow for cooling winds through the covered external space in summer]. The intention was to create a shaded and inviting arrival space that is related to the rest of the municipal precinct.

The tectonic of the building is an expressed steel structure with brick infill panels. The programme orientates itself linearly east/west and is held together by a large single roof. This is manipulated to form high volumes over the main library area, volume [and a mezzanine work area] over the entrance, and lower volumes over more service-related functions like offices and public toilets. The main library is the primary space, with south-facing clerestory windows contributing to the use of controlled natural light. The interior is scaled from the large face-brick back wall and the clerestory windows to low and intimate study nooks and the children's section to the north.

The material palette is kept to a minimum with the expressed steel frame and red brick [with flush red mortar joints] taking prominence. Within this rugged framework, lighter and finer materials, such as timber-slatted acoustic ceilings, are incorporated. A public art programme was undertaken with local school children and these 'personalisations' are expressed in various forms in the building. This process also allowed for the naming of the facility after a local hero, Mcebisi Michael Msizi.

It is anticipated that this long overdue provision of facilities will empower a poor rural community, strengthen the 'civicness' of the municipal precinct, and become a popular place of study and leisure.

- 1 New public library
- 2 Existing municipal offices
- 3 Entrance to municipal precinct
- 4 Parking



Site plan

