



HAVANA INTERNATIONAL CHARRETTE

The 12th Havana International Charrette will focus on El Vedado and will build on the previous work developed by INTBAU Cuba since 2007. International developers, businessmen, architects, planners, artists and people in general are invited to join Cuban experts and local communities for a one-week Charrette from March 15-18, 2017 **to develop proposals for the regeneration and development of El Vedado district and its waterfront area.**

The Charrette will fit both educational and professional purposes and will give participants an introduction to the history of Havana's cultural heritage through close contact with its traditions, architecture and urbanism while focusing on the garden city of El Vedado and its waterfront area. The Charrette seeks the participation of individuals who share a respectful attitude to new interventions in historical contexts, and who value the creation of places where humans can live in, work in and enjoy.

Project Objectives

- **To test and evaluate the ideas of "A Master Plan for 21st Century Havana" and their feasibility and implementation based on the city's current needs**
- Elaborate ideas for the development of the waterfront sectors of El Vedado and urban infill
- Promote an integrated vision between the natural condition and the built environment
- Promote and highlight the importance of a long-term vision for the garden city of El Vedado that preserves its fabric and character and also grants social and cultural diversity
- Evaluate the benefits of the transformation of El Vedado in economic and urban terms to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants
- Propose the increase of urban open space, housing and commerce along the waterfront and evaluate their impact at city level
- Reshape the civic and urban landscape of El Vedado and surrounding neighbourhoods by increasing the green areas
- Interact with local experts about the building environment and business possibilities in Cuba

2017 Havana International Charrette Program. March 19th - 24th, 2017

Led by Professor Julio Cesar Perez Hernandez

Site of the 12th Havana International Charrette: El Vedado Waterfront.

Venue: Hotel Ambos Mundos, Old Havana.

WEDNESDAY 15 March, 2017. Hotel Ambos Mundos, Mercaderes St. & Obispo. Old Havana
Afternoon Session. 2.00-5.30 pm. Introduction. Lectures and presentations. Work in teams

THURSDAY 16 March, 2017. Hotel Ambos Mundos, Mercaderes St. & Obispo. Old Havana
Morning Session. 9.00-12.00 pm. Studio Work. Preliminary ideas and proposals.

12.00-1.30 pm Lunch on your own

Afternoon Session. 1.30-5.30 pm. Studio work. Presentation of preliminary ideas.

FRIDAY 17 March, 2017. Hotel Ambos Mundos, Mercaderes St. & Obispo. Old Havana

Morning Session. 9.00-12.00 pm. Studio Work.

12.00- 1.30 pm Lunch on your own

Afternoon Session. 1.30-5.30 pm. Studio work Studio work. Review and discussion of preliminary ideas.
Adjustment of team work according to training and affinity

SATURDAY 18 March, 2017. Introduction: Professor Julio César Pérez

Morning Session. 9.00-12.00 pm. Final presentation and Conclusions.

Presentation: All Team members. Public Discussion

Final Remarks: Professor Julio César Pérez Hernandez

The registration fee for international participants is \$1,250.00 USD or its equivalent in other currencies, such as Euros, British (Sterling) Pounds, etc. This is a mandatory registration fee that helps cover expenses during the Charrette. **This fee only covers the admission to the Charrette.**

Please, contact Professor Julio Cesar Perez Hernandez at jcaesar2010@gmail.com

What is a Charrette? An especially intense workshop where people meet and work.
A Charrette is an intensive planning session where citizens, designers and others collaborate on a vision for development. it provides a forum for ideas and offers the unique advantage of giving immediate feedback to the designers. More importantly, it allows everyone who participates to be a mutual author of the plan through its personal contribution, ideas and work as part of a team. The Charrette is designed for developers, investors, architects, planners and anyone with an interest in understanding business in Cuba its history, traditions and culture.

Travel. This is a high level educational trip. Once registered, every participant will receive an official Letter of Invitation from INTBAU London.

Visas. Every international participant will need a visa to visit Cuba. INTBAU will provide an official Letter of Invitation that will allow all participants to get the visa to travel to Cuba legally.

Airfare. All participants are responsible for obtaining their visas and airfare from the place they live to Havana and back. This means that all participants will have to arrange their own trip to Havana and back to their original destination.

Accommodation. All participants are responsible for their accommodation. We can, on request, help you arrange your accommodation and breakfast in a Casa Particular (rooms in private houses and apartments) by putting you in touch with the owners directly. The cost is \$60.00 per night per room. Most of our participants at the previous Charrettes chose this option, although some preferred to arrange their own accommodation in international hotels. We can make some suggestions if you prefer hotel accommodation.

Our previous Charrettes have brought together participants from Argentina, Australia, Colombia, Cuba, UK, USA, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Slovakia, Mexico among other countries.

The Organizers

This Charrette is organized by INTBAU Cuba who has successfully organized and led similar events since 2007.

Participating Cuban Experts

- Prof. Arch. & Urban Planner Julio C. Pérez, CEU & INTBAU Cuba President. UNEAC,
- Architect & Urban Planner Joel Estevez, CEU, INTBAU
- Architect & Urban Planner Alexis de La Cruz, CEU, INTBAU
- Architect Jorge Araguez, CEU, INTBAU
- Architect & Urban Planner Esteban Martinez, CEU, INTBAU, UNEAC

Cuban Supporting Organizations

- Office of The Historian of the City of Havana, OHCH
- National Guild of Artists and Writers of Cuba, UNEAC
- National Guild of Architects and Engineers of Cuba, UNAICC

Participating International Experts

- Architect Ricardo Alvarez-Diaz, AIA, NCARB, CAAPPR – ALDIVI

As usual, the Charrette will be preceded by an International Study Tour led and guided by Cuban Professor Julio Cesar Perez Hernandez, whose schedule is available upon request.

The Charrette Site. El Vedado

Introduction

The 19th Century marked the birth of modern planning in Cuba as Havana enjoyed prosperity and splendor based upon a steady economic growth that originated in the second half of the previous century. This helped to insert Cuba into the world economy and allowed Havana to adapt to multiple changes.

Progressive institutions, such as the influential Economic Society, favored an ambience of openness to science, technology and management that helped to insert Cuba into the world economy and allowed Havana to adapt to multiple changes. The same institution put Cuba on the map with the introduction of the railroad in 1837, before Spain.

Culture reached broader sectors of the society and fostered the gradual consolidation of a strong sense of identity. In architecture, Neoclassicism was embraced as the new style and expressed an aspiration to order, rationality and perfection.

Along the first half of the 19th Century, the city underwent important transformations as the existing colonial urbanism was overtaken in terms of urban expansion and continuity, as well as strategic needs. Colonel-engineer Antonio María de la Torre's *Plan de Ensanche* for Havana (1817-1819), was the first of its kind in Hispanic America. He used the existing roads that connected the old town with the hinterland to guide the expansion of the city beyond the walls in an orderly manner. A new streetscape derived from the arcaded streets —the so-called *Calzadas*— and their prominence established commercial arteries that became a trademark for Havana.



Map of Havana with Calzadas. Caesar Studio Archives

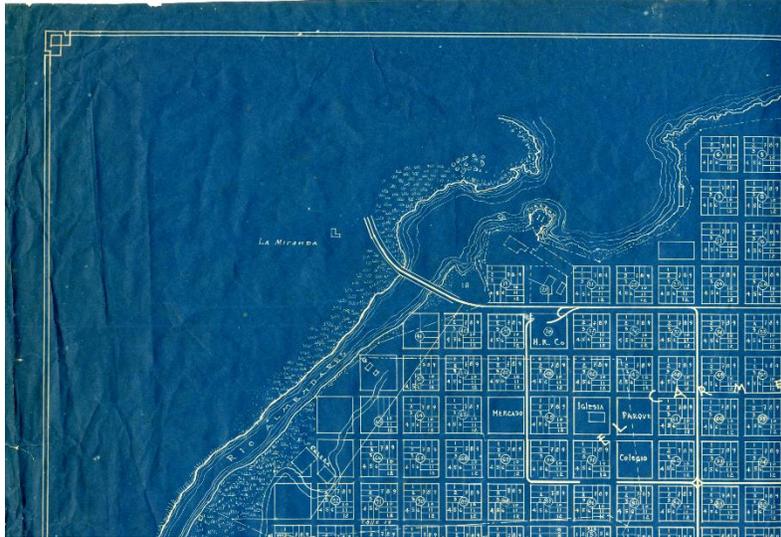
Along one of them, the *Calzada del Cerro*, the affluent bourgeoisie built a series of free-standing Neoclassical villas, called *quintas*, with gardens and porches that would somehow influence El Vedado's streetscapes.

Other major urban transformations —in terms of scale and design— took place during governor Miguel Tacón's term (1834-1838) giving Havana a new monumental image, which reached its peak in The Walls district, or The Ring of Havana, laid out by Juan Bautista Orduña in 1865.

El Vedado

By 1565 all sort of transit was forbidden in the area called Mount Vedado where the only existing building was a colonial fortress named *Santa Dorotea de la Luna de La Chorrera*, built by Italian Engineer Bautista Antonelli as part of Havana's defensive system around 1645 near the Almendares River, then named La Chorrera River, and later Almendares River, whose mouth was the city's second settlement.

The westernmost farm land along the river was surveyed by Spanish engineer Luis Yboleón Bosque, who drafted a plan for a new neighborhood named El Carmelo in 1859 that comprised 105 blocks, and another one named El Vedado, initially with 29 blocks, in 1860.



Blueprint of Plan 2999-Sheet106. National Archive. Caesar Studio Archives

The latter had an extension consisting of 100 blocks by Alberto de Campo and Jose de Ocampo in 1877 and 1878 and the rest of the adjacent land was subsequently subdivided into several neighborhoods, the fusion of all together becoming *El Vedado*, which means forbidden in Spanish.

The plan laid out by Yboleon emphasized order, with a regular grid defined by tree-lined avenues along which the lots were laid out in square blocks measuring 100 m aside. The building's frontage featured a setback for private gardens and a porch, allowing for the primary separation between the public and the private realm.

This, ensured privacy and created a very distinct streetscape that would be signed by the hierarchy of the street network where two major green axes stand out —Paseo or Avenue of the Mayors and Avenue of The Presidents or G Street— because of their section and urban design features as linear parks.

Public space was also provided by entire blocks left unbuilt and devoted to parks and gardens within the grid. Other blocks were devoted to markets and schools.



Map of El Vedado. Drawing by Professor Julio Cesar Perez Hernandez @ Caesar Studio Archives

El Vedado reached its maximum splendor along the first decades of the 20th Century when the international price of sugar cane peaked and beautiful eclectic mansions were built and continued to develop along the next decades.

The neighborhood's image and environment also benefited from the development of the Malecón, started by US engineers Mead and Whitney in 1901, that reshaped Havana's waterfront and became an iconic seaside boulevard showing Havana's capacity to reaffirm its *Genius Loci*.

Besides the afore mentioned colonial fortress, there are many other landmarks that stand out within El Vedado such as the Christopher Columbus Necropolis (1871-1886), the University of Havana (1905-1940) and the Prince's Castle (1767-1779).

Furthermore, Havana's administrative center is located to the southernmost part of the district, considered the geographic center of the capital by world famous local and international architects and chosen for the building of the Republic's Square in the 1950s, an unfinished project lacking an appropriate scale and urban design features whose redesign is still pending today (1).



Google image



Proposal



Proposal

The Almendares River, on the West of El Vedado, is Havana's most important river and it was the city's second settlement before the Spanish finally settled by the harbor and it is one of the city's most important environmental assets. Its banks are worth of preserving and call for a sensitive project (2).

In El Vedado, outstanding examples of modern architecture coexist with Eclectic style buildings, Art Déco style and Streamline Moderne. However, the harmonious scale of the district was altered and disrupted by the presence of tall buildings erected in the 1950s. Some of them, like the FOCSA building (1954-1956) and the Havana Hilton Hotel (1958), are too massive and overwhelming in urban terms. They even violated the existing urban codes regarding floor area ratio and free lot coverage. Currently, some coastal areas within the district are affected by flooding.

(1) There's a proposal for this area in "A Master Plan for 21st Century Havana"

(2) See proposal for this area in "A Master Plan for 21st Century Havana"

Julio Cesar Perez Hernandez, January 2017