

SAH CUBA STUDY TOUR

December 29, 2012 - January 11, 2013

Tour Leader: Belmont Freeman

The Society of Architectural Historians is pleased to offer to its members an opportunity to travel to Cuba on a study tour that promises a rich and stimulating immersion in the architecture, urbanism, culture and landscape of Cuba. Taking advantage of the US Treasury Department's newly-liberalized Cuba travel policies, SAH has designed an educational travel program that satisfies the Department's criteria for "people-to-people" cultural exchange. Tour participants, for the first time since the travel ban imposed nine years ago, will be able to experience the architectural and natural wonders of the island, astonishingly well preserved by the country's 50-year resistance to, and isolation from, globalized development pressures and cultural homogenization. At the same time we will witness the effects, good and bad, of Cuba's growing tourism industry - certain to alter the character of the place profoundly once the inevitable lifting of the US embargo allows Americans to join the rest of the world in freely visiting the island. This is a good moment to visit Cuba.

Compared to SAH's past tours to Cuba (the last in 2003), the present tour is significantly more ambitious in scope, covering, in thirteen days, territory from the province of Artemisa in the west to Oriente in the east. The tour group will convene in Miami [participants are to arrange their own travel to Miami] for a welcome reception and an introductory lecture on Cuban geography, history and architecture. The next morning we board a charter flight for the 50-minute hop to Havana - so close yet a world apart. Our first week in Cuba will concentrate on Havana and environs, examining the colonial architecture of the old city, the eclectic architecture that transformed the city in the early days of the Republic, early and mid-century modernism, and the radical design experiments of the post-revolution period. In Havana our headquarters will be the grand and historic Hotel Nacional. The second week will take us on an overland journey (in a luxury motor coach) through a string of historic cities - and beautiful countryside - ending up in Santiago de Cuba, Cuba's #2 city and very Caribbean counterpart to cosmopolitan Havana. Hotels along the way have been chosen for their location, ambiance, architectural character and variety. From Santiago we will fly directly back to Miami, meaning that all internal travel in Cuba will be by land.

This is a tour highly customized to suit the interests of SAH members, taking us to sites not found in the guide books and including many not ordinarily open to the public. The tour will be led by Belmont Freeman, FAIA, an architect and scholar of Cuban descent whose extensive travel, research, writing and lecturing have established him as a leading expert on the architecture of Cuba. Along the way we will meet with Cuban architects and historians, to engage meaningful dialog on topics of architecture, urban policy and preservation, adding depth to participants' appreciation of Cuba. Friendly Planet Travel, an agency licensed to coordinate travel to and within Cuba and with many years of experience operating on the island, is managing the logistics of the tour to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, a smooth, safe and comfortable journey.

We look forward to seeing you in Havana.

Day 0 (Saturday 12/29)

Tour participants are to travel independently to Miami. We will convene on Saturday evening at an airport hotel for drinks, dinner and an introductory lecture by our tour leader, Belmont Freeman, on the history of Cuba and its architecture.

Day 1 (Sunday 12/30): Havana: Arrival and Orientation

Early morning check-in for our charter flight. Arrive around midday in Havana, where we will be met by our local tour operators for an introductory bus tour of the city, with visits to key sites including:

Plaza de la Revolución; formerly Plaza de la Republica, the civic center planned in the 1920s and developed through the 1950s, with prominent monuments of modern architecture.

*The mid-20C residential district of Miramar, with a stop to see the Havana City model
Drive along the Malecón, Havana's seaside boulevard, through Central Havana to La Habana Vieja.
The fortresses of El Morro (1589-1630) and La Cabaña (1763-1767), which for centuries have guarded
Havana's primary strategic and economic asset, its deep-water harbor.*

Check into the historic Hotel Nacional (McKim, Mead and White, 1930), the most famous grand hotel in the Caribbean. Beautifully situated on the ocean in El Vedado (the elite neighborhood developed outside of the old city at the turn of the 20th Century) the Nacional will be our home base for the first half of our stay in Cuba.

Day 2 (Monday 12/31): Colonial Havana

Full-day walking tour of Old Havana, the original settlement of the city dating from the mid-16C. *La Habana Vieja* is the largest intact colonial city in the Caribbean, featuring beautiful plazas and splendid 17th and 18th century palaces, churches, monasteries and civic buildings, but it also houses superior architecture from the 19th and 20th centuries, including the imposing early 20C banking halls that made Havana's financial district the "Wall Street of the Caribbean." A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Old Havana has in recent years undergone impressive, and on-going, restoration under the directorship of the Office of the City Historian. Some highlights:

Plaza de Armas, established in the 1580s; formerly a military parade ground and the administrative center of the colony and now, after 19C romantic landscaping, a leafy park surrounded by some of Havana's most historic structures

Palacio de los Capitanes Generales (1776-1799); former governors' palace and now the Museo de La Ciudad de La Habana.

Castillo Real de la Fuerza (1558-1577), one of the earliest of the city's fortifications

Plaza de la Catedral; Catedral de La Habana (1748-1777)

Plaza San Francisco; Convento de San Francisco de Asis (1738)

Plaza Vieja, the oldest extant plaza in the city; since the mid 16C a market square surrounded by noble buildings, recently restored.

Convento de Santa Clara (1639-19C, now the home of the National Center for Conservation, Restoration and Museology, CENCREM)

Palacio Aldama (Manuel José Carrerá, 1844); an austere neoclassical structure built outside of the old city walls, is the largest private palace in Havana.

New Year's Eve dinner and festivities at the Hotel Nacional

Day 3 (Tuesday 01/01): Eclecticism and Art Deco

Combined bus and walking tour of Las Murallas, Centro Habana and El Vedado, the neighborhoods developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in concentric rings beyond the walls of the old city. New Year's Day is a holiday, so most public buildings will be closed. Highlights include:

Paseo del Prado; a gracious boulevard initially laid out in the late 18C and redesigned in 1929 by the French landscape designer Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier; lined by a remarkable collection of eclectic houses, hotels and civic buildings

Presidential Palace (Paul Belau, 1920)

Capitolio Nacional (Raul Otero, Govantes y Cabarroca, et al, 1929); modeled after the US Capitol but with more lavish interiors (unfortunately closed for restoration.)

Centro Gallego (Paul Belau, 1915); formerly a social club for Cubans of Galician descent, now houses the magnificent Art Nouveau flavored Gran Teatro de la Habana.

Centro Asturiano (Manuel del Busto, 1918); built for Cubans of Asturian descent and now the Museo de Bellas Artes

Central Railway Station (Kenneth Murchison, 1912)

Bacardi Building (Esteban Rodríguez Castells, Rafael Fernández Ruenes y Jose Menéndez Mendez, 1930; the best of Havana Art Deco

Mansions of El Vedado, built during the boom years of 1900-1929 by some of the most prominent architects of the day, including Govantes y Cabarrocas, Morales y Matas and Carrere and Hastings. The former Barró residence (Govantes y Cabarrocas, 1927), now Casa de Amistad, features Art Deco interiors by Rene Lalique and gardens by J.F.C. Forestier.

Day 4 (Wednesday 01/02): Matanzas, Varadero, and Cárdenas)

Day trip to the east to visit the historic sugar ports of Matanzas and Cárdenas, and the fabled Varadero beach resort with notable architecture from the 1920s through the 1970s. Sights will include:

Habana del Este; on the way out of Havana, a drive-through of the 1500-unit urbanization, one of the most significant developments of the post-revolution period (Hugo D'Acosta, Mercedes Álvarez, Ana Vega, Mario González, et al., 1959-1962)

Matanzas; known as the "City of Bridges" for its collection of early engineering works that support the river, railroad and harbor traffic, all in service of the sugar industry. Matanzas boasts a 1900 neoclassical police station, a miraculously intact 19C pharmacy, and blocks of neoclassical houses that attest to the city's former wealth.

Cárdenas; like Matanzas, a once-prosperous sugar town founded in 1928 and originally populated by refugees fleeing the revolution in Haiti. The town's most famous monument is the mid-19C Molokoff market, a vast cast iron structure with Islamic style domes.

Varadero, before the revolution, the legendary playground for wealthy Cubans and Americans and now a resort jammed with Europeans and Canadians. Important buildings include the Hotel Internacional Varadero (1954, now threatened), the Dupont Mansion "Xanadu" (Govantes y Cabarrocas, 1926), and the Casa de los Cosmonautas (Antonio Quintana, 1972), built as an R&R retreat for Soviet space travelers.

Day 5 (Thursday 01.03): Havana Modernism

All-day tour around El Vedado and the western suburbs, accompanied by the noted architect and historian Eduardo Luis Rodríguez. We will start the day on foot from the hotel, with a walk along La Rampa, the principal commercial and cultural corridor of El Vedado, and stops at:

College of Architects (Fernando de Zárrega y Mario Esquiróz, 1944-47)

Seguro Médico building (Antonio Quintana, 1956-58) an innovative mixed used building and the finest modernist tower in Havana, with lobby murals by Wifredo Lam

Pabellón Cuba (Juan Campos, 1963), a Miesian post-revolution exhibition hall

Hotel Habana Libre (Welton Becket and Associates, 1958); the former Havana Hilton, with an exterior mosaic mural by Amelia Pelaez

Coppelia (Mario Girona, 1966), the popular ice cream parlor composed of flying saucer pods

Hebrew Community Center (Aguiles Capablanca, 1953)*

By bus we will make a circuit through the western extensions of the city that were developed during the 1930s through the 1950s. Important Cuban modernists such as Mario Románach, Max Borges-Recio, Frank Martínez, Manuel Gutiérrez and Ricardo Porro built their careers designing homes for affluent Cubans in the neighborhoods of Nuevo Vedado, Miramar, Siboney and Playa. We will try to arrange access to the interiors of some of these houses, most of which are privately occupied. Important buildings where interior visits are definitely planned include:

Club Nautico (Max Borges, 1953); a beach club and a tour-de-force of thin-shell concrete construction
De Schulthess Residence (Richard Neutra, 1956); built for a Swiss banker and now the Swiss Ambassador's residence, the house features gardens by Roberto Burle Marx. [Pending confirmation of the Ambassador's invitation.]

Hotel Riviera (Polevitzky, Johnson and Associates, 1957); built by Meyer Lansky and the flashiest of the 1950s casino hotels, where we will end the day with cocktails.

Day 6 (Friday 01/04): Post Revolution Havana: Tale of Two Campuses

In the early, optimistic and energetic years after the revolution (roughly 1959 to 1969), the young revolutionary government undertook a building campaign of extraordinary ambition, producing housing, schools, clinics, hospitals, recreation facilities and other projects of urgent social utility, and much of it of stunning avant-garde design. In Havana, the three *proyectos mayores* were the Habana del Este housing complex (seen on Day 4) and two new university campuses, which we will see this day.

Ciudad Universitaria José Antonio Echeverría (Humberto Alonso, et al., 1964, phase one); a new campus for the technical faculties of the University of Havana, including architecture and engineering. Built with an advanced system of prefabricated lift slab construction, CUJAE is the exemplar of the high-tech architecture promoted in Cuba after the revolution. We will be joined by members of the architecture school faculty.

Parque Lenin (master plan Antonio Quintana, 1969-1972); an ambitious project to convert 670 hectares of deforested and eroded land, south of the city, into a new recreational zone. Las Ruinas restaurant

(Joaquín Galván, 1972), within the park and where we will have lunch, is a structure of virtuoso concrete engineering built around the ruins of a 19C sugar mill.

Las Escuelas Nacionales de Artes (1961-1964) is the most celebrated work of post-revolution architecture in Cuba. Built on the grounds of the Havana Country Club, the campus was developed to house the five art faculties in separate structures: The Schools of Plastic Arts and Modern Dance (Ricardo Porro), School of Dramatic Arts (Roberto Gottardi) and Schools of Music and Ballet (Vittorio Garratti.) In contrast to CUJAE, ENA, with hand-laid brick and Catalan vaults represents a more artisanal and expressionist strain of architecture explored after the revolution. Work on the Art Schools was abandoned in 1964 before completion of all of the buildings, but a campaign to restore and complete the schools was inaugurated a few years ago. Our tour of the schools will be led by Universo García, restoration architect.

Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas (Joaquín Galván, 1974); expressive concrete, under the influence of Kenzo Tange.

Day 7 (Saturday 01/05): Las Terrazas and Soroa

Depart early for day trip west, into the Sierra Rosario Ecological Reserve, a lush mountainous region in Artemisa (formerly Pinar del Rio) province and a nature preserve since 1985. Our destinations include:

Las Terrazas (Mario Girona and Osmani Cienfuegos, 1969-1975); a new community established to house workers in the forest industries, built with a simple system of prefabricated concrete components to marvelous picturesque effect

Cafetal Buena Vista; an abandoned 19th Century coffee plantation with preserved ruins of buildings and terraced bean-drying beds. The caretaker's house is now a restaurant where we will have lunch.

Centro Turístico Soroa (Emilio Fernández and Eduardo Rodríguez, 1959); a post-revolution vacation village, one of many built by the socialist government across the island for domestic tourism.

Orchideario de Soroa; a world-famous orchid garden established in 1943 by Spaniard Tomás Felipe Camacho, whose house remains at the top of the landscaped mountainside.

Return to Havana in time for dinner, on your own.

Day 8 (Sunday 01/06): Flex Day in Havana

Morning visit to two important sites in El Vedado:

University of Havana (1906-1940; various Architects); built on fortified highlands above the city; an academic acropolis to which the university moved from its ancient quarters in Old Havana.

Cristóbal Colon cemetery; Havana's monumental necropolis, laid out between 1871 and 1886 and containing countless tombs and monuments of artistic distinction from every era.

Free time in the afternoon for museums, individual explorations and to prepare for the next day's travel

Day 9 (Monday 01/07): Cienfuegos/Trinidad

Depart Havana early for the three-hour drive to the delightful Caribbean port city of Cienfuegos.

Tour central Cienfuegos on foot to visit sites including:

Parque Martí; the main square with the principal civic monuments

Teatro Tomás Terry (1895); an opulent opera house donated to the city by an Englishman who came to Cuba via Venezuela and made his fortune in the slave trade, sugar and railroads. Sarah Bernhardt, Enrico Caruso and the Bolshoi Ballet have performed here.

Palacio Ferrer (c1900); the eclectic residence of a sugar baron, now the Casa de Cultura

Punta Gorda is a spit of land extending into the bay of Cienfuegos, where prosperous local families built fanciful wooden summer houses. Special sights include:

Palacio del Valle; a Moorish fantasy built in 1912 by the sugar mogul Aciclio Valle, reportedly inspired by a visit to the Alhambra; now a restaurant at which we will have lunch.

Hotel Jagua (Eduardo Cañas Abril y Nujim Nepomechie, 1956-1959); a modernist gem of a casino hotel that opened moments before the revolutionary government outlawed gambling.

On our way out of town we will visit the evocative 19C Cementerio la Reina, and the more recent Necrópolis Tomás Acéa, with an impressive neoclassical entry pavilion (Pablo Donato, 1926).

Drive to Trinidad (about 45 minutes); check into hotel (*Brisas del Mar, at Playa Ancón*), hopefully in time for a swim in the sea. Dinner at the hotel with many options for musical entertainment in the town

Day 10(Tuesday 01/08): Trinidad, Valle de los Ingenios, Camagüey

Morning tour of Trinidad, an astonishingly well-preserved colonial city and UNESCO world heritage site.

Highlights include:

Plaza Mayor and Iglesia Parroquial de la Santísima Trinidad (1894)

Casa Sánchez Iznaga; a gracious early 18C house, now an architecture museum

Casa Brunet (1741, with later alterations); an imposing two-story mansion, meticulously restored

Palacio Cantero, an aristocratic mansion embellished in high mid-19C style. From the belvedere one gains a panoramic view of the city

Convento San Francisco de Asis; 18C convent and church, now a museum commemorating the revolutionary efforts in the surrounding Escambray mountains.

Drive east into the Valle de los Ingenios, an indescribably beautiful landscape of pre-industrial sugar cultivation.

Hacienda Buena Vista; evocative ruin of a Palladian plantation house

Manaca Iznaga; restored sugar plantation complex, featuring a quaint railroad station and a magnificent surveillance tower (1835-45). The main house is now a restaurant, where we will have a late lunch.

Continue on through the old town of Sancti Spiritus to Camagüey; check into the venerable Gran Hotel de Camagüey.

Day 11 (Wednesday 01.09): Camaguey, Bayamo and Santiago

Morning walking tour of Camagüey, the mid-island city that Cubans consider the most romantic of places, with its beautiful squares, churches and neoclassical houses. Highlights include:

Parque Agramonte; former colonial parade ground and now a leafy park

Catedral de Nuestra Señora de la Merced (1748)

Plaza, Church and Hospital of San Juan de Dios; former military hospital dating from 1728, with cloisters and Moorish façade added in 1840

Drive east to Bayamo - the second Spanish settlement in Cuba, founded in 1513

Parque Céspedes; the beautiful main square with gracious colonial buildings

Plaza de Himno and Catedral del Santísima Salvador (1516; rebuilt 1733, 1869)

Estacion Forestal (Walter Betancourt, 1964) in near-by Guisa; a post-revolution hallucination of Frank Lloyd Wright in the tropics, by an eccentric US-trained Cuban architect.

Drive on through the Sierra Maestre mountains with, en route, a passing view of the shrine of El Cobre (Basilica de Nuestra Señora del Cobre 1927), Cuba's answer to Lourdes. Arrive in Santiago and check into the hotel Meliá Santiago (José Antonio Choy, 1986.)

Day 12 (Thursday 01.10): Santiago de Cuba

All day bus and walking tour of Santiago, in the company of a local architect/historian. Highlights of the visit will include:

Parque Céspedes, the civic heart of the city

Casa de Don Diego Velázquez (1516); the former home of Cuba's first colonizer and reputedly the oldest house on the island.

Moncada Barracks; an Art Deco gothic military complex famous as the site of a bold but ill-fated assault by Fidel Castro and his revolutionary cohorts. There is an adjacent complex of wood officers' houses from the 1920s, prefabricated in the USA.

The elite Vista Alegre neighborhood with a 1950s tennis club and an eclectic collection of houses, including the opulent Bacardi mansion.

Castillo de San Pedro del Morro (1638 ff); impressive fortifications at the mouth of the harbor

University of Oriente Rectorate (Cañas Abril y Nepomechie, 1956)

University of Oriente Medical School (Rodrigo Tascón, 1964)

Jose Martí Housing Complex (Julio Dean, Teresa Baeza, et al., 1964-67); an important post-revolution project built with the "Gran Panel" system of prefabricated concrete building components manufactured at a plant donated by the Soviet Union.

Farewell dinner; musical entertainment options

Day 13 (Friday 01/11): Santiago and Departure

Early departure by bus from Santiago to Holguín (two hours) and the town of Velasco, for one final site visit:

Casa de Cultura (Walter Betancourt, 1966); an outsized cultural center in a small provincial town; the masterwork of this idiosyncratic architect.

Late afternoon flight from Holguín to Miami

This itinerary to give you an overview and may be subject to change.

Included in the SAH Cuba Study Tour:

- Transfer to Miami Airport
- Round trip charter flight from Miami to Cuba, including airport taxes
- Cuba Entrance Visa Fee
- 13 hotel nights
- 11 Breakfasts
- 9 lunches
- One drink of choice per meal
- 3 dinners (one is on New Year's Eve)
- Private English speaking national guide during duration of tour (Cuban Government requirement)
- Air-conditioned modern motorcoach as noted in the itinerary
- All applicable entrance fees to sites
- 2 bottles of water per person/per day (excluding arrival and departure days)
- Authorization documentation allowing passengers to clear US immigrations upon returning to the United States
- Cuban Travel Insurance covering medical expenses
- Services of a Friendly Planet Travel program manager
- An SAH Tour Leader
- SAH Board Representative
- Voluntary donation to SAH
- SAH administrative costs
- 77 AIA/CES Learning Units*

Not included:

- Passport Costs
- Expenditure for personal items (laundry, telephone, internet fees, meals not included in tour price)
- Gratuities for guides, drivers, hotel maid service, porters and restaurant waiters
- Cuban Departure Tax of 25CUC (approximately \$30USD per person) – must be paid in cash on departure from Cuba.
- Trip cancellation/interruption insurance. You may purchase through a preferred agency or through Friendly Planet.
- Hotel in Miami. A special offer will be available to those who have a confirmed space on the tour.

General Terms and Conditions

Passports & Visas

PASSPORTS are required for all US citizens traveling abroad and must be valid for at least 6 months after your date of return. Many countries will not allow you to enter their borders if you do not have at least 6 months of remaining validity on your present passport. **If you already have a valid passport, please send SAH two clear photocopies of the signature and photograph pages of your passport with your reservation. SAH will forward the copies to Friendly Planet.** If you do not already have a passport, you should make arrangements to get one without delay and send the photocopies of the appropriate pages as soon as your passport arrives. Be sure to sign your new passport before you make your photocopies for us. **SAH and Friendly Planet must receive your passport copy 60 days (October 30, 2012) prior to departure in order to assure that your name appears on your ticket exactly as it appears on your passport. Airlines may apply penalties if it is necessary to make corrections to your name either in the air record or on your ticket.**

VISAS are required for our Cuba programs and Friendly Planet Travel, Inc. will make arrangements to secure such visas for you. Visa fees are included in the tour price for our Cuba programs.

Transportation & Touring

TRANSFERS & TOURING are provided by modern, air-conditioned touring coaches. All entrance fees to places visited in the itinerary are included except those mentioned as optional.

Arrangements for the itineraries, domestic transportation and flights are solely at the discretion of the local land operators and are subject to change without notice. If any changes are made, SAH and Friendly Planet has no liability.

Final Payments

FINAL PAYMENTS are due **at least 75 days (October 15, 2012) prior to departure** Payments may be paid by check or major credit card to SAH.

UNUSED SERVICES cannot be refunded once the trip has begun. No refund can be made for absence by passengers from any part of the tour.

PERSONAL TIPS are NOT included in the tour price. A suggested tipping schedule will be provided to you in your tour packet prior to departure.

DOCUMENTS for this tour, along with tour notes will be sent via email approximately 21 to 14 days prior to departure. This includes your e-ticket if applicable.

TOUR PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE passport fees, foreign airport taxes and fees, US departure taxes, excess baggage charges, baggage and personal insurance, gratuities, optional tours, beverages, items not specifically mentioned in the itinerary or tour inclusions section, or any items of a personal nature.

CANCELLATIONS – must be made in writing and are subject to the following charges:

Up to 76 days prior to departure - \$600

75-46 days prior to departure - \$1000

45-30 days prior to departure - \$1,700

29 days or less prior to departure – No Refund

TRAVEL INSURANCE

SAH and Friendly Planet Travel strongly recommend insurance coverage for your trip. We are pleased to offer you the opportunity to [purchase coverage from Access America](#) for our Cuba tour programs. If you require Friendly Planet's license number to purchase your insurance, that number is CT-18377.

Travel insurance must be purchased before or at the time of final payment and is non-refundable. After SAH and Friendly Planet receives your final payment, our travel insurance package will no longer be available for purchase. In order to take full advantage of this comprehensive travel protection plan available through Access America, we recommend purchasing the insurance at the time of reserving your space.

This way, the pre-existing conditions waiver will apply and your deposit will be covered. For coverage details please visit Friendly Planet's website at: <http://www.friendlyplanet.com/travel-insurance.htm>

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AIA/CES log here

The Society of Architectural Historians is registered with the American Institute of Architects' Continuing Education system to provide credit for participation in the field study tour. SAH will submit the learning units to AIA/CES upon your return from the tour.

SAH Study Tour Fellowship is being offered to qualified students and emerging professionals for this tour to Cuba. Please go to the website to apply.