

SAH CUBA STUDY TOUR

May 15-27, 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 approved 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, amazingly 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 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 Havana in the west to Santiago de Cuba 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, mid-century modernism, and the radical design experiments of the post-revolution period. In Havana our headquarters will be the 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 back to Havana for a final day in the capital before returning to Miami.

This is a tour highly customized to suit the interests of SAH members, taking us to sites not found in the guide books, 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 in 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 (Tuesday 05/14)

Tour participants are to travel independently to Miami. We will convene on Tuesday evening, 7:00PM, at the Hilton Miami Airport hotel for a logistical meeting and an introductory lecture by our tour leader, Belmont Freeman, on the history of Cuba and its architecture.

Day 1 (Wednesday 05/15): Havana; Arrival and Orientation

Early morning check-in for our 11:00AM charter flight. Arrive around noon 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 San Francisco, in the heart of Old Havana, where we will have lunch*
- *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.*
- *Drive along the Malecón, Havana's seaside boulevard*

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. Group dinner at a restaurant within walking distance of the hotel.

Day 2 (Thursday 05/16): 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)*
- *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 Belén (1630-19C), now housing various social service agencies*
- *Palacio Aldama (Manuel José Carrerá, 1844); an austere neoclassical structure built outside of the old city walls, is the largest private palace in Havana.*

Day 3 (Friday 05/17): 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)*
- *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*
- *Capitolio Nacional (Raul Otero, Govantes y Cabarroca, et al, 1929); modeled after the US Capitol but with more lavish interiors (unfortunately closed for restoration.)*
- *Calle Cardenas, with its amazing collection of art nouveau houses*
- *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 (Saturday 05/18): 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 Zárraga 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 visit the mid-20th century civic center, now Plaza de la Revolucion, and then 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 Romañach, Max Borges-Recio, Frank Martínez, Manuel Gutierrez and Ricardo Porro built their careers designing homes for affluent Cubans in the neighborhoods of Nuevo Vedado, Miramar, Siboney and Playa. Important buildings where interior visits are 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.]*
- *Ofelia Viamonte Residence, Frank Martínez, 1954*
- *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 5 (Sunday 05/19): Matanzas and Varadero

Day trip to the east to visit the historic sugar port of Matanzas and the fabled Varadero beach resort with notable architecture from the 1920s through the 1970s. Sightings 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 an 1860 opera house, 1900 neoclassical police station, a miraculously intact 19C pharmacy, and blocks of neoclassical houses that attest to the city's former wealth.*
- *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 6 (Monday 05/20): Post Revolution Havana: Tale of Two Campuses

In the early, optimistic and energetic years after the revolution 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 avante garde design. In Havana, the three *proyectos mayores* were the Habana del Este housing complex (seen on Day 5) 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 representatives 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, is a structure of virtuoso concrete engineering built around the ruins of a 19C sugar mill.*
- *Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas (Joaquín Galván, 1974); expressive concrete, under the influence of Kenzo Tange.*
- *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 Fine 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.

Day 7 (Tuesday 05/21): Cienfuegos/Trinidad

Depart Havana early for the three-hour drive to 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.*

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 8 (Wednesday 05/22): 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).*

Continue on through the old town of Sancti Spiritus to Camagüey, where we will stop for lunch and a brief tour of the historic center. In Camagüey we will check into the venerable Gran Hotel de Camagüey.

Day 9 (Thursday 05/23): Camaguey, Bayamo and Santiago

Morning 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*

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

- *Parque Céspedes; the 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 to Santiago de Cuba and check into the hotel Meliá Santiago (José Antonio Choy, 1986.)

Day 10 (Friday 05/24): Santiago de Cuba

All day bus and walking tour of Santiago, in the company of Omar López, the chief historian and restoration architect of the city. 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.*
- *University of Oriente Rectorate (Cañas Abril y Nepomechie, 1956)*
- *University of Oriente Medical School (Rodrigo Tascón, 1964)*

Day 11 (Saturday 05/25): Santiago de Cuba

Continuing exploration of Santiago and its environs, including:

- *Cementerio Santa Ifigenia and the tomb of José Martí*
- *Castillo de San Pedro del Morro (1638 ff); impressive fortifications at the mouth of the harbor*
- *The elite Vista Alegre neighborhood with a 1950s tennis club and an eclectic collection of houses, including the opulent Bosch mansion.*
- *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.*

Night flight back to Havana

Day 12 (Sunday 05/26): Flex Day in Havana

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

Day 13 (Monday 05/27): Return

Mid-morning flight from Havana to Miami

This itinerary is 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>

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.

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.