



Cuban and American participants at the “Ideas Symposium for Vedado” in Havana



Avenida de los Presidentes in Vedado (photo by Nestor Marti)

El Vedado

Un Simposio de Ideas

Vedado An Ideas Symposium

Surgió del primer logro y desafío plan urbano llevado a cabo en Cuba. El Vedado es reconocido por su belleza y elegancia urbana. El Vedado es un centro cultural, educacional, comercial y gubernamental que involucra a todos los niveles de sus líderes para los residentes de La Habana, así como un gran número de edificios arquitectónicos. Lamentablemente, gran parte de este patrimonio histórico está en riesgo de ser perdido. La incorporación del Vedado a la lista de lugares en riesgo del World Monuments Fund es una oportunidad de volver a mirar para la conservación, renovación, y revitalización de esta parte de La Habana tan vital para el crecimiento de la comunidad, de la ciudad, y del desarrollo económico de Cuba. Con este Simposio y diálogo continuo, esperamos investigar oportunidades y compartir ideas que puedan tener un impacto a escala nacional e internacional, creando de esta manera una visión de revitalización y restauración que sea efectiva, sostenible y realizable.

Vedado was the first major urban neighborhood in Cuba to be built on a defined urban plan, and is recognized for its beauty and urban grace. It is a cultural, educational, commercial, and government center with a wealth of important buildings for Havana residents as well as numerous buildings of architectural significance. Sadly, much of the neighborhood's historic fabric continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. The inclusion of the neighborhood of Vedado on the World Monuments Fund Watch list of endangered places is a timely opportunity to tie the awareness, restoration, and revitalization of this vital part of Havana to the growth of community, creativity, and economic development in Cuba. With this symposium and ongoing dialogue, we hope to research opportunities and share ideas that average Cuban and international residents to share a vision and approach to revitalization and restoration that is effective, sustainable, and achievable.

voces del vedado

próximo al mar y orientado a las mejores brisas

"Close to the water and oriented to the best winds" - the "best brisas"

el lugar preferido para vivir en La Habana

"The preferred place to live in Havana"

la capital de la capital

"The capital of the capital"

la presencia de verde

"The presence of green areas"

valorado por su versatilidad, su vitalidad y riqueza como ejemplo internacional

"It is valued for its versatility, vitality and richness as an international example"

Introductory Board (one of seven)

Dear Friends:

November 2016

In 2015, Fundación Amistad nominated the Havana neighborhood of El Vedado to the World Monuments Fund’s 2016/2017 Watch list of endangered places around the world. El Vedado was the first major urban neighborhood in Cuba to be built on a defined urban plan, and is recognized for its beauty and urban grace. It is a cultural, educational, commercial, and government center with a wealth of important destinations for Havana residents as well as numerous buildings of architectural significance. Sadly, much of the neighborhood’s historic fabric continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate.

Vedado: An Ideas Symposium

The inclusion of the neighborhood of El Vedado on the WMF’s Watch is a timely opportunity to tie the awareness, restoration, and revitalization of this vital part of La Habana to the growth of community, creativity, and economic development in Cuba. To generate discussion, FA organized a symposium conducted in October 2016 bringing together Cuban architects, planners, preservation specialists, educators, and authors with the leaders of the 50 largest US-based design firms represented by the American Institute of Architects’ Large Firm Roundtable (AIA/LFRT). Materials for the symposium were prepared by one of the AIA/LFRT member firms, Ennead, based on research conducted by two recent RISD graduates whose fellowships in Havana were sponsored by FA.

A Vision for Revitalization and Sustainability

The 80 participants at the symposium shared ideas on the urban topics of culture, education, open space, sports, connectivity, transportation, entrepreneurship, hospitality, entertainment, urban anchors, and underutilized assets. Recent creative restorations – such as the Fabrica de Arte Cubano – were cited as excellent examples of cultural vibrancy from artistic entrepreneurs.

Vedado’s diverse character gives the neighborhood a lively visual mix, and allows for growth and change while maintaining its unique legacy. The adaptability of its buildings to accommodate new uses – galleries, restaurants, government ministries, and museums – is a testament to its heritage and future. As Havana enters a new era of internal change and global connectivity, Vedado is the ideal urban platform where legacy and culture can meet innovation and incubation.

Next Steps

In 2017, a community Watch Day and exhibit will be scheduled to further heighten awareness of Vedado’s potential. FA looks forward to participating with our Cuban colleagues and partners to shape a vision and approach to revitalization and restoration that is effective, sustainable, and achievable.

