Modern Grid System built by 100m x 100m blocks 5.2 km²; 2.0 km x 2.0 km consists by 440 blocks

bourgeois dream

GENERAL INFORMATION

built from 1859
23,000 inhabitants
bourgeois dream

PHYSICAL

Modern Grid System
built by 100m x 100m blocks
5.2 km²; 2.0 km x 2.0 km
consists by 440 blocks

MENTAL

'Cultural Heart of the City'
'the Rigid Grid Context'
'Modern Area in Havana'
'Lifestyle Focused Community'
Contents

25  vedado fascinations
41  a forbidden land
65  the perfect grid

25  works
41  morphology
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171  how eclecticism crumbles

99  state assets
141  program
171  architecture

195  vedado times

195  stories
Complex Projects

Complex Projects investigates settlements around the world that are often ambiguous in their development and embedded in the process of globalization. Students and teachers are encouraged to look critically at their surroundings; to gather, organize, and question the complex forces that ultimately manifest themselves in our built environment. In Complex Projects we are interested in the study of different urban conditions, core or peripheral, dynamic or stagnant, traditional or without history, anonymous or famous; these are the contemporary postmodern realities we must confront as a profession.

The role of the architect is changing more than ever before. The profession needs to cultivate a strong, critical and analytical approach to the design process. This concept is central to how teachers and students work together to ask critical questions and engage intelligently in an increasingly complex world.

Cuba

Cuba was once described by Christopher Columbus in 1492 as “This is the loveliest land ever beheld by human eyes.” Since then, Havana has been a place of desire, inspiration and political ideologies.

Originally established in 1514 on Cuba’s southern coast, San Cristóbal de la Habana had been moved by 1519 to its present-day location on the island’s north coast, at the mouth of a deep and spacious harbour with a narrow, protected harbour channel. Before long, Havana had become the most important port in the Spanish colonial empire, a natural final gathering place for the reupply and embarkation of the Spanish fleet before returning to the Old Country laden with bounty. By 1607, Havana had been declared the capital of colonial Cuba, and by the early 1700s, it was the third-largest city in the Spanish empire, behind Mexico City and Lima.

The role of the architect is changing more than ever before and our profession needs to cultivate a strong, critical and analytical approach to the design process. This concept is central to how teachers and students work together to ask critical questions and engage intelligently in an increasingly complex world.

With:

Kees Kaan - Chair of Complex Projects
Manuela Terpignere - Chair Coordinator
Michelle Prevost - Architectural Historian / Critic
Tanner Merkley - Studio Coordinator / Curator
Hrvoje Simunek - Studio Leader (La Habana Vedado)
Paul Cournet - Studio Leader (La Habana Vedado)
Sebastian Janusz - Studio Leader (Havana Profunda)
Jeroen de Nies
Jelmer van Zalingen
Malou Speets
Wei Jiang
Yun Dai
Jing Lin
Tian Hao
Nicole Chan
Chi Zhang
Lin Wang
Wesley Verhoeven

Cuba has been largely frozen in time in the wake of the 1959 Revolution, its development has been halted by shortages that have left much of Havana in severe decay and obsolescence. However, a good indication of where Cuba is headed is La Habana Vieja, where parts have been meticulously restored to much of its colonial glory, along a percentage of tourism receipts from the Old City hotels. Although the situation in Havana is beginning to change, with the recent boom in tourism and tourism-related growth, what new construction has occurred over the past 40 years has largely borne the drab architectural stamp of the former Soviet Union and its central state planning. Most of this has taken place outside the boundaries of the city centre. Today, Havana, with some 2.5 million inhabitants, is the largest city in the Caribbean and Cuba’s undisputed political, business, and cultural centre.

In the late 19th century, Havana was a hub of international commerce and finance. The city was home to the Spanish fleet, the American embargo, and a huge lack of basic necessities like access to water due to a leaky infrastructure from the 1920’s. About 50% of the drinking water is lost before it makes it to people’s households. The natural beauty is also being threatened, the Harbour was once a pristine fishing bay is heavily polluted by industry and raw sewage is often dumped directly into the bay. This city needs to be upgraded, but the question is how? How to keep the rich layers of history and modernity from squeezing out the city? How to create planning policies that innovate and enrich the city and its inhabitants, to enhance the city’s economic, political, business, and cultural centres?

The great exception to this rule is La Habana Vedado, where parts have been meticulously restored to much of its colonial glory, along a percentage of tourism receipts from the Old City hotels. Although the situation in Havana is beginning to change, with the recent boom in tourism and tourism-related growth, what new construction has occurred over the past 40 years has largely borne the drab architectural stamp of the former Soviet Union and its central state planning. Most of this has taken place outside the boundaries of the city centre. Today, Havana, with some 2.5 million inhabitants, is the largest city in the Caribbean and Cuba’s undisputed political, business, and cultural centre.

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The cultural heart of the city, gracious Vedado draws the crowds with its plush hotels, contemporary art galleries, exciting (and sometimes incomprehensible) theatre productions and live music concerts, not to mention its riot of restaurants, bars and nightlife.

Loosely defined as the area running west of Calle 23 immediately west from the Malecón, as well as the streets just to the north and south. Presenting a rather bland uniformity that’s absent from the rest of Vedado, it’s a relatively small space, trading along the eastern part of the Malecón and spanning just a couple of streets inland. A little to the south of La Rampa and alongside the elegant Universidad de La Habana, attended by orderly students who personify the virtues of post-Revolution education.
Vedado fascinations

Works
Vedado fascinations
A forbidden land

Morphology
La Habana profunda
La Habana Vieja
Alamar
El Vedado

A forbidden land
A forbidden land
A forbidden land

44 45
Cuba is divided in 16 provinces. La Habana is the main province, the capital city of the country. La Habana is divided in 12 “consejos” or municipalities. El Vedado fits within Consejo Plaza la Revolución. Each consejo is made up by different neighbourhoods and the study site for El Vedado carries five of these, even though the whole area is simply known as “El Vedado”.

**Location of Vedado in Cuba**

Cuba has a divided 16 provinces. La Habana is the main province, the capital city of the country. La Habana is divided into 12 “consejos” or municipalities. El Vedado fits within Consejo Plaza la Revolución. Each consejo is made up by different neighbourhoods and the study site for El Vedado carries five of these, even though the whole area is simply known as “El Vedado”.

- **Cuba**: the whole country.
- **La Habana**: the main province and capital city.
- **Consejo Plaza la Revolución**: a region in La Habana.
- **El Vedado**: a study site within Consejo Plaza la Revolución.
- **Neighbourhood limit**: a boundary within the study site.

**Legend**

- Blue: Cuba
- Red: La Habana
- Blue: El Vedado project boundary
- Red: Neighbourhood limit
El Vedado Foundation

In 1565, Jacques de Sores attacked El Vedado territory as it was the perfect entry to go inland through the Casiguagua River, today known as the Almendares River. Luckily the French failed the attack and Havana Town Council had the opportunity to reinforce its security against the enemy. Measures were based on banning the use of El Vedado area for any activity such as cattle breeding, hunting or felling trees to lower the attention of the place and weaken any potential access point. A defense tower ‘Torreón de la Chorrera’ was later built for further protection. For three centuries El Vedado’s purpose was set to preserve a wooded band as a natural defense barrier from the coastal area. Thorny bushes were planted in the borders of the area to forbid town people to come in and pirates to disembark. This is exactly were its name El Vedado comes from, meaning ‘forbidden land’.
In the 19th century, the area’s proximity to natural features became a driving force to reconsider the use of El Vedado and so the foundation of El Vedado as the most innovative and hygienic proposal in Cuba began. It was advertised for the rich by holding rich resources, like proximity to fresh water, proximity to waterfront, greenery and in addition proximity to Old Havana.

Although pirates were no longer present in the 1900’s, the natural hazards, especially those water-related, became the new ‘enemy’ for Vedado. These have been shaking the urban settlement with massive floods and storms ever since.
Habana is located on a high risk area of tropical hazards that cause high frequency of intense water penetrations. Massive rainfall and tropical cyclones are the main cause of the floods.

103 year period - 68 floods in La Habana
Cuba in general presents a plane topography as found in Vedado. In the 2km site study area, 35 meter difference is found from the end tip of the neighbourhood to the coastline. There is a wide length between topographical curve 0 to 10 presenting a vulnerable area for flooding.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910. Oct</td>
<td>Del 18 Hurricane</td>
<td>115 km/h wind, 500 deaths, 10 million dollars of loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944. Oct</td>
<td>Ciclon del 18 Hurricane</td>
<td>270 km/h wind, 300 deaths, 14 hours of 200 km/h winds, 262 km/h being the second worst in the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926. Oct</td>
<td>Ciclon del 26 Hurricane</td>
<td>510 mm rainfall, 600 deaths, 300 million dollars of loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932. Nov</td>
<td>Santa Cruz del Sur Hurricane</td>
<td>600 mm rainfall, 3,300 deaths, 40 million dollars of loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963. Oct</td>
<td>Flora Hurricane</td>
<td>Damaged 30,000 houses, 500 economical and social centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993. Oct</td>
<td>Sequence of Hurricanes</td>
<td>Storm of the century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988. Sep</td>
<td>Gilbert Hurricane</td>
<td>Storm of the century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004. Jul</td>
<td>Dennis Hurricane</td>
<td>$100 million worth the trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005. Oct</td>
<td>Paula Hurricane</td>
<td>Provoke worst floods in the past 10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010. Oct</td>
<td>Michelle Hurricane</td>
<td>170 mm rainfall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001. Nov</td>
<td>Lily Hurricane</td>
<td>Category 2 winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996. Oct</td>
<td>Georges Hurricane</td>
<td>Category 3 winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985. Oct</td>
<td>Kate Hurricane</td>
<td>Category 4 winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998. Oct</td>
<td>Georges Hurricane</td>
<td>Category 5 winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999. Oct</td>
<td>Irene Hurricane</td>
<td>Category 1 winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002. Nov</td>
<td>Isodore Hurricane</td>
<td>Category 2 winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004. Aug</td>
<td>Charley Hurricane</td>
<td>Category 3 winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004. Sep</td>
<td>Ivan Hurricane</td>
<td>Category 4 winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005. Oct</td>
<td>Palomo Hurricane</td>
<td>Category 5 winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008. Nov</td>
<td>Ike Hurricane</td>
<td>Category 5 winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008. Sep</td>
<td>Fay Tropical Storm</td>
<td>Category 5 winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010. Oct</td>
<td>Paula Hurricane</td>
<td>Category 2 winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016. Oct</td>
<td>Sandy Hurricane</td>
<td>Category 3 winds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How is Havana affected by frequent cyclones?**

- 65% of hurricanes that hit Cuba hit Havana
- Category 1: 119 - 153 Km/h
- Category 2: 154 - 177 Km/h
- Category 3: 178 - 209 Km/h
- Category 4: 210 - 249 Km/h
- Category 5: 250 - or + Km/h

**Memories from ‘Ciclon del 1926’**

- 600 dead people
- $300 million worth of loss
- Winds of 270 km/h

**Category 1:** 119 - 153 Km/h

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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<td>119 - 153 Km/h</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 3</td>
<td>178 - 209 Km/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 4</td>
<td>210 - 249 Km/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 5</td>
<td>250 - or + Km/h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Book VERSION3.2 (double page cover) indd 56-57**
Floodings in Vedado can be explained by three main points:

1. Rain intensity exceeds drainage system capacity.
2. Sea level rise meets the end of rainwater drainage system.
3. Floodline zone receives the water runoff from the rest of the city.
Flooding risk areas

- north atlantic ocean
- area beyond flood line
- high risk area
- moderate risk area
- low risk area
The perfect grid

Urban fabric
City Expansion

Around 1700

Around 1860

Around 1880

1859 EL CARMELO

1860 EL VEDADO

1878 MEDIDA

The perfect grid

Modern

Around 1700

Around 1700

Modern

Around 1700

Modern

1878 MEDIDA

Later
Phases of Malecon Seawall Boulevard

Construction of the Havana Malecon began in 1901. At the start of the 20th century the buildings along Havana’s then ramshackle coastal road were constantly affected by northern weather systems and northern “barrios” of the city would often flood during the winter months.

1 1901-1902

During these decades there would be, for the most part, a 27 year hiatus, in which the Malecon was left basically unchanged. The situation mostly affected direct coastal areas, what were then, the booming upper-class neighborhoods of Playa and Miramar. So in 1948, with financial help from numerous private entrepreneurs, the Malecon road construction recommenced until its conclusion in 1952 at the mouth of the Almendares River.

2 1902-1921

It was the American US Navy Civil Engineers, in conjunction with the US military, who constructed the initial 2 stretches of the Havana Malecon seawall. The first stretch was built between 1901 and 1902 and covered the distance between the Paseo del Prado corner to Calle Crespo.

3 1948-1952

The second section and rather more complicated on an engineering standpoint was started 1902 and completed in 1921. This stretch completed the Malecon up to the Monument to the Victims of the USS Maine.

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The perfect grid
1901 Phase One
It was the American US Navy Civil Engineers, in conjunction with the US military who constructed the initial 2 stretches of the Havana Malecon seawall. The first stretch was built between 1901 and 1902 and covered the distance between the Paseo del Prado corner to Calle Crespo.

1920
The second section and rather more complicated on an engineering standpoint was started 1902 and completed in 1921. This stretch completed the Malecon up to the Monument to the Victims of the USS Maine.
Comparison of urban grids

- **Barcelona**
  - L’Eixample
  - Alfonso Cerda 1859

- **Havana Vedado**
  - Luis Ibellino Bosque 1859

- **Buenos Aires**
  - Law of the Indies 1573

- **New York City**
  - Commissioners Plan 1811

The perfect grid
Comparison of urban grid blocks

New York (Manhattan)

Buenos Aires

Barcelona

Havana

The perfect grid
Comparison of urban grid blocks

New York (Manhattan)
Big variety of building heights, create 'street canyons' blocking sunlight to lower floors. Similar blocks mainly with open space in the centre.

Buenos Aires
Combination of one grid from the 16th century and a modern 1930s grid with widened streets at fixed intervals. Streets are predominantly narrow, and blocks are very dense.

Barcelona
Highly regular organization. Originally planned to be 50-50 built-unbuilt but many courtyards have been infilled.

Havana
Regular grid, low regularity within each block. Open spaces both close to the street and as back courtyards. Green buffer around most blocks plus extra open space in front of many.
4 Fragment Urban Comparison in Havana

- Alamar
- Miramar
- Habana Vieja
- El Vedado

The perfect grid

500 m
**Built / unbuilt percentages**

On all scales, from the Vedado area to plots, the built / unbuilt percentages is around 68% / 32%. Some blocks have more built percentages. The so-called ‘compact blocks’ show around 85% built floor area. The plots have a ‘border’ of 5 meters which should not be built.

**Swastika principle**

In the original city parceling each block is subdivided into 12 lots distributed symmetrically in each quarter of the block in the form of a swastika. This way, each of the surrounding streets has three front facades. In the original project of 1859, the three plots had a width of 22.6 meters, 13.7 meters and 13.7 meters. However, successive segregations of plots emerged with other models, such as a cross, bands and quarters. Reaching for example 20 or more plots in the average block.
Compact block / Semi compact blocks

All building blocks in Vedado can be roughly divided into two categories: the compact blocks and the semi-compact blocks. The compact version show built / unbuilt percentages up to 81% built. The semi-compact block is around 68% built. On this spread a catalogue of all Vedado blocks is shown. 14% of the blocks is considered to be compact, 86% is semi-compact.

Compact block

14%

(27 blocks)

Semi-compact

86%

(169 blocks)
### House typologies

#### Corner villa
High architectural and urban value, usually located on a corner, with more than 33% of exposed surface looking for privacy and greatest possible isolation from public space. Typically eclectic or neoclassic buildings, generously proportioned, no more than three floors high. It manifests a formal language through gates, gazebos and setbacks, normally used to highlight and qualify the entry and corner.

#### Family house
Common in small plots of approximately square or rectangular shapes, without exceeding 3 floors. Often allowed setbacks to improve the spatial expressive appearance. It is common to find a coherent facade structure with similarly aligned interiors.

#### Common housing
Occupy the original plots of 14 m in front to 50 m total. They are of rectangular proportions and variable height between 1 - 2 levels. Respecting separations and alignments and often have portals in the facade, but ultimately they are not homogeneous in appearance.

#### Divided housing
They are the result of the subdivision of the most common plots of which where thereafter divided in their interiors to house many families. Usually they appear as paired sharing courtyards or portals, or in larger groups. They are usually arranged in very similar ways and often occupy most of the plot.

#### Multifamily housing
Buildings 3, 4 or 5 floors quadrangular and rectangular, recognized by their maximum adaptation to the plot. They are placed in sets of plots adjacent to each other with similar dimensions. Maximum occupancy of the plot and sometimes even violate regulations on urban conditions. The portal is usually closed with glass or simply have an interior portal or lobby access to the street offering an almost continuous facade.

#### Towers
The towers also tend to be located in the corners, preferably with facades facing major streets and occupy almost the whole plot. They are either square or take a quite unique form. Seldom featuring a facade portal. The maximum height, more than 10 plants and up to 30, yields the buildings that break with the general profile of El Vedado.
There are four types of roads in Vedado categorized by their use, speed and widths which go from 23 meters wide maximum to 2 meter wide minimum.

**Street Category**

- **Local Street**
  - Section 8th street
  - Use: Residential and commercial - NO omnibus allowed
  - Speed: 30 to 50 km/h
  - Widths: Streets 6.00-7.00m wide (2 lane max. 3.50 m each), parterres and sidewalks 1.50 minimum

- **Minor Street**
  - Section of 3rd street
  - Use: regular colective transport
  - Speed: 60 to 69 km/h
  - Widths: Streets from 12.00-14.00m wide (4 lane max. 3.50 m each), sidewalk 1.50 minimum

- **Collector Street**
  - Section 17th street
  - Use: Residential and commercial and other / collective public transport
  - Speed: 50 to 60 km/h
  - Widths: Street from 6.00-14.00m wide (2-4 lanes 3-3.50m each), parterres and sidewalk 1.50 minimum

- **Principal Artery**
  - Section El Malecón
  - Use: Regular colective transport + semiexpress
  - Speed: 70 to 80 km/h
  - Widths: Street from 14.00-23.00m wide (4-6 lanes 3.50m each), central corridor 1.20-3.00m cyclepath 2.25 minimum
Street Names

Street naming is related to contemporary developments and reveals the American influence as for example Manhattan streets name and numbering.

development A
development B
join project A & B
El Vedado, CU

Odd # start on coastline

Even # start at Paseo to the west

Letters start at Paseo to the east

(AVENUE)

(SREET)

# start from south to north

(Avenue for name of person organized by borough)

1 # start from east coast to west coast

Manhattan - NY

The perfect grid
In Vedado is always a busstop within 5 minute walking distance. Fixed almendrones routes are on El Malecón and Calle 23. Furthermore there are some GETA (grupo especial de transporte alternativa) pick-up points. These are not that clearly presented to the non-locals.
**Omnibus / Guaguas**
- State driven
- Used by locals and tourists
- Costs: 25 cuban centavos - 1 peso
- Passengers: 50 - 70 people
- Area: all of Havana

**Metrobus / Camellos**
- Was state driven, is now abolished
- Used by locals and tourists
- Costs: 25 cuban centavos - 1 peso
- Passengers: 200 - 300 people
- Area: all of Havana

**Truck transport**
- Used by locals that work in outskirts
- Costs: 25 cuban centavos - 1 peso
- Passengers: 50 - 100 people
- Area: outskirts of Havana

**Bici Taxi / Tourist transportation**
- Used by tourists
- Costs: 1 - 20 CUC
- Passengers: 2 - 6 people
- Area: Havana Vieja, Centro Habana and Vedado

**Almendrones**
- Used by locals and tourists
- Costs: 10 cuban pesos
- Passengers: 4 - 6 people
- Area: fixed routes through Havana

**GETA**
- Grupo Especial de Transporte Alternativa
- Used by locals
- Costs: free
- Passengers: 4 - 6 people
- Area: towards the outskirts of Havana

**Taxis**
- Used by mostly tourists
- Costs: 4 CUC for 10 minute ride
- Passengers: 4 - 6 people
- Area: all of Havana

**Company busses**
- Used by employers of big firms
- Costs: free
- Passengers: 30 - 60 people
- Area: all of Havana

---

**Numberplates in Cuba**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numberplate</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HAA 178</td>
<td>Havana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>216005</td>
<td>Havana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAA 907</td>
<td>Havana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAL 807</td>
<td>Havana</td>
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<tr>
<td>HGJ 037</td>
<td>Havana</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITC 582</td>
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<td>Havana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T19503</td>
<td>Havana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Public Transportation**

- **Top-level functionaries of the government**
- **Foreign political institutions:**
  - D: diplomatic, C: consules, E: employees
- **International tourism**
- **Minint: ministerio del interior**
  (part of the military)
- **Cuban citizens & foreigners**
  (particulares)
- **Provisional replacement of lost number plates, or during repair**
- **Authorized foreigners**
- **Foreign enterprises**
- **Free zone operations**
- **Religious institutions**
- **Foreign representatives**
- **Entitled cuban citizens**
- **Organisations of the state**
  - Governmental organisations
  - Political organisations
  - Cuban trading companies
  - Mixed enterprises
- **Civil non-profit institutions**
- **Civil service institutions**
- **Cooperative credit associations**
- **Authorized functionaries**
- **Military**
A public utopia

State assets
Demographic Data
Comparing with Netherlands

Cuba 1953
Netherlands 1953
Cuba 2005
Netherlands 2005
Cuba 2025
Netherlands 2025

Population density / km²

Vedado
1km² ≈ 50 blocks ≈ 12000 people
Cuba’s economy has been dependent on foreign trade, mostly the export of agricultural products, for instance, sugar, tobacco, etc. During the economy development in Cuba, the Cuban revolution has cleared the way for economic progress. In the pre-revolutionary period in Cuba, agriculture played the main role in Cuba’s economy. In 1972, being part of the USSR, Cuba’s economy gained a quicker development and the trade was shifted to socialist countries. However, the collapse of USSR in 1991 struck on Cuba’s economy. And the economic reforms in 1993 helped the economy recover a bit. The diplomatic relationship in 2011 indicated a new phase of Cuba’s economy.

Source:
Cuba is the largest importer in the world. During the last five years the imports of Cuba have increased at an annualized rate of 3.7%, from $4.94B in 2009 to $5.91B in 2014. The most recent imports are led by Wheat which represent 3.96% of the total imports of Cuba, followed by Refined Petroleum, which account for 3.87%.

The top import origins of Cuba are China ($1.05B), Spain ($920M), Brazil ($507M), Canada ($389M) and Mexico ($360M).

---

### International Trade

**Imports, 2014**

- **Machine**: 22%
- **Chemical Products**: 12%
- **Vegetable Products**: 12%
- **Animal Products**: 7.9%
- **Transport**: 7.2%
- **Metals**: 7.6%
- **Textiles**: 6.2%
- **Plastic and Rubles**: 6.2%

**Import origins, 2014**

- **Spain**: 16%
- **Germany**: 9.2%
- **France**: 5.9%
- **China**: 15%
- **Italy**: 6.1%
- **United States**: 4.9%
- **Brazil**: 8.6%
- **Argentina**: 4.6%

**Source**: http://atlas.media.mit.edu/
International Trade

Cuba is the 140th largest export economy in the world. In 2014, Cuba exported $1.74B and imported $5.91B, resulting in a negative trade balance of $4.17B.

The top exports of Cuba are Raw Sugar ($392M), Refined Petroleum ($314M), Rolled Tobacco ($236M), Hard Liquor ($116M) and Raw Nickel ($108M).

The top export destinations of Cuba are China ($311M), the Netherlands ($157M), Spain ($141M), Senegal ($92M) and the United Kingdom ($67.3M).
Cuba currently operates two currencies: the old Peso Cubano (CUP) and the Peso Convertible (CUC) that replaced the US dollars.

In history, the Cuban government decided to legalize the US dollar when Cuba's economy decreased to a heavy crisis after the soviet breakdown in the early nineties. In 2004, dollar was replaced by the Peso Convertible (CUC) since Cuban didn't want the Cuban economy to be based on the currency of their main enemy.

In 2013, the Cuban Government has announced it is taking steps to unify the country's two currencies. It is a bold and challenging undertaking, but it might just come to be the defining achievement of Raul Castro's presidency.
Retail system overview

- **Rationed retails**
  - Examples: bodega, carnicería
  - Time: 1962
  - Character: state-driven
  - Currency: libreta, CUP
  - Product: regional, national, imported goods
  - Price: $

- **Parallel retails**
  - Time: 1973
  - Character: state-driven&private
  - Currency: CUP
  - Product: national product (low quality)
  - Price: $$$

- **CUC retails**
  - Time: 1993
  - Character: state-driven
  - Currency: CUC
  - Product: imported goods
  - Price: $$$$$$$$

- **Free market**
  - Time: after the nineties
  - Character: private
  - Currency: CUP
  - Product: mainly agriculture
  - Price: $$$

- **Black market**
  - Time: 1959
  - Character: informal
  - Currency: CUC&CUP
  - Product: home-made, smuggling, unofficial way of getting goods from commerce
  - Price: $$$$$$$$$$
Informal economic activities are an everyday reality across Cuba regardless of their levels of economic development. Most of products sold on the informal market are got in misappropriate ways, for instance, thievery by employees from their workplace.

Most historical accounts of Cuba’s black market started from the year 1968. And it took center stage in the early 1990s when the USSR collapsed. Later, in response to the unprecedented crisis in Cuba, the government enacted a series of reforms to resuscitate the fading economy. Though these reforms diminished the size of black market, it still constitutes an important source of basic household goods and additional income for most Cubans.
In Cuba, everyone is equal and the government gives Cubans equal food every month. If you want to have more foods or materials, you need to work to earn monthly salary. On the other hand, a lack of material leads to a fact—material is fortune. In some degree, having access to resources means one Cuban could owe more fortune. Following the perspective of access to resources, the social status could be divided into four levels. At the top is of course Raúl Castro. Then, public servants that work for the government, they could have tickets and other staffs instead of queuing or following the rules. Thirdly, workers who are employed by the factories or shops, they would steal goods directly from the factories or shops. Meanwhile, there’s a trade exchange system among them in black market. For instance, if you have wooden furnitures, you could use it to exchange the eggs. At the bottom, the social status is professions such as doctors, architects.

Social Status

When money starts to play a role, what will happen in the future?
Property developers are queuing up to pounce as Cuba opens its doors to the world. Proposals for Havana's old harbour are described as 'Las Vegas meets Miami in the Caribbean'.

Meanwhile, Havana is beguiling from a distance, especially its old colonial buildings bathed in tropical sunshine. But up close this city is crumbling. Officials say that on average two buildings completely collapse in Havana every month.
How long will we have to wait? We need to get out. People ask me if I'm not afraid to live here. Of course I'm afraid, but this is my house so where can I go.

Mrs Torriente

Not everyone is in the same situation, economically and the state clearly has to help those most in need.

Marbelis Velazquez, Provincial housing official

We had nowhere else to go. The conditions were terrible. But it was that, or live in the street - and we have children. We needed a roof over our heads.

Resident of a collapsed building in Havana

Buildings are crumbling because they're old. Then there's the salt spray, humidity, termites, hurricanes and overcrowding.

Mrs Torriente

There are many kinds of problems and sometimes altogether.

Mrs Torriente

It's difficult, because neither the government nor the people have the money to care for the buildings.

Marbelis Velazquez, Provincial housing official

I sometimes go outside because I'm afraid the building won't hold.

Jose Ramon, Pensioner

In a way, we inherited a city we are not able to keep.
Healthcare System

Three level health system: family doctor - Policlinics - Hospitals. In this system, family doctors are the basic elements: a primary care worker and a statistician. Hospitals are most important in the system, connecting family doctors and hospitals.

Treatment process

A public utopia
Government

Private Institutions

Primary School

Basic Secondary School

High schools

Tech & Prof Education

Pre University

Technical Institute

University

Education is paid by the government

MES
Ministerio de Educación Superior

Government

Private Institutions

Primary School

Basic Secondary School

High schools

Tech & Prof Education

Pre University

Technical Institute

University

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MES
Ministerio de Educación Superior

Education System

— Controls/checks

— Progresses

Education (Cuba)

Requirements University:
- Men have served in the military
- Cleared by Committee for the defense of the revolution
- Good political standing

47 Universities

112,000 Students

13% of National budget on Education

Education (Netherlands)

Requirements University:
- finished primary and secondary school

18 Universities

276,000 Students

6.2% of National budget on Education
In response to strict restrictions on the construction of new buildings, many religious organizations used private homes, known as “house churches,” for religious services.

In the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the state adopted a more conciliatory position towards religion and lessened its promotion of atheism.

1959
Religious people were not allowed to join the Cuban Communist Party.

1962
The government of Fidel Castro seized and shut down more than 400 Catholic schools.

1960s-1970s
Many people lost interest in religion.

1985
In a best-selling book called Fidel y la Religión, Fidel Castro claimed responsibility for excluding non-atheists from Communist Party membership.

1991
The Communist Party began to allow believers into its ranks.

1992
The constitution removed the definition of Cuba as being a state based on Marxism-Leninism, and article 42 was added, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of religious belief. Small worship centres were legally permitted to exist again.

Early 1990s
Cuba had fewer priests per inhabitant than any other Latin American country.

1996
President Fidel Castro invited Pope John Paul II to visit Cuba.

1997
Christmas was officially recognized as a holiday for the first time since 1969, and then was permanently reinstated as a national holiday.

1998
Pope John Paul II paid a historic visit to the island.

Unfortunately, the improvements did not continue once the Pope left the island.

2008
the first country-wide religious procession was held since the Cuban revolution, to mark the 400th anniversary of the Virgin of Charity’s appearance in Cuba.

2008
The relief work of Caritas and various parishes after the 2008 hurricanes has earned the Church some additional street credibility.

2012
Pope Benedict XVI concluded his first official visit to Cuba, meeting with former President Fidel Castro and holding a mass before a multitude gathered in Havana’s Revolution Plaza.

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Increasing Freedom
The Catholic Church continued to publish periodicals that sometimes included criticism of official social and economic policies. As in previous years, the Catholic Church also received permission to broadcast Christmas and Easter messages on state-run radio stations and, in 2011, a televised mass on September 8, the feast day of the Virgin of Charity of El Cobre, the country’s patron saint. The Council of Churches, the government-recognized Protestant umbrella organization, was authorized to host monthly two-hour-long radio broadcasts.
Politics of Cuba

Cuba has an elected national legislature, the National Assembly of People’s Power (Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular), which has 612 members, elected every 5 years and holds brief sessions to ratify decisions by executive branch. National Assembly of People’s Power have the highest power in Cuba. They can elect president who is Chief of State, Head of Government, Prime Minister, First Secretary of the Party of Cuba (CPC)), and Commander in Chief of the Cuban armed forces.

- President
- First Vice President
- Vice President
- Member of National Assembly
- Member of Permanent Commissions
- Secretary
- Ground forces
- Naval forces
- Air and air defence forces
- other paramilitary bodies
- Ministers


Executive power is exercised by the government

The People’s Supreme Court

the highest judicial body
The National Assembly has the power to amend the Constitution; to pass, amend, and repeal laws; to debate and approve national plans for economic development, the State budget, credit and financial programs; and to set guidelines for domestic and foreign policies. It hears the reports from national government and administration agencies and can also grant amnesties. Among its permanent or temporary commissions are those in charge of issues concerning the economy, the sugar industry, food production, industries, transportation and communications, constructions, foreign affairs, public health, defense, and interior order. The National Assembly also has permanent departments that oversee the work of the Commissions, Local Assemblies, Judicial Affairs, and Administration.

The Assembly itself elects the 31 members of the Council of State; their terms expire when a new Assembly is elected. The assembly elects the President, Vice President and Secretary of the Council of State, who must report to the National Assembly on all its work and tasks. It also elects the Council of Ministers, the members of the Supreme Court, and the Attorney General’s Office of Cuba.

Up to 50% of the candidates must be chosen by the Municipal Assemblies. The candidates are otherwise proposed by nominating assemblies, which comprise representatives of workers, youth, women, students and farmers as well as members of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.

National Assembly of People’s Power

The Assembly is a unicameral (one-chamber) parliament and the only body in Cuba that is vested with both constituent and legislative authority (although the government may pass decrees that have the force of law). It holds two regular sessions a year, which are public unless the Assembly itself votes to hold them behind closed doors for reasons of state. It has permanent commissions to look after issues of legislative interest at times when the Assembly is not in session.

- President
- First Vice President
- Vice President
- Member of National Assembly

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National Assembly of People’s Power
Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers (Spanish: Consejo de ministros), also referred to as simply the Cabinet of Cuba, is the highest ranking executive and administrative body of the Republic of Cuba, and constitutes the nation's government. The council of Ministers proposes general plans for economic and social development, which are in turn authorized by the National Assembly twice yearly. The Council also directs Cuba’s foreign policy and its relations with other governments; approves international treaties before passing them over for ratification of the Council of State, directs and oversees foreign trade and the State budget. The Council of Ministers enforces laws authorized by the National Assembly, which are passed by the Council of State.

- President
- First Vice President
- Vice President
- Heads of the national ministries
- Secretary
- Others

The Communist Party of Cuba (Spanish: Partido Comunista de Cuba, PCC) is the political party that rules in Republic of Cuba, although others exist. It is a Communist party of the Marxist-Leninist model. The Cuban constitution ascribes the role of the Party to be the “leading force of society and of the state.” Since April 2011, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba has been Raúl Castro, the President of Cuba, younger brother of the previous First Secretary and President of Cuba, Fidel Castro, and the Second Secretary has been José Ramón Machado Ventura.[2]t

Communist Party of Cuba

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2016:
Politburo:
Raúl Castro Ruz
José Ramón Machado Ventura
Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel Bermúdez
Esteban Lazo Hernández
Ramiro Valdés Menéndez
Salvador Valdés Mesa
Leopoldo Cintra Frías
Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Pamilla
Marino Alberto Muñiz Jorge
Librada Mercedes López Acosta
Álvaro V. López Mejía
Ramón Espinosa Martín
Ulises Guallar de Nacimiento
Roberto Morales Ojeda
Mireya Nicolado García
Teresa Amarillo Boué
Marta Ayala Arka

Secretariat:
José Ramón Machado Ventura
Abelardo Álvarez Gill
José Ramón Balaguer Cabrera
Olga Lidia Tapia Iglesias
Omar Herrero Néz Martín
Jorge Oviedo Ramóst

Fidel Castro was the party’s First Secretary (or leader) since its inception, while Raúl Castro was the Second Secretary. Upon Fidel’s 2008 resignation from the Party and Cuban government, Raúl became First Secretary.

The Communist Party of Cuba has a youth wing, the Young Communist League (Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas, UJC) which is a member organization of the World Federation of Democratic Youth. It also has a children’s group, the José Martí Pioneer Organization.
1. To get ready for the president, the streets along his route from the airport have been swept and cleaned.

2. Homes have been repainted by the government in the neighborhood of Vedado, which the Obama motorcade will drive by.

3. Dozens of new street lights have gone up along the Malecón.

Cubans, Observing the Spectacle, Wait to See What Comes of Obama’s Meeting With Castro

By HANNAH BEECKLEY COHEN

March 21, 2016 | 5:23 PM ET

Men stood on top of cars on Monday, and crowds formed in the middle of one of Havana’s main boulevards. They had stopped to try to catch a glimpse of President Obama’s motorcade driving through the Vedado neighborhood on his way to meet President Raúl Castro at the Palace of the Revolution.

Stretching his neck from a second-floor balcony to see the hubbub on the street below, Gabriel Hernandez shook his head.
### Power generation (2011)

- **Distributed generation - diesel (3,595 GWh)**
- **Gas turbines and combined cycle (2,055 GWh)**
- **Domestic production - nickel and sugar cane (810 GWh)**
- **Hydropower (99 GWh, 0.6%)**
- **Wind energy (19 GWh, 0.1%)**
- **Diesel generators outside the network (64 GWh, 0.4%)**
- **Thermal power plants (oil) (11 113 GWh)**

### Number of exchanged device during the energy revolution

**Share in the total number of existing devices**

- **100%**
  - **1,043,709**
  - **265,505**
  - **3,595,139**
  - **9,470,710**

- **96%**
  - **2,550,997**

- **22%**
  - **230,504**

- **99%**
  - **3,242,591**

- **63%**
  - **138,139**

- **20%**
  - **47,643**

- **12%**
  - **39,776**

- **5%**
  - **19,984**

- **2%**
  - **7,992**

- **1%**
  - **3,997**

- **0.4%**
  - **1,599**

- **0.1%**
  - **531**

- **0.0%**
  - **229**

- **0.0%**
  - **114**

- **0.0%**
  - **56**
Life in the forbidden land

Program
There is a small part of the site covered by sea, which means the possibility of urban extinction to the water area.

**Built vs Unbuilt**

- 83% Built
- 17% Unbuilt

**Water vs Land**

- 4410000m² Water
- 3666677m² Land
Life in the forbidden land

Land Use

- hotels (29)
- bars / clubs (24)
- theatres / cinemas (11)
- restaurants (53)
- educational (31)
- museums / c.lt. centres (14)
- religious (8)
- commercial (108)
- hospitals / clinic (25)
- office (195)
- ministry
- warehouse
- military
- residential
- gas station (10)
- park (8)
- parking space
- monument / attraction

~3500
residential

108
commercial

195
offices

10
gas stations

8
parks

A combination of community focused lifestyle and ideology, as well as a favourable climate result in Havana having public spaces. Streets, markets, parks, and plain open areas act as public space hosting numbers of activities.

Defined public space
- 1. Calle Linea
- 5m buffers of pavement and greenery

Undefined leftover space
- 2. John Lennon Park
- 3. Trotcha Park

Defined public space
- 4. Green space next to new high-rise
- 5. Patches of greenery in Avenida del Pres

Fenced public space
- 6. The Malecon esplanade
- 7. Leftover space

Fenced public space
- 8. Social club "José Antonio Echeverría"
- 9. La Isla Japonesa Garden
Public space activities

- Bus waiting times up to 1.5h - bus stops become a good place for social interaction
- Most times bus stops are not just used only by people waiting for buses
- Space primarily designed for cars
- informal gathering space
- not designated market space
- no price tags
- high quality produce
- agromercados covering gaps in government provision of goods

Life in the forbidden land

- Household products sold on street corner
- Strong customer connections
- Temporary setup
- wide age range mix
- informal gathering space
- Malecon waterfront

24h activity

- Low tide extends the Malecon waterfront
Compared to the booming growth of early 20th century, there have been a very limited number of public infrastructure regeneration projects in the last few decades. This has left the urban environment development at a standstill, with public space largely unchanged and in slow deterioration. However, they still host vibrant activities throughout the day.
Public spaces throughout the day

Day

Night
The revolution in Cuba put an end to what had become a quite blooming sex trade with open prostitution in Havana. Between 1959 and 1990 prostitution was kept at a low level of visibility and numbers. After the start of the “Special period”, the need for other means of making money rather than government help meant a special type of profession known as “Jineteros” (“Jockeys” in Spanish). These are individuals acting in less legal activities and often specialize in hustling tourists, such as street scammers and prostitutes.

This special case of illegal profession means that there is less of a stigma being referred to as a Jinetero/a and being referred to as a criminal or a prostitute. Male prostitutes are sometimes referred to as “Pingüinos” (“Penguins” in Spanish).

As Cuba opens up there is an ever increasing number of foreign tourists going to Cuba to engage in sexual tourism, i.e. buying sex from prostitutes.

Main venues for prostitution in Havana:
- Malecon
- La Rampa

officers as a way of staying safe. Danury, a thirty-one-year-old teacher I met at Café Sofía along La Rampa, told me she had to be careful choosing which men to leave the bar with, because once she is seen walking with them in the street she will have to pay the officer on duty for his silence.
Locations of WiFi hotspots in Vedado. A growing number of Cubans is gathering around these hotspots to connect to the internet using laptops and smartphones. As a result, adjacent public spaces act as social hubs of increasing popularity.

WiFi hotspots

Internet censorship

All material intended for publication on the Internet must first be approved by the National Registry of Serial Publications. However, rather than focusing on complex filtering systems, the government relies on high cost and slow connection to restrict widespread access. A common circumvention is to store online content (such as news articles, videos, classified ads) on USB drives which are then circulated amongst friends and relatives. Some use a ‘speak to tweet’ system by which Cubans can call a phone number in the US and record an anonymous message that automatically gets posted in text format on Twitter or Facebook.

In terms of actual censorship, some services are blocked such as YouTube, WhatsApp and Skype, as well as some content such as anti-governmental blogs.
1. Green medicine in Cuba is not a gentle holistic trend, but born of the stark reality of economic collapse, as pharmacy and hospital shelves became empty of expensive pharmaceutical drugs. For the last ten years, the Cuban government has endorsed and aggressively promoted the cost-effective medicine provided by herbs, homeopathy and acupuncture.

2. The private market stalls play an important role in supplying this hard-to-find produce to a wider majority of Havana residents, who did not always have the access (or the money) to shop from the farms in the same way as the restaurants.

3. The creation of these farms laid the foundation for the recent culinary revolution in Cuba.

**Urban Agriculture in Vedado**

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3. The creation of these farms laid the foundation for the recent culinary revolution in Cuba.
There is no obvious commercial center in Medado. Most cafes and retail are close to street. Along the Malecon coastline and Calle 12, there are more retail shops compared to other areas.
What determines residential property landvalue?

There is an unresolved question for what is actually determining landvalue for residential properties in El Vedado. This variables are likely to change with the release of the US Embargo, but is relevant to understand which are these traits today, in order to follow the downfall or upraise of property value in the near future.

- property (house) for sale
- range from max to min
- greenery
- front of boulevard
- proximity to services
- property size
- proximity to water
For Cuban’s?

For Foreigns?

average price range

Life in the forbidden land

Ciudad de la Habana (Cuba)
Paseo, 57 E/ 3 y 5ª Vedado info@poretecho.com
Teléfono: +53 5 2721048.
The map shows the most prominent locations for tourists according to travel websites such as Lonely Planet and Trip Advisor. Vedado seems to lack important historical monuments compared to other tourist hotspots like Havana Vieja. Its main attractions consist of bars, clubs, restaurants, as well as museums and cultural centres.

Vedado’s image towards potential tourists: a westernized upcoming area, known for its nightlife as well as cultural attractions.
How eclecticism crumbles

Architecture
Building gained iconographic and popular character after application of El Che mural in 1995.

Ministry of Interior building before Revolution.

Havana Yacht club at present time.

Building gained iconographic and popular character after application of El Che mural in 1995.

Havana Yacht club before the Revolution.
Havana Hilton with the original facade with open balconies

Building was designed to have open balconies

Users have closed balconies with materials available

Iconic and innovative character in Vedado

In present day the building is found in very bad shape

How eclecticism crumbles

Havana Hilton with the original facade with open balconies

Havana Libre with closed mirror glass facade

In present day the building is found in very bad shape
Within the architecture styles in Cuba there can be two major phases distinguished. One starting from the beginning of World War I and ending just before World War II. The other main phases beginning after World War II up until the revolution in 1960. Havana, and especially Vedado, is characterized by great architectural expressions from all the styles above. It manifests ornamental Art Nouveau and Catalan influenced buildings such as the Tennis Club and Marie Curie hospital by Morales who was Havana’s first graduate from the Universidad la Habana. Furthermore eclectic bursts such as the American designed Hotel Nacional by Mead and White. Modernistic input by Ricardo Porro and Mansions along the Malecon by Romañach. After the revolution architecture hit an all time low. However this saved Vedado from becoming a “Las Vegas” like scenery.

Architecture Styles Overview

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“You realize that you’ve been accused of something. And then you realize that you have been judged. And then you realize you are guilty. And nobody tells you. [on falling out of favor with the Communist government of Cuba]”

“Modernity does not contradict tradition, it is actually the most developed instance of tradition itself.”
Architecture Style Typologies

Cuba’s early to mid-twentieth-century modern architecture movement can be seen as having two major phases. The first began a few years before World War I and continued to World War II. While it paid homage to Beaux-Arts influences with eclectic Cuban interruptions, it also formulated and developed new design ideas that were expressions of the ever-increasing interest in American engineering techniques and architectural trends.
Architecture Style Typologies

Havana was Cuba’s center of learning, culture, and architectural experimentation. Regardless of the proliferation of new wealth and construction, much of the earliest twentieth-century architecture was stylistically transitional and continued to pay at least partial allegiance to the historic colonial models and neoclassicism of the previous century. Reconciliation between urban architects who considered themselves early modernists and those who still thought of themselves as traditionalists resulted in a surprising outpouring of architectural styles that became known as Cuban Eclecticism. The island’s leading architects of the day, such as Leonardo Morales, Raúl Otero, Evelio Govantes, Félix Cabarrocas, and Eugenio Rayneri, practiced Cuban Eclecticism.
The second phase lasted from World War II to the mid-1960s and, under the impact of rectilinear cubism, emphasized the theories of modernist architects such as, notably, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius, and Le Corbusier, the high priest of the genre. By the late 1950s Cuba’s modern movement had reached maturity and ushered in a mature International Style and an assimilation of a repertory of modern regionalist forms. The climax came with the 1959 revolution’s political realignment, which culminated in the closing of Havana’s School of Architecture in 1965. The revolution is what some people call the saving grace of Havana’s architecture. With the closing of the architecture school, the trade slowly decayed together with the urge to build new buildings because of the lack of economic prosperity.
The early phases of the construction of Malecon were characterized by single or double storey buildings before the 1920s and the rise of three to four storeys until the 1950s. Due to increasing demand for floor space and El Vedado's urban district popularity after the 1950s, gave rise to skyscrapers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building heights</th>
<th>50+ m (27 - 1%)</th>
<th>20 - 50 m (101 - 3%)</th>
<th>0 - 20 m (3452 - 96%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Linea y E. (1959)</strong></td>
<td>residential</td>
<td>97m - 26 floors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Edificio Atlantic (2000)</strong></td>
<td>residential</td>
<td>97m - 25 floors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Edificio Giron (1967)</strong></td>
<td>residential</td>
<td>67m - 18 floors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Habana Riviera (1957)</strong></td>
<td>hotel</td>
<td>67m - 18 floors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Melia Cohiba (1994)</strong></td>
<td>hotel</td>
<td>82m - 22 floors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the early 1900’s, the built environment consisted of mainly low-rise due to legislation within building codes and limits regarding building height. After 1931, three- and four-story buildings were legalised. From 1953, residential flats increased in demand and high-rise was permitted, localised mostly along important axes and along the coast. With a booming industry during American occupation.

Building Age

- 1910-1930
- 1930-1940
- 1940-1959
- 1959-2011
- 2011-now
- Unknown
UNESCO World Heritage in Havana

Cuba had its first site included on the list at the 6th Session of World Heritage Committee, held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France, in December 1982. At that session, “Old Havana and its Fortifications”, an area including the central, historic portion of the Cuban capital of Havana, as well as Spanish colonial fortifications, was inscribed on the list (Source: UNESCO). Old Havana and its Fortifications is one of the 9 Cuban UNESCO areas and consists of 11 sites.
Neglect & Decay

Three buildings collapse each day because of neglect and indolent maintenance. Due to high percentages of upper-class “residencias”, nearly 80% of the buildings are well preserved or only lightly damaged. Most damaged buildings date from 1930 and earlier. Due to flooding up to Calle 7 buildings within this flooding area are highly affected. Mostly buildings from the Neoclassical style, Art Deco and Beaux Arts styles are decaying due to neglect. Also catalonian, and colonial architecture gets swept away and with it, the historical and cultural heritage of Havana and Vedado.
In Havana, three buildings collapse every single day. Historic preservation has become a key strategy and innovative tool for the revitalization and sustainable economic development of distressed urban neighborhoods of Havana and rural areas in Cuba. In 1980 Havana was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its aesthetic beauty and cultural significance. In order to preserve heritage buildings and sites, while developing sustainable tourism, Cuba created an innovative model to leverage tourism for historic preservation. Habaguanex is a corporation that partners with the Office of the City Historian to operate tourism activities in Old Havana and utilize the funds for construction and restoration projects.
A day in Vedado. In the house of architect Juan Gonzalez’s parents in law. A tour in an amazing early modernistic house, that back in the days housed several families. Now in the neighborhood of New Vedado, the house was occupied by a single family. It consists of several living rooms, an upstairs office and 2 kitchens. The house according to Juan, was left as original as possible to try and preserve its history. Only paint finishes were done to stylistically preserve its aesthetics. Close to the house Ricardo Porro designed this was significant for the architecture of the hilly landscape in the upscale neighborhood.
While strolling through Vedado, near Paseo, I came across a ruin located in parque Trotcha. A park on the border of typical Vedado upscale villas, American influenced hotels and simple residential buildings. A lady came up to me and saw my interest in the decayed and neglected building. In extremely lacking Spanish, I tried to ask her what its embodied before this great state of decay. She told me it once was the first hotel in Vedado, Gran Hotel Trotcha. She explained how this was the entrance that was left, a cafetaria underneath the canopy and a stairs towards the entrance. Now used as a park it shows the empathy the residents still have for their historical buildings.
“This is villa used to belong to one family, now it is separated into 17 dwellings. Everybody is responsible for their own maintainance. So you will notice that only a few residents painted just their own part of the facade.”
Flooding Evidence

"I try to fix my house every now and then but the salt is stronger. It is embedded in the walls and destroys any cover... floods keep showing up, so it’s a vicious cycle."

- Virginia Morales, 2016
Water Black Market

“We are a restaurant, not a house. We have to call the “pipa” (1000 L illegal delivery water truck) everyday and sometimes three times a day. Cost is 30 to 40 cuc per truck while we pay the state 50 cents for water per month. It is insane, but you know...Cuba is Cuba.”

- Miguel Rodriguez, 2016
In Old Havana, a man just half-naked on the street in a community to fix a car, which gave the street, a kind of public spaces, a special layer of definition. The normally private behavior is freely embedded into the public space.

Agression of Privacy
Vieja

Everyday life is loosely restricted into a small area, centralized by their own home in Vedado.

Limitation of Living Scale
Vedado
People in Havana can wait up to one hour per trip for a bus. Bus stops become places to socialize. Sometimes residents live nearby may come to bus stop only for chatting. Chairs in this bus stop creates space for people to stay face to face chatting. There’s also people sitting around the bus stop. No one in this image is checking their phones or iPads. This also happens in train stations. These “stations” has become important public spaces in this country.
"This is what we all loved about Vedado... I am from the generation that learned to swim there. It’s a shame they were forgotten and now they remain in our memory..."

- Antonio Masis, 2016
Shaded from the scorching sun and blistering rain, using the public space to practice the national passion of boxing.

The monthly rations of rice and other food staples is often not enough to support a growing family. Many people told of doing business on the side to supplement their meagre monthly salary.