

## Areas of concern

### The CARIMOS plan for monuments and sites in the Greater Caribbean

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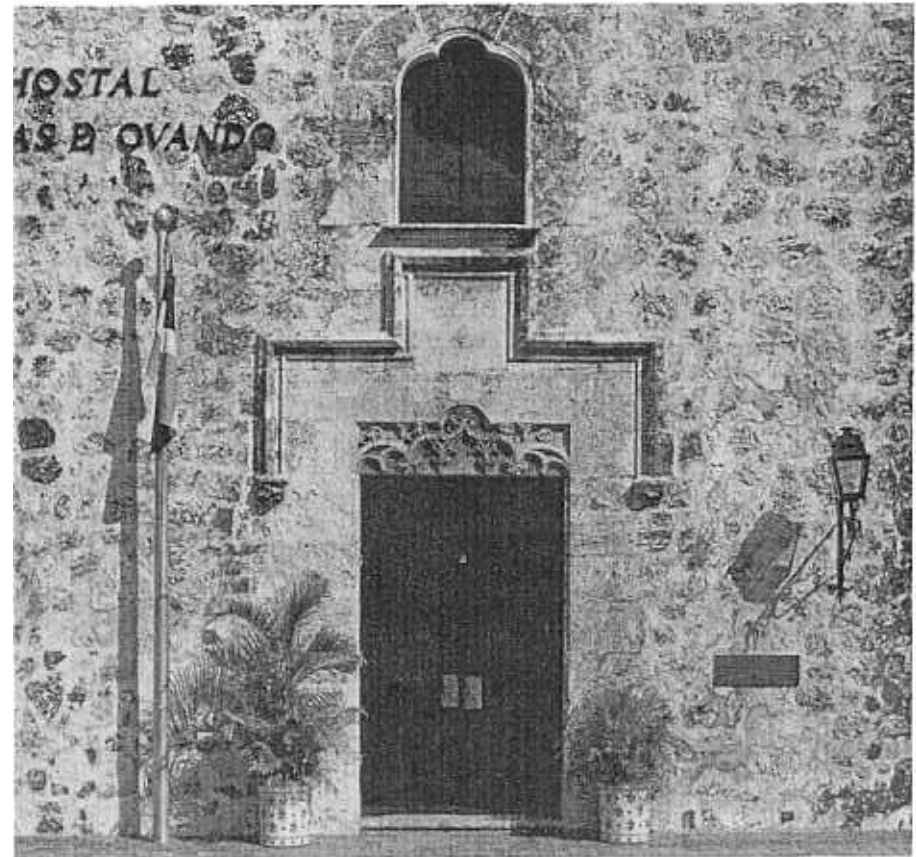


FIG. 1. An example of a Gothic house in Santo Domingo built for the use of the Governor, Nicolas de Ovando, in the early sixteenth century.

<sup>1</sup> This action has the support of the Organization of American States (OAS) and was initiated in the Dominican Republic through the National University Pedro Henríquez Ureña (UNPHU) in Santo Domingo. For several years the project was sponsored by the Dominican ICOM/ICOMOS. It now has the backing of the University of Florida in Gainesville and the Caribbean Conservation Association, which have become Project Sub-centers along with the Coordination Center established by the UNPHU in Santo Domingo. Other institutions, such as the National ICOMOS committees in several countries, preservation groups, international organizations such as the Association of Universities and Institutes of the Caribbean, government departments dealing with

The architecture of the Caribbean is like Nature itself in that region, heterogeneous and dispersed. Nevertheless, the urban sites possess a certain similarity in their atmosphere. Some call this common character Antillian; others define it as Caribbean, in which towns, cities and buildings merge in a tropical, colorful entity.

However it may be defined, there is a growing realization that this quality is precious and in need of conservation. But the success or failure of a programme concerned with an historic centre does not depend on the number of monuments contained within it. Nor is it the exclusive responsibility of a single generation; but it depends on a conscious responsibility demonstrated by local groups, or by the municipal, national or international community. A human settlement is like cultural wealth, a non-renewable resource whose disappearance is an irreversible loss—whether it is a five hundred year old city such as Santo Domingo or a coastal village which serves to illustrate the ingenuity and creativity of its inhabitants.

Within this general concept, CARIMOS was born with the aim of strengthening the conservation of Caribbean monuments and sites, of revitalizing old centres, and of initiating a movement towards a collective consciousness in which our heritage is converted into an instrument for economic and social development.<sup>1</sup>

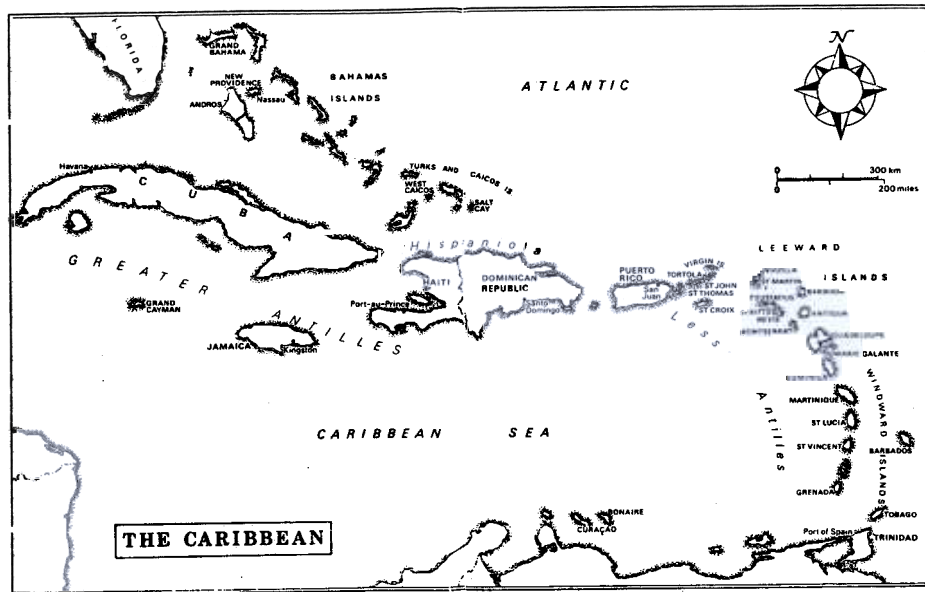


FIG. 2. The Caribbean Sea or Mar de las Antillas.



FIG. 3. An old plan of Santo Domingo.

### The world of the Caribbean

The conquering force of the discovery of America was concentrated on the isles of the Caribbean Sea (Fig. 2), and was then extended to the continental shores, when specific urban patterns were adopted. The territorial expansion in America was far greater than that of the Hellenic world or the Roman empire; but to what extent has its visible influence survived? The powerful threat of destruction hanging over the Caribbean monuments and sites is hard to withstand. The effort to safeguard the cultural remains of the Antilles and the continental territories of the Greater Caribbean becomes ever more difficult because of the absence of a collective consciousness and specific infrastructural factors. It is obvious that the economic and social values of the region's monumental resources can be realized only by utilizing them within the framework of tourism. Hence this proposal for development by means of conservation.

The world of Caribbean architecture is directly related to the epic of discovery. At the turn of the fifteenth century La Isabela and Santo Domingo (Fig. 3) were founded along with Sevilla in Jamaica and San Juan in Puerto Rico. Within the same latitude, and only slightly later, other cities were founded. Pedrarias Davila, bearing instruction on how to found it, established Panama La Vieja in 1519; Rodrigo de Bastidas sailed along the coast of Colombia and founded Santa Marta. La Habana

<sup>1</sup> (continued)

affairs related to the Plan and, especially, individual professionals have enrolled in a movement that is about to become the most important cultural initiative of the Greater Caribbean Region.

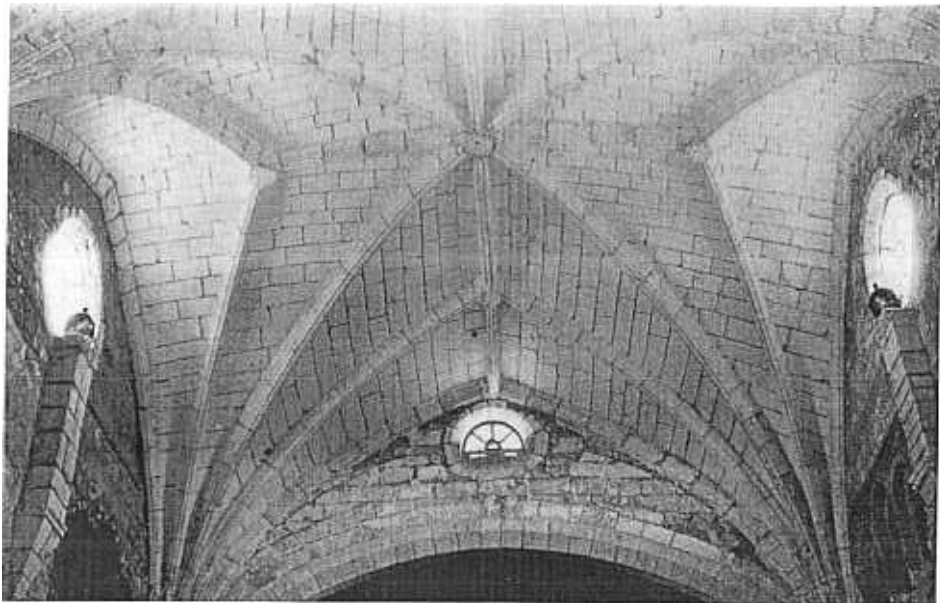


FIG. 4. Gothic vaulting in the convent of Santo Domingo.

was created around 1519 but not developed, while Pedro Heredia appeared in 1513 on the site of what is today called Cartagena de Indias. In 1519, at the same time as Panama and La Habana, the port of Veracruz was established in the Gulf of Mexico.

Apart from these first settlements, some of which have now disappeared or are in ruins, a second group resulted from the dismemberment produced by the colonial interventions of England, France and Holland. The English occupied Jamaica in 1655; and a little earlier, in 1634, the Dutch had occupied Curaçao; Spain thus began to lose her domination in the area and her culture was weakened. However, the bricklayers and carpenters who moved from island to island, from territory to territory, created a language that is still recognizable in Port-au-Prince, Jackmel and in the river port centres of Central America, as well as in other towns along the Gulf and in the lesser Antilles. During the nineteenth century the various human and cultural traditions introduced by Europeans, Africans and Indians were, to a certain extent, integrated within the new territorial geometry of the sugar-cane settlements.

All these influences produced a richly varied architectural heritage. The late Gothic, dating from the time of the Discovery and Conquest, clearly left its mark in Hispaniola, Puerto Rico and Jamaica, and later in

Mexico (Fig. 4). At the end of the fifteenth century the first Colonial dwellings on the American continent were erected on Hispaniola to shelter the conquistadors and immigrants. This was the origin of the towns of La Isabela, Concepcion de la Vega and Santo Domingo de Guzman, originally on the east bank of the river. This building programme was undertaken with the help of architects and stonemasons from Europe, and architectural forms and fashions were transplanted to the New World. In Santo Domingo and other cities we find Gothic structures (Fig. 1) exhibiting Plateresque conceits based on such Renaissance themes as pomegranates, grotesque masks and monsters, but also reflecting at times an Islamic influence.

At the same time a vernacular architecture was developing; for example, it was in Santo Domingo that the first sugar-cane mills were built, and this building type was developed in the greater and lesser



FIG. 5. A sugar windmill in Barbados.





FIG. 6. The sugar cane factory at Nigua, one of the largest eighteenth-century examples of this building type, before restoration.

Antilles in the following centuries (*Fig. 5*) until it attained its final form in the nineteenth in the great mills of Cuba, Jamaica and Puerto Rico. Complementary to these industrial buildings are the plantation houses of the owners, overseers, workers and slaves. Sugar's economic power created both large and small monuments (*Figs 6 and 7*) in the same way that it produced both family riches and social injustices; but a study of the vernacular architecture of the Caribbean shores reveals an uninterrupted sequence of common values and appropriate technology that is perfectly adapted to the surroundings, ecology and society. This aspect of vernacular architecture, often the product of those on the fringe of society, is the counterpart of the Franco-Antillian buildings of Port-au-Prince (*Fig. 8*), New Orleans and the Panama Canal, or the Georgian architecture of Bridgetown, or the Dutch influence in Curaçao (*Fig. 9*), or the pervasive Spanish colonial presence.

Other colonial influences added to the diversity of Caribbean architecture. Republican Neoclassical monuments may be found throughout the area in the form of official buildings or great houses. Neo-Gothic images from the British colonial sites compete with romantic



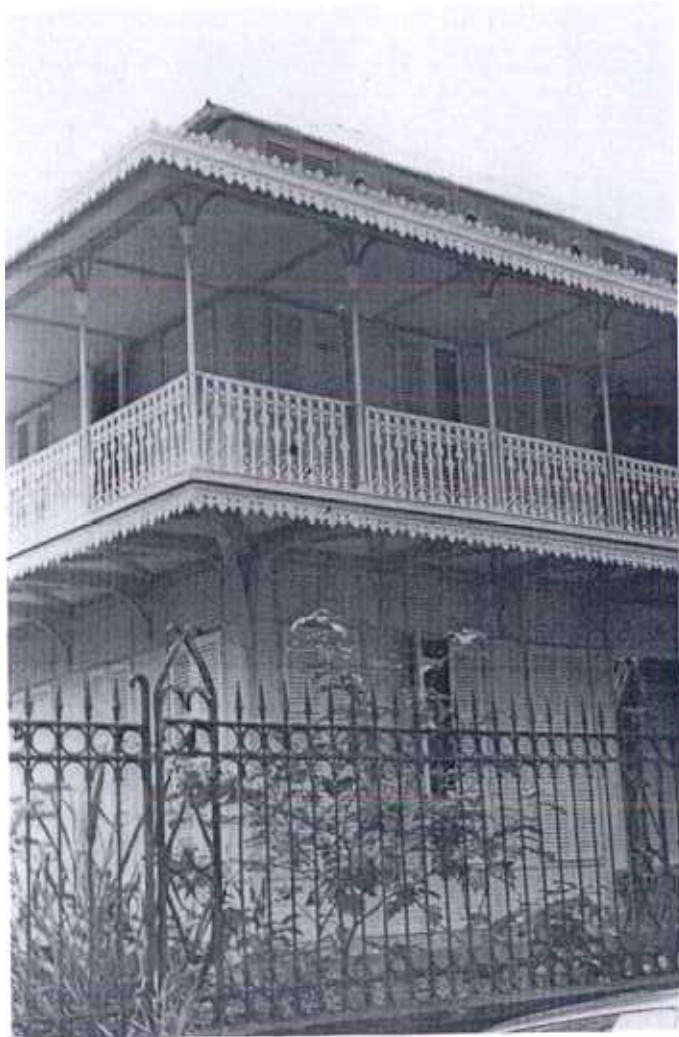
FIG. 7. The sugar cane factory at Nigua after restoration.

academic neo-Renaissance concepts and provincial idealizations of the official Baroque of the French and Spanish Bourbon courts. Nevertheless, the Neoclassicism of San Juan and of La Habana demonstrate different lines of action and different spatial rhythms, and are an essential part of the history of Caribbean architecture. The decorative details and ornamental balconies found everywhere (*Fig. 10*), the small, narrow wooden cabins with their rectangular floor plans and pitched roofs, which may be found in the towns of Haiti and along the American coasts of the Gulf, are as much a part of the history of Caribbean architecture as are the small bungalows (*Fig. 11*), almost Victorian in character (i.e. English, latter half of the nineteenth century) in the Dominican Cibao valley; and so are the cabins of the Panamanian countryside and the stilt houses of Lake Maracaibo in Venezuela.

Among the Caribbean historic sites are the great fortresses of Cartagena, Portobello, La Havana, San Juan (*Fig. 12*), Campeche and St Augustine, as well as those established by the great Admiral Christopher Columbus, his captains and generals, the bishops and governors, the mayors, chroniclers and map-makers. Some of these sites are only

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6. 8. A house with  
ance-Antillian charac-  
teristics in Guadalupe.



awaiting an archaeological program; some are villages, while others are important cities in which the historic centre, having become a slum, is in danger of being obliterated or completely destroyed by the modern city.

This brief account of the architectural influences only underlines the extent to which the Caribbean's geographical importance has been recognized. Juan Bosch has described how it occupies, geographically



FIG. 9. The port of Willemstad in Curaçao.



FIG. 10. A house with balconies and verandas on the island of St. Lucia.

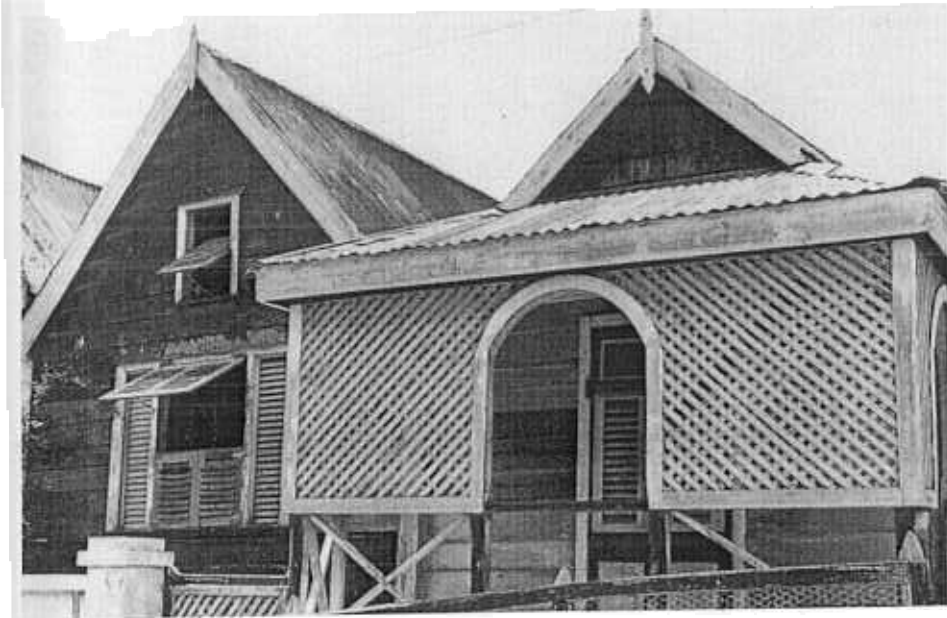


Fig. 11 A characteristic house on the island of Barbados.

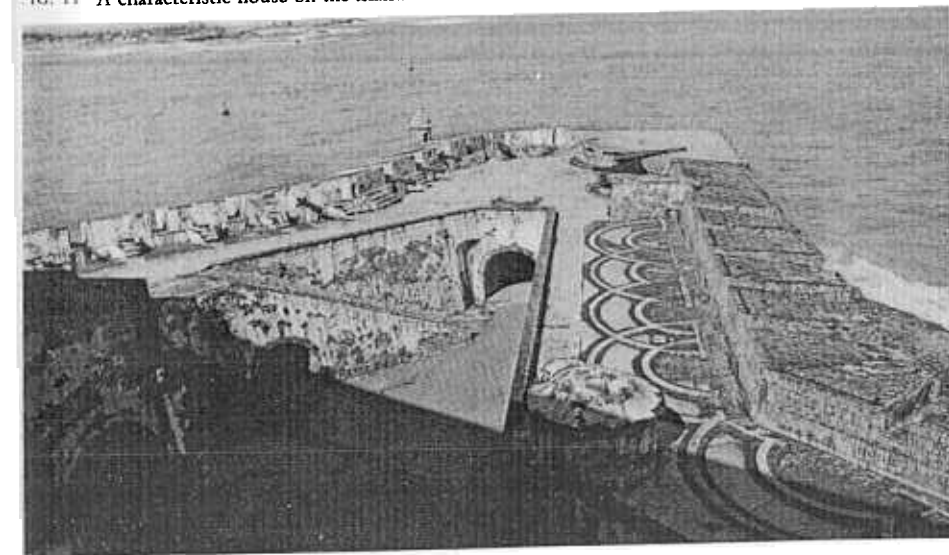


Fig. 12. The fort of San Felipe del Morro on the island of San Juan, Puerto Rico. The Caribbean fortifications are in a special category requiring protection.

'from a political and military standpoint, a strategic position; the Caribbean is destined by its position and its privileged nature to be the frontier of two or more empires'.<sup>2</sup> This destiny, he adds, 'has made it a coveted prize for the great western powers and the theatre for the violent scenes enacted by them'. The same writer emphasizes how

The history of the Caribbean is the history of the struggles of the empires to wrest these rich lands from their native peoples; the history of the battles between the imperial powers to take portions already gained from one another, and finally the history of the struggle of the peoples of the Caribbean to gain their freedom from these imperial masters. If one fails to study the Caribbean according to this criterion, it would not be easy to understand why this sea has been so important from the time of Columbus to the days of Castro, nor will it be possible to foresee what will happen there in the future.<sup>3</sup>

For many, the modern Caribbean is still to be identified with the Antilles; but it has been observed that

the introduction of slavery in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and its abolition in the nineteenth, were true social revolutions, profound enough to alter the foundations of Antillian society and to break what little continuity its history had.<sup>4</sup>

Today, the economy of the Antilles (which was linked historically to sugar, tobacco, contraband, piracy and slavery) turns on the fortunes of tourism and oil.

The Caribbean is an unbalanced area in which the great continental countries such as Venezuela, Mexico, Cuba and the United States of America, with their enormous political and economic power are pitted against the small island nations or colonial provinces. Strategies and plans for development overlap, thus confirming the situational interdependence of the Greater Caribbean as a regional zone. Among the latest proposals the most noteworthy is the Caribbean Basin Project, by which the government in Washington will promote certain specific actions for regional development. The initial programme was introduced by the American Secretary of State at a meeting in Nassau attended by the Foreign Ministers of Canada, Mexico and Venezuela. The four countries agreed to cooperate in offering economic assistance to the Caribbean and Central American countries, including: incentives for foreign trade; investment; emergency assistance.

We may conclude therefore that the Caribbean is being bombarded with ideas which, if used intelligently, can turn the 1980s into the beginning of a sustained movement for social and economic development based on integration; and this is one of the main objectives of the project for the Greater Caribbean, which is regarded as an instrument for conservation and development through the environmental revitalization of important sites.

At the same time, the United Nations has initiated a program, Action

<sup>2</sup> Bosch, J., *From Christopher Columbus to Fidel Castro*, Editora Alfa y Omega, Santo Domingo, 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>4</sup> Parry, J.H. and Sherlock, P., *History of the Antilles*, Buenos Aires.



Plan for the Caribbean, for the preservation of natural resources. A brief description is as follows

Acting together for the first time, the Caribbean nations have launched a long range plan for Environmental Protection. Representatives of 23 of the 27 states, territories and islands of the Caribbean approved the action plan in a meeting in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

The action plan, which the International Union for the Conservation of the Caribbean helped to define, includes sixty-six specific environmental projects that range from the fight against oil pollution, the management of hydrographic basins, protection of coral reefs and mangrove swamps, protection of tropical forests and endangered species, to the mitigation of risks caused by natural disasters, monitoring of coastal contamination and studies of the impact of tourism on the environment.

### **CARIMOS: Plan for Monuments and Sites of the Greater Caribbean**

The Greater Caribbean Project is an instrument for the conservation, development and revitalization of the surroundings of the monuments and sites of the region, and it hopes to combine the forces both of individuals and institutions, and of the public and private sectors.

This project is also a strategy that would create a community willingness to find the means whereby the building heritage of the historic centers may be converted into an instrument for economic and social development.

The cultural resources and their relation with the vital hopes and perceived needs of man assembled on a territorial level acquire a different dimension when viewed from a regional perspective.

The Plan is a cultural component of recent and important regional initiatives which take into account that the Greater Caribbean is in the 'waiting room' expecting to enter a new period of economic and social development, and this on the eve of the five hundredth anniversary of its discovery.

The greater Caribbean includes the insular and continental territories of the Antilles Sea, the Gulf of Mexico including the Bahamas, Guyana and Surinam as well as the waters of the Atlantic adjacent to these states and territories according to the definition of the United Nations Environmental Protection Plan (UNEP).

The original project has evolved into a ten year plan that includes the following: promotion of a regional consciousness, conservation of the architectural heritage, and the preservation of historical centers, the publication of professional experience and the formation of human resources, the problems of appropriate technology and artisan training, the execution of projects and technical assistance with the participation of the Universities (or equivalent institutions) of the region.

#### *III A. General considerations*

In the program meeting held at the University of Florida in Gainesville in March 1982 in collaboration with the Organization of American States (OAS), the Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA) and the National University Pedro Henriquez Ureña (UNPHU) of Santo Domingo, ideas were expressed relating to the geography, history and anthropology of the Greater Caribbean. These led to the specific activities that are outlined below.

The activities to be undertaken are oriented by the following general objectives in the antecedents of the Plan:

1. To identify and investigate the Caribbean monumental heritage within a framework of cultural development.

2. To determine whether or not possibly unifying characteristics exist, as well as the origins and reciprocal influences in the most noteworthy historical centers of the area.
3. To publish these results with the intent that the governments of this region may establish conservation and valuation policies.
4. To train the human resources indispensable for the work of conservation and to promote voluntary groups that may participate in the process and interchange of experiences between the different countries.
5. To proceed with the implementation of basic work on the identified types in the principal historic centers, so they may serve as models in the development of a conservationist policy with the overall goal of economic and social development.

It must be pointed out that a number of important regional institutions have joined in the effort along with a group of noteworthy experts, more of whom will be needed in specific areas and disciplines in the work groups formed as a result of the meeting.

About twenty territories in the region are effectively involved through institutions or individuals in the 'Work Groups' in the Coordinating Center in Santo Domingo, established for this project by the National University Pedro Henriquez Ureña in the Dominican Republic or in the work Sub-centers sponsored by the Caribbean Conservation Association in Barbados and the University of Florida at Gainesville.

Specific projects are under study that could be carried out in Haiti, Barbados, St Vincent, Antigua-Barbuda, Santo Domingo, Jamaica, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

A publishing program will start shortly under the sponsorship of the OAS, the UNPHU and UNICA.

An information center will offer unified data gathering according to the characteristics of each country, using as a base the multiple-use card registration of cultural resources developed in the regional seminar on the Inventory of Monumental Heritage, in Atlahuetzia, Mexico in 1979.

Parallel to the phase of information gathering there must be an ample publication program that will prevent negative actions by the modification or disappearance of the authentic cultural values of the region.

The measures developed under the Plan will take into account and contribute to the refinement of the cultural identity on a national and on a regional level.

The publication program will also take into account the necessary participation of tourism organisms with the idea that their intervention will serve to develop and strengthen the socio-economic development of the area.

In order to ensure the correct implementation of the work and its subsequent conservation and maintenance, the plan will undertake an ample program of technical formation on both the professional and artisan levels. By means of this training program a dynamic continuity will be maintained with new generations of professionals and will be nourished with new viewpoints and solutions.

#### *III B. Stages of the Plan*

According to the planning document resulting from the meeting in Gainesville, the general plan for the Greater Caribbean Project has been spread in three stages over a ten year span aimed at 1992, the five hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America.

The document allows for the following stages:

*The First Stage (1982-83)* sets the following objectives:

1. To programme the organization and functioning of the Coordination Center

in Santo Domingo and work Sub-centers in the Caribbean Conservation Association in Barbados and the University of Florida in Gainesville, as well as any others that may become necessary.

2. To identify areas of action, to develop programmes and organize work groups.
3. To carry out certain specific projects as already foreseen and to take advantage of them as investigation laboratories and/or professional training.
4. To design a training program, taking existing programs into account.
5. To begin a publication program on a regional level with the purpose of creating a network of information of professional communication and publication.

*The Second Stage (1984–87)* is limited to the following objectives:

1. To intensify the activities relating to the Inventory of Monuments and Sites according to specific historic centers of primary interest on a regional level.
2. To carry out specific programs for the revalorization of the existing heritage with reference to economic and social development.
3. To strengthen the criteria of historic centers as a unit leading to the development of the community.
4. To promote specific studies that constitute an integration factor in the development of the Greater Caribbean.
5. To promote horizontal technical cooperation between countries, institutions and individuals.

*The Third Stage 1987–91* sets the following objectives:

1. To consolidate and implement measures begun in previous stages.
2. To give ample publication to the activities carried out.
3. To execute specific projects on a regional level through which they can gain access to the general and specific objectives of CARIMOS.

### III C. Activities for the First Stage and for the Work Groups

One of the most important achievements of the meeting in Gainesville was the creation of the six Work Groups in different interdisciplinary areas and a technical advisory committee on the highest level. By means of these committees work will be channeled, and the projects carried out will be evaluated. At the same time the Work Groups may be used so that all participation may be properly organized on coherent levels in a professional interdisciplinary relationship.

The following activities have also been programmed:

1. To carry out the Inventory of Sites and Monuments in Barbados and Granada.
2. To elaborate pilot restoration projects in Haiti and Surinam, that will serve as investigation laboratories and as generators of experience for the conservation of wooden architecture which is in an advanced stage of deterioration in several countries in the region.
3. To select and effectuate pilot rescue projects of the architectural heritage in St Vincent and Antigua-Barbuda, in coordination with the Sub-centers created by the Caribbean Conservation Association.
4. To hold several work meetings during 1982–83.
5. To organize an editorial program with UNICA (Association of University and Research Institutes of the Caribbean) according to the objectives to be drawn up by the Work Group on Consciousness Raising and Publications.

### Conclusions and recommendations from the meeting

The conclusions and recommendations of the meeting are contained in several paragraphs that sum up the general spirit of the Plan for the Greater Caribbean and the general outline of its strategies.

Nevertheless, the basic operating element is conceived of as the Work Groups organized at the Gainesville meeting, as well as the Coordination Center in Santo Domingo and the Sub-centers in Barbados and Florida.

Specific resolutions are as follows:

1. To ratify as a framework for the Plan for Monuments and Sites of the Greater Caribbean (CARIMOS) the specific conclusions relating to the Preservation of the Monumental Heritage of the Greater Caribbean area from the second International Symposium on the Conservation of the Monumental Heritage held in Morelia by ICOMOS–Mexico, the OAS and UNAM in October 1981.
2. To adopt as a geographic frame of reference for the Plan for Monuments and Sites of the Greater Caribbean (CARIMOS) the definition of the United Nations Plan for Environmental Protection (UNEP) for the said region.
3. To work for the integration of CARIMOS as the cultural component in the program for the socio-economic development of the Caribbean sponsored by Columbia, the United States, Mexico and Venezuela.
4. To promote technical and financial collaboration between the countries which, for cultural, historic and political reasons, are linked to the Greater Caribbean region.
5. To establish contacts with both governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to obtain additional financing for the said plan.
6. To establish the Regional Project for the Investigation, Conservation and Revalorization of the Monumental Heritage of the Caribbean Basin as the first stage in the Plan for Monuments and Sites of the Greater Caribbean.
7. To solicit that the universities and research centers of the region sponsor studies and the publication of work on architectural heritage and on historic centers within the publishing program of the Plan for Monuments and Sites of the Greater Caribbean.

### Résumé

L'architecture des Caraïbes est comme la nature même de cette région—hétéroclite et dispersée. Néanmoins, les sites urbains ont tous une certaine atmosphère en commun—appelée parfois antillaise parfois caribéenne—où baignent les villes, les bourgs et les bâtiments formant une espèce d'ensemble tropical et coloré. Or, on se rend compte maintenant que, de quelque manière qu'on la définisse, cette qualité est précieuse et doit être sauvegardée. Mais le succès d'un projet de conservation d'un ensemble historique ne dépend pas du nombre de monuments qu'il contient pas plus qu'il ne peut être l'oeuvre d'une seule génération; il dépend en fait de la prise de conscience de groupes locaux ou de la communauté urbaine, nationale ou internationale. Un centre de peuplement est, comme tout patrimoine culturel, non renouvelable et sa perte est irréversible, cela qu'il s'agisse d'une cité vieille de cinq siècles comme Saint Domingue ou

d'un village du littoral illustrant le génie et la créativité de ses habitants.

C'est autour de ce concept général qu'est né CARIMOS (Plan Caribéen pour les Monuments et les Sites). Il s'agit d'un programme de dix ans pour la restauration de bâtiments, monuments et sites de la région des Caraïbes qui devrait culminer en 1992, cinq centième anniversaire de la découverte du Nouveau Monde par Christophe Colomb.

Le Plan, résultat de plusieurs années de travail d'une équipe basée à Saint Domingue est ambitieux: il inclut non seulement la sauvegarde des bâtiments, monuments et sites de valeur historique et architecturale, sauvegarde qui sera étroitement liée à des projets de développement économique et social, mais aussi plusieurs publications destinées à sensibiliser le public caribéen à la valeur de son patrimoine culturel.

Le Plan fut lancé en mars 1982 au cours d'un



congrès à l'Université de Floride qui réunit l'Organisation des Etats Américains (OAS), l'Association Caribéenne de Conservation (CCA) et l'Université Nationale Pedro Henriquez Ureña (UNPHU). Les travaux seront dirigés à partir d'une centre de coordination principal à Saint Dominique épaulé par des centres secondaires au Secrétariat du CCA à la Barbade et au Centre d'Architecture Tropicale de l'Université de Floride qui animeront une série de commissions consacrées chacune à une tâche particulière. Le CCA sera chargé de la coordination des travaux dans les Antilles de langue anglaise, française et hollandaise; de plus, il est présent au sein de la commission chargée de l'inventaire, des publications et généralement de la sensibilisation du public. D'autres projets spécifiques sont à l'étude pour Haïti, la Barbade, Saint-Vincent, Antigua-Barbuda, Saint-Domingue, la Jamaïque, le Nicaragua et le Venezuela.

## Resumen

La arquitectura del Caribe es como la propia naturaleza de la región heterogénea y dispersa. Con todo, los emplazamientos urbanos poseen cierta semejanza de ambiente. Algunos denominan antillana esta característica común; otros se valen de la expresión 'del Caribe' para definir la unidad tropical y llena de clorido en la cual se funden villas, ciudades y edificios.

Se la define de un modo u otro, lo indudable es que cada vez nos damos más cuenta de que esta cualidad es preciosa y necesita ser conservada. Pero el éxito o el fracaso de un programa relativo a un centro histórico no depende del número de monumentos que contiene. Tampoco es la responsabilidad exclusiva de una sola generación, sino que depende de la responsabilidad consciente demostrada por grupos locales o por la comunidad municipal, nacional o internacional. Un emplazamiento humano, como acervo cultural, es un recurso no renovable cuya desaparición constituye

una pérdida irrevocable, ya se trate de una ciudad de cinco siglos de existencia, como Santo Domingo, o de un pueblo de la costa que ilustre el ingenio y la creatividad de sus habitantes.

De este concepto nació CARIMOS (Caribbean Plan for Monuments and Sites), programa de diez años para la rehabilitación de edificios, monumentos y emplazamientos del Caribe, y que se espera llegue a su punto culminante en 1992, quinto centenario del descubrimiento del Nuevo Mundo por Cristóbal Colón.

El Plan, resultado de varios años de trabajo de un grupo con base en Santo Domingo, es de amplios vuelos. Comprende no sólo la conservación de edificios, monumentos, y lugares de interés histórico y arquitectónico, que serán integrados en programas nacionales de desarrollo económico y social, sino también la producción de publicaciones destinadas a llamar la atención de las gentes del Caribe al significado de esta parte del legado cultural.

El Plan surgió de una reunión celebrada en la Universidad de Florida en marzo de 1982, en unión de la OAS (Organization of American Sites), la CCA (Caribbean Conservation Association) y la UNPHU (Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña); será dirigido por un centro de coordinación en Santo Domingo, con subdirecciones en el Secretariado de la CCA en Barbados y en el Centro de Arquitectura Tropical de la Universidad de Florida, y funcionará mediante varios comités responsables de diversas áreas de actividad. La CCA tendrá a su cargo la coordinación del trabajo en el Caribe de habla inglesa, francesa y holandesa, y está representada en el comité encargado de compilar inventarios y de publicaciones y cultura del medio ambiente.

Están en estudio proyectos que podrían ser llevados a cabo en Haití, Barbados, San Vicente, Antigua-Barbuda, Santo Domingo, Jamaica, Nicaragua y Venezuela.