

The quarterly newsletter of
the Trinidad and Tobago
Society of Planners
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The Planning newsletter

Page One Comment: *Our Festival Infrastructure*

We are really between a rock and a hard place! The 'Recession' experts are suggesting that concentration on our cultural, social and religious festivals, sporting activities and local tourism will be one of the panaceas for surviving the global economic downturn. At the same time our falling revenues do not now afford us the opportunity for provision of adequate facilities for these activities.

We have just come out of the Carnival season and our memories are fresh with the horror stories of the damaged athletic surfaces at the National Stadium and the sufferings of residents within hearing distance of the mega decibel fetes and concerts. Those who played mass on the sloping and treacherous streets and then had to pass over the pretend stage that afforded little seating accommodation to view the mass, even those with 'porta potty trucks', must have concluded that we who boast of the 'Greatest Show on the Earth' had nowhere to show anything! We put up with minimum levels of sanitary facilities, clambered up dangerously sloping stairs, sat in uncomfortable seats, stared at small reluctant monitors, because the stage was off centre and support poles impeded the view.

Ok, we had sufficient rum in our heads and low expectations to be able to tolerate the lack of carnival infrastructure and never mind the visitors – we are not a Tourist country, most of the visitors are returning Trinis anyway. Right? But what about our other festivals?

We have had several Phagwa celebrations – mostly at schools and recreation grounds. Toilets? Organised Parking? Proper stages and sound systems for Chowtal Singing and the Dancers?

What about the Ramleela enactments? Rich cultural traditions faithfully preserved for centuries. Shouldn't we by now have a theatre in the round that could support the presentations and provide facilities for the actors? Imagine having to be transformed into a Goddess or a Demon in the full glare of the onlookers! Half of the drama is lost! The same fate befalls most of the Heritage presentations in Tobago – schools and

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"....The Island (of Tobago) should be divided into Parishes of 6,000 to 10,000 acres and suitable land should be reserved for fortifications, navy yards, and other military purposes. Towns should be laid out of 500 to 1,000 acres in lots, not to exceed 6 acres each, with 60 feet reservation on the waterside, for wharves, quays and other public uses; a glebe for the Minister (of religion) of 100 to 200 acres and 30 to 60 acres for a Schoolmaster

.....reservations of woods in suitable places, to maintain rainfall and a suitable climate. The rest of the lands should be allotted as plantations in lots of 100 to 300 acres; in each Parish 800 acres should be reserved, for grants in fee simple of lots of 10 to 30 acres for poor settlers."

Town and Country planning instructions given by the crown in regard to preparation for the sale of land in Tobago in 1764

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A conversation with Carole Smart: Former Director of the Town and Country Planning Division of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago

The editorial

One of the planned objectives of this quarterly newsletter is to create an [archive](#). For this reason we spend about TT\$1500 per two-hour session in conducting the [talking planning](#) interviews in a sound studio and a further TT\$5000 for producing approximately 100 hundred hard copies of the newsletter. The TTSP treasurer, we are sure, cringes every quarter when we ask for the cheques (she must be thinking of recommending that we increase the annual subscriptions – sorry members!). The results however are intended to be high quality audio recordings (that we hope would be made available to all through the TTSP website soon!!!) and a hard (and soft) record of those physical planning issues and special places that concern us.

The [October '08](#) and [January '09](#) issues that featured Ken Snaggs and Tracy Wilson respectively, started the effort. What we did not expect was that along the way we would discover the potential for a significantly larger archive of material that could be acquired from and about those interviewees and their planning practice. Ken for example has offered copies of some of his early work, reports and other documents that could in time become valuable archive entries for planning researchers of the future. The challenges however are: [Who is able and willing to be responsible for such a collection and where should this archive be held?](#) Several repositories have been suggested, these include: The Town and Country Planning Division, the National Library, the Urban and Regional Planning Programme at UWI and the Library of the University of the West Indies. Persuading any one of these agencies to commit to such a responsibility however will require concerted and sustained effort by a champion: the TTSP?

The [talking planning](#) feature this quarter adds fuel to this fire by providing another special interview record featuring 'one of us': Carole Smart, a former Director of the T&CPD. As always we are limited to only two brief pages drawn from a 90 minute long interview. As you read the feature, think about what value there can be in such an archive (Carole still has a copy of her MSc thesis) and indeed, how might we establish one.

Also in this quarter's issue we have tried to get our planning feet wet... the marine environment features in the Planning Letter ([tackling coastal development](#)) and in an article that offers a brief explanation of the role of physical planners in the offshore marine environment. We also tried to follow up on some of your Climate Change stories and publish an interesting article on the larger Climate Change issues and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) suggested role for planners. It is reprinted with the kind courtesy of the RTPI. Wayne Quintal, a from San Fernando, tells us why the Hill ([Mount Naparima .. an ornament of San Fernando](#)) is a special space and Ken Snaggs comments on the current [local government planning](#) effort. A special thank you to Amalie Carter who helped us proof read this issue.

Our Festival Infrastructure.... cont'd

recreation grounds forced into becoming less than adequate staging areas.

The inconvenience that most of the well-patronised events brings has generated complaints but little action. How many of you have been caught in the massive traffic jams that the Divali Nagar has brought to bear on the traveling public? The T&CPD has pointed out the potential for noise pollution when both the Shore Park Facility and the Tobago Hospital are finally completed.

What can we as a profession accomplish at a time when there is little government funding for activities that are likely to be more patronised? Is anyone working with noise abatement and mitigation strategies? How about the development of a 'Park and Ride' system with the active involvement of our Public Transport Services Corporation? Could we identify some locations that would serve more adequately for various festivals? I saw on my recent visit to Cape Town, south Africa that the Botanical Gardens was the venue for public events on weekends. The entire infrastructure for facilitating these large events was provided seamlessly. Could the TCPD be encouraged to develop standards for managing public events. What response can we planners give to the growing demand for events from fetes to crusades? The provision of adequate festival infrastructure could be the focus of innovative thinking and action from the planning fraternity.

The Planning Letter

There are many stories of applications that have gone unanswered for as many as two years (prompting the developers to act without the necessary authorisation) and of unauthorised land reclamation schemes that despite being served notices to desist, have continued for as many as ten (10) years without any serious action on the part of the regulatory agencies.

Tackling Coastal Development

Debates at global, regional and national levels over the past few decades have articulated the many arguments for and warnings against the growth of urbanisation along coastlines. The Small Island States Development Conferences of 1990s emphasised the particular vulnerabilities that such a development form hold for small islands like Trinidad and Tobago. The general consensus is that the many short and medium term economic gains of coastal development ought to be assessed in the face of potential long-term environmental and socio-economic loss that may be associated with it. In the face of such concerns, there is little evidence of any orderly and sustainable development-centred approach to coastal development in present day Trinidad and Tobago. This absence, argues this column, is one that may significantly diminish the overall quality and value of our coastal resource.

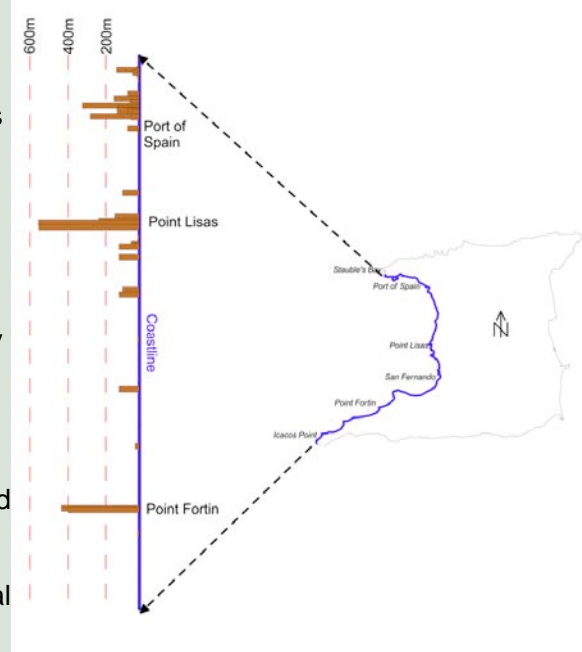
By way of a general definition, coastal development can be thought of as physical development activity that can be grouped in three (3) broad categories: (i.) the construction of structures at the coastline or on offshore marine areas: seawalls, jetties, piers, buildings, resource recovery platforms, pipelines etc, (ii.) dredging and reclamation: the removal of seabed material or the use of material to reclaim marine areas, (iii.) the use of marine space: for effluent and waste disposal, resource winning such as fishing and mineral extraction or other use. Some have argued that a fourth category of coastal development exists, one that relates to physical development activity that occurs well inland from the coastline but in a manner that potentially impacts the coastline and marine areas: deforestation, hillside development and river bank development have been cited to belong to this category.

In Trinidad and Tobago, there is evidence of development projects that belong all four categories. Alarming but not surprisingly, recent (but still unpublished) graduate level research conducted at the University of the West Indies (UWI) has suggested that on the Trinidad West Coast up to 35 per cent of coastal development occurring between 1970 and 2007 was completed without the statutory authorisation and approvals. The breach was equally evident in projects by both the State and non-State sectors. Land reclamation is particularly troublesome. The State agency responsible for the issuance of land reclamation licenses, the Office of the Commissioner of State Lands, appears to have never had any real handle on this activity. There are many stories of applications that

have gone unanswered for as many as two years (prompting the developers to act without the necessary authorisation) and of unauthorised land reclamation schemes that despite being served notices to desist, have continued for as many as ten (10) years without any serious action on the part of the regulatory agencies. The graphic in Box 1 (taken from the UWI study mentioned above) illustrates an interesting insight into the appeal, apparent ease and extent of land reclamation as a development form.

Other parts of the Trinidad and Tobago coastline, while not as intensively developed because of more energetic (and thus development-discouraging) marine conditions, all have evidence of poor coastal development practice. Coastal setback lines appear subject only to the fancy of the developer. Displacement of traditional users

Box 1: Land Reclamation (lengths in metres) on the Trinidad West coast between 1970 and 2007



The Planning Letter

such as fisher-folk and bathers in the face of growing industrial development both onshore and offshore appear widespread, unchecked and without opportunity for recourse. The fishing village as a traditional settlement form may now be under threat: Claxton Bay, Charlotteville and Guayaguayare are examples of villages where fishing may be forced to give way to industrialisation over short time periods.

The eventual impact of now aging 'seabed-ridden' infrastructure is likely to become a marine pollution concern: some of these such as oil and gas pipelines have been on the seabed since the 1950s and may be well past the end of their design life thus prone to leaks, ruptures and failures. The coral reefs around Tobago continue to be threatened by effluent and other waste disposal and in addition the once near pristine coral reefs at that lie along the island's north-eastern coast, recent hillside and road development 'dumped' large volumes of silt that may have smothered coral communities. Sadly, our beaches remain unprotected from poor physical development practice with risk of deteriorating bathing water quality.

Perhaps the single largest challenge to tackling coastal development is the lack of a clear, well-articulated coastal policy at national level. Some State agencies argue that Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) through the State's accession to international coastal management related treaties and conventions has long been part of their regulation and management policy. Clearly, that and the Certificate of Environmental Clearance requirement have not been enough: the lessons from many States around the world are that a published coastal policy with 'buy in' from all stakeholders and supportive regulatory infrastructure is required.

A useful model is provided by neighbouring Barbados and while there are significant

differences in physical planning infrastructure there and that in Trinidad and Tobago, valuable lessons can be learnt through a closer examination. Efforts that were initiated about a decade ago through the West Coast Planning Committee of the then Interim National Planning Commission, attempted the beginnings of such a coastal policy (initially restricted to the Trinidad West Coast) but these



Charlotteville, Tobago: once a quiet fishing village, now having to deal with the challenge of increased coastal development

photo by Andrew Chadwick

early efforts fell to politics and perhaps more significantly, the politics of physical development in Trinidad and Tobago.

In the absence of any meaningful attempts at tackling coastal development we are left with numerous project plans for further land reclamation, offshore islands, ports, offshore hydrocarbon development, with only a few actively dissenting voices of those willing to be thrown from barges, an ever diminishing number of fisher folk and a coastal environment that continues to deteriorate. The positive is that at the level of the University of the West Indies, the subject of coastal development is taught and researched across several programs at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels. Indeed such teaching/learning opportunities leave us with few excuses.

Let's hope that those who are currently engaged in the revision of and drawing up of the next national physical development plan will see the wisdom in including within that document, a comprehensive national coastal policy.

spaces:

"In a real sense, this 178m high argillite mound is also the barrier that makes your trip from one side of the city to the other, longer by few kilometers."

Photos
Upper right- a view of the Hill,
below - the park on top of the Hill

photographs by Wayne Quintal



The San Fernando Hill: *'Mount Naparima .. an ornament of San Fernando'*

by Wayne Quintal

'The Hill' would have had significance to the local Amerindians and the Warao Indians, native to the Orinoco Delta, would have traveled to Annaparima (single hill) for sacred pilgrimage (Peter Harris). Raleigh, in 1595 noted that 'we sailed on to the mountain foote, called by the naturals Annaparima'. Mallet's 1803 map identified it as 'Naparima Mount' which lay next to the 'little village of Naparima'. Jose Maria Chacon, the last Spanish Governor, had renamed the town 'San Fernando de Naparima' in 1784 and the process of evolution in nomenclature led to what is now called San Fernando Hill.

Anthony notes that the demand for road surfacing material from the Hill would have started in the 1790's and quarrying activity actually accelerated in 1846. By 1853 the Borough Council was receiving complaints from the community about the nuisances caused by the mining operations that provided road-base material for the town and the nearby sugar-cane estates. Mining operations reached a pinnacle in the 1960's - 1970's and the activity was



stopped in 1977 by which time the natural appearance of the hill was totally altered. Public pressure exerted by one of the country's earlier NGOs, the San Fernando Citizen's Action Committee, was responsible for bringing the mining operations to a halt. The memories of the blasting operations, the pushing of the material off the plateau, and the periodic deposition of tonnes of material on Pointe-a-Pierre Road during heavy rainfall, are vivid in the mind of the writer.

San Fernando Hill is the common denominator for San Fernandians and those who live within its 'sphere of influence'. The hub in our wheel, San Fernandians have this attachment to the place that starts at childhood, ... **it was always there, it is within sight in our every move around our city, .. it is part of our value system.** In a real sense, this 178m high argillite mound is also the barrier that makes your trip from one side of the city to the other, longer by few kilometers.

The Hill, proposals for which appeared in the 1975 San Fernando Region Plan and the 1990 Greater San Fernando Land Use Plan, is our urban design asset and opportunity, our 'Sugar Loaf'. Robert Johnstone, San Fernando's first Mayor (1853-1854), was correct it saying **'Mount Naparima is an ornament of San Fernando'**, but a useable one at that! It is a passive recreational area, it allows for grand vistas, has a children's play park, trails, is used by walkers, joggers, cyclists, kite flyers, and its facilities for functions are booked way in advance. The 26ha. space under the management of the Forestry Division, is used by 1200 persons over a typical weekend and when one includes seminars, weddings etc., the figure reaches 10-12,000 per month (Ramgoolam, Forestry Division).

This natural Landmark, this resource extraordinaire, is alive and functioning and is perhaps the major recreational and visitor facility in south Trinidad. We need to work towards enhancing this natural landmark, re-vegetating it at every opportunity, increasing the opportunities for communities to enjoy the experience in innovative but sustainable ways. Very importantly, we need to improve on safety which limits the park's opening hours to 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Concerns for safety denies users the great opportunity to experience the remaining trails and tracks that generations enjoyed as children. This Naparima Hill, if we are to call it by its proper name, is our Lynchian path, edge, node, district and landmark, all in one.

Talking Planning

A Conversation with Carole Smart

*by David Neale
Photographs by Paul DeGannes*

Even as we started our interview with Carole Smart, the former Director of the Town and Country Planning Division, she was wishing that it were over. Carole confesses that she is not one for the front row or limelight, still her career has at times put her there. The third of twelve children, Carole admits to having always liked geography, going off to Mc Gill University in Canada in 1965 to study the discipline. It was at McGill as an undergraduate student, that her professors suggested that she consider Town Planning as a career. Once she graduated however and returned to Trinidad, she became a teacher at St James Secondary School. She subsequently pursued a Diploma in Education at UWI at Mona, Jamaica, finding the time to travel that country, appreciating many aspects of the differences in urban form and physical geography between Jamaica and Trinidad.

Committed to teaching, she returned to it in Trinidad in 1972 and eventually her personal growth and awareness of physical development issues pushed her into planning field. She took up a scholarship to the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom, to read for an M.Sc. In Environmental Planning for Developing Countries: a course she says that was based in part, on physical planning experiences in Kenya.

She returned home in August 1978 and was appointed to the position Town Planner I in the Town and Country Planning Division. She remembers well her early days in the Division, working on standards for small plots and a policy for development standards in East Port of Spain. By then the National Physical Development Plan (NPDP) and several other regional plans were either completed or in preparation and thus in the wake



Carole supports the notion that in the face of reality (as existed on the ground) some of the existing policies were 'useless' and that a kind of ad hoc (for want of a better word) system seeped in.

contributing to all of the physical planning issues that were associated with the industrial estate.

By the late 1980s, the Division had also started to struggle with unauthorised development and found itself without the necessary tools to enforce or effectively control physical development, particularly in the urban areas. Carole supports the notion that in the face of reality (as existed on the ground) some of the existing policies were 'useless' and that a kind of ad hoc (for want of a better word) system seeped in. In that system recommendations for approval were largely based on

of increasing physical development, there arose the need greater staffing and training in development control. There was lots to do. She admits that the public was perhaps not aware of the existence of many of the Division's plans, probably because of the 'top down' approach to physical planning at the time. She remembers that by then they had started to deal with Point Lisas - a major industrial estate development that was conceived as important and at the heart of the nation's economic future. Its immense scale and heavy industrial type was not one with which the Division was familiar. Carole admits that as a State agency, it did not have the skills to deal with that kind of mega project and so struggled with

Talking Planning

reasoned, logical and practical arguments being made to the Minister responsible for planning and not specifically on any published plans, hard standards and

...there just was not sufficient support at the level at which the support should have come.

policies that were available at the time. The problem with that kind of approach was that it was slow. It thus drew much criticism from the public. Carole therefore rejects the argument that the T&CPD had thrown its hand into the air in so far as development control was concerned. In her mind it just did not have the resources to attend to the large number development applications in a timely manner. She insists that the Division did

everything that it could, with varying success, to push the State to make scholarships available so that new planners could be trained. Unfortunately she feels the profession was no longer of interest to young Trinidadians. The Division regularly asked for and did not receive the necessary resources to attend to its duties. Indeed, Carole cites the lack of resources as perhaps the single largest challenge to the Division in the late 1980s and 1990s. Given an application load that was around eight thousand per year, it was just not possible to attend to development in the manner that was necessary. As a consequence of this and a number of other factors, the level of unauthorised development rose and continued to rise annually. Even if there were plans and policies in place, suggests Carole, there just was not sufficient support at the level at which the support should have come. In her words:

“... with the resources we had, we did the best we could and then could do no more.....that is what led to frustration”

In 1999, Carole was appointed the Director of the Town and Country Planning Division, one of four women who have held that position in the Division's life and the third part of a run of female directors. The run was broken only by the four (4) or



five (5) year period of tenure by Calvin Romero. Women she believes, do not necessarily bring anything special to physical planning since planning is a discipline that ought to be guided by standards, policies and a sensitivity to the environment in which plans take place. As the Director in what were difficult planning circumstances, she remained hopeful. She drew strength from many of the Division's successes including some in which the Division was able, in spite of non-supportive

policies, to positively support approvals for sound, well-thought out and reasonably argued projects that would normally not be approved. Unfortunately it is the Division's apparent failures on other projects that the public laments. To some extent argues Carole, these reactions are because the 'public does not always understand what planning is.' In many instances some kind of public awareness programme about planning is required.

Carole Smart retired as Director in 2004 and still engages in some level of planning practice. She has since been engaged in work on housing matters as well as other planning areas. Perhaps more importantly, she continues to be involved with her community through her church, no doubt, still using her planning skills to help improve the lives of those around her.

This article was based on an interview with Carole Smart of 23th March, 2009. The audio will be made available as a podcast on the TTSP website.

The University Page

This quarter we feature the BSc in Urban and Regional Planning at UTECH, Kingston, Jamaica

The recognition of the need for locally trained planners was first articulated in the Conference on Town and Country Planning in the Caribbean, which was organised by the Caribbean Commission in Trinidad and Tobago in 1956. In 1974/1975 a survey conducted by the Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP) revealed that developing countries were in particular need of planning professionals. Projections for four (4) Caribbean countries (Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana and Jamaica) suggested that by 1995, there would be a shortfall of 90 professional planners annually. In response, the diploma in physical planning was started at what was then called the College of Arts and Technology (CAST) in 1977/1978, with the objective of training middle-level planning personnel for Caribbean countries. In 1991 the course was then supplemented with a Post-Diploma BSc. This supplementary course was commonly referred to as the Integrated Planning, Environmental and Resource Development Course (IPED). The B.Sc. Urban and Regional Planning course was introduced with Dutch financial support in 1991 and was eventually replaced by the four-year BSc URP in 2002. CAST was later upgraded to full university status and renamed the University of Technology (UTECH). The UWI St. Augustine MSc. in Planning and Development was in part conceived as one designed to build on the UTECH BSc.

Set on the UTECH campus in urban Kingston, it currently boasts of nearly 50% of the 2008 Olympic world-record breaking Jamaica athletic team and the programme shares faculty with the Caribbean School of Architecture and BSc programmes in Land Surveying, Valuation Surveying and Quantity Surveying. The programme has and continues to provide a high quality undergraduate level education in planning. Interestingly, the programme opts for a minimum entry requirement of 5 CXC passes in English Language, Mathematics, Geography and two other subjects for the four years that includes an internship taken over the summer of the second and third years. Candidates are normally interviewed by an admissions panel to ensure that their level of maturity is suitable for the programme.



UTECH planning students on a field trip

The current six (6) full time lecturers are supported by over eight (8) part time lecturers have contributed to the academic

delivery of courses. Many graduates have gone abroad to further their academic development and are also involved in various projects and courses at the national level. These planners/lecturers represent the profession on the various regional and government committees (such as the Town and Country Planning Authority, National Hazard Mitigation Committee and the Development Committee of the various Local Authorities).

Semester 1	Semester 2
URP 1 Fundamentals of Communication Information Technology Pre-Calculus Intro. to Physical Environment Cartography Sociology	Construction Technology Economics Intro. to Spatial Planning Theory Mapping and Design Oral Communication Mathematics for Urban & Regional Planners
Community Service Course (CSP)	
URP 2 Advanced Communication Land Surveying Regional Planning Theory Site Analysis Photogrammetry Quantitative Studies in Planning Total Credits Hours	Information Technology in Planning Introduction to Remote Sensing Urban Planning Theory Business Communication Site Planning
URP 3 Research Methods Introduction to Law Development Planning Methods 1 Internship Intro. to GIS Land Economics	Planning Legislation Community Development Planning Development Planning Methods II Advance Remote Sensing Developmental Control
URP 4 Housing Policy and Practice	Waste Management Planning and Policy Zoning and Land Use Management Traffic and Transportation Planning Intergovernmental Relations & Planning Research Project
Urban Design and Presentation Historic Preservation Planning Disaster Vulnerability	
Environmental Resource Planning Urban Governance & Management	
Elective 2	

BSc in Urban and Regional Planning Course outline

The programme's website can be found at

<http://www.utech.edu.jm/Faculties/Built/SBLM/programmes-URP.htm>

Planning shorts

Enquiry into the Construction Industry in Trinidad and Tobago

The conduct of the [Commission of Enquiry into the construction industry in Trinidad and Tobago](#) continues to give us an interesting insight into the construction industry and some of the larger infrastructural projects undertaken by the State over the last five years. The witnesses suggested all manner of potentially corrupt, unethical and unprofessional practices that surround these large projects. The projects that the Commission considered include the Government Campus, the Brian Lara Cricket Academy, the Scarborough Hospital project and the Cleaver Woods Housing Development. Of particular concern to the Commission is the role of the Urban Development Corporation in facilitating these projects. Several witnesses have pointed to apparent poor project management skills and practice as a key challenge in the management of such large projects. Whatever the final findings of the Commission, the insight is useful to some of the challenges that face physical development in Trinidad and Tobago.

Documents and the proceedings of the commission can be accessed at www.constructionenquiry.gov.tt

Conference Infrastructure

The [5th Summit of the Americas](#) and the [Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference](#) scheduled for Mid-April 2009 and Mid-November 2009 respectively, will present major tests of our national physical infrastructure and our ability to manage our use of it in the light of security concerns for the visiting diplomats. Roads, hotels, air and sea ports will be severely tested. In addition, the State will be required to manage police and army security systems, vending, communication, hospital and emergency readiness, the homeless in the city and urban transport during the days of each conference. All of this while the State still is required to keep national production going. Physical planners will recognise the infrastructural challenges that must be surmounted to accomplish two successful conferences in one year.

North/South by Sea

The long awaited [intra-inland water taxi service](#) between Port of Spain and San Fernando started on 30 December 2008. The initial reaction of the public has been positive with several of the daily runs reporting full occupancy of the 350-seater ferry. In addition to the regular daily services, the ferry has been used to transport passengers from Port of Spain to some carnival shows in Skinner Park, San Fernando. This and the soon to be opened Interchange at the Uriah Butler Highway promises to ease the daily traffic-ridden journeys of many between Port of Spain and other parts of the country.

TTSP January 2009 Business Meeting

The TTSP January Business meeting on 29th January 2009 held at the Professional Centre was attended by a small but keen group of members gathered to further discuss further a short feature that appeared in January 2009 issue of the Planning Newsletter – a comment on the Prime Minister's call to [tighten our belts](#) in the face of the current economic downturn and what should be the planners response. Several had a lot to say including some comments on what happened the last time in 1980s when the country had a similar period of lean economic years. Most saw planning opportunity in the expression.

At the end of a short hour of lively discussion most agreed that as planners our response must be to continue planning in preparation for the time when there will once again be the ideal economic conditions to pursue physical development.

If you were not at this one, please try to attend the next. Notices are usually sent to members by email. Your attendance and participation can only enhance the quality of such debates.

Tram Cars in Port of Spain

It is sometimes difficult for those younger planners among us to envisage a time when the tram was a major part of our transportation network. One reader sent us this internet weblink that might help in giving us a sense of what that time was like. It can be viewed at:

www.tramz.com/tt/tt.html

More 'Art in the City'

This newsletter has noticed that the Art on the Oval wall project now seems extended both on other parts of the Oval Wall not previously covered with art, and to other parts of the city. Within recent weeks, large reproductions of art have been installed on the external walls of the ground floor at the new International financial centre at The Port of Spain Waterfront. **Art in the City** now seems to have significant meaning in our capital region.

Environmental Conference, Kingston, Jamaica 26th & 27th May 2009

The **Jamaica Institute of Environmental Professionals (JIEP)** is holding its 4th Conference on the Environment on May 26th and 27th, 2009 at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel, Kingston. The theme of the conference is 'Climate Change – Caribbean Response'

And covers the following subject areas:

- History of climatic events, findings of IPCC.
- Climate change modeling - scenarios, modeling techniques and uncertainties
- Vulnerability
- Sectoral threats and response – agriculture, water, tourism, health, finance,
- Energy, industry & trade
- Ecosystem resilience – biodiversity, invasive species
- Adaptation strategies
- Community adaptation programmes
- Mitigation and energy strategies – international and regional response
- Integrating climate change into policy and development cooperation activity
- Communicating the message of climate change

The JIEP can be contacted at
The Environment House, 173 Constant Spring Road, Kingston 10
Tel: Tel : (876) 898-1693, E-mail: jiepconference@gmail.com,

Urban design

The Bus Stop/Shelter

Despite our best efforts, the TTSP newsletter could not establish who is responsible for the design and implementation of the new bus shelters around the country.

Yes, we like the design!

The new bus shelters appear comfortable, able to provide shade (maybe), safe and vagrant-proof. Perhaps someone could write to us with clues as to whom the credit for these new shelters is due.



Planning Perspectives on the Offshore Environment

David Neale

It is not too far a stretch to think of the major sea-lanes as road arterials or identify marine equivalents of brown-field sites or even to classify marine spaces as being industrial, commercial, recreational or open.

At first mention it is perhaps not immediately obvious that there is any significant role for physical planners in the offshore environment. Physical planning in the near coastal environment as obtains for say port and harbour development, is however well understood by most persons trained in physical planning. While there is no clear definition for the difference between near coastal and offshore, the need for or role of planning as a discipline in the marine environment can be best conceived as a function that grows with the reach of the influence human activity and the kind of optimism that technology brings. In the offshore waters of Trinidad and Tobago, oil and gas exploration companies have successfully completed exploratory drilling programmes in water depths in excess of 1000m. The operation of a drilling programme in such deep water means that the drill equipment, and the hundreds of specialised personnel must operate and live for periods of up to several months over discrete locations in an environment open to high energy, mid-Atlantic oceanographic conditions many kilometres from the nearest shoreline on superstructures that, except for the drill pipe, never touch the seabed. Such ambitious efforts are driven by the potential for the high commercial rewards associated with hydrocarbon recovery. It is therefore possible to envisage competition for spaces among exploration agencies, the need for daily air and marine transits to and from these drilling locations, the possibility of waste and pollutants into the marine environment, the need for the imposition of restriction zones, the potential for the displacement of traditional fishing activity, the requirements for a system of rights over marine space and ultimately a need for a system of regulations, plans, permits, agencies, policies and other regulatory instruments to sustainably manage offshore spaces: i.e. a role for physical planning.

Our more than 70 year history (the first offshore well in Trinidad and Tobago was drilled in 1930s) of the use of offshore spaces for resource extraction has allowed the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to develop some sea administration and sea use structures that include the establishment of offshore 'blocks' that are leased by the State

to exploration companies and a set of regulatory permits that include the need for environmental clearance certificates, marine approvals and compliance monitoring. Similar to debates in land use planning, many have commented on the inefficiency of the current sea use and sea administration practice particularly its inability to manage negative downstream social issues that may impact coastal communities, the fishing industry and the overall quality of the marine environment. These are all issues that concern the practice of physical planning.

It is not too far a stretch to think of the major sea-lanes as road arterials or identify marine equivalents of brown-field sites or

even to classify marine spaces as being industrial, commercial, recreational or open. The work of physical planning in the offshore environment is similar to that of physical planning in terrestrial spaces except that a few special training needs and skills are required by the planner working in the offshore marine environment. That said, in the offshore environment, the core principles of physical planning in terrestrial areas, remain valid.



The Local Government Planning Programme - A comment

Ken Snaggs

The programme of plan preparation for the Regional Corporations and Municipalities of the country under the direction of the Local and Regional Planning Unit of the Ministry of Local Government will impact on the planning system in the country and should be of interest to the TTSP. The stated purpose is to produce regional/spatial development plans which will lay down the guidelines and parameters for continuation of the planning process to more detailed levels. Also they are expected to identify proposals of interest to the Corporations that can be implemented almost immediately. A third objective is that these plans will be produced in a suitable form for submission to Parliament to be approved as statutory Regional plans.

Beyond these substantive outcomes there are some other interesting possibilities which may impact on the practice of planning. The most significant of these is the opportunity provided to overhaul the planning system and make it more relevant to contemporary circumstances. I will comment on this and other aspects of the programme and would welcome further discussion. In a general sense I see this programme as a re-launch of the planning system with new features that can benefit planning.

When the system was launched in 1969 with the proclamation of the Town and Country Planning Act 35:01, the legal imperatives forced the Town & Country Planning Division (the public sector agency with the exclusive mandate for planning at the time) to focus on development control. In contrast, in the local government planning programme the emphasis is initially on development planning. Moreover it is the first attempt to establish a planning function within local government administration and disseminate the concepts and practice of planning among personnel of the Corporations and the public through their involvement in the process. This shift from the current highly centralised system can bring about a significant and beneficial change in the planning system and in the way planning is viewed.

The fact that every municipality and regional corporation will be covered at the same time affords the opportunity for comparison, co-ordination and resolution of differences and conflicts in planning for the development of the different areas in the country and will assist in elaborating and refining the spatial development strategies.

The third point of note is the opportunity for development of the human resources in planning. The involvement of many local and some foreign planners either as consultants, representatives of the co-ordinating unit of the Ministry or as officials of the responsible public sector planning agency provides the opportunity for fruitful interaction and learning for all. Additionally, I see in the oversight structure, though somewhat complex, a creative attempt to tap into and utilise all of the available professional resources in rolling out a planning process and implanting it in the local government bodies.

Success in establishing planning as a function within local government administration and in some of the other aspects mentioned can set the stage for the next step in overhauling the planning system. This will involve a redesign and consolidation of planning as a structured system that is accessible, understood and widely accepted by all levels of public sector administration, by the public and the players in the development process. It will also help to confirm planning as the professional discipline with the body of knowledge, tools and expertise required for effectively guiding and managing development and for determining and maintaining the appropriate standards of development.

Positive outcomes will not be achieved unless certain pre-conditions are met. Establishing a planning system operating within different levels of government, and also involving outside agencies, calls for co-ordination in working through the changes required. The responsible ministries and agencies must have extensive dialogue and negotiation on the purpose and procedures for planning at the different levels. At present I see no evidence that this is yet in place. Even in the current local government planning programme, out of which statutory plans will be produced, there is an absence of the required close working relationship between the two administering agencies. Similarly, in the preparation of a new National Physical Development Plan, a prerequisite is the establishment of a clear link

**Local Government
Planning - cont'd**

between the parallel exercises with joint oversight and harmonization of the operating procedures. The degree of separation which seems to exist at present will not lead to the best outcome.

Finally, it is imperative that the need for a structured all-embracing planning system for the country be accepted and steps taken to develop it. Such a system will accommodate the many actors in the planning process, playing recognised roles and working toward the same ends of good development within a framework of agreed goals and objectives.

I think the perfect opportunity is now available with the local government planning exercise and the imminent commencement of the national physical development planning exercise. What is needed is a champion for the idea – the TTSP?

Climate change Stories

Here are two climate change queries submitted by a TTSP member that we followed up on:

Confused Poui at UWI

Visiting the St. Augustine Campus on Friday 27th February I came across this most striking Poui in bloom. Pouis at UWI have a time honoured role of reminding students that the time for exams and therefore final study is near! So is this Poui giving a warning that they need to do extra study or has it become confused by the weather?

*The Mango Tree's Gift to the Parrots.*

In October last year our large mango tree began to flower profusely and by November - it was covered with green mangoes while still flowering. Before we could plan on Mangoes for Christmas for the first time in my memory, a host of migrating parrots descended on the tree and for a few weeks we were treated to the raucous sounds of celebrating parrots which ate every mango and left us with the job of cleaning up the hundreds of seeds that littered the ground. This tree has always borne sufficient for our garden birds and us. Was this unusual crop the only food around when the parrots were passing through? Could this be a signal of climate change? Will we get another crop this year?

We were not able to get specific answers to our reader's tree observations. We did however find many articles published by scientists around the world who have observed similar phenomena elsewhere. Here is the full abstract from one such paper:

"Rising temperatures brought about by global warming are causing plants to bloom and leaf earlier, and advancing the start of animal breeding seasons. The ranges of some species of plants and animals are also being shifted northwards or to higher elevations. In cities, the heat island effect is raising temperatures still further, accelerating the flowering of plants. The degree of such phenological changes, and of the range in shifts, varies according to species and group, resulting in the distortion or mismatch of biological interactions such as predation, pollination, seed dispersion and parasitism. Rising sea levels due to the rising temperatures is destroying tidal wetlands and wiping out coral reefs and, consequently, killing off the various organisms that live there. It has been predicted that if warming continues, sudden and drastic changes will occur in the structure and functioning of ecosystems around the world and that such regime shifts, which cannot easily be reversed, will be frequent. These ecological changes would affect a variety of aspects of human life such as housing, diet and health."

[http://www.fujipress.jp/finder/preview_download.php?pdf_filename=PRE_DSSTR000300020001.pdf&frompage=abst_page&pid=1054\(=English.](http://www.fujipress.jp/finder/preview_download.php?pdf_filename=PRE_DSSTR000300020001.pdf&frompage=abst_page&pid=1054(=English.)

**Climate
Change
Stories**

Confused Poui...blooming in
February and confusing
students

Do you have a climate
change story? Please
share it with us so that
we might all learn.
Send your story to
TTSPnewsletter@gmail
.com

Book/Publication Reviews



The dragon can't dance

Earl Lovelace
ISBN-10: 0892552727

The Dragon Can't Dance

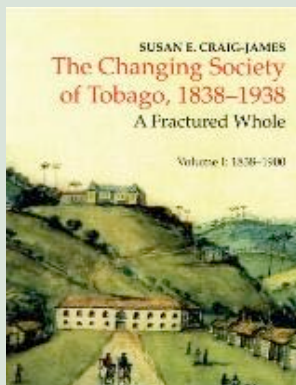
Review by David Neale

I first read *The Dragon Can't Dance* in the 1980s. On that first reading I enjoyed the language and the characters. Aldrick and his carnival, Fisheye, the bad John, Miss Cloetilda and Pariag, the 'little country Indian from Guayaguayare'. The scenarios all seem so alive and full of everything positive that one could find in "Calvary Hill- poverty stricken, pot-holed and garbage-strewn, where the slum shacks 'leap out of red dirt, thin smoke, fragile like kite paper balancing on their rickety pillars as broomsticks on the edge of a jugglers nose.'" My second reading was in 1996 as part of a planning theory class as I did the MSc. programme in Planning and Development at UWI. This time Dr. Mohammed, the course lecturer, pushed the class to see spaces, societal structures, rural-urban drift and a kind of futility in the events that were strung together in the story. In one scene, 'General Fisheye of the People's Liberation Army' and some friends, driven by the frustration of life on the Hill, commandeers a police jeep with two policemen locked inside the back. They head for Woodford Square and drive round and round it until they run out of gas and are arrested. In so doing they encounter a colonial inheritance. A serious act of revolution that lasted a few hours!

The book, first published in 1979, remains a gem for all and a must read for all with an interest in physical planning issues relating to Trinidad, Carnival and the urban history of East Port of Spain.

The Changing Society of Tobago, 1838-1938: A Fractured Whole (Volume I - 1838-1900)

Review by Margaret McDowall



The Changing Society of Tobago, 1838-1938 A Fractured Whole

Susan Craig-James
Hardback
ISBN: 9789769516007

I agreed to review this book before I read or even bought this volume and its sister Volume II that traces the changing society of Tobago for the rest of the period under study. I confess that once I purchased it, I was overwhelmed by the task of adding any comment that had not already been made. I am instead urging our readers to give themselves the gift of delving into the pages. You will be rewarded as I have, by a captivating look into the story of the island of Tobago – a rich historical, socio-developmental recounting and evaluation of the events that have shaped this island and hopefully will find in it, an understanding of the long history and attempts to forge a fair and effective economic union.

This work began as Dr. Craig-James' doctoral dissertation. Indeed, the academic thoroughness, its careful adherence to the rules of reference and argument, reveal its origin. However, unlike many academic tomes, this is easy and inviting to read, perhaps because the references are mainly contained as notes, the numerous photographs and maps and the anecdotal snippets that are sprinkled throughout especially the priceless folk songs and interviews with so many Tobago elders.

As a planner of course I was very impressed with the Road Map for Volume I in which the author summarises each chapter and thus fits it into the context that became clearer as I read on. The maps of Tobago, particularly those of the original estates, give a clear understanding of how the island was carved up and still functions today in the differences between the villages.

As I read however, I was struck by the difference between the development of the islands of Trinidad and that of Tobago; the roots of the disharmony between the two and the process of understanding that must come before the islands of the Caribbean- all fractured can become a whole.

I urge you all to read and be enthralled by this work by Dr. Craig-James. My read continues as I am only barely through Volume I. I have not yet opened Volume II (published with Volume I).

CAP Corner

by James Armstrong

The Trinidad and Tobago Society of Planners is moving ahead with plans for the CAP Americas Regional Conference on 23-24 November 2009. This Conference will take place just prior to the Commonwealth People's Forum, followed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) scheduled for 27-29 November 2009. The theme for CHOGM will be "Partnership for a More Equitable and Sustainable Future."

The convergence of these meetings will facilitate the participation of a broader cross section of planners from across the Commonwealth. Consequently, CAP Americas anticipates that a segment of its conference could be open to planners who may be visiting as part of their delegations to the People's Forum and CHOGM. This process will allow inputs from CAP Americas to inform the People's Forum, which will in turn inform the Civil Society Statement to CHOGM.

The Civil Society Statement of the previous CHOGM in Kampala included a segment on Human Settlements that, inter alia, called on Commonwealth Member States and the Consultative Group on Human Settlements to produce a "State of the Commonwealth's Cities" report for the upcoming CHOGM in November 2009. Aspects of this report that is under preparation, could form the basis of technical review at the CAP Americas conference.

A precise theme for the CAP Americas Conference is under consideration but it will certainly be in accordance with the overall theme of CHOGM and take into consideration the peculiarities of the Americas Region and the current deliberations of CAP.

Further information on the CAP Americas Conference will be transmitted via the CAP Secretariat and will be elaborated upon in the next issue of the TTSP Newsletter.

Planning to live with Climate Change: A professional challenge for the future

Rynd Smith

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)

29th January 2009

Human civilization is entering a new era. Most social and economic decisions throughout our history have been taken with little concern for the use of finite natural resources. We must provide for the needs of future generations as well as our own present needs. We must change the way we use natural resources both globally and locally to become truly sustainable and to avoid threatening the survival of humankind and other world ecosystems.

Climate change threatens our survival. Recent studies have shown that we have about 5 to 7 years to change our ways before accelerating trends in environmental degradation lead to irreversible and chaotic impacts. Environmental and economic changes threaten the well-being of communities, families and individuals. Social changes on a global scale will unavoidably lead to increasing social and economic polarity worldwide.

"Planning to Live with Climate Change" introduces the challenges of climate change as an over-arching priority into the original "New Vision for Planning". It revisits the key issues of sustainable development, spatial planning, value-driven planning and action-orientated planning and it then develops the original agenda for change into an action plan focussed on professional leadership, vision and delivery to promote

A Global View:

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fundamental shifts in practice in response to climate change.

The RTPI suggests that measures to mitigate climate change should have priority over the conventional balance between economic, social and environmental factors in planning for sustainable development in areas where there is a challenge to the survival of human civilisations and natural ecosystems. This challenge might, for example, be defined in relation to targets for reducing the carbon and related greenhouse gas emissions that drive global warming.

The RTPI is now refreshing the “New Vision for Planning” to promote a response to climate change and to develop an action plan in a professional challenge to planning practitioners in “Planning to Live with Climate Change”. The original principles are now being developed to reflect the new global and local context to suggest that planning should be ...

Responsive to Climate Change- ensuring that as a matter of priority, planning policies are made and decisions taken in the interests of mitigating and managing climate change processes and ensuring sustainable development

Spatial -dealing with the unique needs and characteristics of places

Sustainable- looking at the short, medium and long term consideration of social, economic and environmental effects

Integrative - in terms of the knowledge, objectives and actions involved

Inclusive- recognising the wide range of people involved in planning

Value-driven- concerned with identifying, understanding and mediating conflicting sets of values

Action-oriented- driven by the twin activities of mediating space and making of place.

We are now saying that above all of the elements of our existing vision, planning should be driven by the need to respond to climate change.

The 2001 New Vision was an excellent document. Much of its thinking went on to shape the way in which governments and practitioners think about and carry out planning. However, work done so far on the review suggests that it needs to be changed, to say not only how we should plan, but why we should plan.

In setting out why we should plan, the review suggests that:

The highest priority for planning action should be to help humanity, at the global and local scales, to deliver sustainable development, to live with and successfully manage and adapt to the climate change processes we have inherited and to mitigate and control the potential for additional and adverse climate change.

The work done so far suggests how everyone engaged in spatial planning should adapt their professional approach to plan for living with climate change, to advise and work in partnership with others and to campaign for fundamental change to shape a sustainable new future for humankind.

This article can be accessed at the RTPI site at the following web address:

[http: www.rtpi.org.uk/item/2293&ap=1](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/2293&ap=1)