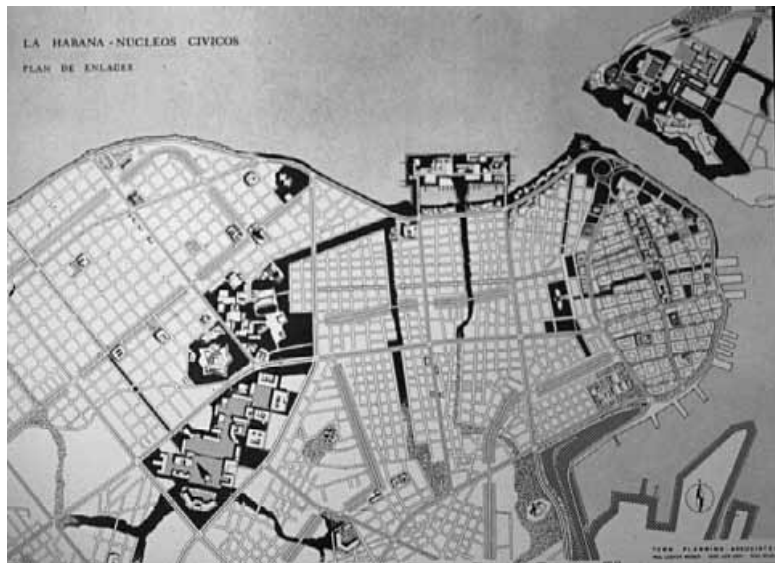


9.11 Plan for Havana, from the office of José Luis Sert.



barracks and instead made a square for people and markets. A square based on commerce was rare for the time.

Baroque and neo-classical architecture constitute the fabric of the city. The cathedral and the important civic monuments, including the municipal palace of the eighteenth century, are of baroque inspiration, as are a number of other urban elements, including the Plaza Vieja. Neo-classical homes decorated with elaborate ironwork and arcades complement the fabric of the city. The architecture of old Havana represents five centuries of development, from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. Of the 900 historic buildings, 101 date from this century, 460 from last century, 200 from the eighteenth century and an astonishing 144 date from the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries.

The harbor and the remains of the old city walls define old Havana. The old city wall is two kilometers long and took 164 years to construct, lasting only sixty-six years. In the area defined by its circumference are more than fifty monuments and historic buildings of national and international importance. At the head of the harbor sits Castillo de la Punta, located at the junction of the Prado and Avenida Malecón, and across from it Castillo del Morro. The harbor barrier chain was strung between the two fortifications. Today the wharves and old warehouses, built to service the sea trade, still define the character of the harbor.

Of Havana's many features, some are worth noting. Havana is defined by four squares. Plaza de Armas and Plaza de la Catedral are the most important, but Plaza Vieja and Plaza de San Francisco are also of significance. Plaza de Armas is the oldest, situated at the seaward end of Calles O'Reilly and Obispo. The square contains the shrine of El Templete, commemorating the first Mass celebrated in Havana. It was the site of the first town council meeting in 1519. The square is where the Spanish governors ruled Havana from El Palacio de los Casa Bayona.

Plaza de la Catedral is a remarkable colonial entity in old Havana. It houses many historic buildings, including the baroque cathedral of San