

I met Richard after becoming a member of the planning office back in 1976. By that time, he had done his stint as a government planner and moved on to set up what is undoubtedly the most impressive and enduring planning firm in Barbados.

Richard has made a massive and significant contribution to the practice of physical planning on the island in all the elements of planning practice. Much of his work was in Development control as the planning consultant to some of the largest development projects and firms on the island. Although we were on opposite ends of the process I valued having him as a professional to interact with and often he acted as a buffer against hard-nosed developers and land owners who saw the planning office as getting in the way or blocking their proposed developments. He had to carefully balance the equation between advocacy for his clients and his professional judgement as a planner. When thinking of Richard I always think of the term "Probity": the quality of being honest and behaving correctly. This incidentally is the term used by the RTPI in its professional code and its practice advice on ethics and professional standards.

He and I had many long interesting discussions on applications, conditions attached to permissions, planning theory and practice and even my requiring too much planning gain from some developments long before the concept of planning obligations was formally put into our legislation. Our modern planners would not have experienced this but it was not an easy transition from persons being able to do whatever they wanted to with their land to accepting an agency which decided on these matters. In the first planning case which went to court before Chief Justice Stoby - the case of Kitty Feldman at Navy Gardens versus Peter Stevens - the judge made it quite clear that a sea change had occurred with the introduction of the new planning system and persons were no longer at liberty to deal with the use and development of their land as they pleased but had to seek permission first from the Chief Town Planner or the Governor in Executive Committee. Richard was among that group of early planners who had to bring the whole island along with them in understanding the importance of this change.

Richard was also deeply involved with and interested in development planning and plan preparation. Indeed, after the days of United Nations assistance in the preparation of PDPs came to an end we had to do them from our own resources. Richard was one of the consultants working for government on the preparation of these plans. In this regard you will see his name in the development plans of 2003 approved 2013 and the 2017 plan Approved in 2023. In addition, he prepared jointly with Colin Jones of Robertson Ward Associates, The Speightstown Development Plan and the Oistin Development Plan. Richard also prepared for government the New Orleans Development Plan. I also remember him working as part of the team on the Barbados Surface Transportation Study.

On the administrative side he served periods as a member and sometimes chairman of the Planning Advisory Committee the organ created in the earlier legislation to advise the Minister on policy matters and specific applications. Richard also functioned as a panellist hearing appeals against decisions made by the planning office and making recommendations to the Minister who then made the final decision.

While I am not sure of the extent of his work outside of Barbados Richard did planning appeals

in other islands.

Richard was one of the first professional planners in Barbados and certainly the longest practicing one. In those early days planning was new and many people did not appreciate or care for planning and it was the planners such as Richard who had to explain and teach persons about this new thing impacting their lives. He shared that burden with Peter Stevens, Leonard St Hill, Peter Shepherd, Luther Bourne, Colin Jones, Derek Baker, Douglas Gill, Margarita Omotoso and I would go as far down as The Reverend Alan Jones and Alloysius Blackett.

Richard played a pivotal role in the development of the planning profession in Barbados and held all the key positions within the planning society for long periods of time. I well remember the evolution of the society and its outreach to related professions and the general public, the monthly in-house meetings of the professional planners group and eventually the accreditation of professionals by the society. He also generously allowed his office to become the home of the planning society.

He was one of the first planners on the island who connected the local planning society with The Commonwealth Association of Planners, so taking the local society into the wider context of regional and commonwealth planning professionals.

This function tonight and the honour to Richard is thoroughly deserved and I applaud Richard for his contribution and the planning society for so recognizing his sterling work.

Lionel Nurse.
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