

Money woes put pan home on hold

SHERWIN LONG

PAN TRINBAGO will not be able to move into its new headquarters at Trincity in March, as originally planned.

The plan fell apart recently when work on the project ground to a halt due to increased production costs and late payments to contractors.

In an interview yesterday, Pan Trinbago president Patrick Arnold confirmed the project had been stopped because the price of building materials was too high.

He said if construction had continued, the headquarters would have cost double its estimated \$3.6 million price.

"The original cost was \$3.6 million, but as time went on, it just kept escalating,"

Arnold said.

"By the end, it would have cost \$7.8 to \$10 million."

However, Clive Alexander, the project's consulting architect, disagreed with the figures given by Arnold.

Alexander said initially, the contract price was \$3.6 million, but after plans to add a third floor to the facility, the final tendered contract price was estimated \$7.8 million.

Alexander said once completed, the headquarters would serve as a pan information centre and also have an adjoining pan factory.

He said the real losers in the whole affair were pan enthusiasts and Rashidi Namdi, owner of Namdi Construction Limited, which was

contracted to work on the project.

Namdi yesterday refused to disclose the amount of money owed to him by Pan Trinbago.

"We have not been paid since in June. I am owing a lot of people and I can't pay. I have to hide," Namdi said.

Namdi appealed to Government to lend a hand to the project.

Arnold said after the cost of construction on the facility went up, a committee headed by Kenny De Silva decided work on the site should stop until all finances were sorted out.

He also dismissed allegations of Pan Trinbago misusing funds on trips and car rentals.