



(Expires 5/31/2012)

1077

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Eugenio María de Hostos School

other names/site number Escuela Eugenio María de Hostos

2. Location

street& number Matías Brugman Avenue

not for publication

city or town Las Marías

☒ vicinity

state Puerto Rico code PR county Las Marías code 083 zip code 00670

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national ☐ ☒ statewide ☐ local

Carlos A. Rubio Cancela
Signature of certifying official

October 29, 2012

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer
Title

Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

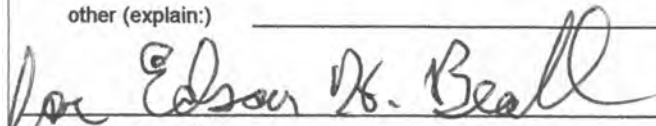
☒ entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

12.19.12
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | private |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | public - Local |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - State |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - Federal |

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | object |

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Early XXth Century Schools Puerto Rico, 1900-1930

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/ School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/ School

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Spanish Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Concrete

roof: Concrete

other: Spanish Clay Tiles

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

The *Eugenio María de Hostos School*, located off PR-120 [Matías Brugman Avenue] in the Municipality of Las Marías, Puerto Rico, is a rectangular, two stories, reinforced concrete building. Built in 1938 on a 7,397.8 m² acre lot, the eight-classroom school constitutes a noteworthy example of the public effort to erect multiple schools in Puerto Rico during the early 20th century by repeating prototypical, building typologies throughout the Island. Puerto Rican designer Francisco Gardón Vega designed *Escuela Hostos* in a simple, yet appropriate architectural expression that incorporated Neoclassical and Spanish Revival styles. Because of its urban location, a unique and elaborated frontispiece, the appropriation of classical details, the use of Spanish terracotta roof tiles, and fine construction craftsmanship, the *Eugenio María de Hostos School* stands out as a significant historic resource, still relevant in its location as an academic facility of prime importance to the town of Las Marías.

Narrative Description

The *Eugenio María de Hostos School* lies on an off-ramp off PR-120 [also known as Matías Brugman Avenue] at *Barrio Maravilla Sur* and *Barrio Pueblo* in the Municipality of Las Marías, on the western side of Puerto Rico. The municipalities of San Sebastián to the north, Maricao to the south, Lares to the east, and Mayagüez and Añasco to the west, surround Las Marías. Being within the *Cordillera Central* (Puerto Rico's mountain range) Las Marías epitomizes the Island's rural world. The *Urayoán* mountain range runs through the southwestern part of the municipality. Due to its topography, nearly ninety-four percent (94%) of Las Marías' land consists of steep slopes. The school building, in fact, is located on one of the highest elevations in town. Its privileged location allows almost complete 360° views of the surrounding countryside. The school shares its 7,397.8 m² (1.83 acres) lot with four additional buildings of one and two levels, built in the early 1980's.

Originally, the *Eugenio María de Hostos School* accommodated eight classrooms: four at each floor, distributed symmetrically at either side of a central axis. On the second level, the principal's office was provided at center. Restrooms and storage spaces flank the sides of the main volume, which is higher (**FIG. 1**). The school's main façade is situated on a northeast orientation and on axis with an access road from PR-120, one of Las Marías' main arteries that lead into the "*pueblo*" [downtown]. *Escuela Hostos* is bordered on the north, east and south by the aforementioned PR-120

and, along the west, by a small residential area. Within its original lot, the building occupies a 488.9 m² footprint. The applicable land zoning classification nowadays pertains to DT-G (*Distrito Dotacional General*) as defined by the Puerto Rico Planning Board.¹ The site's topography is slightly steep.

A combination of low to mid-height retention walls closes off the school's property along the PR-120, while chain-link fences, over a small concrete base, provide more immediate enclosure and protection from the incidental topography around the school. Vehicular access is thru an iron-grille gate at the off-ramp off PR-120 and on axis with the school's entrance. The main façade is set back 115'-0" from the property limit along PR-120. As one walks up towards the school, the pavement bifurcates to provide side service roads and parking spaces for employees and visitors. In order to avoid garden maintenance costs and related administrative work, most of the property's open areas have been paved over with concrete or asphalt paths. These link several buildings with which the school shares its lot. A wide variety of trees grow haphazardly amongst these, providing shade and, in some cases, interrupting asphalted areas. A few ornamental plants grow scattered, predominantly shrubs. Mid-height palm trees edge the school's main façade.

Scattered rectangular benches border the asphalted pathways, while two flagpoles with a small concrete base that no longer perform any practical function flank the main entrance path. On the southwestern side, adjacent to one of the flagpoles, lies a statue figure of Eugenio María de Hostos over a pedestal. Hostos was a reputed 19th century figure, distinguished in politics, literature, and education. Today, the school lacks any formal playground areas as a result of the additional classrooms and exterior restrooms buildings constructed within its lot in the mid 1980's. The school, like the surrounding area, is in relatively fair condition, despite various changes implemented since its construction.

The two-story school is articulated into three (3) volumes; a main, larger one, flanked by a pair of identical, smaller bodies attached at either side. The main volume measures 75'-0" along its longitudinal axis, with a height of 35'-6", and a depth of 60'-0". In terms of plan composition, the adjoining, smaller, lower bodies are aligned on axis with a central longitudinal hallway. They are set back 17'-0" from the school's front and back elevations (northeast and southwest, respectively). Each flanking volume measures 28'-8" high, 12'-0" wide and 25'-6" deep. The total length of all three volumes together adds up to 98'-0" wide.

Through the manipulation of myriad architectural elements characteristic of the Beaux Arts Period (cornices, moldings, and other trims raised from wall surfaces for emphasis) the designer provided the school's main volume with abundant horizontal lines that emphasize its importance (**FIG. 2**). Ornamentation is concentrated around the main entrance of the building and three windows on the second floor. A rather elaborated frontispiece adds monumental scale to the otherwise bare façade. Two low piers flank a five-step stoop lacking any handrails (**FIG. 3**). It acts as a pedestal for the one and one-half level pilasters that rise to reach a slightly protruding flat cornice that "wraps around" the main volume at "waist height", underneath the sill of the upper level windows. This grants an over slung scale to the school building, and is partly responsible for the monumental presence it exerts in town.

Two small engaged concrete urns cap off the pilasters over the cornice. Each pilaster boasts two inlay raised panels, separated horizontally by a *congé*² molding *taenia*³, allowing for a flat space

¹ Puerto Rico Planning Board, Geolocalizador: Interactive Map of the Land Registry, <http://gis.jp.pr.gov/GeoLocalizador/Internet/> for plot number 184-092-017-03.

in-between, where the school's name – *Escuela Hostos* - is painted over on-center. Two "bull's-eye" round medallions are located above the arch spandrel, the triangular surface bounded by the outer curve of the entrance arch and the adjacent wall. Similar, yet smaller bull's-eyes highlight three distinct window entablatures at the second floor.

To further underscore the arched entry, the portico displays two Tuscan order columns between *antae* (pilasters). In terms of architectural composition, said arrangement is formally referred to as *distyle-in-antis*⁴. Column shafts are unfluted and tapered. The base is plain and simple; only a single torus molding⁵ sits above the plinth of the base. The capital consists of a plain astragal⁶ ring on top of the column beneath its plain cap (**FIG. 4**). The entrance arch is in Roman style, sporting a double frame architrave⁷. On top, a protruding keystone includes coarse finish inlay and crown top molding. A paneled soffit underscores the underside of the arch.

In the front façade, windows appear in sets of five (5), each group corresponding to a single classroom. Thin, rectangular, concrete columns separate one window from the other, mullion-like, far from being perceived as full wall segments. The sets of five windows are closely spaced and "read" as a horizontal field in the overall building composition. Window openings are rectangular and vertical; all of them now house aluminum, operable жалюзи. The symmetrical composition of the entrance frontispiece is further emphasized at these window groupings by highlighting the window at center, on the upper level, where the principal's office used to be located. Three flat (fillet) moldings surround the 4'-3" wide, window opening. Above, a small entablature framed by a single fillet molding encases four "bull's-eye" round medallions lined-up horizontally. A pediment crowns the window (**FIG. 5**). On the same façade - at window groupings corresponding to flanking classrooms right and left of the entrance - the center window [part of a group of five] is also highlighted with similar trimmings. These openings (3'-3" wide) incorporate the three flat (fillet) molding surrounds and a small entablature. The latter is framed by a single fillet molding that encases three "bull's-eye" round medallions also laid-out horizontally and capped-off by a flat cornice, instead of a pediment. Their compositional importance is further underlined by a three-dimensional cartouche placed on axis beneath them.

Almost reaching roof level, four discreet, rectangular (4) bas-relief motifs in concrete and coarse finish inlay constitute complementary ornamental features. Unlike its lateral volumes, the main body of the school includes a classical cornice molding under a single string of red clay roof tiles that sits above the coping. The continuity of the roof's cornice contrasts with a smaller cornice that runs at ground floor level below the windows, at sill height. This cornice is interrupted at each window opening. The same cornice wraps around the building's side volumes as well, but without any interruptions. At either side of the hierarchical volume – at ground level - classrooms have a single window, while two bright light and air into the second floor. In contrast with the main volume, the complementary ones flanking it at each side are almost seven (7) feet lower and capped by an

² *Congé* refers to a concave molding having the form a quadrant curving away from a given surface and terminating perpendicular fillet parallel to that surface. Also known as *congee*.

³ In classical architecture, *taenia* is the Latin word for a small "band" or "ribbon". It is a "fillet" molding in lower part of the frieze.

⁴ *Distyle* refers in classical architecture to a portico with two columns between pilasters or antae. *Anta* relates to a pier produced by thickening a wall at its termination, treated architecturally as a pilaster, with capital and base.

⁵ *Torus* moldings are large convex, semicircular moldings commonly found directly above the plinth of the base of a classical column.

⁶ *Astragal* refers to a convex molding of semicircular section.

⁷ *Architrave* defines molded or decorative bands framing a rectangular door or window opening.

overextending, flat and thin concrete roof. In the lower level, these lateral components include five (5) windows for the bathrooms here located: three (3) of them at both northwest and southeast elevations; and one (1) each at the northeast and southwest facades. On the second floor level – where storage areas have been located – two (2) windows appear on the long elevations and a single pair of windows, ventilates the shorter sides. Some of the original vertical cast-iron grilles ventilators provided at the time of construction are still visible at the school's base. Other ventilators are partially covered by concrete poured paths along the sides and back of the school.

All elevations are **stuccoed** in cement to achieve a flat finish. In particular, most of the back façade appears as a wholesome wall plane, devoid of any ornamentation, except for the three horizontal lines defined by the ground floor level cornice, the "waist high" banding below the second floor windows, and the roof cornice. Here, as in the main elevation, windows appear in sets of five (5), each group corresponding to a single classroom. At center (below the second level, but above the first one) a rectangular window and a slot filled with glass blocks disclose the location of the interior stair's landing behind. Below them, a rear entrance/exit is framed by a bas relief lintel with flat volutes. It accommodates 5'-0" wide, solid, metal double doors (**FIG. 6**). Because the whole building is raised above grade at this point, complementary ramps were subsequently added to account for official ADA regulations. The ramps run parallel to the rear elevation, but still fail in compliance. Continuous, galvanized-steel, tubular handrails extend all along the ramps and landing.

The spatial sequence of approach and movement through the building is formal; the traditional Roman arch (semicircular) underscored by the aforementioned frontispiece welcomes the visitor at center. In order to access the building, one has to climb up five steps flanked by a low, stepped pier at each side. As high as the set of steps, a base surrounds the whole building, projecting out a few inches. From the steps – and by passing an ornamental iron grille - visitors reach a six feet deep small foyer also defined by a concrete lintel with flat volutes at each side.

In what appears to be an attempt to comply with means of egress of contemporary building codes, additional doors convene from the two side classrooms onto the abovementioned foyer. The northern classroom space has been reorganized into office space for administrative use, incorporating decorative wood board wall partitions over wood frames; 2'-0" x 4'-0" acoustic ceiling tiles; fluorescent lighting; and exposed air conditioning window units. These windows have iron-grille bars for security on the outside, while in other classrooms [on the ground floor] bars are installed on the inside.

A cross-shaped, double-loaded corridor on the first floor level and a T-shaped hallway on the second floor level lead to the classroom spaces housed within the main volume. At ground level, said hallway includes a 12'-0" wide vestibule that extends from the main entrance to the rear facade and runs northeast/southwest, providing direct access to classrooms, the main stairs, and a secondary back entrance, partially hidden behind these. To the left side of the vestibule, a mural painted by students fills portions of the wall below the stair's landing. The stairway itself is built in concrete, located on axis with the main entrance, and prominently featured within a double height space. The dogleg stair⁸ is wide but plain, and features a round post where the center balustrade ends at the curtail step (**FIG. 7**). Steps are finished in polished concrete and include stair nosings. The space underneath the stairs is used as storage. The first level has an interior height of 14'-0". The hallway

⁸ The term *dogleg stair* describes a half-return stair consisting of two straight flights immediately side-by-side, and connected by an intervening landing.

that runs northwest/southeast from one flanking volume to the other measures 10'-0" wide. The second floor height is 11'-6".

Originally, all eight classrooms, four on each floor, were organized on a cross-grid-linear layout. Facing northeast, two classrooms and principal's office on the second floor were provided with folding door partitions, so that they could easily be integrated as a large assembly room (FIG. 8). Later changes were enacted (at an uncertain date) to accommodate a ninth classroom with panel board folding wall divisions, substituting the original folding doors. Currently, only the track and beam of one folding partition remains. Most of the classroom doors are in solid steel plate, reinforced by hot-rolled steel tube frames with padlock. Some have an iron-grille transom, except for a single door on a ground floor classroom and another in a second floor classroom, which sport batten doors⁹ with no transom. A few classrooms retain the original door transoms in wood. Some have plastic screens that impede ventilation. The administration space includes air-conditioning window units and aluminum screen doors with plastic inserts that also appear over the windows. The interiors of all the classrooms have ceilings in acoustic tile, and fluorescent lighting. Floors are in polished exposed concrete. Restrooms are provided with lavatories, water closets, toilet partitions, and urinals. Significant alterations have occurred in these spaces; a half wall now provides some privacy, and all original stalls and equipments have been replaced. Having removed the original wood ceiling, PVC pipes for rain discharge from the roof are now exposed.

All around Eugenio María de Hostos School, windows are the aluminum, operable jalousie type painted a bronze/brownish color. Walls are finished in rough concrete on the outside, but smooth cement on the inside. Wall bases are in concrete. Exposed electrical equipment, conduits, telephone lines (dead or in use), as well as plumbing and air conditioning pipes appear indiscriminately throughout all of the school's facades. Cement stucco – original, but mostly pertaining to repairs – is coming off at some walls. Paint is peeling off at some locations due to the weight of one coat being applied over another throughout the years without use of any primer or without the removal of any previously applied material. All of these improvised interventions and omissions can be removed and improved without any damage to the existing structure. At an unspecified date, the school's floors were removed and substituted with steel, open-web joists, metal deck, and a concrete slab. These were also installed at the roof, the entrance vestibule, and the roof over the staircase. The more contemporary roof has fostered the installation of acoustic tile systems at classroom ceilings; unfortunately many of them already damaged by unattended water leakage. Illumination is now of the fluorescent type, where it used to be incandescent. Much of the electrical and plumbing systems has been repaired or replaced.

The Impact of Time

The *Eugenio María de Hostos School* remains the most monumental of all institutional buildings built in Las Marías to this day, unequaled by any other in scale or in the appropriation and recombination of neoclassical ornamentation. In its current state, it retains all its key distinguishing and distinctive architectural attributes. In spite of several inconsequential buildings that are located behind the school, the building's original massing and internal disposition prevail. The intended architectural composition retains its integrity. Since it was built 74 years ago, the property has been used as a public educational facility. The fact that it still serves its original purpose has limited any drastic transformation of the property unrelated to its initial spatial program. In parallel, extended use has granted permanence of the school as a community icon, representative of the many generations

⁹ A door constructed of vertical boards held together by horizontal battens and bracings.

whose lives are linked to it. Minor inflictions – changes and repairs - have not yet affected permanently the building.

All windows originally in wood (with operable louvers, glass panes, and shutters) have been substituted more than once, the last time resorting to aluminum jalousies. In general, the proportions of most original openings have been retained and/or are retrievable. Where needed, some original window openings have been walled up to fit the smaller dimensions of the new windows, as in the restrooms and the storage spaces. On the ground floor, security bars have been placed over the window openings; these are visible in the interior and the exterior. Minor damage and poor paint jobs impinge now upon several architectural finishes. However, the original neoclassical details remains unaltered. At different locations throughout the building, air conditioning units protrude from the metal louvered windows. Refrigerant lines as well as electrical conduits and cables are often exposed. PVC drainage pipes run down the northwest and southeast façades. Also visible on the school grounds is a space for a plastic water cistern tank enclosed by a chain-link fence at the southeast corner of the school. A second cistern, in concrete and with an access ladder, rises west.

Although molded reinforced concrete was the primary construction material, designers originally endorsed a combined roofing system. Roofs were erected in wood, but above the double loaded corridor, a concrete slab would be provided. The system of rafters and joists would slant inwards, towards the slab roof. Rafters used were 2" x 6" and 2" x 8", and purlins 1 ½" x 6", while floor joists were 2" x 12". Wooden plugs were used to anchor the roof to the purlins, secured in place by galvanized iron screws. Above the classrooms, the wooden roof was covered with corrugated galvanized iron, and seal finished with flashing and counter flashing. The central corridor remains as originally poured, a concrete slab, but a more contemporary concrete slab substituted the original cover in wood.

Inside, the spatial flexibility originally granted by the retractable accordion doors in the second floor has been temporarily lost. The walls that now replace them impede the joint use of classroom spaces. Wooden floors at classrooms were oiled; wooden fenestration was stained. Doors were paneled and included ventilation transoms. Paneled shutters complemented casement windows with glass panes. Cement floors have been repaired nostalgic haphazardly and in some areas painted over. The original stairs remain, but several steps need repair. Stair railings are not ADA compliant. Through the decades, however, most changes have been related to the substitution of all wood components of the building, including the roof, classroom floors, and most fenestration.

In its current state, the Eugenio María de Hostos School attests to its architectural resilience. The scale and location of the property continue to overwhelm most adjacent urban elements. Stylistic attributes and design composition contribute significantly to the value awarded to the school by most townsfolk. That electrical and plumbing improvements had to be made to bring systems up to date is to be expected. That air conditioning would be considered conducive to better learning is also understandable. Less justifiable is the expediency with which these needs have been satisfied. Concrete in walls has been damaged; repairs to plaster have been less than skillful; and paint has been often applied without special care. In spite of it all, *Escuela Hostos* has weathered time well, and the small scars add to its architectural dignity.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1938-1962

Significant Dates

1938

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Gardón Vega, Francisco, Designer

Carmoeaga, Rafael, Head Architect

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance of the property starts when the building was constructed in 1938, and closes at the 50-year cut-off date (1962).

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

Statewide significance of the *Eugenio María de Hostos School* rests on *Criterion C* (Architecture). The building, designed in a spare Spanish Revival idiom, adheres to the style's proclivity for incorporating classical motives in frontispieces that contrasted highly against otherwise plain backgrounds. Bearing striking resemblance to other similar school buildings built in Puerto Rico from the late 1920's to the late 1930's, *La Hostos* brought to town an alternate architectural expression, but also renewed tectonics regarding construction methods. Since its construction – and to this day – the school's sitting, bearing, and permanence have earned it respect from the community.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance)

The *Eugenio María de Hostos School* was built in 1938¹⁰ making use of funds provided by the recently created *Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration* (referred to locally as PRRA)¹¹. The school was constructed using the plans of a school design dating from the 1920's by Francisco Gardón Vega, who was working at that time under the supervision of architect Rafael Carmoega, then head of the Public Works Division of Puerto Rico's Department of the Interior. After some years of diverting paths, Gardón and Carmoega met again in the 1930's, when the former became a PRRA employee, and Carmoega, once more, his boss. Floor plans and construction documents almost identical to those of Las Marías were used at at least four more locations in Puerto Rico: the *José Gautier Benítez School* in Santurce; the *Andrés Flores School* in Canóvanas; the *Rafael Nicolau School* in Aguas Buenas; and the *Manuel Gaetán Barbosa Building*, now a component of the *Dr. Francisco Hernández y Gaetán School Complex* in Santurce, San Juan. However, documentation regarding policies or practices regarding the use and reuse of prototypical buildings is lacking.¹²

The design of the *Eugenio María de Hostos School* follows an archetypal model that was applied at other locations in Puerto Rico during the second and third decades of the 20th century. Construction documents developed earlier on said period were used repeatedly until its end. At that time the PRRA, as the agency in charge of implementing the school building program saw fit to reuse plans from previous projects in order to cut costs, given its limited funds. Coincidentally, the

¹⁰ As established in the Minutes of Las Marías' Municipal Assembly, 1937-1947, n. p.

¹¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 7057 established the *Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration* on May 28, 1935: "By virtue of and pursuant to the authority vested in me under the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935, approved April 8, 1935 (Public Resolution No. 11, 74th Congress), I hereby establish an agency within the Department of the Interior to be known as the "Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration," and appoint Ernest H. Gruening as Administrator thereof, to serve without additional compensation." The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/>

¹² The design of *Escuela Hostos* follows the plans made in 1928 for the *Rafael Nicolau School* in Aguas Buenas. Because construction documents for the school at Las Marías have not been located, consultation of those documents (plans and specifications) for Aguas Buenas proves useful to grasp the scope and details pertaining to *La Hostos*. (AGPR: Fondo: Obras Públicas; Serie: Edificios Escolares; Caja: 1156; Leg. 253, Exp. 1)

staff under which said plans were originally prepared in the 1920's at the Department of Public Works of Puerto Rico's Department of the Interior, had transferred to the PRRA, particularly Rafael Carmoega and Fidel Sevillano.

The eight-classroom reinforced concrete school was the first urban school in the Municipality of Las Marías. In its early years, the school provided services at all educational levels: elementary, middle and high. Nowadays, it is used as a night school for the Adult Education Program of Puerto Rico's Department of Education. In previous years, it lodged the regional *Even Start Family Literacy Program* for the U.S. Department of Education¹³.

Comparisons regarding the current state of *La Hostos* are made possible by those other extant schools erected in the same manner and style. To that effect, at Las Marías, the property still cuts its proud profile and simple massing against the surrounding countryside, perched as it is atop a hill. Ornamental embellishments remain in place, dating, as such, the Spanish Revival period under which the school was constructed. Craftsmanship attests to the will exerted at that time – even in remote areas – of endorsing neoclassical detailing as the epitome of architectural taste, without any particular regard to context. That concrete building techniques were then applied in the inaccessible mountain region of the Island underlines the public will (trust?) to train locals in cement workmanship, a challenge well met, given the school's resilience to damage throughout time. All of the above mentioned conditions contribute to the architectural integrity of the property. Permanence (physical, but also programmatic) contributes to educe association: for people at Las Marías, *La Hostos* is a fixed presence, often taken for granted on a day to day basis, but celebrated whenever an opportunity arises.

Developmental history/additional historic context information(if appropriate)

Founded in 1872 - relatively late in comparison with other settlements in Puerto Rico - it took more than half-a-century for Las Marías to lodge its youth in a proper school building. Up to that time, young and old alike had been educated in wooden, temporary, rented facilities. The site selected to build Escuela Hostos in 1939 had been, since 1896, the seat of the town's Civil Guard headquarters. That first building was a modest one, in wood, raised on stilts, with a gabled roof covered with galvanized sheet panels, as some walls were too. Its footprint embraced approximately 25 X 50 feet. In 1907, it was rehabilitated and refurbished as a hospital. Said use lasted until the Hostos School was erected.¹⁴ At that time, Eustaquio Ramos Meléndez ("Don Tito") was mayor. His term of tenure lasted from 1937 to 1940. Specific reasons for building the new school have not been identified. Census data reveal that from 1900 to 1940, the population of Las Marías had decreased by 15%, a fact that may not have been in direct correlation with the percentage of school attendees per se.¹⁵

The choice of concrete as building material for the school must have proven reassuring to the community of Las Marías, that from 1926 to 1932 had been hit - within one, two and three-year spans

¹³ *Even Start* is a component of the Office of Early Learning of the U.S. Department of Education. This program offers grants to support local family literacy projects that integrate early childhood education, adult literacy (adult basic and secondary-level education and instruction for English language learners), parenting education, and interactive parent and child literacy activities for low-income families with parents who are eligible for services under the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act*. *Even Start*, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/evenstartformula/index.html>

¹⁴ Juan Luis Medina Caraballo. *Las Marías: Notas para su historia, 1842-1983* (Oficina Estatal de Preservación Histórica, San Juan, 1983), 52, 56.

¹⁵ Idem, 78. By 1899, the US Bureau of the Census reports 11,279 persons living in Las Marías; by 1940 the number has dropped to 9,626.

- by four hurricanes, the worst of which was San Felipe in 1928. The others were: San Liborio, 1926; San Nicolás, 1931; and San Ciprián, 1932. Fear of fire was, in parallel, prevalent. Two of the most devastating ones in town occurred in 1922 and 1937.¹⁶ Use of cement appeased widespread safety concerns, but also heralded change and progress in remote Las Marías.

By 1937, Franklin Delano Roosevelt had implemented many of his New Deal initiatives in the Mainland and, in Puerto Rico, the agency named the *Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration* would prove instrumental in the design, construction and project supervision of school buildings, one of them being *Escuela Hostos*. Las Marías was eligible to the program. Aware of it, the town's municipal assembly, headed by Fernando Nieves, and backed by Mayor Eustaquio Ramos Meléndez, requested construction funds. The land on which the municipal hospital operated (the former military headquarters) was transferred to the municipality by the Island's Department of Health. Upon completion of the school, the municipal assembly considered three names to honor it with, those of the President of the United States, his wife Eleanor, and Eugenio María de Hostos. The school began operations in August, 1938.¹⁷

For more than a decade, the school served junior high school students; in 1950, it became a high school. A first high school graduation, however, took place a year before, when Second World War veterans completed a special course that allowed them to earn a diploma. The first high school graduation for regular students was held in 1953.¹⁸ From that time, to the present – along six decades – *La Hostos* has served well its community, playing host to generations of students that now comprise a significant segment of the town's population. A highly regarded icon, the school was paid tribute in Las Marías' Orange Festival of 2011, three days of festivities for which a scale replica of the building was built as an expression of respect and gratitude to everyone's *alma mater*.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form)

Primary Sources

Archivo General de Puerto Rico
Fondo: Obras Públicas; Serie: Edificios Escolares; Caja: 1156; Leg. 253, Exp. 1.

Municipality of Las Marías. Minutes of the Municipal Assembly, 1937-1947.

Puerto Rico Planning Board, *Geolocalizador: Interactive Map of the Land Registry*, <http://gis.jp.pr.gov/GeoLocalizador/Internet/> for Cadaster Number –184-092-017-03.

Secondary Sources

Carley, Rachel. *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 1994)

¹⁶ Idem, 40.

¹⁷ Luis F. Rodríguez López. *Historia del edificio de la Escuela Eugenio María de Hostos de Las Marías*, Hoja Mimeografiada, Febrero 7, 2012.

¹⁸ Juan Luis Medina Caraballo. *Las Marías: Notas para su historia*, 56.

Medina Caraballo, José Luis. *Las Marías: Notas para su historia* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Oficina Estatal de Preservación Histórica, 1983).

Rigau, Jorge. *Puerto Rico 1900: Turn-of-the-Century Architecture in the Hispanic Caribbean, 1890-1930*. (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1992)

Rodríguez López, Luis F. *Historia del Edificio de la Escuela Eugenio María de Hostos de Las Marías*, Hoja Mimeografiada, Febrero 7, 2012.

Sepúlveda Rivera, Aníbal. *Puerto Rico urbano: Atlas histórico de la ciudad puertorriqueña*. (San Juan, Centro de Investigaciones Carimar y Departamento de Transportación y Obras Públicas, 2004)

Figures

Archivo General de Puerto Rico

Alex Martínez

Interviews

Wilson Aponte Rosario, Director, Hostos School, September 16, 2012

Luis F. Rodríguez López, Record Keeper, Municipality of Las Marías, October 2, 2012

Internet

Even Start, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/evenstartformula/index.html>

The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/>

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☒ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☒ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other
Name of repository:
Municipality of Las Marías

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre (.11)
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 19 712537 2019002
Zone Easting Northing

3
Zone Easting Northing

2
Zone Easting Northing

4
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundaries are indicated on the accompanying base map, and are shown as the dotted line on the accompanying map. See continuation sheet, section 10.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The nominated property includes the entire lot historically associated with the Eugenio María de Hostos School.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Arq. Jorge Rigau, FAIA

organization Jorge Rigau Arquitectos

date October 26, 2012

street& number #67 calle Los baños, 1er piso

telephone (787) 982-0002

city or town San Juan

state Puerto Rico zip code 00911

e-mail rigau@jorgerigau.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

1. Eugenio María de Hostos School
2. Las Marías, Puerto Rico
3. Mariana Morales Martínez
4. May 25, 2012
5. Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico
6. Northeast elevation, looking southwest. Main facade existing conditions in the town of Las Marías, Puerto Rico. Original reversed hipped roof and wood louvers windows have been substituted but the fenestrations retain their original proportions. The frontispiece on center is a predominant feature in otherwise bare façade. Windows in group of five, featuring interrupted cornice on ground floor, highlighted center window on second floor level and cartouche underneath central window. A cornice on ground floor level breaks with each window's opening at window sill height. Portions of the openings have been filled adroitly in cement, corresponding with the top of the cornice, to accommodate smaller window units. At roof level height one of four lantern shape, low-relief, coarse finish inlay, concrete motif are distributed along the front façade below a cornice.
7. #1

1. Eugenio María de Hostos School
2. Las Marías, Puerto Rico
3. Mariana Morales Martínez
4. May 25, 2012
5. Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico
6. Northeast elevation, looking southwest. A highly elaborated frontispiece adds monumental scale to the otherwise bare façade. A five stepped stoop with no handrails flanked by a low pier at each side; acts like a pedestal for the one and one-half level pilasters that elevates onto a slightly protruding flat cornice that "wraps around" the main volume only – not at floor slab or ceiling level, which remain unaccounted for – but at "high-waist", underneath the sill of the upper level windows. This grants an over slung scale to the school building, partly responsible for the monumental presence it exerts in town.
7. #2

1. Eugenio María de Hostos School
2. Las Marías, Puerto Rico
3. Mariana Morales Martínez
4. May 25, 2012
5. Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico
6. Interior view, looking southwest. Entrance vestibule on axis with stairway Classroom spaces are housed within the main volume, and reached by a cross-shaped, double-loaded, corridor; restrooms flank the main volume.
7. #3

1. Eugenio María de Hostos School
2. Las Marías, Puerto Rico
3. Mariana Morales Martínez
4. May 25, 2012
5. Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico
6. Close-up detail view, looking southwest. One of the two central windows [part of a group of five]. Openings are only 3'-3" wide, has three flat (fillet) moldings surrounds, a small entablature framed by a single fillet molding that encases only three "bull's-eye" round medallions laid-out horizontally and is capped-off by a cornice. Distinct to the central window these two windows have cornice sill over the abovementioned "high-waist" decorative cornice below the windows. Underneath these two windows and at center cartouches flank the frontispiece.
7. #4

1. Eugenio María de Hostos School
2. Las Marías, Puerto Rico
3. Mariana Morales Martínez
4. May 25, 2012
5. Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico
6. Close-up detail view, looking southwest. Upper portion of the frontispiece, highlighting the window at center, three flat (fillet) moldings surrounds the 4'-3" wide opening. Above, a small entablature framed by a single fillet molding encases four "bull's-eye" round medallions laid-out horizontally. On top a pediment crowns on axis the second floor window. Two small engaged concrete urns cap off the pilasters over the cornice. Corresponding to the second floor level height, each pilaster with inlay raised panels edges is split and a horizontally by a congé molding taenia, allowing a small frieze for where the school inscription is painted on-center.
7. #5

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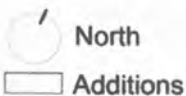
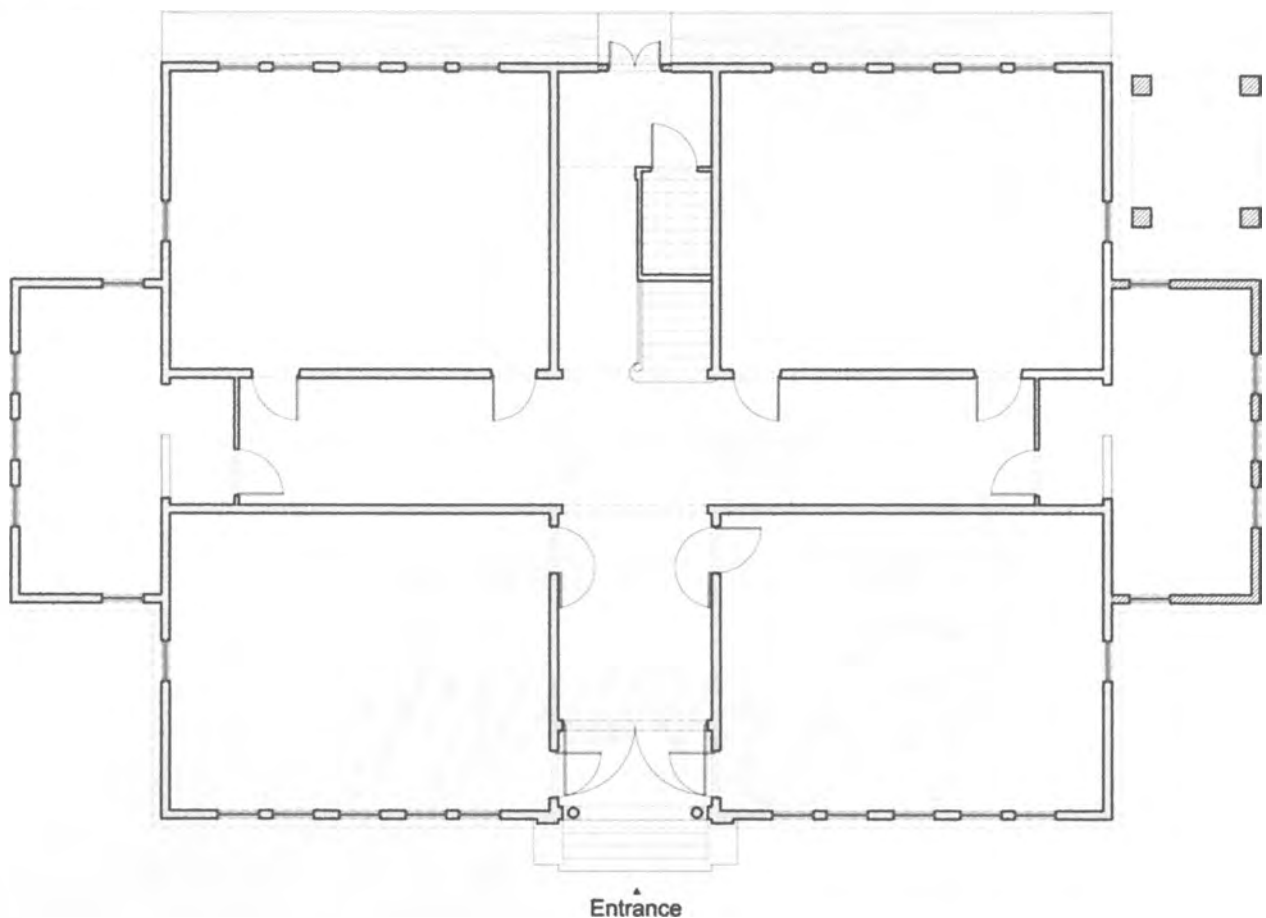
Eugenio María de Hostos School

Las Marías, Puerto Rico

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Early XXth Century Schools Puerto Rico,
1900-1930

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List of Figures



Scale 0 4' 12' 28'

FIG. 1: Eugenio María de Hostos School Ground Level Floor Plan. Classroom spaces are housed within the main volume, and reached by a cross-shaped, double-loaded, corridor; restrooms flank the main volume. Drawing: Eduardo Miranda, September 19, 2012.

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FIG. 2: Eugenio María de Hostos School northeast elevation, looking southwest. Main facade existing conditions in the town of Las Marías, Puerto Rico. Original reversed hipped roof and wood louvers windows has been substituted but the fenestrations retain their original proportions. The frontispiece on center is a predominant feature in otherwise bare façade. Windows in group of five, featuring interrupted cornice on ground floor, highlighted center window on second floor level and cartouche underneath central window. A cornice on ground floor level breaks with each window's opening at window sill height. Portions of the openings have been filled adroitly in cement, corresponding with the top of the cornice, to accommodate smaller window units. At roof level height one of four lantern shape, low-relief, coarse finish inlay, concrete motif are distributed along the front façade below a cornice. Photo: Mariana Morales, May 28, 2012.

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FIG. 3: Eugenio María de Hostos School northeast elevation, looking southwest. A five stepped stoop with no handrails flanked by a low pier at each side; acts like a pedestal for the pilasters. Photo: Mariana Morales, May 28, 2012.

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FIG. 4: Eugenio María de Hostos School northeast elevation, looking southwest. Main entrance arch part of an elaborate frontispiece. Photo: Mariana Morales, May 28, 2012.

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FIG.5: Eugenio María de Hostos School exterior detail, looking southwest. Highlighting the window at center, where the principal's office used to be located. Three flat (fillet) moldings surrounds the 4'-3" wide opening. Above, a small entablature framed by a single fillet molding encases four "bull's-eye" round medallions laid-out horizontally. On top a pediment crowns on axis the second floor window. Photo: Mariana Morales, May 28, 2012.

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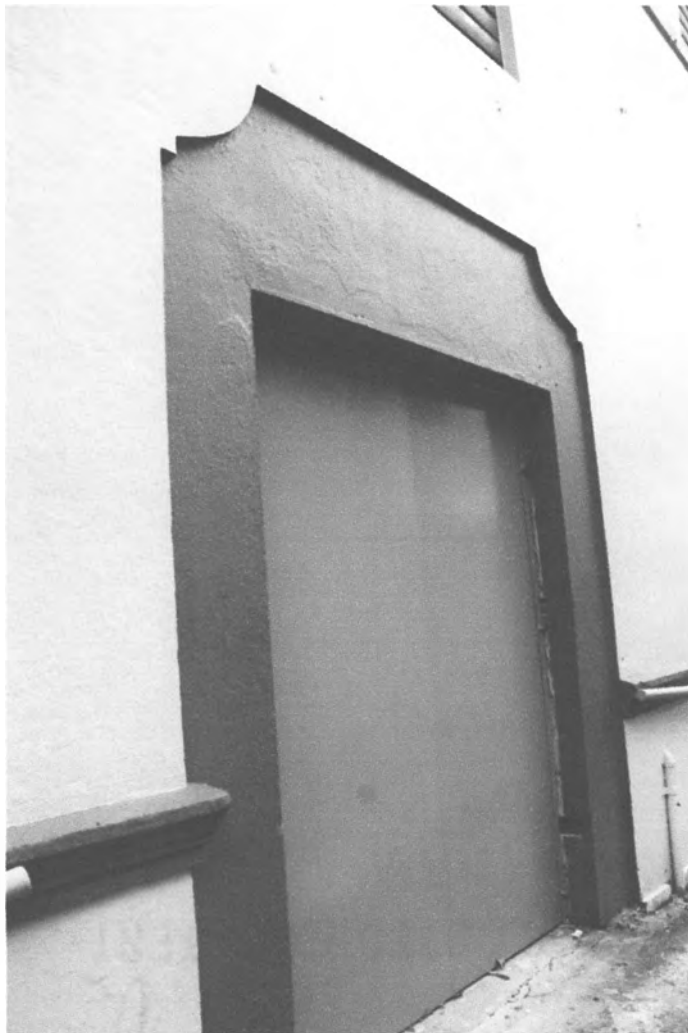


FIG. 6: Eugenio María de Hostos School exterior detail, looking northeast. A rear entrance/exit mixtilinear arch filled in to accommodate a 5'-0" wide solid metal double doors. Photo: Mariana Morales, May 28, 2012.

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FIG.7: Eugenio María de Hostos School interior view, looking northeast. The stairway is built in concrete and is located on axis with the main entrance prominently featured with a double height space. The dog-leg stair is plain and wide, they feature a round post where the center balustrade ends at the curtail step. Steps are finished in polished concrete and include stair nosings. Photo: Mariana Morales, May 28, 2012.

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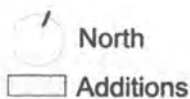
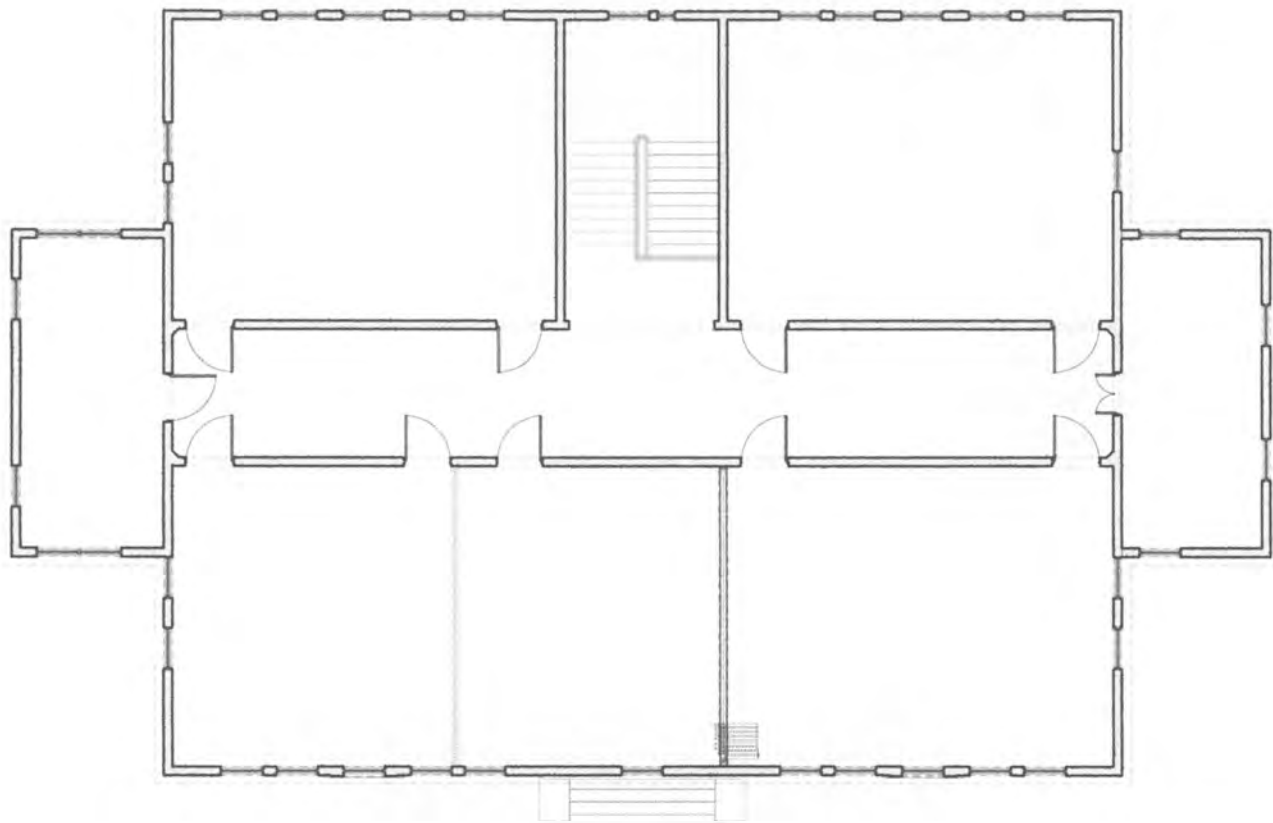
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Scale 0 4' 12' 28'

FIG. 84: Eugenio María de Hostos School Second Level Floor Plan. Classroom spaces are housed within the main volume, and reached by a T-shaped, double-loaded, corridor; storage space flank the main volume. Facing northeast, two classrooms and principal's office on the second floor were provided with folding door partitions, so that they could easily be converted into a large assembly room. Drawing: Eduardo Miranda, September 19, 2012.

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10. Geographical Data *Eugenio María de Hostos School*

The boundaries are indicated with gray shading. Map shows the contributing resource. The limits were obtained from the official boundaries map provided by the Puerto Rico Planning Board.

EUGENIO MARÍA DE HOSTOS - LAS MARÍAS , PUERTO RICO

Location: PR-120 [Matias Brugman Avenue] Las Marías, Puerto Rico 00670
UTM Reference: 19, 712537, 2019002
Acreage of Property Less than one acre (0.12 acre)



JORGE RIGAU
ARQUITECTOS

feet 800
meters 200

- Contributing resource
- Property boundary

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10. Geographical Data

The limits of the plot were obtained from the official boundaries map provided by the Puerto Rico Planning Board. The boundaries of the nominated resource are identified by an outline. Image taken from Google Earth.

EUGENIO MARÍA DE HOSTOS - LAS MARÍAS , PUERTO RICO

Location: PR-120 [Matias Brugman Avenue] Las Marías, Puerto Rico 00670
UTM Reference: 19, 712537, 2019002
Acreage of Property Less than one acre (0.12 acre)



JORGE RIGAU
ARQUITECTOS

feet
meters

800
200



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY de Hostos, Eugenio Maria, School
NAME:

MULTIPLE Early Twentieth Century Schools in Puerto Rico TR
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: PUERTO RICO, Las Marias

DATE RECEIVED: 11/02/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/04/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/19/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/19/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12001077

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 12.19.12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.







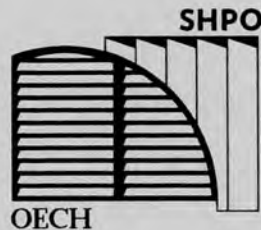






OFICINA ESTATAL DE
CONSERVACIÓN HISTÓRICA
OFICINA DEL GOBERNADOR

STATE HISTORIC
PRESERVATION OFFICE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



October 29, 2012

Ms. Carol D. Shull, Ph.D.
National Park Service 2280, 8th floor
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20005

**SUBMISSIONS - ESCUELA GUILLERMO ESTEVES, NARANJITO; ESCUELA
EUGENIO MARIA DE HOSTOS, LAS MARIAS; ESCUELA LUIS MUÑOZ RIVERA,
LAJAS**

Dear Ms. Shull:

We are pleased to submit the following three schools for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places:

- **Escuela Luis Muñoz Rivera, Lajas**
- **Escuela Eugenio María de Hostos, Las Marías; and,**
- **Escuela Guillermo Esteves, Naranjito;**

Should have any questions on the nomination, please contact Berenice R. Sueiro,
Deputy SHPO (787) 721-3737, extension 2002.

Sincerely,

Carlos A. Rubio Cancela, Architect
State Historic Preservation Officer

CARC/BRS/JEM

Enclosures

WWW.OECH.GOBIERNO.PR