

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUN 29 1987

date entered AUG 4

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Eleuterio Derkes Grammar School

and or common La Escuela de Magueyes

2. Location

street & number José María Anguelí Street not for publication

city, town Guayama vicinity of N/A

state Puerto Rico code PR county Guayama code 057

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Department of Education - Departamento de Instrucción Pública

street & number Urbanización Industrial Tres Monjitas

city, town Hato Rey vicinity of San Juan state Puerto Rico

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Guayama Registry of Deeds

street & number Guayama Government Center

city, town Guayama state Puerto Rico

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Early XXth C. High Schools in Puerto Rico has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date October, 1986 federal state county local

depository for survey records Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office

city, town San Juan state Puerto Rico

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Eleuterio Derkes School in Guayama, on the Southern part of Puerto Rico, is not among the town's largest educational structures, but is one of the oldest in the whole Island. It sits in what is today a city lot, but was originally the outskirts of town. Low income suburban growth reached it many years ago. The school, however, retains much of its object-like character due to its set-backs from the sidewalks, a fence added in 1914, and surrounding greenery. Also, the scale of adjacent buildings does not surpass its own.

Built in 1908, the one-story C-shaped facility houses 6 similarly sized classrooms, all connected by an arcade (a single-loaded open hallway) facing inwardly, that is, away from three of the four surrounding streets. The arcade, although at the same floor level, is lower than the rest of the building, the difference heightened by a surmounting parapet on the latter. A zinc and wood roof slopes inward in both arcade and building; the original design and materials are still preserved. Ceilings are in galvanized steel and wood planking. Square columns, loosely spaced, make up the arcade's interior courtyard facade, very light, also flat, in appearance.

Symmetrically laid out, the building's organization is clear and direct. Two flagpoles, an entrance portico (very subtle) and a small set of steps, all in axis, lead to a vestibule which, in turn, leads to the arcade and, immediately, outside the building. The sequence is a very short one, the feeling a very open one. Getting in means reaching the arcade, which is also where you're already out. Bathrooms are located at the end of each wing stemming out from the vestibule. The structure is in concrete.

The building's outside surface is sparsely articulated on elevation. At the front facade, each side wing's width is expressed by projecting the building's volume at both ends. Ornamentation is down to the basic essentials: the grandest (yet so modest) gesture is that of a pediment and flat pilasters with cornices and frieze. The rough concrete texture on the front facade makes evident the construction materials and building techniques at the time it was erected. Window openings include sills and key stones; they once exhibited wood windows in shutters, with transoms. Aluminum louvered windows replace the original fenestration; transoms are now in glass block, an unhappy addition of the 1940's. At that time, a planter was added to the front facade; its impact is minor. The general stylistic character of the building is that of a washed-down neoclassical interpretation, one that, nonetheless, became a familiar feature in school buildings built at the time in Puerto Rico, in less populated urban centers.

A lean-to concrete addition with zinc roof was added to the original structure in the late 60's. It includes aluminum louvered windows as an only feature of what is, by all means, a non-descript structure. A similar one, but independent and in wood, also sits on the site. Of a very temporary character, it could easily be done away with.

The inner patio has been completely paved in concrete for use as parking. The space, usually full with cars, contrasts sharply with the surrounding vegetation, and with the tropical character of the arcade facing the patio. In spite of it all, most of the original elements of the school have been retained, including many fine pine doors facing towards the arcade; also sliding doors between classrooms which open up to allow for larger meetings.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1908 **Builder/Architect** Antonio Higuera

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Eleuterio Derkes School of Guayama is a structure whose architectural merit lies on the fact that it represents a prototype or model widely repeated and reinterpreted at a significant moment in Puerto Rico's urban history. Under such light, the decision to choose the Derkes School as an example worthy of inclusion in the National Register, stems from the building's excellent condition.

This structure, contrary to most other schools of the time in the Island, has been little altered. It is one of the few examples remaining where the basic, simple, honest construction technology and building materials from the turn of the century can be observed. The C-shaped scheme, the lower arcade overlooking a patio, the roofs and ceilings in wood, including the naive classical detailing, are all highly characteristic of school buildings in Puerto Rico well up to the late 1920's. At the Derkes School, several important issues of our built history become evident: the transition of wood technology to concrete (a most significant and long lasting change of materials on the Island); the relevance of school houses as a major civic presence trying to equal church and city hall; and the resulting change of architectural imagery, as a direct product of the first two above mentioned processes.

Although there is no specific information about who was responsible for the design of the Derkes, archival research confirms that the contractor responsible for its erection was Antonio Higuera, from San Juan, who was Chief of the Division of School Buildings of the Commissioner of Education in the first decade of this century. He designed many similarly low-scaled school houses in Puerto Rico. In fact, he may be responsible for the proliferation of the Derkes prototype on the most diverse areas of the Island.

This school, located on axis with one of Guayama's most important streets, plays a vital role in the city's particular urban character. Age, its continued academic performance, and its urban prominence have made of the Eleuterio Derkes School an architectural event at a local level. Its links with the Island school-building tradition and the clear embodiment of the architectural ideals of a given period, make it stand out among other structures used for similar purposes as worthy of recognition and inclusion in the Register.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Archivo General de Puerto Rico
Fondo de Obras Públicas
Serie EE, Caja 1005, Leg. 27, Exp. 1

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name USGS Guayama 1970

Quadrangle scale 1 : 20,000

UTM References rev. 1982

A

1	9	8	0	5	7	5	0	1	9	9	0	6	5	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See enclosed location plan

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
N/A			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jorge Rigau, AIA Secretary

organization Colación, Inc.

date March 16, 1987

street & number Ponce de León 653, Miramar

telephone (809) 725-3948

city or town San Juan

state Puerto Rico

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Mariano G. Coronas Castro

title State Historic Preservation Office

date June 17, 1987

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date 8/4/87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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AUG 4 1997

Continuation sheet Eleuterio Derkes School

Item number

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SCALE 1:1,000

