

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 Aguayo Aldea Vocational High School

and/or common La Vocacional

2. Location

street & number San Juan Street, corner of Principal Street not for publication

city, town Caguas vicinity of N/A

state Puerto Rico code PR county Caguas code 025

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. Caguas Registry of Deeds

street & number Caguas Government Center

city, town Caguas state Puerto Rico

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date October, 1986 federal X 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

Caguas' 1939 Aguayo Aldea School is a striking Art Deco courtyard building, all in concrete. It sits in what seems a crowded lot, next to two other important school structures of the city, within walking distance from the plaza. The adjoining educational facilities are also Deco in style, providing a homogeneous character to the tree-shaded premises.

Raised from the floor, but only one story high, Aguayo Aldea's horizontal lines are strong and bold, only contrasted by a higher (two-story) volume at the building's entrance. Said volume houses the school's library on top, and includes abstracted monumental pilasters, projecting balconies, a large window area, a clock, and a bold spire of "futuristic" inspiration. There is no other feature like it in any other institutional building built in Puerto Rico at the time.

The symmetrically laid-out Aguayo Aldea is entered on axis from the street, alongside its Southern facade. In fact, it lies on perfect axis with the Manuel F. Chiqués School, directly in front of it. The lobby leads to a stair dead center; it is the means of access to the second story of the entrance volume. At entrance level, the circulation occurs to the left and right of the lobby, leading the visitor to an interior arcade which completely surrounds the patio. Concrete paving covers the open area. Fifteen classrooms can be reached from this open arcade. The arches themselves are stepped and flat, with vertical mouldings projected and recessed in truly typical Deco fashion. Side entrances are close to the front facade; the rest of the elevations is handled through the repetition of similar window modules.

Iron railings, closely associated to the nautical imagery of the period, tie together all facades, as part of them project higher than others as parapets. Continuous eaves over multiple windows underline, once more, horizontality. All original windows were in wood shutters and louvers; they have all been replaced by aluminum louvered windows. Transoms for ventilation have been sealed off with cement block. Modern iron grilles have been installed at some windows.

The main vertical volume is crowned with a geometrical patterned frieze, one highly characteristic of Deco architectural surface detailing. The frieze, as do other facade articulations, endows the building's elevations with an interesting play of light and shadow, of depth and shallowness. Achieving such effects in slightly recessed planes is a facade strategy closely associated with the Art Deco tendencies.

All floors are in polished concrete; at the library, the ceiling was refurbished in 1975 with acoustical tile. Classrooms are well-lit and ventilated; the bathrooms are in need of repair. No significant change, however, has affected this structure. There are no unwelcome additions; integrity has been kept at its best. Add to that the uniqueness of the Deco style and spire, and the complete picture of its importance within the Puertorican community becomes evident.

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	1939	Builder/Architect	Lizardi & Díaz Díez, Eng. Manuel González Seijo, Contractor
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Aguayo Aldea School in Caguas best represents the group of structures erected in Puerto Rico by the American Government during the last clearly identifiable school-building period at the early XXth century. Since the beginning of its renewed relationship with the Island, the United States established the construction of roads and schools as a main priority. During Franklin Delano Roosevelt's tenure as President, these priorities were again the focus of most governmental efforts. According to the terms of the "New Deal", the USA would directly intervene in all economic matters pertaining the development of the Island. An offspring of this was the Puerto Rico Emergency Relief Administration (PRERA), which from 1933 to 1936 spent 29 millions creating jobs, roads, hospitals, bridges and, of course, schools.

Given the interest on economic and industrial development, a new focus on education emerged. A by-product of such concerns was the emphasis placed on vocational training. Several schools were erected for such purposes on the Island; Aguayo Aldea is the most characteristic, yet peculiar of them all. These schools, all dating from around 1939, constitute our best Art Deco legacy, rivaling its contemporaries in places like Miami, Florida.

The Deco style is here maturely and consistently handled, but in Aguayo Aldea the use of building elements transcends the more conventional approaches to create a unique piece of Architecture, deeply rooted in its times. All Deco elements (horizontality, the use of eaves, the nautical quotations, the shallow surface articulation...) have remained in the Island's architectural vocabulary since first introduced to Puerto Rico in the late 30's. In Aguayo Aldea our building tradition is made as evident as in the architecture of Old San Juan; one and the other are part of a continuous line of development, from Colonial to Modern times. Schools like Aguayo Aldea, strong institutional presences within their community, performed the task of introducing the Deco style and taste to the general public. In such a way, the Modern Movement was paved its way. That is why, in spite of lacking two years for the given 50 year hiatus for nomination, the Aguayo Aldea is recommended for the Register.

Art Deco today enjoys the favor and interest of the public; structures from the period have been nominated to the Register all over the United States. In Puerto Rico, several buildings deserve such recognition: many of the are vocational schools. They are, as Aguayo Aldea is, unmistakably tied to the DEpression Era, to the emergence of the Island's economic maturity, and to a rich architectural imagery which subsequent building efforts took up for good.

9. Major Bibliographical References

NONE

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name USGS Caguas 1964

Quadrangle scale 1 : 20,000

UTM References rev. 1982

A

1	9	8	1	4	0	4	0	2	0	1	8	5	3	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 N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

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 Officer date June 17, 1987

For NPS use only

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

Ch. W. Eason for Jerry Rogers date Aug 4, 1987
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration