

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

RECEIVED

FEB 07 1994

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name: **Casa Alcaldía de Vieques (City Hall of Vieques)**

other names/site number: **Casa de Gobierno; Casa Municipal; Casa del Rey; Ayuntamiento**

2. Location

street & number: **Carlos LeBrun St. and Benítez Guzmán St.**
city or town: **Isabel Segunda** vicinity _____
state: **Puerto Rico** code: **PR** county: **Vieques** code: **147**
zip code: **00765**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Arleen Pabón PhD

January 20, 1994

Signature of certifying official

Date

Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions

Cat: **Government**
Government
Government
Health Care

Sub: **City Hall**
Government Office
Correctional Facility
Clinic

Current Functions

Cat: **Government**
Government

Sub: **City Hall**
Government Office

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification: **Vernacular adaptation of Colonial, Neoclassical and other architectural modes.**

Materials

foundation: **brick**
roof: **concrete**
walls: **brick, concrete**
other: **wood, glass**

Narrative Description

See accompanying continuation sheets.

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

Applicable National Register Criteria

- 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

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

Areas of Significance: **Settlement / Government
Social History**

Period of Significance: **circa 1850-1937**

Significant Dates: **circa 1850, 1903**

Significant Person: **N/A**

Cultural Affiliation: **N/A**

Architect/Builder: **N/A**

Narrative Statement of Significance

9. Major Bibliographical References

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: **Archivo General de Puerto Rico**

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property: **less than one acre**

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	241620	2008580	—	—	—
2	—	—	—	—	—	—

— See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

Boundary Justification

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title: **Mr. Héctor Santiago Cazull; Mr. Robert Rabin; Revised and Edited by the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office**

organization: **Cultural Center Yaureibo and Institute of Puerto Rican Culture**
date: **September 30, 1992** street & number: **54 Ulises Martínez St.**

telephone: **(809) 850-1885**

city or town: **Humacao** state: **PR** zip code: **00791**

=====
Property Owner
=====

name: **Municipality of Vieques c/o Hon. Manuela Santiago Collazo, Mayor**

street & number: **P.O. Box 154** telephone: **(809) 741-1000**

city or town: **Vieques** state: **PR** zip code: **00765**

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Casa Alcaldía de Vieques
Vieques, Puerto Rico

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Vieques City Hall is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of LeBrun and Benítez Guzmán Streets, in front of the Plaza of Isabel Segunda, on the Island of Vieques, Puerto Rico. It is a two-story, brick-masonry and stucco public building, a Vernacular adaptation of Colonial, Neoclassical and others architectural modes. Construction was begun c. 1850 and finished in 1903. The building presents three distinct volumetric units: a two-story, core volume occupying the northern half of the Carlos LeBrun Street façade and the Benítez Guzmán Street façade; a single-story volume at the southern half of the Carlos LeBrun Street façade; and a clock tower, centralized and projecting above the façade of the one-story volume. As most public urban buildings, the building occupies the entire area of the lot, leaving only a central, interior courtyard as open space.

The principal core of the building (the two-story volume, constructed in 1903), is an example of Vernacular architecture deeply infused with Colonial modes of interpretation. It also shows Neoclassical impact, one of the favorite architectural modes during the fin-de-siècle, as well as influence by other different modes (such as Castellated detailing). The organization of the building s façades consists of a series of bays with openings: eight on the main façade, on Carlos LeBrun Street, and twelve on the secondary, Benítez Guzmán Street façade. The main façade of this volume presents a varied vertical composition: the ground story presents an A-B-B rhythm, consisting of a wide, zaguán (an entrance foyer connecting the exterior to the courtyard) with an elliptical-arch, and two rectangular door openings; the upper story displays an A-B-B-A rhythm, consisting of four bays (the central two of which are connected by a concrete balcony and rail, suspended over concrete brackets). All openings on both levels are articulated by simple, planar brick and stucco moldings. The zaguán is closed to the street by means of a wrought-iron gate.

The single-story volume was part of the old Alcaldía, believed to have been constructed by Governor Francisco Sainz. It presents a façade similar, in terms of arrangement, to bays two, three and four of the lower story of the core volume. Above the central portion of the façade is a two-story, clock tower (square in plan), added in 1937. The tower displays a series of horizontal and

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 2

**Casa Alcaldía de Vieques
Vieques, Puerto Rico**

vertical courses and mouldings which highlight the combination of architectural elements of diverse stylistic inspiration: pairs of arch-like elements at each of its four sides and detailing suggesting Castellated influence such as, the pseudo-battlements at the parapet. The tower presents an eclectic composition formed by architectural elements inspired from diverse stylistic sources such as the Colonial, Neoclassical and Castellated.

The entrance of the Alcaldía is through a wide zaguán. Once inside, half-way through it, are modern doors which lead up a small set of steps, and into either the core volume, on the right, or the original building, on the left. At the end of the zaguán, is the interior patio, an area paved with re-cycled historic brick and highlighted by a centralized well-curb; below it lies the original brick-masonry public cistern. The well-curb and cistern are both original elements that can be dated to c. 1850. At the south side of the courtyard, two wooden panelled doors in a brick-masonry wall lead into an office area. To the west of the courtyard, a similar wall (with only one door) leads onto storage and service areas. The concrete stair that leads up to the Mayor's office on the second floor, is also located at this side. The north and east sides of the courtyard are formed by the interior façades of the two-story core volume. All walls enclosing the courtyard, except the one immediately to the left of the zaguán (upon entering the courtyard), belong to the 1903 construction. This wall corresponds to the interior façade of the masonry section of the original Alcaldía.

Immediately to the right, upon entering the interior courtyard, a second concrete stair, with lathed wood balusters, leads onto a large second-floor vestibule. To the right (east at the top of the stairs) is the Municipal Assembly Hall, which occupies the entire length of the second-story façade of the Alcaldía. To the north (straight ahead at the top of the stairs) is an aluminum and stained glass door which opens onto the eastern end of a hallway which leads to the waiting room to the Mayor's office. West of the waiting room are the Mayor's office and two side-by-side offices for secretaries, immediately to the north of the Mayor's office. To the left (or west) and across the vestibule, are two bathrooms.

Apparently, the 1903 addition was built to replace weak, deteriorated materials (primarily wooden elements) with more

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7+8 Page 3

**Casa Alcaldía de Vieques
Vieques, Puerto Rico**

=====

durable materials, such as masonry. This design incorporated a stylistic vocabulary derived from both Colonial and Neoclassical sources. Pilaster-like elements and mouldings provide order to the façade plane; austere straight lintels above the windows, cornices and parapets, are also used as part of the composition.

In 1937, the clock-tower was added, and in 1948, the original hardwood roof-beams and brick azotea roofing were removed and replaced with a reinforced concrete slab. At the time, this was considered a more durable material, capable of withstanding possible bombardments, feared at that time by the local citizenry. The original balcony was replaced at this time with a concrete one over the second and third bays of the façade. Most of the major structural and historical division walls still exist, and a few of the 1948 doors remain intact. However, most all the original interior stucco finishes have been covered over by pressed-wood, veneered panels, and the floors of some offices have been covered with vinyl tiles and/or carpets. Window-unit air-conditioners project through many of the windows, and the zaguán has been paved with modern ceramic quarry-tile.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Casa Alcaldía de Vieques, built in phases between 1850 and 1903, is representative of a characteristic Puerto Rican type of city hall. In this particular case, the building still embodies the significance given historically to such structures, as the physical symbol, the seat of power, of the local Government. As such, this building is still highly significant to the social, political and urban history of the Island of Vieques. The Alcaldía is also significant in terms of its contextual relationship: its physical presence, its imposing size and style, mark it as the most important building in the Plaza environment. In addition to its being a symbol of the creation and development of the Vieques Municipal Government (it should be remembered that the two off-shore municipalities represented a unique type of government within Puerto Rico's bureaucratic structure), the building is also a physical reminder of the foundation and colonization processes of the Island of Vieques, for it still contains portions of the first public building constructed in the Island-colony. The eligibility of the building under Criterion A is, therefore, related to the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 4

**Casa Alcaldía de Vieques
Vieques, Puerto Rico**

historic context entitled: The Foundation and Settlement of Vieques, 1811 - 1860. The eligibility of the Alcaldía under Criterion C is justified for it being a local interpretation of several important architectural modes (Colonial, Neoclassical and Castellated) as well as for the uniqueness of its morphology (it is the most important, if not the only, example of a public building with an interior patio in Vieques). Finally, it is the only building belonging to the city hall tipology in all of Vieques.

Throughout the 19th century, particularly during the reign of Queen Isabel II (1836-1867), the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico, the only two remaining Spanish-American territories after the Latin-American Wars of Independence, became the object of unprecedented attention by the Spanish Crown. This new-found interest resulted in new levels of economic and social development, as well as in population growth. Many new towns were founded throughout Puerto Rico, and the Island-territory of Vieques was colonized and formally settled at this time.

Along with the foundation of towns and the development of the governmental social structure and corresponding public services, dozens of public buildings were constructed throughout Puerto Rico to house the components of the new infrastructure: hospitals, jails, poor-houses, asylums, army barracks, schools, road tender's houses, lighthouses, public-markets, cemeteries, churches, courthouses, city halls, among others. Besides giving additional official presence to the government, the founding of new towns was also the result of the growing demands of the immigrant population. To secure the productivity of these remote, unpopulated areas, the construction of new alcaldías or city halls, came to be imperative. These buildings were, usually, multi-purpose buildings designed to house numerous public services; in fact, they were often referred to as the casas del pueblo (houses of the people).

The Vieques project, proposed in 1843 (prior to the actual foundation and settlement of the town of Isabel Segunda), called for a building which would house the following offices or services: the Governor of Vieques, representatives from the Treasury Department, a public doctor, the town chaplain and the municipal secretary. The building would also serve as the local army barracks, infirmary and municipal jail.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 5

Casa Alcaldía de Vieques
Vieques, Puerto Rico

=====
The building was designed by Francisco María Belgodere, a civil engineer, in 1843. Echoing the character of buildings typically constructed by the Spanish Corps of Engineers in Puerto Rico, the project for the Alcaldía presented an austere façade in the Colonial style. This style has become synonymous with historic architecture in Puerto Rico: flat walls with three-dimensional detailing by means of mouldings which frame all openings. In this particular case, Neoclassical vocabulary was also incorporated, as seen in the flat lintels on top of all openings and in the cornice that crowns the composition. The Alcaldía building was square in shape with a central interior patio or courtyard. The basic material for the walls was terra cotta bricks; the roof was of the azotea type, with flat wooden beams and a final brick cover. Eight window bays, arranged on both sides of the zaguán entrance, formed the façade. Its organization ends with a simple, continuous cornice and parapet around the entire building. The courtyard was to have an arcade, and all of the interior offices were to be accessed through this space.

This first project was never built due to the Island's financial limitations and to the difficulties implied in constructing "overseas." In spite of this, one governor of Vieques, Francisco Sainz, managed to build, from 1843 to 1852 and allegedly with his own money, a house to shelter his residence and the municipalities' basic administrative functions. This first Alcaldía, was constructed following the general lines of the 1843 scheme. A description found in legal documents provides an excellent record of how the building looked shortly after the United States' occupation of Puerto Rico and Vieques, in November of 1898. It reads as follows: "House known by the name of 'House of Government,' situated on San Juan Street, at the corner of Conde de Mirasol Street, on a lot belonging to the Municipality of Vieques. . . both sides measuring 23.25 meters long and 5.58 meters wide, consisting of two floors, constructed in wood, except for the lower floor of the southern extreme, which is of masonry, the gallery having galvanized-iron roof and the kitchen, roof tiles, and a great, masonry, water cistern in the corral (courtyard)." [Translation by the authors.]

Since the building was apparently financed personally by Governor Sainz it was, therefore, recorded as his private property, as is evidenced by the existing historic deeds at the Puerto Rico Deeds

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 6

**Casa Alcaldía de Vieques
Vieques, Puerto Rico**

Register. The building was later sold to the Municipality by his daughter, Doña Josefa Sebastiana de la Trinidad Sainz, in 1908, for the sum of 800 pesos (approximately \$400 dollars).

The two-story structure was completely rebuilt in 1903 under the municipal administration of Mayor Luis Amadée. At this time, a new, two-story masonry structure was integrated to the original edifice. The new addition was designed in keeping with Puerto Rican vernacular interpretation of the Colonial style with Neoclassical vocabulary, maintaining stylistic similarities with Francisco Sainz's City Hall. A modern interpretation of the decorative, wood and wrought-iron projecting balcony at the upper story might find in this element an evocation of the image and residential character of the original City Hall.

The architectural character of the clock tower, added in 1937, reflects the impact that the Eclectic trends, as late as the 1930s, had had in Vieques. Some years later, in 1948, the wooden balaustrade was substituted by a solid concrete one.

Despite its piecemeal construction process and the alterations carried out over the years, the building preserves its architectural significance as an example of the 19th-century Puerto Rican Colonial style municipal building. It retains the key elements which most clearly identify it as such: the large, open zaguán, the central courtyard with its cistern-well, its architectural ornamentation and rhythm, and the spatial sequence and hierarchy of its interior divisions (services and minor offices on the ground floor, administrative offices on the upper floor, and the Municipal Assembly Hall along the front façade). The Alcaldía is also the only major building on the Island of Vieques showing this particular combination of architectural styles (the only other monumental building with Neoclassical vocabulary, the Luisa Morandy House, was altered significantly during the early 20th century in order to house the Vieques High School). Because of its prominent location in front of the town plaza, the Alcaldía also plays a very significant urban role, as it defines the historical and architectural character of the central part town of Isabel Segunda.

The building is also significant since it preserves and displays parts of the growing puzzle which might symbolically represent the process of birth, growth and development of the governmental

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8+9 Page 7

**Casa Alcaldía de Vieques
Vieques, Puerto Rico**

structure of the Island Vieques. All major periods in the history of Vieques are condensed visually in this edifice: the original southern wing (c. 1850), with its courtyard and public cistern; the peak moment in the Island's political and economic growth during the first decades of the 20th century, represented by the 1903 masonry reconstruction; the last period of sugar-related economic "independence," as represented by the addition of the clock-tower; and finally, the municipality's state of economic decline, as represented by the 1948 alterations, carried out with funds from the War Emergency Program of the United States. All local legislation, to this day, as well as significant public-service projects, were planned and carried out in the Alcaldía since its original construction.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Archivo General de Puerto Rico. Fondo de Obras Públicas, Serie Municipal.

Archivo General de Puerto Rico. Fondo de Obras Públicas, Serie de Edificios Públicos.

Archivo Municipal de Vieques, Puerto Rico.

Rabin, Robert and Héctor Santiago. "The Foundation and Settlement of Vieques, 1811 - 1860," Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office, 1992; part of the "Inventario de Recursos Históricos y Arquitectónicos de Vieques, Puerto Rico, 1843-1941."

Registro de la Propiedad. Fajardo, Puerto Rico.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 8

**Casa Alcaldía de Vieques
Vieques, Puerto Rico**

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is defined by the property limits corresponding to lot number seven (7) of urban block number fourteen (14) of the town of Isabel Segunda, Municipality of Vieques, Puerto Rico.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries comprehend the urban lot historically and currently associated with the property.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

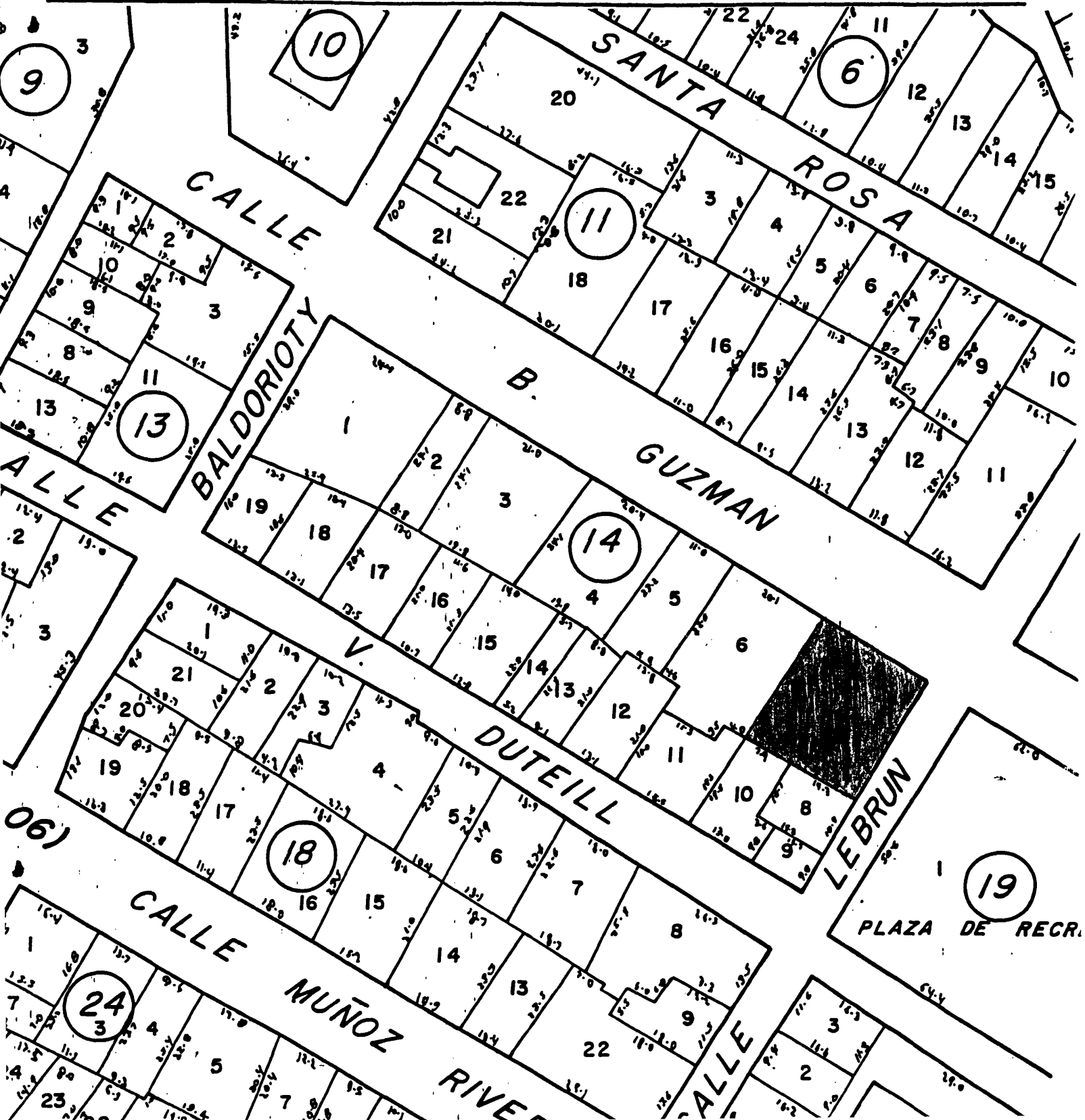
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

SITE PLAN

Casa Alcaldía
Isabel Segunda
Vieques, P.R.
Scale: 1:1000



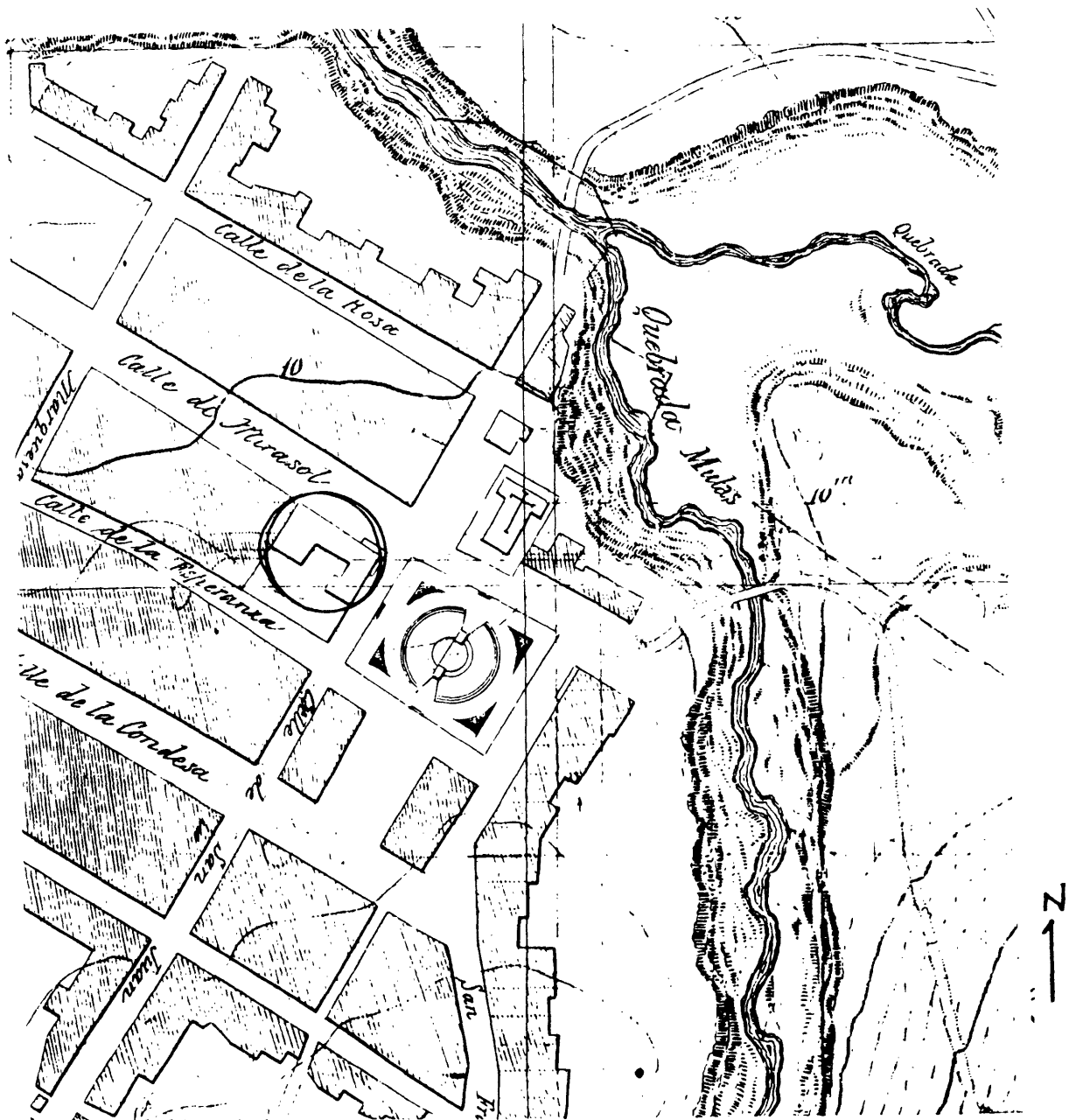
Section number _____ Page _____



National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

CASA ALCALDIA
CALLE CARLOS LEBRUN & CALLE BENTEZ GUZMAN
ISABEL SEGUNDA
VIEQUES PUERTO RICO



PLAN OF ISABEL SEGUNDA, CA. 1890
NOT TO SCALE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 94000174

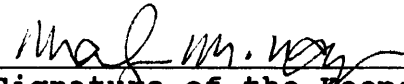
Date Listed: 3/17/94

Case Alcaaldia de Vieques
Property Name

Vieques PUERTO RICO
County State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

4/5/94
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section No. 8

This nomination is amended to include architecture as an area of significance.

This change was confirmed by phone with the Puerto Rico SHPO (3/17/94).

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)