

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received DEC 5 1986  
date entered JAN 6 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Corregimiento plaza Theater

and/or common Oliver Theater

2. Location

street & number Llaguerry Street, corner of Toribio Pagán Street — not for publication

city, town Arecibo — vicinity of

state Puerto Rico code 72 county Arecibo code 0090

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Not in use

4. Owner of Property

name A.L.C.C., Corp.

street & number Box 231

city, town Arecibo — vicinity of Arecibo state Puerto Rico

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Folio 224; Tomo 34, Finca N., 1976

street & number Property Register of Arecibo

city, town Arecibo state Puerto Rico

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historical Architectural Inventory of Arecibo has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date April, 1985  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town San Juan state Puerto Rico

---

## 7. Description

---

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The original Oliver Theater was a fine neoclassic three story brick masonry structure built in 1876. The main facade (West side) had a series of alternate windows and doors in the first floor. Seven tall windows on the second level were encased in segmental arches. The third floor included seven additional windows, this time enclosed in semicircular arches, and located directly above the second level ones. Eight pilasters divided the facade in seven bays, with cornices defining each floor level. A triangular pediment completed the composition, reflecting the pitched metal roof of the theater. The interior was also outstanding with two levels of balconies and a fine stage.

In 1919 it was remodelled, after a series of earthquakes damaged the structure. The main alterations consist of changes to the main facade's second and third levels and the pediment. The second and third floor arches were pleased by six small rectangular windows. A stepped pediment with amphorae and plaster decorations complete the simple facade. The interior was provided with a main floor that raised mechanically to meet the stage. In this area sport activities and popular dances took place.

During the 1930's the theater was remodelled again, but this time the interior underwent the major changes. The mechanism that raised the floor was removed, the stage was shortened, and the balconies were boarded and replaced by a new mezzanine. In 1955 a cinemascope screen was installed and became exclusively a movie house until 1984 when it was closed. The billboard, new entrance and sign on the Southwestern corner were also added in the 1950's. Reinforced concrete, glass blocks, plastic laminates, etc., were employed throughout.

At present, the building retains the 1919 main facade's decoration and the 1930's interiors, although deteriorated. Remains of the original 1876 theater are evident in the South and the North facades (the latter concealed by a new building), and in the first floor of the West side. The cornices and pilasters of the main facade, some interior walls and details were also derived from the original theater.

## 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" 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** 1876–1919 **Builder/Architect** unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Teatro Oliver was Arecibo's first structure built for specific use as theater. Prior to its construction in 1876 by a great patron of the arts, the Marqués "de las Claras"; theatrical performances were held in private clubs or houses.

The original neoclassic structure had a stage where great international artists displayed their talents. Some of these great artists include actress Adelina Patts, opera singers Caruso and Antonio Paoli and during the 1930's Carlos Gardel, the great tango idol, gave one of his last performances on this stage, before his tragic death. Local actors also displayed their talent on this stage. These performances allowed people from all social echelons to expand their cultural horizon.

The Theater gave local playwrighters an opportunity to stage their work. Thanks to this, Arecibo became one of the island's cities to produce great playwrighters such as René Marqués, considered as one of Puerto Rico's greatest talents in this artistic labor.

This was a true theater in the old European sense. Its facilities were used not only for theatrical presentation but also for social, sporting, political and other town events. Great public balls, exuberant carnivals and basketball games were held in Theaters' Orchestra level which thanks to a hydraulic system could be elevated to stage level thus making it a great ball room or sport arena. Politicians used the stage for their debates during campaign and schools used it for their graduations.

The theater was the city's center of life until recent years when it was closed due to its deteriorated conditions.

In the past two years the people of Arecibo have united and formed a committee for the restoration of the Old Oliver Theater. At present, the municipal government is in the process of buying the property and the people are gathering funds to restore their beloved theater to its original nineteenth century splendor.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Cadilla, Francisco - Los Ochocentistas; Ediciones Rumbos, Barcelona, 1961  
Coll y Toste, Cayetano - Crónicas de Arecibo, 1891  
Limón de Arce, José - Arecibo Histórico; Manatí, 1935

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 797.98 M<sup>2</sup>

Quadrangle name Arecibo

Quadrangle scale 1:20000

UTM References

A 

1	9	7	4	1	2	2	0	2	0	4	4	1	4	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 MAP

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 Félix J. del Campo, Director

organization Historical Architectural Inventory of Arecibo date May 1, 1985

street & number Inter American University of Arecibo telephone 878-5475 Ext.244

city or town Arecibo 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 Arch. Mariano G. Coronas Castro

title State Historic Preservation Officer date November 22, 1985

For NPS use only

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

Keeper of the National Register

date 1/6/86

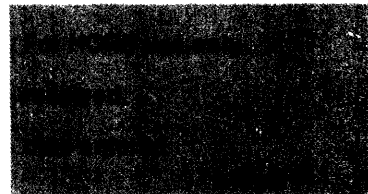
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

Together with the Tapia theater in San Juan, la Perla theater in Ponce and the Yagüez theater in Mayagüez, the Oliver was one of the greatest theaters in the island.

Even today when most of its original decorations have been covered in the various reconstructions one can appreciate what made it one of the island's most beautiful theaters.



TEATRO OLIVER

SCALE: 1:2,000

