

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

For NPS use only

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

received APR 6 1984

date entered

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

1. Name

historic University of Puerto Rico Tower and Quadrangle

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number Ponce de León Ave. not for publication

city, town Río Piedras vicinity of

state Puerto Rico code 72 county Río Piedras, San Juan code 0930

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 University of Puerto Rico

street & number Ponce de León Ave.

city, town Río Piedras vicinity of state Puerto Rico

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. President's Office and Planning and Development Office

street & number Central Administration and Río Piedras Property Registry

city, town Río Piedras state Puerto Rico

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventario de Monumentos Históricos has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 federal state county local

depository for survey records Institute of Puerto Rican Culture

city, town San Juan state Puerto Rico 00905

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

(See Enclosure No. 1 for a fuller written description; see also accompanying portfolio of photographic illustrations)

The University of Puerto Rico Tower and Quadrangle Complex, which comprises the principal entrance to the Río Piedras Campus, was mainly constructed in the thirties and forties following the design of Arch. Rafael Carmoega. The South side of the Quadrangle was closed in the fifties with two new buildings named Luis Palés Matos and Julia de Burgos (Nos. 4a and 4b) (see date in the Closed Inventory sheet) of simpler design — they lacked the beautiful colored Plateresque decoration which adorned the earlier ones. The same can be said of the latest addition (1983), a three - floor wing, to the Luis Palés Matos building, which runs on the East side closing the last remaining gap of the Quadrangle. The two large buildings included in the nomination and shown within the perimeter of the boundary line in the site plan, Agustín Stahl (No.5) and Julio García Díaz (No. 6), although lying outside the Quadrangle itself, were also built during the original construction with the same design and style, and thus share with it the historic and aesthetic values we wish to preserve in the core of the campus. The newer buildings, notwithstanding the simplicity of their external appearance, blend well with the older, profusely ornamented ones (compare photographs). The whole — Tower with its fronting square, Quadrangle with its inner courtyard extending between the Tower and the Theater, and the two adjacent buildings on the South side — is an unparalleled urban landmark in Puerto Rico.

The exterior of all these buildings has remained unaltered since their construction; the interior remodellings made at various times to accomodate or restructure offices and classrooms have not detracted anything at all from the historic and architectural integrity of the Complex proposed for nomination : great care has been taken to maintain its qualities. Another thing must be noted : several outbuildings whose presence can be noticed in the site plan of the campus are of a temporary nature and will eventually be eliminated, as would also be the building presently housing the Academic Senate, which never was a part of the original plan and stands incongruously behind the Tower.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1935

Builder/Architect Arch. Rafael Carmoega

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Since it was built in the thirties, the Quadrangle, with its main feature, the tower, has been a landmark in Río Piedras and the whole of the San Juan metropolitan area. From an architectural and aesthetic point of view, it is a unique complex in Puerto Rico -- it has no parallel in style or magnitude and would be worth conserving even if these were its only values. It embodies Hispanic tradition, the principal root of Puerto Rican culture; it is a symbol of the permanent presence of that tradition; and it functions at the same time as a home for unceasing efforts devoted to preserve and extend it. It is the place where higher learning grew to maturity in Puerto Rico, and where indeed it is still epitomized: to speak of "the University" without further specification is to refer to the Río Piedras campus and particularly to its nucleus, the cloisters and buildings that comprise the Quadrangle and contain the Offices of the Chancellor and the central administration of the Campus, the theater where the Casals' Festival used to take place, and the College of Humanities.

As to its historical significance, it must be noted that during the forties and the fifties, the period of Puerto Rico's modernization and its political, social and economic development and coming of age, all public issues were debated in these very halls. Everyone who mattered politically or intellectually was either from the University or had dealings with it. The University was the source of ideas, initiative and plans. That has been its glory. As the state university, it has grown enormously and trained the faculty and staffs of the other, private universities that have appeared and now share in the cultural leadership this campus once enjoyed alone. This particular place merits preservation as a heritage for future generations, for here a significant portion of Puerto Rico's history has been made and its modern leadership has been trained. The University Quadrangle is the symbol of an era.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See appended list, Enclosure No. 2)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 13.14 acres

Quadrangle name San Juan Quadrangle scale 1:20,000

UTM References Point A: Lat. 18°-24'-17" North, Long. 66°-03'-02" West
 Point B: Lat. 18°-24'-21" North, Long. 66°-02'-55" West
 Point C: Lat. 18°-24'-13" North, Long. 66°-02'-57" West

A	Zone	Easting	Northing	B	Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification
 The Quadrangle is located in the Western section of the U.P.R., Río Piedras Campus, near the intersection of Ponce de León and Gándara Avenues; it is surrounded by nameless inner streets (see accompanying plans and map, Enclosure No. 3)

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Georges Delacre, Ph. D.

organization College of Humanities, U.P.R. date October 24, 1983

street & number Río Piedras Campus, U.P.R. telephone 764-0000 Ext. 2442, 2466

city or town Río Piedras 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 *Georges Delacre*
 title State Historic Preservation Officer date March 14, 1984

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Georges Delacre date 3/17/84
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

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TOWER AND QUADRANGLE COMPLEX, CENTRAL CAMPUS,
UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO, RIO PIEDRAS, PUERTO RICO
(1935 -)

By Dr. Eugene E. Crommett
Professor of Architecture, UPR

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Founded in 1903 with 90 students and 12 professors, the University of Puerto Rico is today (1982) an Island-wide university system with a student population in the tens of thousands. What is at present its main campus in Río Piedras consists of 128 buildings occupying 280 acres of park-like ground on the edge of Metropolitan San Juan. The Tower and Quadrangle Complex, dating from 1935, comprises the main and "official" entrance to the campus, the Tower, administrative offices, classroom buildings, and the University Theater.

Although the campus has long since expanded well beyond the limits of its original buildings, the Complex with its urban landmark tower, distinctive appearance and organization, and integration of buildings with the natural landscape, remains the gateway, core and symbol of the entire campus, indeed of the university system as a whole.

THE ARCHITECTS:

The architect for the Complex was the well known Rafael Carmoega who designated several other architects to assist him: William Shimmelpfening, a German-American who planned the Tower, and Puerto

Rican architects Francisco Gardón who designed the Theater, Rafael Hernández, Eloy Plard, and Raúl Reichard. Until his untimely death, the architect Pedro de Castro was contractor for the project. This group was responsible for the design of the project in all its details, including the structural and other building systems.

URBAN SETTING:

The Tower and Quadrangle Complex acts as a transitional element between the urban area surrounding it and the park-like environment of the campus. Three gates along Ponce de León Avenue open onto a large, well landscaped fore area: the center entrance, for pedestrians, is on the central axis of the whole Complex which moves up a palm-lined walkway, through the center of the Tower and out into the inner cloister area, to end at the entrance of the University Theater (a later building unfortunately interrupts this axis); the two outer vehicle entrances are at the ends of a loop road which approaches the Tower at its center, where pedestrians meet to enter the Complex. The distinctive bell-observation Tower has long been a focal and orientation point for the university and the surrounding urban area.

ARCHITECTURAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMPLEX:

The buildings of the Complex are arranged to accommodate three organizational concepts: a main symmetrical axis from the main entrance to the Theater; a traditional cloister or inner quadrangle around which the buildings are sited and onto which they open; and a series of arcades which offer sheltered communications and exits at the corners of the Quadrangle.

The inner garden plaza facilitates diagonal pedestrian traffic through the Quadrangle, and serves as an open but tree-shaded place for rest and conversation.

NOTES ON MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION:

Except, perhaps, for the Tower and the University Theater, the materials and methods of construction of the buildings of the Complex are conventional, but they are well executed. Moreover, their consistency of use and quality gives additional unity to the Quadrangle.

The buildings are two and three stories in height and rectangular in shape. Class and other rooms are generally arranged along single loaded corridors (arcades) for the most part, facilitating cross ventilation, although the registrar's office building has double loaded corridors. The rectangular units are connected into H-forms, keeping the plan open, well ventilated, and affording contact between the interiors and the landscaped grounds outside. The general layout of the buildings is an early and viable solution for solar design in the humid tropics.

The materials of construction are masonry concrete, stucco, wood, and tiles. Sloping roof sections carry Spanish red clay tiles, giving drainage, character and continuity, especially to the arcades. The Tower entrance, with its high vaulted ceiling and inner balcony under it, combines structural wood construction with concrete masonry. The University Theater (long known as the home of the Casals Festival) employs modern structural techniques with its long trusses over the audience, and its mechanical and electrical systems, and has seats for nearly 2500. Wall surfaces are smooth

(except for the concentrations of decorative elements) and finished in plaster and paint.

STYLE AND DECORATION :

The Tower and Quadrangle Complex derives much of its importance from its overall organizational themes and unity, as well as its strong character as an urban landmark. But it is also significant as an example of Puerto Rican architects searching for and creating an appropriate symbol for a modern university in Puerto Rico located at the meeting place of North and South America, and of past and present cultures. The contrasts between simplicity and complexity and the historical allusions to the Spanish Colonial Renaissance or Baroque, that is the Plateresque Style, seemed appropriate to them.

Stylistically, the Complex is an adapted, modified Plateresque, say Neo-Plateresque, which depends heavily upon sometimes dramatic contrasts between simple stark surfaces and elaborated concentrations of ornament at fenestration elements. Thus in the Complex's arcades there are twisted columns capped by Corinthian capitals, and concentrations of ornaments reminiscent of Spanish Baroque altar pieces appear in the interior of the University Theater. Heraldic shields, figures, faces, foliage, pilasters, volutes, and cornices are brought together and brightly colored in concentrations that mark principal entrances, notably that of the Tower.

The main portal of the Tower - and the Quadrangle - provides the best example of this Neo-Plateresque ornamentation, and as well of

the symbolic intent of the project's designers. That the University of Puerto Rico is firmly planted in the soil once occupied by the Conquistadores is evident from the portal's Plateresque (Plateresco, Sp.) roots. But more significantly, there are three large heraldic shields directly over and forming the main motif of the decorative concentration at this entrance. At the center, significantly, the shield depicts the precepts of history, of knowledge and of work. The shield at the left, representing the Americas of the South, is of the University of San Marcos in Perú, and that at the right, representing the Americas of the North, is of the University of Harvard. Similarly, embedded in the floor of the Tower entrance under the vaulted ceiling is a circle of plaque-shields representing the countries of North, Central and South America.

INVENTORY OF BUILDINGS

I N V E N T O R Y

QUADRANGLE:

Name of the buildings that compose the Quadrangle and other contiguous buildings.

1. The Tower - (1937 (1st floor: Román Baldorioty de Castro)
(2nd floor: Franklin Delano Roosevelt)
2. Antonio S. Pedreira (1937)
3. Sebastián González García (1944)
4. Luis Palés Matos and Julia de Burgos Amphitheater (1953 both)
5. Agustín Stahl (contiguous to the Quadrangle) (1931-46)
6. Julio García Díaz (contiguous to the Quadrangle) (1937)
7. Theater (no name) (1935-40)
8. Eugenio María de Hostos (1935-40)
9. Registrar's Office (1935)
10. Felipe Janer (1927)
11. Janer B Annex (Home Economics) (1936)

Source: Juan José González Correa
Central Archives' Director

PHOTOGRAPHS

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