

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 8 1984
date entered SEP 18 1984

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

1. Name

historic Church Santa María del Rosario of Vega Baja

and/or common Nuestra Señora del Rosario

2. Location

street & number Town Plaza not for publication

city, town Vega Baja vicinity of

state Puerto Rico code 72 county Arecibo code 1020

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Catholic Church , Diocese of Arecibo

street & number Box 616

city, town Arecibo vicinity of state Puerto Rico 00612

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, Church Litigation Case # 2, 1904

street & number Box 2392, Old San Juan Station

city, town San Juan state Puerto Rico 00903

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of the Historic Churches of Puerto Rico has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town San Juan state Puerto Rico 00901

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

Check one

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

original site
 moved date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The church of Santa María del Rosario in Vega Baja sits directly in front of the town plaza, with its entrance facing west. It is separated from its immediate surroundings by a low concrete and iron grillwork wall which encloses garden areas around the main structure. This church, as well as the parish church of Carolina, was designed by Engineer Antonio María Guitián. The facades of both churches and the arrangement of the interior spaces are very similar.

A cruciform plan is used. The nave is covered by a barrel vault. It has two side aisles, a transept and a semicircular apse. Arcades resting on bulky pilasters, decorated with simple moldings and cornices, divide the aisles from the nave. The side aisles are lower than the central nave, allowing space for a clerestory area made of rectangular wood louvered windows above the arches that permit light entrance to the interior space.

At the entrance, there is a vestibule with a small room at each side. To the right, a stairway leads up to the choir loft. The main nave, consisting of three bays, is relatively short, and the space is perceived as if it were a central plan with one of its sides elongated. This impression is reinforced by the great spatial importance given to the crossing. This area is covered with a large lanterned dome mounted on a drum perforated with windows. The importance given to this central space is such, that in a recent restoration the floor was raised in this area and the altar brought forward and placed under the dome. Behind this space, the semicircular apse, of secondary importance, is covered with a half dome.

The construction of this church began in 1860 and was finished in 1867. The entire structure is built of durable materials, mainly, mortar and brick. The floors are covered with the original gray and white marble tiles.

The facade, similar to that of the Carolina church, has slender proportions, highlighting the impression of verticality. Doric pilasters frame the entrance arch. There are two niches on each side of the entrance and rustication is used on the corners of the facade. Two side doors, recessed from the plane of the main entrance indicate the presence of the two side aisles in the interior. A Doric frieze separates the first and second levels of the facade. Double pilasters flank the choir loft window. Rustication is also used in this part of the facade. The belfry crowning the facade, has a single pilaster on each corner. The side facades are dominated by a monumental entrance to the transept. A large flat wall with an arched doorway runs the entire height of the transept and ends with a round window and a triangular pediment above it.

The exterior, as well as the interior, of this church are impressive and monumental, specifically the dominant volume of the dome. The building was restored in 1979 and is in excellent conditions. The most noticeable alteration to the main structure is the addition of a parish house attached to the rear facade of the church.

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 checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input 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 1860-1867

Builder/Architect

Engineer Antonio María Guitián

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The church of Santa María del Rosario in Vega Baja is of architectural and historical significance. In 1860, the old church of Vega Baja was torn down and the present one was begun, following the plans of Engineer Antonio María Guitián. It was finished in 1867. The building retains most of its original construction and design elements. It is a good example of the churches covered with multiple vaults built between 1790 and 1870 on the Island. The Vega Baja church was designed by the same engineer that designed the Carolina church, and its facades and interior spaces are very similar. These churches are distinguished from others around the Island by their plan, proportions and structural roof system. The use of a cruciform plan and the great importance given to the central space under the dome appear to have been inspired by traditional centrally planned churches. The only alteration that has somewhat distracted from the significance of the property was the addition of a parish house at the rear of the church. The traditional relationship of the town plaza, city hall and the church is maintained to this day, in accordance with Spanish Crown ordinances, a living example of early Puerto Rican town planning.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Marvel, Thomas S. and Maria Luisa Moreno, Architecture of Parish Churches in Puerto Rico, Editorial Universitaria, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, unpublished.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property aprox. 2007 sq. mts.

Quadrangle name Manati, PR

Quadrangle scale 1:20,000

UTM References

A

1	9	7	7	5	9	8	0	2	0	4	1	4	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

The church is bounded on the north by Acosta St., on the east by Padilla St., on the south by Betances St. and on the west by the town plaza.

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

N/A

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marisa Gómez, Arch. and Ester Cardona, Arch. (Reviewed by Dr. Arleen Pabón de Rocafort, PRSHPOfficer)

organization Investigaciones Bonaire, Inc.

date February 1984

street & number Tetuan 103

telephone (809) 724-4997

city or town Old San Juan

state Puerto Rico 00901

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

Arleen Pabón de Rocafort

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date July 20, 1984

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

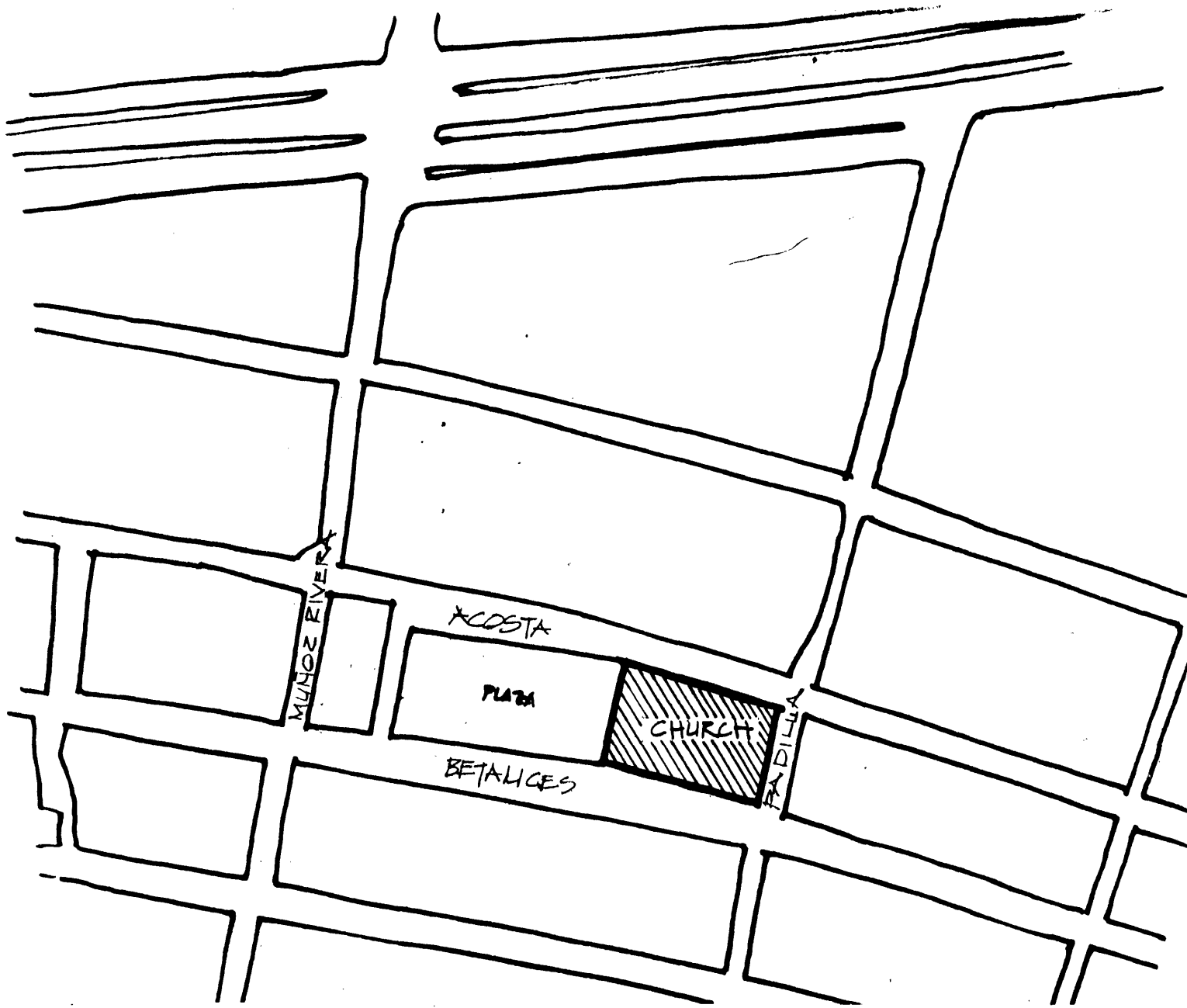
Keeper of the National Register

date

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



town: **VEGA BAJA**

scale: 1:2000



north

INVESTIGACIONES BONAIRE INC.

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