

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

856



1. Name of Property

historic name Martín Peña Bridge

other names/site number Bridge # 185, Martín Peña Channel Bridge

2. Location

street & number SR 25, km. 8, Santurce Ward not for publication

city or town San Juan vicinity

state Puerto Rico code PR county San Juan code 127 zip code 00918

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Aida Belen Rivera Ruiz, Archaeologist
Signature of certifying official/Title

18 July 2008
Date

Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or Tribal government

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

Patricia Andrews

Signature of the Keeper

8/27/2008

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

_____ 0 _____

_____ 0 _____

_____ 1 _____

_____ 0 _____

_____ 1 _____

Noncontributing

_____ 0 _____	buildings
_____ 0 _____	sites
_____ 0 _____	structures
_____ 0 _____	objects
_____ 0 _____	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

Historic Bridges of Puerto Rico, c.1840 - 1950

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

_____ 0 _____

Puente Martín Peña
San Juan, Puerto Rico

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/ road related _____

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/ road related _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Art Deco/ longitudinal rolled beam _____

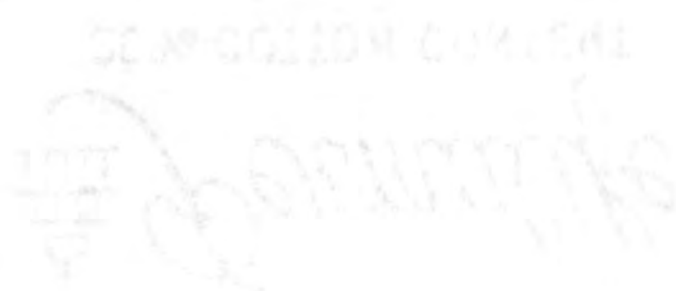
Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation_ concrete _____
walls _____ N/A _____
roof _____ N/A _____
other_ superstructure - concrete, bronze, glass _____
substructure - steel, concrete _____

Narrative Description

(See Continuation Sheets)



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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

Martin Peña Bridge
San Juan, Puerto Rico

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

Martin Peña Bridge (also known as Bridge #185) is a concrete vehicular bridge that spans 2.5 meters over the Martin Peña Channel, at kilometer 8 of State Road # 25, between the Hato Rey and Santurce Wards, Municipality of San Juan (Figure 1). The longitudinal rolled beam bridge was designed in Art Deco style by engineers of the Puerto Rico Department of the Interior. The foundations were made of concrete, the substructure materials are steel and concrete, and the superstructure materials are bronze, glass and concrete. The bridge retains all aspects of integrity.

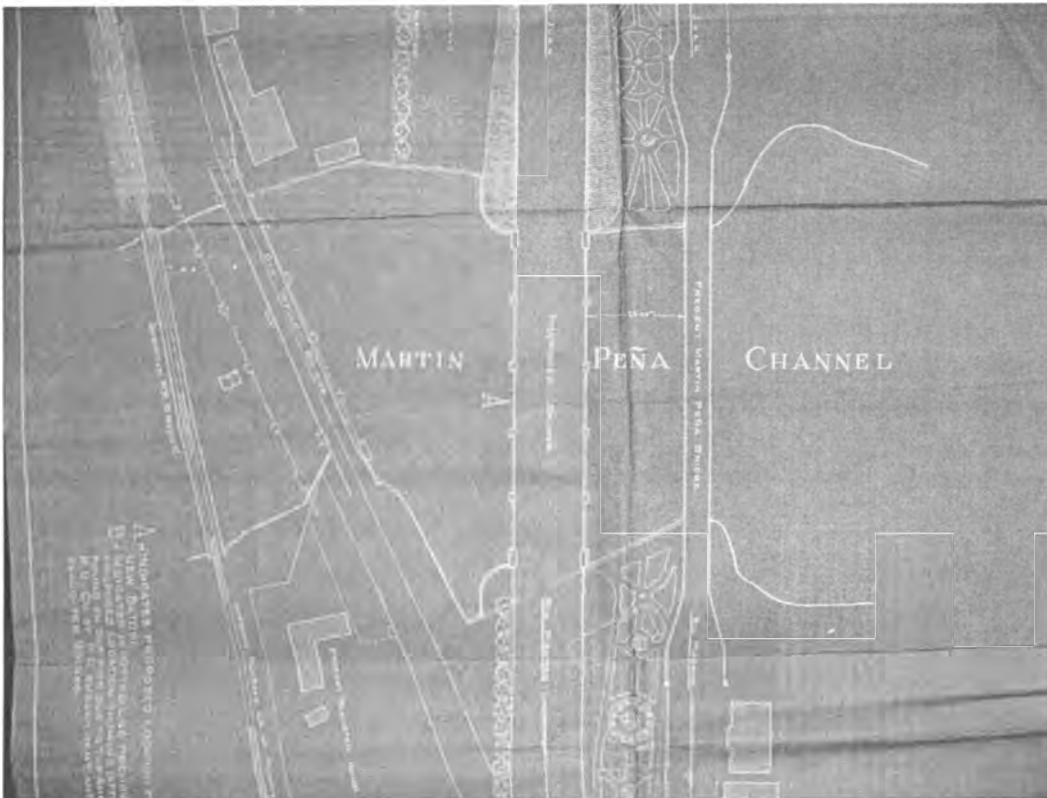


Figure 1 . Location plan ¹

¹ Taken from Plans of Proposed Insular Highway Federal Aid Highway Project 1-A, Route No. 1 Section Martin Peña –Río Piedras. 1937

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Martin Peña Bridge
San Juan, Puerto Rico

The bridge projects approximately 6.79 meters over the water level of the Martín Peña Channel. The bridge's superstructure measures approximately 3.79 meters, while the substructure measures 3.0 meters. This bridge exemplifies the Art Deco style. The character defining features of the bridge are its simple and volumetric piers and pillars (Figure 2). Its design encompasses geometric lines, cubic forms, marine motifs and ornamental panels (which combine floral and nature motifs) present in piers and pillars.

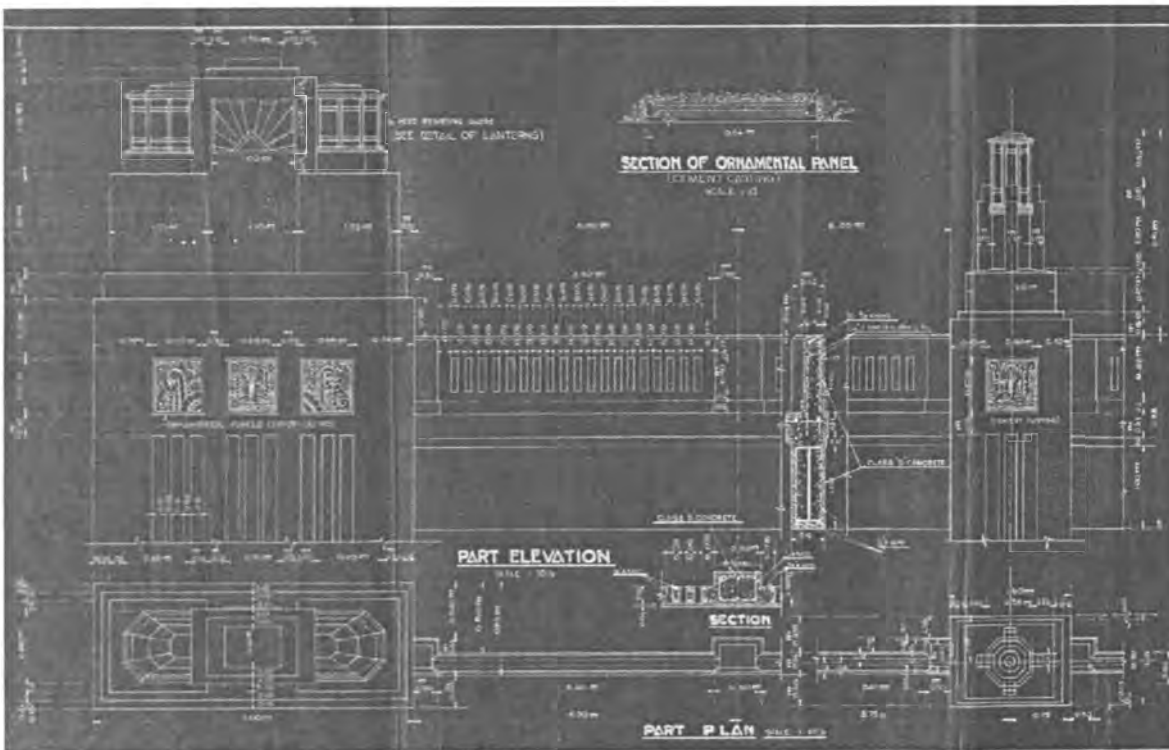


Fig. 2 Detail of the pier, pillar and balustrades of Martín Peña Bridge. ²

The northern and southern ends of the bridge are marked by rectangular piers (1.5 meters wide by 4 meters long). The cubic form is expressed in the four piers that define the beginning and the end at each side; it combines a rectangle, it is stepped up to two smaller squares, stepped up and crowned

² Taken from Plans of Proposed Insular Highway Federal Aid Highway Project 1-A, Route No. 1 Section Martín Peña - Río Piedras. Courtesy of General Archives of Puerto Rico.

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Martin Peña Bridge
San Juan, Puerto Rico

by two pentagons and a central lantern. Each pier is decorated with three square ornamental panels facing outwards toward the Martín Peña Channel (East and West façades).

The bridge's concrete deck is supported by steel beams which rest on eight concrete pillars (Figure 3). The concrete pillars (1.0 meters wide and 1.15 meters long) appeal to a small lighthouse that encloses the façades of this beautiful bridge; they are a cubic square that step up to a smaller hexagon, topped by a lantern. Each is decorated by a square panel. A concrete handrail, that runs along both side of the deck of the bridge, encloses two pedestrian walk ways each 1.35 meters wide that run astride the whole length of the road way.

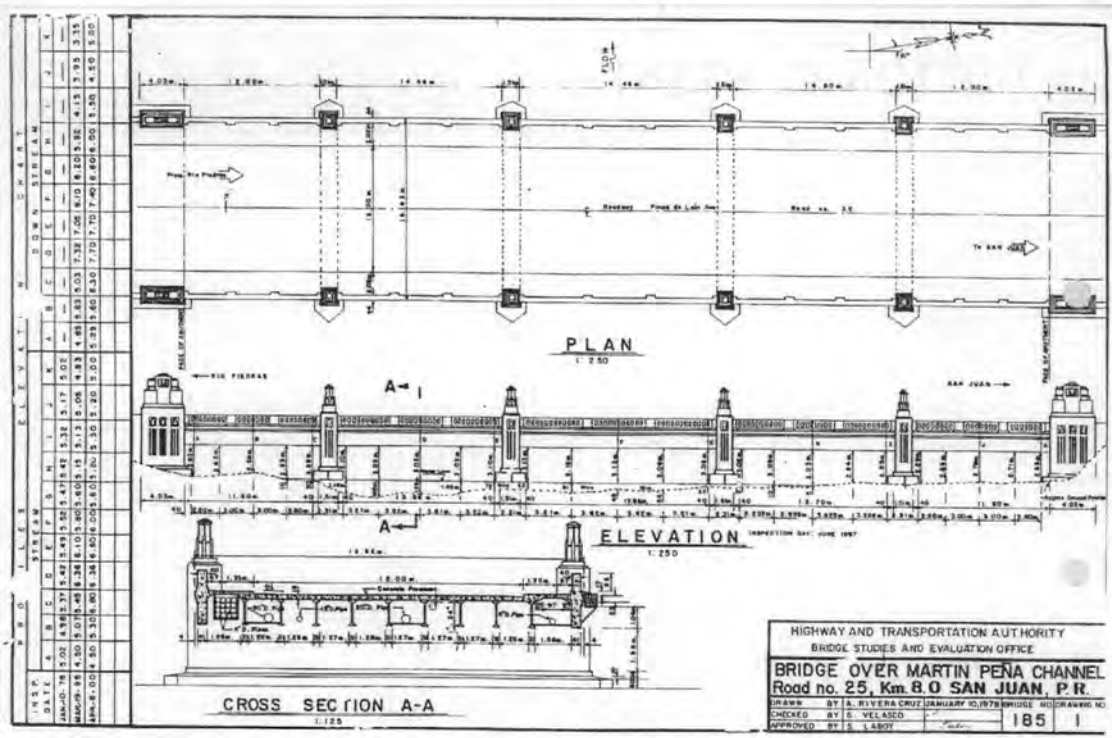


Fig. 3 – Bridge plan, 1978. ³

In recent years, the bridge's condition had deteriorated because of the continued use by heavy traffic, vandalism, environmental factors and lack of maintenance that caused the loss all of the

³ Courtesy of Puerto Rico Department of Transportation and Public Works.

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Martin Peña Bridge
San Juan, Puerto Rico

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lanterns and some of the balustrades. Between 2002 and 2003, the Architectural Firm of Blanquita Calzada and Carlos Amador prepared plans and specifications for restoring the historic appearance of the Puente Martín Peña for the Department of Transportation and Public Works. Primarily, the work consisted of the removing of the many layers of lead base paint, resurfacing of the deteriorated balustrades, and the electrical system and lanterns. The original plans and specifications were used as reference in the project. The original lanterns had been lost in previous years and had been replaced by provisional modern light fixtures. New lanterns were molded after the original (obtained from a collector of antiques), and installed according to the original plans but consistent with current safety codes; the electrical system was replaced. The project was completed and inaugurated in September 28, 2004.

span number:	5 meters	construction date:	1939
longest span length:	14.5 meters	superstructure:	concreter, bronze, glass
total length:	73.5 meters	substructure:	steel, concrete
roadway width:	12 meters		

Puente Martín Peña
San Juan, Puerto Rico

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- 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

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- 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

(See Continuation Sheets)

Engineering _____

Transportation _____

Architecture _____

Period of Significance

1939-1958

Significant Dates

1939

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

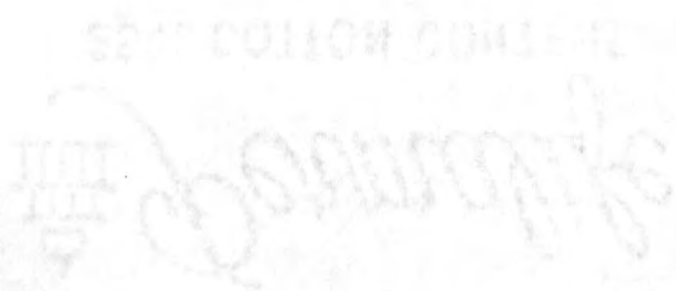
N/A

Architect/Builder

- Delgado, Cecilio
- Fortuño, Francisco
- Gayá Benejam, Raúl
- Calzada, Blanquita
- Amador, Carlos

Narrative Statement of Significance

(See Continuation Sheets)



9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(See continuation sheets)

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: General Archives of Puerto Rico, Department of Transportation and Public Works

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than an acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing
1 19 810676 2040662
2 _____

Zone Easting Northing
3 _____
4 _____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(See continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(See continuation sheet.)

Puente Martín Peña
San Juan, Puerto Rico

11. Form Prepared By

name/title José E. Marull / Historian and Berenice R. Sueiro/ Architect

organization Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office

date July 1, 2008

street & number PO Box 9066581

telephone 787-721-3737

city or town San Juan

state PR

zip code 00906-6581

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name Department of Transportation and Public Works

street & number PO BOX 41269, Minillas Station telephone (787) 722-2929

city or town San Juan state PR zip code 00940-4262

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Martín Peña Bridge
San Juan, Puerto Rico

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NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Martín Peña Bridge is a property of statewide significance under the National Register's Criterion C for engineering and architecture, and Criterion A for transportation associated with the *Carretera Central*. Built in 1939, is one of the most elegant examples of Art Deco concrete beam bridges in Puerto Rico. The structure was designed by Cecilio Delgado and Francisco Fortuño, two engineers of the Puerto Rican Department of the Interior, and was built by engineer Raúl Gaya Benejam. The bridge's construction was financed after US Congress granted funding for road and bridge construction.

Background

The area of the Martín Peña channel has been an important crossing between the Río Piedras and Santurce areas since the foundation of the city of San Juan. Around 1519 stone causeways over the San Antonio and Martín Peña Channels were built as part of the land route between the city of San Juan and the mainland⁴. By 1568, a wooden bridge had been built over the stone causeway. In 1784, a masonry bridge, designed by Spanish military engineer Francisco Mestre replaced the wooden bridge over this waterway. This bridge would remain in use until 1797, when it was partially destroyed during the British siege of San Juan. In 1846, a nine arch masonry bridge named "Aurora", designed by the Spanish military engineer Santiago Cortijo, was built in its place. This bridge formed part of the *Carretera Central*, the only first order road constructed in the Spanish period in Puerto Rico, which connected the old city of San Juan in the north with the southern coastal port of Ponce.⁵

In the last two decades of the 19th century, two additional bridges were constructed over the Martín Peña Channel for the Ubarri tramway (1880) and for the railroad (1891) to cope with the increased volume of traffic between San Juan and Río Piedras.

Construction of the 1939 bridge

In the 20th century, the continued importance of the State Road #1 (former *Carretera Central*), the population increase and the introduction of the automobile as the principal means of land transportation made the "Aurora" bridge a target for replacement by local agencies. By 1929, the Puerto Rico Department of the Interior, agency in charge of road and bridge construction and maintenance, decided to replace the masonry bridge with a new concrete construction. Between

⁴ María de los Angeles Castro, *Arquitectura en San Juan de Puerto Rico (Siglo XIX)* (San Juan: Editorial Universitaria, 1980), 18. See note 9.

⁵ Department of the Interior, "Project of Proposed Insular Highway, Federal Aid Highway Project No. (F.A.P. 1-A) Martín Peña Channel Bridge and Approaches, Municipalities of San Juan and Río Piedras", 1938, 1, 1-A. Spanish Engineers of the 1784 and 1846 bridges identified in María de los Angeles Castro, *Arquitectura en San Juan de Puerto Rico (Siglo XIX)* (San Juan: Editorial Universitaria, 1980), 114, 236.

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Martin Peña Bridge
San Juan, Puerto Rico

1934 and 1935 the design and specifications were completed by Engineers Cecilio Delgado and Francisco Fortuño of the Department of the interior. However, the severe economic conditions on the Island caused by the passage of two devastating hurricanes (San Felipe in 1928 and San Ciprian in 1932) the Government of Puerto Rico did not have sufficient funds for construction of a new bridge.

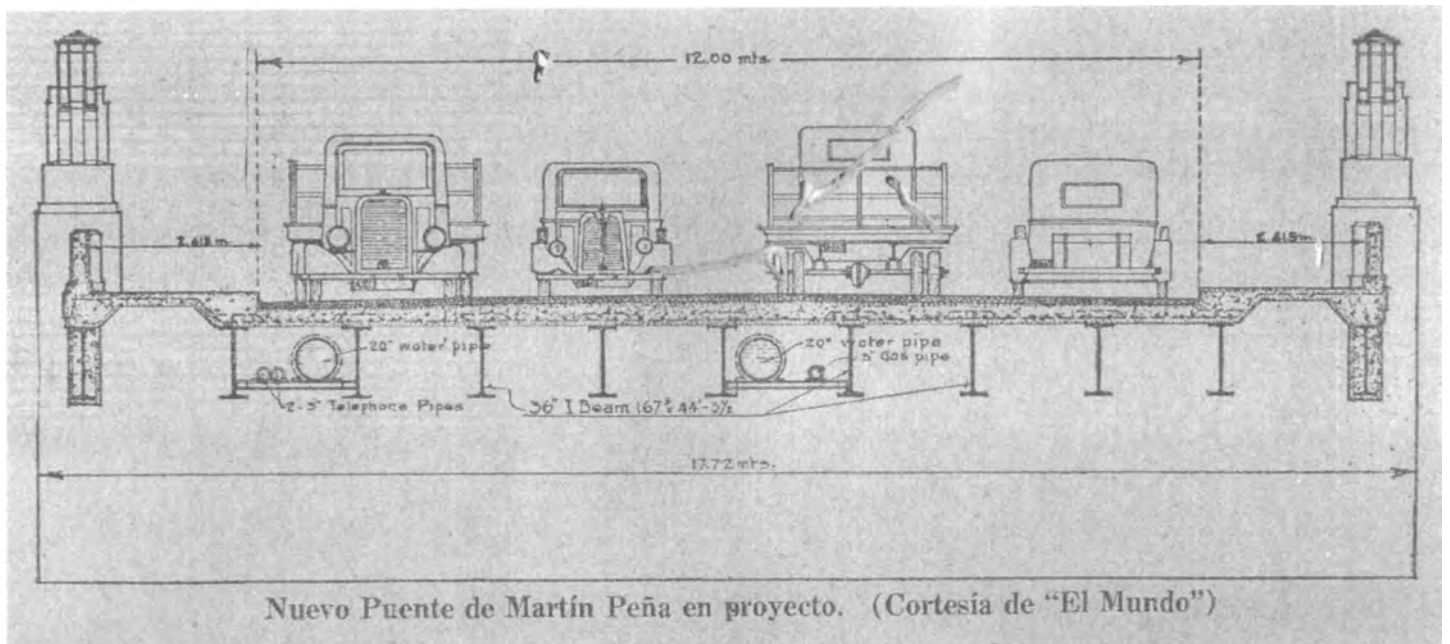


Fig. 4 - Drawing of Martín Peña Bridge illustrating the capacity for four lane vehicular traffic. *Revista de Obras Públicas*, July 1934.

The Department of the Interior in its publication, *Revista de Obras Públicas*, July 1934 issue presented briefly the new bridge over the Martín Peña Channel (Figure 4). It stated,

By this bridge go over 80% of the traffic between the Island and San Juan [islet] in addition to the intense and frequent local traffic between San Juan and Río Piedras. It is estimated an average of 435 vehicles by hour cross during working hours and 900 vehicles per hour pass during the entry and exit hours of the race tracks [in Santurce] the days when there area races.⁴

⁴ "Puenté de Martín Peña," *Revista de Obras Públicas*, Julio 1934.

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Martín Peña Bridge
San Juan, Puerto Rico

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In November 1935 the Commissioner of the Interior tried unsuccessfully to obtain funding for this project through the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration. After the approval of the Law #123 of May 15, 1936, the Government of Puerto Rico tried to obtain funding for the study and construction of highways, roads and bridges through the sale of a bond issue. However, this attempt was unsuccessful due to the Government's reduced loan capacity⁷. However, this situation changed when, in June 23, 1936, the US Congress extended federal aid to Puerto Rico for the construction of roads and bridges as of July 1, 1937.⁸ As result of this legislation, the Government of Puerto Rico was able to create a permanent fund drawn from matching Federal and local funds. One of the first two bridge construction projects to benefit from this permanent fund consisted of replacing the "Aurora" bridge with a new concrete bridge over the Martín Peña Channel.⁹ The project's memoir described the problems faced by the old bridge.

The present Martín Peña Bridge is in a ruinous condition. It is badly cracked and to avoid the collapse of the structure or the suspension of traffic, the Department of the Interior has been forced to prop the central arch. The maximum permissible load passing over this structure has been fixed by the Department of the Interior at 6 tons. Its available roadway width of only 5.90 meters, without sidewalks, converts this bridge into a real funnel to transportation, causing danger and interruption to traffic.

The amount of traffic going over this bridge is about two thirds of the total traffic coming in this city, without taking into consideration the intense local traffic between San Juan and Río Piedras. The average number of vehicles passing this bridge is 750 per hour

The construction of a new bridge is therefore, a matter of great necessity that cannot be further delayed.¹⁰

In March 27, 1937 an article appeared in *Puerto Rico Ilustrado* concerning the old bridge and the construction of the new bridge. The article emphasized the need for a new bridge because the existing bridge and roadway's width was inadequate and constituted a danger causing frequent collisions by vehicles and their turnover in the roadway's culverts. The Department of the Interior published an

⁷ Rafael del Valle Zeno, "El Nuevo Puente de Martín Peña," *Puerto Rico Ilustrado*, 27 de marzo de 1938.

⁸ Departamento del Interior, *Informe del Comisionado del Interior al Honorable Gobernador de Puerto Rico, Año Fiscal 1936-1937*. (San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte) 1937, 25.

⁹ Departamento del Interior, *Informe del Comisionado del Interior al Honorable Gobernador de Puerto Rico, Año Fisca. 1937-1938* (San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte), 1938, 16.

¹⁰ Department of the Interior, "Project of Proposed Insular Highway, Federal Aid Highway Project No. (F.A.P. 1-A) Martín Peña Channel Bridge and Approaches...", 1938, 1-A.

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Martín Peña Bridge
San Juan, Puerto Rico

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advertisement on December 22, 1937 requesting bids for the project "Martín Peña Channel Bridge and Approaches".

In February 14, 1938 the Department of the Interior accepted the bid (\$116,600.00) presented by Engineer Raúl Gaya Benejam for the project. Engineer Gaya constructed a small office near the construction site, where he directed the work. The project's memoir indicated that the proposed structure consisted of:

...a new steel I-beam Bridge, that will fulfill the requirements of present and future traffic. This structure will have a concrete slab floor covered with penetration bituminous pavement as wearing surface; a clear roadway of 12 meters (four lanes) and two sidewalks, 2.50 meters each.

Electric lighting has also been provided.¹¹

Prior to the construction of the new bridge, Engineer Gaya demolished the old Aurora Bridge. Although, this project started on February 28, 1938, it had to be postponed for six months while 20-inch pipes attached to the old bridge were redirected. By August 23, 1938 the demolition of the old bridge was started¹².

The construction was started, on the eastern end, using reinforced concrete piles with iron rods that were driven five to six feet below old bridge's foundations to support the new bridge. For the four pillars' construction, it was necessary to import a steel ship-pile for the work needed in the channel. Fifty-five steel rods 36 six inches high and 53 feet long, each with an approximate weight of four tons, were used to form the skeleton of the bridge. For the superstructure a thousand linear feet of roadway and 14 bronze lamps specifically designed for the bridge (each with 500 watt light bulbs) were completed. One hundred twenty five laborers worked on the bridge in the eight months it took for completing the new bridge. Close to 20,000 cement bags were used for the project, which was mixed with fine dust from crushed stone¹³.

¹¹ Department of the Interior, "Project of Proposed Insular Highway, Federal Aid Highway Project No. (F.A.P. 1-A) Martín Peña Channel Bridge and Approaches..." 1938, 1-A.

¹² Arturo Gigante, "Está próximo abrirse al tránsito el nuevo puente de Martín Peña," El Mundo, 30 de abril de 1939, 5.

¹³ Ibid.

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Martín Peña Bridge
San Juan, Puerto Rico

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The bridge was accepted by the Department of Interior on February 28, 1939. On June 1939, the concrete bridge was completed and opened to the general public¹⁴. Blanton Winship (Governor of Puerto Rico) and José Enrique Colom (Commissioner of the Puerto Rico Department of the Interior) were present at the bridge's inauguration ceremony.

Raul Gaya Benejam, from the western town of San Sebastián, started studying engineering at the College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. Later, he moved to Indiana where he completed his studies and graduated from Tri-state College in 1927. After returning to Puerto Rico, he started to work under the Department of Public Works in the tracing of the irrigation channel system for the Municipality of Isabela. Later he worked in the Design and Construction Division of the Puerto Rico Road Authority in the reconstruction of schools and public buildings. In 1931, he worked as General Superintendent for construction in the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. Three years later he started to work in private projects. In 1938, the same year of the project of the Martín Peña Bridge, he was working on the project of the José Celso Barbosa School in Santurce. Engineer Gaya also worked on "Los Reyes Católicos" bridge in Dorado, another bridge near the Isla Verde International Airport (1951), a second bridge over the Martín Peña Channel (1951-1953), the General Supplies Building in Puerta de Tierra (1955), the Fajardo pier, and the Camuy Water Treatment Plant, among others.¹⁵

Engineering significance

In the construction of this bridge, it was the first time in Puerto Rico that the process of weighing the aggregate for the different classes of concrete was used. Also, it was the first time that the fine dust, from the crushed stone, was used as a fine aggregate for the concrete mixture. Thirty one years after its construction, the engineering significance of this bridge was briefly discussed in the magazine Puerto Rico Ilustrado. The article reported that,

It was the first time in Puerto Rico that the process of weighing the aggregates for the different classes of concrete was used, because at the time modern premixed concrete plants and large motorized mixers were not known. The concrete was weighed on small portable scales that had only the capacity for four cubic feet, which could be carried by a wheelbarrow. While today 1,600 cubic yards of concrete can be served, the Gaya organization produced daily 30 cubic yards. All was done by hand.

¹⁴ Departamento del Interior, Informe del Comisionado del Interior al Honorable Gobernador de Puerto Rico, Año Fiscal 1938-39. (San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte), 1940, 11.

¹⁵ Pura N. Gil de Lamadrid, "Ingeniero Raúl Gaya Benejam Constructor del Puente Martín Peña," Topac, Enero 1978, 5, 8.

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Martín Peña Bridge
San Juan, Puerto Rico

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The only machinery used consisted in a small mixer, moved by a 20 horse powered motor, which capacity was of half a cubic yard by load. Heavy equipment was not used, with the exception of pile driver, which was made by the same contractor and included a forty feet wooden fulcrum.

Other innovations of the moment, was that in this construction was the use of fine dust (residue of the crushed rock) as a fine aggregate for the concrete mixture.¹⁶

Architectural significance

Although the Martín Peña Bridge resolved a functional and structural problem, the designers went further by imbuing this structure with rich geometric forms. The Martín Peña Bridge is significant because of its bold use of step forms, lanterns and ornamental panels as seen in the pillars and piers. The use of the ornamental panels with is geometric forms and floral motif provided a degree of refinement and beautification to the whole structure distinguishing from other bridges built after in Puerto Rico. Symmetry and repetition, distinctive of the Art Deco, is found throughout this bridge.

For further contextual information regarding bridge building in Puerto Rico, registration requirements, and property types, see related multiple property listing "Historic Bridges of Puerto Rico".

¹⁶ Jose López Vázquez "Martín Peña: Un Puente con Historia," Puerto Rico Ilustrado, 30 de mayo 1970, 15.

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Puente Martín Peña
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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Corraliza Roque, Sigfredo, José Raúl Rodríguez Pacheco y José Raúl Gayá. "CE 540 – Estudio del Puente Martín Peña", requisito de clase CE 540- Capstone I, Departamento de Ingeniería Civil, Universidad Politécnica de Puerto Rico, 1999.

Departamento de lo Interior. Informe del Comisionado del Interior al Honorable Gobernador de Puerto Rico, Año Fiscal 1936-37. San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1937.

-----. Informe del Comisionado del Interior al Honorable Gobernador de Puerto Rico, Año Fiscal 1937-38. San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1938.

-----. Informe del Comisionado del Interior al Honorable Gobernador de Puerto Rico, Año Fiscal 1938-39. San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1940.

Department of the Interior. "Plans of Proposed Insular Highway, Federal Aid Highway ProjectProject 1-A, Route No. 1 Section Martín Peña-Río Piedras, Insular Highway No. 1", December 8, 1937

-----."Project of the Proposed Insular Highway, Federal and Highway Project No. (F.A.P.IA) Martín Peña Channel Bridge and Approaches, Municipalities of San Juan and Río Piedras, Insular Road No. (1), Special Provisions and General Information" prepared by the Division of Survey and Construction of Highway, Roads and Bridges, 1937. [AGPR, OP, Carreteras, Leg. 654, Caja 2769]

Gigante, Arturo. "Está próximo a abrirse al tránsito el nuevo puente de Martín Peña." El Mundo, Domingo, 30 de abril de 1939, 5.

Gil de Lamadrid, Pura N. "Ingeniero Raúl Gayá Benejam: Constructor del Puente Martín Peña", Topac, Enero 1978, 4, 5 y 8.

López Vázquez, José. "Martín Peña: Un Puente con Historia." El Mundo, Suplemento Sabatino, "Puerto Rico Ilustrado", 30 de mayo de 1970, 14 y 15.

Pumarada O'Neill, Luis. "Fichero de puentes elegibles a ser considerados para designación como puentes históricos", informe preparado para la Oficina de Estudios Ambientales, Autoridad de Carreteras y Transportación de Puerto Rico, 5 de enero de 1995.

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Puente Martín Peña
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----- Los Puentes Históricos de Puerto Rico. Mayagüez: Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo,
Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1991.

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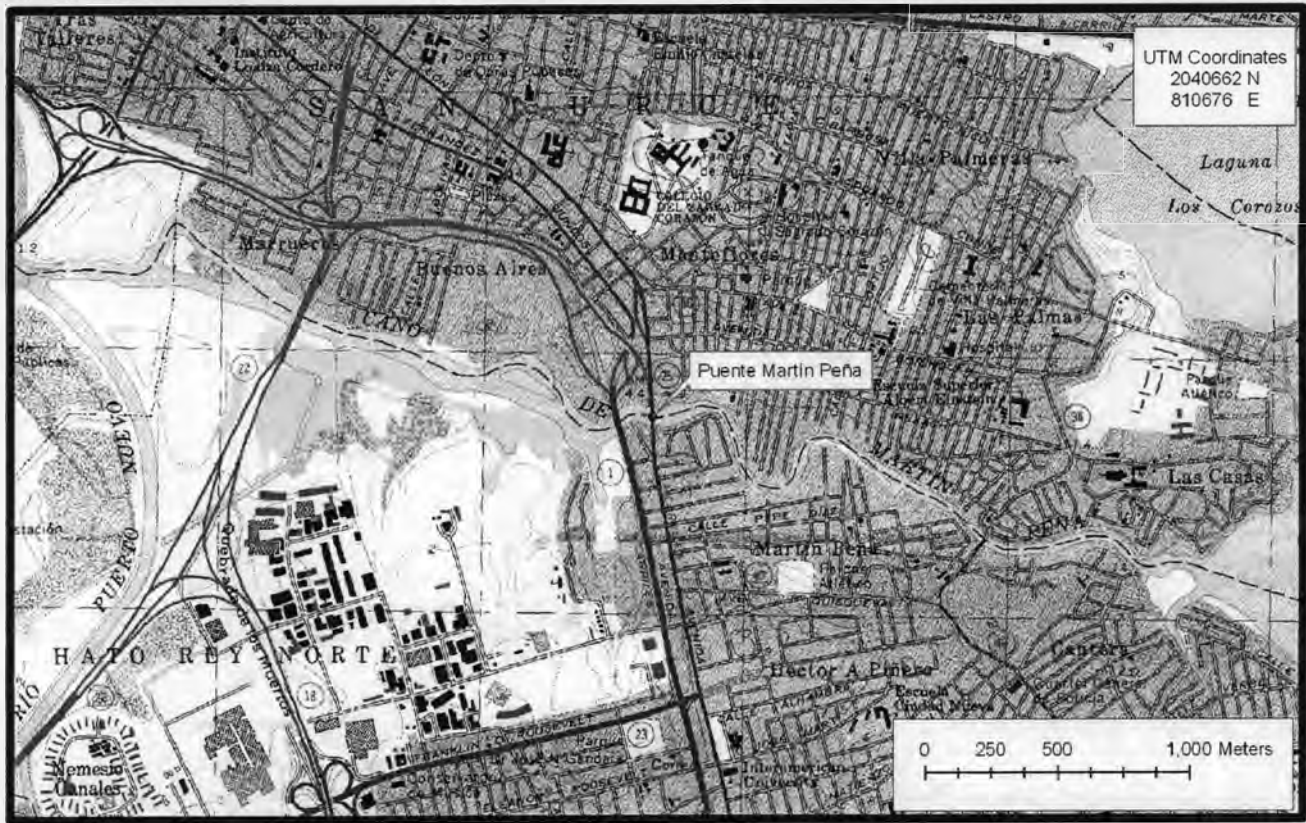
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Puente Martín Peña
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is a rectangular shaped parcel measuring 73.5 X 17 meters or 1249.5 square meters. Included within this rectangular parcel are the bridge's superstructure, substructure and floor systems.

Topographic map



<p>Source: USGS San Juan Quadrangle Map</p>	<p>Site Map Martín Peña Bridge San Juan, Puerto Rico</p>	<p>1:20,000</p>
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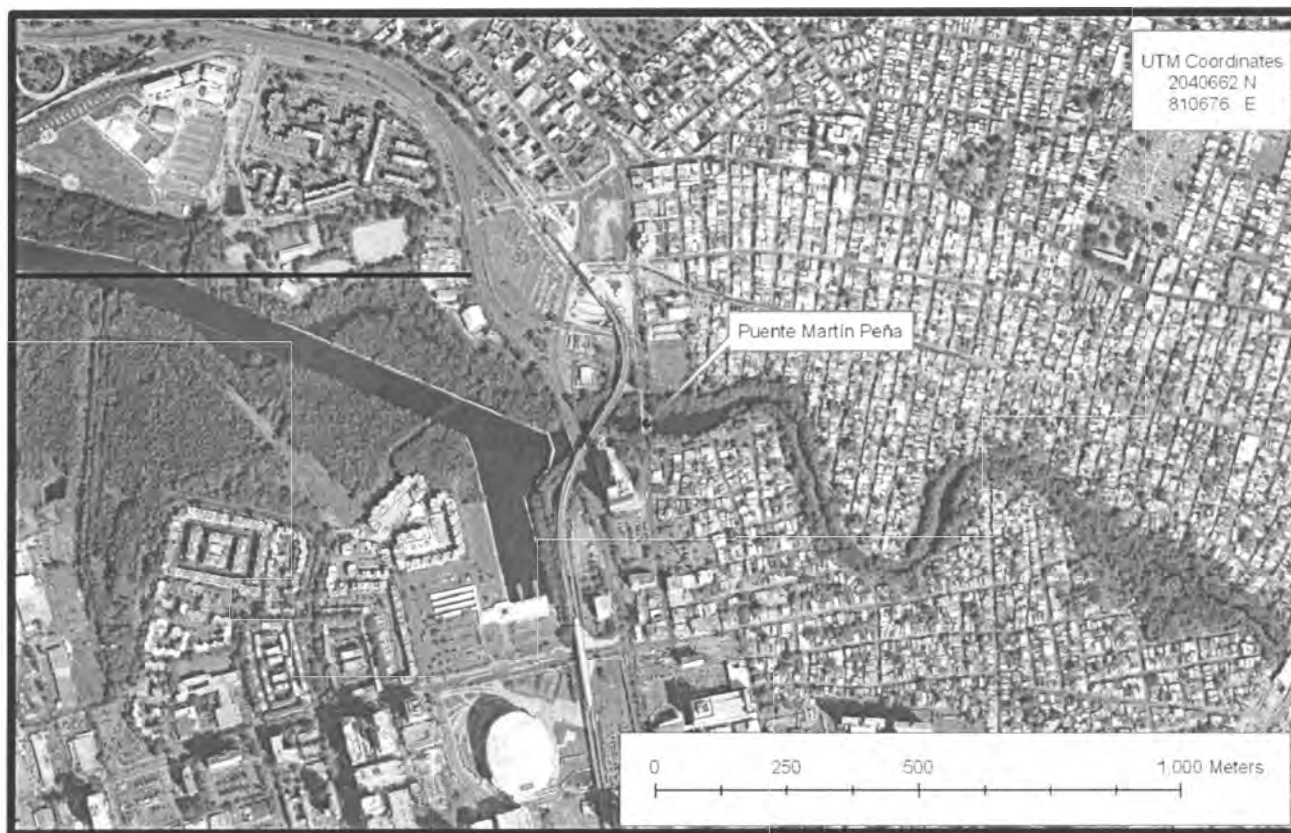
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Puente Martín Peña
San Juan, Puerto Rico

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Aerial photography- general context



	<p>Site Map Martín Peña Bridge San Juan, Puerto Rico</p>	<p>oech</p>  <p>1:10,000</p>
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Puente Martín Peña
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Aerial photography – Martín Peña Bridge – close up Martín Peña Channel



Boundary Justification

The nominated structure includes the bridge's superstructure, substructure, floor system, any approach spans and the property on which they rest. These boundaries encompass, but not exceed, all property that has been historically associated with this bridge.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Martin Pena Bridge

MULTIPLE NAME: Historic Bridges of Puerto Rico MPS

STATE & COUNTY: PUERTO RICO, San Juan

DATE RECEIVED: 7/23/08 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/11/08
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/26/08 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/05/08
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08000856

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 8/27/08 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The Martin Pena Bridge meets the Criteria as proposed in the Historic Bridges of Puerto Rico MPS. It is an important link in San Juan's transportation network, carrying a principle highway to the South Suburbs. It has remarkable Architectural flourish, with high Art Deco stylized embellishments and a form reminiscent of Beaux Arts City Beautiful movement bridges of the Turn of the century.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Crit A+C

REVIEWER J. C. Cabana DISCIPLINE Historic

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.











PUENTE NÚM. 185 DEL CAÑO MARTÍN PEÑA
EL PUENTE HISTÓRICO SOBRE EL CAÑO MARTÍN PEÑA















Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

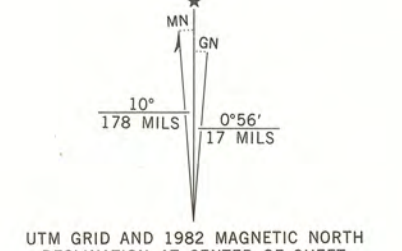
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1962. Field checked 1963. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1967. Field checked 1969

Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS charts 903 (1964) and 908 (1965). This information is not intended for navigational purposes

Polycyclic projection. Puerto Rico Datum, 1940 adjustment
2000-meter grid ticks based on Puerto Rico coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 19

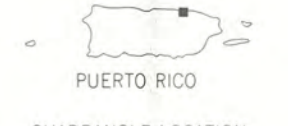
Barrio and municipality boundaries by the Puerto Rico Planning Board
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled from aerial photographs taken 1977 and other sources. This information not field checked. Map edited 1982
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 METERS
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 1-METER CONTOURS
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 0.3 METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA, 22092
AND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS, SAN JUAN, P. R. 00910
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

30% TOTAL RECOVERED FIBER

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, all weather, Light-duty road, all weather, hard surface
Secondary highway, all weather, Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
Insular Route

Martin Peña Bridge
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Zone 19 Easting 810676 Northing 2040662

SAN JUAN, P. R.
N1822.5-W6600/7.5

1969
PHOTOREVISED 1982
DMA 1323 II 8E-SERIES E835





ESTADO LIBRE ASOCIADO DE PUERTO RICO
DEPARTAMENTO DE TRANSPORTACIÓN Y OBRAS PÚBLICAS

19 de junio de 2008

Arql. Aida Belén Rivera Ruiz
Directora Ejecutiva
Oficina Estatal de Conservación Histórica
PO Box 9066581
San Juan PR 00906-6581

**PUENTE NÚM. 185 (PUENTE MARTÍN PEÑA)
PR-25 (AVE. PONCE DE LEÓN), KM 8, SANTURCE-HATO REY, SAN JUAN**

Estimada arqueóloga Rivera Ruiz:

Reciba nuestro cordial saludo.

Acusamos recibo de la carta de la Oficina Estatal de Conservación Histórica (OECH) de 15 de mayo de 2008, relativa a la propiedad histórica de referencia.

Sirva la presente para expresar que en el Departamento de Transportación y Obras Públicas (DTOP) concurrimos con la nominación del Puente Martín Peña al Registro Nacional de Lugares Históricos de EE.UU. por parte de la agencia que usted dirige. No obstante, le indicamos que con el propósito de viabilizar el proyecto de dragado del Caño Martín Peña y la expansión del ACUAEXPRESO hasta la Laguna San José, el Puente Martín Peña será objeto de estudios exhaustivos y posiblemente de algún tipo de intervención estructural. En su momento, las alternativas de acción serán presentadas a la OECH como parte del proceso de cumplimiento con la reglamentación federal aplicable (Sección 106 de la Ley de Preservación Histórica).

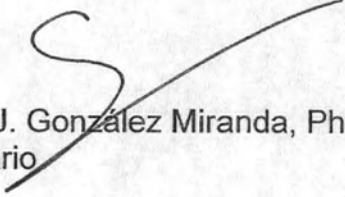
Agradecemos tan loable proyecto, el cual entendemos como uno de mérito para efectos de la conservación y protección de esta importante pieza de nuestro patrimonio histórico edificado.

OFIC. EJECUTIVA
CONS. HISTÓRICA
OFIC. GOBIERNO
2008 JUL -7 PM 3:50
DIRECCION EJECUTIVA

Arq. Aida Belén Rivera Ruiz
Puente Núm. 185 (Puente Martín Peña)
19 de junio de 2008
Página 2

Finalmente, aprovechamos para informarle quienes nos representarán en la reunión de la Junta Revisora de la OECH, pautada para el viernes 20 de junio próximo, a la 1:30 p.m., en sus oficinas, serán el Arq. Norberto J. Guzmán Torres, Secretario Auxiliar para Urbanismo y Arq. Thelma V. Valenzuela Sánchez, Directora Oficina de Patrimonio Cultural.

Cordialmente,



Carlos J. González Miranda, Ph.D.
Secretario

TVVS/NJGT/jmch

c: Ing. Luis M. Trinidad Garay
Arq. Norberto J. Guzmán Torres
Arq. Thelma V. Valenzuela Sánchez, AEE



RECEPCION

2008 JUN 20 PM 9:05

OFICINA ESTADAL DE
CONSERVACION HISTORICA
SAN JUAN, P.R.
GOBERNADOR

20 de junio de 2008

Aida Belén Rivera Ruiz
Directora Ejecutiva
Oficina Estatal de Conservación Histórica
Apartado Postal 9066581
San Juan PR 00906-6581

Atención: José Marull, Historiador Principal

**NOMINACIÓN DEL PUENTE MARTIN PEÑA PARA EL
REGISTRO NACIONAL DE LUGARES HISTÓRICOS DE EEUU**

Estimada arqueóloga Rivera Ruiz:

Sometemos ante su consideración nuestros comentarios sobre la nominación del Puente Núm. 185 (Puente Martín Peña) en la PR-25 (Ave. Ponce de León) del kilómetro 8 entre Santurce y Hato Rey, en el Municipio de San Juan, para el Registro Nacional de Lugares Históricos de EEUU. En principio, la Corporación del Proyecto ENLACE del Caño Martín Peña apoya la designación del puente como monumento y lugar histórico dado su valor arquitectónico y estructural, pero principalmente por su ubicación y los sucesos históricos asociados al mismo. No obstante lo anterior, no estamos en posición de decir fehacientemente que no habrá impacto al puente por el dragado, aunque ciertamente haremos todo lo posible por evitar impactos significativos.

El Proyecto ENLACE del Caño Martín Peña es una iniciativa que vincula a los sectores público, privado y comunitario tras una agenda de ciudad, calidad de vida, recuperación de los recursos naturales y superación de la pobreza que se fundamenta en la capacidad de autogestión de los 27,000 residentes en las comunidades aledañas al Caño. Sus beneficios trascienden estas comunidades y repercuten en mejoras sustanciales al entorno urbano y ambiental del Área Metropolitana de San Juan. Las ocho comunidades que participan de ENLACE son: Barrio

Obrero, Barrio Obrero Marina, Buena Vista Santurce, Península de Cantera, Parada 27, Las Monjas, Buena Vista Hato Rey e Israel – Bitumul.

La Ley Núm. 489 del 24 de septiembre de 2004 para el Distrito de Planificación Especial del Caño Martín Peña creó la Corporación del Proyecto ENLACE del Caño Martín Peña, cuyo propósito es liderar la implantación del Plan de Desarrollo Integral y el Plan de Usos del Terreno para el Distrito de Planificación Especial del Caño Martín Peña. El Distrito de Planificación Especial fue definido por la Junta de Planificación mediante su resolución de 18 de mayo de 2002. Dichos planes se elaboraron utilizando técnicas de planificación participativa. Todos los trabajos que desarrolla el PECMP en el Distrito se enmarcan dentro de la política de participación ciudadana.

Por virtud de la Ley 489, supra, la Corporación del Proyecto ENLACE del Caño Martín Peña es la entidad a cargo del dragado y canalización del Caño. Esta corporación cuasi pública es independiente a cualquier otra entidad gubernamental. El Proyecto ENLACE integra los aspectos de desarrollo urbano, social y económico de las ocho comunidades en los márgenes del Caño. Mediante el dragado y canalización del Caño, atiende la amenaza a la salud y seguridad de los residentes que representa su estado actual de degradación ambiental. El proyecto persigue la superación de la pobreza, reestructurar la forma en que la ciudad se relaciona con sus comunidades marginadas, redefinir la relación entre el medio ambiente construido y sus cuerpos de agua y mayor control local sobre los procesos de toma de decisiones y sobre el recurso tierra, para evitar el desplazamiento involuntario de las comunidades. De igual forma, reconoce el valor social y cultural de estas comunidades en el proceso de formación de la ciudad de San Juan. Muchos de los acontecimientos que formaron la historia de estas comunidades estaban relacionados al cuerpo de agua y la conexión entre Santurce y Río Piedras. Dentro de esos elementos históricos de gran importancia está el puente Martín Peña y los sucesos que ocurrieron sobre el mismo.

Como sitio histórico, la relevancia del lugar estriba en tres hechos principales: (a) hizo viable el traslado del asentamiento de Caparra a la Isleta de San Juan; (b) fue escenario de uno de los hechos históricos más importantes en la formación de la identidad del puertorriqueño, a saber, la victoria de los criollos sobre los invasores ingleses en 1797; y, (c) jugó un rol importante en la expansión de la ciudad de San Juan. El puente Martín Peña es considerado como un monumento representativo de la obra pública y social del Nuevo Trato y el Plan Chardón. Estos acontecimientos le han dado al Puente Martín Peña un significado histórico y cultural que permanece aún presente en las comunidades aledañas y que han asumido el rol de proteger y mantener la estructura y dar a conocer su historia.


Según el estudio realizado por ConservAcción Inc. en 2003 para evaluar la elegibilidad del puente Martín Peña al Registro Nacional de Lugares Históricos, “el puente refleja la visión de modernidad que se comienza a incubar en Puerto Rico en los albores de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, mediante la adopción del estilo Art Decó...” Los autores destacan el valor arquitectónico del puente Martín Peña al decir:

“Con sus pilastras monumentales, sus elementos decorativos en bajo relieve y su explotación de linternas y farolas, el puente fue y sigue siendo el mejor ejemplo de puente en Puerto Rico en este estilo significativo en la historia arquitectónica del País.”

Por su parte, Luis F. Pumarada O'Neill señala en su libro *Los puentes históricos de Puerto Rico*, que el puente Martín Peña es el único ejemplo de un puente de vigas maestras tipo Girder en hierro o acero con viga maestra múltiple.

Mucho se ha discutido sobre el impacto potencial del dragado y canalización del Caño Martín Peña sobre el puente del mismo nombre. Ciertamente el dragado es crítico para rehabilitar un ecosistema del altísimo valor ecológico, el estuario de la bahía de San Juan, que es el único tropical bajo el Programa Nacional de Estuario de la EPA. Recientemente, el Congreso de los EEUU autorizó \$150M para esta obra. ENLACE está trabajando en colaboración con el Cuerpo de Ingenieros de los EEUU para culminar el análisis de impacto ambiental de este proyecto, que incluye una discusión sobre el puente Martín Peña.

Los criterios principales para determinar las características del dragado son, en orden de importancia, la rehabilitación ambiental del cuerpo de agua, reducir el riesgo a inundaciones y restablecer el carácter navegable del Caño, con el menor impacto negativo posible en las comunidades aledañas al cuerpo de agua. El dragado es fundamental para atender la degradación ambiental del Caño, y atender los problemas que ponen en riesgo la salud y seguridad de miles de puertorriqueños.

 Preliminarmente, se propone dragar el Caño siguiendo su forma natural. Por su alto impacto social y ambiental, se descarta la posibilidad de enderezar el Caño para que éste se convierta en una vía acuática de transporte rápido. El tipo de transporte acuático por el Caño debe estar supeditado a los otros criterios, y a contribuir al desarrollo integral de las comunidades. Por tanto, la postura de ENLACE sobre este asunto es que se promoverá el transporte acuático de menor escala, para usos recreativos y turísticos, incluyendo los taxis acuáticos. Asimismo, entendemos que el transporte acuático debe ser compatible con el ancho propuesto para el dragado, que será de 100 pies o de 150 pies, como máximo, y con el puente Martín Peña existente. Es decir, las dimensiones del Caño van a permitir vehículo marítimos de pequeña a mediana escala. Las embarcaciones de escala similar al acuapreso necesitan vía exclusiva, lo que conflige con la meta de desarrollo económico comunitario que se ha adoptado como política pública.

Esta postura es resultado del proceso de planificación participativa para el Plan de Desarrollo Integral y de Usos del Terreno del Distrito de Planificación Especial del Caño Martín Peña. Asimismo, fue resultado de consultas con entidades del gobierno de Puerto Rico y de los EEUU, incluyendo la Autoridad de Carreteras y Transportación (ACT). Mientras ENLACE fue un programa de la ACT se determinó que el transporte acuático debe ser de escala pequeña, con propósitos recreativos y turísticos, e incluso en manos de empresas comunitarias. De igual

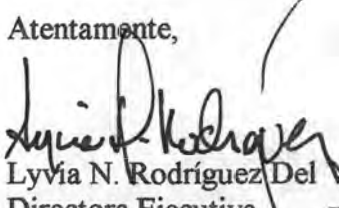
forma, hay que recordar las grandes limitaciones que hay en la laguna San José y otros sectores del estuario para viabilizar el uso de embarcaciones de gran escala. Este es un asunto de gran preocupación para las agencias que velan por los recursos naturales, dados los problemas de contaminación en los sedimentos de la laguna, su poca profundidad, entre otros.

No obstante lo anterior, es vital destacar que el dragado tendrá una profundidad de diez pies, necesaria para sanear el área y eliminar décadas de basura y escombros acumulados en el cuerpo de agua. Esto presenta un problema con respecto a los cimientos del puente Martín Peña. Para atenderlo, hay que examinar la viabilidad de hacer una transición y dragar a una profundidad menor en ese punto. Esto no se ha estudiado aún. Esperamos que este sea uno de los puntos importantes a discutir en la declaración de impacto ambiental para el dragado. Nuestra meta es que junto a las entidades correspondientes y la comunidad se pueda encontrar una alternativa viable que permita dragar el Caño y preservar el puente. De lo contrario, habría que sopesar la viabilidad del dragado, y por tanto, la salud y seguridad de miles de ciudadanos, versus la conservación de esta importante estructura.

ENLACE promovió la rehabilitación del puente Martín Peña por parte de la ACT, lo que ocurrió en 2004 bajo el diseño de la arquitecta Blanquita Calzada. La comunidad ha luchado por proteger y custodiar este patrimonio histórico, y ENLACE ha respaldado estas acciones. Adjunto incluimos los comentarios de Nicasio Mojica Rivera, como representante de la comunidad de Parada 27, dado la dedicación y entrega por parte de esta y otras comunidades en la protección del puente Martín Peña.

Agradecemos la oportunidad de participar en este proceso y estamos a la mayor disposición para aclarar cualquier duda o atender cualquier solicitud de su parte.

Atentamente,


Lyvia N. Rodríguez Del Valle
Directora Ejecutiva

Anejo

- c. Luis Trinidad Garay, Director Ejecutivo de la Autoridad de Carreteras y Transportación
- Thelma Valenzuela
- Norberto J. Guzmán Torres, Secretario Auxiliar para Urbanismo DTOP
- Mario Núñez Mercado, Presidente del G-8, Inc.
- Nicasio Mojica, Presidente de la Asociación Pro Bienestar de la Parada 27, Inc.
- Jorge M. Tous, Cuerpo de Ingenieros de los EEUU.

LNR/CMP

Desde la construcción del Puente Martín Peña en el año 1519, para trasladar la ciudad capital Caparra a la Isleta de San Juan, donde se encuentra hoy, se ha mantenido como un testigo fiel de todos los acontecimientos que han ocurrido en él. Es uno de los primeros pasos de importancia sobre un cuerpo de agua construido en el nuevo mundo. Se conocía como el camino que unía al pueblo viejo (Caparra) con el islote de San Juan. Es el primer puente donde se cobraba peaje.

La Comunidad Parada 27 ha sido una de las comunidades primicias en Puerto Rico que ha sido relegada por largo tiempo en aras del progreso, siendo una de las más importante e histórica, nace a los pies del puente y lleva en sus entrañas toda esa historia grandiosa que impacta a todo Puerto Rico y trasciende a la humanidad.

Para nosotros es un monumento histórico que representa luchas intensas, victorias obtenidas, el comienzo de la retirada de la más formidable armada inglesa conocida en esa época y sobre todo un medio de comunicación entre Hato Rey y Santurce.

La misma historia recopilada y narrada por historiadores como Salvador Brau, Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, entre otros, destaca la importancia y relevancia del puente para San Juan y todo Puerto Rico.

Es un símbolo local al cual hemos atado nuestro pasado y presente, que nos brinda al mismo tiempo un sentido de pertenencia. Agradecemos al Departamento de Transportación y Obras Públicas por concedernos en adopción y así pudimos rescatar de la insidiosa guerra de colores que suscitaran las entidades políticas en el país. Además agradecemos al Proyecto Enlace Caño Martín Peña por su ayuda técnica en el rescate del puente.

Para el año 2006, los residentes de Parada 27, comunidades vecinas, amigos y amigas rescatamos el puente de la guerra de colores creada por el gobierno central y municipal, donde la comunidad obtiene la victoria y el mismo permanece como un ejemplo de defensa de nuestro patrimonio histórico para todo el país.

Durante el año 1797 en el mes de abril, el puente fue un escenario de fuertes luchas al ser dominado por las fuerzas Británicas que invadieron a Puerto Rico y pretendían atacar a San Juan por la retaguardia. En esas cruentas batallas, el día 30 de abril de 1797, murió el Sargento Mayor Jose Pepe Díaz, natural de Toa Alta quien defendió con gallardía y valentía la ciudad amurallada y nos dejó su legado.

El tiempo ha transcurrido y el Puente Martín Peña, aquel que sirvió de paso a los nuevos habitantes de San Juan, como la nueva capital desde 1521, lugar estratégico utilizado por los británicos para lograr su invasión, fue protagonista

de estos hechos. Hoy permanece y representa la valentía, coraje y determinación de aquel hombre que ofrendó su vida para que podamos sentirnos puertorriqueños y con orgullo exclamemos a viva voz que vencimos a los británicos, los cuales más tarde vencieron a Napoleón Bonaparte en Egipto.

Entendemos que la iniciativa de reconocer la importancia histórica del Puente Martín Peña es una muy acertiva y debe extenderse a la zona adyacente.

Nicasio Mojica Rivera
Presidente Junta de Directores
Asociación Pro Bienestar Parada 27 Inc.
Comunidad Parada 27
Tel. (787) 319-5817
Correo electrónico nmojicap@hotmail.com



July 18, 2008

Ms. Janet Snyder Matthews, Ph.D.
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" Eye Street, N.W., 8th floor (MS 2280)
Washington, D. C. 20005

SUMISSION – MARTÍN PEÑA BRIDGE

Dear Ms. Snyder: *Jau*

We are pleased to submit for inclusion in the National register of Historic Places the nomination of Martín Peña Bridge, in the Municipality of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Enclosed comments received supporting the inclusion of the property in the National Register of Historic Places.

Should have any questions on the nomination, please contact Arch. Arch. Berenice Sueiro, AIT, Conservation Manager at 787-721-3737 or at bcgsueiro@prshpo.gobierno.pr.

Sincerely,

Warm regards,

Aida

Aida Belén Rivera Ruiz, Archaeologist
State Historic Preservation Officer

ABRR/BRS/jvr

Enclosures