

**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 Nuestra Señora de la Concepción y San Fernando of Toa Alta
and/or common Church San Fernando of Toa Alta

2. Location

street & number Ponce de Leon St., Town Plaza not for publication
city, town Toa Alta vicinity of _____
state Puerto Rico code 72 county San Juan code 0970

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, Archdiocese of San Juan
street & number Box 1967
city, town San Juan vicinity of _____ state Puerto Rico 00903

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, Church Litigation Case #2, 1904
street & number Box 2392
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

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The church Nuestra Señora de la Concepción y San Fernando of Toa Alta, built from 1752 to 1826, sits on a block by itself facing the town plaza, and is basically oriented on an east-west axis. It is separated from its immediate surroundings by a simple wall enclosing garden areas around the main structure.

The building plan consists of only one nave covered with a large barrel vault 38.6 feet wide. The brick of the barrel vault is exposed on the interior of the church. Walls of great thickness and wide buttresses receive the weight of the vault. Four lunette openings were placed above the nave in order to illuminate the interior space. There are four bays plus the apse and sacristies area. The apse and sacristies are also covered by individual barrel vaults. The entire structure is constructed of durable materials, such as mortar and brick. The floors are covered with colored native cement tiles of various designs. The original floors were probably replaced during the first half of this century. The interior decoration was altered in 1945. Pilasters were attached to the side walls in addition to a frieze of Renaissance design.

The facade is emphasized by two Corinthian columns with fluted bodies which support a small frieze above the entrance door. Above this area, two pilasters and the espadaña, or bell gable, with three bells highlight the importance of the entrance. Curious decorative elements top a series of small buttresses on the facade. The side facades are treated in a simple fashion. One arched door flanked on each side by enormous buttresses allows ventilation and light to the interior. The stucco of the arches above these side doors was scraped and the brick work has been exposed (1977), as in an interior arch between the nave and the apse. The exterior of the church is deteriorated, having vegetation growing on the walls and buttresses.

The most noticeable alteration to the main structure is the addition of a new parish house which is attached to the rear facade of the original church. The doors and windows in the main building are not original and are in a very deteriorated state.

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"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
			<input type="checkbox"/> science
			<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
			<input type="checkbox"/> social/
			<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
			<input type="checkbox"/> theater
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1752–1826 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The church Nuestra Señora de la Concepción y San Fernando is of historical and architectural significance. In 1751, at the same time the city of Toa Alta was founded, the church construction began. The building is dedicated to Nuestra Señora de la Concepción and to San Fernando. It retains most of its original construction and design elements. It is a good example of the churches built from 1720 to 1820 on the Island that have a single nave covered with a barrel vault. The space created by the bold brick vault, finished in 1802, is surprising and impressive, and has miraculously survived until today. The barrel vault, 38.6 feet wide, is the largest of its kind in the Island. Construction of the church was finally finished in 1826. The small frieze on the facade is a rare example of a decorative treatment to this area. The columns at the entrance have fluted bodies. Both elements relatively of a small scale present an interesting contrast to the overall size of the church. The espadaña was placed after it was recommended by José Y. Hernández in a report in 1861. The most noticeable alteration that somewhat detracts from the significance of the property is the addition of a new parish house. The traditional relationship between the town plaza, the church and city hall is, however, maintained, presenting an 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, P.R., unpublished.
- Villar Roces, Mario, "Los Municipios de Puerto Rico", La Gran Enciclopedia de Puerto Rico, Vol. 13, Vicente Báez, ed., C.Corredera, Madrid, 1976.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 5303 sq.mts.

Quadrangle name Bayamón, PR

Quadrangle scale 1:20,000

UTM References

A

1	9	7	9	0	8	2	0	2	0	3	5	4	4	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

The church is bounded on the north by José de Diego St., on the west by Ponce de Leon St. and the town plaza, on the south by Muñoz Rivera St. and on the east by Alfonso XIII St.

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

state	code	county	N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

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

organization Investigaciones Bonaire, Inc.

date February 1984

street & number Tetuan 103

telephone (809) 724-4997

city or town 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

For NPS use only

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

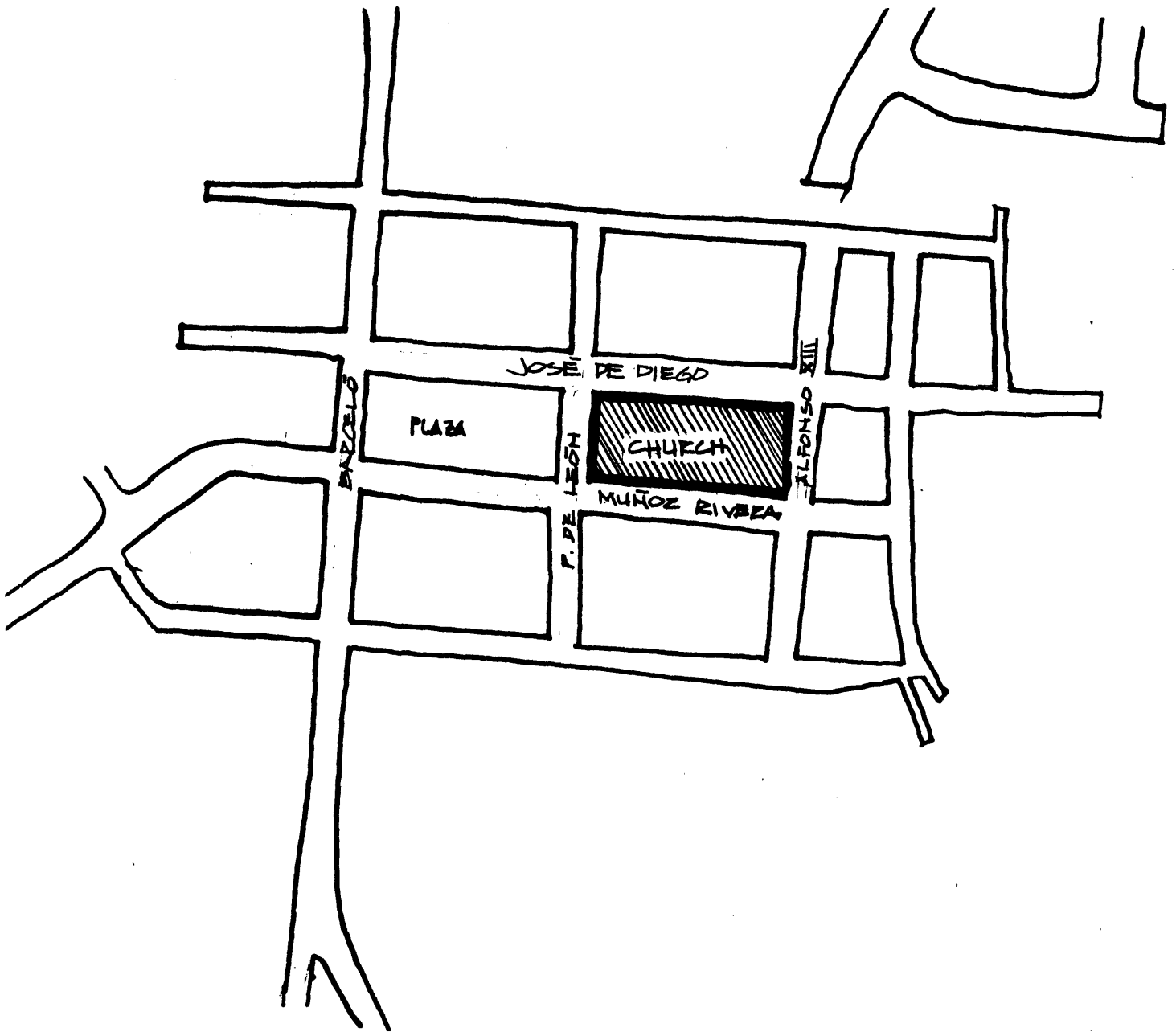
See Continuation Sheet for listing date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



town: **TOA ALTA**

scale: 1:2000



INVESTIGACIONES BONAIRE INC.

Calle de Tetuan nº 103, Viejo San Juan, Puerto Rico · Tel. (809) 724-4997