

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Gautier Benítez High School
other names/site number La Gautier

2. Location

street & number Calle Gautier Benítez and Calle Cristóbal Colón not for publication N/A
city, town Caguas vicinity N/A
state Puerto Rico code P.R. county Caguas code 025 zip code 00626

3. 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

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.
Mariano G. Coronas Castro S.H.P.O April 25, 1988
Signature of certifying official Date
Puerto Rico S.H.P.O
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:) _____

Mary Schlagel 6/15/88

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Schools

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Schools

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concretewalls Concrete

roof Concreteother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Gautier Benítez High School is a two-storey concrete building, built in 1924, at the northeastern grounds of the Caguas historic section. Its floor-plan is constructed by a rectangular "U" shape that embraces an interior courtyard. This configuration provides light and ventilation to rooms which open out onto sides.

The building's main facade displays a symmetrical neoclassical design. It has seven bays organized in an ABCBA rhythm, consisting of a one-bay central section, two double-bay slightly recessed midsections, and two flanking single-bay sections. Each bay is articulated by plasters that support a continuous cornice which, in turn, supports a parapet wall above. The middle and flanking sections' intercolumnial walls are articulated horizontally into four bands, two of which contain 5 "Miami" type aluminum windows.

The central bay comprises a portico which was designed using a monumental ionic order vocabulary. This porch has two pairs of flanking columns which emerge from a high podium and run throughout the two floors to support the entablature.

A six steps pyramidal stair leads into the building, where a post and lintel "ionic" portal slightly protrudes from the wall level, constituting the building's main entrance.

The building's portal projects both in height and depth from the overall facade. Its triangular pediment emphasizes this central section of the building. Two Italian-Renaissance style bell towers rise at the sides of the porch. They stem from the sides of the pediment's eaves, surmounting it while pinpointing the building's central section.

The building opens onto the interior courtyard through open galleries on both floors. These galleries serve as circulation space. They are differentiated at each floor by the bay articulation. At the upper level the bays are articulated into rectangular openings created by a post and lintel system. The lower level consists of a traditional arcade onto which a continuous bleacher stair allows access.

Four concrete stairways connect the building's two levels: two at the building extremes, and two flanking the entrance hall at the building's center. Stairway steps are covered with original white, native tiles, which have been worn out by prolonged use.

The building still displays original black and white checkered native tiles. The building has been almost unaltered with the exception of alterations to the exterior windows, which were changed from the two leaf wooden shutters.

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Education

Period of Significance

1924
1924-1940's

Significant Dates

1924

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

P.R. Dept. of the Interior Staff

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Gautier Benítez High School is significant both for its Architecture as well as for its function: the first public High School of the area.

Architecturally it exemplifies the transformation of Puerto Rico's traditional architectural values, vocabulary and scale due to U.S. stylistic heritage imported to the island after the 1898 change of sovereignty. In this specific case we see Jeffersonian and federal influence in the monumentality of its portico and the use of columns and a triangular pediment of such proportion.

Built in 1924 under the auspices of the US Territorial Government in Puerto Rico the Gautier Benítez School, together with Ponce High (NR-PO-04-08-82) and Central High (NR-SJ-04-08-87) helped to spread the government's public education policies of "americanization".

Until the onset of WWII, it served as regional educational center for five municipalities including Caguas. Three generations of students from the Caguas district have attended "La Gautier". Some of its most outstanding graduates include Concha Meléndez, international literary figure; various local prominent political figures like Angel O. Berríos, President of P.R. Mayors Association; scientists like Dr. José Nuñez, former president of Puerto Rico's Medical Association; and other public figures like Daniel Lugo, famous local and latin american movie, and T.V. star.

The "Escuela Gautier Benítez" is a vivid and faithful example of an early 20th century neoclassical american-style high school. It stands as a local monument to a new epoch and to self-improvement by means of education.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bunker, L. Oscar, Historia de Caguas, 1975

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

U.P.R. Rio Piedras Campus

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.3 acres

UTM References

A

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

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Gautier Benítez High School is bounded to the North by Calle Cristóbal Colón, to the South by the Department of Education offices building, to the East by Calle Rafael Cordero and to the West by Calle Gautier Benítez.

See enclosed location plan

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries are those of the urban lot occupied by the school and its garden. Traditionally associated with the property

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title José Rodríguez/Félix J. del Campo/Héctor F. Santiago

organization P.R. SHPO

date November 20, 1987

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 88000657

Date Listed: 6/15/88

Benitez, Gautier High School
Property Name

Caguas County
County

PR
State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Ally Schladt
Signature of the Keeper

6/15/88
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Period of significance is discussed as closing at the start of World War II, and therefore the date range should close at 1940 (not 1940s), and Criterion Consideration G checked for last part of 1930s.

Discussed and concurred in by Puerto Rico SHPO on June 15, 1988.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)