

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

For NPS use only

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

received **SEP 8 1987**

date entered **OCT 29 1987**

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

**1. Name**

historic Residencia Armstrong-Toro

and/or common Casa de las Cariátides

**2. Location**

street & number Calle Unión #9 \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Ponce \_\_\_ vicinity of

state Puerto Rico code 072 county Municipality of Ponce code 113

**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"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>NA</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña

street & number Antiguo Convento de los Dominicos

city, town San Juan \_\_\_ vicinity of state Puerto Rico

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registro de la Propiedad

street & number Centro Gubernamental de Ponce

city, town Ponce state Puerto Rico

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Architectural-Historical Inventory of Ponce has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date July, 1984 \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office

city, town San Juan state Puerto Rico

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Armstrong-Toro Residence is a two-storey masonry building on the west-side of Calle Unión (No. 9), directly in front of the Cathedral and Plaza of the historic urban center of Ponce. The almost-cubic proportions of the facade are articulated in three bays: 2 wider bays flanking a central, narrower entrance bay.

At the ground storey, a pink-stone plinth serves as a podium for the one-storey eclectic pilasters at the north and south extremes of the facade and for the two caryatids, which flank the main entrance and define the three bays of the facade. The central entrance arch cuts the podium and houses intricately carved hardwood doors and a stained-glass fanlight protected by decorative wrought-iron railings. Bays 1 and 3 both consist of paired arches, located above the podium and articulated in an ionic pilaster order. Each arch-window houses folding jalousie shutters.

At the upper level there are four Ionic pilasters with pedestals resting on a continuous horizontal string-course. The three openings are symmetrically arranged and equally proportioned and articulated: a simple surround with a keystone frames a wide arch, opening out to a balcony through wooden jalousie doors. Decoratively etched clear glass lights occupy the tympanum over each opening. The first and third bay balconies contain waist-high decorative cast-iron railings and the wider central balcony consists of stone balusters and rails supported by the caryatid figures of the ground floor. A full-entablature cornice and solid parapet cap the facade composition. Roman-style amphorae on the parapet, above each pilaster serve as finials for each bay division.

At the northern end of the structure, a concrete port-cochere enclosed by decorative wrought-iron railings projects from the upper level floor line, creating a side terrace for the upper floor.

The house is very simple in plan and elegant in execution. The main entrance accesses a foyer with steps leading up to the major circulation hall through wooden and stained-glass double-doors. A sweeping stairway toward the back of the house on the left side of the hall accesses the second floor, which is similar in plan to the first. All floors within the house are parkay and ceilings are of hand-painted decorative pressed metal. The floors were installed during the last restoration and the pressed-metal ceilings are all original.

As a result of the disastrous earthquakes of 1918, the structure's northern wall had fallen and was subsequently reconstructed according to the original plans. At that time the concrete-vaulted port-cochere was added. Aside from this latter addition, the Armstrong-Toro house maintains the exact architecture of the original design.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input 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 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** 1899

**Builder/Architect** Manuel Domenech

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Carlos Armstrong-Toro Residence is one of Ponce's most famous houses. This structure was designed and built by Manuel Domenech, one of the island's most distinguished architects of the late XIX and early XX centuries. Some of Domenech's designs include: the Asilo de Pobres de Mayaguez (ANR-12-02-85-1) and the Residencia Batiz (ANR-Po-09-26-86). Domenech, a public figure in Puerto Rico during the last century, built many noteworthy private residences and public buildings in San Juan, Ponce and Mayaguez.

Mr. Armstrong-Toro was one of Ponce's most distinguished citizens as well. He was one of the first bankers in Puerto Rico, founder of the Banco de Ponce and the Banco de Crédito y Ahorro Ponceño. Mr. Armstrong-Toro developed an international banking network with offices in Puerto Rico; Havana, Cuba; New York, USA; and Copenhagen, Denmark. As a result of his extensive financial relations with the Danish Government, Mr. Armstrong was conferred the high honor of the "Danabru Order" of Denmark and was named Danish Consul to Puerto Rico.

Architecturally speaking, the Armstrong-Toro Residence is significant in the history of Ponce because it is one of Domenech's most distinguished eclectic designs and probably the most well-known. Its unique caryatid-framed main entrance, its intricate ornamental details and its location upon the most prominent lot in the city of Ponce (across from the Cathedral and public plaza) have made this house a true architectural landmark in the city's traditional urban core. As a result, many houses were built during the early XX century with similar elements in a similar vocabulary, contributing to the unique historic district of Ponce.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Archivo Histórico de Ponce  
Porrata-Doria Family Archives  
Interview with Francisco Porrata Doria III, January, 1982.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Ponce, PR

Quadrangle scale 1:20,000

### UTM References

A 

1	9	7	5	2	5	4	0	1	9	9	3	1	8	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

See enclosed location map.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Félix Julián del Campo / State Historian  
Héctor F. Santiago / State Architectural Historian

organization P.R. S.H.P.O. date August, 1987

street & number Box 82, La Fortaleza telephone 809-721-3737

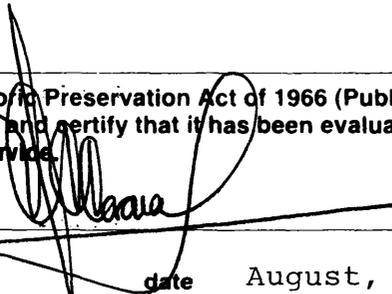
city or town San Juan state Puerto Rico

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

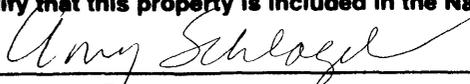
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date August, 1987

### For NPS use only

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



date 10/24/87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

OCT 26 1987

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Residencia Armstrong-Toro, Calle Unión #9  
Ponce, Puerto Rico

