

PH0670090

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAY 4 1977  
DATE ENTERED NOV 18 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC \*\*  
El Capitolio de Puerto Rico

AND/OR COMMON  
same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Avenida Ponce de Leon and Avenida Muñoz Rivera  
CITY, TOWN San Juan  
STATE Puerto Rico

VICINITY OF  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
COUNTY CODE

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 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 checked="" 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
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

STREET & NUMBER Fortaleza

CITY, TOWN San Juan STATE Puerto Rico

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Registro de Propriedad

STREET & NUMBER Municipio de San Juan

CITY, TOWN San Juan STATE Puerto Rico

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Inventario de Monumentos de Puerto Rico

DATE 1977  
\_FEDERAL  STATE \_COUNTY \_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña

CITY, TOWN San Juan STATE Puerto Rico

# DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" 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 structure is one of the largest in Puerto Rico, covering over an acre of land. It is in the Beauz Arts style popular at the turn of the twentieth century, thus adopting neoclassical elements, yet it is not as 'pure' an example of revival when compared to certain other similar buildings on the island, mostly due to some of the eclectic ornamentation particularly on the exterior: the cornices have an 'arabesque' design which tends to diminish the austerity and clean lines usually linked to such design.

From the exterior the 3-story building presents an imposing array of corinthian and <sup>corin</sup> ~~doric~~ order columns. The corinthian columns are featured on both the south and north entrances as porticoes. The plan is rectangular except for the 2 porticoes which extend slightly, and the east and west sides are flanked by terraces with balustrades and urns.

The dome on pendentives is topped by a small 'lantern' tower. The building is of concrete and steel with a marble exterior facing. Interior materials include marble, plaster, mosaic. The entire building makes much use of marble, especially for floors, stairs, and balustrades.

Seven 'symbolic' arched doorways lead to the interior. These represent the original seven senatorial districts (prior to the current 8 and the status of the Commonwealth).

Entering the building and at the centre of the ground floor there is a large urn containing the Constitution of the Commonwealth. Along the sides of the stairway leading to the second floor there are murals. Columns of black veined marble frame the stairs. The plaster ceilings are in relief with polygonal and square ornament. The marble floors throughout have polychrome decorative motifs. The second floor which contains the the two legislative assembly halls also has as its distinguishing characteristic numerous columns. The meeting halls are columned with the semi-circular arrangement of seating for the senate and the representatives.

Directly under the dome and supporting the entablature are 16 pink marble columns. The pendentives are also decorated with panels and coffers of plaster. The semi-circular windows are framed in bronze. The dome has framing supporting it from the exterior as well as the interior. Between the vaults, covering the areas reaching to the columns, are four mosaic allegoric paintings decorate the pendentives. The mosaic work was done by an Italian firm, while the paintings were designed by renowned Puerto Rican artists:

Additional structures have been built to accommodate offices; these are not in an integrated style yet their scale does not interfere with the integrity of the Capitol. The only obvious intrusion or alteration are the modernizations, such as the addition of air conditioning equipment to the windows. The lower level is occupied by offices. Throughout the building are reliefs depicting historic events or ceremonies.

# 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

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SPECIFIC DATES	1925-29	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Rafael Carmoega
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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The idea for the project to build a Capitol for Puerto Rico originated with Luis Muñoz Rivera, an outstanding political leader and renowned patriot. At one time he served as Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico, and he was the father of Luis Muñoz Marín the creator of the Commonwealth concept.

AS of 1907 steps were taken to fund such a project and some designs were even contemplated for the building by the Office of Public Works. The project for the erection of a Capitol achieved prime importance for the island, yet it took a number of years to be realized, until the inauguration in February of 1929, which was also the occasion for the first meeting of the Legislative Assembly. Rafael Carmoega, was a Puerto Rican architect educated at Cornell and recently employed by Public Works. He was assigned to design the building with the specific instruction that it be simple yet monumental to reflect its character and function. As a result, the Capitol is another example of neo-classical revival adopted for the use of Government buildings with the influence of the Roman Pantheon as the central element and the addition of the usual details such as columns and balustrades. It is also quite influenced by the design of the US Capitol. The dome was completed in 1961.

Numerous Puerto Rican painters were also invited to collaborate in the design of the interior paintings and mosaics. Among them were Rafael Rios Rey, Jose Oliver, Jorge Rechani and Rafael Tufiño, renowned for their imagery of the island.

# MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Directorio, Camara de Representantes, 1973-76, Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico  
 March 1976  
 Diccionario Historico Comentado Bibliografico de Puerto Rico, A. Hostos,  
 Accademia Puertorriqueña de la Historia, 1976

## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.4 acres approx.

UTM REFERENCES

N. lat. 18°28' 8" W. long. 66°6' 10" <sup>23</sup>

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	D	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

South

The property is bounded on the ~~North~~ <sup>South</sup> by Avenida Ponce de Leon and the ~~South~~ <sup>South</sup> north by Avenida Muñoz Rivera, on the east by Calle Pelayo, and on the north by Edificio Casa de España.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

A. Tarr consulting preservation architect

ORGANIZATION

Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña

DATE

3/1977

STREET & NUMBER

Plaza San Jose

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

San Juan

STATE

Puerto Rico

## STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

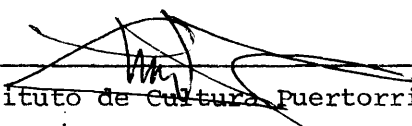
NATIONAL

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



20-111-77

TITLE

Executive Director, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Robert B. Rettig

DATE

11/18/77

ATTEST:

Charles A. Murray

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11-18-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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RECEIVED	SEP 30, 1977
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CONTINUATION SHEET Capitolio, S. Juan MEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Puerto Rico, since its discovery by Columbus and its subsequent colonial status under the Spanish Crown and the United States, has had a "crisis of identity". There have been sporadic yet unsuccessful attempts at independence. Never independent, however, the island nurtures its 'patriots and intelligentsia': Luis Munoz Rivera and later Munoz Marin have played major roles in elevating the status of island leaders and increase leadership in the context of Puerto Rico's political relationship with the the United States.

The Capitol is thus a powerful symbol of self-government, with more emotionally packed significance than a State Capitol.

Architecturally, it is one of the major structures to be built on the island in the 1920's during a boom of neoclassical civic monumental construction.