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Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

CITY, TOWN

San Juan

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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STATE Puerto Rico

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6 REPRESEN	ITATION IN EXIST	ING SURVEYS		
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DATE 1977		FEDERAL X	STATECOUNTYLOCA	L
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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 Beaux 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 ecclectic ornamentation particularly on the exterior: the cornices have an 'arabesque' design which tends to dimitish the austerity and clean lines usually linked to such design.

From the exterior the 3-story building presents an imposing array of corinthian and 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, andbalustrades.

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 polumns; ... 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	AF	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	XARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	_SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
<u>X</u> 1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY INVENTION	X POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	OTHER (SPECIFY)
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SPECIFIC DATES

1925-29

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Rafael Carmoega

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 Rapresentantes, 1973-76, Estado L^Ibre Asociado de Puerto Rico March 1976

Diccionario Historico Comentado Bibliografico de Puerto Rico, A. Hostos, Accademia Puertorriqueña de la Historia, 1976

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Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CONTINUATION SHEET Capitolio, S. Juamem 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.