

**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 Inmaculada Concepción of Vega Alta

and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number Town Plaza

not for publication

city, town Vega Alta

vicinity of

state Puerto Rico

code 72

county Arecibo

code 1010

**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                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                   | <b>Accessible</b>                                     | <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           |
|   | N/A   | <input type="checkbox"/> no                           | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation       |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other:               |

**4. Owner of Property**

name Catholic Church, Diocese of Arecibo

street & number Box 616

city, town Arecibo

vicinity of

state Puerto Rico 00612

**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**

Inventory of the Historic Churches  
title 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

## 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 parish church Inmaculada Concepción of Vega Alta is located on the town plaza, its entrance facing west. The building originally consisted of a nave and two aisles; unfortunately the round columns that divided the space were eliminated in 1960 and the flat wooden roof was replaced with a concrete roof. A hung ceiling with false wood beams covers the steel structure that supports the concrete roof. There were originally four bays plus the apse/sacristies. The first bay includes the vestibule and concrete stairs leading up to the choir loft on the right side. The concrete choir loft is new. It is supported by two of the original round columns, from which the beginnings of the arches that were destroyed can be observed. The square apse is covered by a brick dome. The principal construction material of the church is brick masonry. The floors are covered with terrazo.

A repair project, drawn up by Don José Hernández Costa in 1889 describes the church as having the same exterior appearance as it has today. The facade is austere and simple. Two pilasters rise uninterrupted up to the cornice and divide the facade into three sections, two of them without openings. The main entrance consists of a large rectangular doorway topped by a semicircular arch. An elegant espadaña, or bell gable, with very soft, curved lines crowns the facade and integrates perfectly with the rest of the building. The side facades are simple: a single door flanked by two pilasters supporting a flat arched cornice and three windows.

The church retains most of its exterior original architectural features. The most serious alteration the building has suffered has been the destruction of the interior arcades. Aside from this, another alteration has been the addition of a parish house attached to the rear facade of the church.

# 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 checked="" 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/<br>humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering                   | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement        | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900–                | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry                      | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)         |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention                     |   |  |

**Specific dates** 1831, 1889      **Builder/Architect** José Hernández Costa (1889 project)

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The church of Inmaculada Concepción of Vega Alta has historical and architectural significance. The town of Vega Alta was founded in 1775. In 1831 historical reference is made to an already existing church. It was repaired in various occasions, in 1847 and 1851. In 1889, still another repair project was drawn up by Don José Hernández Costa. Although the church has lost much of its original interior, the exterior has been maintained with very few alterations since 1889. Its location within the town plaza permits an uninterrupted view of the building. As is traditional in Puerto Rico, the plaza, church and city hall have always been the center of town life. The historic relationship between these three urban elements has been maintained in Vega Alta, and is a living example of the town planning so characteristic of the Spanish colonial period in Puerto Rico. The Vega Alta church still retains its brick masonry walls, apse and brick dome, and could eventually be restored to its original appearance.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Marvel, Thomas S. and Maria Luisa Moreno, Architecture of Parish Churches in Puerto Rico, Editorial Universitaria, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, unpublished.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2019 sq.mts.

Quadrangle name Vega Alta, PR

Quadrangle scale 1:20,000

### UTM References

A 

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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The church is bounded on the north by Muñoz Rivera St., on the west by the town plaza, on the south by Georgetti St. and on the east by Colón St.

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

N/A

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marisa Gómez, Arch. and Ester Cardona, Arch.

organization Investigaciones Bonaire, Inc.

date March 1984

street & number Tetuan 103

telephone (809) 724-4997

city or town Old 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

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

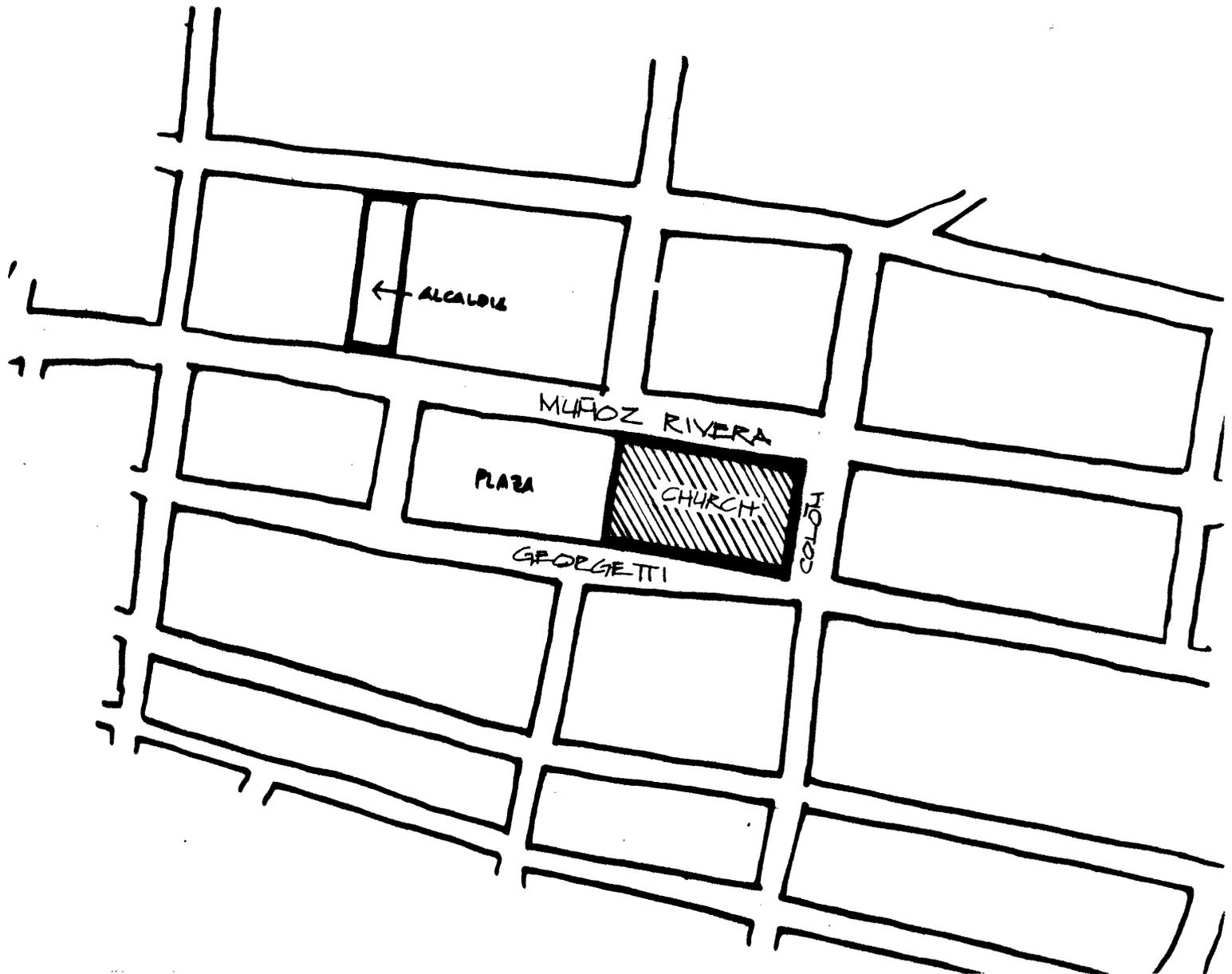
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



town: VEGA ALTA

scale: 1:2000



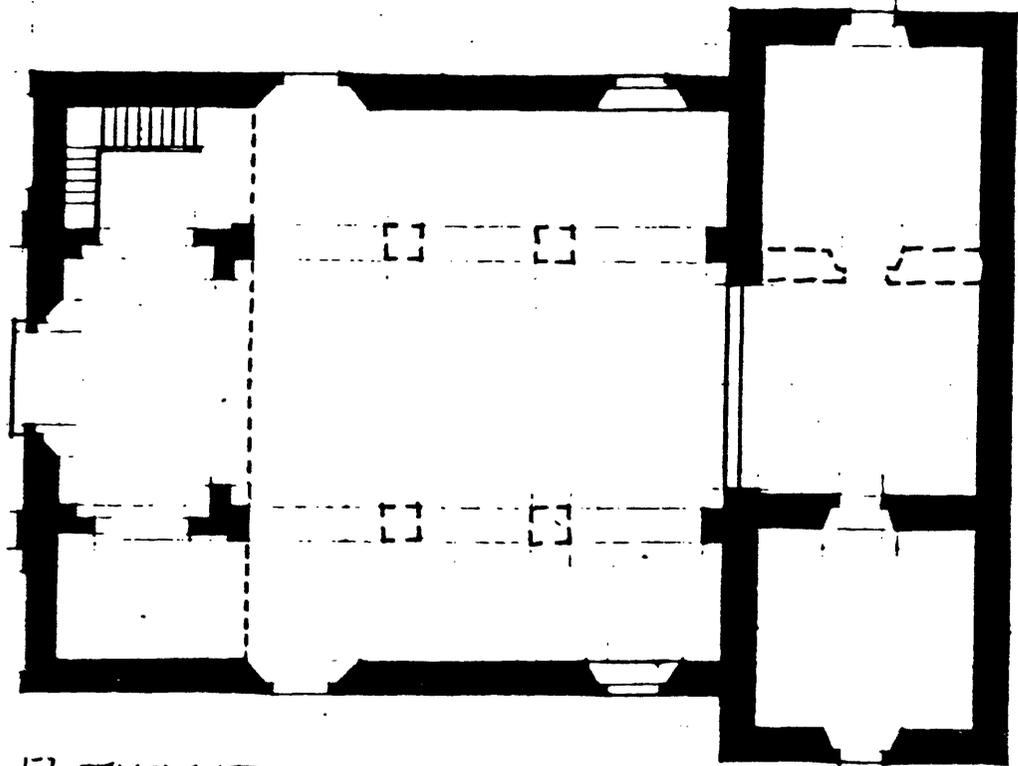
north

INVESTIGACIONES BONAIRE INC.

Calle de Tetuan nº 103. Viejo San Juan, Puerto Rico Tel. (809) 721-1107



SCALE 1:200



☐ DEMOLISHED

Church Inmaculada Concepción of Vega Alta

- Diagram prepared by Arch. Thomas S. Marvel for the book Architecture of Parish Churches in Puerto Rico, unpublished. Revised by on-site inspection by Investigaciones Bonaire, Inc.