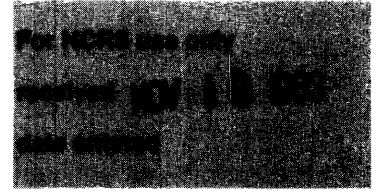


United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# 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 Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes de San Miguel de Hato Grande

and/or common Las Mercedes

## 2. Location

street & number Colón Street, ~~in front of public plaza~~ \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town San Lorenzo \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district N/A

state Puerto Rico code 72 county Humacao code 0940

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Catholic Church of Puerto Rico, Caguas Archdiocese

street & number \_\_\_\_\_

city, town Caguas \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Puerto Rico 00625

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Caguas Judicial Center, Second Floor

street & number \_\_\_\_\_

city, town Caguas \_\_\_\_\_ state Puerto Rico

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventario de Monumentos Históricos has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes  no

date 1977 \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Institute of Puerto Rican Culture

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 basic plan of the church is a rectangular building, one story in height, measuring 24.5 meters in length by 11.80 meters wide, with a bell tower attached at the front facade measuring 4.6 meters in length by 5.4 meters wide, and the main altar and sacristy volume attached at the end of the church measuring 6.4 meters wide by 16.4 meters in length (see enclosure #1). It sits at one end of the San Lorenzo public plaza on a northeast-northwest axis.

The structure dates back to the eighteenth century (1737) when it started as an "ermita" (small chapel). Its main structural elements consisted of thick brick, stone and masonry walls with "ausubo" wood columns supporting a hipped clay tiled roof on wood beams. In 1814, the hipped tiled roof was replaced by a flat mortar roof and the simple "ausubo" wooden posts supporting it were replaced by thick piers with roman arches. Afterwards, the main altar roof was replaced by a thick barrel vault with a lantern at center. In 1875, a bell tower was added at the front. In 1887 it was restored as it exists today; a public clock was added at the west facade of the bell tower, new openings were created for windows on the front facade and lateral naves, the roof structure was replaced by a new one due to the deteriorated conditions of the wood beams.

The body of the church consists basically of three volumes: the bell tower volume, the central nave volume that contains the principal and lateral naves, and the attached volumes of the sacristy. Upon approaching the church, we encounter a portico bell tower, reminiscent of the nartex of the primitive christian basilicas, that is attached to the main body of the church. This portico area is a prolongation of the spaces it crosses; that is, the atrium and central nave. Its facade has been strengthened visually by its depth and articulation of receded planes with decorative elements. The central nave volume consists of five roman arches with thick piers at each side of the nave opening up to the lateral naves. The third volume consists of a thick barrel vaulted space, on center to the central nave, dedicated to the main altar, and two flat roof lateral spaces on each side of the main altar used as sacristy.

The top part of the bell tower is formed by an octagonal shaped area with roman arches incorporating in them the bell and public clock. This area has a continuous cornice that gives an ending to the tower that is crowned by a vaulted roof with a cross as its center.

The church has been kept in fair condition with minor alterations since the 1887 restoration.

## 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 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/ humanitarian
<input checked="" 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				

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<b>Specific dates</b>	1737, 1887	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	
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### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The "Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes de San Miguel de Hato Grande" (Our Lady of Mercy) church is an example of neoclassical architecture in Puerto Rico. This style developed in Puerto Rico during the eighteenth century, under the reign of Elizabeth II (1837-1868). The name of the church (Las Mercedes) was given in honor of the wife of Don Miguel Muñoz de Ornica (founder of the town of San Lorenzo), Doña Mercedes Delgado Manso who was a descendant of Don Sebastián Delgado Manso, founder of the town, now city, of Caguas.

The history of the church dates back to the eighteenth century (1737). Documents found in Caguas City Hall confirm that a marriage was carried out in that year. The church, then known as the "Antigua Ermita del Hato" (a small chapel) was probably of an earlier date, going back to the time when San Lorenzo was a small village. It was a simple chapel built of brick, stone and masonry walls, hipped roof covered with tiles supported with "ausubo" wood beams and posts. It resembled the style of Porta Coeli Chapel located in San Germán, Puerto Rico. Records show that in 1811, Bishop Arizmendi visited the chapel. In 1812, the village of San Lorenzo was formally proclaimed a town and during that same year, the chapel was proclaimed a church.

In 1814, Governor Miguel de la Torre, ordered the demolition of the hipped tiled roof to be substituted for a flat roof; this project was carried out that same year. In 1860, the mayor of San Lorenzo temporarily closed the church due to its deteriorated condition in order to prevent an accident. Part of the roof at the central nave caved in and some wood beams were found to be dangerously rotten. A nearby wooden house was rehabilitated in order to continue the religious practices of the community. A project for the restoration of the church, including the construction of two towers, one for the bell and the other for the installation of a public clock, was submitted in 1869 by the counselors of "Hato Grande": Manuel Soto España, Francisco Santa-Ana, Sebastián Mont, Pedro Machín, Narciso Gran, José Buxó, Cruz Mangual and Rafael Valle for an estimated five thousand five hundred eighty one (5,581) "pesos", but it was turned down by the Provincial Commission. On March 26, 1870, the Department of Public Works of Puerto Rico carried out a project to repair the church. This proposal included the construction of a bell and clock tower which was submitted by the Municipal Corporation and approved by Antonio Alonso Herrero. The tower was finished in 1876.

On January 3, 1887, the Municipal Corporation submitted a project for the restoration of the church that carried out some details of the 1869 project. This project was approved on March 3, 1887 by State Architect Don Pedro Cobreros. The project was carried out during that year and the church is essentially the same today.

The facade of the church dates from the restoration of the 1887 project; the general structure that contains the central nave, lateral naves and sacristy dates back to the eighteenth century when the church started out as a small chapel or "ermita" (1737). It is an example of neo-classical provincial style because of the simplicity and clarity of its volume and proportions. The structure consists basically three volumes; the portico

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

General Archives of Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico  
 San Lorenzo Municipality Archives, San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico  
 Caguas Municipality Archives, Caguas, Puerto Rico

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 949.94 sq. mts.

Quadrangle name Juncos

Quadrangle scale 1:20,000

UMT References 18°11'32" Latitude North  
65°57'40" Longitude West

A 

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 Zone Easting Northing

B 

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 Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The property is bounded to the northwest by the San Lorenzo Public Plaza, to the southeast by Muñoz Rivera Ave., to the southwest by Colón Street and to the northeast by a public school. A rectangular lot 32.21mts. x 29.31 mts.

— See enclosed location plan; nominated property in red.

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 Armando Morales Parés- architect

organization State Historic Preservation Office

date October 31, 1983

street & number La Fortaleza

telephone (809)721-7000, ext.2232, 2241

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Armando Morales Parés*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date October 31, 1983

For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

date 12/8/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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bell tower volume, characterized by its verticality; the central volume that contains the main and lateral naves; and the volumes of the sacristy. The architectural elements utilized to structure the facade include all of the characteristics of the neo-classical provincial style repertoire, that is, from the dovel of the roman arch up to the pilasters that serve as an integral element in the height of the structure, strengthening visually with lineal peculiarity. The pilasters are crowned by volumetric curvilinear pinnacles very popular in the architecture of San Juan in the eighteenth century (1789). The lateral naves are exposed, but enclosed between the pilasters that act as a frame to the volume, strengthened by a continual cornice and ledge that unifies and integrates the structure as a whole.

The church is in fair condition and has suffered only minor alterations throughout the years.