

**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 San Sebastián Mártir of San Sebastián

and/or common same

**2. Location**

street & number Severo Arana St., Town Plaza not for publication

city, town San Sebastián vicinity of

state Puerto Rico code 72 county Aguadilla code 0950

**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 type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>n/a</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Catholic Church, Diocese of Mayaguez

street & number Box 2272

city, town Mayaguez vicinity of state Puerto Rico 00708

**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**

title Inventory of the Historic Churches 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

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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 <input type="checkbox"/> date
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The San Sebastián Mártir Church sits in front of the town plaza, oriented on an East-West axis, its entrance facing West. The church is surrounded by streets on three of its sides and by private structures on its east side. It is separated from its immediate surroundings by a concrete and iron grillwork fence enclosing a paved cement area which is used for parking purposes.

The church was designed by State Architect Don Pedro Cobreros and was built between 1895 and 1897. The plan follows the basilica prototype of two aisles and a nave. It is covered with a flat concrete roof. The original roof was probably made of wood beams and layers of brick. The apse is covered with a brick dome. The plan consists of six bays plus the apse/sacristies. Simple arcades resting on round columns divide the aisles from the main nave. The side aisles are lower than the central nave, allowing space for a clerestory consisting of four round openings on each side, that give light to the interior space. At the entrance there is a concrete choir loft over the vestibule.

The floors are covered with the original grey and white marble tiles. The doors and windows are modern, made of glass and metal, with arches of colored plexi-glass.

The facade is typical of Cobreros' style and is very similar to that of San Mateo church in Santurce, which was also designed by this architect. The facade is subdivided in three sections, vertically as well as horizontally, by simple moldings of low relief. Two towers flank the central body which includes a large arched entrance framed with pilasters and a simple molding. Above the doorway, a round opening crowns the facade. The towers, divided into three levels (Westwork arrangement), have simple arched windows. The upper section of the tower is decorated with dentils and a cornice. The side facades have an arched doorway and two arched windows each. The dome has structural ribs which can be seen from the exterior.

The church conserves most of its original elements, except the roof and choir loft, and is in good structural condition. There are other elements of superficial nature like the doors, windows, fluorescent lights and fans which are not in accordance with the sober style of the church. Apart from these, the most noticeable alteration to the church has been the addition of a parish house to the north and rear sides of the building.

# 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/
<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** 1897 **Builder/Architect** Don Pedro Cobreros, State Architect

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

The San Sebastián Mártir church is of historical and architectural significance. It is one of a group of five churches designed between 1890 and 1896 by State Architect Don Pedro Cobreros who created an austere, yet noble style, which played an important role in the history of religious architecture in Puerto Rico. Construction began in 1895 using the facade foundations, the side walls and the dome over the apse of an earlier original church and was completed in 1897. Despite the addition of a parish house to the rear and north sides and the reconstruction of the original roof and choir loft in concrete, the building retains most of its original construction and design elements. The traditional relationship of Town Plaza, city hall and church is maintained, in accordance with Spanish Crown ordinances at the time the town was founded, providing a living example of Spanish town planning practices.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Marvel, Thomas S. and Maria Luisa Moreno, Architecture of Parish Churches in Puerto Rico, Editorial Unversitaria, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, unpublished.  
Historic Plans of 1896, General Archives of Puerto Rico, Fondo: Obras Públicas, Serie: Edificios Religiosos, Caja:99, Legajo:64.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2039 sq. mts.

Quadrangle name San Sebastián, P.R.

Quadrangle scale 1:20,000

UTM References Latitude 18° 20' 19" North, Longitude 66° 59' 28" 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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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The church is bounded on the north by Padre Feliciano St., on the west by Severo Arana St. and the Town Plaza, on the south by Muñoz Rivera St. and on the east by private properties (see enclosed location plan).

### 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 Marisa Gómez, Arch. and Ester Cardona, Arch.

organization Investigaciones Bonaire, Inc.

date May 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

*Adelmo Pabón de Regent*

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

*See Continuation Sheet for Listing*

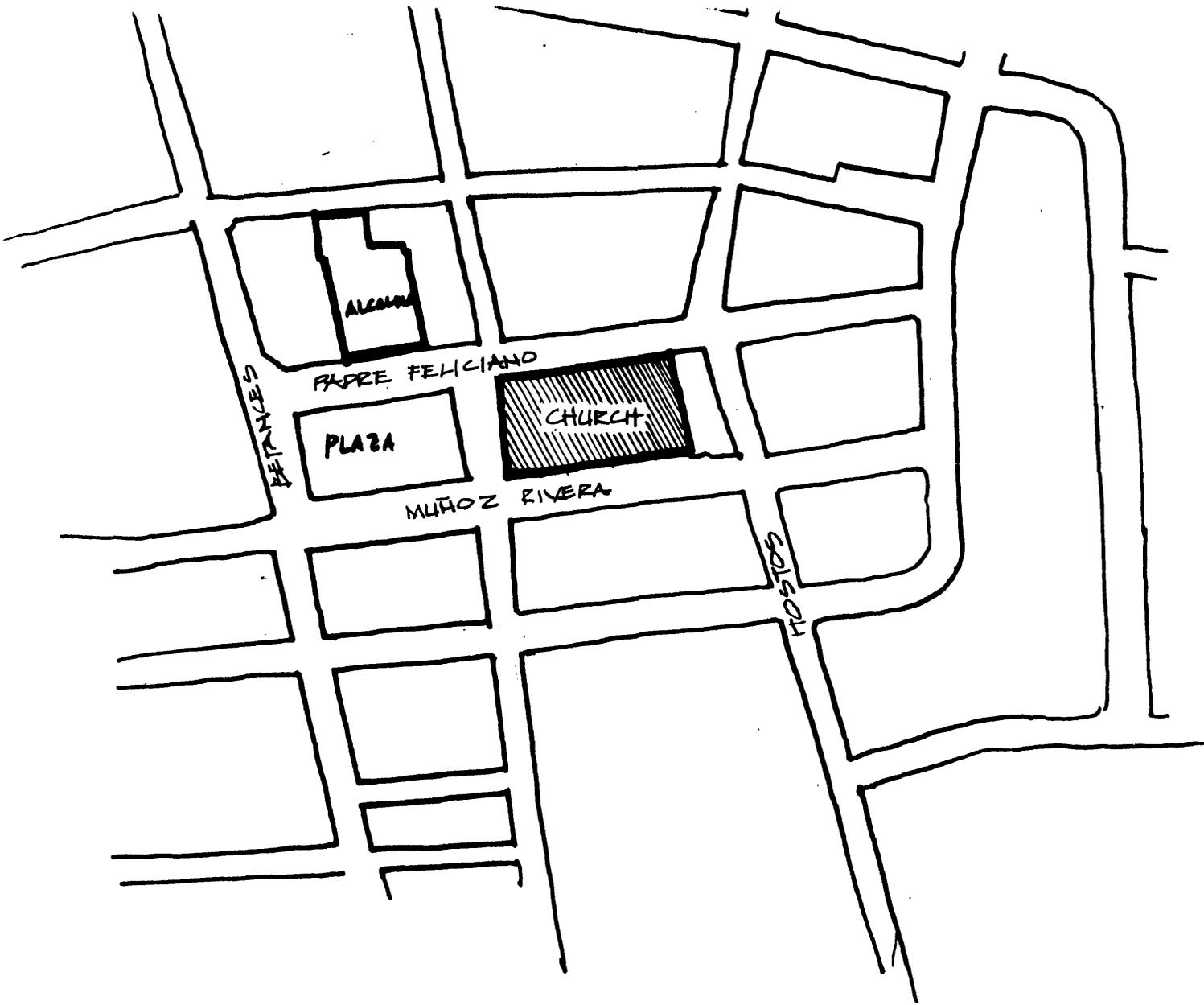
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



town: **SAN SEBASTIÁN** scale: 1:2000



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