

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**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

The Gonzalez-Alvarez House

AND/OR COMMON

The Oldest House, The Gonzalez-Alvarez House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

271 Charlotte Street

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

St. Augustine

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

004

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Florida

CODE

12

COUNTY

St. John's

CODE

109

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

__DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

__STRUCTURE

__SITE

__OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

__PUBLIC

PRIVATE

__BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

__IN PROCESS

__BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

__UNOCCUPIED

__WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

__YES: UNRESTRICTED

__NO

PRESENT USE

__AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

__COMMERCIAL

__PARK

__EDUCATIONAL

__PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__ENTERTAINMENT

__RELIGIOUS

__GOVERNMENT

__SCIENTIFIC

__INDUSTRIAL

__TRANSPORTATION

__MILITARY

__OTHER.

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

The Saint Augustine Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

271 Charlotte Street

CITY, TOWN

Saint Augustine

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Florida

32084

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Clerk of the Circuit Court

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Drawer 299

CITY, TOWN

St. Augustine

STATE

Florida

32084

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1961, 1962

FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

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 Gonzalez-Alvarez House was erected sometime between 1703 and 1727, possibly in 1723, on the occasion of Tomas Gonzalez Hernandez's marriage. Documentary evidence indicates that the house was the home of Gonzalez a fusilier and artilleryman of The St. Augustine garrison, in 1727. When Spain ceded Florida to England in 1763, Gonzalez and his family left for Cuba. The house then stood vacant until 1775, when it was purchased by Major Joseph Peavett, a wealthy Englishman, who enlarged and improved the structure between 1775 and his death in 1786. Geronimo Alvarez, a native of Spain who had come to St. Augustine in 1784, acquired the house in 1790, enlarged it, and the property remained in the possession of his family until 1882. The Gonzalez-Alvarez House then passed through the hands of four owners.

In 1918 the St. Augustine Historical Society purchased the Gonzalez-Alvarez House and in 1959-60, after extensive archeological, architectural, and historical research, carefully restored the structure to its late 18th-century appearance.

As originally constructed, this was a one-story rectangular-shaped stone dwelling with thick coquina walls that were lime plastered inside and out and whitewashed. Covered by a wood shingle gabled roof, the house contained two large rooms arranged end to end. There were no fireplaces and the floors were composed of tabby (a mixture of oyster shell or coquina chippings and lime). The large windows, without glass, were covered by close gratings of wood called rejas and were protected on the inside by double-leaf solid shutters.

In the period 1775-1786, Major Peavett doubled the size of the structure by adding the second story of frame construction with clapboard siding. The roof was hipped at the west end and a chimney and fireplace was introduced at the northeast (rear) corner. The interior shutters and rejas were removed and replaced by double hung, glazed windows with exterior solid shutters.

The next owner, Alvarez, brought the house to its final 18th-century form by adding a two-story tier of six rooms to north or rear side of the dwelling. This addition was constructed entirely of coquina; the wood shingle gable roof was extended over the new section and also hipped at the west end. At the east end was added a covered two story frame porch which rested on a one-story, one-room, coquina-walled addition. The new rooms on the rear included: on the first floor, a chapel at the west end, a loggia in the center, and a pantry at the east end. Over these, on the second floor, were three new bedrooms. No further alterations were made to the structure until 1886, when a tower was added to the northeast rear corner and a fireplace and chimney installed at the west end; the final changes were made in 1900, when a two-story addition was attached to the west end.

Condition

In the 1959-1960 restoration, the 1886 tower was demolished and the missing northeast corner reconstructed on the original foundations that were found to be still in place. The work at this corner also required reconstruction of the roof framing, the tabby floor at ground level, and the joists and flooring for the second floor. At the west

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 checked="" 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 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 c. 1703-1727

BUILDER/ARCHITECT anonymous

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Probably constructed about 1723 and reaching its present form by 1790, the Gonzalez-Alvarez House is an excellent restored example of an organic growth house that reflects both Spanish and English architectural influences. In its final form the Gonzalez-Alvarez House is illustrative of a colonial town house built on the "St. Augustine" plan.¹ The "St. Augustine" type of dwelling was developed by the Spanish between 1703 and 1763 to meet the special local climatic needs of Florida. Accepted by the English, the plan was further refined in the period 1763-1783.

The basic "St. Augustine" residence was a simple rectangular structure of two to four rooms, with a loggia or a porch, and often a street balcony. The plan was used in two forms. The more popular one had a loggia (an open-sided room) as an integral part of the plan, centered on the side. The other version of the plan, of which the Llambias House is an excellent example, substituted a sheltered porch for the loggia. In both cases, the main entrance was through either the loggia or porch, which opened onto the garden in the rear. Houses constructed on the "St. Augustine" plan were usually oriented with the open areas facing south or east, so that in summer the prevailing southeast winds ventilated the large rooms and made the loggia or porches cool and pleasant. Thick masonry walls of the houses insulated against summer heat and held out the cold in the winter.

¹In the Gonzalez-Alvarez House, however, the central loggia is facing north.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Hugh Morrison, Early American Architecture (New York, 1952).
Florida-A Guide to the Southermost State (American Guide Series) (New York, 1939).
 Arnold Nicholson, American Houses in History (New York, 1965).
 J.T. Van Campen and Others, "Evolution of the Oldest House," in Notes in Anthropology,
 Vol. 7 (1962) of Florida State University, Tallahassee, 1962.
 Albert Manucy, The Houses of St. Augustine (Notes on the Architecture from 1565 to 1821)
 (St. Augustine, Fla., 1962).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 7	4 7, 0 0 6, 0	3, 3 0, 6 2, 3, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Gonzalez-Alvarez House is in the center of the south side of the block of St. Francis Street between Marine and Charlotte Streets. It is part of a complex of buildings now owned by The Saint Augustine Historical Society, whose address is 271 Charlotte Street. While the sympathetic stylistic integration of a number of old Spanish, and new Spanish-colonial buildings serves to preserve the historic atmosphere of the early eighteenth century Gonzalez-Alvarez House, it is of course only the architectural merit (cont'd)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Boundary information by James Dillon, NPS,
 Other data from a special report by Charles Snell, NPS, 1969

ORGANIZATION

National Historic Landmarks

DATE April 1975

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW

TELEPHONE

STATE

DATE

STATE

DATE

STATE

DATE

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

DATE

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

11/24/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

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CONTINUATION SHEET The Gonzalez-
Alvarez House ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

end, the demolition of the 1900 apartment addition revealed the original west hip of the roof. The rafters were still in place, with a few hand-split shingles attached. The entire roof was resingled with fire-resistant, hand-split cedar shingles, in replacement of existing modern surfacing. Taking down the west apartment and the 1886 chimney also exposed original painted weather boards. Examination of the successive coats of paint indicated that a low-key green was the original color, and this hue was used in the restoration. An upstairs doorway, which gave access to the apartment, was returned to its original function as a window.

All openings in the house required attention. Windows and doors were repaired or reconstructed as necessary. Most woodwork was in poor condition. Removal of old work often brought forth significant evidence, and in some instances the evidence made it possible to restore openings that had been modified in recent times. On the east end, the posts and rails of the second floor porch were rebuilt.

Inside the house, one concession was made to visitor safety and convenience. According to evidence in the southeast corner of the main room, there had been an extremely cramped and narrow stairway. For public use in a house museum, a more utilitarian structure was substituted for the missing original stairway.

The restored house is maintained in excellent condition and is open to visitors; the structure is furnished with late 18th century period pieces.

Addendum:

Description of the three other buildings in the complex.

Webb Memorial Building was constructed in 1937. It is a two story build in the St. Augustine style with a hip roof and made of concrete stone covered with plaster. It is used as a museum to illustrate the history of St. Augustine.

Tovar House was constructed in the pre 1763 period. It is a two story building of coquina stone in the St. Augustine style. It is also used as a museum.

David Ross Dunham Memorial Library was constructed in 1964 in the St. Augustine style. It is a two story building of concrete block covered with plaster.

These buildings help preserve the historic atmosphere of the Gonzalez-Alvarez house.

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The Gonzalez-
CONTINUATION SHEET Alvarez House ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

of that building which contributes to the national significance of the landmark. Happily, we are able to point to very early maps of Saint Augustine to understand the historical boundary of the property.

From the city plan of St. Augustine, by Mariano de la Rocque, 25th April, 1788, with the land parcels shown and numbered, we can see that parcel 251 consisted of the house, three other buildings, and land as far east as Marine Street.

Approximating the eighteenth century lines then, the boundary of this landmark extends from the Northwest corner of Marine and Saint Francis Streets, west along the North curb of St. Francis St., to a point just West of the Gonzalez-Alvarez House, thence north, along a line parallel to Marine Street, to a point just North of the more northerly of two 1788 buildings on the lot. From there, the line turns East directly to a point on the West curb of Marine Street, just south of the building shown there on lot 252. From that point, the line returns to the starting point, along the West curbline of Marine Street.

The site is approximately 2 acres, and is indicated in red pencil on the accompanying U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute series map, St. Augustine Quad, as well as on a photocopy of the pertinent section of the Mariano de la Rocque map.