

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 13 1987

date entered MAY 14 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name** 19th Century Civil Architecture in Ponce - Thematic Nomination

historic Antigua Cuartel Militar Español de Ponce (Spanish Military Headquarters in Ponce)

and or common "El Castillo"

**2. Location**

street & number Calle Castillo Final N/A not for publication

city, town Ponce \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of Ponce

state Puerto Rico code 072 county Ponce code 0760

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Jail

**4. Owner of Property**

name Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Department of Corrections

street & number Ed. Plaza Barbosa 306 Ave. Barbosa

city, town Hato Rey \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of Puerto Rico state Puerto Rico

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds - Ponce

street & number Ponce Government Center

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

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Historic Architectural Survey of Ponce has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date July, 1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records SHPO

city, town San Juan \_\_\_\_\_ state Puerto Rico

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

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

El Castillo is perhaps the less ornamented example of 19th century Civil Architecture in the city of Ponce. The building consists of a two level structure, square in plan with an interior courtyard. It is built in brick and stone masonry; and timber beams and brick layers for roofs and floors.

Open arched galleries surround the interior courtyard in both levels from which the spaces, now used as jail barracks, are organized.

A repetition of windows over the facade's plane without any ornament gives the building an austere appearance, typical of military architecture developed during the Spanish period in Puerto Rico. A special feature that the building still preserves are the lead gutters in the form of cannons. Alterations to the structure include the use of metal louvered windows instead of the wood louvers originally used and the addition of iron bars over interior openings. (The exterior bars were part of the original design). Other alterations are minimal and are related to the structure's maintenance, such as repavement of the interior courtyard and the installation of modern sanitary facilities.

This building's sober architecture clearly responds to its intended use as the center of Spain's military power in Ponce.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ 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** c. 1894 **Builder/Architect** Spain Royal Corps of Engineers

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

"El Castillo", as this building is commonly known, was built in 1894 by the Spain Royal Corps of Engineers as general headquarters for the Spanish military garrison stationed in Ponce. Since 1898, when Puerto Rico became a possession of the U.S.A., this structure has served various purposes, first as courthouse and later as district jail house, (present use).

The Old Military Headquarters is one of the largest Neoclassic Isabelino civil architecture structures built in the city of Ponce during the 19th century. It may lack many of the traditional facade ornaments associated with the style but this, in fact, increases the property's architectural significance making it an example of the use of Neoclassic Isabelino style for military purposes. The "Castillo's" sober exteriors clearly depict the structure's use; massive and sober, it undoubtedly conveyed military power.

Changes in its use throughout this century did not affect much of the building's original structural system.

This building played an active role in the enforcement of Spanish laws and military government in Ponce as general headquarters for the southern area of Puerto Rico.

The Ponce Spanish garrison played an important role in the defense of the island during the U.S.A. invasion of the island in 1898. After surrendering the city to General Milles on July 28 the Ponce troops aided by other smaller garrisons held the Asomante area preventing the US Army to invade Aibonito. They also helped the Guayama garrison in its attempt to detain US troops from taking this city.

This is the only structure directly related to these events that has been identified to date.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Coll y Toste, Cayetano - Boletín Históirco de Puerto Rico, Tip. Cantero  
Brau, Salvador, Historia de Ponce, 1913

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 2,669.43 m<sup>2</sup> (less than one acre)

Quadrangle name Ponce

Quadrangle scale 1:20000

UTM References

A 

1	9	7	5	3	1	7	0	1	9	9	3	6	1	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The property occupies an urban block bounded to the North by Pabellones street, to the South by the Charles H. Terry Athletic Park; to the East by the Portugues River; and to the West by Grand Stand Street.

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

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Félix J. del Campo, State Historian/Héctor Santiago, Assistant to State Historian

organization PRSHPO date November 15, 1986

street & number Box 82, La Fortaleza telephone (809) 721-3737

city or town San Juan state Puerto Rico

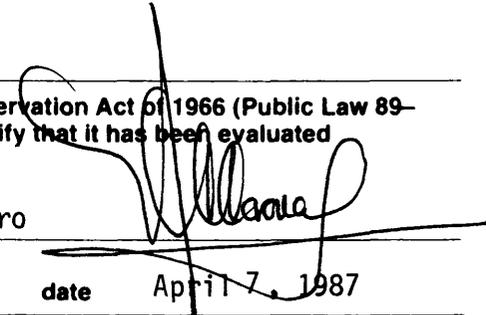
# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Mariano G. Coronas Castro

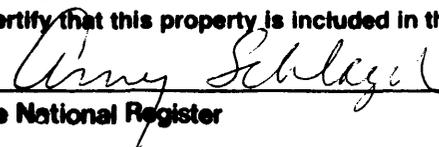


title State Historic Preservation Officer

date April 7, 1987

For NPS use only

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



date 5/14/87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration