

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name De Luxe Florida  
other names/site number De Luxe Caribe Inc

## 2. Location

street& number PR-642, KM. 11.1 not for publication  
city or town Florida  vicinity  
state Puerto Rico code PR county Florida code 054 zip code 00650

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Carlos A. Rubio Cancela

Signature of certifying official

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer

Title

Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

*Doc Eshon H. Beal* *11.14.12*

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

	Contributing	Noncontributing	
	1	0	buildings
	0	0	district
	0	0	site
	0	0	structure
	0	0	object
	1	0	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Early Prototypes for Manufacturing Plants in Puerto Rico, 1948 to 1958.

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/ Manufacturing facility

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INDUSTRY/ Manufacturing facility

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT

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**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: CONCRETE

roof: CONCRETE

other: Metal: Steel

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**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Plant number T-0472-0-58 and its addition labeled T-0472-0-66 integrate the best-known and most successful manufacturing plant of the Municipality of Florida. Plant and addition are one of three prototypical buildings at a small-sized industrial park northeast of town, alongside Road PR-642, Kilometer 11.1. The plant sits in a lot measuring 6,300 square meters and, design wise, it replicates *Prototype L*, one of several, alphabetically-labeled design options endorsed by the development corporation at that time as a means to encourage the Island’s industrialization. René Ramírez, one of Puerto Rico’s earliest and most decisively modern architects, designed the prototype. Built in steel and concrete, with an A-frame supported above concrete beams and columns, the property embodies key stylistic considerations pertaining to the Modern Movement in Architecture. Moreover, as it stands, the former *De Luxe Florida/Caribe* still incorporates all key components identifiable with the manufacturing building as originally designed and built.

**Narrative Description**

*De Luxe Florida/Caribe*, a manufacturing plant at the Municipality of Florida, Puerto Rico, operates in one of three prototypical buildings at a small-sized industrial park located northeast of town, alongside Road PR-642, Kilometer 11.1. The building dates from 1958 and was conceived as an all-purpose industrial facility, whose design preceded any specific programmatic (use) allocation (**Photo 1**). To that effect, its internal spatial organization is based on an open plan arrangement complemented by supporting, generic electrical and mechanical capabilities, useful to prospective tenants regardless of their respective trades. Plans and plant follow architectural standards established by the *Puerto Rico Industrial Development Corporation* (PRIDCO) by the late 1940’s for encouraging the Island’s industrialization through the construction of physical facilities that were to be rented to local and foreign investors. Puerto Rico’s government expected that providing financiers with “ready to go” facilities would influence their decision to establish locally. In addition, by appointing *a priori* the location of these manufacturing plants, areas preferred for social and economic development could be specifically targeted.

In PRIDCO’s official property register, *De Luxe Florida/Caribe* plant number corresponds to T-0472-0-58, although - having been expanded in 1966 through an addition attached to the building on its north side - it is also identified with a second numerical reference, T-0472-0-66. The Florida Plant

was one of over a hundred built in 1958 in Puerto Rico.<sup>1</sup> It sits in a lot of 6,300 square meters and adheres to *Prototype L*, one of several, alphabetically-labeled design options endorsed by the development corporation at that time. Differences among the diverse choices then rested primarily on: the total amount of square footage provided, ceiling height and main façade alternatives, as key distinguishing traits between one type and another. The building was first rented to *De Luxe Fashions, Inc.*, a lingerie corporation from New York; the next tenant was *International Custom Molders*, which has been there from 1983 to the present.<sup>2</sup>

One of three plants built by PRIDCO within the municipality, the property lies at half a mile from the heart of town. The site is accessed from Road PR-642, which leads east to the neighboring Municipality of Manatí. A chain link fence with barbed wire at the top surrounds the lot. A double gate (also in chain link) allows access to the site on its easternmost area, which slopes up about two feet. It is paved in concrete and used for parking and service access; it also includes an area paved with stones and grass. The main loading dock highlights the east elevation. Six feet north of it, an entrance allows access from an improvised, non-compliant ramp and a four-step stoop laid out perpendicular from the property. Along the east façade, the building's method of construction makes itself evident (**Photo 2**). An upper, reinforced concrete beam supports the roof, edged by a minute overhang. Pilaster-like columns support the beam. Wall segments in concrete masonry unit fill the space between all structural members, but these remain visible because the "filling" is narrower than the structural members (beams and columns). All elements have been cement-plastered and painted over. In general, bearing and non-bearing elements are differentiated throughout the building's facades, except at the main one, facing Road PR-642, which receives a different compositional treatment. Ventilation along the east elevation is provided by aluminum, louvered windows grouped repeatedly above a smaller, concrete beam about 5'-0" high from grade. Windows are rectangular (3'-0" x 6'-0"), but stringed in horizontal manner. Although the 1966 addition was built in adjacency to the north elevation, it projects ten feet east, away from the original 1958 plant. The addition features similar materials and construction of its earlier counterpart: concrete beams and columns, concrete masonry unit walls, and louvered jalousies, the latter laid out horizontally in groups of four.

However, color distinguishes the original plant from its addition. The latter is painted a light ochre tone; the former is in green and burnt sienna. The brown color is used to establish a wainscot all around the building, also at three independent components housed east of the *De Luxe*. The first one, south of the loading dock, houses electrical transformers. It is surrounded along three sides by an 8'-0" high, plain concrete wall. On the fourth side (facing east), the wall is interrupted and closure provided by a chain link fence with a gate. Barbed wire crowns wall, fence, and gate. A second component – north of the ramped access - is a rectangular, open shed, raised on a concrete pad. Its steel, tubular, structural elements support a wide-angled, A-frame roof itself covered with steel decking. Many elements are rusted. The area extends 24'-0" X 36'-0" and shelters today obsolete machinery and equipment. The third site component is a cooling tower that, in spite of its unraveled appearance, still works.

Electrical conduits, piping and meter boxes run exposed along the east façade, unlike at its mirror condition along the west elevation, almost completely safeguarded from public view by the main façade and adjacent trees. Design-wise, east and west share all basic components. The north

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<sup>1</sup>Administración de Fomento Económico de Puerto Rico. *Presupuesto Modelo Año Fiscal 1961: Explicación a las Comisiones Legislativas*. (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Administración de Fomento Económico, 1961), 61.

<sup>2</sup>Compañía de Fomento Industrial de Puerto Rico. *Registro de Proyectos*; Proyecto Núm. T-0472-0-58.

façade, belonging to the 1966 addition, echoes the post and lintel structural system used at other elevations. However, as it was customary in the design and construction of these manufacturing plants, in the *De Luxe*, design intentions were made expressly evident at the building's main, public façade, its southern one (**Photo 3**). Proportioned in a 1:4.5 ratio lengthwise, the elevation extends laterally as well as upwards beyond the plant's enclosure, adding size and scale to the A-frame that lies behind. Occlusion of the building's diagonal rooflines by rising well beyond these constitutes a deliberate architectural effect to hide the purely pragmatic engineering solution that lies behind, and favoring (even if in "paste up" effect) horizontality, more in tune with modern design tastes than prevalent.

The difference between what the façade projects and what the building behind stands for is underscored by contrasting the A-frame's symmetrical disposition with the main elevation's asymmetrical composition. The plant's entrance is located off-center, towards the east facade, and reached by climbing eight (8) steps finished in polished concrete. Four tubular railings articulate the stair in three sections. Upon climbing, employees and visitors reach a canopied area flanked by a pair of round thin walled structural steel columns. Both lally columns are eight (8) inches in diameter and frame the plant's main doors (double). The lower canopy and the slender columns add human scale to the entry sequence, in spite of being part of the billboard-like front façade (**Photo 4**). Left and right of the steel columns, two asymmetrically laid-out, concrete "fins" frame further the entrance. At the westernmost one, the steel tubing belonging to the lower segment of a flagpole remains in place, unused. Two feet away from it, an opening has been improvised in the wall to fit a small air conditioning window unit. A roof-flashing cap extends lengthwise above the façade, painted over in green, as the rest of the façade, which also sports a wainscot painted in burnt sienna.

Above the cantilevered entrance to *Deluxe Florida*, an extended strip of window runs westward along the main façade. This horizontal opening incorporates twenty-six aluminum, louvered windows 24" x 24" with operable жалюзи. This clerestory window is edged (above, below, and at the sides) by a continuous concrete eave that shyly projects outwards. It is also painted in the burnt sienna hue. Below the *fenêtre en longueur*, extending east to west, the flat concrete stucco is scored vertically, conforming a recurring pattern of alternately narrow and broader strips. In keeping with the Modern Movement's canonical pledge to horizontality in low buildings, different elements contribute to accentuate the stretched out proportions in the main façade. Among these, in particular, are those already mentioned: the linear fenestration, its unbroken eaves, and the repetitive scoring in the concrete (**Photo 5**). Old, discarded telephone lines, mold in some surfaces, and some plant growth constitute the only signs of wear. In addition, a rectangular office trailer (about thirty feet long) sits on top of concrete-block supports in front of the main façade, surrounded by grass. A concrete path and three steps allow users to reach this temporary feature, easily removable. The trailer houses administrative spaces, granting them privacy from the program housed within the plant itself.

Underneath the canopied entrance, two metal double doors lead to the building's interior, one story high (**Photo 6**). *Deluxe Florida* presents a rectangular, 90'-0" wide X 245'-0" long open floor plan. Before it was extended, its original measurements were 90'-0" X 120'-0"; these translated into 10,800 square feet of serviceable area. Reinforced concrete, used in a post and beam structural system, constitutes the main construction material. As evidenced by the east, west and north facades, concrete masonry unit walls close off most of the periphery. The roof is gabled, consisting of steel joists in a shallow A-frame that holds prefabricated concrete slabs with elastomeric, non-rigid, insulation on top. The A-frame construction, hidden by the exterior facades, becomes primarily evident in the interior. Inside, within the production area, concrete columns are laid out in 30'-0" x 30'-

0" structural bays. Floor surfaces are finished in polished concrete and grooved intermittently to accommodate expansion due to temperature changes. Yellow lines have been painted on the floor to isolate working spaces from circulation areas. The open space is unobstructed by any partitions, except south of it (behind the main elevation), where low, wooden walls define office and storage facilities. Along the west façade, an L-shaped, wooden wall partition has been erected. Crude, wooden doors lead from these spaces into the production area. All utilities are exposed; fluorescent lighting hangs below the exposed roof joists. All original construction and roofing elements are evident. Today, half of the facility is still in operation by *International Custom Molders*; the half built as an expansion in 1966 is vacant. Functional areas within the interior are in a good state of conservation. As it stands, *Deluxe Florida* still incorporates all key components identifiable with the manufacturing building prototypes erected during Puerto Rico's foremost period of economic transformation through industrialization.

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1961

**Significant Dates**

1958, 1961-1969

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Ramírez, René O.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

Built in 1958, PRIDCO's manufacturing plant in Florida was among the last manufacturing facilities erected in the Puerto Rico as part of the Island's industrialization efforts. By lodging two corporations for over twenty years each, the plant became a significant contributor to local industry and community history from 1961 until 1969. The plant has changed owners, but remains in continuous use, still providing job opportunities in Florida. Having been a key source of employment over half a century, the plant is not just one component among others within Florida's urban profile, but a key social and cultural constituent acknowledged as such by multiple generations.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The construction, operation, and community impact of the former *De Luxe* manufacturing plant are inextricably linked to the development of the Municipality of Florida in the 20th Century. The property, which has been used without any significant interruption since the 1960's, claims local significance under Criterion A (Social History). The property is emblematic of governmental policies and official incentives implemented in Puerto Rico to engage private investors in the Island's economic transformation through industrialization. These initiatives impacted the Island's rural/agricultural areas and, to a great extent, they succeeded in granting a permanent job source to the Municipality of Florida, unlike at many other localities where the effort yielded poor results, at that time and to this day. The prototype building - as designed by local architect René Ramírez and without being subjected to many alterations throughout time - remains a useful, well-preserved,

flexible facility, whose adherence to the modern style is undiminished. That is why statewide significance of the property is also acknowledged under Criterion C (Architecture).

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

*Florida* constitutes the youngest municipality organized as such in Puerto Rico. Formerly known as *Florida Adentro*, it was a *barrio* among others that originally comprised the Municipality of Barceloneta. It became a separate governmental entity in 1971.<sup>3</sup> Spreading 15.2 square miles, Florida is located north of Ciales, south of Barceloneta, east of Arecibo, and west of Manatí. Approximately 44.12 miles from San Juan, it is primarily rural, its terrain being within Puerto Rico's *karst country*, rich in limestone. Even if deprived from large areas for farming – and well up to the mid-twentieth century, Florida was primarily an agricultural settlement. By building three of its prototypical buildings within town, PRIDCO incorporated Florida (not yet a municipality) to Puerto Rico's industrialization process. Manufacturing became an alternate economic component of considerable weight, still relevant today. In its heyday, the *De Luxe Florida/Caribe* alone, hired hundreds of people, including people from neighboring towns like: Arecibo, Barceloneta, Hatillo, Jayuya, Manatí, Quebradillas, Utuado, and Vega Baja.<sup>4</sup> As such, it became a regional source of employment.

The choice to build manufacturing plants in Florida echoed official developmental concerns at the time of construction. For some time, PRIDCO had been interested in driving investors to rural localities in an effort to decentralize industrialization from San Juan and thus promoting job opportunities within deprived, more distant areas. To that effect, it would build plants before having secured a tenant for them. An analyst from the period comments on this decision: “...it is believed that a considerable number of the firms who occupy them would not have established operations in Puerto Rico had a suitable building not been ready and waiting...”<sup>5</sup> Furthermore:

*“...immediate availability is critical for a rapid start-up since construction of a standard factory building still takes about five months. The risk of loss to the Development Company is small because if the firm fails another will soon be promoted to reoccupy the building. But the reduction of risk to the firm is quite substantial... the existence of standard buildings and the readiness of the Company to construct special buildings are responsible for favorable private decisions to invest”*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Commonwealth Puerto Rico Legislature. *Law #30 of June 14, 1971*.

<sup>4</sup> Jaime de Jesús Polanco, who worked for decades with the *De Luxe* Corporation, remembers employees coming from these diverse locations and how public transportation (“*carros públicos*”) improved as a result of it. Interviewed on July 3, 18, 2012.

<sup>5</sup>H.C. Barton, Jr. *Puerto Rico's Industrial Development Program: 1942-1960*. (Prepublication copy of a paper presented at a seminar of the Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, held in Cambridge, Massachusetts on October 29, 1959), 24. At that time, the author, H. C. Barton, was affiliated to the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. In later years he was a contributor to the Board of Governors of the United States Federal Reserve System, Division of Research and Statistics.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

The economic strategy was also fueled by a land development tactic to promote social betterment:

*“...construction of factory buildings... enables better land use planning. The Company... can lay out industrial estates with an eye to future growth of the area... buildings are made available in the more remote towns where they can not be as promptly rented and where, in order to encourage decentralization of industry, rentals are set below those obtainable in the larger cities.”<sup>7</sup>*

What was argued in 1959 (above) was still considered important by 1971. A report from that year on the impact of Puerto Rico’s industrial incentive program states:

*“Since the standard plants available for immediate occupation minimize the opportunity cost of a firm’s waiting for the building to be constructed, they are a subsidy to startup costs. Firms anxious to begin operations are likely to be attracted to a municipality with an available plant in spite of other non-optimal location characteristics. Therefore, the location of the newly-built plants is likely to affect the regional distribution of industrial growth... The rent per square foot of PRIDCO plants is determined by the rental zone in which each plant’s municipality is located. Currently, rent in metropolitan San Juan is \$1.20 per square foot while rent in the most rural municipalities is \$.75 per square foot...PRIDCO plants rents constitute a subsidy to both land and capital.”<sup>8</sup>*

Florida, if not as removed from the capital city as other inland locations, was nevertheless distant and, even if a *barrio* of the Municipality of Barceloneta, it constituted a community with its own traditions and ways of life.<sup>9</sup> It seemed an ideal place to pursue PRIDCO’s wide scoped objectives focused as they were on ...”*not simply to maximize national income but rather to abolish poverty, and also help prevent excessive urbanization, to provide relief to especially distressed towns...*”<sup>10</sup> In a way, *“las tres fábricas de Fomento trajeron el siglo veinte a Florida”*<sup>11</sup>; these plants inaugurated locally the twentieth century. The trio of buildings still stands in close proximity, but only the one formerly occupied by *De Luxe Florida* has remained in continuous operation until today.

The first *Fomento* prototypes design was entrusted in 1955 to René Ramírez, one of Puerto Rico’s earliest modern architects.<sup>12</sup> Raymundo M. Pagán, Jr. was the contractor for the 1958 De Luxe Florida building.<sup>13</sup> Professionally trained at Cornell University (Class of 1945), René Ramírez engaged in an extensive practice in Puerto Rico. Upholding the fundamental creed of the Modern Movement, Ramírez’s prototypical design attests to those tendencies pursuant to the architecture of

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<sup>7</sup>Idem. 25.

<sup>8</sup>R. Woodward. *Industrial Incentives and Regional Economic Growth: The Case of Puerto Rico*. (Mimeographed Confidential Document, March 26, 1971), 6.

<sup>9</sup> Today, Florida can be reached from San Juan by car in some 50 minutes, but roads and expressways now available had not yet been built.

<sup>10</sup>Barton, H.C., Jr. *Puerto Rico’s Industrial Development Program*, 13.

<sup>11</sup> As noted by Juan Santiago Santiago, who worked at the plant since early 1960’s. Interviewed in July 18, 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Jean M. Julbe Rivera, *El positivado de un “corporate architect”: un arquitecto puertorriqueño al que su obra bastó como voz* (MidCareerResearch Project, Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico, 2011) unpublished.

<sup>13</sup> Compañía de Fomento Industrial de Puerto Rico, *Registro de Proyectos*, Form CFI-R, CTT-11; 6-87 for Project T-0472-0-58. No additional information on Raymundo M. Pagán has been located.

the time, which include, but are not limited to: a search for asymmetrical balance, the use of the *fenêtre en longueur* (strip window), an inclination for horizontality, an exploration into the malleability of concrete, and the development of structural systems composed of slender steel columns and thin concrete slabs.<sup>14</sup> In Florida, with economy and simplicity, these architectural principles were achieved through relatively simple engineering means. Manufacturing plants would summarize the best of both disciplines: aesthetics and functionality. The more-than-20 models developed reflected the government's enthusiasm – not to say, conviction – about the eventual widespread impact of the Island's industrialization program.

### Florida transforms

When the first manufacturing plant in Florida was built in 1958, *Barrio Florida Adentro* was still a part of the Municipality of Barceloneta. However, throughout the years, *barrio* inhabitants had consolidated as a community of shared interests, often different from those of Barceloneta.<sup>15</sup> In 1959, Barceloneta granted urban status to *Florida Adentro*.<sup>16</sup> By 1971, as an initiative of senator Luis Cancel Ríos, *Barrio Florida Adentro* became the Municipality of Florida, as established by Law #30 of June 14, 1971.

In 1961, three years after its construction, PRIDCO succeeded at engaging *De Luxe Caribe, Inc.* as tenant of building number T-0472-0-58.<sup>17</sup> Industrialization heralded progress so, it should not come up as a surprise that previous efforts of Florida to become an independent municipality were brought up to the table again after the manufacturing plant made its debut and proved its worth.<sup>18</sup> In 1962, the Puerto Rico Planning Board prepared a feasibility study regarding Florida's present and future economic self-sufficiency as a municipality, but it rendered the option as still not viable.<sup>19</sup>

In 1966, the plant was expanded through addition labeled T-0472-1-66, built along the plant's north façade, attached to the original building. In 1967, *De Luxe Florida, Inc.* started operations in the added space and operated there until 1983. *De Luxe Caribe* and *De Luxe Florida* produced lingerie and belonged to the same owners, but were addressed separately, probably for tax benefit purposes.<sup>20</sup> In 1967, PRIDCO built another plant east of the already existing ones (#T-0728-0-67) and shortly expanded it (#T-0728-1-68).<sup>21</sup> Another manufacturing plant was built further east of the industrial park

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<sup>14</sup> Among key exponents of these principles were Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in Europe and North America, and Oscar Niemeyer in Latin America. The grammar of rationality and the use of counterpoint as a compositional device underlie many projects by Mies like the *Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg Monument* in Berlin (1926, demolished) and the Barcelona Pavilion, from 1929. Asymmetry and the contrast of verticality and horizontality characterize both examples. The Brazilian Pavilion for New York's 1939 World's Fair is a comparable work by Niemeyer.

<sup>15</sup> Clapp and Mayne, Inc. *Estudio de Viabilidad sobre la Creación del Municipio de Florida*. (San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1970), 16.

<sup>16</sup> Municipal Assembly of Barceloneta. Resolution Number 6, Series 1958-59, Appendix B. Also, Clapp and Mayne, Inc. *Estudio de Viabilidad*, 16.

<sup>17</sup> Compañía de Fomento Industrial de Puerto Rico, *Registro de Proyectos*, Expediente Núm. 981.

<sup>18</sup> In 1949, legislator Francisco Díaz Marchand submitted a project to the Puerto Rico House of Representatives to promote Florida to municipal status.

<sup>19</sup> Clapp and Mayne, Inc. *Estudio de Viabilidad*, Anejo A: Resolución Conjunta Núm. 24 del Senado y la Cámara de Representantes, (Aprobada el 20 de mayo de 1970).

<sup>20</sup> Adela Meléndez Reyes, a former secretary at the *De Luxe* plant, remembers supervision visits from Sidney Scheinberg, President of *De Luxe Fashions*, a lingerie manufacturer in New York. At That time, *De Luxe Fashions* was located at 45 West, 25<sup>th</sup> Street. Stanley Glogover, an associate, also visited frequently. Interview held on July 18, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> PRIDCO, *Official Cadaster*, Map L-223-0-60-00: Municipality 91; Block 002; Parcel 43-47.

by 1974, #T-1149-0-74.<sup>22</sup> The open metal shed that now sits next to the loading dock was built in 1974 as an outdoor eating facility for employees to enjoy at lunch and coffee breaks.<sup>23</sup> By 1976, *El Mundo* newspaper reported the opening of yet another manufacturing plant in Florida as one of several initiatives contributing to the municipality's progress.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, many neighbors from Florida and surrounding municipalities succeeded at earning their living at these facilities and improving their socioeconomic level. Moreover, although initially located in an area removed from the center of town, plants spurred the development of their surrounding area, which grew to incorporate housing and commerce along (and near) Road PR-642. *De Luxe Florida/Caribe* played a key role in the process, being the only one that, in spite of changing owners, remains in operation and, as such, continues to provide job opportunities Florida. To this day, the manufacturing plant remains a vital organ of the municipality.

In 1982, the *De Luxe* closed.<sup>25</sup> *De Luxe Florida* provided jobs for 400 workers, men and women. However, the property was empty only briefly. In 1984, *Custom Molders of P.R., Inc. (International Custom Molders)* became the new tenant of the the original 1958 building.<sup>26</sup> From 1985 to 2000, several companies held brief operations within the space expanded in 1966.<sup>27</sup> To this day, however, *International Custom Molders* is still in operation within the nominated property, fabricating plastic components for electrical equipment by *General Electric Company*.<sup>28</sup> Today, the 1966 addition is empty. The only noticeable change the original property has suffered relates to the elimination of two outdoor flower boxes, one square-shaped, the other rectangular, both located east of the entrance canopy. The latter was slightly higher than the former, as attested to by original plans and photographs.<sup>29</sup>

Former employees of the *De Luxe* recall warmheartedly the years they worked at the plant. Nostalgia always tints remembrance, but those who reminisce, consistently mention recurrent visits of Vicente Acevedo Ballester, Mayor of Barceloneta during the 60's<sup>30</sup>; the two García brothers who managed locally each *De Luxe* corporation<sup>31</sup>; a visit by Rafael Hernández Colón, who would eventually become governor of Puerto Rico<sup>32</sup>; Christmas parties offered by management within the premises<sup>33</sup>; and the continued support offered by the different manufacturing firms on occasion of the

<sup>22</sup>PRIDCO, *Oficial Cadastre*, Idem.

<sup>23</sup> As remembered by Jaime de Jesús Polanco, former company employee, interviewed in July 18, 2012.

<sup>24</sup>*El Mundo*, October 18, 1976, 4-B.

<sup>25</sup> Jaime de Jesús Polanco remains in charge of final closing operations and disposition of machinery and equipment. Interviewed in July 18, 2012.

<sup>26</sup>Compañía de Fomento Industrial de Puerto Rico, *Registro de Proyectos*, Expediente Núm. 4865.

<sup>27</sup>*Alpha Products, Inc.* from 7/3/85 to 8/31/86; *Il Piccolo Pietro Pizza of P. R., Inc.* from 7/23/87 to an unspecified date; *Compocan* from 11/13/90 to 9/30/91; *H-O-H, P. R., Inc.* from 12/7/92 to 3/31/96; *Excel Aluminum Products* from 3/26/97 to 1/18/200; and *I.B.M. Specialties Corp.* from 2/28/2000 to an unspecified date. Ibid., Compañía de Fomento Industrial de Puerto Rico, *Registro de Proyectos*, Expedientes Núm. 4981, 5307, 5850, 6102, 10047, and 10346, respectively.

<sup>28</sup>*International Custom Molders of Puerto Rico, Inc.*, is a private company dedicated to molding primary plastics. Current estimates show this company has annual revenue of \$1.8 MI and employs a staff of 26. Walter Odasz, Jr. is president. <http://www.manta.com/g/mmjgxt3/walter-odasz-jr>

<sup>29</sup> The flower boxes were featured in the original construction documents. See: Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, P. R. Industrial Development Co., Design Department, Drawing 698, No. 4; Sheet 4 of 17; Typical Building "L" 11,500. Florida Ward, Barceloneta, P. R., 1960. Source: Compilación de planos, Colección personal, Ing. Luis A. Rivera Justiniano, Ex Director de la División Servicios Especiales.

<sup>30</sup> Juan Santiago Santiago, interviewed in July 18, 2012.

<sup>31</sup> Aureliz García was manager of *Deluxe Florida, Inc.* Efraín García, his brother became plant manager of *Deluxe Caribe, Inc.* when it occupied the 1966 extension building.

<sup>32</sup> Adela Meléndez Reyes, interviewed in July 3, 18, 2012.

<sup>33</sup>Idem.

town's yearly Patron Saint's Festivities.<sup>34</sup> Having been a key source of employment over half a century, the plant integrates more than just Florida's urban profile, it constitutes a key component of a cultural legacy that spans several generations.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information**(if appropriate)

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography**(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form)

### Primary Sources

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<sup>34</sup> See advertisements in official programs for yearly *Fiestas Patronales en honor a Nuestra Señora la Virgen de la Merced*. *De Luxe Caribe, Inc.*, appears in 1974, 1976, and 1980; *International Custom Molders* in 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1996, and 1997. Both companies included a list of distinguished employees in many of these yearly ads.

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Baralt, Guillermo A. *La razón del equilibrio: La vida de Luis A. Ferré, tomo 2: 1968-1998*. (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Fundación El Nuevo Día, 1998).

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Christian Laboy Aponte. *Típica promesa: Estudio de las fábricas prototípicas construidas por la Compañía de Fomento Industrial en Puerto Rico entre 1940 y 1960*. (Mid Career Research Project, Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico, 2010) unpublished.

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Toro Sugrañes, José A. *Historia de los pueblos de Puerto Rico*. (Río Piedras: Puerto Rico. Editorial Edil, 1995).

## Newspapers

El Nuevo Día

El Mundo

## Internet

<http://www.manta.com/g/mmjgxt3/walter-odasz-jr>

## Interviews

Carmen Álvarez, Librarian, Florida Municipal Library

Jaime de Jesús Polanco, former employee of *De Luxe Corporation*

Juan Manuel Delgado, professor and local historian

Milagros Díaz, trimmer, floor girl, and supervisor, *De Luxe Corporation*

María Feliciano, clerical employee, *De Luxe Corporation*

Adela Meléndez Reyes, secretary, *De Luxe Corporation*

Juan Santiago Santiago, former employee, *De Luxe Corporation*

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: PRIDCO Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre (0.50 acre)  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>19</u>	<u>757786</u>	<u>2032227</u>	3	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	4	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundaries are indicated on the accompanying base map, and are shown as the dotted line on the accompanying map. See continuation sheet, section 10.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries encompass the full extent of De Luxe Florida.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Arq. Jorge Rigau, FAIA  
organization Jorge Rigau Arquitectos date August 14, 2012  
street& number #67 calle Los baños, 1er piso telephone (787) 982-0002  
city or town San Juan state Puerto Rico zip code 00911  
e-mail rigau@jorgerigau.com

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:AUSGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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### Photographs:

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Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

1. De Luxe Florida
2. Florida, Puerto Rico
3. Victor Blay
4. July 24, 2012
5. Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico
6. Southeast elevation, looking northwest. Front facade towards road #642. As it stands today, the building retains its modern proportions and key distinctive elements (strip window, canopy, thin steel columns).
7. #1

- 
1. De Luxe Florida
  2. Florida, Puerto Rico
  3. Victor Blay
  4. July 24, 2012
  5. Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico
  6. East elevation, looking west. Improvised, non-compliant ramp and a four-step stoop laid out perpendicular from the property. Along the east façade, the building's method of construction makes itself evident. An upper, reinforced concrete beam supports the roof, edged by a minute overhang. Pilaster-like columns support the beam. Wall segments in concrete masonry unit fill the space between all structural members.
  7. #2

- 
1. De Luxe Florida
  2. Florida, Puerto Rico
  3. Victor Blay
  4. July 24, 2012
  5. Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico

6. **South elevation, looking north. Proportioned in a 1:4.5 ratio lengthwise, the elevation extends laterally as well as upwards beyond the plant's enclosure, adding size and scale to the A-frame that lies behind.**
  7. **#3**
- 

1. **De Luxe Florida**
  2. **Florida, Puerto Rico**
  3. **Victor Blay**
  4. **July 24, 2012**
  5. **Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico**
  6. **South elevation detail, looking northwest. Entrance Canopy and Strip Window. Supported by thin steel columns, the thin, concrete slab canopy highlights the entrance. Continuous eaves surround the stripwindow.**
  7. **#4**
- 

1. **De Luxe Florida**
  2. **Florida, Puerto Rico**
  3. **Victor Blay**
  4. **July 24, 2012**
  5. **Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico**
  6. **South elevation detail, looking northeast. Scoring Detail at front elevation. Vertical grooves are used in a rhythmic pattern repeatedly up to the height of the strip windows.**
  7. **#5**
- 

1. **De Luxe Florida**
  2. **Florida, Puerto Rico**
  3. **Victor Blay**
  4. **July 24, 2012**
  5. **Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico**
  6. **Interior view, looking north. The A-frame construction, hidden by the exterior facades, becomes primarily evident in the interior. Inside, within the production area, concrete columns are laid out in 30'-0" x 30'-0" structural bays. Floor surfaces are finished in polished concrete and grooved intermittently to accommodate expansion due to temperature changes. Yellow lines have been painted on the floor to isolate working spaces from circulation areas.**
  7. **#6**
-

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

*Doc Echan H. Beal* \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

*11.14.12*

**5. Classification**

<p><b>Ownership of Property</b> (Check as many boxes as apply)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> private</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> public - Local</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public - State</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> public - Federal</p>	<p><b>Category of Property</b> (Check only one box)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> district</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> site</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> structure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> object</p>	<p><b>Number of Resources within Property</b> (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Contributing</th> <th>Noncontributing</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>buildings</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>district</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>site</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>structure</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>object</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td><b>Total</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Contributing	Noncontributing		1	0	buildings	0	0	district	0	0	site	0	0	structure	0	0	object	1	0	<b>Total</b>
Contributing	Noncontributing																						
1	0	buildings																					
0	0	district																					
0	0	site																					
0	0	structure																					
0	0	object																					
1	0	<b>Total</b>																					

<p><b>Name of related multiple property listing</b> (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)</p> <p>Early Prototypes for Manufacturing Plants in Puerto Rico, 1948 to 1958.</p>	<p><b>Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register</b></p> <p>N/A</p>
---	--

**6. Function or Use**

<p><b>Historic Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)</p> <p>INDUSTRY/ Manufacturing facility</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>Current Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)</p> <p>INDUSTRY/ Manufacturing facility</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

De Luxe Florida

Florida, Puerto Rico

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)  
Early prototypes for manufacturing plants in  
Puerto Rico, 1948-1958

Section number 10 Page 1

10. Geographical Data

The boundaries are indicated with gray shading. Map shows the contributing resource. The limits were obtained from the official boundaries map provided by the Puerto Rico Planning Board.

DE LUXE, FLORIDA, PUERTO RICO

Location: Road PR -173, Km. 0.5 Florida, Puerto Rico 00650  
UTM Reference: 19, 757786, 2032227  
Acreage of Property: Less than one acre (0.5 acre)



JORGE RIGAU  
ARQUITECTOS



- ◀ Contributing resource
- Property boundary

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

De Luxe Florida

Florida, Puerto Rico

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)  
Early prototypes for manufacturing plants in  
Puerto Rico, 1948-1958

Section number 10 Page 2

Photographs viewpoint are indicated, shown as an arrow. The numbers correspond to the list of figures.

DE LUXE, FLORIDA, PUERTO RICO

Location: Road PR -173, Km. 0.5 Florida, Puerto Rico 00650  
UTM Reference: 19, 757786, 2032227  
Acreage of Property: Less than one acre (0.5 acre)



JORGE RIGAU  
ARQUITECTOS



- ◀ Contributing resource
- Property boundary
- ← Visual angle of photography

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

De Luxe Florida

Florida, Puerto Rico

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)  
Early prototypes for manufacturing plants in  
Puerto Rico, 1948-1958

Section number Additional Documentation Page 3

Additional Documentation Map

The limits of the plot were obtained from the official boundaries map provided by the Puerto Rico Planning Board. The boundaries of the nominated resource are identified by an outline. Image taken from Google Earth.

DE LUXE, FLORIDA, PUERTO RICO

Location: Road PR -173, Km. 0.5 Florida, Puerto Rico 00650  
UTM Reference: 19, 757786, 2032227  
Acreage of Property: Less than one acre (0.5 acre)

