

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 Padre Nazario School

other names/site number Padre José M. Nazario School

## 2. Location

street & number 4 Concepción Street

 N/A

not for publication

city or town Guayanilla

 N/A

vicinity

state Puerto Rico

code PR

county Guayanilla

code 059

zip code 00656

## 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



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### 7. Description

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#### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Neoclassical and Spanish Revival

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#### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Concrete/Masonry Units

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roof: Concrete

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other:

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### Narrative Description

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(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.)

The *Padre Nazario School* is located at 4 Concepción Street in the Municipality of Guayanilla, Puerto Rico. It is a two-story high, C-shaped, reinforced concrete building. Built in 1926 as a six-classroom school on a rectangular lot, it was later added two more classrooms on its second floor. Facing one of Guayanilla’s main streets - calle Concepción - the school boasts a prominent urban location within town, one block (roughly 100 meters) from the main square and city hall. The *Padre Nazario School* constitutes a true example of prevailing schoolbuilding policies in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Puerto Rico. Still in operation, its facilities continue to serve the community for the purposes for which it was built.

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### Narrative Description

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The *Padre Nazario School* lies at the heart of town in *Barrio Pueblo*, in the Municipality of Guayanilla, southwest of Puerto Rico. This coastal town borders the Caribbean Sea, and is located south of Adjuntas, east of Yauco, west of Peñuelas and about twelve (12) miles west of Ponce. Constructed between 1925 and 1926<sup>1</sup> in a lot embracing 2,771 square meters, the building occupies nearly twenty percent (20%) of its site with a 530 square meters (5,704 square feet) footprint. Archival information on the design and construction of the school has been scarce, mostly not available, even if “...the decade of the 20’s reflects a special interest in public works” for Guayanilla.<sup>2</sup>

The property’s internal spatial organization is based on a "C"-shaped layout. In spite of later changes, symmetry prevails in reference to the entrance axis where the first floor vestibule is located. On both levels, the floor plan is also symmetrical, with two classrooms and a bathroom on each end,

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<sup>1</sup> Department of the Interior, Government of Puerto Rico. *Report of the Commissioner of the Interior for Porto Rico*, years 1922 (p.127), 1923 (p.127), 1924 (p.147) , and 1925 (p.42). The 1922 report identifies Guayanilla’s school project as work to be executed, while the 1923 report lists it among those initiatives to be undertaken. On the 1924 report, the school appears as completed during fiscal year 1923-1924, most certainly referring to the design phase. The 1925 report indicates that the project is under construction.

<sup>2</sup>Otto Sievens Irizarry. *Guayanilla: Notas para su historia* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Oficina Estatal de Preservación Histórica, 1984), 41.

for a total of 8 classrooms and four bathrooms. Setback from the street, the school incorporates a green area in the front. Enjoying such frontage and a much greater scale than residences nearby, *Padre Nazario School* claims a monumental presence in town.

Originally, the *Padre Nazario School* accommodated six classrooms distributed symmetrically at either side of a central axis; four classrooms on the ground floor and two classrooms on the second floor, where two additional classrooms and restrooms were later added. The school's main façade is situated on a southwest orientation facing *calle Concepción*, one of Guayanilla's main streets connecting with the Catholic Church (*Parroquia de la Inmaculada Concepción*), the town's square, and City Hall to the southeast. The lot where the school sits is bounded on the north by the *Eustaquio Torres Street*, which provides a secondary pedestrian access to the school. Both streets include relatively wide sidewalks. The surrounding context is made up of early 20<sup>th</sup> century residences, mostly one-level, made out in wood with concrete components. South of the property lies the *Immaculate Conception School* and two wooden residences adjoin to the west. The applicable land zoning classification for the site nowadays pertains to DT-G (*Distrito Dotacional General*) as defined by the Puerto Rico Planning Board.<sup>3</sup> The school's lot sits in a floodable area<sup>4</sup>, which may account for the decision to raise the first level of the property a few feet above grade, as building codes at the time required.<sup>5</sup> Cast iron grille ventilators provided at the time of construction are still visible at the school's base.

The school's site topography is flat. A combination of low to mid-height concrete walls closes off the school's property. These include segments of concrete balustrades with low piers and concrete banisters in the front and the back. A chain-link fence runs along the southeastern and the northwestern sides of the school. Vehicular access is thru the latter, where a small parking area can be found. A tall tree (*Pterocarpus indicus*) provides shade. The main façade is set back nearly 20'-0" feet from the property limit along *Concepción Street*. Pedestrian access is through an iron grille gate on axis with the property and the initials P and N facing the street. A seven-foot wide, concrete pathway, covered with 12"x12" terrazzo flooring tiles, leads perpendicularly to the main volume. Ornamental plants [Spider lily (*Hymenocallis littoralis*) and *playera* (*Vinca rosea*)] grow on either side of the path and edge along the main fence, surrounding two extended grass areas. On the one facing the northwest grows a 16-foot high cypress (*Thuja orientalis* L.). Various low shrubs are located along the green area in front of the lot, amidst decorative plants like: white spider Lily (*Hymenocallis*), *playera* (*Vinca rosea*), and Crape myrtle or *astromelia* (*Lagerstroemia*).

Two flagpoles with a small concrete base and two dissimilar water fountains (bird bath type) flank the main entrance path. The fountains are not an original feature and lack institutional character. The fountain on the northwestern lawn has a contemporary-looking three-bowl, tiered set, tiered in concrete, over a pedestal in the same material. This pedestal is the extant base from the school's original, single flagpole, now gone.

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<sup>3</sup>Puerto Rico Planning Board, *Geolocalizador: Interactive Map of the Land Registry*, <http://gis.jp.pr.gov/GeoLocalizador/Internet/> for plot number – 386-034-032-10.

<sup>4</sup> School location categorized as ZONE AE Floodable. *Federal Emergency Management Agency Panel 1620J- Map number 72000C1620J, revised November 18, 2009*. ZONE AE stands for areas susceptible to flooding by the flood event of one percent as determined by detailed methods.

<sup>5</sup> See Jorge Rigau, in "La posible felicidad del país: Optimismo, pragmatismo y responsabilidad social en la reglamentación finisecular puertorriqueña relacionada a la construcción", *Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña*, Núm. 98, 1991; also in Rigau's *Puerto Rico 1900: Turn-of-the-Century Architecture in the Caribbean* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992).

On the southwestern counterpart, a cast-concrete figure of a woman holding an urn is the centerpiece of the fountain, also with a base in cement. A rectangular concrete post rises northwest of the school's green area for the electric meter box; multiple cables reach to and from it. A second parking area is found in front of the main façade, but to the southeast. Here, where the school's site meets the adjacent lot, plantains (*Musa spp.*) grow. The school, like the surrounding area, is in good condition, despite various changes implemented since its construction. The school incorporates playground areas, two half-basketball courts, a cafeteria, and kindergarten classrooms within its lot. Between the two-story school and a cafeteria on its back, a galvanized steel roof was built to provide a shelter for activities and cultural events. In order to avoid garden maintenance costs and related administrative work, most of the property's open areas have been paved over with concrete slabs or paths, a practice endorsed for decades throughout the Island by Puerto Rico's Department of Education.

In terms of volumetric composition, the two-story C-shaped school is articulated into three (3) volumes, a main, larger one, flanked by a pair of receding identical, smaller wings at either side. The hierarchical volume is rectangular, measuring nearly 90'-0" along its longitudinal axis, with a depth of 40'-0", and a height of 31'-6". The lateral volumes recede 8'-0" from the main body, measure 25'-0" wide, and extend to 42'-0" to the back. For reasons of economy, durability and appearance, reinforced concrete was used in the construction of the building, except as roofing material, for which the choice was originally wood, later substituted by steel joists, metal decking and a concrete slab over these. The school's exterior finish is a rough concrete texture, but multiple layers of paint applied throughout the decades hinder its visibility. Also difficult to perceive is a small rectangular plate embedded onto the concrete base in the southeastern portion of the main volume. The inscription is handwritten in concrete and spells out the name of the contractor, *José E. Lluch*, as well as the year the school' construction began, 1925. Sobriety and little elaboration characterize the school's façade. Windows sport a thin, flat trim around, and a somewhat wider sill that projects beyond the width of the openings and away from the walls.

Ornamentation is concentrated primarily on the main volume's front elevation, specifically around the main entrance of the building and a window above. A two-level highly elaborated frontispiece adds monumental scale to the otherwise bare façade. It includes a pair of engaged Tuscan columns set over pilasters flanking each side of an entrance arch, Roman style. The arch includes an articulated surround capped by an *appliqué* shaped as a keystone. Two shields fill the wall space between the Tuscan columns and the semicircular arch. Above these down arrowed (chevron patterned) badge medallions Euler spirals coil away from the keystone in bas-relief manner. Further above, the shape of a small cornice/molding betrays the Spanish Revival bent of the façade by adopting a mixtilinear configuration, that is, using alternately straight and curved lines.<sup>6</sup> Above the straight and curved cornice, two dwarf pilasters frame a paneled, decorative frieze in which a cartouche is set over a drapery festoon. At this height, torches supported by a pillar above each Tuscan capital crown the columns that flank the entrance arch. The symmetrical composition of the entrance frontispiece is further underscored at the upper floor, by highlighting the window at center, where the principal's office used to be. At the height of its sill, a torso-patterned, shaft arch springs from a pair of foliate urns, incorporating a keystone *appliqué* smaller than the one above the first floor arch. Unlike its lateral volumes, the main body of the property includes a classical molding below the top.

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<sup>6</sup>Associated with Moorish architecture from the Iberian Peninsula, *mixtilinear* arches were featured in many Spanish Renaissance Revival buildings.

The school's name appears in the main elevation, between the first and second floors. Symmetrically laid out in bas-relief manner, it spells • **ESCUELA • PUBLICA** • to the left of the frontispiece, and • **PADRE • NAZARIO** • to its right. While most of the building emphasizes plain wall surfaces and horizontality, vertical windows are used in sets of four, three and, in some cases, two units. Nevertheless, in spite of being grouped, windows read primarily as individual perforations within the wall surface. In contrast with the ornamental treatment of the school's main elevation, the side facades (northwest and southeast) are unadorned and defined primarily by pragmatic needs, as was common practice at the time of construction. At *Padre Nazario School*, although flat and austere, they are finished in the exposed aggregate concrete texture mentioned before. Base and fenestration emphasize horizontality and low in each wall, the cast iron grates for floor ventilation allow hot air to circulate. In these facades, windows appear in sets of four, each group corresponding to a single classroom. Two single windows, one in each floor, bring light and ventilation to the restroom at the end of the wings.

The rear façade presents a different vocabulary. Here, the wings project away from the main volume and incorporate rear entrances. Facing northeast, each projecting wing lacks any fenestration, yet the southeastern one displays two rectangular window openings on the upper level restroom. The northwestern wing is also without any fenestration, just an overhead floodlighting fixture at center. Along the school's main volume extends a C-shaped gallery of thirteen arches, two of them as appendixes to the wings. As a covered corridor on both floors, the gallery connects two classrooms and a restroom at either end. Left and right of the center arch in the back façade – reached by a ramp with tubular railings at each side - four more arches complete a nine-arch arcade facing northeast. All arches include a trim around them, and most incorporate a concrete parapet capped by a slightly protruding handrail in cement. Above these, security iron grilles rise for security. At the last arch on each side, the Roman arches extend in full to the floor, providing access to the school through iron grille gates that are reached from the patio by a four-step stoop. Between the ground floor arches and those in the second galleria, eleven protruding vase-top scuppers, with a molding drip below, drain water from the upper hallway to the patio. At ground level, a planter with palm trees (*Areca catechia L.*) runs parallel to the arcade. Backyard spaces include a playground area, basketball hoops, a roofed-yet-open stage area, the cafeteria, and kindergarten classrooms. These accessory facilities were built in the 1980's. From the backyard, a satellite dish is visible in the roof's southeast end.

The spatial sequence of approach and movement through the building is formal, given the property's symmetrical composition and perpendicular alignment in relation to Concepción Street. A traditional Roman arch (semicircular) underscored by the aforementioned frontispiece welcomes the visitor at center. To access the building, one has to climb up three steps flanked by a low, stepped pier at each side. Ornamental flower vases crown these. As high as the set of steps, a base surrounds the whole building, projecting out a few inches. Past the arched entry, and its double door, wrought iron grille gate (original), the visitor approaches a 13'-0" high vestibule, "bracketed" by U-shape staircases. This space serves as a grand entrance hall for the school, incorporating more architectural detailing and surface articulation typically absent in other schools of the period. Inside the space, eight square Tuscan columns in post and lintel configuration are distributed in three bays conforming an A-B-A layout. These provide support to a grid of concrete beams, detailed with a series of recessed bas-relief panels on their lower face. Floors at the vestibule, once finished in polished exposed concrete, are covered with white terrazzo concrete tiles. Benches with concrete

supports and a terrazzo top lie at each side of this hall. Marble plaques from donors are inserted into the terrazzo top.

Identical stairs at each side of the entrance arch lead up to the second floor. In order to access them, visitors have to turn (left or right) immediately upon entering the building. Here, three steps flanked by a solid concrete balustrade reach a square landing subsequently followed by two additional steps laid out perpendicular to the façade and another square landing. From it, users are reoriented to climb up in parallel to the entrance axis; a small, perpendicular shift in direction leads to a few more steps and two intermediate landings before finally reaching the second floor. Ascension at *La Padre Nazario* is paced in a formal, gracious manner, far from being limited to just take persons from one flight to another. This attention to sequence and the stairs as an integral component of it, distinguishes *La Padre Nazario* from many other comparable schools dating from the same period.

Individual steps still exhibit the original polished concrete finish at treads and nosings, while their raisers have been painted over. Wrought iron banisters with continuous, wooden, over-the-post handrail provide guardrails for the stairs, as well as against windows that face the landings. All of them are original. Storage spaces are incorporated beneath the stairs. Books and other materials are kept here. Two smaller offices are located under the stairs at the northeastern end of the vestibule. They retain the original polished-concrete floors. Two small rectangular windows provide ventilation into the offices from the northeastern hallway. A second archway connects the vestibule to the hallway. It incorporates a similar wrought iron gate as the one at the entrance.

Mirror spatial conditions of the two classrooms and restrooms at each side of the building's axis reinforce the overall symmetrical layout. The arched hallway, perpendicular to the entry sequence and instrumental for reaching all classrooms, echoes the prevailing axial disposition in plan. This main circulation corridor lays one step below the vestibule because of the terrazzo flooring added over. It has a polished concrete finish and a concrete slab ceiling. Classrooms are one step up from the hallway. All classrooms and restroom doors are in solid steel plate, reinforced by hot-rolled steel tube frames with padlock and an expanded metal transom. Classrooms with air conditioning window units include aluminum screen doors with plastic inserts. The interiors of all the classrooms have acoustic ceiling tiles, fluorescent lighting and ceiling fans. Floor finishes vary from terrazzo tiles on the ground floor to polished exposed concrete on the second floor. Each of the classrooms on the school's main volume sports three original wall transoms in wood. They allow air to circulate and light to enter. Some have plastic screens that impede ventilation.

At second floor level, above the vestibule, a small foyer leads to the corridor. One space is articulated from another by a wall that includes two rectangular, vertical openings at each side, and a larger (almost square) floor-to-ceiling aperture at center. These openings grant transparency between the foyer and the corridor. What was originally the principal's office, has been reorganized into office space for administrative use, incorporating gypsum board wall partitions, 2'-0" x 4'-0" acoustic ceiling tiles, fluorescent lighting, and exposed air conditioning wall units. Two small closets (above the stair landings below) provide storage space. In addition, the classroom that is oriented southeast lodges a faculty lounge and other administrative offices defined by gypsum board partitions. In, the small foyer where the stairs convene as they reach the upper level and the principal's office, floors are finished in hydraulic mosaic ("*losa isleña*"), a colored-cement tile much popular at the time of construction.<sup>7</sup> The

<sup>7</sup> Jorge Rigau, *Puerto Rico 1900.*, 155-58: "... at the turn of the century... concrete tile (known as *losa isleña*, *losa nativa*, or *mosaco hidráulico*) was also extremely popular. Variety in patterning and color made it possible to achieve personalized effects in floor design. Borders, friezes, and accents pieces were available from widely circulated

floor tile installation reflects the conventional patterning of the period, with units laid out to resemble a decorative rug above a neutral setting. At *Padre Nazario School*, a checkerboard pattern (white and red) is used and bordered by an interlacing Greek fret motif. The second floor corridor has an original, polished concrete floor, patterned in squares with a raked joint<sup>8</sup>.

All around *Padre Nazario School*, windows are the aluminum, operable jalousie type. Walls are finished in rough concrete on the outside, but smooth cement on the inside. Wall bases are in concrete. As established before, floor finishes vary, primarily due to interventions by authorities and/or teachers who have chosen, on their own, to make improvements to the classrooms at which they work. Some air conditioning condensing units are bracket mounted on the walls, or surface mounted, on the ground, next to the building. Cement stucco – original, but mostly pertaining to repairs - is coming off at some walls. Paint is peeling off at some locations, due to the weight of one coat being applied over another throughout the years without use of any primer or without the removal of any previously applied material. All of these improvised interventions and omissions can be removed and improved without any damage to the existing structure.

### The Impact of Time

Since it was built 86 years ago, the *Padre Nazario School* has been used as a public educational facility for elementary students. The fact that it still serves its original purpose has limited any drastic transformation of the property unrelated to its initial reason for being. Impromptu additions, crude repairs, and lack of maintenance have not succeeded in detracting from its integrity as an important architectural icon in town. Two important changes, however, must be noted: suppression of the original three-unit width, low pitch, hipped roof and the addition of two supplementary classrooms at second floor level. The original wooden roof, with its ridge parallel to Concepción Street, was covered with galvanized steel sheets and projected some five feet away from the building. Exposed downspouts (no longer in place) brought rain from the roof to the floor. At an unspecified date, steel, an open-web, joists and metal deck concrete slab substituted the school's roof from 1926. The two classrooms and restrooms added after the school had been in use for several years were built above the school's side wings, originally only one floor high. Date of said addition is unknown. Windows provided in these later additions do not line up with those in the lower level. When erected, each wing had a flat roof (in an unconfirmed construction material), edged at the top by a string of Spanish red-clay tiles. At each wing, tiles also covered an angled eave supported by wooden brackets, protecting the three windows that faced Concepción Street. Wood floors were originally used in all classrooms, later replaced by an open web system similar to the one used for the roof's substitution.<sup>9</sup> Ceilings over classrooms included wood plafonds that shielded the wooden rafters from view. Classrooms at the second floor now have transoms in diamond mesh. The original wooden windows – with louvers, shutters, and glass panes – were discarded. The new ones are in

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*catalogues. The most popular and sophisticated supplier of concrete tiles was Escofet Tejera & Cía. from Barcelona. Its products and designs (many by the most famous Catalan architects of modernisme) were copied all over the Caribbean. Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, and Mexico, among other countries, all produced concrete tile locally, but did not always succeed in matching the Escofet quality.” For manufacturing details of hydraulic mosaic, see Jaume Rosell and Joan Ramon Rosell, El mosaic hydraulic (Barcelona: Col·legi Oficial d’Aparelladors i d’Arquitectes Tècnics de Barcelona, 1985).*

<sup>8</sup> The term raked joint refers to a concrete or mortar joint made by removing material to a given depth with a squared edge tool before hardening.

<sup>9</sup> Alumni report that they could see first-level students from the second floor between the grooves of each plank of wood. Interview with Otto Sievens Irizarry, dated June 27, 2012.

aluminum, operable jalousie type. In general, they have been made to fit into the original openings. On the northeastern arcade, at both floors, security iron grilles now protect the back corridor. Plumbing pipes are visible at restrooms, where wall tile porcelain-type at wainscots is not original.

The school's site, once provided with ample playground space behind, is now somewhat cramped by two single-storied buildings added throughout the years to fulfill expanded program needs. Two reinforced concrete buildings, symmetrical in reference to the school's central axis, house different programs. One is used as a dining hall; the other as a kindergarten. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant ramps provide access to both buildings from the playground. Two half-courts for basketball mediate between the kindergarten and the original school. Minor damage and poor paint jobs impinge now upon several architectural finishes. The original classical ornamental detailing at the main façade and the vestibule remains unaltered.

Cement floors have been repaired haphazardly and in some areas painted over. Stair railings are not ADA compliant. Because the whole building is raised above grade and reached through steps, complementary ramps were added to account for prevailing ADA regulations, though these fail to be compliant. Much of the electrical and plumbing systems has been repaired or replaced. A stand up pole in concrete was built to relocate the electric meter at the green area northwest of the main elevation. At different locations throughout the building, air conditioning wall units protrude from openings on the exterior wall, and condensing units rest over brackets, or sit on the ground. Refrigerant lines as well as electrical conduits and cables are exposed. For security reasons, exterior lighting has been installed at most facades.

In its current state, the *Padre Nazario School* attests to its architectural resilience throughout time. Other comparable buildings of the period have not weathered change as well. To this day, the scale of the property continues to overpower the adjacent urban elements. Size and bearing are not the only distinguishing features; composition and craftsmanship are equally ennobling traits of the school. Within the school's extended life span, change has not brought about detrimental architectural transformations. Electrical, plumbing, and air conditioning improvements to update technology were to be expected. Less justifiable is the unscrupulous perforation of concrete walls, uncaring repairs in plaster, or paint applied carelessly.

**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)

within the past 50 years.

- 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.

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1926-1962  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Division of Public Buildings  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1926  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance of the property starts when the building was constructed in 1926 and closes at the 50-year cut-off date (1962).

**Criteria Consideratons (explanation, if necessary) N/A**

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

The *Padre Nazario School* is of statewide significance under *Criterion C* (Architecture) as the property represents an example of substance regarding early 20th century stylistic modes and methods of construction in Puerto Rico, as these were applied to many educational facilities erected at that time. Designed by architects working for the Division of Public Buildings of Puerto Rico's Department of the Interior Office, the property embodies the distinctive characteristics of school building types pursuant to the early 20th century, whereas simultaneously claiming individual distinction.

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

Guayanilla was founded in 1833, owing its subsequent growth to sugar cane and coffee plantations that prospered in its agriculturally rich plains. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, educational opportunities within the municipality were scarce. After formally integrating a local school district in

1908, Guayanilla built its first urban school building one year later.<sup>10</sup> This pioneer educational facility – much later named after political figure Luis Muñoz Rivera - still stands. On October 11, 1918, it was damaged by an earthquake experienced in the southwestern region of the Island.<sup>11</sup> This may have been one of the considerations taken into account to build new academic facilities in town for - although finally *Padre Nazario School* was built in 1925 – its planning dates from 1922.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, archival information on the design and construction of the school has been scarce, limiting a closer examination into the historical reasons of how it came to be, key personalities involved, and the changes suffered throughout time.

From 1910 to 1920, Guayanilla's population had increased from 10,354 to 12,083, almost 17%. The numbers rose significantly during the ensuing years... "...we can state that most townfolk established in the municipality arrived along the decade of the 1920's", argues historian Otto Sievens Irizarry.<sup>13</sup>

Prosperous families settled along Concepción Street, a main artery connecting to Guayanilla's main plaza and its parish church. Beyond these homes and the town's nucleus, rural areas dominated the landscape. The street behind *Padre Nazario School* (named after Eustaquio Torres, but also known as "callenueva") was built in the 1930's, after the educational facilities had been erected. Two destitute areas of town named after other Island settlements (Añasco and Isabela) extended beyond the street.<sup>14</sup> As a former student of *La Nazario*, historian Sievens Irizarry recalls that many students came from these poverty-stricken areas of town. Against such background of deprivation - and taking into account that houses of the well-to-do along Concepción Street were neither large nor imposing - the tall, massive and formal bearing of *La Nazario* must have impressed significantly Guayanilla's population. Not even the Catholic Church facing the main plaza could claim such an imposing presence. The school's conspicuousness remains, to this day, one of its key architectural and historical attributes. *Padre Nazario School* is the physical embodiment of the political practice by which the North American government sought highly visible, prominent locations to build schools, using strategic sites and monumental architecture as instruments to assert the importance of education in society, linked as it all was to the Americanization of the Puerto Rican people.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the ornamental treatment of its main elevation and the interior vestibule grant the school a special place amongst the most elaborate ones built in the early 20th century in Puerto Rico. The hybrid commitment to the Neoclassical and the Spanish Revival styles characterized other similar initiatives in the Island during that period, but few as elaborate and sophisticated as at Guayanilla, considering it was then a small, non-pivotal settlement.

As an institution for elementary education, the school institution currently offers instruction in kindergarten through the fourth grade<sup>16</sup>. The school's enrollment averages 120 students per year,

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<sup>10</sup> Otto Sievens Irizarry. *Guayanilla: Notas*, 39.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 40, 41.

<sup>12</sup> Department of the Interior, Government of Puerto Rico. *Report of the Commissioner of the Interior for Porto Rico*, Years 1922 (p.127).

<sup>13</sup> Otto Sievens Irizarry, "El barrio Magas Abajo de Guayanilla", *Guayanilla Internacional*: Núm. 3, 2011. [http://www.encuentroguayanillense.org/images/Periodico\\_enero\\_febrero\\_2011.pdf](http://www.encuentroguayanillense.org/images/Periodico_enero_febrero_2011.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Otto Sievens Irizarry, interview dated June 27, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Aida Negrón de Montilla, *La americanización en Puerto Rico y el sistema de instrucción pública 1900/1930* (España: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1976), 60.

<sup>16</sup> Raúl Colón Irizarry, schools' superintendent for the District of Yauco and current interim director at the *Padre Nazario School*, explained that offering the fourth grade is dependent upon the school's enrollment numbers and has been discontinued for some years. Since summer of 2012, Dasha Vanessa Morales Pierluisi is the school's director.

most of them coming from *Residencial Padre Nazario*, a nearby low-income housing project in Guayanilla.<sup>17</sup> Its teaching staff is composed of a director, a teacher/librarian, and five regular homeroom teachers, a physical education professor, an English teacher, a music instructor, a skills teacher, a special education teacher and a facilitator. Non-teaching staff is made up of a secretary, three dining hall employees and two custodial workers. Throughout the years, the school's facilities have been used as a refuge in times of disaster and/or other weather related events.

For towns in development, large-scale school buildings, however, simultaneously performed an important role that transcended the projection of official values unto the urban milieu. Spatially generous, schools were places of choice for townfolk to meet, organize, and consolidate as groups interest. In 1967, at *La Nazario*, the *Centro Cultural de Guayanilla* held its constituent meeting, becoming a key cultural force in the municipality throughout the years.<sup>18</sup>

Archival information on the design and construction of the school has been scarce, mostly not available. The building was designed by architects working for the Division of Public Works of Puerto Rico's Department of the Interior Office. At that time, the Chief Architect for the division was Rafael Carmoega. As head of the department, Carmoega was responsible for some of the most noteworthy projects of the period; however, in the absence of related documents, at this point in time it is impossible to ascertain who the school's primary designer was.

Since it was built 87 years ago, however, *Padre Nazario School's* main role has been as community fulcrum, serving uninterruptedly as a public educational facility for elementary students. No dramatic changes have impinged upon its architectural identity. As such, it has succeeded in grafting itself into the collective memory of many *guayanillenses* who learned to read and write within its walls. Well preserved to this day, the *Padre Nazario School* continues to claim urban relevance in its original location. Its surrounding setting still contributes to make it a preeminent institutional presence in Guayanilla. In terms of design, the school retains the initial volumetric disposition and all of its imaginative ornamental elements in the original materials, all attesting to the quality of the craftsmanship and general workmanship of the period. At *La Nazario*, architectural integrity and permanence regarding function nurture feeling and association from users, alumni, and visitors alike.

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

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## **9. Major Bibliographical References**

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<sup>17</sup> Jose María Nazario y Cancel ("*Padre Nazario*") was born in 1838 and ordained as priest in 1865. He became parish leader of Guayanilla in 1866, a position he held until 1912, although not continuously. A man of myriad pursuits, he wrote a history of Guayanilla and developed a theory linking Christopher Columbus' second voyage to America and his landing on the Island to the Guayanilla region. Interested also in archaeology, Nazario kept a collection of objects belonging to the Taíno indians. After the Spanish American War, Padre Nazario became a strong advocate against the presence and expansion of protestant religions in Puerto Rico. Given the long period he served the Catholic community – in parallel with said religion's hegemonic control at that time - it is said that almost all *guayanillenses* have an ancestor that was baptized by Padre Nazario. Otto Sievens Irizarry, *Guayanilla: Notas...*, 77. Also, interview with Otto Sievens Irizarry, dated June 27, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Otto Sievens Irizarry, interview dated June 27, 2012. Cultural centers were organized at different towns around the Island under the aegis of its umbrella agency, the *Institute of Puerto Rican Culture*, founded in 1955. They were created to tend to local cultural interests in an effort to decentralize the agency's work from San Juan.

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## **Newspapers**

Periódico *El Mundo*

## **Figures**

Porto Rico 1930 Aerial Image Database

Archivo General de Puerto Rico, Álbum de Obras Municipales de Puerto Rico, 1919-1928.

Mariana Morales, April 25, 2012

## **Internet**

<http://pr1930.revistatp.com/index.html>

<http://bibliopadrenazario.blogspot.com/2011/03/escuela-padre-nazario.html>

<http://escuelapadrenazario.blogspot.com/>

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<http://www.encuentroguayanillense.org/>

**Interviews**

Entrevista Dr. Otto Sievens Irizarry, June 27, 2012

**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:  
Municipality of  
Guayanilla

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

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre (0.13)  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>19</u>	<u>733943</u>	<u>1993654</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 nominated property includes the entire lot historically associated with the Padre Nazario School.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Arq. Jorge Rigau, FAIA

organization Jorge Rigau Arquitectos date August 25, 2012

street & number 67 calle Los baños, 1er piso telephone (787) 982-0002

city or town San Juan Puerto Rico 00911

state Rico zip code

e-mail rigau@jorgerigau.com

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:**A **USGS 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:**

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. **Padre Nazario School**
2. **Guayanilla, Puerto Rico**
3. **Mariana Morales**
4. **April 25, 2012**
5. **Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico**
6. **Padre Nazario School southwest elevation, looking northeast. Main facade existing contition in the town of Guayanilla, Puerto Rico. Original hipped roof and wood louvers windows has been substituted but the fenestrations retain their original proportions. In the flakers a second floor was incorporated and the wood and spanish clay tiles awnings were removed.**
7. **#0001**

- 
1. **Padre Nazario School**
  2. **Guayanilla, Puerto Rico**
  3. **Mariana Morales**
  4. **April 25, 2012**
  5. **Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico**
  6. **Padre Nazario School southwest elevation, looking northeast. Main entrance elaborate frontispiece.**
  7. **#0002**
-

1. Padre Nazario School
  2. Guayanilla, Puerto Rico
  3. Mariana Morales
  4. April 25, 2012
  5. Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico
  6. Padre Nazario School interior detail, looking southeast. Original concrete floor with racked joint pattern in the second level hallway.
  7. #0003
- 

1. Padre Nazario School
  2. Guayanilla, Puerto Rico
  3. N/A
  4. 1926
  5. Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico
  6. Padre Nazario School 1926 photograph; southwest elevation, looking east. The school is a notable example of the Spanish Revival. The resource display a three part composition, the two story central block features a hipped roof, an elaborate frontispiece, relatively plain wall surfaces and wood louvers casement windows. The identical one level end pavilions had flat roofs with spanish clay tiles, wood louvers casement windows with awnings.
  7. #0004
- 

1. Padre Nazario School
  2. Guayanilla, Puerto Rico
  3. N/A
  4. 1936
  5. Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico
  6. Padre Nazario School 1936 aerial photograph, looking onto Guayanilla (Barrio Pueblo). Notice the scale of the Padre Nazario School in comparison with the other buildings erected at the time. The boundaries of the nominated resource are identified by an outline.
  7. #0005
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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.

PADRE NAZARIO SCHOOL, GUAYANILLA, PUERTO RICO

Location: 4 CONCEPCIÓN ST. GUAYANILLA, Puerto Rico 00656  
UTM Reference: 19, 733947, 1993658  
Acreage of Property Less than one acre (0.13 acre)



JORGE RIGAU  
ARQUITECTOS



- ◀ Contributing resource
- Property boundary



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Additional Documentation Photographs



**FIG. 1: Padre Nazario School southwest elevation, looking northeast. Main facade existing condition in the town of Guayanilla, Puerto Rico. Original hipped roof and wood louvered windows has been substituted but the fenestrations retain their original proportions. In the flakers a second floor was incorporated and the wood and spanish clay tiles awnings were removed. Photo: Mariana Morales, April 25, 2012. Source: Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico.**

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**FIG. 2: Padre Nazario School southeast elevation, looking northwest. Cast iron ventillation grille on the schools raised basement, particularly appropriate to the tropical climate, were some components of the passive cooling system fo the building. Photo: Mariana Morales, April 25, 2012. Source: Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico.**

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**FIG. 3: Padre Nazario School southwest elevation, looking northeast. Main entrance elaborate frontispiece. Photo: Mariana Morales, April 25, 2012. Source: Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico.**

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FIG. 4: Padre Nazario School southwest elevation, looking northeast. Frontispice detail, dwarf column with spiral patterned shaft placed over a doric column. Photo: Mariana Morales, April 25, 2012. Source: Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico.

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FIG. 5: Padre Nazario School southwest elevation, looking northeast. Frontispice detail, cartouche flanked by two doric dwarf pilasters, foliate unrs, cornices and mouldings. Photo: Mariana Morales, April 25, 2012. Source: Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico.

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**FIG. 6: Padre Nazario School northeast elevation, looking southwest. Original scupper detail evokes the shape of a vase top. Photo: Mariana Morales, April 25, 2012. Source: Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico.**

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**FIG. 7: Padre Nazario School Interior detail , looking west. Interior column/pilar and beam connection detail. Notice the bas-relief rectangular panels on the beam. Photo: Mariana Morales, April 25, 2012. Source: Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico.**

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FIG. 8: Padre Nazario School interior detail, looking south. Hydraulic mosaic ("*losa isleña*") tiles used for the administration office and small foyer. Photo: Mariana Morales, April 25, 2012. Source: Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico.

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**FIG. 9: Padre Nazario School interior detail, looking southeast. Original concrete floor with racked joint pattern in the second level hallway. Photo: Mariana Morales, April 25, 2012. Source: Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico.**

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FIG. 10: Padre Nazario School southwest elevation, looking east. The school is a notable example of the Spanish Revival. The resource display a three part composition, the two story central block features a hipped roof, an elaborate frontispiece, relatively plain wall surfaces and wood louvers casement windows. The identical one level end pavilions had flat roofs with spanish clay tiles, wood louvers casement windows with awnings. Photo: Unknown. Source: AGPR, Annual Report of the Governor of Puerto Rico, 1904-1905.

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**FIG. 11: Padre Nazario School 1930's aerial photograph, looking onto Guayanilla (Barrio Pueblo). Notice the scale of the Padre Nazario School in comparison with the other buildings erected at the time. The boundaries of the nominated resource are identified by an outline. Photo: Unknown. Source: Unknown.**