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NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: **Humacao District Courthouse**

other names/site number: **Casa Alcaldía de Humacao**

2. Location

street & number **Dr. Vidal St. and Antonio López St.** ___not for publication
city or town **Humacao** vicinity___
state **Puerto Rico** code **PR** county **Humacao** code **069**
zip code **00791**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this _X__ 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 _X__ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally _X_ statewide ___ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official — Date 28-III-95

State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register	Edson W. Beall	5/18/95
___ See continuation sheet.	Entered in the National Register	
___ determined eligible for the National Register		
___ See continuation sheet.		
___ determined not eligible for the National Register		
___ removed from the National Register		
___ other (explain): _____		
	for Signature of Keeper	Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

___ private
_X_ public-local
___ public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

_X_ building(s)
___ district
___ site
___ structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: **Government** Sub: **Courthouse**

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: **Government** Sub: **City Hall**

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals/Neo-Classical Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	**Concrete**
roof	**Metal**
walls	**Concrete**
other	**Glass**

Narrative Description: **See continuation sheet**

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.

_X_ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, possesses high artistic values.

____ 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.)

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

____ B removed from its original location.

____ C a birthplace or a grave.

____ D a cemetery.

____ E a reconstructed building, object,or structure.

____ F a commemorative property.

____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance: **Architecture**

Period of Significance: **1925**

Significant Dates: **1925**

Significant Person: **N/A**

Cultural Affiliation: **N/A**

Architect/Builder: **Rafael Carmoega**
Fidel Sevillano

Narrative Statement of Significance: **See continuation sheet**

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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
_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
_X_ Other

Name of repository: **General Archives of Puerto Rico**

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: **Less than one acre**

UTM References:

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	**20**	**201140**	**2009120**	3	__	_____	_____
2	__	_____	_____	4	__	_____	_____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: **See continuation sheet**

Boundary Justification: **See continuation sheet**

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11. Form Prepared By

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First original nomination draft: **Héctor F. Santiago Cazull/Cruz Ortíz Cuadra**

Revised and rewritten by: **Karen González/ Staff Architect; Arleen Pabón PhD/State Historic Preservation Officer; Berenice R. Sueiro/ Staff Architect**

organization: **Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office**

date: **March 16, 1995**
street & number: **109 San José St.** telephone: **(809) 721-3737**
city or town: **San Juan** state: **PR** zip code: **00901**

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Property Owner

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name: **Municipality of Humacao**
street & number: **P.O. Box 178** telephone:
city or town: **Humacao** state: **PR** zip code: **00792**

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Humacao District Courthouse
Humacao, Puerto Rico

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

The Humacao District Courthouse, also known as the "Casa Alcaldía de Humacao," is a two story, concrete building constructed in 1925 in the Neo-Classical Style (See photo #1). The building sits at the center of an oblong urban lot located at the corner of Dr. Vidal and Antonio López Streets.

The floor plan has an "E" shape, with its wings extended to the rear of the building and a Classical portico on its main facade. Two lateral, one-story, office wings extend at each side. The building is elevated by a base or podium and possesses a monumental, two-story hexastyle portico in the Ionic order (columns are fluted). This portico supports a pediment with a tympanum adorned by the seal of Puerto Rico flanked by torches and a garland motif. This decoration is done in polychromed terra-cotta (See photo #2). Seven steps lead the way to the three main entrance doors. At each side of this staircase, concrete ramps have recently been added; the discrete design of this addition is a compatible, non-intrusive element which does not detract from the elegance of the building's facade.

Behind the portico, the building's facade has a seven-bay composition of windows and doors on the first level; only windows are located on the second level. All the facades are unified by a continuous cornice. The roof consists of a single-slope roof of corrugated metal-sheet, hidden by the continuous parapet of the facade. The side facades have the continuous base, cornice and parapet of the main facade and double-casement, steel and glass french windows (See photo #3). The short lateral wings have independent entrance which access to the principal office spaces. The rear facade consists of the three projecting volumes, the central one hides the staircase, encased with a simple structure of steel and glass casement windows. The roofs of these projecting volumes are independent ones, formed by a single slope of the corrugated, metal-sheet.

The interior lobby is a large, rectangular space articulated by fluted Doric

pilasters and organized into three smaller spatial units. A frieze with mouldings and a triglyph-like ornament surround the room. The design on the polished terrazzo floors further helps to define the three spatial volumes created. Two square columns support the frieze-like beam that separates the central space from a parallel hallway (See photo #5). This hallway leads through arched openings, on either side, into an office area (See photo #4). Ending the spatial sequence, the stairs spring upward, on a central flight, and return on both sides, conforming a sober and elegant yet dynamic design. Light coming from the rear facade windows, illuminates the stairs, providing a dramatic accent to the whole composition (See photo #6).

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Humacao District Courthouse is the most significant public building constructed by the "United States Territorial Government of Puerto Rico" in the town of Humacao. This sober and elegant building design is an excellent example of the new "Federal" style of architecture, as applied to courthouses, which were constructed throughout the Island during the 1920's. The building served as the District Courthouse continuously until 1967, when it was transferred to the local government. The Humacao City Hall, or "Casa Alcaldía," was subsequently moved to the building, which retains, to this day, an exceptional degree of historic integrity.

The building was constructed under the aegis of the Public Buildings Division of the Department of Public Works. At that time, the Division was directed by architect Rafael Carmoega. Native son Carmoega, a graduate of Cornell University, is one of the most outstanding and prolific American-trained architects to practice in Puerto Rico during the first decades of the twentieth century. During his tenure, dozens of governmental, educational and institutional public buildings were designed and built throughout the island. His generation represents the first generation of architects trained in American schools "vis-à-vis" engineers, which were responsible for most official buildings under Spanish rule. Buildings designed by Carmoega and the team of architects under his direct supervision, were done in different architectural styles, reflecting the diverse cultural influences of the era. Carmoega was an unique leader; he was able to instil in others the concepts related to a "new" architecture, an architecture created by a group professionally-trained in the field of architecture. It is an important part of our cultural heritage, because it is the work of a master. Yet it is also an example of American architecture

and the impact it had on the island.

Carmoega's design for the courthouse, reflects a trend towards a more academic style, the Neo-Classical style. This choice obviously responds to a desire to generate a powerful visual and symbolic image in keeping with the new government and its desire to project both power and stability desired. This imposing facade with its crisp, monumental, Ionic portico is the Neo-Classical example in Puerto Rico "par excellence." Proportions, details, vocabulary are presented in an extremely academic manner. The architect is aware of the long architectural tradition, is proud of it and, far more importantly, understands its profoundly. This knowledge reveals itself both in the exterior and interior; in both consistency of detail and semantics are maintained.

The building is important because it was created by one of Puerto Rico's great architects and because it is an important example of the Neo-classical style, as adapted to the island for formal use by the United States government. It is, therefore, eligible for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C.

MAYOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Ortiz Cuadra, Cruz M. and Santiago Cazull, Héctor. "Inventario de Edificios Históricos del Municipio de Humacao". Centro Cultural Antonia Sáez with Survey and Planning funds from the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office. July 1994.

Archivo General de Puerto Rico
Photographic Catalog of the Department of Public Works of Puerto Rico. 1925.

Tarr, A. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Capitolio de Puerto Rico. Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1977.

Rigau, Jorge. Puerto Rico 1900. New York: Rizzoli, 1992.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the property are: State Road #3 to the south; Antonio López St. to the west; Selenia St. to the east and urban lots #75, #6 and #4 to the north.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries correspond to the Municipality-owned urban lot historically associated with the property.

Humacao District Courthouse
Humacao, Puerto Rico

All photographs taken by Héctor Santiago Cazull, July, 1994.

All original negatives found within the Historic Buildings Survey of Humacao, at the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office.

Photos
#1 General view of the main facade, facing north.
#2 Detail of Seal of Puerto Rico in pediment, facing north.
#3 Window detail at the main facade, facing north.
#4 Ground floor hallway, facing northwest.
#5 Ground floor vestibule, facing northeast.
#6 Detail of stairway and ground floor hallway, facing east.