

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 Williams Products Corp.

other names/site La Williams

number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street& PR-992, KM. 0.3

number \_\_\_\_\_

city or Luquillo

town \_\_\_\_\_

state Puerto Rico code PR county Luquillo code 089 zip code 00773

not for

publication

vicinity

## 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

X 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:)

*Jon Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

*11-14-12*  
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**

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)

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

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/ Manufacturing facility

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## 7. Description

---

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: CONCRETE

---

roof: CONCRETE

---

other: Metal: Steel

---

---

### 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 #T-S-412-0-57 at the Municipality of Luquillo, Puerto Rico, housed the town’s best known manufacturing plant, operated by **Williams Products Corporation** for over three decades. The plant, enlarged two times throughout the years, sits amongst several similar prototypical buildings at an industrial park southwest of town, alongside Road PR-992, Kilometer 0.3. The plant occupies a lot measuring 6,170 square meters. The building adheres to *Prototype L*, one of a number of alphabetically labeled design alternatives endorsed by the Puerto Rico Development Corporation to encourage the Island’s industrialization by building plants to expedite the establishment of investors. René O. Ramírez, one of Puerto Rico’s earliest and most resolutely modern architects, was responsible for the prototype’s design. Combining steel, concrete, and cement masonry units - supporting an A-frame above concrete beams and columns - the rectangular-shaped property embodies key stylistic, architectural tenets pertaining to the Modern Movement. Likewise, as it stands, the former *La Williams* retains building integrity, incorporating key features that are identifiable with the manufacturing facility as it was originally designed and erected.

---

### Narrative Description

---

The prototype building labeled #T-S-412-0-57 at Luquillo, Puerto Rico, housed the town’s best known manufacturing plant. Operated by **Williams Products Corporation** for over three decades, “*La Williams*”, as townsfolk address it, is one of three other prototypical buildings in an industrial park located at *Mata de Plátano Ward*, southwest of town and Road PR-3, more specifically west of Road PR-992, Kilometer 0.3. The building was erected originally as an all-purpose facility whose open plan and electromechanical capabilities would serve well a wide array of prospective tenants, regardless of their respective manufacturing trades. As such, the plant’s design predated any function-related programming and follows the architectural standards established (as early as the late 1940’s) by the *Puerto Rico Industrial Development Corporation* (PRIDCO) for promoting the Island’s industrialization

through the construction of physical facilities to be rented to local and foreign investors. In many occasions, these plants were grouped within one area to conform an industrial park.

Based on official map boundaries, the industrial park at Luquillo comprises a total area of 24,247 square meters or 5.9 acres<sup>1</sup>. The applicable land zoning classification nowadays is I-L (light industrial) as defined by the Puerto Rico Planning Board.<sup>2</sup> FEMA maps (2009) categorize it as X, *Floodable. Classification X* pertains to areas of moderate flood risk or at least from the main source of flooding in the area.<sup>3</sup> Within its perimeter, the industrial park includes three standard, multipurpose, factory Type "L" buildings, and one administration edifice, all connected via open-but-roofed corridors. At some point in time, **Williams Products Corporation** used all four buildings. In plans from PRIDCO, the overall site is articulated into two lots, designated respectively as #3 and #4.<sup>4</sup> Lot # 3 embraces 6,170 square meters (1.52 acres; 1.57 *cuerdas*) and houses the nominated resource, the first manufacturing plant erected in the industrial park. As plant #S-412-0-57, the property was later expanded in 1965 and 1972 and these subsequent additions are labeled independently as #S-412-0-65 and #S-412-0-72, respectively.<sup>5</sup> Lot #4 accommodates two other factory buildings (#S-517-59 and #S-518-59) and a much smaller building for offices (#S-519-59), all constructed later in 1959. Although the three plants on the industrial park adhere to PRIDCO's Type L, each one is placed in its lot at different angles from each other and from adjoining Road #992. Inconsequential differences between these facilities relate to the total amount of square footage provided, roof heights, and minor front façade variations. In reference to the heart of town, the industrial park lies some 740 meters away from Luquillo's main plaza. The topography of the plot is predominantly flat, being a well-drained terrain located within the urban limits. North of the plot, the land slopes up in a green incline. Various suburban neighborhoods have developed around the industrial complex. Northeast of the site lies "A" Street; "B" Street lies northwest. Plant # S-518-59, southwest of parcel #3, is occupied by *Liberty Cable Corporation*. At a distance, looking south, the mountains of *Sierra Luquillo* and its foremost feature, mount *El Yunque*, are visible for miles around.

Automobile and pedestrian access to the 1957 property at lot #3 is from PR-Road 992, a four-lane thoroughfare lying southeast. A chain link fence with three lines of barbed wire surrounds the lot. Incorporated to the fence, one gate leads to a concrete parking area, also used for loading and unloading. Another gate leads to the building's pedestrian entrance from the sidewalk. A planting strip adds frontage to the property. Directly across from the road sits an empty lot adjoining Luquillo's fire station. Greenery extends between the manufacturing plant's main façade and road #992. Landscaping elements include grass and two *flamboyán* trees (*Royal Poinciana*; *Delonix regia*). Additional plant material includes crotons (*Codiaeum variegatum*) and an *higüero*, or Calabash-tree (*Crescentia cujete L.*).

**Williams Products Corp.** presents a rectangular floor plan whose configuration incorporates three spaces built in three stages: one measures 60'-0" X 90'-0" and dates from 1957; two others comprising 90'-0" X 90'-0" each, the result of two subsequent additions from 1965 and 1972. The three built spaces operate as one, connected by 6'-0" wide x 8'-0" high openings between each other.

---

<sup>1</sup> Puerto Rico Planning Board, Geolocalizador: Interactive Map of the Land Registry, <http://gis.jp.pr.gov/GeoLocalizador/Internet/> for plot number 120-005-064-05.

<sup>2</sup> Idem.

<sup>3</sup> Federal Emergency Management Agency Panel 0805J- Map number [72000C0805J](#), revised November 18, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> See Site Plan L-85-57. PRIDCO, Planning Department. *Luquillo South Individual Subdivision Mata de Plátano Ward, Luquillo, P.R.*, 1966.

<sup>5</sup> PRIDCO. Registro de Proyectos. *Williams Products Corp.* inaugurated the facilities in 1961.

Their footprint adds up to 90'-0" wide X 240'-0" long, establishing an 1:2.5 proportion in plan. Before it was expanded, the original 1957 building measured only 90'-0" X 60'-0", then providing some 5,400 square feet of usable area. Only one story high, the property is elevated from the ground by a five-step-high stoop which allows for ease of loading and unloading materials, products, and merchandise. Reinforced concrete constitutes the main construction material, used in a post and beam system. Roofing is gabled, consisting of steel joists in a shallow A-frame that holds pre-fabricated concrete slabs with elastomeric insulation on top. Concrete masonry unit walls close off the periphery.

Horizontality characterizes the main façade, proportioned in a 1:4.5 ratio. Beyond providing an enclosure, the elevation along the southeast extends upwards as a parapet (beyond the roof line) to cover the A-frame structure beneath which manufacturing processes took place for years. The parapet section hides the A-frame's diagonal beams in a deliberate architectural effect to occlude the purely pragmatic engineering solution, shielding its outright industrial bearing. Further underlining a "paste-up" effect, the main façade also extends laterally beyond the building's main body, even if not in full height. However, in contrast with the A-frame's symmetrical disposition, the main elevation is asymmetrical. Although it faces southeast, the entrance is located off-center, towards the southeast, flanked by two steel round columns eight (8) inches in diameter. These support a lower, flat slab, concrete, canopied roof that adds human scale to the entry sequence. The steps to reach this porch and its floor are in polished concrete. Metal railings painted green flank the steps. From the way the railings are fixed to the steps, one can tell they constitute a later addition. Two metal double doors lead to the inside. Columns, railings, and doors are painted light green. Left of the canopy, at its base, stands the *higüero* tree. Right of the canopy, against the façade, remains the original identification sign for the property. It reads: *PR Industrial Development Co., Building No. S-412-57.*

Above the entrance canopy to **Williams Products Corporation**, a strip window extends southwest all along the main (southeast) façade. This horizontal opening incorporates aluminum, operable, louvered jalousies. This clerestory window is surrounded (above and below) by a continuous concrete eave that subtly projects outwards. Below the strip window, and along most of the elevation, the flat concrete is stuccoed over. However, the wall segments extending beyond the building's main body are scored vertically, conforming a rhythmic pattern of alternately, two thin (3") strips and one wide (9") one. In keeping with the Modern Movement's commitment to horizontality, different elements combine to underscore elongated proportions in the main façade, in particular, the linear fenestration, its continuous eaves, and the repetitive scoring in the concrete. Wall surface alterations reveal that an opening was once provided to install an air conditioning unit and was later sealed off, leaving only a small, rectangular, 6" x 10" opening, covered with a fixed glass. Also visible are cracks within the masonry units.

Southeast and northwest facades make evident their method of construction. An upper, reinforced concrete beam supports the roof; beneath it, aluminum, louvered windows are grouped repeatedly above a smaller, concrete beam placed about 5'-0" above grade. Columns supporting both beams appear as pilasters, for the concrete masonry unit fillings in between all structural members are "thinner" than the beams and columns, in spite of having been cement-plastered and painted over. Such differentiation between bearing and non-bearing elements is evident outside and inside of the property.

The northeast façade (right) stretches to the back of the site, evidencing the three successive stages through which it came to be. Articulated into nine bays of roughly 30'-0" each, the building's first two bays correspond to the original 1957 construction, which measured 90'-0" along the front and 90'-0" deep. These first two bays include metal, louvered windows, but one of them substitutes a former access door to the property's initial loading dock. An eave that protected it is still in place. The original power installations to receive power from the street are still in place, even when they are now substituted for contemporary ones elsewhere on the site. Headed northwest along the northeastern façade, the next three bays belong to the 1965 addition. All of them lodge more windows. At center, however, their size and location changes because, originally, in their place used to be an ample opening to service a loading dock. Bolts and screws of a former, horizontal, building bumper guard still remain in place, now rusted. Three more bays complete the building's extended elevation. They are identical, displaying metal жалousies in groups of six units that measure 2'-0" X 6'-0" each, laid out vertically. Along this section of the plant (from 1972) the terrain slopes up to an incline that partially closes off the site on the north side. Exposed electrical equipment and conduits run across the elevation and around the building. Deterioration due to water damage and neglect is visible. Some of the aluminum жалousies are bent and/or in detrimental conditions.

The northwest façade is the building's back elevation. It faces the terrain's north incline on top of which more manufacturing plants are to be found. Articulated into three bays - and in contrast with the front façade - it reveals the A-frame, post and lintel construction that was used at all growth stages of *La Williams*. Aluminum louvered windows are grouped within each bay in sets of six. Columns and beams become evident at the surface, being wider than the rest of the walls, as it happens at other elevations. A 0'-6" roof flashing edges the top of the A-frame. A volume protrudes from the northwestern corner of the back façade. It lodges restroom facilities, of which two operable, aluminum windows can be seen. This bathroom module measures 10'-0" along the back elevation, but extends lengthwise 30'-0" along the southwestern façade, one that incorporates several other components. A tall, *Pterocarpus* tree rises at center and an open, rainwater channel runs across, to eventually turn south and reach Road PR-992.

As is the case with the northeastern elevation, the southwestern one is also the result of *La Williams'* enlargement by phases. Each plant addition incorporated a bathroom module as an appendix on this side of the site. The restrooms that line up with the back façade belong to the last addition (1972). A similar 10'-0" X 30'-0" module culminated the 1965 extension, while for the earliest stage (of less square footage) a 10'-0" X 15'-0" volume sufficed. The 1965 restrooms are located halfway through the southwestern façade; those from 1957 lie almost at its end, closer to the main façade. The three outbuildings are made of concrete masonry units and reinforced concrete columns, sporting aluminum жалousies laid out in strip window manner. Ventilation shafts, rain leaders, downspouts, and other plumbing piping fixtures are displayed in various states of disarray. Visible along this façade are also: a single door protected by an eave above (next to the 1972 module); a roll up door, also shielded by a concrete eave and including building bumper guards (from 1957); and three freestanding walls that remain of what once was a lean-to used for additional storage, but has now lost its roof. Somewhat lower than the restroom modules, it was not an original component of the property.

An open, roofed corridor links *La Williams* with the manufacturing plant that sits west of it. The passageway, with a concrete slab floor, is attached to the 1965 addition, adjacent to its restroom module, and accessed by a metal roll up door. Passersby are protected by a concrete slab supported

by lally columns paired lengthwise. All in all, the open hallway has a very light appearance. The roof slab includes round, iron downspouts on its sides and fluorescent lighting fixtures below. Pedestrian transit, however, is diminished by the current use of the passageway as a storage area. North of the passageway extends a green, grassy area.

Inside the manufacturing plant, within the production area (now empty), concrete columns are laid out in 30'-0" x 30'-0" structural bays, ceiling heights fluctuating between 12'-0" to 15'-0" high. The concrete beam that supports the windows projects outwards from the wall, establishing a wainscot all around. Floors are finished in polished concrete and grooved intermittently to provide expansion joints. The open space is unhindered by any partitions. All utilities are exposed; lighting conduits have been routed to match, as much as possible, the lay out of the exposed roof joists. At the ceiling, all original construction and roofing elements are visible. Empty of any machinery or equipment, the interior also features roll up doors leading to the loading docks and some hollow metal doors. All in all, the building's interior is in excellent condition. As such, *La Williams* is highly representative of the architectural prototypes erected to foster manufacture in Puerto Rico during the Island's 20th-century economic transformation, one that led Puerto Rico away agriculture into 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.

- 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 within the past 50 years.

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1957-62

**Significant Dates**

1957

**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)**

PRIDCO's building in Luquillo housed the **Williams Products Corps.** manufacturing industry from 1958 until 1991, becoming a significant contributor to the local industry. By lodging the corporation for over thirty years, the plant became a significant contributor to local industry and community history from The period of significance starts with the building's construction in 1957 and closes in 1962, the 50-year cut-off date.

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

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

The Luquillo's manufacturing plant where **Williams Products Corp.** operated for almost four decades claims local significance under Criterion A (Social History) as its construction and operation were fundamental to the municipality's expansion in the 20th Century. The property represents Operation Bootstrap's efforts to propel the Island's economic transformation from an agricultural to an industrialized one. As such, **Williams Products Corp.** constitutes an important icon in reference to the impact of apparel industries in the economic and urban development of rural areas in Puerto Rico, and the changing role of women at home and in society. From the late 1940's to the late 1960's, many trusted the improvement of living conditions was reliant upon the Island's industrialization. Local significance of the property is also acknowledged under Criterion C (Architecture). The spare, well-preserved property retains all key components identifiable with the industrial prototypes pursuant to

Puerto Rico's historic *Operation Bootstrap* initiative. Noted architect René O. Ramírez, who adhered to the basic precepts of modern architecture, designed the industrial prototype built.

---

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

Luquillo is a municipality located in the Island's northeastern coast, east of the town of Río Grande and northwest of Fajardo. Luquillo spreads over five (5) wards and a sixth named *Luquillo Pueblo*, its traditional administrative center.

Built in 1957, PRIDCO's industrial property in Luquillo was among the last manufacturing plants erected in Puerto Rico as part of the Island's early industrialization efforts associated to *Operation Bootstrap*, the program to transcend Puerto Rico's reliance on agriculture as a source of employment. Managed by the same corporation from 1958 to 1991, *La Williams* became a significant permanent asset to local industry and a catalyst for the improvement of social conditions in town. Having been a consistent key source of employment in Luquillo for three decades, and remaining an unchanged presence within the municipality, the plant epitomizes, simultaneously, progress and permanence. Integrity of the former **Williams Production Corporation** manufacturing plant is granted by several attributes. Its **location** remains eloquent as it reflects Puerto Rico's government original policies regarding the construction of industrial facilities at rural areas to boost their economic development. Its particular **setting** amidst other comparable industrial properties has not lost its original character. True to its original architectural **design**, the plant still exudes its commitment to the architecture of the Modern Movement. Said stylistic pledge is mirrored by the original choice of building **materials** and the corresponding **workmanship**, all of them evident to passersby. Location, milieu, and building communicate the visual and historic sense of the particular period in which Luquillo's manufacturing plant came to be and impacted everyday life in town. These attributes endow with **feeling** and **association** the property that proved instrumental in fueling Luquillo's social and economic transformation.

---

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

The introduction and operation of manufacturing plants in Luquillo in the late 1950's and throughout the 1960's transformed the municipality's social and economic profile in a most decisive manner. Since its foundation in 1797 and for more than one and-a-half century, the town's inhabitants had been dedicated mostly to agriculture.<sup>6</sup> Integration of Luquillo to *Operation Bootstrap* brought with it myriad changes of permanent impact. The Island's government implemented the program under the leadership of Teodoro Moscoso, who was succeeded in 1961 by Rafael Durand. Conception, construction and operation of *La Williams* happened under their tenure at PRIDCO. By 1960 census data established Luquillo's population at 8,582; one year later it had reached 10,390.<sup>7</sup> The 20% increase of inhabitants occurred in parallel to a boost in housing units built: from 2,054 in 1960 to

---

<sup>6</sup> "In 1940, the economy [still] relied mainly on sugar cane and fruit. Some of the residents made their living by fishing". <http://www.encyclopediapr.org/esp/article.cfm?ref=09032603&page=2>

<sup>7</sup> Población de Puerto Rico por Municipios: 1930-2000, <http://209.68.12.238/censo2000/1930-2000.html>

3,462 in 1970.<sup>8</sup> By 1984, PRIDCO was “advertising” Luquillo to potential industrial investors as a location highlighted by a skilled, completely bilingual labor force.<sup>9</sup> Late in the 20th century, there were nine factories operating in Luquillo that employed 835 workers. They produced fuses and other electric devices, parts for calculators, uniforms, women's underwear, gloves, and other products.”<sup>10</sup>

For almost three decades, **Williams Products Corp.** operated in three prototypical buildings erected to endorse industrialization throughout the Island by PRIDCO. Winter garment was produced in the Luquillo plant, including mittens, gloves, slippers, boots, and other winter apparel. As job opportunities in manufacture multiplied, the town grew and expanded. Nowadays - after more than fifty years - social, urban, architectural, and associational values overlap in Luquillo to render the **Williams Products Corp.** as an icon of local history.

Years before *Operation Bootstrap* came to be, many women earned a living through the home needlework industry. When sewing factories opened up, many women who had never had a formal job were employed because of their previous experience as seamstresses. The history of *Williams Products Corp.* is an account of the changing role of women in Puerto Rican society and their incorporation into the labor force in modern times. As has been previously stated,

*“The industry that most impacted the initial phase of Operation Bootstrap was the undergarment and clothing industry... Textile manufacture and brassiere production account for the foremost and most important successes of industrialization in Puerto Rico. If only one establishment was in operation in 1948, by the end of 1963, 74 of them employed almost 10,000 workers.”*<sup>11</sup>

*“... 114,000 new jobs were added to the labor force from 1960 to 1965. Leading the surge was precisely the apparel industry: of the 100,591 manufacturing jobs in 1965, 39,828 were in apparel and other textile-related industries.”*<sup>12</sup>

*“In terms of employment, the share of agriculture and needlework fell from 40% and 9% respectively, in 1950, to 18% and 1%, respectively, in 1965; manufacturing’s proportional role, in contrast, rose from 10%, in 1950, to 17% in 1965. From the viewpoint of the composition of the value of the production of goods and services, agriculture’s share declined from 18% in 1950 to 6% in 1965, while that for manufacturing rose from 16% to 25%, respectively, in the fifteen-year span.”*<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/phc-3-53-sp.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Lydia Carreras. *Community Profile for Fajardo Area: Fajardo, Ceiba and Luquillo*. Economic Development Administration, Office of Economic Research. PRIDCO, 1984.

<sup>10</sup> See <http://www.encyclopediapr.org/esp/article.cfm?ref=09032603&page=2>

<sup>11</sup> Waldemiro Vélez Cardona. *El tránsito hacia una sociedad industrial y urbana: la historia de Puerto Rico en imágenes*. Ensayo preparado con motivo de la inauguración de la Biblioteca Digital Puertorriqueña de la Universidad de Puerto Rico (Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras, 2007). See also, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/18624883/EL-TRANSITO-HACIA-UNA-SOCIEDAD>

<sup>12</sup> A. W. Maldonado. *Teodoro Moscoso and Puerto Rico’s Operation Bootstrap* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 1997), 143.

<sup>13</sup> Adams Howard & Upperman. *Planning for a changing industrial structure in Puerto Rico: A report for the Economic Development Administration* (Cambridge, Mass., November 1969), 20.

By 1957, the year *La Williams* was built, PRIDCO was coming to terms with the consequences of its industrialization program initiated almost a decade earlier, among these: an unyielding job-seeking migration from the countryside to the cities; the disproportionate concentration of manufacturing plants in and around San Juan; mealy interest from investors in terms of settling in rural areas; as well as the challenge that maturing labor unions represented. It would all lead to a change of focus within PRIDCO's higher echelons.

However, by 1961, PRIDCO was officially boasting about its achievements along fiscal year 1958-1959. Against 213 manufacturing plants already established by then, 113 new ones were initiating production, and 84 were in promotional stage; technical trainings, management seminars, and lectures, as well as research efforts and publications were all part of a wide-scoped, aggressive outreach program.<sup>14</sup> "*Stimulated by tax and wage incentives and PRIDCO's provision of plant space, manufacturing output increased threefold between 1950 and 1960, its share of production expanded from 16 to 22%, and the gross regional product increased two thirds (in constant dollar terms).*"<sup>15</sup> In spite of it all, this was the period when - against the relative inaugural success of *Operation Bootstrap* - a change of winds led PRIDCO through uncharted waters, as heavy industry became the government's new coveted trophy. Luquillo's *La Williams* constitutes a survivor of that moment in history, when local government pushed to place manufacturing plants in rural communities, away from the San Juan metropolitan area. Having sustained local growth in terms of increasing its population's per capita income, light industry construction was a success in Luquillo, when employment was falling from in agriculture and the needle trades.<sup>16</sup> One of the last plants built to cater to PRIDCO's original objectives, *La Williams* eventually (and ironically) outlived the most important heavy industries established afterwards.

More specifically, at Luquillo, the buildings that housed **Williams Products Corp.** followed the Type-L prototype, one of several, different official architectural models erected by PRIDCO at that time around the Island. As designed, all models were labeled in alphabetical order to account for square footage differences and "look" (façade composition). Different models were erected in most Island towns, grouped in industrial parks similar to the one at Luquillo. As such, no other building prototypes have been repeatedly used more extensively in the Commonwealth. For that reason, they represent Puerto Rico's most comprehensive urban presence, even when, today, many are overlooked for lack of understanding of their role in history and their social relevance. The architectural models constitute the surviving symbols of Puerto Rico's early industrialization efforts. Properties akin to the one that housed **Williams Products Corp.** in Luquillo heralded - and inaugurated - a shift in developmental urban patterns like only very few other examples in the Island's history can claim to have fostered.

Architect René O. Ramírez, a Puerto Rican who completed his professional studies at Cornell University, in Ithaca, New York, developed the design for the *Fomento Type-L prototype* built in Luquillo. Given that Ramírez appraised the fundamental tenets of the Modern Movement, we can now deem his factory prototype as encompassing the architectural trends of his period: the use of slim steel ("lally") columns, thin concrete slabs, and strip windows, the manipulation of concrete to study its expressive qualities, and a propensity for horizontality and a sense of balance achieved through

<sup>14</sup> Administración de Fomento Económico. *Presupuesto Modelo, Año Fiscal 1961, Explicación a las Comisiones Legislativas* (Mimeographed Copy, 29 de febrero de 1960), 61.

<sup>15</sup> Adams Howard & Upperman. *Planning for a changing industrial structure*, 6.

<sup>16</sup> Angela Santos Casillas. *Luquillo: Notas para su historia* (Oficina Estatal de Preservación Histórica: San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1984), 37.

asymmetry, all executed through simple and economical engineering-like solutions. *La Williams* – half a century after its erection – still embodies the historic and artistic period of its conception.

Besides architect René O. Ramírez, other personalities of relative note associated with the *Williams Products Corporation* plant are Jonathan and Myron Wynson, brothers from New York City who led the business for almost forty (40) years. Son of holocaust survivor and émigré from Germany, Jonathan established *Williams Products* in 1958 under the auspices of *Operation Bootstrap*. His brother Myron (“Mike”) Wynson granted continuity to his efforts until the plant close down in 1991.<sup>17</sup> If many names and specifics regarding *Williams Products Corp.* have been lost within the context of History, the plant – the building, as well the operation it housed – is affectionately remembered by many *luquillenses* whose lives can not be disentangled from it. Amongst them, oral histories reveal respect and fondness for the plant, granting it stature as a most important social catalyst in Luquillo.

Rafael Sánchez Navarro worked at ***Williams Products Corp.*** since the day it opened in 1958 and for 32 years.<sup>18</sup> “Mr. Arzuaga, who was the first manager of *Williams Products Corp* offered me a job. We were friends and he knew I had studied electronics in Mississippi. If a machine was damaged I repaired it.”<sup>19</sup> Enrique Arzuaga Arrarás remained the plant’s manager until the early 60’s, when he resigned and went to work in another factory in the town of San Lorenzo. The plant’s second manager only worked there for several months. After that, Rafael Sánchez Navarro became the third and last manager. Employee turnover at the plant was minimal: “I began working as a mechanic, after a few years I became plant supervisor because I could be both, a machine tool engineer and a leader who manages the staff well and fairly.”<sup>20</sup> These recollections from a former manager echo those from other residents of Luquillo who, similarly, moved up within the plant’s labor hierarchy. –“It was a chain”, underlines Sánchez Navarro – “*La Williams* offered the opportunity to improve their living conditions to many townfolk... as well as others outside the plant who also benefitted from a working population that, at peak season, reached 400. *La Williams* breathed life into Luquillo”.<sup>21</sup> Softball teams from neighboring plants played against each other in friendly terms, but women coming from nearby rural areas led the work corps. Ladies tended to sewing primarily; gentlemen handled cutting, storage, and supervision duties. Rafael Sánchez Navarro reaffirms about Luquillo what sociologists and historians have acknowledged as a key process in women’s emancipation in the Island: - “*Manufacture granted expanded opportunities for employment, economic power and, for women, more independence. The new way of life made possible for more children to attend school, get a high school diploma, and go to college. Improved economic conditions contributed highly to educational development in Luquillo.*”<sup>22</sup> Manufacturing plants stimulated increases in population, public housing, and infrastructure improvements.

As the 20th century came to an end, nine factories were still active in Luquillo, employing over eight hundred workers. *La Williams* operated until 1991, providing products for Sears, *JC Penney’s*, *Thom McCann*, and *Walmart*, among other brand names in the Mainland. Former employees recall

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Rafael Sánchez Navarro; June 21, 2012. The former plant manager recalls the original family name was Wyshinsky, with German/Jewish roots dating back to the Holocaust.

<sup>18</sup> Idem.

<sup>19</sup> Idem.

<sup>20</sup> Idem

<sup>21</sup> Idem. The months of July, August, and September comprised peak season. Normally, the plant operated with about 200 employees.

<sup>22</sup> Idem.

regular plant rounds from PRIDCO administrators and stopovers of high profile politicians who visited the premises in election periods. Reminiscing about life at *La Williams*, Rafael Sánchez Navarro, clings to a specific memory:

*“The land stretching east from north to south, Finca Las Margaritas (owned by Julio Méndez) was planted with sugar cane. Each and everyday, from the factory we could watch the train from Central Fajardo go by. At the end of the **zafra**, the harvest period, the last train wagon would be covered completely with **flamboyán** flowers, thus signaling the start of **tiempo muerto**, the idle time when work in the field ceases for the sugar industry.”*

In watching trains regularly go past *La Williams*, Rafael and his co-workers did more than that: they witnessed the rite of passage by which Puerto Rico shed its agricultural past for an industrialized future, one that held true to its promise for over four decades in Luquillo.

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

---

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

### Primary Sources

Administración de Fomento Económico. *Presupuesto Modelo, Año Fiscal 1961, Explicación a las Comisiones Legislativas*. ( Mimeographed copy, 29 de febrero de 1960).

Carreras, Lydia. *Community Profile for Fajardo Area: Fajardo, Ceiba and Luquillo*. (Economic Development Administration, Office of Economic Research; San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1984).

Compañía de Fomento Industrial de Puerto Rico. *Registro de Proyectos*. No date.

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, P. R. Industrial Development Co., Design Department, *Drawing 551, No. 1; Sheet 4; Typical Building “L”*, Luquillo, P. R., 1957.

Departamento de Hacienda, Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico. *Ley de Incentivo Industrial De Puerto Rico de 1963* (Aprobada el 13 de junio de 1963), (Mimeographed publication: San Juan, Puerto Rico: n.d.).

Federal Emergency Management Agency Panel 0805J- Map number 72000C0805J, revised November 18, 2009.

PRIDCO Planning Department. *Luquillo South Individual Subdivision Mata de Ward Luquillo, P.R. L-85-57 Site Plan*, 1966.

Ramírez, René. *Application for Membership at The American Institute of Architects*, Application No. 5344, March 12, 1947.

U.S. Census Bureau. *Población de Puerto Rico por Municipios: 1930-2000*. (Washington: DC, 2004)

Vilches, Rubén. *Special Tabulation of Census of Manufacturing Industries in Puerto Rico, 1969*. (Director of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor), 1970.

## Secondary Sources

A. W. Maldonado. *Teodoro Moscoso and Puerto Rico's Operation Bootstrap* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 1997).

Adams Howard & Upperman. *Planning for a changing industrial structure in Puerto Rico* (A report for the Economic Development Administration (Cambridge, Mass., November 1969).

Casillas Santos, Angela. *Luquillo: Notas para su historia* (Oficina Estatal de Preservación Histórica: San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1984).

Julbe Rivera, Jean M. *El positivado de un "corporate architect": un arquitecto puertorriqueño al que su obra bastó como voz* (Mid Career Research Project, Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico, 2011), unpublished.

Laboy Aponte, Christian. *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.

Libro del año 1956-57: *Enciclopedia de Datos Útiles y Conocimientos Prácticos sobre Puerto Rico y lo que se debe saber de Índole Internacional*. (San Juan: Puerto Rico. Editorial El Imparcial, Inc., 1956-57)

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

Laura Torres de Feliciano, Ed. *Cidra... 1809-2010, espíritu bicentenario*, (Cidra, Puerto Rico; incCreativeSolutions, 2010),

Vélez Cardona, Waldemiro. *El tránsito hacia una sociedad industrial y urbana: la historia de Puerto Rico en imágenes*. (Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras, 2007)

## Internet

[http://map1.msc.fema.gov/idms/IntraList.cgi?displ=wsp/item\\_10636892.txt](http://map1.msc.fema.gov/idms/IntraList.cgi?displ=wsp/item_10636892.txt)

<http://www.encyclopediapr.org/esp/article.cfm?ref=09032603&page=2>

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/18624883/EL-TRANSITO-HACIA-UNA-SOCIEDAD>

Puerto Rico Planning Board, *Geolocalizador: Interactive Map of the Land Registry*, [http://gis.jp.pr.gov/GeoLocalizador/Internet/for\\_plot\\_number\\_120-005-064-05](http://gis.jp.pr.gov/GeoLocalizador/Internet/for_plot_number_120-005-064-05).

**Interviews**

José González, Oficina de Rentas Públicas, Municipality of Luquillo

Rafael Sánchez Navarro, former employee and manager of *La Williams*.

Beatriz Rodríguez, *Oficina de Documentos Públicos*, Municipality of Luquillo

Dinorah Sánchez, Secretary, Municipal Assembly, Municipality of Luquillo

**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 (0.49 acre) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>20</u>	<u>212715</u>	<u>2033374</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 Williams Products Corp.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

---

name/title Arq. Jorge Rigau, FAIA  
organization Jorge Rigau Arquitectos date August 22, 2012  
street& number 67 calle Los baños, 1er piso telephone (787) 982-0002  
city or town San Juan Puerto Rico 00911  
e-mail rigau@jorgerigau.com

---

**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)

---

**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. Williams Products Corp.
2. Luquillo, Puerto Rico
3. Guillermo Marrero, AIT
4. February 08, 2012
5. Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico
6. Southeast elevation, looking northwest. Front facade towards road # 992. As it stands today, the building retains its modern proportions and key distinctive elements (strip window, canopy, thin steel columns).
7. #0001

- 
1. Williams Products Corp.
  2. Luquillo, Puerto Rico
  3. Guillermo Marrero, AIT
  4. February 08, 2012
  5. Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico
  6. Southeast elevation detail, looking northeast. Entrance Canopy and Strip Window. Supported by thin steel columns, the thin, concrete slab canopy highlights the entrance. Continuous eaves surround the strip window.
  7. #0002

- 
1. Williams Products Corp.
  2. Luquillo, Puerto Rico
  3. Guillermo Marrero, AIT
  4. February 08, 2012
  5. Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico
  6. Northeast elevation, looking northwest. The northeast façade (right) stretches to the back of the site, evidencing the three successive stages through which it came to be. These first two bays include metal, louvered windows, but one of them substitutes a former access door to the property's initial loading dock.
  7. #0003
-

1. Williams Products Corp.
  2. Luquillo, Puerto Rico
  3. Guillermo Marrero, AIT
  4. February 08, 2012
  5. Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico
  6. Interior elevation, looking northeast. Inside the manufacturing plant, within the production area (now empty), concrete columns are laid out in 30'-0" x 30'-0" structural bays, ceiling heights fluctuating between 12'-0" to 15'-0" high. Floors are finished in polished concrete and grooved intermittently to provide expansion joints. The open space is unhindered by any partitions.
  7. #0004
-

**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:)

*Jon Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

*11-14-12*  
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**

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)

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

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/ Manufacturing facility

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Williams Products Corp.

Luquillo, 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.

WILLIAMS PRODUCTS CORP., LUQUILLO, PUERTO RICO

Location: PR-992, KM. 0.3 LUQUILLO, PUERTO RICO 00773  
UTM Reference: 20,212715,2033374  
Acreage of Property: Less than one acre (0.49 ACRE)



JORGE RIGAU  
ARQUITECTOS



- ◀ Contributing resource
- Property boundary

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Williams Products Corp.

Luquillo, Puerto Rico

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

Section number 10

Page 2

10. Geographical Data

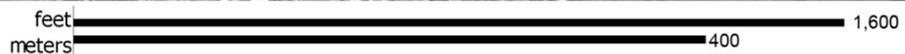
The limits of the plot were obtained from the official boundaries map provided by the Puerto Rico Planning Board. The boundaries of the nominated resource are identified by an outline. Image taken from Google Earth.

WILLIAMS PRODUCTS CORP., LUQUILLO, PUERTO RICO

Location: PR-992, KM. 0.3 LUQUILLO, PUERTO RICO 00773  
UTM Reference: 20,212715,2033374  
Acreage of Property: Less than one acre (0.49 ACRE)



JORGE RIGAU  
ARQUITECTOS



- ◀ Contributing resource
- Property boundary