

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 María Dávila Semidey School
other names/site number Escuela María Dávila Semidey

2. Location

street& number 300 Muñoz Rivera Street N/A not for publication
city or town Patillas vicinity
state Puerto Rico code PR county Patillas code 109 zip code 00723

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 Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office
Title 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): _____

For Edoan H. Beall
 Signature of the Keeper

11.14.12
 Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
 (Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
1	0	Total

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

Early XXth Century Schools Puerto Rico, 1900-1930

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/ School

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/ School

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Mixed: Beaux Arts and Spanish Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Concrete

roof: Concrete

other: Terracotta tiles

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.)

The *María Dávila Semidey School*, located at #300 Muñoz Rivera Street in the Municipality of Patillas, Puerto Rico, is a two stories high, reinforced concrete building of longitudinal proportions, erected at the entrance of town, three urban blocks west of the town's plaza, close to the cemetery and other municipal institutions. The twelve-classroom school was built between 1929 and 1930 on a 0.75-acre, trapezoidal lot. The architect of record was Rafael Carmoega, Chief Architect for the Division of Public Works of Puerto Rico's Department of the Interior Office. Carmoega was responsible for some of the most noteworthy projects of the period, but construction plans specifically credit Puerto Rican architect Francisco Gardón Vega as the school's designer. Among the Island's most notable architects who worked in the Neoclassical and Spanish Revival styles, Gardón penned several other important academic buildings in the Island. To this day, the *María Dávila Semidey School* remains relatively well preserved and retains architectural/historic integrity. The resource continues to claim urban relevance in its original location; the surrounding setting still contributes to make it a preeminent urban presence in Patillas. In terms of design, the school retains the initial volumetric disposition and all of its imaginative ornamental elements, whose original materials have been preserved, and are highly illustrative of the craftsmanship and general workmanship of the period. Architectural integrity and permanence regarding function nurture feeling and association from users, alumni, and visitors, in general.

Narrative Description

The *María Dávila Semidey School* lies on a corner lot shaped as a trapezoid, located on the outskirts of *Barrio Pueblo*, at the edge of *Barrio Cacao Alto*, amidst the low laying plains of the southeastern coastal town of Patillas, Puerto Rico. Constructed in a lot originally embracing 0.75 acres (3,187 m²), the building occupies a footprint of 650 square meters. The school's main façade faces *calle Muñoz Rivera*, Patillas' key vehicular and pedestrian artery running east/west. This street was for a long time considered the main entrance to town; now other options are available. South of the school, an open space built in 2007 to honor past town mayors, includes patterned paving, round, oversized bollards, traditional lampposts, and two large commemorative plaques in bronze, lit at night by floodlights installed at ground level, over two individual concrete bases. To the southwest, a building occupied by *The Puerto Rico Telephone Company* partially adjoins the plaza. Patillas' Municipal Cemetery is the next neighbor west. *Calle Esmeralda* (formerly known as *Callejón San*

*Lorenzo*¹) constitutes the school's site limit to the West. Across Esmeralda Street rises the *Angelita Lind* Baseball Park. To the east, *Quebrada Mamey* (a channeled creek) borders the school's lot. A bridge over Luis Muñoz Rivera Street² spans above the creek, leading into Patillas' urban core and, further east, local key institutions like: town hall, the *Pedro Albizu Campos Art & History Museum*, the electronic public library, and other municipal facilities. North of the property are located additional academic components: small-sized buildings used by the *Marín Bajo School*, as well as the *Josefina Muñoz de Bernier Middle School*.

The school's site topography is primarily flat. A combination of low to mid-height concrete walls closes off the school's property. These include segments of the original concrete balustrades, and chain-link fence segments above these and along the perimeter. 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. A few ornamental plants grow scattered; predominantly shrubs and mid-to-high-level trees edge the front side of the lot. Their foliage covers a good portion of the school's main façade. Among the most notable are five (5) *palmas reales* (*Roystonea borinquena*, Puerto Rico Royal Palm) that tower as high as the building and frame the *María Dávila Semidey's* name inscription included as bas-relief in the main façade. These palms are not featured in the original design. An *úcar* (*Bucida buceras*, Ucar) also grows in the front patio and, east of it, rises a *guamá americano* (*Pithecellobium dulce*, Madras thorn). The existing vegetation has changed throughout the years. Except for the royal palms in linear disposition, the haphazardness of the other vegetation betrays the lack of any particular landscaping intention.

The school is set back 33'-0" feet from the property limit along Muñoz Rivera Street, sitting lower than the artery, as the result of road improvements throughout time. In the center of the front patio, an octagonal concrete planter (1'-6" high) of crude construction lies on axis with the main facade. The planter has a protruding base and a curved cap. On its base, two inscriptions (bas-reliefs) read "*Clase de 1935*" (Class of '35) to one side, and "*Asociación de Padres y Maestros*" (Parents and Teachers' Association) on another. At center, two cement posts (each with a pyramidal top, and both bridged together by a round metal tube) hold up an old bell, suspended above the planter by an iron chain as a remainder of past, long gone schooldays.³

A few solid, rectangular benches border a paved pedestrian pathway, while two flagpole bases in the ground, being deprived of any masts, no longer perform any practical function. These elements are all in concrete. Other benches are in poured terrazzo, shaped through formwork. To the east, stands an open kiosk for students to gather informally. It incorporates concrete benches, cylindrical columns in iron, and a wooden roof protected by corrugated zinc panels. To the west, the space between the school and *Esmeralda Street* is limited, as the latter cuts across diagonally, making the property site longer towards *Muñoz Rivera Street*, but shorter as it extends north of it. A television satellite dish within this cramped space further limits it. At the school's southwestern end, however, grow trees of varied species: *reina de las flores* (Queen of the Flowers, *Lagerstroemia speciosa*), *roble blanco* (White Cedar, *Tabebuia heterophylla*) and, *plátano* (Plantain, *Musa spp.*). The backyard evidences successive repaving in asphalt, and concrete, showing unlevelled remnants of both

¹ The street is also known as *calle Don Paulino Rodríguez Bernier*. Don Paulino (1893-1971) was a local writer, historian, and professor.

² The bridge and the adjacent sidewalks had to be reconstructed in response to flooding caused from heavy rains over Puerto Rico from September 21 to 23, 2008. Its construction was finished in early 2009.

³ The original provenance of the bell, however, has not been confirmed.

finishes. Low walls enclose a trash bin, garbage area. West of the backyard, an electrical substation includes iron posts for its protection from any vehicle approaching it from the premises. Chain link fence separates the backyard from a basketball court shared by all the surrounding academic facilities.

At the east and west facades, a two-foot wide paving strip in cement has been provided where the building meets the ground, in order to channel rain water coming from the roof into the school site's catch basins. Exposed PVC, one-inch, water piping runs at surface along the east end of the site, where the chain-link fence has been partially removed, allowing improvised access to the adjacent creek. Three concrete steps constitute the single remains of a concrete bridge that used to cross over *Quebrada Mamey* to provide a shortcut to town by reaching *Las Flores Street, east of the creek*. An African tulip tree (*Tulipán africano, Spathodea campanulata*) rises towards the extreme northeast section of the school's site.

Throughout the decades, the school has lodged all public, K-12 educational levels: elementary, intermediate and high school. Along time, several smaller buildings have been clustered incrementally behind the school's originally more extended playground, and used as complementary classroom facilities, storage rooms, a dining area, and restrooms, including the aforementioned basketball court. Pedestrian access is now available from only one of two of the building's original entrances from *Muñoz Rivera Street*. Upon entering the school grounds by car from *Esmeralda Street*, an irregularly asphalted parking lot for faculty and guests welcomes students and visitors alike. In adjacency, beyond the garbage disposal area, is located a former cafeteria, now used as additional teaching space. Further east, a three classroom, rectangular shed-roofed structure with restrooms provides added academic facilities.

The applicable land zoning classification for the site nowadays pertains to DT-G (*Distrito Dotacional General*) as defined by the Puerto Rico Planning Board.⁴ The school's lot sits in an area prone to flooding⁵. It is probable that, being aware (or having experienced first hand) the site's proclivity for flooding, at the school's inception, governmental authorities and designers decided to rise the first level of the property a few feet above grade. Said architectural "move" also delays direct heat transmission to the floor slabs, guaranteeing lower temperatures in Puerto Rico's hot, humid tropical climate. This concern was so prevalent in the early 20th century that many building codes at the time required a separation between ground and first floor to allow for airflow.⁶ The original ventilators are still visible throughout the school's base, still sporting the same iron grills provided at the time of construction. This constitutes just one of the many details pursuant to the original design of a building whose architectural merits are plentiful.

The two-story school is articulated into three (3) volumes, a main, larger one, flanked by a pair of smaller, identical bodies at either side. The hierarchical volume is rectangular, measuring 91'-6" along its longitudinal axis, with a depth of 57'-8", and a height of 31'-6". In terms of plan composition,

⁴ Puerto Rico Planning Board, Geolocalizador: Interactive Map of the Land Registry, <http://gis.jp.pr.gov/GeoLocalizador/Internet/> for plot number - 398-078-042-01

⁵School location categorized as ZONE AE Floodable. Federal Emergency Management Agency Panel 1770h- Map number 72000C1770H, revised April 19, 2005.

⁶The subject has been expounded by 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 *Puerto Rico 1900: Turn-of-the-century Architecture in the Caribbean* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992).

the adjoining, smaller, lower bodies are aligned with the main volume's longitudinal axis, and both are set back 11'-6" from the school's front and back elevations (south and north, respectively). Each one of these flanking volumes measures 21'-5" long x 34'-8" deep. Considering all three volumes together, the building's total length along Luis Muñoz Rivera Street adds up to 134'-4".

All classroom spaces are housed within the main volume, and reached by a double-loaded, 8'-0" wide corridor that runs east/west, at center. Three classrooms face north, and three others face south. This layout is similar on both floors. At each of its ends, the corridor reaches the previously mentioned flanking volumes. This is where stairs, restrooms, and other supporting spaces are located. On each flanking volume, at ground level, the school's entrances, office space, and hallways leading to the outside and the building's inner corridor are lodged. Above them - on the upper floor - stair, corridor and restrooms echo the first floor layout, but incorporate additional office space, added after the original construction was completed over what was originally an open terrace.⁷ Concrete beams, bracketed where they join the walls, articulate the lobby area from the rest of the public circulation. Iron grills (sliding, non-original) isolate the building's corridor from other spaces when needed.

The school's entrance doors at both ends (east and west) of the main building body are reached by climbing four outdoor steps and reaching a concrete platform with plinth, post, and balustrade with banister, all in cement. The post is detailed with inlay panels; the balustrade is transparent, with semicircular elements stringed along and on top of each other. The twin entrances underline the overall symmetrical arrangement of the school, in keeping with the Beaux Arts. The name *María Dávila Semidey*, at center, underlines the balanced condition further. Given the extension of the building's main volume - and the setback of its adjacent bodies - one entrance is not visible from another, which must have made difficult any single-access control of the premises.

Through the manipulation of myriad architectural elements characteristic of the Beaux Arts Period (cornices, moldings, reveals, friezes, and other trims raised from wall surfaces for emphasis) the designer provided the school's main volume with abundant horizontal lines that emphasize its importance. On the outside of the south facade, to perceptually aggrandize the height of the ground floor, a decorative cornice runs through the facade - not at floor slab or ceiling level, which remain unaccounted for - but at "high-waist", underneath the sill of the upper level windows. This grants an over slung scale to the school building, partly responsible for the monumental presence it exerts in town.

While the south elevation of the building emphasizes primarily plain wall surfaces and horizontality - simultaneously, but in contrast - pilasters contribute convey verticality. This is achieved through the expressive bas-relief treatment of four (4) flat, engaged columns, made richer through the inclusion of inset panels within them and projecting capitels, also providing classical urns as finials at the top of a parapet that crowns the roof of the main volume. Two classical pilasters frame the volume's central axis; the other two - by not being at the end corners, but several feet away from them, and rising as high as the other pair - tend to "shrink" visually the overall length of the three-unit composition, making it appear more vertical.

⁷ AGPR, Fondo: Obras Públicas; Serie: Edificios Escolares; Caja: 1154; Leg. 249, Exp. 1. Original plans and specifications for the *María Dávila Semidey School* - as well as some related official correspondence - are preserved at Puerto Rico's National Archive in San Juan.

All elevations were stuccoed in cement to achieve a flat finish. In particular, most of the back façade appears as an abstract, wholesome wall plane, devoid of any ornamentation, in spite of the setback of the adjoining volumes. In this northern elevation – at the main volume - six groups of five windows each (three per floor) are laid out symmetrically, echoing the school's internal classroom disposition. Window openings are rectangular and vertical; all of them now house aluminum, operable jalousies. The sets of five windows are closely spaced and “read” as a horizontal field in the overall building composition. Thin, flat concrete columns separate one window from the other, mullion-like, instead of being perceived as full wall segments. The three sets of windows at ground level include individual, security iron grills for protection from vandalism. Flat, C-shaped concrete eaves shelter, in eyebrow manner, each of the six five-window groups. The eaves add depth and horizontality to an otherwise bare façade, whose only articulations consist of a ground floor base and an uppermost cornice at the top of the roof parapet. The elevations of volumes adjoining the school's main body are also spare. They include five square windows (with eaves) and the door that leads outside from each. Facing north, several condensing units for air conditioning have been placed over the window eaves. Additional brackets provided to hang condensing units from the wall, with no other support, remain bolted to the walls, even when the equipment is no longer there. Electrical piping and paraphernalia appear at random, seemingly having been added with only pragmatic, immediate considerations at hand. Two outdoor light fixtures, also for security, project out from the school's main volume, below the next to last window in its uppermost floor.

As it happens in the property's main volume, the façades facing south of the east and west volumes also exhibit greater ornamental emphasis. After all, access to the school was originally through the entrance doors located within them. As designed, one approached the building through a series of concrete sidewalks leading to a four-step stoop. On the west entrance, nowadays, a concrete ramp has replaced the steps⁸.

Both set back elevations facing south are similar. Iron panels now substitute the original 5'-0" wide doors. The door transom, a surmounted arch (whose curve begins above the impost line) has been sealed off in concrete. The original door surround remains, decorated with a “*perlario*”, in the manner of stringed pearls. Above it, a cornice iterates horizontality and frames an inlay panel with a decorative shield at center. This classical escutcheon repeats the pearl motif. Also of importance in these façades are a pilaster (at center), and a window (with an iron grill) for ventilation of the office space behind it. On the second floor, four windows line up; they belong to a space added later (in concrete) above what was originally an open terrace. At both additions, their rectangular proportions match that of the original fenestration in the rest of the building. An air conditioning condensing units sits above it.

East and west of facades of the property are alike. Restroom windows at both floors are similar to the ones used elsewhere in the property. However, they have been sealed off with cement block and provided with a small aluminum jalousie window. The one at the ground floor has been protected with an iron grill. Two window openings (one on top of the other) bring light into the stairs through ornamental cement blocks (on the east) and a chain link fence enclosure (to the west). These were added in substitution of original glass pane windows. The lower opening is rectangular and incorporates an “eared” (crossed surround). Its cornice acts as sill to the upper, arched window right on top of it, crowned by a bracketed keystone. At the top, the advent of the Spanish Revival

⁸The west entrance is now the single one to the school because students and pedestrians access the site through a sliding iron gate right in front of it, at Luis Muñoz Rivera Street. The east entrance has no direct pedestrian access, as it was washed away by the September 2008 rains and later condemned by a chain-link fence and concrete wall.

taste is made evident. After all, the project had been described as follows: “*The building will be in Spanish style with simple and adequate ornamentation.*”⁹ A single string of red clay roof tiles sits above the coping. Two eight-inch (8”) PVC pipes, surface mounted, now bring water from the rooftops to the ground.

Past each entrance at either side of the school, rectangular vestibules can be reached. On the easternmost one, closest to town, a small office used to lodge the school principal’s office. Now dedicated for counselors and social workers’ use, this room still keeps its original door transom for ventilation, and a metal sign that reads “PRINCIPAL”, as a keepsake of where the headmaster performed his/her duties. Although all doors in the school have been replaced, most retain the original perforated transom that granted much welcome aeration in times before the advent of air conditioning.

Reinforced concrete, for reasons of economy, durability and appearance was used in the construction of the building. Floors of corridors, offices, and restrooms are of 3” concrete slab at the ground floor, but 4.5” on the second floor. Exterior steps/ramps and interior double tread stairs are also in concrete. On both floors, the space underneath the stairs is used as a storage area. Restrooms are provided with lavatories, water closets, toilet partitions, and urinals and slop sinks. Wall and floor ceramic is of the inexpensive type and has been installed rather crudely. Significant alterations have occurred in these spaces; a pocket area has been closed off for additional storage, and all original stalls and equipments have been replaced. Having removed the original wood ceiling, iron pipes for rain discharge from the roof are now exposed. On the second floor, the ample, generous space located between the classroom corridor and the stairs has been appropriated for office space, locating within it a plywood panel shed with an air conditioning wall unit of its own, looking unto the stair shaft. Classroom and hallway floors are finished in polished cement, slightly grooved to imitate a traditional, reticulated flooring pattern. The pattern’s module size varies from space to space.

At the *María Dávila Semidey School*, the twelve-classrooms remain the most important spaces of the building. Each one measures 24’-0” x 30’-0” feet, and is laid out lengthwise, parallel to the 8’-0” wide, double loaded corridor. On the ground floor, a classroom oriented northwest has been converted into temporary office space for administrative use, incorporating gypsum board wall partitions, 2’-0” x 4’-0” acoustic ceiling tiles, fluorescent lighting, and air conditioning diffuser grilles. In addition, the classroom directly across the administration now performs as a library/audiovisual room. At all ground floor classrooms, exposed electrical infrastructure, fluorescent lighting, utility sinks, air conditioning units (split system) and science laboratory furniture constitute the most visible additions/alterations found in these spaces.

On the second floor, the two wings of classroom are roofed differently. A concrete slab covers classrooms facing north; those facing south have a joist-and-metal deck roof. In the former, electrical conduits are exposed and hang from the bottom of the roof slab, as do fluorescent lighting fixtures. The room that is oriented towards the northeast is divided into two dissimilar-size spaces by means of a temporary wall built with plywood panels. The smaller space serves the special education student population; the other is used as a regular classroom. In contrast with its northern counterpart, the

⁹ AGPR, Fondo: Obras Públicas; Serie: Edificios Escolares; Caja: 1154; Leg. 249, Exp.1. Gobierno de Puerto Rico. Departamento del Interior, División de Edificios Públicos. *Memoria descriptiva para la construcción de un edificio escuela de doce salones de hormigón para Patillas, Puerto Rico*. Mimeographed copy, no date, M-1.

south wing is roofed by an open web joists' system in steel and a metal deck with a poured concrete slab. The overlaying roof structure is occluded from view by a 2'-0" x 4'-0" acoustic tile ceiling system.

Spanning nearly 90'-0" wide, the three classrooms facing south at ground level originally included folding doors in between them. These opened up to provide the school with an extended assembly area the size of three classrooms. Performances, graduations, and other official activities were held here. Comparable strategies for flexibility were incorporated in other schools of the period.¹⁰ The original folding dividers, drawn in detail in the plans for construction are no longer in place; temporary, fixed plywood walls have replaced them, with no other consequence than temporarily lacking the flexibility granted by the retractable wall partitions.

The Impact of Time

The *María Dávila Semidey School* remains the most monumental of all institutional buildings built in Patillas to this day, unequaled in scale or in the appropriation and recombination of classical ornamentation. It retains all its key distinguishing and distinctive architectural attributes. In spite of a pair of inconsequential additions that covered up two small terraces east and west of the school, the original building massing and internal disposition prevail. The intended architectural composition retains integrity. Since it was built 90 years ago, the property has been used as a public educational facility for elementary, junior high and high school students. To a certain extent, the fact that it still serves its original purpose has limited any drastic transformation of the property unrelated to its initial reason for being. In simultaneity, it has succeeded in grafting the school into the collective memory of many people from Patillas who received their earliest lessons within its walls. However, impromptu additions, crude repairs, and lack of maintenance – conditions often pursuant to lack of funds and planning from its owner, the Education Department of Puerto Rico – have consistently challenged the school's architectural demeanor. Luckily, so far, the inflictions have not yet affected permanently the building, although the grounds have not run the same course.

The school's site, once provided with an open and ample playground, is now shared with another local academic facility from the 1970's, *Escuela Josefina Muñoz de Bernier*, and has been somewhat cramped with additional buildings added throughout the years to fulfill expanded program offerings. A basketball court (in steel and metal deck) overpowers the back of the lot. This echoes similar conditions around the Island, where Puerto Rico's Department of Education has tried to make the most out of its originally generous lots, now insufficient to accommodate growth. Limited frontage has also been a by-product of progress at the *Dávila Semidey School*, whose southern patio was diminished by engineering improvements to Muñoz Rivera Street. A variety of trees, including palm trees and other vegetation have been added here, impeding clear visibility of the school.

All windows originally in wood (with operable louvers, glass panes, and shutters) have been substituted more than once, the last time resorting to aluminum jalousies. Nevertheless, the proportions of most original openings have been retained and/or are retrievable. Where needed, some original window openings have been walled up to fit the smaller dimensions of the new windows. On the ground floor, security bars have been placed over the window openings. Minor damage and poor paint jobs impinge now upon several architectural finishes. The original classical ornamental detailing remains unaltered; only two original escutcheons located east and west of the south façade are gone.

¹⁰ For example, the *Rafael Balseiro Maceira School*, in Barceloneta; *Eugenio María de Hostos School*, at Las Marías; *Jose Fontán School*, in Morovis; and the *Daniel J. Webster School*, in Peñuelas.

At different locations throughout the building, air conditioning units protrude from a metal louvered window, and condensing units rest over concrete eaves, or sit on the ground. Refrigerant lines as well as electrical conduits and cables are often exposed. For security reasons, exterior lighting has been installed at all facades. Many of these lighting fixtures do not work, but have been left in place, nevertheless. Oversized PVC drainage pipes run down the east and west façades. Also visible on the school grounds are two satellite dishes, one on top of the roof and the other near an electrical transformer on the west side patio.

Although molded reinforced concrete was the primary construction material, designers originally endorsed a combined system. Roofs were erected in wood, but above the double loaded corridor, a concrete slab would be provided. The system of rafters and joists would slant inwards, towards the slab roof. Rafters used were 2" x 6" and 2" x 8", and purlins 1 ½" x 6", while floor joists were 2" x 12". Wooden plugs were used to anchor the roof to the purlins, secured in place by galvanized iron screws. Above the classrooms, the wooden roof was covered with corrugated galvanized iron, and provided with flashing and counter flashing. Most areas are now roofed in concrete; the three classrooms to south are covered by a metal deck and joist system.

Inside, the spatial flexibility originally granted by the retractable accordion doors has been temporarily lost. The fixed, plywood panel walls that now replace them impede the joint use of the three classroom spaces as an assembly space. Wooden floors at classrooms were oiled; wooden fenestration was stained. Doors were paneled, crowned with ventilation transoms. Paneled shutters complemented casement windows with glass panes. Cement floors have been repaired haphazardly and in some areas painted over. The original stairs remain, but several steps need repair. Stair railings are not ADA compliant. The arched stair windows have lost their original glass and wood fenestration, but the original "eared" surround, its cornice, the arch trim and its ornamental keystone, all remain. In substitution, the stair windows are closed off with chain-linked fencing and steel reinforcement construction bars to the west, and decorative concrete blocks to the east. Iron grill gates slide to control access to the corridors on both floors. 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.

Through the decades, however, most changes have been related to the substitution of all wood components of the building, including the roof, classroom floors, and most fenestration. C-shaped, concrete eaves over the windows are not original; construction plans called for none. At a date that has not been confirmed, these eaves were most certainly added for control of incoming rain, given the tall height of the window openings. These eaves could have been incorporated when the original roof and floors were substituted. Illumination is now of the fluorescent type, where it used to be incandescent. Much of the electrical and plumbing systems has been repaired or replaced.

In its current state, the *María Dávila Semidey* 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 overwhelm most adjacent urban elements. Moreover, size and bearing are not the only distinguishing features; composition and craftsmanship are equally ennobling traits of the school. With a life span of close to a century, it is surprising that change has not brought about detrimental architectural transformations to the property. That electrical and plumbing improvements had to be made to bring systems up to date is to be expected. That the advent of air conditioning would be considered conducive to a better learning environment is also understandable.

Less justifiable is the expediency that ruled all related building initiatives. Concrete walls have been hammered over, sometimes perforated. Repairs in plaster have not been harmonious; paint has been applied over without special care. In summation, the school has weathered well its extended existence. The resource continues to claim urban relevance in its original location; the surrounding setting still contributes to make it a preeminent urban presence in Patillas. In terms of design, the school retains the initial volumetric disposition and all of its imaginative ornamental elements, whose original materials have been preserved, and are highly illustrative of the workmanship of the period. Architectural integrity and permanence regarding function nurture feeling and association from users, alumni, and visitors, in general.

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1929-1962

Significant Dates

1929, 1930

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

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 within the past 50 years.

Architect/Builder

Gardón Vega, Francisco

Carmoeaga, Rafael

Capestany, Rogelio

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance of the property starts when the building was built in 1929-30 and closes at the 50 year cut off date (1962).

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

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

The *María Dávila Semidey School* is significant statewide under *Criterion C* (Architecture). The building constitutes a standard-bearer regarding early 20th century institutional design in Puerto Rico. Representative of many other public, educational facilities erected in the Island at that time, the *María Dávila Semidey School* epitomizes the joint adoption (often devoid from academic correctness) of *Beaux Arts* and Spanish Revival styles as a valid architectural expression. Two key figures were linked to the school's inception. Francisco Gardón Vega designed it; Rafael Carmoega was architect of record. In Puerto Rico, Gardón Vega's design talents were responsible for several other, high profile, academic buildings during the 1920's and 30's. Under such considerations, the *María Dávila Semidey School* simultaneously exemplifies the distinctive school building types of the early 20th century, but also of individual distinction in Architecture.

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

In the early 20th century, Puerto Rico's initial public school building efforts span from 1900 to 1930, as stated in the thematic nomination that addresses the subject. During three (3) decades, many architectural samples of significance were produced, impacting the urban profile and people of many towns. Through engagement in the design and construction of these schools, Puerto Rico became familiar with many stylistic, formal, climatic, and technological concerns regarding the construction of educational facilities in the United States. Concerns regarding placement of schools in a site; different applicable building typologies; proclivities and preconceptions regarding the appropriateness of one style above the other; and the societal impact of such undertakings, led to the development of an architecture of consequence. Myriad influences underscore the thirty-year period (1900 to 1930) by which these public schools were built, but three (3) identifiable phases roughly coincide with each decade. Having been built in 1929-30, the *Webster School* constitutes a paradigmatic product of the last period (1920-1930).

In the years before 1920, construction of school buildings in Puerto Rico had followed a rather slow pace.¹¹ Diverse causes proved to be catalytic: the hemispherical impact of World War I; local political strife about the ratification of the Jones Act, and; labor strikes, all of it having great impact on a rapidly changing social panorama. During the 20's, however, sugar spurred an economic boom that was shared by private industry and government. Most municipalities benefited from it, directly or indirectly, many of them committing matching funds to build up to date schools within their districts. In 1923, the local government set aside one million dollars to complement their efforts.¹² Government

¹¹ Ángela López Borrero, *Mi Escuelita: Educación y arquitectura en Puerto Rico*.(San Juan, Puerto Rico: Editorial Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2005), 141.

¹² See Teachers' College, Columbia University, *A Survey of the Public Educational System in Puerto Rico* (New York City, Bureau of Publications, 1926), 19-20: "At various times since 1900, the insular government has also appropriated sums

debenture loans were awarded to qualifying municipalities for the construction of hundreds of schools throughout the Island.¹³ To secure proper academic facilities for Patillas, on September 7, 1925, José R. Díaz, town mayor, requested the Puerto Rico's Commissioner of the Interior to prepare construction documents for a concrete building to house twelve (12) classrooms. Six months later, on February 8, 1926, architect Rafael Carmoega presented the plans to the Commissioner of Education for his approval. In a communication to that effect, Carmoega mentions that construction of the project will be funded through the municipal debenture loan.¹⁴

Juan B. Huyke, then Commissioner of Education, promptly replied on February 13, 1926, denying approval of the plans until some details regarding the building site's acquisition were ironed out. Almost two months later, on May 6, Luis C. Marrero requests the Department of the Interior to confirm the size of chosen site, as measured by the agency's engineers¹⁵ because the Municipality needed it to prepare the corresponding deed. On a copy of the telegram appears what seems to be the answer, handwritten later: "4113m² Sea 1 cuerda con 4 centimos". By June 17, in a memorandum to Mike Rivera (from the Department of the Interior) the Engineer in charge of Municipal Works, R. Rodríguez López, stated that the lot capacity has been verified to conform 4,113 square meters.¹⁶

The change of location caused additional delays. First consulted about the initial choice of site for construction of the school at Patillas, the Sanitary Engineer at the Office of the Commissioner of Health had granted his approval through Permit No. 4295 on February 24, 1926. On November 27 of the same year, architect Carmoega requests reapproval of the project on the second choice site, in order to proceed with the bidding process. Unfortunately, extant historic documentation falls short regarding information about what happened next.¹⁷ For reasons unknown, a year went by. Labeled as "Project No. 1529", and comprising four sheets of plans dated November 27, 1927, the twelve-classroom school for Patillas was approved by the Sanitary Engineer on August 15, 1928. Huyke, the Commissioner of Education stamps his approval on August 21st, less than a week later. The school would be built in a plot of land (the second choice) bought by the Municipality from members of *Sucesión Cervera Massari*, descendants of 19-th century Corsican immigrants to Patillas.

Three weeks later – on September 13, 1928 - Puerto Rico was hit by Hurricane San Felipe, rated as a Category 5 storm, the only one of that category that has so far impacted Puerto Rico and, as such, one of the most devastating ever to reach the Island. Surprisingly enough (but maybe spurred by the spirit of renewal and commitment that characteristically follows disasters), the school's construction was bid only two months after the storm, on November 28. The municipal assembly, as

for the erection of school buildings. The last considerable appropriation was in 1923, when one million dollars were set-aside for this purpose. The increasing tendency has been, however, to place upon the municipalities... the burden of providing and maintaining schoolhouses."

¹³ A *debenture loan* is "a type of debt instrument that is not secured by physical asset or collateral. Debentures are backed only by the general creditworthiness and reputation of the issuer. Both corporations and governments frequently issue this type of bond in order to secure capital. Like other types of bonds, debentures are documented in an indenture... Debentures have no collateral. Bond buyers generally purchase debentures based on the belief that the bond issuer is unlikely to default on the repayment. From: <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/debenture.asp#ixzz20j28RYu2>

¹⁴AGPR, Fondo: Obras Públicas; Serie: Edificios Escolares; Caja: 1154; Leg. 249, Exp.1. Letter dated Feb 8, 1926, from architect Rafael Carmoega to Juan B. Huyke, Commissioner of Education.

¹⁵ Idem., Luis C. Marrero is identified as "*alcalde*" in the telegram, but no record states he held such position. The mayor for Patillas at that time (1926) was José R. Díaz.

¹⁶ Idem., Memorandum from R. RodríguezLópez to Mike Rivera, dated June 17, 1926.

¹⁷ Historic documents from the period of construction have only been found at Puerto Rico's National Archive. The municipality, the Department of Education, and the school could not provide any material of investigative relevance.

certified by its secretary José Maurás, agreed to award the school's construction contract to Rogelio Capestany for the amount of \$35,500.¹⁸ The certifying document underlines:

*"...construction of the building is an urgent necessity given that, as a consequence of the recent hurricane [San Felipe], the facilities that housed graded schools are now in ruinous conditions, this being detrimental to public education".*¹⁹

On January 4, 1929 Rogelio Capestany signed the construction contract.²⁰ The design was carried out under the aegis of Rafael Carmoega, Chief Architect for the Division of Public Works of Puerto Rico's Department of the Interior Office, but its development was entrusted to Francisco Gardón Vega.

Gardón Vega (1891-1938) worked at the local Department of the Interior as a draftsman from 1909 to 1912, before moving to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he pursued a career in architecture at the *Carnegie Institute of Technology*.²¹ In 1915, he abandoned his studies to relocate in New York, where he worked with various architectural and engineering firms. That same year, Gardón enrolled at the *American School of Correspondence* from where, in 1921, he was awarded an architect's certificate.²² He remained in the United States until 1925, at that time working for the State Commission on Bridges and Tunnels of New York. Upon his return to Puerto Rico, Gardón rejoined the Public Buildings Division of the Department of the Interior, where he worked as a draftsman until early 1936.²³ During this period, he designed the *María Dávila Semidey School*, and several others in Puerto Rico: *José M. Gallardo High School* in Juncos, and *Daniel J. Webster School*, in Peñuelas, in 1927; *Andrés Flores López School*, in Canóvanas, in 1928; *Rafael Nicolau School*, in Aguas Buenas, and *Escuela Eugenio María de Hostos*, in Las Marías, in 1930.²⁴

Gardón remained in the Department of the Interior until January 18, 1936 when he requested – along with Rafael Carmoega - a transfer to the *Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration*, the local government agency responsible for implementing many of the *New Deal* initiatives on the Island. In said agency, Gardón Vega joined an architectural team entrusted with developing buildings for the University of Puerto Rico, in Río Piedras. Named "*University Buildings Division*", the group of designers that Gardón joined included other architects. Augusto Plard, Rafael Hernández Romero, William Schimmelpfennig, and others, were working during those years (1935-38) in several buildings for the quadrangle of the university. In particular, Gardón participated in the design of the Agustín Stahl Building (with architect Joseph O'Kelly, and the Library (now Registrar's Building; with Engineer José Font in 1935).

¹⁸Supra.,Municipal Certification from José Maurás, Municipal Secretary, dated December 10, 1928, but regarding the municipal assembly's approval of the contract award at an extraordinary session held on December 9, the day before.

¹⁹ Idem.

²⁰ Roberto Capestany was mayor of the nearby town of Guayama from 1923-1924.

²¹ Much of the biographical information on Francisco Gardón Vega here quoted was provided by the *Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción de la Universidad de Puerto Rico*.

²² The American School of Correspondence, founded in 1897 is a distance education high school, pioneer in the field of home study in the United States.

²³ The architect certificate awarded by the American School of Correspondence did not allow Gardón to obtain a license to practice Architecture, limiting him to sign only as a "designer", as in the case of the *María Dávila Semidey School* plans.

²⁴Colación, Inc. *Inventario de Recursos Arquitectónicos de Puerto Rico, Early 20th Century Schools in Puerto Rico*. Oficina Estatal de Conservación Histórica, La Fortaleza (San Juan, Puerto Rico) 1987.

Gardón's most noteworthy contribution was in the interior design project for the university theatre, which he did not live to see finished (1937). Theatre design was a sort of specialty for him, having landed projects like *Teatro Martí* (1933, later named *Ambassador Theatre*), in Santurce; *Cobian's Film Center*, in Puerta de Tierra (1935, now demolished); *Teatro Calimano* in Guayama (1937), and the renovation of Ponce's *Teatro La Perla* (1938), the latter in collaboration with architect Francisco Porrata Doria.²⁵ Gardón died that same year.

As characteristic of many designers of the early 20th century all over the world – and Puerto Rico being no exception - Francisco Gardón Vega was an eclectic artist, not bent on a single style, but on the display of stylistic dexterity instead.²⁶ His earliest works appropriate the neoclassical vocabulary (as is the case with the *María Dávila Semidey School*), but subsequent designs endorse the Spanish Revival (as at the University of Puerto Rico), and finally, later projects support the Art Deco movement (at the *Teatro Calimano*, for example). A designer's skill to address multiple stylistic expressions was highly regarded at that time, as exemplified by some of Gardón's most distinguished contemporaries.²⁷ Freedom to choose an architectural vocabulary led to lack of restrictions in combining ornamental elements without adherence to any code or rule of composition. That is how Gardón handles classical elements at the façade of the *Dávila Semidey School*: freely arranged, following no pre-established syntax, sometimes abstracted, on occasions profuse in detail. His contemporaries allegedly admired the designer's adroitness at ornamentation.²⁸

Gardón's *María Dávila Semidey School* at Patillas took about eleven (11) months to build. The contractor, Rogelio Capestany had signed the construction contract in early 1929, and by November 25 of the same year, Project Inspector Fausto Luciano recommended provisional acceptance of the finished, 12-classroom building to the architect of the local Department of the Interior. By February 17, 1930, the contractor had yet to address several punch list items.²⁹ Although the project was finally accepted on August 8, 1930, complaints about deficiencies were plentiful, particularly from the school's acting principal, which later in 1930 was still arguing about leakages, poor roof drainage, cracks, and malfunctioning hardware.³⁰ In 1931, a local publication in Patillas proudly features the new school and its faculty,³¹ although no reference is yet made to María Dávila Semidey, the local school teacher after whom the school was named. Dávila Semidey started teaching in 1909 at age 17, in the rural areas of *Apeadero* and *Bajos*. She is best remembered as a first grade teacher at a time when children did not attend kindergarten before.

Twelve years later, acting upon the request of the Mayor of Patillas, the Department of the Interior was reporting expansion cracks in the concrete roof above the main corridor, leakage, rotten

²⁵ María Luisa Moreno, *La arquitectura de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras*, (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2000), 95.

²⁶ See Jorge Rigau, *Puerto Rico 1900*, Chapter II: On Being Modern in the Caribbean, where the subject is addressed at length.

²⁷ See Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción de la Universidad de Puerto Rico (AACUPR). *Pedro Méndez Mercado en su tiempo 1902-1990*. Catálogo exposición Museo de Arte de Ponce: Instituto Americano de Arquitectos, Capítulo de Puerto Rico s.f.; also Enrique Vivoni Farage. *Pedro de Castro y Besosa: Alarife de sueños* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1999)

²⁸ María Luisa Moreno, *La arquitectura de la Universidad de Puerto Rico*, 94-99.

²⁹ AGPR, Fondo: Obras Públicas; Serie: Edificios Escolares; Caja: 1154; Leg. 249, Exp.1. Memorandum to Guillermo Esteves, Commissioner of the Interior, from Special Inspector, Inocente Rivera, dated February 17, 1930.

³⁰ Ibid. Letter from Municipal Auditor, Francisco De Mari, to the Department of the Interior, dated September 10, 1930. De Mari notifies that Ms. Luz Ma. Picón, acting principal of the school, has written a letter listing project deficiencies. He includes copy of said letter.

³¹ *Album Puerto Rico 1931*, with a foreword by Valentín Díaz; no additional publication information.

wood (structural and ornamental), and toilet equipment on poor conditions.³² Some doors and windows were replaced in fall of 1942, but information is lacking on what happened in the ensuing decades. The school has flooded on other occasions, losing much of its archival material. The last time was on September 21, 2008, when the passing of Hurricane Kyle, produced record-breaking rains over Puerto Rico for three days³³. In Patillas, a 500-year, 24-hour rainfall event took place, with 22.03 inches (559.5 mm) falling from 8:00 A.M. on September 21 to 8:00 A.M. on September 22. At different Island locations, some rivers rose more than 25 ft (7.6 mts.) in a span of 12 hours, leading to far-reaching, severe flooding. *Quebrada Mamey*, the neighboring creek, surged over its banks. Water rose over three (3) feet at the *María Dávila Semidey School*, causing considerable material and equipment damage. Segments of the fence along Muñoz Rivera Street collapsed, trees were ripped out of the ground, and the adjacent bridge leading to town was washed away, as were nearby roads and other structures³⁴.

During the second half of the 20th century, the school lost some of its initial luster as new schools were built in Patillas, following modern pedagogical and architectural ideas. With them came lack of attention to the older facility, and disregard for the attentive care it had been granted in earlier years. However, a rainbow of physical attributes that exemplify significant aspects of the period in which the property came to be underlines historic authenticity at the *María Dávila Semidey School*. As a permanent fixture on the landscape, the school has welcomed visitors to Patillas for decades, sitting as it does, in the town's main entrance road. To this day, in terms of architectural design and character, many elements constitute contributing factors to this property's significance: its stoic urban presence, volume and plan configuration, preserved patterns of fenestration, diversity in ornamentation, and the fact that it remains in use for the purpose it was conceived. Taken together – and unfazed by the challenges often posed by time to any building – these attributes combine to communicate effectively the period when the property attained significance through feeling and association and, as a result, grant historic integrity to the *María Dávila Semidey School*.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

³² Supra. *Memorandum to the Commissioner of the Interior* from architect Inocente Rivera, dated March 16, 1942. Rivera was the same person who, in 1930, advised on the provisional acceptance of the school as a completed project.

³³ For a video on the aftermath of the disaster, see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCBbHyLUFQs>

³⁴ Three deaths were directly blamed on the weather system as a result of floods and mudslides. Another three deaths were indirectly related, as a product of stress-induced heart attacks. Mudslides, triggered by the torrential rain, closed off highways and schools. Damage to agriculture on the Island was estimated to be \$23 million and structural damage was estimated at \$25 million, for a total of \$48 million. In addition to the system's rainfall, its winds whipped up 10 ft (3 m) waves along Puerto Rico's southern coast. (See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Kyle_\(2008\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Kyle_(2008))).

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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Figures

AGPR, Fondo: Obras Públicas. Album de Obras Públicas, # 306

Eduardo Miranda, June 4, 2012

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Kyle_ (2008).

<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/debenture.asp#ixzz20j28RYu2>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCBbHyLUfQs>

Puerto Rico Planning Board, Geolocalizador: Interactive Map of the Land Registry, <http://gis.jp.pr.gov/GeoLocalizador/Internet/> for plot number - 398-078-042-01

Interviews

Edwin Latalladi Laboy

Cesar Lebrón Rodríguez, Museo de Arte e Historia Pedro Albizu Campos, Patillas

Ricardo Planadeball Poggi, Mayor of Patillas, 1969-1973.

José J. Rivera Lebrón, Administrative Supervisor, Municipality of Patillas

José Rivera Montesuma, Museo de Arte e Historia Pedro Albizu Campos, Patillas

Sra. Yolanda Suárez Concepción, Principal, Josefina Muñoz de Bernier School

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: Colección Puertorriqueña, Biblioteca Lazaro, UPR

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre (0.16 acre)
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 19 815883 1993384
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
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 María Dávila Semidey School.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Arq. Jorge Rigau, FAIA
organization Jorge Rigau Arquitectos date July 30, 2012
street& number #67 calle Los baños, 1er piso telephone (787) 982-0002
city or town San Juan state Puerto Rico zip code 00911
e-mail rigau@jorgerigau.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps: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. **María Dávila Semidey School**
2. **Patillas, Puerto Rico**
3. **Eduardo Miranda**
4. **June 4, 2012**
5. **Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico**
6. **South facade, looking north. Through the manipulation of cornices, moldings, reveals, friezes, and other trims raised from wall surfaces for emphasis) the designer provided the school's main volume with abundant horizontal lines – simultaneously, but in contrast – pilasters contribute convey verticality. María Dávila Semidey's name inscription included as bas-relief in the main façadeunderlines the overall symmetrical arrangement of the school.**
7. **#1**

-
1. **María Dávila Semidey School**
 2. **Patillas, Puerto Rico**
 3. **Eduardo Miranda**
 4. **June 4, 2012**
 5. **Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico**
 6. **Southeast facade, looking northwest. Lateral body houses, at ground level, the school's entrances, office space, and hallways leading to the outside and the building's inner corridor are lodged. Above them - on the upper floor - stair, corridor and restrooms echo the first floor layout, but incorporate additional office space, added after the original construction was completed over what was originally an open terrace.**
 7. **#2**

-
1. **María Dávila Semidey School**
 2. **Patillas, Puerto Rico**
 3. **Eduardo Miranda**
 4. **June 4, 2012**
 5. **Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico**
 6. **North facade, looking south. Latter additions, several condensing units for air conditioning have been placed over the window eaves. Additional brackets provided to hang condensing units from the wall, with no other support, remain bolted to the walls, even when the equipment is no longer there. Electrical piping and paraphernalia appear at random, seemingly having been added with only pragmatic, immediate considerations at hand.**
 7. **#3**

-
1. **María Dávila Semidey School**
 2. **Patillas, Puerto Rico**
 3. **Eduardo Miranda**
 4. **June 4, 2012**
 5. **Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico**
 6. **South façade (right flanker partial view), looking north. Access to the school was originally through the entrance doors located in the flankers. As designed, one approached the building through a series of concrete sidewalks leading to a four-step stoop.**
 7. **#4**

1. **María Dávila Semidey School**
2. **Patillas, Puerto Rico**
3. **Eduardo Miranda**
4. **June 4, 2012**
5. **Jorge Rigau Arquitectos, San Juan Puerto Rico**
6. **South façade (left flanker partial view), looking north. Main entrance detail, the original door surrounds remains, decorated with a “*perlario*”, in the manner of stringed pearls. Above it, a cornice iterates horizontality and frames an inlay panel with a decorative shield at center. Iron panels now substitute the original 5'-0” wide doors. The door transom, a surmounted arch (whose curve begins above the impost line) has been sealed off in concrete.**
7. **#5**

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): _____

For Edoan H. Beall
 Signature of the Keeper

11.14.12
 Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
 (Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
1	0	Total

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

Early XXth Century Schools Puerto Rico, 1900-1930

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/ School

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/ School

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

María Dávila Semidey School

Patillas, Puerto Rico

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)
Early XXth Century Schools Puerto Rico,
1900-1930

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.

MARÍA DÁVILA SEMIDEY, PATILLAS, PUERTO RICO

Location: Muñoz Rivera Street #300 Patillas, Puerto Rico 00723
UTM Reference: 19, 815883, 1993384
Acreage of Property: Less than one acre (.16)



JORGE RIGAU
ARQUITECTOS

- ◀ Contributing resource
- Property boundary

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

María Dávila Semidey School

Patillas, Puerto Rico

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)
Early XXth Century Schools Puerto Rico,
1900-1930

Section number Additional Documentation Page 2

Additional Documentation Map

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

ESCUELA María Dávila Semidey , PATILLAS, PUERTO RICO

Location: Muñoz Rivera Street #300 Patillas, Puerto Rico 00723
UTM Reference: 19, 815883, 1993384
Acreage of Property: Less than one acre (.16)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

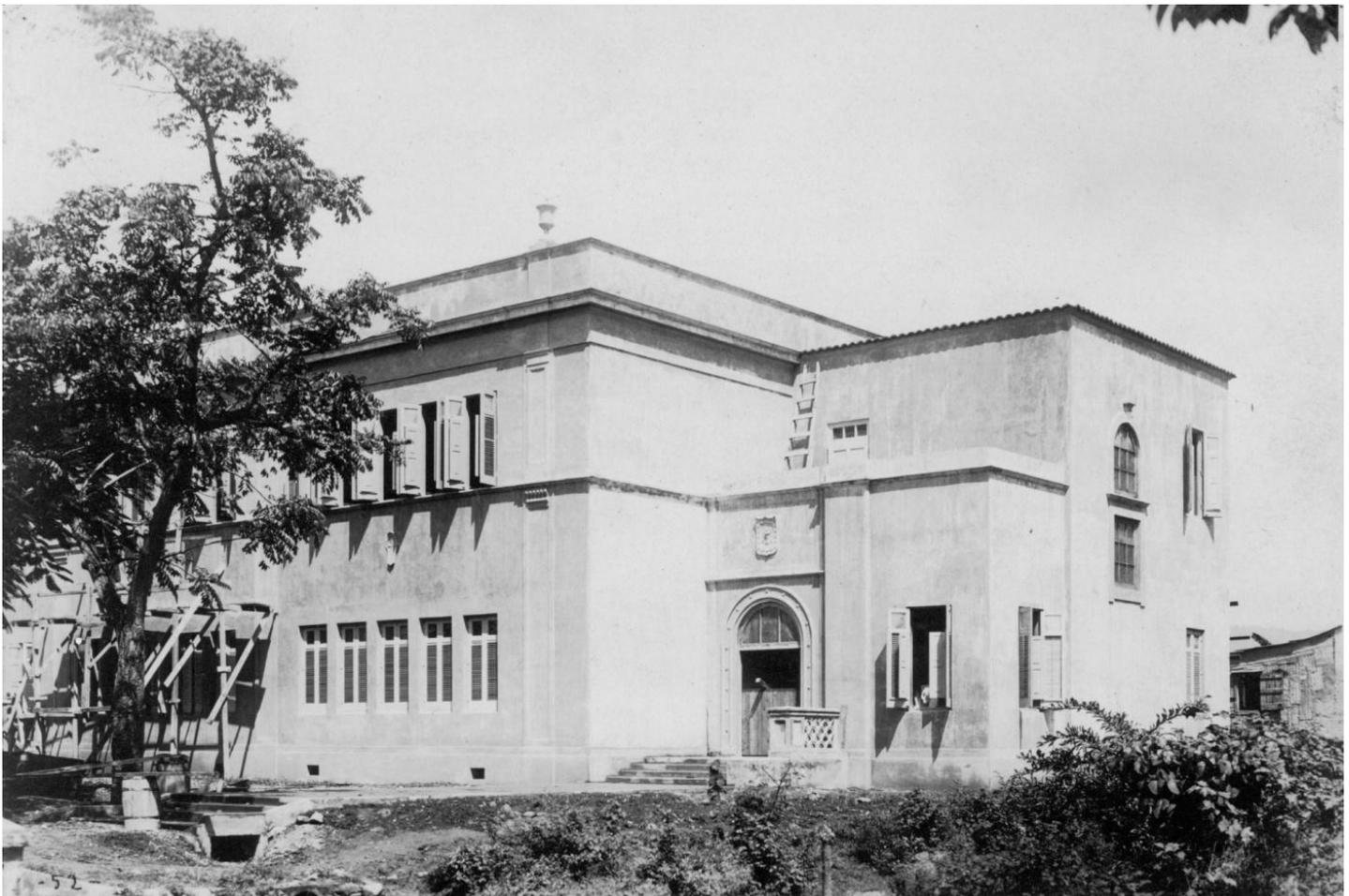
María Dávila Semidey School

Patillas, Puerto Rico

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)
Early XXth Century Schools Puerto Rico,
1900-1930

Section number Additional Documentation Page 3

Additional Documentation Photographs



Historical view of the main (south) façade. The two-story school is articulated into three (3) volumes, a main, larger one, flanked by a pair of smaller, identical bodies at either side. Source: Archivo General de Puerto Rico, Fondo Obras Públicas Album, # 306.