NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received APR 13 1987
date entered MAY 14 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name 19th Century Civil Architecture in Ponce - Thematic Nomination

historic Antiguo Cuartel Militar Español de Ponce (Spanish Military Headquarters in Ponce)

and/or common "El Castillo"

2. Location

street & number Calle Castillo Final ___ N/A not for publication

city, town Ponce ___ vicinity of Ponce

state Puerto Rico code 072 county Ponce code 0760

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	X public	X occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	X yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	N/A	___ no	___ military	X other: Jail

4. Owner of Property

name Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Department of Corrections

street & number Ed. Plaza Barbosa 306 Ave. Barbosa

city, town Hato Rey ___ vicinity of Puerto Rico state Puerto Rico

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds - Ponce

street & number Ponce Government Center

city, town Ponce state Puerto Rico

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Architectural Survey of Ponce has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date July, 1984 ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records SHPO

city, town San Juan state Puerto Rico

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	X original site
X good	___ ruins	X altered	___ moved date _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

El Castillo is perhaps the less ornamented example of 19th century Civil Architecture in the city of Ponce. The building consists of a two level structure, square in plan with an interior courtyard. It is built in brick and stone masonry; and timber beams and brick layers for roofs and floors.

Open arched galleries surround the interior courtyard in both levels from which the spaces, now used as jail barracks, are organized.

A repetition of windows over the facade's plane without any ornament gives the building an austere appearance, typical of military architecture developed during the Spanish period in Puerto Rico. A special feature that the building still preserves are the lead gutters in the form of cannons. Alterations to the structure include the use of metal louvered windows instead of the wood louvers originally used and the addition of iron bars over interior openings. (The exterior bars were part of the original design). Other alterations are minimal and are related to the structure's maintenance, such as repavement of the interior courtyard and the installation of modern sanitary facilities.

This building's sober architecture clearly responds to its intended use as the center of Spain's military power in Ponce.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	X architecture	___ education	X military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	
X 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
___ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1894 **Builder/Architect** Spain Royal Corps of Engineers

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

"El Castillo", as this building is commonly known, was built in 1894 by the Spain Royal Corps of Engineers as general headquaters for the Spanish military garrison stationed in Ponce. Since 1898, when Puerto Rico became a possession of the U.S.A., this structure has served various purposes, first as courthouse and later as district jail house, (present use).

The Old Military Headquarters is one of the largest Neoclassic Isabelino civil architecture structures built in the city of Ponce during the 19th century. It may lack many of the traditional facade ornaments associated with the style but this, in fact, increases the property's architectural significance making it an example of the use of Neo-classic Isabelino style for military purposes. The "Castillo's" sober exteriors clearly depict the structure's use; massive and sober, it undoubtedly conveyed military power.

Changes in its use throughout this century did not affect much of the building's original structural system.

This building played an active role in the enforcement of Spanish laws and military government in Ponce as general headquarters for the southern area of Puerto Rico.

The Ponce Spanish garrison played an important role in the defense of the island during the U.S.A. invasion of the island in 1898. After surrendering the city to General Milles on July 28 the Ponce troops aided by other smaller garrisons held the Asomante area preventing the US Army to invade Aibonito. They also helped the Guayama garrison in its attempt to detain US troops from taking this city.

This is the only structure directly related to these events that has been identified to date.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Coll y Toste, Cayetano - Boletín Históirco de Puerto Rico, Tip. Cantero

Brau, Salvador, Historia de Ponce, 1913

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2,669.43 m² (less than one acre)

Quadrangle name Ponce **Quadrangle scale** 1:20000

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A	19	753170	1939610	B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification The property occupies an urban block bounded to the North by Pabellones street, to the South by the Charles H. Terry Atletic Park; to the East by the Portugues River; and to the West by Grand Stand Street.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	**code**	**county**		**code**
state	N/A	**code**	**county**		**code**

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Félix J. del Campo, State Historian/Héctor Santiago, Assistant to State Historian

organization PRSHPO **date** November 15, 1986

street & number Box 82, La Fortaleza **telephone** (809) 721-3737

city or town San Juan **state** Puerto Rico

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ **national** ___ **state** X **local**

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Mariano G. Coronas Castro

title State Historic Preservation Officer **date** April 7, 1987

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Amy Schlagel **date** 5/14/87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: **date**

Chief of Registration