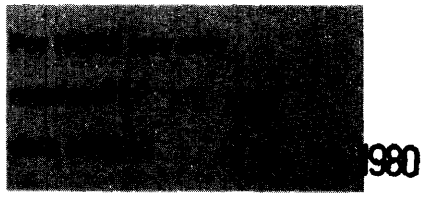
FHR-8-300 (11-78)

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



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

1. Name

historic CASTILLO DE SERRALLES

and/or common CASTILLO DE SERRALLES

2. Location

street & number CERRO EL VIGIA ___ not for publication

city, town PONCE ___ vicinity of congressional district

state PUERTO RICO code county 72 code 0760

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Rosa Serralles Torruella and Felix J. Serralles Sanchez

street & number Box 2021

city, town Ponce ___ vicinity of state PUERTO RICO 00731

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. REGISTRO DE LA PROPIEDAD

street & number MUNICIPIO DE PONCE

city, town PONCE state PUERTO RICO 00731

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title PRELIMINARY PUERTO RICO SURVEY has this property been determined elegible? ___ yes ___ no

date 1974 ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records INSTITUTO DE CULTURA PUERTORRIQUEÑA

city, town SAN JUAN state PUERTO RICO 00731

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Serralles mansion is located on the South side of "El Vigía, the name given to one of the rolling foothills to the north of the center of Ponce. The building's "Y" shape plan and large central patio area take maximum esthetic advantage of the setting, commanding an impressive view of the city from its east, south and west elevations while maintaining privacy and elegance on its elevation. The house, built in 1926, has four floors; the garden level basement dedicated to service quarters and garage, the second to library, central patio, solarium, living, dining and kitchen, the third for sleeping. The fourth floor is really the roof, but has tiled floor and covered areas, which is used mostly for entertaining.

Designed in a popular fashion of the 20's representing Spanish Mediterranean influence, the building adapted well to the Caribbean climate and was congruent with spanish influence existing throughout the island as well as in Ponce. All elevations feature round arches or modified coyned arches over ample window and door openings trimmed in wood. Many of these are richly adorned, with small stained glass panes and lead mullians, framed between neo-classsic half columns. Several openings also exhibit ornate iron work as additional decoration. The building was constructed entirely of concrete, including the roofs of the upper floors. Two towers that punctuate the east and west sides of the base of the "Y" plan have red roof tiles as do the dormers and all-other hipped or shed roofs. The exterior of the buildings is finished in smooth stucco and simulates coursed stone masonery.

The house has remained in the Serralles family since the time of its construction, and has suffered only minor alterations. The two most obvious examples are: The replacement of a set of four mullioned windows with aluminum jallousie windows in the west bedroom passageway; and the blocking-in of a service entrance at the rear of the house on the garden level. Other minor changes will undoubtely become apparent upon closer inspection, but on the whole the house maintains its original architectual and decorative integrity.

Access to the main entrance on the second level of the north elevation, is by way of either of two semi-circular stairways which run from the covered carriage entrance on the ground level of the north elevation. At the top of the stairs, double french doors open into a large vestibule with a ceramic tile floor, representative of the floor coverings throughout the house. The view from this room reveals and open patio with a fountain, a series of planters which accent a solarium at the extreme end of the house and a gallery running the circumberence of the patio. To the left of the vestibule, the living room is both visible and gratiously accessible. This is the only room that features a parquet floor. It remains intact and has recently been repaired and refinisthed. All of the original furniture in the room has been removed by the owners throughout the years since 1956 when they closed the house and moved to other locations.

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	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
___ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
X 1900–	___ communications	X industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates Built in 1926 ~~Disoccupied in 1956~~ **Builder/Architect** Pedro Adolfo de Castro - Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Serrallés mansion was built as the exclusive residence of Don. Eugenio Serrallés, a leader in the sugar cane industry during the early part of this century. It repesents an example of Spanish Morrocan architecture, the style first introduced in Puerto Rico by the architect Pedro Adolfo de Castro. The three good examples of this style of architecture were: El Castillo de Valdés in Mayaguez, (destroyed several years ago); el Castillo de Mario Mercado in Guayanilla, (in ruins and vandalized beyond any possible means of reconstruction), and El Castillo de Serrallés. Since its disoccupancy in 1956, the Serralleś mansion has been maintained in very good condition and quite fortunately retains its architectural integrity and feeling. Alterations to the structure have been of such minor proportions that to restore the original effect could be accomplished with a minimum of effort and expense. The grounds, however, have suffered from lack of care. Weeds overrun the entire area, small trees and bushes have been allowed to grow wild and as a result have obscured the intention of the land scaping plan. Restoration in this case would require a great deal of cleaning, perhaps an even greater measure of design consideration and certainly research into the original scheme to bring the estate up to its original and immaculate appearance. Local Historical significance of the building is equal to, if not greater, than its architectural significance. Ponce's dependance on the sugar cane industry at the close of the nineteenth century, created an atmosphere of development from which evolved a series of intrinsic cultural characteristics and afforded great wealth to many families involved in the industry. The wealthy families generally chose Europe as the model for the direction that cultural endeavors would take.

European fashions and lifestyles were usually preferred. Buildings and homes were constructed in European and Mediterranean styles all along the South and West coast of the island. The result of this intense cultural interest naturally provided work for artists, artisans, and architects whose creations tended to strengthen the image of the ethnic identity.

Even though El Castillo de Serrallés is not based on an indigeneous design, its architectural significance lies in the fact that is was designed to adapt well with Caribbean climatic conditions. Its workmanship, its interior decoration, its furniture (especially designed for the house) and even its floor plan reflect cultural attitudes of its time, and for this reason, it represents a step in the ladder of the National development.

Other homes built in a similar grand manner no longer exists in such fine condition (examples cited earlier). Numerous other structures built later to exist, but none match the Serrallés mansion in setting, landscaping and attention to detail. It stands alone gracing "El Vigía", visible from nearly every part of the city, it is a constant reminder to all of us of our heritage.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Hernández Colón, Rafael - La Zona Histórica de Ponce

Lo Que Es y Lo Que No Es; Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña
Historia De La Arquitectura en Puerto Rico

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property 2.5 acres

Quadrangle name Ponce

Quadrangle scale 1:20 000

UMT References Latitude 18°01' 41"
Longitute 66°37' 05"

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

North - Bertoly Street Extension
South - Bertoly Street Extension
West - Property of Sucn. Rafael Torres Alberty
East - Property of Bamar Const. Corp.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Luis Muñoz Polanco, Eng., Director Planning and Budget Office

organization Municipality of Ponce **date**

street & number Marina Street # 38 (First Floor) **telephone** 843-2117 843-6816

city or town Ponce **state** Puerto Rico

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national X state ___ 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer **date** 7-7-80