NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received NOV 6 1984

date entered DEC 10 1984

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 Church San Germán Auxerre of San Germán (Historic Churches of Puerto Rico TR)

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number De la Cruz St., Town Plaza ___ not for publication

city, town San Germán ___ vicinity of

state Puerto Rico code 72 county Mayaguez code 0920

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Catholic Church, Diocese of Mayaguez

street & number Box 2272

city, town Mayaguez ___ vicinity of state Puerto Rico 00708

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, Church Litigation Case #2, 1904

street & number Box 2392

city, town San Juan state Puerto Rico 00903

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventario de Bienes Inmuebles de San Germán has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date May 1983 ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Colegio de Arquitectos de Puerto Rico

city, town San Juan state Puerto Rico 00901

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

The parish church of San Germán de Auxerre of San Germán is located on a block to itself overlooking the town plaza. It is oriented on an east-west axis, entrance facing east. The atrium in front of the church is raised above the level of the plaza, having a series of steps leading up to it from the street. The side walls of the church stand right on the side streets without any space separating them.

The rectangular plan consists of one nave 19 feet wide, and two aisles, 15 feet wide each. Open arcades (six arches) sitting on square pillars divide the space. There are seven bays plus the apse and sacristies. The first bay is the vestibule or sotocoro. Pendentives can be seen above this area hinting the previous existence of a dome, instead of a flat roof. Two chapels flank the vestibule, both having domes over pendentives. The chapel on the right functions as a baptistery. A modern concrete stairway attached to this chapel leads up to the choir loft. The main space is amply decorated and covered with a wooden vault. As in the San Juan Cathedral trompe l'oeil painting was used to imitate rich coffering on the wooden vault and moldings in the arcades. Wide side aisles permitted the placement of ten neoclassical 19th century marble altars, enriching the space. The side aisles are roofed lower than the main nave, permitting the placement of twelve clerestory windows on each side of the vault. The original wooden roof on the aisles was replaced with concrete in 1935. The plan culminates in a square apse covered with a lanterned dome sitting over pendentives. The sacristy is located on the left side of the apse, and a baroque style tower on the right. An earthquake destroyed the original brick masonry tower and the existing concrete tower,similar to the original,was built in 1939. The floors are finished with gray and white marble tiles, set at a diagonal to the church's main axis. The church conserves some original wooden doors and some of the windows. A neoclassical gray and white marble altar was placed in 1869. Valuable works of art such as a Juan Campeche painting, 17th century metalwork, and 19th century wooden carvings are kept in the choir loft which is being used as a small museum. The glass chandeliers that decorate the open arcades date from 1858. General repair work and the restoration of the wooden vault and trompe l'oeil painting is presently being undertaken.

The main facade, of neoclassical style, is divided into two bodies and a triangular pediment. The first body is composed of three parts. The main entrance is an arched doorway, flanked by flat pilasters and crowned with a simple cornice. An arched window on each side permits light to enter the two chapels inside. The second body is smaller. It is divided vertically by pilasters holding a cornice. A round window is located in the center, an arched window was placed on each side. This body is crowned by a very ornamented triangular pediment. The side facades are simple, having just one arched door on each side. The only elements seen are buttresses, each topped by a molding. A parish house was constructed behind the church at the beginning of this century. It is not in contact with the original structure.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1688, 1739, 1897 **Builder/Architect** Various. See text.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The church of San Germán de Auxerre is of historical and architectural significance. The parish of San Germán was founded in 1510. Due to the fact that the village changed its location several times, a permanent structure was not built until the year of 1688. San Germán was the most important town on the western half of the island for more than three centuries. With the passing of the years, natural phenomena damaged the structure, making extensive repairs necessary after 1717. The work was finished by 1739. The 1739 structure with few alterations is the one still standing today. At the beginning of the 19th century the church was again very deteriorated. In the period between 1834 and 1897 the structure underwent various repair projects. Among the builders and architects involved were Juan Puig (1834), Pascual Antongiorgi (1834 and 1841), Martin Albertuchi (1845), and Arch. Patricio Bolomburu (1897). In the 1897 construction, a choir loft was added and the roof over the nave was raised to permit light to enter the interior space. At present, the structure conserves most of its original architectural and design elements: brick masonry walls, arches, columns, sacristies and domes. It conserves a 19th century wooden vault, one of the few still standing on the island (others are Guayanilla and Sabana Grande). The church of San Germán has one of the most amply decorated interiors on the island. The vault and arches are painted in the trompe l'oeil manner. The church conserves the 1869 marble altar as well as ten other 19th century smaller secondary marble altars. A collection of 17th century metalwork , 18th century wooden carvings and a painting by José Campeche of great value are kept in the choir loft. The relationship between the church and the plaza is excellent. The linear plaza is closed at the west end by the church and on the east by the city hall. This follows the traditional relationship stipulated by Spanish Crown ordinances at the time the town was founded.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Feliciano, Héctor R., "La Iglesia Parroquial de San Germán: Su Historia y Arquitectura".
Marvel, Thomas S. and Maria Luisa Moreno, Architecture of Parish Churches in Puerto Rico, Editorial Universitaria, Rio Piedras, P.R., unpublished.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1628 sq.mts.

Quadrangle name San Germán, PR **Quadrangle scale** 1:20,000

UTM References Lat. 18°05'04" N, Long. 67°02'41" W

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

Verbal boundary description and justification
The church is bounded on the north by Juan Acosta Street, on the east by the town plaza and De la Cruz St., on the south by Ruiz Belvis St., and on the west by the parish house. (see enclosed location plan).

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ester Cardona, Arch. and Marisa Gómez, Arch.

organization Investigaciones Bonaire, Inc. date July 1984

street & number Tetuan 103 telephone (809) 724-4997

city or town Old San Juan state Puerto Rico 00901

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ✓ 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [signature]

title State Historic Preservation Officer date October 30,1984

For NPS use only

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

Patrick Andrus date 12/10/84

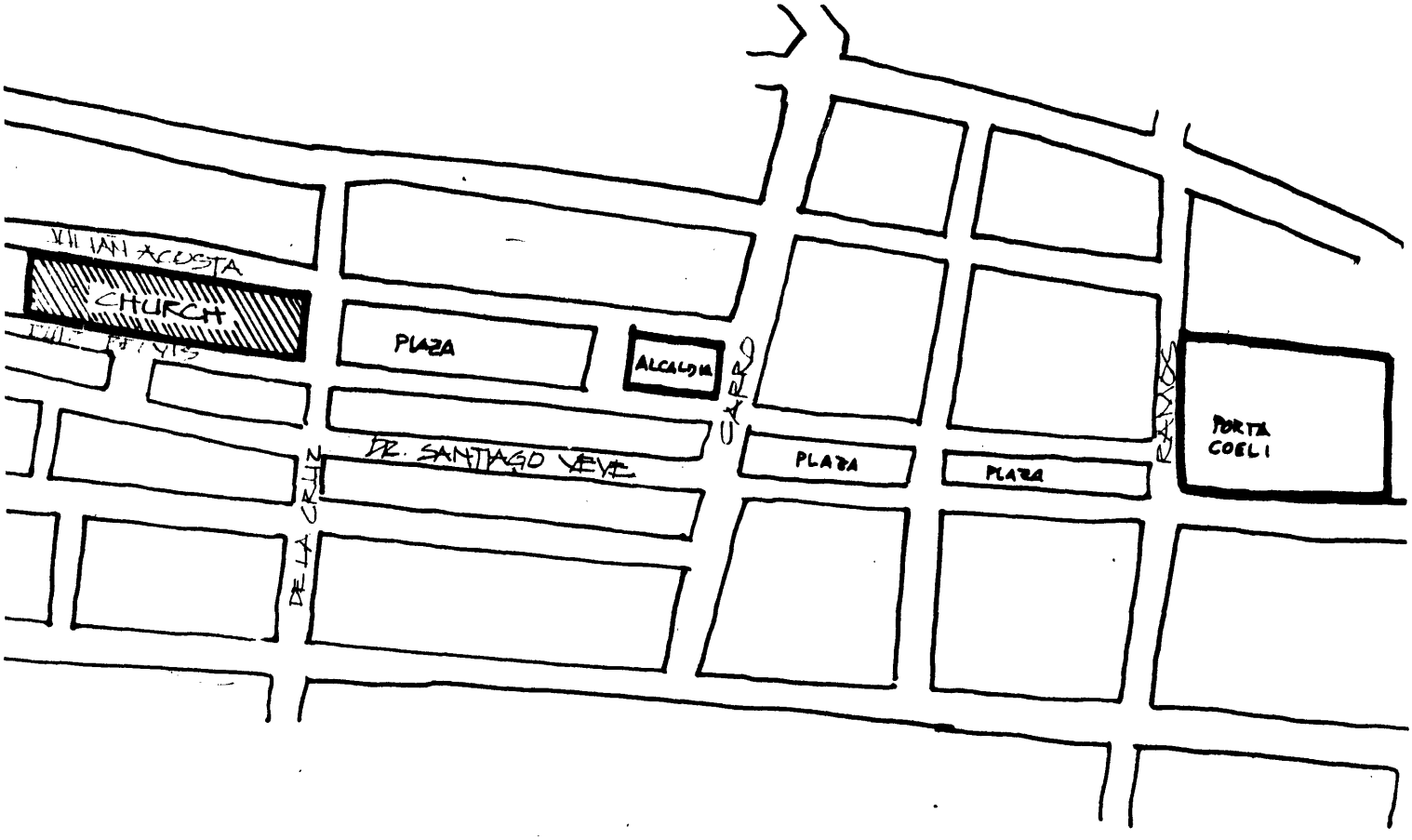
for Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

Church San Germán Auxerre of San Germán
Representation in Existing Surveys:

Inventory of the Historic Churches of Puerto Rico, 1984, State Historic Preservation Office, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



town: SAN GERMÁN scale: 1:2000 north

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