NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

APR 12 1990

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Jaime Acosta y Fores Residence

other names/site number Casa de Doña Delia Acosta

2. Location

street & number Calle Dr. Santiago Veve, 70 ☐ not for publication

city, town San Germán ☐ vicinity N/A

state Puerto Rico code PR county San Germán code PR 125 zip code 00753

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
[X] private	[X] building(s)	2	0	buildings
☐ public-local	☐ district	0	0	sites
☐ public-State	☐ site	0	0	structures
☐ public-Federal	☐ structure	0	0	objects
	☐ object	2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Mariano G. Coronas Castro

Signature of certifying official — Date

State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

[X] entered in the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet. — Amy Fedorman — 5/24/90

☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Domestic/Single Dwelling	Domestic/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement
other: Art Nouveau
other: Urban-residential Criollo

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Weatherboard
roof Corrugated Zinc
other Wrought Iron

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Jaime Acosta y Fores Residence is a wooden, one-story and raised-basement, detatched structure located at #70, on the south side of Calle Dr. Santiago Veve in the historic city of San Germán, Puerto Rico. The house belongs to the Spanish-Creole (Criollo) vernacular, urban and residential typology. The major characteristics of this vernacular form are: raised, wooden construction; main living core with rear service wing usually called "martillo," or "hammer," forming an "L"-shaped plan with an interior courtyard; full-length frontal balcony or verandah; hipped or side-gabled, usually high-pitched roof of ceramic tile or corrugated zinc. Because of the detatched nature of the house the "martillo" opens out onto the grounds at the southeast corner of the lot and not onto an interior courtyard.

The main volume of the house is raised upon concrete struts. The rear wing accommodates the down-slope toward the south by the introduction of a full basement level with storage spaces.

The main or north facade of the residential structure consists of a simple series of four identical, generously and evenly-spaced, rectangular door-openings within a field of horizontal tongue-and-groove weatherboards, all raised upon a concrete basement approximately four feet above sidewalk level. Each doorway is articulated by a simple surround molding, each surround with ornamental rosettes, within a square panel, at each of the upper corners. The surrounds frame outward-opening double-doors, each door of which consists of two slender, vertical fields of panels below, jalousies at center, and vertical, arched glass lights above.

This main core is sheltered by a high, corrugated-zinc, hipped-roof. Two gabled, zinc-roofed dormers project out toward the street from the main roof, incorporating eaves which extend outward horizontally from the dormer walls, creating a slight oriental look. The dormers house single, purely functional ventilation louvres at their front walls. A section of the low, concrete basement level, only slightly narrower than the main facade, projects forward, creating a frontal balcony. This balcony is enclosed by a wood-lathed balustrade rhythmically articulated into the four bays by a series of seven lathed posts: double posts at each end of the balcony and three single posts dividing each respective bay from the next. Two additional posts are located adjacent to the weatherboard facade, behind the first and last post of the aforementioned posts, one at each extreme of the balcony. The balcony posts support a decorative, wooden entablature with

[X] See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Art	c. 1917	c. 1917
Architecture		

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

Luis Pardo, Architect

"Antonio", Artist

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Jaime Acosta y Fores, a prominent, well-educated and travelled plantation owner in San Germán, had the Acosta y Fores Residence constructed circa 1917 as a wedding gift to his wife Delia López. The design is attributed to architect Luis Pardo, of little renown in Puerto Rico. The interior paint stenciling was carried out over a period of two years by a local artist remembered simply as "Antonio."

The building dates to a period in which Architecture--studied abroad by necessity--gained territory as an established profession and thus began to change the Spanish-provincial and traditional building techniques and design vocabulary among the upper classes of Puerto Rican society. As a result, contemporary stylistic influences from Europe and from North and South America--such as "Modernismo" and "Art Nouveau"--began to transform the face of the long-established "Criollo" (Creole) vernacular architecture of the Island while largely adapting to traditional house-typologies.

The Acosta y Fores Residence clearly displays imported decorative styles and techniques, but more importantly, in a very complete, integral and accomplished manner. The interiors present the most coherent and elaborate decorative art-work among the few Puerto Rican examples of the Total-Design concept which was popular among European and American architects of the period. Stenciled wall-painting, applied in techniques similar to those performed by Louis Comfort Tiffany in the United States, covers all interior wall surfaces, rendered in pastel colors in a European Art-Nouveau vocabulary reminiscent of that utilized by Charles Rennie Mackintosh. These wall paintings are by far the most complete and well-preserved in all of Puerto Rico.

Alongside the current of progressive and international design runs the mainstream of traditional Puerto Rican construction. The traditional "L"-shaped plan incorporating a front balcony, a main living core and a rear-projecting service-wing and gallery which overlooks a private courtyard, remains unadulterated, yet is enhanced by modernistic spatial sequencing embodied in: a side-entrance accessing a foyer; a "mediopunto" or architectural screen which visually divides the main living area into

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

del Cueto de Pantel, Beatriz. "La presencia del pasado en el diseño moderno," Ambiente, año 1, vol. 6, marzo-abril, 1985.

Rigau, Jorge. "The Eclectic Architecture of San Germán," Qué Pasa?, November, 1983.

Rigau, Jorge. "Modernismo: Architecture in Puerto Rico at the Turn-of-the-Century (1890-1930)," A historic context with selective, supporting inventory for the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office, July, 1988.

Rigau, Jorge and Beatriz del Cueto de Pantel. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Registration Form," Prepared for a determination of eligibility and on file at the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office, December, 1985.

☐ See continuation sheet

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 # PR 122
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: Historic-Architectural Survey of San Germán, 1983.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
C				D			

☒ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See accompanying Plot Plan.

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lot historically and currently associated with parcel 26 of block 46 of the City of San Germán.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Héctor F. Santiago Cazull, State Architectural Historian

organization Puerto Rico SHPO date October 19, 1989

street & number Calle San José, 109 telephone 809-721-3737

city or town San Juan state Puerto Rico zip code 00901

various vertical panels at the frieze and a series of decorative modillions along the length of the cornice. This elegant composition supports, in turn, a hipped, balcony roof with a ridge that butts up against the weather-board facade slightly below the eaves of the main roof structure.

A very decorative, baroque-influenced, wrought-iron access gate provides entrance to the grounds immediately west of the main facade. This two-door iron gate is flanked by two concrete pillars, one on each side, with decorative panels along each side, pyramidal caps and large, spherical pommels above. These pillars are, in turn, flanked by two adjacent, larger concrete pillars with similar decoration but capped by concrete cross-gables. To the east of the main facade runs a traditional garden fence consisting of four bays of evenly-spaced concrete pillars with wrought-iron railing in-between each pillar, all above a low, concrete plinth. At the eastern extreme of this fence, a wide, iron gate of simple, vertical iron bars allows access to the cochere, locate at the rear of the lot. A plain, solid, concrete wall continues from the cochere gate to the east end of the lot line.

The main entrance along the west side of the house is accessed by a flight of rounded, exterior steps with concrete balustrades. The doorway consists of wooden, double-doors with circular and semi-circular patterns and framed by surrounds similar to those at the facade, but incorporating a transom panel above.

A hipped, zinc-sheathed hood-roof, supported by intricately carved wooden brackets shelters the main doorway, creating a smooth transition from the exterior to the interior.

Once inside, a large entrance foyer leads onto a "vestibule," or ante-chamber of the main living room. This antechamber is divided from the main living area by a "mediopunto,"--an architectural division or screen common to late XIX and early XX century houses in Puerto Rico--of excellent quality millwork. This most significant mediopunto consists of an A-B-A rhythm, three-bay, Palladian opening defined by two wooden, Corinthian columns and two embedded half-columns, all upon pedestals. The narrower first and third bays of the opening contain a low wall connecting the pedestals. The colonnade supports a simple, austere entablature, also of quality millwork.

Both the chamber's and antechamber's butt-jointed wallboards are decorated with gardwood wainscoting and stenciled wallpaintings in a pattern clearly influenced by the Art Nouveau style and the European Arts and Crafts Movement. The ceiling above the living room contains a decorative, stucco madallion at center, surrounded by broad fields of tongue-and-groove wooden panels on all four sides. This field of ceiling boards is, in turn, surrounded by a stenciled border of Art Nouveau design. A hardwood cornice with modillions creates the wall-ceiling transition along all walls. All of the doors within these two spaces are wooden, panelled doors with glass lights at the upper extremes and intricately hand-carved transoms above.

The composition created by the living space or chamber, the mediopunto and the vestibule or antechamber, both in physical location, prominence and significance, is the central piece of the house.

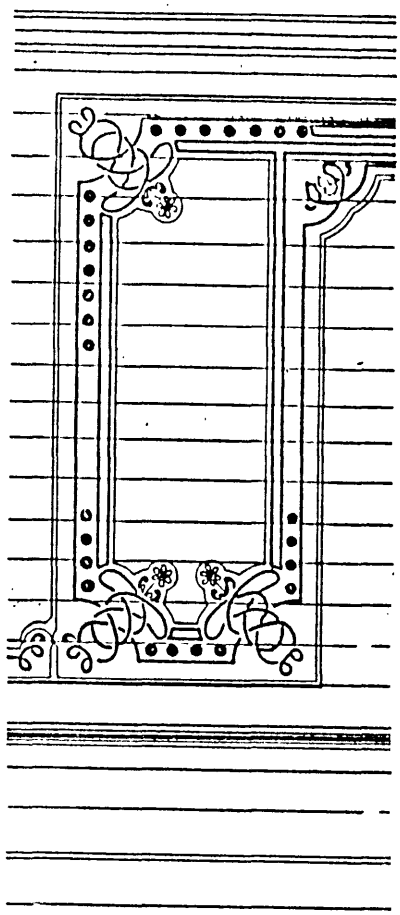
The north, east and west walls of the living room each display two symmetrically-arranged doors. The room opens out onto the balcony through the two central doors of the main facade. Flanking this space are: to the west, an office and a bedroom, the latter of which also opens out onto the balcony; and to the east, one large bedroom, accessed from the living area by both of the doors along this wall. This bedroom also accesses the main balcony as well as a small terrace to the east and another bedroom south of this terrace.
The vestibule or antechamber accesses: the entrance foyer to the west; the dining room, through two symmetrically-arranged doors to the south; and another bedroom to the east. The dining room, in turn, accesses another bedroom and a dressing room to the west, and most importantly, the gallery of the rear wing via a wide, central door at the south wall.

The gallery at the rear wing contains a series of five, identical doors which lead onto: a bathroom, two storage spaces, a pantry and a kitchen, in that respective order from north to south, all along the west wall. To the east the gallery opens out onto the side-yard and the square-plan, non-contributing, enclosed porch addition of circa 1950.

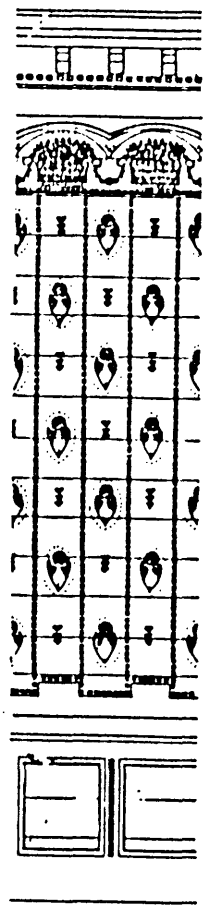
An original, small, weatherboard and side-gabled, zinc-roofed cochere (now garage) building occupies most of the southeast quadrant of the house's lot and contributes to the character and significance of the Acosta y Fores Residence.

The Jaime Acosta y Fores Residence has suffered no other non-contributing additions other than the enclosed porch addition mentioned above, and has suffered absolutely no significant alterations.

Wall-painting stencil patterns:

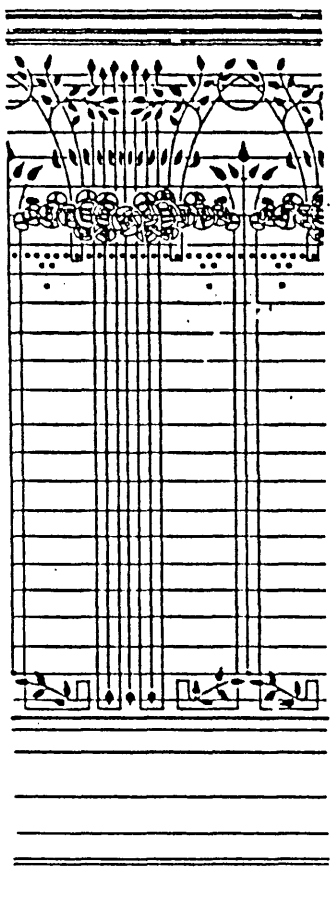


DINING ROOM

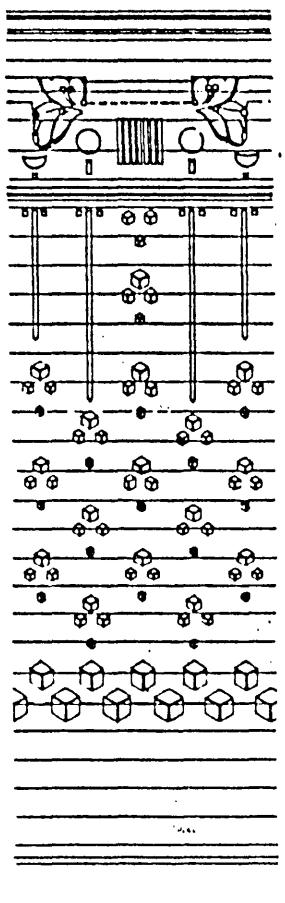


LIVING ROOM

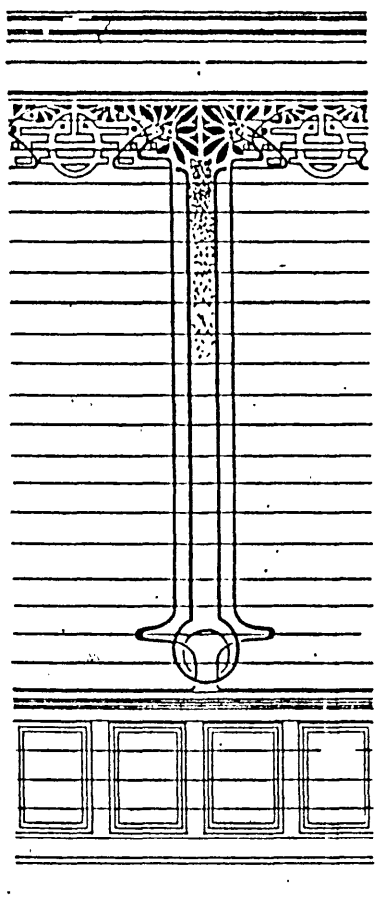
Wall-painting stencil patterns:



BEDROOM-4

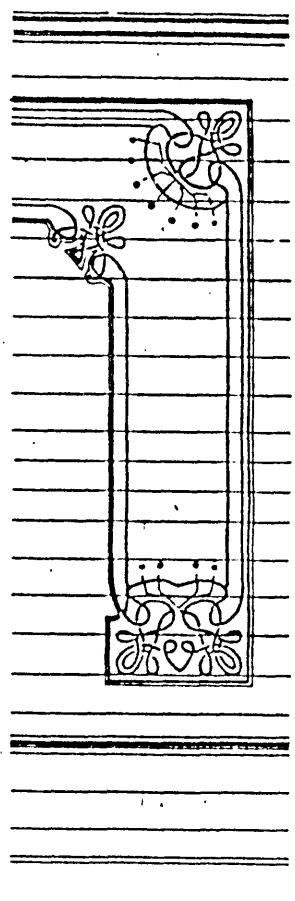


BEDROOM-1

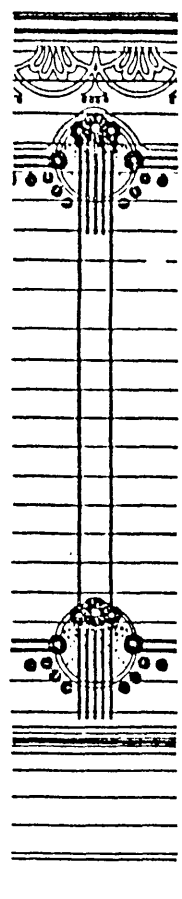


OFFICE

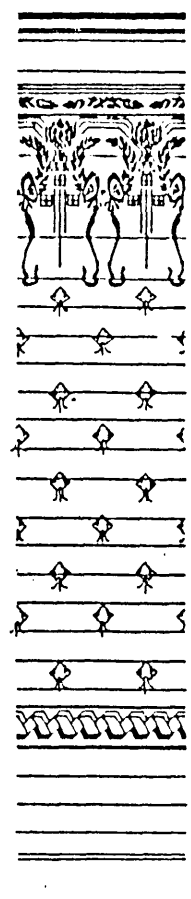
Wall-painting stencil patterns:



BEDROOM-3

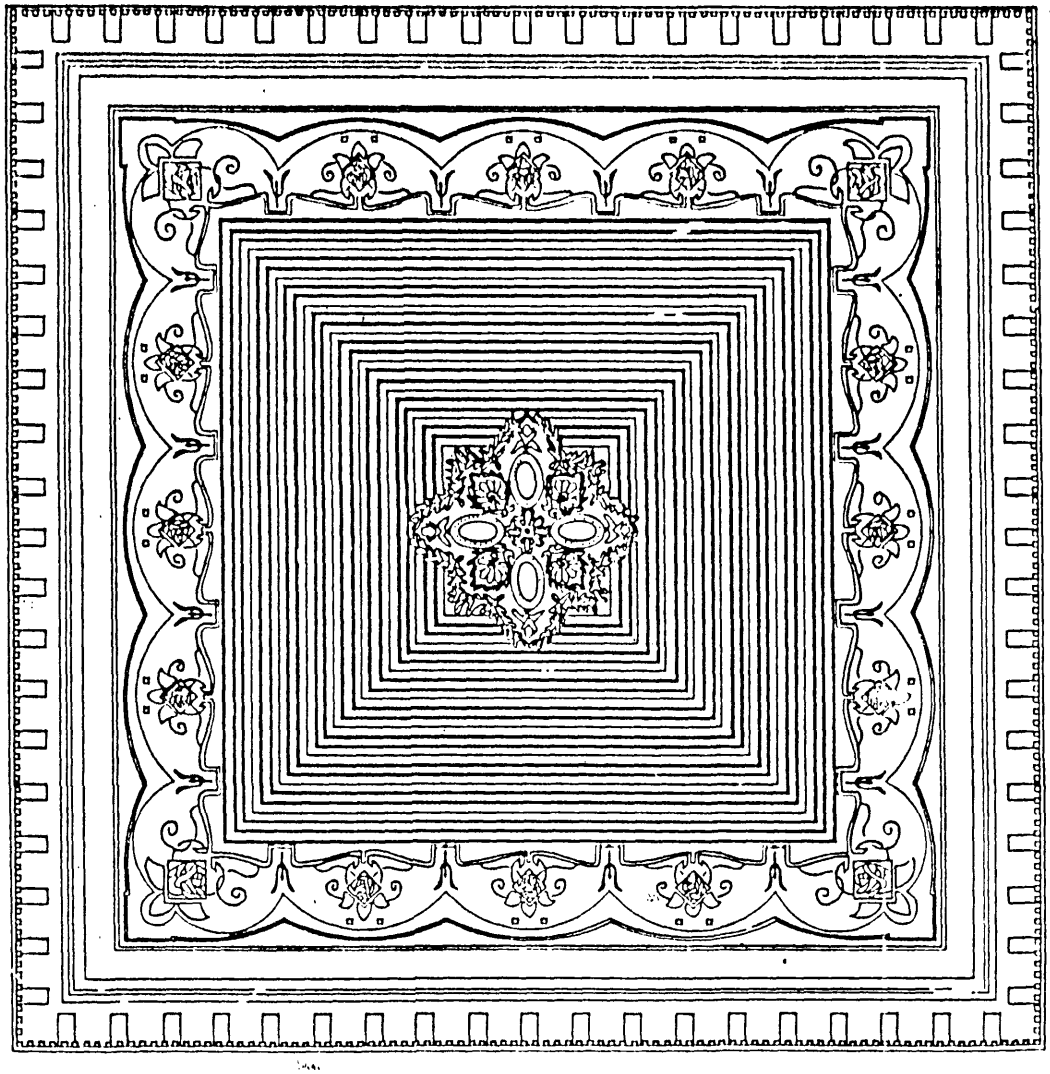


BEDROOM-2



BEDROOM-5

Wall-painting stencil patterns:



LIVING ROOM REFLECTED CEILING PLAN

THIS PLAN SHOWS THE CENTRAL STUCCO MEDALLION SURROUNDED BY TONGUE AND GROOVE WOOD PANELS BORDERED BY A STENCILED DESIGN

chamber and ante-chamber; and planned vistas which allow the perception of various inter-related spaces from a single vantage point. In addition, the overlaying of various hipped-roof units and dormers expands on the traditional and simple volumetric expression of the Criollo house, creating a more dynamic play of horizontals, verticals and diagonals, probably influenced by the Prarie-School architecture of the United States.

The skillful integration of local and foreign, traditional and modern architectural vocabularies presented in the Acosta y Fores Residence constitutes, without doubt, the most achieved and well-preserved example of both Total-Design in Architecture, and Modern-Movement Decorative Arts in Puerto Rico.

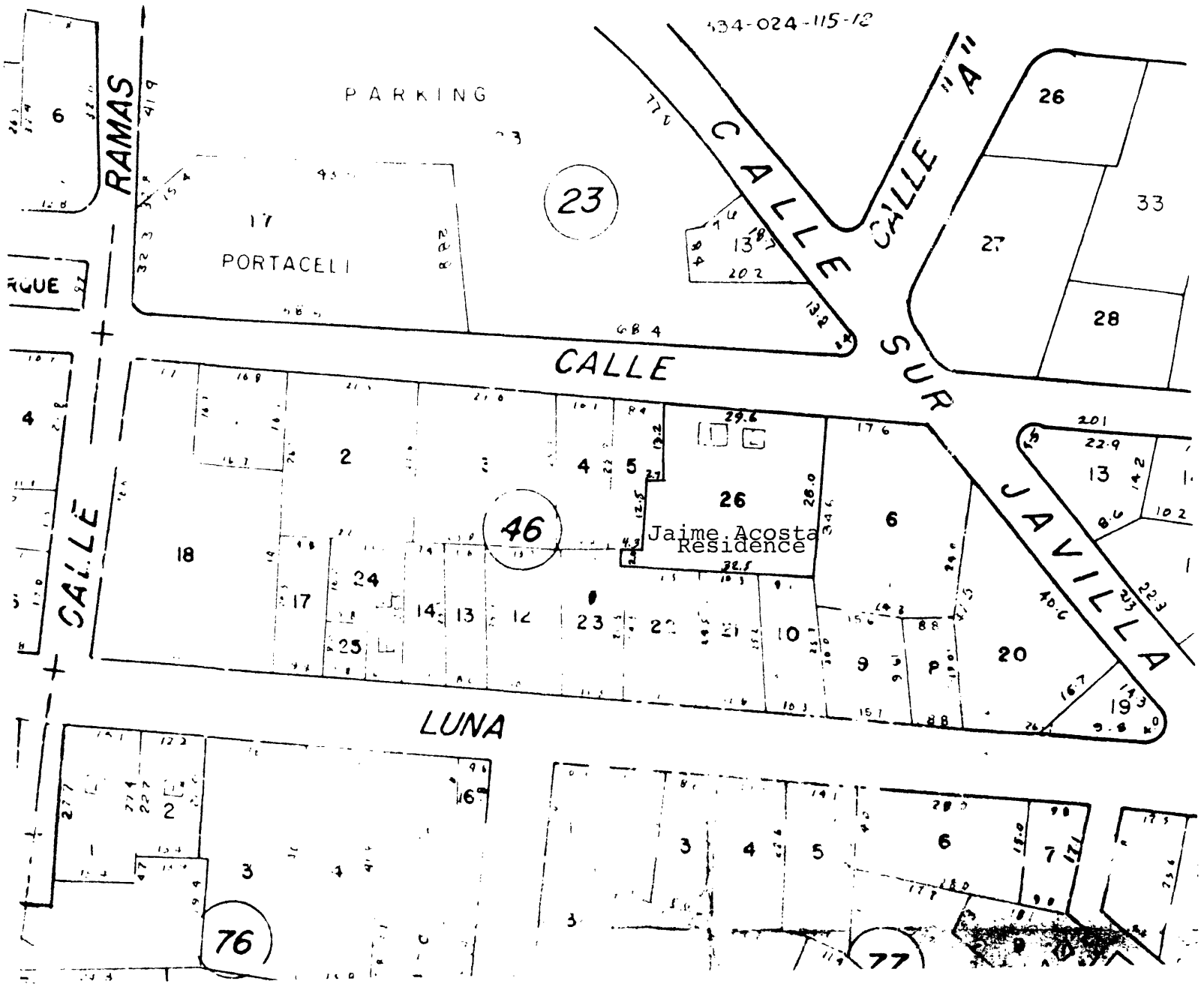
The Universal Transverse Mercator Grid System is not yet available for the San Germán, Puerto Rico quadrangle. The geographic coordinates for the Jaime Acosta y Fores Residence, in latitude and longitude, are as follows:

Latitude: 18° 05' 07"
Longitude: 67° 02' 25"

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 2 Jaime Acosta y Fores Residence, San Germán, Puerto Rico



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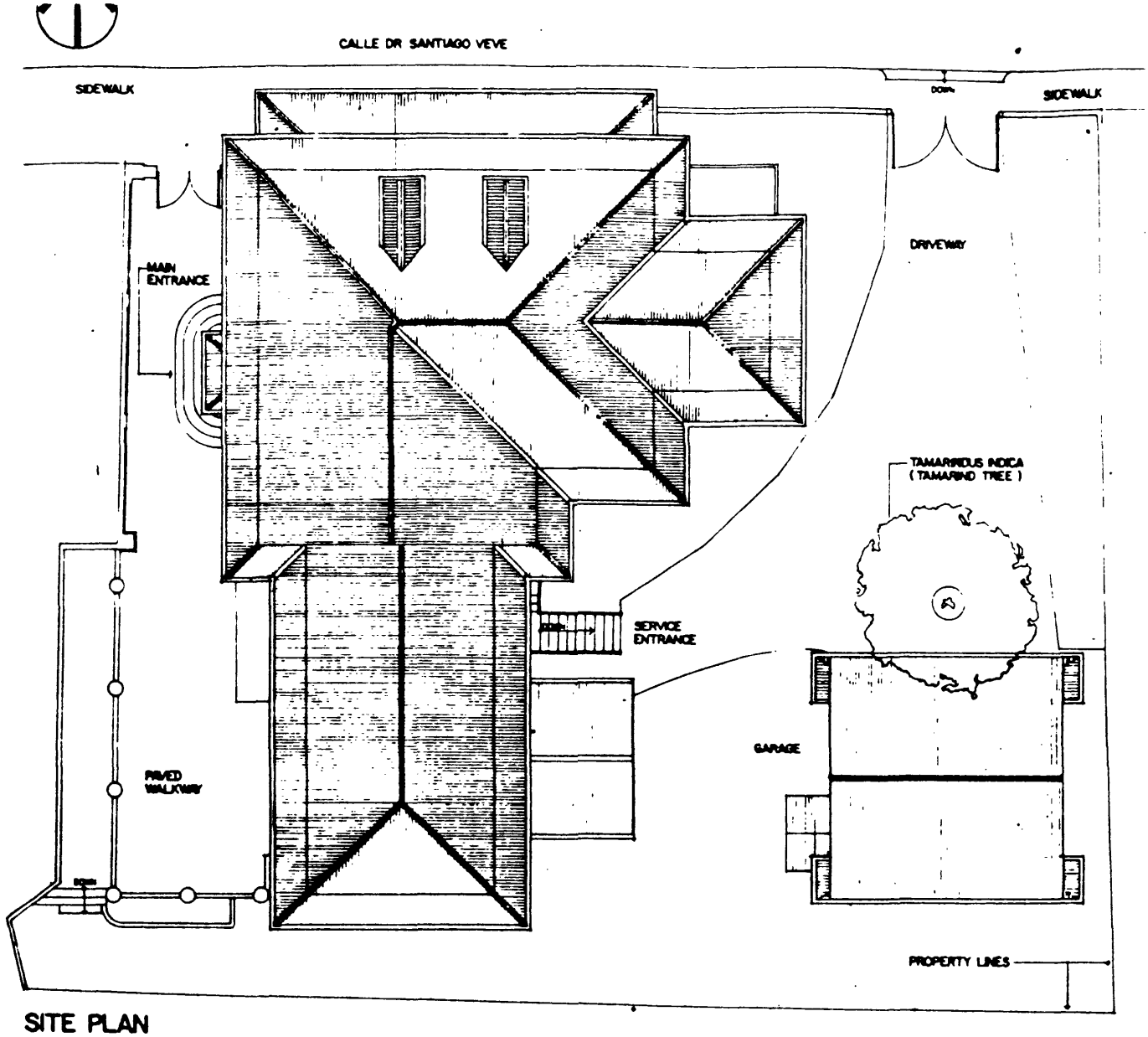
SCALE: 1:1000



SITE PLAN

THE SITE WAS MEASURED BY THE SURVEY TEAM LISTED BELOW IN THE MONTH OF JUNE, 1983.

24 FT

1/8" = 1'-0"

8 MTS

Residence of Jaime Acosta Fores
-Scale 1.200