

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Observation Tower

Other names/site number: Torre de Piedra, Santa Ana Tower

Name of related multiple property listing:

New Deal Era Constructions in the Forest Reserves of Puerto Rico, 1931-1942 (Amendment)

2. Location

Street & number: SR 120, Km 14, Cain Alto Ward

City or town: San Germán State: PR County: San Germán

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

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
Applicable National Register Criteria: ___

A B C D

<p><i>Diana López Sotomayor</i> Diana López Sotomayor, Archaeologist</p>	<p>17 March 2016</p>
<p>Signature of certifying official/Title: _____ Date</p> <p><u>Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office</u></p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	
<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>Signature of commenting official: _____ Date</p>	
<p>Title : _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

Observation Tower
Name of Property

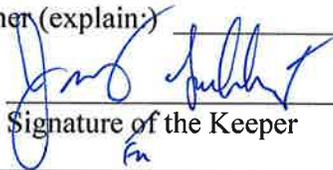
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4. National Park Service Certification

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):


Signature of the Keeper

5-1-2016
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

- Private
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Recreation and Culture/outdoor recreation

Current Functions

Recreation and Culture/outdoor/recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Other: Castellated

Bungalow Craftsman, Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials:

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stone, Concrete and Clay

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Observation Tower (commonly known as *Torre de Piedra*) is a rectangular, two volume, stone and concrete building which rest on top of a grassy knoll, located next to kilometer 14.0 in SR-120, Cain Alto Ward of the San German Municipality, within the Maricao State Forest Reserve. The building's central volume has a two story observation castellated tower with a cut stone cladding finish. The property's two adjacent volumes have open picnic shelters with a low pitched gabled clay tile roof that rests upon tapered columns also with cut stone cladding. The picnic shelters have Bungalow Craftsman and Spanish Colonial Revival features and have a structural system composed of reinforced concrete trusses (kingpost with tie beams). The property is in excellent condition and retains high level of integrity.

Narrative Description

The Observation Tower, is a stone and concrete two volume rectangular building 76.5 feet (23.3 m) long and 18 feet (5.5 m) wide that rest on a manmade six feet high grassy knoll south of SR-120 at kilometer 14.0. The tower is located at the highest point of the Maricao Forest Reserve in the Cain Alto Ward of the Municipality of San German. The tower is divided in two volumes: a central observation tower and two lateral picnic shelters. With a height of some six feet over the neighboring road; the tower itself is about 30 feet (9.1 m) high with a height difference of the lower level and the observation platform of 24.75 feet (7.5 m).

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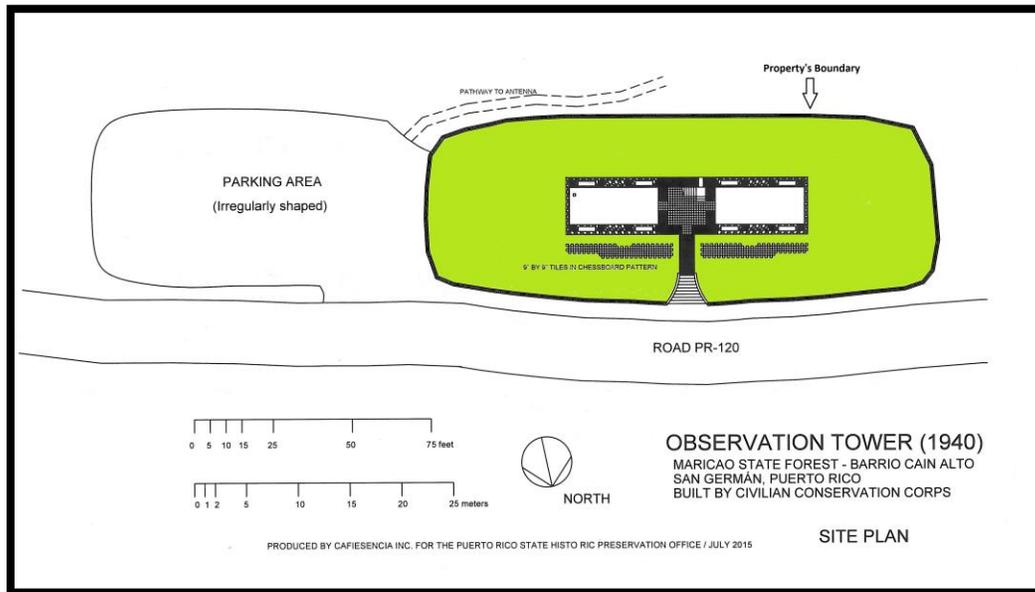


Figure 1. General plan of the Observation Tower prepared by Cafiesencia, Inc., 2015.

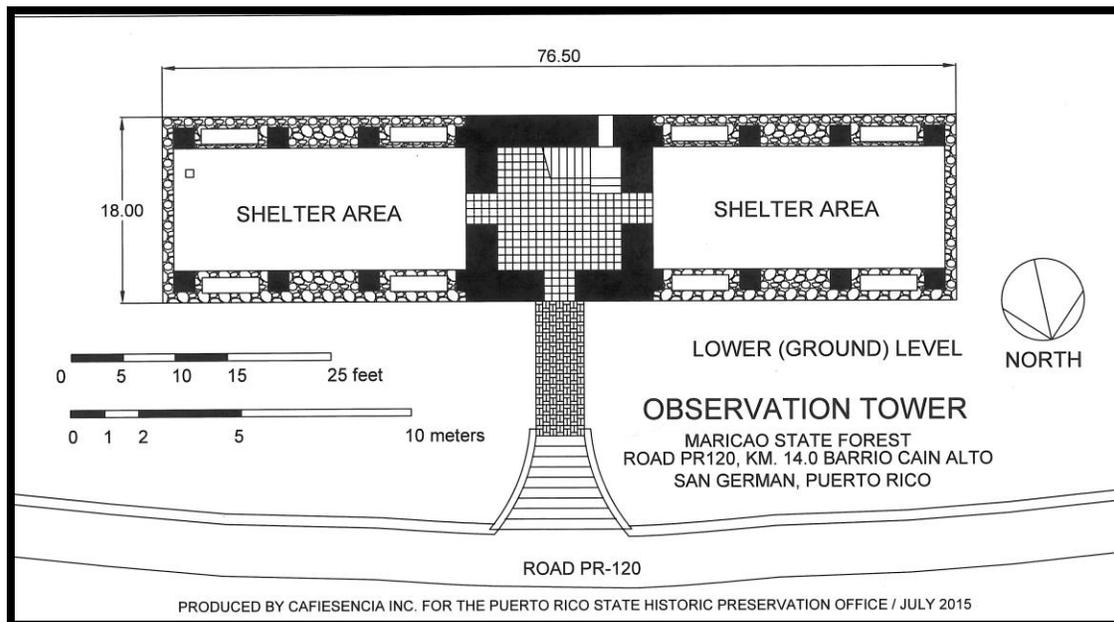


Figure 2. Plan of Observation Tower prepared by Cafiesencia, Inc., 2015.

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Photo 1. Aerial View of the Observation Tower taken from film *JIBA, el Bosque de Maricao*.

The tower's main entrance is reached from the roadway by way of a ten brick and stone stairway cut into the knoll. The stairway is broader at the base and shorter at the top. At the top of the stairs a brick path leads into the building's entrance. West of this brick path there is one historic marker prepared by the *Compañía de Parques Nacionales* (National Parks Company) that identifies the property and provides background information on the Civilian Conservation Corps. Also, square clay pavers (9"X 9") were dispersed to both sides of the path, in a chessboard pattern in the grass.



Photo 2. View of the brick and stone stairway facing approximately southwest.

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Photos 3 and 4. Pavers on the knoll and marker.

Main volume (Tower)

The central volume is solid-looking and a closed volume which has a footprint of 18 X 18 feet (5.5 m X 5.5 m). The building's exterior surface has irregular stones having one face dressed for outside exposure and using predominantly hard volcanic rock. The north (main façade) has an arched doorway opening with a louvered steel bar gate and above it two window openings. Both the east and west facades, which provide access to the picnic shelters, have one arched door opening with one window. The southern façade does not have a doorway, but has a three window openings. Steel bars have been placed in the window closest to the ground level.



Photo 5. View of the Observation Tower facing southwest.

The flooring of the tower is made of a mix of brick and concrete slabs. Access to the observation terrace is made by way of a three quarter turn surfaced polished cement stair attached to the walls. The stair's railing consists of two parallel 1.5 inch pipes, with a 1 feet of separation, held by symmetrically spaced 2.5 feet high cement posts.

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Photos 6 and 7. View of the window opening northern with iron grill work in southern façade and interior stairway looking west.



Photo 8. Observation area at the top of the tower.

Picnic shelters

Each picnic shelter wing has gabled I-beam roof supported by eight stone squared columns. Flooring in the picnic shelters consists of polished cement at the center surrounded by pressed stone of about 1 foot wide. Four concrete benches were placed between the columns at the eastern and western end of the wings. The two picnic shelter wings have a footprint each of 29.5 X 18 feet (8.9 m X 5.5 m). The original roofs were initially made out of wood and but by 1955 they had been substituted with reinforced concrete trusses by the Insular Forest Service.

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Photo 9. View of the four columns and two of the benches in the eastern picnic shelter taken from the roadway facing southwest.



Photos 10 and 11. View of the picnic shelter as seen from the tower (facing northwest) and close-up of the kingpost with tie beams.

Antenna

Facing the southern façade a communication antenna was placed at approximately 20 feet of distance, with a small reinforced concrete shed. The shed and antenna are outside the property's boundaries.

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Photo 12. View of the antenna in the forest areas behind the Observation Tower taken from film *JIBA, el Bosque de Maricao*.

Changes throughout time

After 1960, due to safety reasons, three iron gates were installed on the tower's central volume openings and iron bars placed at the two lowest arched window openings. The side gates (opening to the picnic shelters) are kept closed while the main gate is kept unlocked all year round as informed by the management official of the Maricao State Forest.

The building is at the location where it was built in 1940. The property's setting has retained the natural and manmade features (original roadway). The original design, materials and workmanship elements that help identify the property as a CCC construction can be appreciated. Since 1940 property has been in continued use as part of the entertainment icon of the Maricao State Forest and its adjacent community. The property's aesthetic value, historic sense of a particular period of time, and direct link to the historic events have been retained, so it maintains integrity of feeling and association.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- 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.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- 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

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Areas of Significance

Architecture

Period of Significance

1940-1965

Significant Dates

1940

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Civilian Conservation Corps

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Observation Tower, built in 1940, is statewide significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture. The use of cut stone clad finish and castellated tower features reflect the distinctive design and construction methods used by Civilian Conservation Corps in the National and State Forest in Puerto Rico. The building is one of the few well preserved surviving examples of CCC constructions in Puerto Rico. The period of significance extends from 1940-1965 that encompasses the date of construction until the fifty-year cut-off date.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Observation Tower meets Criterion C embody the distinctive characteristics of a period and methods of construction with the use of cut stone clad finish and castellated tower were a distinctive features used by the Civilian Conservation Corps from 1933 to 1942 in the Forests of Puerto Rico. Its form, massing and design details link it with romantic imagery of castles and fortresses even if it is not a military building. Rather, it condenses the visual codes implemented at this time by the Forest Service for “appropriate designs” in those buildings and structures needed for the use, management and interpretation of forest reserves.

By scaling, stone-cladding, painting or landscaping the concrete volumes and surfaces they are rescaled and redefined in a more friendly way with nature; additionally, the employment of Spanish-style tiles on the roof of the side pavilions of the Observation Tower, not necessary from the standpoint of waterproofing the roof, are used mostly as a symbolic device, possibly a mild recognition of Puerto Rican Hispanic roots, or because of their “earthy” effect.

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Construction of the Observation Tower

In the second year (1934-35) of the implementation of the CCC Program in Puerto Rico, a thirty-four (34) feet Observation Tower with picnic shelter building was built a top of the mountain (*Tetas de Cerro Gordo*) to take advantage of beautiful panoramic views of the area. The Government of Puerto Rico was aware of Maricao Insular Forest's development potential as an important recreation area¹. However, this first tower was likely made out of wood. The construction of buildings and structures made out of wood was very common practice on the Island in the first years of the program. It was not until the fiscal year 1939-1940 that the CCC program assigned \$11,301.01 for the construction of the stone and concrete tower². The next year (1940-41) an additional \$4,851.43 was provided for work on the tower and an additional \$621.14 for landscaping³.

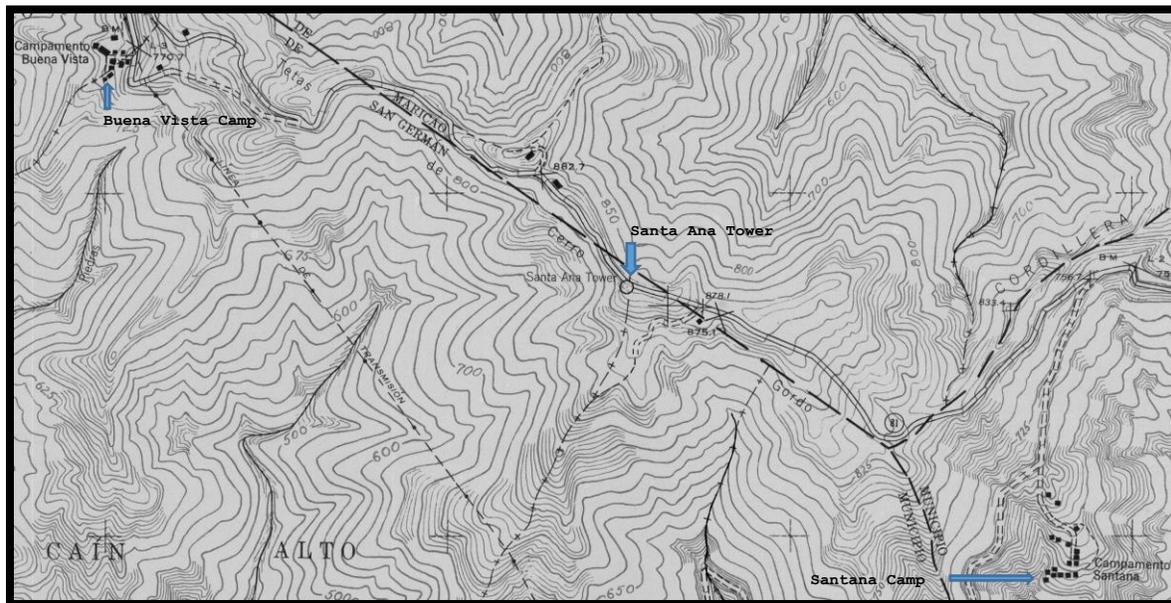


Figure 3. Segment of USGS Preliminary Map of Maricao, Southwest, 1947 edition, showing two work camps and the location of Santa Ana Tower astride route 81 (now SR 120) in the Maricao Insular Forest.

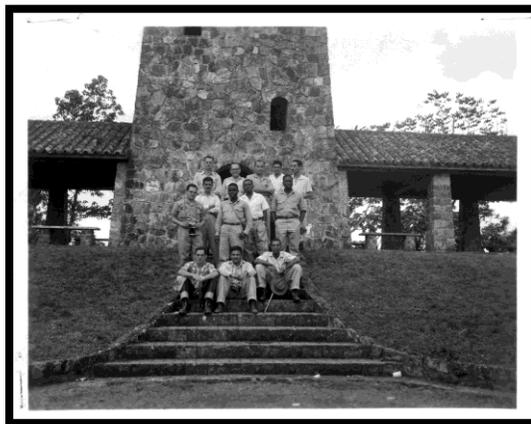
¹ Informe del Comisionado de Agricultura y Comercio, Ejercicio 1934-1935 (San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1935), 92.

² Informe del Comisionado de Agricultura y Comercio, Ejercicio 1939-1940 (San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1940), 33. Considering that the fiscal year 1939-1940 in Puerto Rico corresponds to the period of July 1, 1939 to June 30, 1940, the construction date selected was 1940.

³ Informe del Comisionado de Agricultura y Comercio, Ejercicio 1940-1941 (San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1942), 33.

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Historic Photograph 1. Training Course 1956. Forest Service, Record Number 1377.

Importance of the tower within the Maricao State Forest

As representation of a historical moment, the Observation Tower in the Maricao State Forest is a potent symbol of the redefinition of forests during the 1930s. Since 1940, this building stands out from the surrounding trees and peaks and from its raised platform. Thus it is a result of the government policy regarding forests as pristine objects not violated by man, even if this act of appreciation necessitates building this tower and a road that makes it accessible.

The Tower seems to deliver one purpose: as a recreational amenity placed with a view of most of the high points of the forest. The coast in a circa 60-mile length from Rincón to Guayanilla can be mostly discerned albeit some smaller ranges close to the coast like Cabo Rojo's Sierra Bermeja (Red Range) obstruct the view to some portions. Among the towns visible are Mayagüez, San Sebastián, Cabo Rojo, Hormigueros, San Germán and Sabana Grande.

Other towers built by the CCC in National and State Forests

Regarding the similarities and differences of this building with other extant towers of CCC forest projects, especially in the Maricao region, and other relevant examples taken from elsewhere, the binding element is above all the design principles more so than the specific formal solutions. This observation tower offers a distinct typology (two exterior picnic shelters). There are other three observation towers extant built by the CCC in Puerto Rico: one in the Guanica State Forest (Capron Tower) and two in El Yunque National Forest (the Britton Tower and Yunque Peak Tower). All these buildings were designed with the dual purpose as observation towers and picnic shelters. The observation towers made of stone and concrete.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

I. Primary references

a. Archives and libraries

Archivo General de Puerto Rico. Fondo: Obras públicas. Serie: Carreteras y puentes; Carretera #108. Caja 2889. Legajo 771.

b. Reports

Barbour, William. *Notes on proposed unemployment relief projects in Puerto Rico*. National Archives and Records Administration. Record Group 126. Division of Territories, Box 855, 1933.

Departamento de Agricultura. Informe anual del Comisionado de Agricultura y Comercio, Ejercicio 1934-1935. San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1935.

----- Informe anual del Comisionado de Agricultura y Comercio, Ejercicio 1939-1940. San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1940.

----- Informe anual del Comisionado de Agricultura y Comercio, Ejercicio 1940-1941. San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1942.

Pabón Charneco, Arleen. *Taking the fiesta to the forest: The civilian conservation Corps and Puerto Rico: Interpretive analysis of Guanica's Camp Borinquen and Fort Caprón*. San Juan, Puerto Rico: UMA Group, 1999.

c. Interviews

Iñigo Agostini, Félix. Archivo del Centro Interdisciplinario de Estudios del Litoral. Universidad de Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, (January 25, 1989).

Rodríguez, Rafael. *Entrevistas Audiovisual para Documental Bosque Maricao* (2015).

II. Secondary References

a. Journals

Gerhart, George A. "El Cuerpo Civil de Conservación en Puerto Rico." *Revista de agricultura de Puerto Rico* 28 (1937): 292-299.

Groben, W. Ellis. *Acceptable Plans Forest Service Administrative Buildings*. Division of Engineering, Washington: USDA Forest Service, 1939.

Grosvenor, John R. *A history of the architecture of the USDA Forest Service*. EM-7310-8, Engineering Staff, United States Dept. of Agriculture Forest Service, Engineering Staff, United States Dept. of Agriculture Forest Service, July, 1999.

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Hadley, W. E. "Reporte trimestral del Servicio Forestal Insular." *Revista Agricultura de Puerto Rico*, no. 29 (julio-septiembre 1937).

b. Books

Valdés Pizzini, Manuel, Michael González Cruz, and José Eduardo Martínez Reyes. *La Transformación del paisaje puertorriqueño y la disciplina del Cuerpo Civil de Conservación, 1933-1942*. Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2011.

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 # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.5 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

1927 or

AD 1983

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Zone: 19 | Easting: 713700 | Northing: 2007300 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

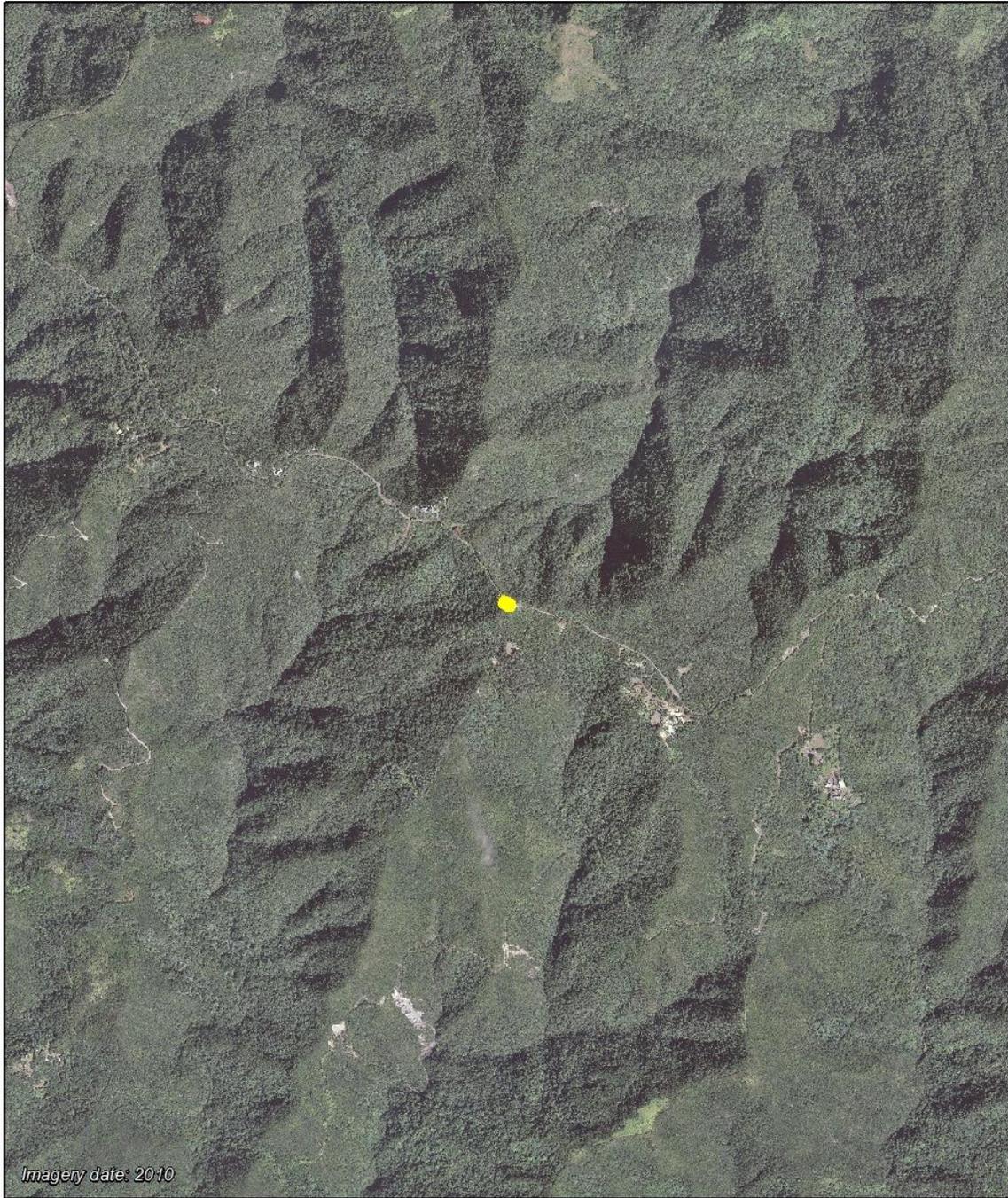
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of this property is limited, to the north, by the outermost limit of the right of way of State Road PR-120; to the east, by an open, treeless area dedicated to car parking; to the south and west to wooded portions of the Maricao State Forest.

The property, within this boundary, is delimited more precisely by a low (about 1 foot high) stone curb all around (except the cut for the stair), made with the traditional stonework used in other CCC properties and structures.

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Imagery date: 2010

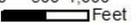


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19Q 713708 2007329 UTM

1:20,000 

0 500 1,000
 Feet

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Observation Tower
San Germán, Puerto Rico
19Q 713708 2007329 UTM

1:1,800 N
0 50 100 Feet

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries were selected so that it would include the extent of the historic property (knoll and building) extant at the period of its construction in 1940.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Manuel Valdés Pizzini, PhD, Anthropologist, Jorge Ortiz Colom, Conservation Architect, Carlos Carrero Morales, PhD Candidate, History, José Daniel Cuevas, Undergrad History Student, Lisette Fas Quiñones, M.A. Journalism
organization: Cafi Cultura Puertorriqueña, Inc. (Cafiesencia)
street& number: 22 San Isidro Street
city or town: Sabana Grande state: PR zip code: 00637
e-mail lisettefas@gmail.com
telephone: 787-309-6017
date: July 31, 2015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

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Photo Log

Name of Property: Stone Tower

City or Vicinity: San German

County: San Germán

State: Puerto Rico

Photographer: There are three photographers – Lisette Fas Quiñones contributed seven photographs (#2, #3, #5, #6, #9, #10 and #11), Roscoe Stanley Productions (#1 and #12), and Jorge Ortiz Colom (#4, #7 and #8).

Date Photographed: One photograph was taken in April 6, 2014 (#6) and two photographs were taken in February 7, 2015 (#1 and #12), and the remaining nine were taken in March 20, 2015 (#2-#5 and #7-#11).

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- Aerial View of the Observation Tower from the film *JIBA, el Bosque de Maricao* facing approximately north 1 of 12.
- View of the brick and stone stairway facing approximately southwest, 2 of 12.
- Brick pavers on the knoll, facing approximately west, 3 of 12.
- Marker placed by the National Parks Company, facing approximately west, 4 of 12.
- View of Observation Tower facing approximately southwest, 5 of 12.
- View of opening in the southern façade with iron grill work looking approximately southwest, 6 of 12.
- View of interior stairways, looking approximately west, 7 of 12.
- Observation area at the top of the tower, looking approximately south, 8 of 12.
- View of eastern picnic shelter taken from the roadway facing approximately southwest, 9 of 12.
- View of western picnic shelter, facing approximately east, 10 of 12.
- View of the curb and the eastern picnic shelter taken from the parking area facing approximately west, 11 of 12.
- View of the observation tower, its nearby antenna, the surrounded forested area and mountain ranges, looking approximately west, 12 of 12.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.