

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received AUG 14 1984
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Nuestra Señora de Lourdes Chapel

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number ~~Corner of~~ Ponce de Leon Ave. and Miramar Ave., not for publication

city, town Santurce vicinity of

state Puerto Rico code 72 county San Juan code 0964

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Catholic Church, Archdiocese of San Juan

street & number Box 1967

city, town San Juan vicinity of state Puerto Rico 00903

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Archbishop House of San Juan

street & number Box 1967

city, town San Juan state Puerto Rico 00903

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of the Historic Churches
title of Puerto Rico

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town San Juan state Puerto Rico

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The chapel Nuestra Señora de Lourdes sits on a corner lot, oriented along a north-south axis. The entrance to the church is on the northeast corner. The building is separated from its immediate surroundings by an iron grillwork fence enclosing garden areas around the structure. The Neo-Gothic chapel was designed by Antonin Nechodoma for the Methodist Episcopal Church, and was built between 1907 and 1908. It later belonged to the Union Church of Puerto Rico (1917), and, as it still does at present, to the Roman Catholic Church.

The plan consists of a single large nave with a smaller area off to one side. Each of these spaces has an entrance portico. The building is constructed of reinforced concrete with light rustication simulating stone. The decorative trim, including finials and moldings, is made of baked ceramic. Both the nave and the adjacent area are covered with gabled roofs made of wood overlaid with asphalt shingles. The roof sections are at right angles to each other. The church facade is dominated by a square bell tower over the corner entrance. On the first level, two openings with rounded arches lead to the entrance doorway, which is set at a diagonal to the tower. On the second level, three sides of the tower are opened up by double arches which are slightly pointed. The tower is crowned by a crenellated embattlement. Four gargoyles squat conspicuously at the bases of the four corners. The wall of the facade features a large stained glass window, with a smaller one in the gable above it. A large Celtic cross tops the gable pinnacle. The side walls of the church are modulated by buttresses reflecting the interior bay divisions. The buttresses frame three stained glass windows on either side, made up of three lancets. The rear of the building terminates in an hexagonal apse, over which has recently been inserted another stained glass window.

On the inside, the nave is covered by a handsome wooden ceiling, following the lines of the gabled exterior. Arched beams with spandrels filled with carved-out quatrefoils divide the ceiling at regular intervals. A simpler flat wooden ceiling covers the adjacent area. The floor of the church is made of mosaic tiles. Plain walls which flank the recess of the apse originally contained stained glass windows. These were removed during a recent restoration project (1982), and the glass was used to repair other existing windows.

The original structure has not suffered any major alterations, other than the removal of the two windows on the south wall, and the addition of a new apse window. No structures have been attached to the building. However, the growth of the city all around the chapel has had a noticeable effect. New avenues, and apartment and office buildings have risen on all of its sides, restricting its space and leaving only this small structure to remind us of the past.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1908 **Builder/Architect** Architect Antonin Nechodoma

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The chapel of Nuestra Señora de Lourdes is significant on several counts, architecturally and historically. The design and execution of the church, including architectural features such as the elaborate stained glass windows, make the building architecturally significant. The fact that it is the work of Antonin Nechodoma adds to its importance. Nechodoma is considered to be one of Puerto Rico's finest architects. He built many houses and several churches on this island and in the Dominican Republic between 1905 and 1928. Some kind of association with Frank Lloyd Wright before coming to the Caribbean, an association still being clarified, gives Nechodoma's work additional historical value. Moreover, the chapel of Nuestra Señora de Lourdes is thought to be the only Nechodoma church left standing in Puerto Rico.

This church is representative of an historical development in Puerto Rico: the opening up of the island to denominations other than the Roman Catholic. Prior to the change of sovereignty in 1898, the island of Puerto Rico had only one non-Roman church, this being an Anglican church built in 1873 in Ponce. But almost immediately after the American occupation, Protestant churches began to appear on the island. The church being proposed here is one of the first of these, and one of the first of many Methodist churches built in Puerto Rico in the first decade of the 20th century. Nechodoma is particularly associated with this denomination. The style is closely akin to Late English Gothic, or English Gothic Revival. As such, rather than announcing a Spanish source, as in many other churches on the island, it announces an English one.

