NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JUL 23 1984
date entered AUG 23 1984

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

1. Name

historic The Miami Building

and/or common The Miami Building

2. Location

street & number #868 Ashford Avenue ___ not for publication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	
___ district	___ public	X occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	X private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	X yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	N/A	___ no	___ military	X other: apartment house

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Luis Tirado, Mrs. Blanca Barrera de Tirado, Mrs. Mariblanca Tirado

street & number #868 Ashford Avenue

city, town Santurce ___ vicinity of state Puerto Rico

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds

street & number Judicial Center

city, town San Juan state Puerto Rico

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventario de Monumentos Históricos has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date 1977 ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Institute of Puerto Rican Culture

city, town San Juan state Puerto Rico

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Miami Building is a seven storey structure, rectangular in plan, located in the Condado section of Santurce, Puerto Rico. It is located on a lot facing Ashford Avenue to the front and the Condado Lagoon to the back. The building is symmetrical in plan and contains a total of fourteen (14) apartments, distributed two to a floor. Each apartment consists of a foyer; dining and living rooms, kitchen, bathroom, two bedrooms, a balcony on each bedroom and a service or maid quarters. A central fan-shaped staircase with an elevator on its side leads to an open gallery connecting the entrance of the apartments on each floor. The structural system consists of reinforced concrete walls with concrete floor slabs and a flat reinforced concrete roof slab. All walls (interior and exterior) are smoothly plastered in cement. Almost all of the original wooden windows with glass panes still stand; some of them were replaced a few years ago with aluminum jalousie windows. Most of the original wooden doors showing simplified geometrical grillwork are still standing. The flooring material used throughout the building consists of native cement tiles depicting different shapes and patterns.

The entrance to the building is strongly emphasized by a central projecting vestibule with double wooden and glass panes doors with the name of the building, "MIAMI", casted on concrete at its top (Photographs #1 and #2). Of particular importance are the large entrance lamps located at the center of the entrance and the flutted zigurat shaped pilasters located at both sides of the entrance. Inside the building, a vestibule with a large central fan-shaped staircase with two flat scalloped arches openings on both sides of the staircase dominates this area (Photo #5). One notable feature located in each apartment is a room divider or "mediopunto" between the dining and living areas. Each "mediopunto" is formed by a scalloped arch supported by pilasters with rounded corners. This architectural device achieves the purpose of dividing both areas in a subtle way (Photos #6 & #7). A most interesting feature is the creation of a curved foyer in each apartment. The wall creating this curved area is composed of glass bricks. This feature creates a sense of transparency seldom seen in such apartments. Of interest too is the treatment of some corners in the living room by means of two perpendicular areas closed by means of wooden windows with glass panels (Photos #1-#4).

The design of the building followed the concepts and design details of the Art Deco style in Puerto Rico (refer to Item #8 for a detailed description of this style). The outside of the building reveals the repetitive logic of the building's interior through a layered series of identical balconies, two to a side, flanking a solid wall at the center (Photo #2). The central core's strong verticality is emphasized by the used of a continuous vertical elements (Photos #2 & #3). This vertical accent contrasts sharply with the horizontal emphasis achieved in the crisply edged balconies with their rounded corners (Photos #2 & #4) and in the continuous horizontal streamlining elements (Photos #2 & #3). Two notable features are the curved elements formed by glass blocks which are located on both sides of the central area. They allow natural light to filter into each apartment. Because of the beauty of its proportions and the organization of its main components, this building stands out as a major example of Art Deco architecture in the Island.

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	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates 1936 **Builder/Architect** Architect Pedro Méndez

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Miami Building was the first private apartment building constructed on the Condado section in Santurce, Puerto Rico. Its owner, Mr. Tirado, was a rich Venezuelan that commissioned Architect Méndez, a graduate of Syracuse University in 1932 and one of our first native architects, to design the plans. Beltrán, Miró and Benítez were the contractors that built the structure at a cost of $90,000.00. It is believed that this was the first apartment building in all of Puerto Rico.

The building is located on an exclusive tourist strip where in 1930's only rich influential people lived. At that time, the Condado area was mainly a residential area dotted with expensive private residences. When the Miami Building was constructed it was, with the possible exception of the Condado Vanderbuilt Hotel (now the Condado Beach Hotel), the tallest structure of the strip.

Architecturally, the Miami Building is of extreme importance as a prime example of the Art Deco style in Puerto Rican architecture. This style is distinguished by its rich geometrical ornamentation that could be applied to every type of object. Cubist and expressionist ideas also influenced this style Every extravagant and exotic feature was utilized as an inspired element of design. Its fluid lines created with simple flat and curved surfaces, its rectangular and symmetrical projections, the extensive use of streamlining (decorative element represented by grooves or moldings that are formed on molds as a result of mass production), the use of new materials (such as concrete) and new concepts of technology typifies the Art Deco movement in Puerto Rico.

The impact of American culture on Puerto Rican culture brought about the Art Deco movement during the 1930's. It was developed in Puerto Rico with the intention of creating an agreeable, pleasant and "modern" atmosphere. At the same time it introduced to Puerto Rico new concepts in technology and new construction materials. The style offered to Puerto Ricans a great flexibility in terms of morphology and typology. Because of this, the Art Deco was a revolutionary style in Puerto Rico, presenting a vocabulary quite different from the traditional Spanish Colonial Style. These new changes in our architectural values reflected social and stylistic changes in the Island due to the impact of the North American culture. Its main characteristics, so different from traditional ones, such as the innovative vocabulary in terms of the masses and the voids, the flat walls with rounded corners, the development of new construction materials, the new decorative details were all a reflection of the changing modes of our cultural milieu.

The Miami Building stands out as one of our finest examples of Art Deco architecture in the Island and the Caribbean. Its innovative design, its delicate decoration and its impressive use of the new material called concrete, ranks this structure as one of the major examples in the development of modern Puerto Rican architecture. Its impressive good looks and revolutionary style typify an era of architectural innovation in Puerto Rico.

9. Major Bibliographical References

M. Fernández, Metodología para el Art Deco en Puerto Rico, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1982.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1,265 sq. meters

Quadrangle name San Juan

Quadrangle scale 1-20,000

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A	19	808210	2043680	B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification The property is bounded to the North by Ashford Avenue; to the Soth by the Condado Lagoon; to the West by the South Wing of the Condado Holiday Inn Hotel and to the East by a vacant lot. See enclosed location plan: nominated property in red.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Armando Morales Pares; State Architect

organization State Historic Preservation Office date June 30, 1984

street & number Box 82, La Fortaleza telephone 809-721-3012; 721-4389

city or town San Juan state Puerto Rico 00901

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer date June 30, 1984

For NPS use only

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

Keeper of the National Register date 8/23/84

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311