NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name: *Edificio Victory Garden*

other names/site number: _____

2. Location

street & number: *1001 Ponce de León Avenue, corner of Elisa Colberg Street* ☐ not for publication

city or town *San Juan* ☐ vicinity

state *Puerto Rico* code *PR* county *San Juan* code *127* zip code *00909*

3. 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant* ☐ *nationally* **X** *statewide* ☐ *locally.* (☐ *See continuation sheet for additional comments.*)

Elizabeth Solá Oliver Aug. 25. 04

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

_____

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

_____

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
- ☑ entered in the National Register
  - ☐ See continuation sheet
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ☐ removed from the National Register
- ☐ other(explain): _____

for Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

Daniel J. Vivian — 10/13/04

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
- X private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
- X building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
Domestic / Multiple dwelling

Current Functions
Domestic / Multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
Spanish Revival

Materials
- foundation concrete
- walls concrete
- roof concrete
- other terracotta (roof tiles)

Narrative Description X See continuation sheets

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.

X **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

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
☐ **B** removed from its original location.
☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
☐ **D** a cemetery.
☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
☐ **F** a commemorative property.
☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance *Architecture*

Period of Significance *1936 –1940*

Significant Dates *1936*

Significant Person *N/A*

Cultural Affiliation *N/A*

Architect/Builder *De Castro, Pedro*

Narrative Statement of Sigfnificance

X See continuation sheets

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

X See continuation sheets

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

X 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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
X University
☐ Other

Name of repository: *School of Architecture, Architecture and Construction Archives, University of Puerto Rico*

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property *less than one acre*

UTM References

1	*19*	*808525*	*2043950*	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

☐ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

X **See continuation sheets**

Boundary Justification (See continuation sheets)

X **See continuation sheets**

11. Form Prepared By

name/title *Irma Iranzo Berrocal, Historian, PRSHPO*
Santiago Gala, Architect, PRSHPO

organization *Oficina de Conservación Histórica (PRSHPO)* date *31 March, 2004*

street & number *PO Box 9066581* telephone *(787) 721-3737*

city or town *San Juan* state *Puerto Rico* zip code *00906-6581*

Additional Documentation

Property Owner

name *many owners*

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Narrative Description:

Edificio Victory Garden *(Victory Garden Building) is a four-story, reinforced concrete, Spanish Revival domestic/multiple dwelling building with a "U" shaped floor plan of symmetrical composition and two commercial spaces in its ground level. Most of its walls are finished with cement plaster and all ornamental details such as cornices and moldings are of cast concrete. The main façade is also symmetrical with five individually articulated stepped bays, a central circulation core and two identical apartments on each floor. Both a main and service entrance accesses each unit independently. The floor plan's "U" shape promotes natural ventilation and light into each unit by means of a small patio. This property is located in Miramar, a traditionally residential district of Santurce in San Juan, at the corner of Ponce de León Avenue and Elisa Colberg Street. The topographic condition of its sloping lot along the street, made possible the integration of garage and storage spaces at an underground level. Though moderately altered through its existence –with minor interventions such as adverse window replacements- this property has stood the test of time as one of Puerto Rico's finest examples of Spanish Revival apartment houses from early 20th century.*

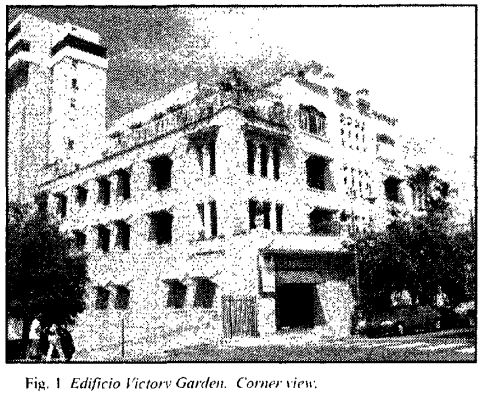

Fig. 1 *Edificio Victory Garden. Corner view.*

Edificio Victory Garden (Victory Garden Building) was built on a rectangular corner lot facing both Ponce de León Avenue and Elisa Colberg Street in Miramar, one of Santurce's finest residential districts. The lot is 135'-0" wide by 130'-0" deep, and the ground slopes as it moves away from Ponce de León Avenue northward towards Baldorioty de Castro expressway.[1] The building is conceived as a detached volume with façades on its four sides. It has both a side yard and a backyard.[2] The sloping site allows for the development of a basement with direct access from Elisa Colberg Street. This basement houses four covered garage spaces also used as storage rooms (Figs. 1 and 2). The blocks in this area of Santurce tend to be long and narrow, with the shorter sides towards the avenue, while the longer ones slope downhill North towards the Condado Lagoon. There is no typical lot size for the blocks.[3] The lot size accounts for the building's comfortable occupancy rate of 30% of the overall lot area, regardless of its great bulk as a four-story structure. The building mass is a square "U"- shaped block, 84'-0"wide (at the avenue) and 84'-0" deep (into the lot), 60'-0" high (at the top of its main staircase).

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[1] Enrique Vivoni Farage, Alarife de sueños, Pedro de Castro y Besosa. AACUPR, (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico), p. 73-75.

[2] "Between 1930 and 1950, an accelerated replacement of the residential structures for commercial and institutional buildings occurred. The old "quintas" (country-houses) in Ponce de León Avenue were disappearing at the fast process of speculation." Sepúlveda, Aníbal and Jorge Carbonell. Cangrejos-Santurce 1519-1950. Estudio del desarrollo histórico-urbano de Santurce. San Juan: Investigaciones Bonaire, Inc.1986, p. 52.

[3] "At the end of the 1930's, Santurce's territory was almost completely occupied by unarticulated urban tissue, reflecting the socioeconomic structures of a mono-export Caribbean capital city. At that moment, the developing patterns that would constitute Santurces evolution through the 1950's, when the area reached a population peak in its history, were already drawn." (Sepúlveda, 50).

The ground floor is occupied by two commercial spaces, while each of the upper stories houses two dwelling-units, for a total of 6 apartments in the building.[4] The typical building floor plan is symmetrical, with a central staircase of immediate access (around an elevator shaft) upon entrance to the building. This is one of the two circulation elements of the whole building and its expression in elevation becomes a central feature of vertical continuity. The main access from Ponce de Leon Avenue is flanked by two commercial spaces of an irregular shape, a design configuration meant to persuade pedestrians towards the building's entrance. However, a perforated wall that encloses this "exterior foyer" and a wooden canopy were added as part of recent renovations, considerably transforming the original building approach. The added wall leads into this small, partially covered space and then, through a portico of rustic design with "VICTORY GARDEN" engraved in a concrete plate above it, to the circulation foyer inside. Two iron grillwork enclosed openings on the new wall allow light from the street into the entrance patio and its two small planting areas (Figs. 3 and 4). The staircase is the only public circulation element in the building, as every unit is entered directly from a foyer developed on a spacious landing of the stairs and elevator (Fig. 5).

Fig. 3 *Edificio Victory Garden. South façade.*

Public circulation remains the same at every floor since the unit's layout varies only subtly in the treatment of the balconies. At every floor, the two symmetrical units are separated from each other by the staircase and by a gap of open space of about the same width as the stair shaft. This gap adds perimeter surface to each unit, facilitating natural ventilation and light. From the staircase foyer there is access to the unit's living room and the adjacent dining room (Fig. 6); these are located along the building's sidewall. Both spaces access the south-facing balcony. The dining room connects to the kitchen through the pantry; the kitchen, in turn, is adjacent to the laundry room and maid's room that includes its own bathroom beyond. A corridor from the dining room leads to the bedrooms located placed along the sidewall; the farthermost of them facing the back of the building. Both bedrooms share a bathroom that cannot be accessed from the main corridor. The master bedroom has its own bathroom, also facing the back of the building. This space has a North-facing balcony with a view of Condado Lagoon (Fig. 7). All rooms and spaces in this apartment house are well lit, ventilated and generously

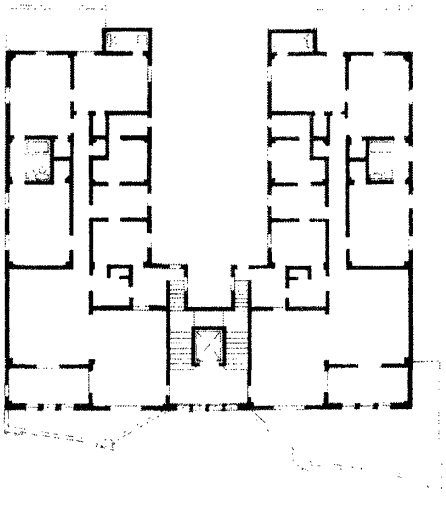


Fig. 7 *Edificio Victory Garden. Second Floor plan.*

[4] Commercial use at ground level demanded large open areas. A reinforced concrete, post and lintel system was adopted. The modern approach established by this structural grid on the first floor is subdued by a more traditional treatment of space in the upper housing stories. The concrete columns can be seen at different corners of some spaces within the dwelling units. All floor and roof slabs, along with the main staircase, are of reinforced concrete, while all interior non-bearing partitions are built in concrete masonry blocks.

sized. As a particular feature, there is a service entrance from the main staircase to the kitchen through a storage area (this service entrance requires some steps to handle appropriately the level link with the stair). The service access is of less importance from the staircase standpoint, so that it does not create any ambivalence of which is the main sequence of access to the units (Fig. 8). The elevator –which maintains its original character and mechanism-, does not stop at the service level, only at entry points. This double entry condition is featured in some of the best multifamily housing examples characteristic of this period.

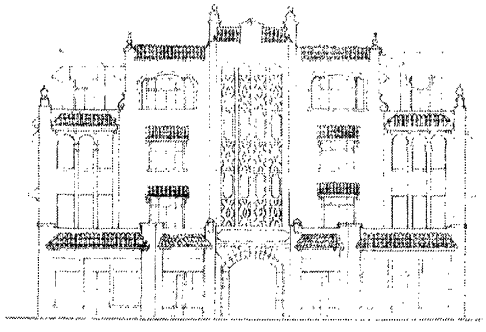
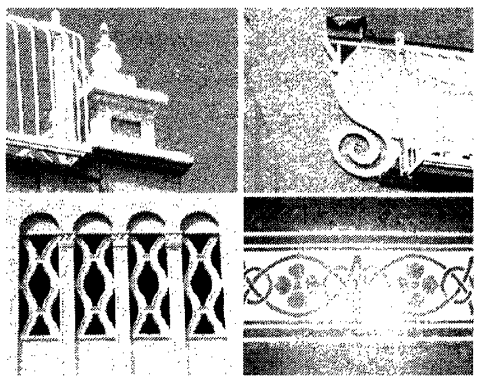


Fig. 9 *Edificio Victory Garden. South elevation.*

The façade is vertically articulated into five symmetrical bays. The central tallest bay, which encloses the staircase, runs continuously from top to bottom and makes only a subtle reference to the four stories of the building. Two four-story bays on either side have diverse fenestration schemes that vary according to vertical and horizontal disposition. In this second set of bays, the fourth floor is left as an open balcony. Additionally, there are two more bays placed at either side of the composition that contain all the North balconies. These end bays are the lowest in height, since the balcony of the fourth floor is left uncovered, (thus actually expressing these as three story bays). The building's relationship with its urban surroundings is of particular interest. From the avenue, the structure's bulk is articulated as a taller body with two smaller volumes attached on either side of it. The side components are much more open in comparison to the centerpiece, as they house the North balconies for all the units. The central portion is also divided into three zones, with a taller central one housing the main staircase/elevator shaft, and two others symmetrically placed on either side, each displaying punched windows at the second and third stories, and balconies at the fourth story. The articulation of the balconies breaks the solidness of the volume at the upper level suggesting a pyramid composition, which eases the building's scale integration with the surrounding context. Horizontally, the building is divided into two main zones, reflecting the different functions involved in it. A continuous Spanish clay roof tile overhang that is only interrupted at the main entrance arch defines the lower zone. Above this level, the second story units have ample balconies, the largest of the building. The rest of the façade shows no horizontal division other than that implied by the parapets of the balconies, the level of the windows, and the modulation of the vertical elements at the center bay (Fig. 9).



Figs. 11(a) *Pinnacle on south façade*, (b) *Spiral scroll*, (c) *Ornamental grille at staircase core* and (d) *quarry tile terracotta mosaic patterns and ornamented hydraulic cement tiles on living rooms.*

The building's façade is in Spanish Revival style[5], although it shows diverse stylistic features pertinent to a more eclectic understanding of said vocabulary[6]. The balconies on the third floor display a nonacademic treatment of half-round arches at the end of the double height pilasters (Fig. 10). Each of the five bays of the façade has a pinnacle that acts as a transitional element in height from one bay to the next (Fig. 11a). The fourth floor units have a covered balcony adjacent to an open terrace at each of the building's corners. Also, there is a scroll between the second and third bays, another transitional element of the stepping façade (Fig. 11b). The central bay displays a prominent chain-like, ornamental feature resembling an arabesque motif (Fig. 11c). This feature is perforated and allows for natural ventilation at all landing levels, next to all units' entries[7]. All the exterior finish for the walls is cement plaster and the cornices, moldings and decorative details are of cast concrete. Inside the building, the walls and ceilings are finished in cement plaster. The main staircase and the circulation corridor floor are finished in rectangular quarry tile with bull nose and baseboard pieces. Walls are of stucco in public areas. All the apartment floors are finished in 8"x 8" hydraulic cement tile with baseboards, with the exception of living and dining rooms, which include quarry tile terracotta mosaic patterns, inserted within the hydraulic cement tiles (Fig. 11d and 12). Kitchens and bathrooms have 2"x 2" ceramic tile flooring and 4-1/4" x 4-1/4" standard ceramic tile wainscots at 60", with a bull nose along the top edge. The remaining portion of the walls is finished in cement plaster, just as all the other interior partitions in the unit. All ceilings are also finished in cement plaster. There are no distinguishable interior features with the exception of wood moldings and stucco wall and

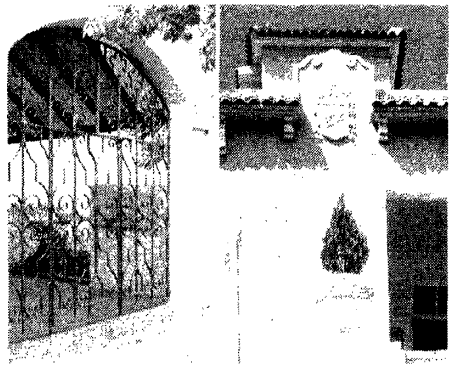
[5] "In the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, the Spanish Revival became the preferred architectural style in southern California and much of Florida, and it inspired important public and private buildings in Puerto Rico. This is a plural an eclectic style, which may take its inspiration from a wide spectrum of cultural models, ranging from the Spanish reconquista, with its Moorish elements to the Spanish Renaissance. It looks back to the style of the missions in the old California territory and adapts Moorish and Mediterranean elements. Its employ in the architectural practice in United States and Puerto Rico respond to several factors: a taste for the exotic; a search for cultural roots; evoked by such places as the Universidad de Alcalá de Henares; an accommodation to regional climatic conditions; and last, the historicist wave that swept over Western architecture at the beginning of the twentieth century". Hispanophilia The Spanish Revival in Architecture and Life in Puerto Rico, 1898-1950; Exhibition organized by the Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Escuela de Arquitectura, 1997, p. 16.

[6] "The development of Coral Gables, Boca Raton, and Palm Beach made an eclectic Mediterranean style that combined Moorish and Renaissance elements all the rage (p. 42). Addison Mizner became the most sought-after architect of the twenties and thirties, and his designs for wealthy clients were reviewed in the most important architectural magazines. It was only natural that his vision of a Spanish Revival architecture for tropical settings should become popular in Cuba and Puerto Rico" (p. 43). Hispanophilia. The Spanish Revival in Architecture and Life in Puerto Rico, 1898-1950; Exhibition organized by the Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Escuela de Arquitectura, 1997.

[7] "The preference for Hispanophile styles spread beyond the well-to-do classes and the intellectual circles. In the housing developments and apartment houses that crowded San Juan and Santurce during the thirties, the aura of Spain mitigated the effects of the modest buildings meant for the middle classes. From the drawing table of the architect Pedro de Castro came several of the first high-rise apartment buildings in San Juan, such as Victory Gardens in Miramar. The Hispanophile aspect was concentrated in the façades, which thus served as a symbol of social and financial upward mobility". Vivoni, Enrique Hispanophilia: The Spanish Revival in Architecture and Life in Puerto Rico, 1898-1950 (San Juan: AACUPR, 1997), p. 48.

ceilings surfaces above these. A concrete arch with a rusticated finish frames the opening between living and dining areas. The living room has a fixed, wood louver window that ventilates this space through the service entry area.

The elaborate wrought iron entrance gate from the street displays a flower motif that relates it to the building's name; this element was removed from its original location and placed in the new entrance wall as part of the above-mentioned recent intervention (Fig. 6a). The building's construction date, 1936, appears in bas-relief on a *cartouche* located at the highest point of the central bay in the main façade (Fig 6b). Urns adorn the second story terraces (Fig. 6c) and inside each unit, all interior doors are wood paneling doors and have a rectangular wood and glass transom on top. Replacing the original double door, wood and glass, sash windows, has recently changed many of the original windows and the removal of original finishes has significantly altered many bathrooms and kitchens in some units.



Figs. 6(a) *Entrance gate*, (b) *Heraldic ornament with date inscription*, (c) *Urn*.

Victory Garden building remains today as one of Puerto Rico's best examples of modern apartment houses, an architectural type made popular during the 1930's by developers, investors and designers in the new suburbs of San Juan, particularly Santurce and El Condado. Its creator, Pedro Adolfo de Castro y Besosa, is considered the island's finest exponent of the Spanish Revival, an architectural style of historic inspiration he successfully combined with the modern requirements of American design and construction.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Edificio Victory Garden, built in 1936 is significant locally under Criterion C for the area of architecture as outstanding Spanish Revival building in the Municipality of San Juan, representative of apartment buildings, results of the rise in urban development in the area and excellent example of the work of the renowned Puerto Rican architect Pedro de Castro.

Historical background

In 1918, Puerto Rico suffered the severed effects of an earthquake and received Federal funds for re-construction. These circumstances produced a prosperity which allowed to build state buildings and housing for the working class. This situation was favorable, also, to a rise in urban development in Santurce, among other areas of the metropolitan zone. High class, also, benefited from that period and built rich houses in Ponce de León Avenue, Condado and other areas. The sugar production allowed upper income class's capital to commission new residences, "summer houses or chalets" in the rural areas and improving the buildings for commerce. Also, professional classes prospered permitting the new urban development to extend to Santurce ward and in the Municipalities of Río Piedras, Guaynabo and Bayamón. Growth in the construction industry continued in the 1920's when 5,497 construction permits were granted in fiscal year 1921-1922[8].

Puerto Rico received additional funding due to the impact caused in the Island by the lash of hurricanes San Felipe (1928) and San Ciprián (1932). Economic conditions on the Island that were assisted by influx and availability of capital made the 1930's important decade for the construction industry[9]. During 1919-1936 more than 53,000 housing units were built in the Island. In particular, in the period of four years (1931-1934) 500 more homes per year were built than in 1940. *"Construction slumped sharply, the year sugar quota legislation went into effect, then recovered gradually to a peak in 1937 when Federal spending in Puerto Rico was heavy and the Island's industries were in healthy, if not peak, condition."*[10]

New housing development spread in Santurce during the 30's through of many new apartment houses in the area, particularly on Ponce de León Avenue in Miramar and Condado. The work of Pedro de Castro had a great impact in the development of modern apartment housing in Puerto Rico. The Santurce identity changed with wooden houses being replaced by he new multi-story concrete buildings for the middle and upper classes. In Puerto Rico, during the 30's and 40's, the estate investors favored the multi-family housing for urban

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[8] Enrique Vivoni Farage, Alarife de sueños, Pedro de Castro y Besosa. AACUPR, (San Juan: Imprenta de la Universidad de Puerto Rico), ps. 51-53.

[9] (Ibid) The influx of capital from Venezuelan émigrés (after 1936) and investment by the Dominican Republic Dictator Rafael Trujillo 1930-1961). Also, there was an accumulation of capital in the banks in Puerto Rico when remitances to Spain were stopped during the Civil War (1936-1939), ps. 53-54.

[10] The Economic Review. Summer Quarter, 1941. V.VI No. 1. , p. 50

development. Barrack-style buildings for working class became multi-family housing, which also turned to be the preferred housing for middle class that were occupying San Juan at the time. "*Apartment houses offered tenants the same facilities as single-family dwellings. Apartment living became so popular that Santurce's Borinquen Park –the second-largest urban park in the city- was given over to development, and the area was filled with these residential buildings*"[11].

The financial sector conducted the spatial occupation of Santurce, and also its housing and economic development. Mostly, in terms of architecture style, this social class preferred the tropical versions on the wooden made bungalow and the "cottage". *"Dominant social classes also have been occupying the Atlantic coast in single-family development houses, provided with a new electric trolley and other infrastructures facilities, recently built"*(p. 41). Santurce embraced the "residential parks" concept with the "tropical comfort" as the high class housing" (p. 42). The identity of Santurce, also, was shaped by the settlement of the displaced peasant class.[12]

The Spanish Revival, an eclectic architecture style, had its heyday in the last decades of the XIX century and the first decades of the XX century. It was the style in vogue to build significant institutional and private edifices and numerous magnificent residences for a wealthy class in Puerto Rico. It was a style that looked at Spain as a cultural paradigm with its Moorish, Renaissance and Mediterranean influence, and to the style of the missions in California. It became so popular in Puerto Rico, California and Florida in that period. *"Its employ in the architectural practice in United States and Puerto Rico respond to several factors: a taste for the exotic; a search for cultural roots; evoked by such places as the Universidad de Alcalá de Henares; an accommodation to regional climatic conditions; and last, the historicist wave that swept over Western architecture at the beginning of the twentieth century"*[13].

In 1915, on occasion of the inauguration of the Panama Channel, were carry out in San Francisco and San Diego two important fairs, where the buildings showed a clear Spanish trend. Addison Mizner, seduced by the taste for the "Spanishness" of the epoch, designed many residences and private clubs in Florida on a "Mediterranean" style with Moorish and Spaniard Renaissance characteristics. Coral Gables, Boca Raton, and Palm Beach were developed following the design inspired by that same eclectic style. Mizner, a renowned architect in the 20's and 30's, influenced the way architecture was conceived and articulated in Cuba and Puerto Rico with his conception and adaptation of "Spanish Revival" to the tropics.It is in that time when the architect Pedro de Castro created some of the first high-rise apartment buildings in San Juan, such as the Victory Garden multi-family apartment building. In terms of style and design, because the Hispanophile was a sign of wealth and social mobility, it was showed it in the façades.

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[11] Enrique Vivoni Farage, Alarife de Sueños, Pedro de Castro y Besosa. 74.
[12] Sepulveda, 50.
[13] Hispanophilia –The Spanish Revival in Architecture and Life in Puerto Rico, 1898-1950; Exhibition organized by the Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Escuela de Arquitectura, 1997, 16.

"During the first three decades of this century [XX century], Santurce experiments an accelerated growing in housing construction in all the different districts"(p.41). In that time were built the greater part of residencies of Caribben characteristics, which constitutes today the best-preserved architectural inheritance in the district. *"The quality of these structures, in some cases, and their concentration and/or quantity in others, best define Santurce as a significance area in terms of historic and architectural resources"*[14].

"To this day, this is a sector [Santurce] rich in historic and architectural resources. There are plenty of great residences with similar features in architectural type, period of construction, materials, etc. Some streets in the district keep the site and setting integrity dating the beginning of the century"[15].

"The so called Alto del Olimpo (old Olimpo Height), knowed at present as Miramar, was defined as a bourgeois families' neighborhood, at this period"[16].

In Puerto Rico, during the 30's and 40's, the real investors favored the multi-family housing for urban development. Barrack-style buildings for working class became multi-family housing, which also turned to be the preferred housing for middle class that were occupying San Juan at the time.

The financial sector conducted the spatial occupation of Santurce, and also its housing and economic development. Mostly, in terms of architecture style, this social class preferred the tropical versions on the wooden made bungalow and the "cottage".

"Dominant social classes also has been occupying the Atlantic coast in single family development houses, provided with a new electric trolley and other infrastructures facilities, recently built. Santurce embraced the "residential parks" concept with the "tropical comfort" as the high class housing"[17].

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[14] Sepúlveda, 41.
[15] Sepúlveda, 70.
[16] (ibid) 34.
[17] (ibid) 41-2.

The building:

Victory Garden building is representative of the apartment buildings constructed during the building boom of the 30's, as part of the urban development of Santurce. Also, it is an excellent representative of the efforts to design functional apartment houses in Puerto Rico, integrating the beauty of the Spanish Revival style of the time.

According to a 1918 design of Santurce, on the grounds where, in 1936, the Victory Garden Building would be built, *"a great manger was built and later, in the subsequent years, a popular boxing arena known as the Victory Garden, which fell through the destiny of the ground-plot, bequeathed its name to an elegant apartment building in the 30's..."*[18]

Between the years 1918-1919 the Land Register's records reflects that in the lot, that would later house the Victory Garden building, existed a large wooden building and minor buildings (of wood and of concrete). The large wooden building, cardboard-roofed, had in the second floor a theater for cinematography and theatrical shows[19]. In 1919, a theater named Teatro Victory Garden (Victory Garden Theatre), was inaugurated by the company bearing the same name, constituted by the young businessmen Ferrer, Toste and Cerdeira, as it was reported by an illustrated article[20]. In 1935, another illustrated report registers the reopening of the "Victory Garden Stadium" in Stop 15, in Santurce, a boxing arena where boxing matches were held[21].

In 1930 Mrs. Encarnación Aboy acquired the property through an auction. Mrs. Aboy commissioned for the sum of $20,000.00, the construction of a multifamily residential building with two areas for commercial spaces on the first floor. Architect Pedro de Castro designed the new building using Spanish Revival style in vogue during the period. The construction of the Victory Garden building was completed in 1936, as indicated in relief in its northern façade. This edifice was built facing the Ponce de León Avenue. In the first floor had he stairs and elevator for access to the upper and lower levels of the building. Two luxurious apartments, with approximately 2,400 square feet each, were located in the second, third, and fourth floors. The rent for the building's apartments was high for the time, ranging from sixty to ninety dollars a month.

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[18] Damiani Cósimi, Julio. "Santurce, Puerto Rico: morfología urbana y estructura social de un suburbio (1894-1910)". Ph. D. Thesis, Río Piedras: Universidad de Puerto Rico. Graduated Program of History. Faculty of the Humanities, 1997, p. 120 (Registro de la Propiedad -Puerto Rico's Land Register- folio 243 finca 1437, inscripción cuarta, tomo 34, San Juan).

[19] Puerto Rico's Land Register in Santurce Norte Volume 50 page 186 (back), as early as 1919, on that ground-plot, property of the married couple, Don Manuel Mendía Morales and Doña Carmen Palés, among the various buildings which constituted the property, there was a "wooden house, cardboard-roofed, with one floor at its front and two at its back, because of the natural slope of the land, which measures twenty eight meters at the front side by fifty three meters at the back and ten meters high, with concrete support pillars and partition blinds, and its upper floor structure is designed to be a cinematography hall". Description of the movie theatre and equipment can be found in the Puerto Rico's Land Register ("Registro de Propiedad") Santurce Norte Volume 50, Page 185.

[20] Puerto Rico Ilustrado magazine 25 October 1919. Vol. X No. 504.

[21] Puerto Rico Ilustrado magazine. July 1935.

The building's design efficiently recognizes the different programmatic needs for commercial spaces on the first floor and more private housing units on the upper floors. It also recognizes its proximity to a nice view of the Condado Lagoon, as every unit has a balcony towards it. At the same time, housing units – and the whole building – acknowledge the presence of Ponce de León Avenue – the city as such – on the opposite site.

The design takes full advantage of the sloping topography on the site as the difference in level from the front of the building to the back wall allows for some covered parking space to develop under the main structure without occupying any of the scarce lot space behind the structure. The building's four-story bulk is cleverly handled to play down its scale to merge better with the surrounding structures along the street. The design indulges successfully in a play of solids and voids featuring outdoor covered balconies and uncovered terraces along the edge zones on both sides, to imply a step down in volume one story to the one below, all done in a subtle, almost unnoticeable manner. The mature design displayed on the general aspects of the building and site design is further made evident in the unit design.

Besides the exquisite handling of architectural composition in massing and elevation, the design excels for its quality in the use of architectural details and ornament pertinent to the Spanish Revival Style, one particularly mastered by De Castro. The careful composition of ornaments and moldings penetrates the building. The flooring in every room of the units displays a contained geometric pattern in hydraulic cement mosaic tile, a feature based on a long lasting Island tradition.

The Architect:

Pedro Adolfo de Castro y Besosa was born on January 5, 1895 in New York City, where his parents lived in exile because of their commitment for the independence of Puerto Rico from Spanish colonialism. *"The family of De Castro was part of a large group of Puerto Ricans which was active in attempting to overthrow the Spanish regime in Puerto Rico. They were members of the Puerto Rican Section of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, an organization in which De Castro y Castro met his future wife, Manuela Besosa, the daughter of one of the leaders, Manuel Besosa. In 1899, after the defeat of Spain by the United States, the family returned to Puerto Rico"*[22].

He was the first Puerto Rican architect graduated from American universities and returned to Puerto Rico in 1918. The formal education of De Castro was first in the public schools of San Juan and later at the University of Syracuse in the State of New York, beginning in 1914. De Castro followed the precepts of the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, an academic education based on XIX century French world vision and a formation that enhanced a development of different approaches and interpretations for every architectural design. Puerto Rican students of architecture in the United States were in touch with many different architectural styles, such as Spanish Revival, that were reinterpreted and adapted to the climate, color, landscape and identity of the Island. Besides De Castro, the first wave of Puerto Rican professionals educated in the United States were Rafael Carmoega -Cornell, 1919-, Germán Ramírez de Arellano -Syracuse, 1920-, Pedro Méndez -Syracuse, 1926-, Raymond Dávila -Cooper Union, 1926- August Plard -Michigan, 1928- and Eloy Ruiz -Michigan, 1929. At the university, De Castro developed a wide, international vision of architecture styles. An example of this was a house he designed in Moorish style, (Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción de la Universidad de Puerto Rico (AACUPR), Pedro De Castro Collection, Project PdC/0002/P0001-P0002 of 1917) during his student training.

The importance of the relations between de members of this first generation of Puerto Rican architects, graduated from United States universities, is crucial to understand the development of Puerto Rican architecture of the period. Many of them, as Rafael Carmoega, Pedro Méndez and Jorge Ramírez de Arellano, among others, were influenced by the Spanish Revival style (and interpreted it by their own personal perspective) and could make their great body of work and masterpieces on the construction peak of the 30's. *"For example, Rafael Carmoega –in most of his projects- distanced himself from the use of asymmetrical volumes, towers and turrets preferring to use great expanses of wall interrupted by an arcade, a grilled window, or an entrance portico which was always crowned by a balcony or a window"[...] "The other architects –especially Pedro Méndez, who considered de Castro to be his "Master"- all used similar design styles [...]"* (p.101).

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[22] Hispanophilia - The Spanish Revival in Architecture and Life in Puerto Rico, 1898-1950; Exhibition organized by the Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Escuela de Arquitectura, 1997, 132.

[...] "Between 1929 and 1936, De Castro designed at least 33 apartment houses (p.73). *De Castro's production, however –as regards both quality and variety of building types- exceeds the output of his colleagues, mainly because most of his contemporaries were government employees, while he had his own private design and construction practice. It wasn't until his untimely death, in October 1936, that his professional torch passed to Rafael Carmoega* (p.101)".[23]

By 1926 he was listed in the directory of the Puerto Rican Chamber of Commerce. He also worked abroad in the Dominican Republic producing many designes for fine residencies for a rich and powerful sugar class that emerged in that nation during the two world wars.

Pedro de Castro successfully combined the new and old architecture styles in his designs. He used new architectural styles in the design of interior spaces and in the designs of the façades of public structures, such as cinemas and professional associations. In this matter, De Castro made a great contribution placing architecture in a high level through art. Also, Pedro de Castro placed architecture in modern world by inserting the use of materials and technology of that period. By these means, he modernized architecture by popularizing practical aspects and styles and was a source of inspiration for a new architecture in Puerto Rico. By doing this, he gave structure, identity and voice to a particular class, the new, emerging Puerto Rican middle class. He brightly combined the experience and execution of two tendencies in Puerto Rican architecture, the one followed by engineers before World War I and the latest, by American architects, and this performance allowed him to design and build more than 300 buildings in just eighteen years.

"He created the designs for the homes for the Serrallés, Cabassa, Hernández Usera, Valdés, Coll and de Hostos families in Puerto Rico and the Pimentel, Tejera and Freites families in the Dominican Republic. His prolific body of work also included movie theaters, apartment houses, triumphal arcs, and buildings for social clubs and professional associations. His practice influenced both the private and public spheres of Puerto Rico during the 1920s and '30s"[24].

De Castro made a great contribution to Puerto Rican architecture when he reinterpreted the concept of "architect". He re-oriented the profession to a vision of the abundance and fantasy of a world of progress and modernism. His notion of architecture made the profession closer to a feminine, freedom concept rather than the rigid, masculine form of the generation that preceded him.

"A year after the Casa de España was inaugurated, and as the construction of the Theater of the University of Puerto Rico was beginning, ***De Castro*** *died [...]. But what guaranteed that he would continued to be*

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[23] Vivoni Farage, Enrique. Architect of Dreams: Pedro Adolfo de Castro y Besosa. Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción de la Universidad de Puerto Rico. Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1999.
[24] (Ibid, p. 6).

remembered by the people of Puerto Rico were the more than 170 residences which he designed and built, some 35 apartment buildings, 16 theaters and an untold number of other buildings in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Through his designs, De Castro formulated a proposal of Puerto Rican identity, a metaphor of nation, in which the Hispanic element was very significant though in permanent negotiation with "modern"paradigms".[25]

The legacy **Pedro de Castro** made to the interpretation of the Spanish Revival turned him into one of the most magnificent exponents of this style in Puerto Rico.

[25] Hispanophilia –The Spanish Revival in Architecture and Life in Puerto Rico, 1898-1950; Exhibition organized by the Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Escuela de Arquitectura, 1997, ps. 141-142.

Other Spanish Revival properties of Puerto Rico included in the National Register of Historic Places:

Carolina

- Edificio Alcaldía: calle Ignacio Arzuaga esq. De Diego; Rafael Carmoega, 1917 *(Spanish Revival)*

Dorado

- Escuela Jacinto López Martínez: calles Norte y San Quintín; Pedro de Castro, 1925 *(Art Deco and Spanish Revival)*

Fajardo

- Aduana de Fajardo: calle Unión, Puerto Real; Albert B. Nichols, 1930 *(Spanish Revival)*

Mayagüez

- Edificio José de Diego: Recinto Universitario de Mayagüez, UPR; arquitecto desconocido, 1916 *(Neoclassic and Spanish Revival)*
- Correo y Corte Federal: calles Mc Kinley y Pilar DeFilló; Louis A. Simpson, 1935 *(Art Deco and Spanish Revival)*
- Residencia Gómez: calle Méndez Vigo número 60; Francisco Porrata Doria, 1933 *(Spanish Revival)*

Ponce

- Castillo Serrallés: ladera sur del cerro El Vigía; Pedro A. de Castro, 1926 *(Spanish Revival)*
- Casa Fernando Luis Toro (Casa Chavier): calle Obispado número 3, Urbanización La Alhambra; Francisco Porrata Doria, 1927 *(Eclectic style: Spanish Revival)*
- Mercado de las Carnes (Plaza de los perros): callejuela que une las calles Mayor y León; Rafael Carmoega, 1926 *(Spanish Revival and Art Deco)*
- Residencia Lassise Schettini: calle Angel Ramírez; Luis Perocier, 1924 *(Eclectic: traditional house of Southern United States and Caribbean, Chicago School and Spanish Revival)*

San Juan

- Casa de España: Avenida Ponce de León, parada 1 ½, Puerta de Tierra; Pedro A. de Castro, 1932 *(Spanish Revival)*
- Central High School (La Central): Avenida Ponce de León, Santurce; Adrian C. Finlayson, 1925 *(Spanish Revival)*
- Antiguo Correo y Edificio Federal: entre calles Recinto Sur y Comercio, Viejo san Juan *(Eclectic style: Spanish Revival)*

- Residencia en Concordia 659: calle Concordianúmero 659, Miramar; Joseph O'Kelly, 1935 *(Spanish Revival)*
- Residencia en La Paz 663: calle La Paz número 663, Miramar; Pedro A. de Castro, 1935 *(Spanish Revival)*
- Residencia en La Paz 659: calle La Paz número 659; Pedro A. de Castro, 1928 *(Spanish Revival)*

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Vivoni Farage, Enrique. Architect of Dreams: Pedro Adolfo de Castro y Besosa. Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción de la Universidad de Puerto Rico. Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico [Architecture and Construction Archives of the University of Puerto Rico], 1999.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

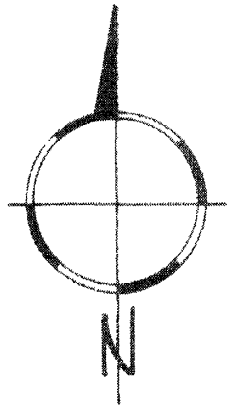
See enclosed site map.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the city lot *(040-048-060-09 in -land registry Puerto Rico State Government)* that has been historically and is currently associated with the property.

CASAS DE VECINDAD

ARQ. JORGE RIGAU A.I.A.



EDIFICIO VICTORY GARDEN

SANTURCE, PUERTO RICO

ESCALA 1:2,000

PONCE DE LEÓN

CALLE CORRA

CALLE NAVAS

CALLE ARAGÓN

C. MONSERRATE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 04001149 Date Listed: October 13, 2004

Property Name: Edificio Victory Garden

County: San Juan State: Puerto Rico

none
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for Daniel J. Vivian
Signature of the Keeper

October 13, 2004
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8. Statement of Significance
The period of significance is hereby changed to 1936.

The Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)