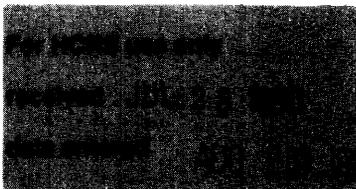


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



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

1. Name

historic HOTEL NORMANDIE

and/or common

2. Location

Isleta de San Juan

street & number Ponce de León Avenue and San Gerónimo Street not for publication

city, town San Juan vicinity of _____ congressional district _____

state Puerto Rico code 72 county 5 code 00930

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name United States Internal Revenue Service

street & number _____

city, town San Juan Puerto Rico vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry Deeds

street & number _____

city, town San Juan Puerto Rico vicinity of _____ state _____

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Survey of Historic Monuments of
title Puerto Rico has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal state county local

depository for survey records Institute of Puerto Rican Culture

city, town San Juan Puerto Rico vicinity of _____ state _____

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 Hotel Normandie was built in the early 1940's by Mr. Félix Benítez Rexach. It is an excellent example of "Art Nouveau" (or art deco style) that is worth preserving. The Normandie was one of the few plush hotels of its time and many social events took place in its hall and for sentimental reasons this building is full of meanings for several Puerto Rican generations.

This art deco architecture refers to a specific type of buildings style that was developed between the years 1920 thru 1940. This term "art deco" came out of the 1925 Parisian design fair called "Exposition Des Arts Decoratifs Et Industriels Modernes", but it was in America that it was really used and developed very broadly.

In the art deco architecture, the effects were deliberately horizontal or vertical with frequent massing of connecting or overlapping projections. Arrangements could be axial and pyramidal, or calculated asymmetrical. Smoothness was sought and suavity was suggested.

The Hotel is triangular in shape with rounded vertices and a total of seven floors plus a cellar. The first floor has an interior patio with a swimming pool. The other floors have a corresponding open interior with corridors overlooking the swimming pool. The building have been closed for the past 6-8 years and it has been greatly affected by its physical deterioration and a large degree of functional obsolescence as a hotel.

The existing building area is divided as follows:

- A) Cellar area used for storage room, electric power panels, emergency power plant, water, pressure pumps, etc...
- B) First floor having various commercial area and hotel rooms as well as the main entrance lobby, back entrance lobby and interior patio with a swimming pool.
- C) Second thru fifth floor consists of hotel rooms with large waiting parlors, elevators and stairs at the northern and southern vertices.
- D) Sixth floor consists of a dance hall which used to be known as the "Gold Room" a banquet room known as the "Silver Room", a dining room with kitchen area and a large room used for a casino. There are also separate sanitary facilities for ladies and men, and ample interior corridors.
- E) The seventh floor had various large hotel rooms, a kitchen area and a small dining room.

As mentioned previously, its physical deterioration is so great that none of the elevators are able to work and most (or all) of the electrical, telephone and plumbing infrastructure are not functioning and have to be replaced. The building is very sound structurally and it will need extensive plastering, painting millwork and windows.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1939 (first 3 floors) **Builder/Architect** Félix Benítez Rexach and Architect Raul Richard

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Normandie Hotel was planned and built in the early 1940's to resemble one of the most famous steamships of that era. It is a "perfect" example of the art deco style that was developed in those years and it is a vivid example of an epoch of flamboyance and luxury. The distinguished engineer Félix Benítez Rexach, builder of ports and a man of great imagination and culture, left in this building a symbol full of meaningful association for several generations of Puerto Ricans. Many social events of significance took place in its luxurious rooms, when affluence meant social interior halls and the fine craftsmanship is a unique example of a disappearing art which merits preservation.

The placement of the structure adds to its significance, in that the Normandie forms a mayor visual focal point for all traffic entering Old San Juan.

9. Major Bibliographical References

PUERTO RICO NEWSPAPERS LIKE "EL MUNDO", NUEVO DIA, SAN JUAN STAR, ETC.

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property ~~2,800~~ S.M. approx.

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification The structure of the Normandie Hotel is at the "Escambrón" area, which is the entrance to the islet of Old San Juan, and right in front of the intersections of Ponce de León Avenue, Muñoz Rivera and San Gerónimo Street (this street was named for the spanish fort to which it has the only access). *The nominated area is the building and the land on which it stands.*

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

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gabriel Díaz

organization Four Winds Rental Corporation date March 19, 1980

street & number G.P.O. Box 2556, San Juan, Puerto Rico telephone 753-7740

city or town _____ state _____

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Rafael Muñoz

title State Historic Preserv. Officer date 7/7/80

For NCRS use only

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

John W. Ray Keeper of the National Register date 8/29/80

Attest: Cecil J. Dabie date 8/26/80

Chief of Registration