1134

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

RECEIVED 2280
1997
NAT REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

---

1 NAME OF PROPERTY

historic name: **Puerto Rico Ilustrado/Edificio El Mundo**
other names/site number:

---

2 LOCATION

street & number: **San José # 254** ____not for publication
city or town: **San Juan**
vicinity:
state: **Puerto Rico** code: **PR**
county: **San Juan** code: **127** zip code: **00901**

---

3 STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Preservation Act of 1966, as ammended, I hereby certify that this _x_nomination/___request for determination of elegibility 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/___statewide/_x_locally.
(___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Lilliane D. López

Lilliane D. López, Arch. **July 11, 1997**
State Historic Preservation Officer Date

State or Federal agency or bureau: **Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office**

In my opinion, the property _x_meets/___does not meet the National Register Criteria.
(___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

_____ _____
Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency or bureau:

---

4 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register 9/25/97
____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 Keeper Date

---

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
buildings	_1_	____
sites	____	____
structures	____	____
objects	____	____
Total	_1_	____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: _0_

Name of related multiple property listing: **N/A**

---

6 FUNCTION OR USE

Historic Functions:
Cat: **INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION**
Sub: **COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY**

Current Functions:
Cat: **COMMERCIAL/TRADE** Sub: **BUSINESS**
DOMESTIC **SINGLE DWELLING**

---

7 DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: **MIXED: CHICAGO STYLE, ART DECO, SPANISH REVIVAL**

Materials: foundations: **concrete**
roof: **concrete**
walls: **concrete**
other: **ceramic tile**

Narrative Description: **See continuation sheet**

---

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:
____A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
____B removed from its historical 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

Area(s) of significance: **ARCHITECTURE**
Period(s) of significance: **1923-1940s**
Significant Date(s): **1923**
Cultural Affiliation: **N/A**
Architect/ Builder: **ROLDAN, FRANCISCO/HATCH, FRANK B.**

Narrative Statement of Significance: **See continuation sheet**

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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 #_____

Primary Location of Additional Data
__x_State Historic Preservation Office
__x_other State agency
____Federal agency
____local government
____university
____other

Name of repository: **Institute of Puerto Rican Culture**

Bibliography:

Burton, Earl K. El uso del hormigón armado. Revista de Obras Públicas de Puerto Rico: Año 1, 1924, número 1, volumen 1. p.386-390. Colección Puertorriqueña, Biblioteca Lázaro, U.P.R.

Férnandez, Alexander and Rivera, Diana. Francisco Roldán: Architecture and Biography. A project prepared for the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office, 1995.

Lavandero, Ramón. Causerie Arquitectónica. Puerto Rico Ilustrado: 15 de diciembre de 1923. Colección Puertorriqueña, Biblioteca Lázaro, U.P.R.

Pedreira, Antonio S. El periodismo en Puerto Rico. p.336-347. Biblioteca del Centro de Estudios Avanzados del Caribe.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property:

UTM References:

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
19	**804485**	**2044055**

Boundary Justification: The boundaries correspond to the urban lot **# 16** of block **# 52**, historically associated with the building.

__x_See continuation sheet

---

11 FORM PREPARED BY

first original nomination draft: **Alex Fernández**
revised, rewritten and edited by: **Javier Isado/Staff Architect**
organization: **Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office**
date: **June 30, 1997**
street & number: **La Fortaleza, PO Box 82** tel: **787 721 3737**
city or town: **San Juan** state: **PR** zip code: **00901**

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Located in a sector along the southern wall of the city of San Juan, the *Puerto Rico Ilustrado/El Mundo* building accentuates the corner of San José and Tetuán streets. Directly south of the building, a 70 foot high city wall accomodates the ground level difference between two city areas. The scale, proportions and exterior decoration of *El Mundo's* five floors address the perception of the building from the outer section of the walled city [figure 1]. A small plaza originally known as *El Bastión de la Palma* currently flanks the building's south elevation. Constructed as part of the defense system, this projection of the fortification wall evolved into an open public space. *El Mundo's* chamfered corner incorporates this site element and establishes a spatial relation between the street, the building, and the public space.

The facade presents a clear, ordered system of composition and a logical arrangement of local and absolute symmetries reminiscent of the traditional European aesthetic principles institutionalized by the Ecole des Beaux Arts. *El Mundo's* massing in terms of the ratio of solid to void represents a deviation from its Chicago School predecessors since its volume is perceived not as a frame, but as a wall with a series of overlapping layers. It clearly expresses, however, the three horizontal zones (base, main shaft, cornice) found in Louis Sullivan's designs [figure 2].

Low relief geometrical designs, concrete construction with accents in other materials, polychromed ornamentation and simplified and streamlined forms, represent Art Deco influence [figure 3]. Arches and intricate ornamentation, associated with Moorish iconography, occupy almost every visual field.

The Moorish arch acquires different tridimensional treament across Roldán's built work. In the *Puerto Rico Ilustrado/El Mundo* building, arches are made of precast terracota pieces that barely project outward from the concrete surface [figure 4]. The architect employed the two-dimensional archways underneath the balcony to divide the base and establish a secondary rythm at street level. This articulation of the base combines with the presence of the balcony to define a pedestrian zone. Formally, the concrete balcony with Moorish motifs provides continuity to the urban profile and generates shadow and protection for the passerby. Although built inside the predominantly colonial center, the structure then manages to sensitively incorporate its context while achieving a new vocabulary for expression [figure 5].

The wall surface of the main shaft is treated as a single plane with paired openings aligned one on top of the other. A continous frieze defines the limits of the top level of the building. This band is echoed by both the balcony and the demarcation of the base. The geometric forms which support the balcony are also found as decorative reliefs at the base of the mosaic tile arches.

The entrance portico, which faces San José Street, acts as a threshold which gives way to the entrance lobby. A secondary facade inside the vestibule is used as a filter between the semi-public and the more private circulation spaces such as stairways and elevators [figure 6]. Interior ornament is emphasized in this space as well as in the stairwell. Basic elements such as lobulated arches, the decorative treatment of the *alfiz* (the arches' bordering panel), double and triple terrazo columns combined with glass mosaic panels, and glazed ceramic tile wainscots mark transitions among circulation spaces.

Integrity statement: When the structure was rehabilitated in the 1980's, several changes were executed throughout the building. Four window openings were expanded at street level in order to provide access to new office spaces. The original continous base was cut in order to mount new metalic frame and glass pane doors. Wood windows with operable jealosies were replaced with metalic casement windows. These changes, however, have not adversely affected the building's original design. An apartment built on the roof level was added using a modern, compatible vocabulary. This addition is recessed from the focal corner of the existing building. The architectural integrity of the building has survived the alterations. *Puerto Rico Ilustrado/El Mundo's* facade massing, ornament and articulation still embody Roldán's ability to creatively manipulate contemporary styles while sensibly integrating the piece to its immediate context.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary: The *Puerto Rico Ilustrado/El Mundo* building meets Criterion C as it epitomizes the design principles of a unique blend of architectural styles. The building stands out as a significant example of a highrise building in a historic zone. It echoes the visions and aspirations of commercial entrepreneurs caught in the quest for *progress* brought about by political, economic and technological changes. Besides representing the talent of one of Puerto Rico's best architects, the building becomes an important historical document which architecturally embodies a particular moment of the island's history.

Don Romualdo Real came from Tenerife, Spain in 1904 to work as editor-in-chief of the *Heraldo Español.* Along with his brother, Manuel Real, he started the magazine *La República Española* in 1906 when he acquired the printing press of *El País.* They were able to start the production of a weekly illustrated magazine with the first issue of *Puerto Rico Ilustrado* in March 1910. In 1919, the growing company started the daily newspaper *El Mundo.* The publishing company then commissioned Architect Francisco Roldán the design of a high rise building to house the production machinery and staff for the two periodicals. Inaugurated in October 1923, the building contained the printing presses, communication facilities, archives, photography and engraving workshops and the administrative offices for the *El Mundo* newspaper and the *Puerto Rico Ilustrado* weekly magazine.

Both periodicals influenced the communications and graphic arts industry in Puerto Rico. The *Puerto Rico Ilustrado* covered mainly social events and gatherings while *El Mundo* focused on local and world news. Besides being among the most widely circulated media of its days, today they represent a valuable compilation of literary collaborations and a graphic recollection of the Puerto Rico's history. Their printing facilities started the evolution of local photo-journalism. The company remained in operation until 1966 when the newspaper moved to its new facilities in Hato Rey. After the San Juan Municipal government used the building as office space for several years, it was eventually sold to private investors in 1979. The structure remained abandoned for several years until 1985 when Gerardo Carlo and the Copali Group acquired and converted it into its present state: a multiple office building with an additional apartment on the roof level.

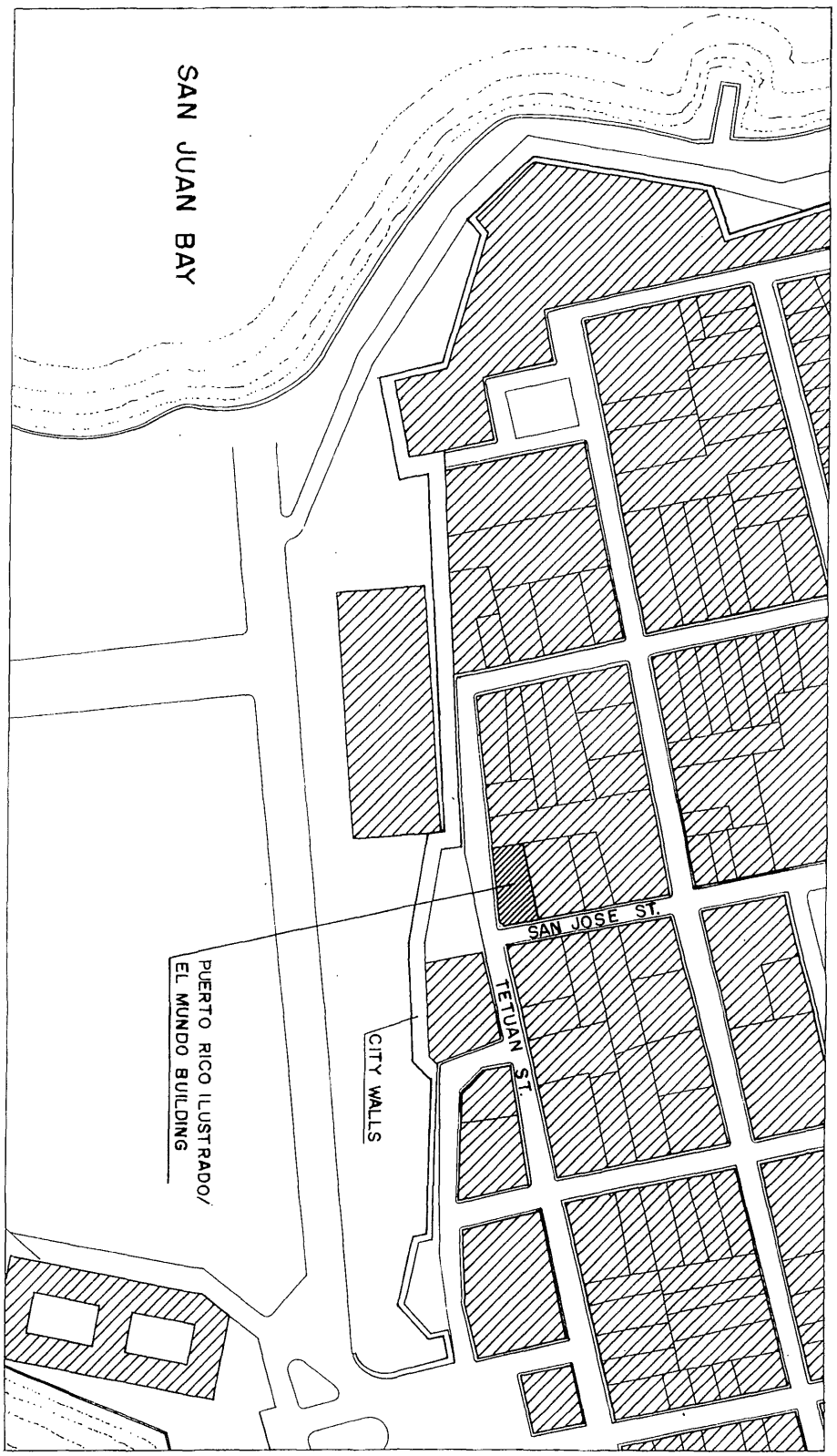
The architectural profession in Puerto Rico underwent drastic changes after the change of sovereignty in 1898. A new set of models, conventions and trends suddenly influenced the construction industry. A *building boom* continued during the following decades. Several possible agents through which stylistical revivals from the U.S. mainstream were imported to Puerto Rico were the education of native architects in state side schools, the incorporation of U.S. architects and builders into local construction, and the impact of images from the public media that originated in the mainland.

Constructed in 1923, *El Mundo* building represents one of the first modern high-rise buildings built in Puerto Rico. Other highrise structures that started to surge in Old San Juan closely followed the Chicago School building typology. Roldán manipulated the Chicago Style in his design by adding Art Deco and Spanish Revival elements to the building's composition.

The design of the *Puerto Rico Ilustrado/El Mundo* building sought to portray a *modern* image that would effectively represent its product in the communications business. Roldán employed a new construction technology that enabled him to sculpt surface layers, construct angled surfaces, make deep openings and craft low relief decorative elements. This monolithic reinforced concrete structure embodied both modern technology and contemporary stylistical trends.

Art Deco and Moorish Revival elements adorn the building's facade and emphasize its attempt towards being *modern*. Although masterfully integrated to the design of the whole, traditional Beaux Arts themes are supplemental to the more contemporary styles such as Art Deco. The austere articulation and the horizontal continuity reiterates the simplification of lines and the streamlined forms of the Art Deco style. The geometric forms which support the balcony are also found as decorative reliefs at the base of the mosaic tile archs. In this case, ornamentation is reduced to its merest suggestion in order to effectively recreate it and repeat it throughout the design.

Moorish decorative interpretations provide a variation in color and materials typical of Art Deco's ornamental attitudes. The mosaic panels distributed across the facade exemplify superficial, imposed decoration. The panels' complicated, elaborate formal elements, their materiality and tonal variations, and their systematic integration of text, make evident its Moorish origins.


SAN JUAN BAY
SAN JOSE ST.
TETUAN ST.
CITY WALLS
PUERTO RICO ILUSTRADO/
EL MUNDO BUILDING

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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: 97001137 **Date Listed:** 9/25/97

Puerto Rico Ilustrado--
Edificio El Mundo — San Juan — PUERTO RICO
Property Name — **County** — **State**

N/A
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 **Signature of the Keeper** — 12/11/97 **Date of Action**

==========

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section No. 10: This nomination is amended to show that the acreage of the property is less than one. The site map (marked Section 10 page 1) shows the boundaries of the property.

This change has been confirmed with the Puerto Rico SHPO.

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