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 AUG 8 1984
date entered SEP 18 1984

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

1. Name

historic Church San Sebastián Mártir of San Sebastián

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number Severo Arana St., Town Plaza ___ not for publication

city, town San Sebastián ___ vicinity of

state Puerto Rico code 72 county Aguadilla code 0950

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	X religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	X yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	n/a	___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Catholic Church, Diocese of Mayaguez

street & number Box 2272

city, town Mayaguez ___ vicinity of state Puerto Rico 00708

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, Church Litigation Case #2, 1904

street & number Box 2392

city, town San Juan state Puerto Rico 00903

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of the Historic Churches of Puerto Rico has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date 1984 ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town San Juan state Puerto Rico

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The San Sebastián Mártir Church sits in front of the town plaza, oriented on an East-West axis, its entrance facing West. The church is surrounded by streets on three of its sides and by private structures on its east side. It is separated from its immediate surroundings by a concrete and iron grillwork fence enclosing a paved cement area which is used for parking purposes.

The church was designed by State Architect Don Pedro Cobreros and was built between 1895 and 1897. The plan follows the basilica prototype of two aisles and a nave. It is covered with a flat concrete roof. The original roof was probably made of wood beams and layers of brick. The apse is covered with a brick dome. The plan consists of six bays plus the apse/sacristies. Simple arcades resting on round columns divide the aisles from the main nave. The side aisles are lower than the central nave, allowing space for a clerestory consisting of four round openings on each side, that give light to the interior space. At the entrance there is a concrete choir loft over the vestibule.

The floors are covered with the original grey and white marble tiles. The doors and windows are modern, made of glass and metal, with arches of colored plexiglass.

The facade is typical of Cobreros' style and is very similar to that of San Mateo church in Santurce, which was also designed by this architect. The facade is subdivided in three sections, vertically as well as horizontally, by simple moldings of low relief. Two towers flank the central body which includes a large arched entrance framed with pilasters and a simple molding. Above the doorway,a round opening crowns the facade. The towers, divided into three levels (Westwork arrangement), have simple arched windows. The upper section of the tower is decorated with dentils and a cornice. The side facades have an arched doorway and two arched windows each. The dome has structural ribs which can be seen from the exterior.

The church conserves most of its original elements, except the roof and choir loft, and is in good structural condition. There are other elements of superficial nature like the doors, windows, fluorescent lights and fans which are not in accordance with the sober style of the church. Apart from these, the most noticeable alteration to the church has been the addition of a parish house to the north and rear sides of the building.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	X community planning	___ landscape architecture	X 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
X 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
___ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates 1897 **Builder/Architect** Don Pedro Cobreros, State Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The San Sebastián Mártir church is of historical and architectural significance. It is one of a group of five churches designed between 1890 and 1896 by State Architect Don Pedro Cobreros who created an austere, yet noble style, which played an important role in the history of religious architecture in Puerto Rico. Construction began in 1895 using the facade foundations, the side walls and the dome over the apse of an earlier original church and was completed in 1897. Despite the addition of a parish house to the rear and north sides and the reconstruction of the original roof and choir loft in concrete, the building retains most of is original construction and design elements. The traditional relationship of Town Plaza, city hall and church is maintained, in accordance with Spanish Crown ordinances at the time the town was founded, providing a living example of Spanish town planning practices.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Marvel, Thomas S. and Maria Luisa Moreno, Architecture of Parish Churches in Puerto Rico, Editorial Unversitaria, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, unpublished.
Historic Plans of 1896, General Archives of Puerto Rico, Fondo: Obras Públicas, Serie: Edificios Religiosos, Caja:99, Legajo:64.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2039 sq. mts.
Quadrangle name San Sebastián, P.R. Quadrangle scale 1:20,000
UTM References Latitude 18° 20' 19" North, Longitude 66° 59' 28" West

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification
The church is bounded on the north by Padre Feliciano St., on the west by Severo Arana St. and the Town Plaza, on the south by Muñoz Rivera St. and on the east by private properties (see enclosed location plan).

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 Marisa Gómez, Arch. and Ester Cardona, Arch.

organization Investigaciones Bonaire, Inc. date May 1984

street & number Tetuan 103 telephone (809) 724-4997

city or town Old San Juan state Puerto Rico 00901

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 National Park Service.

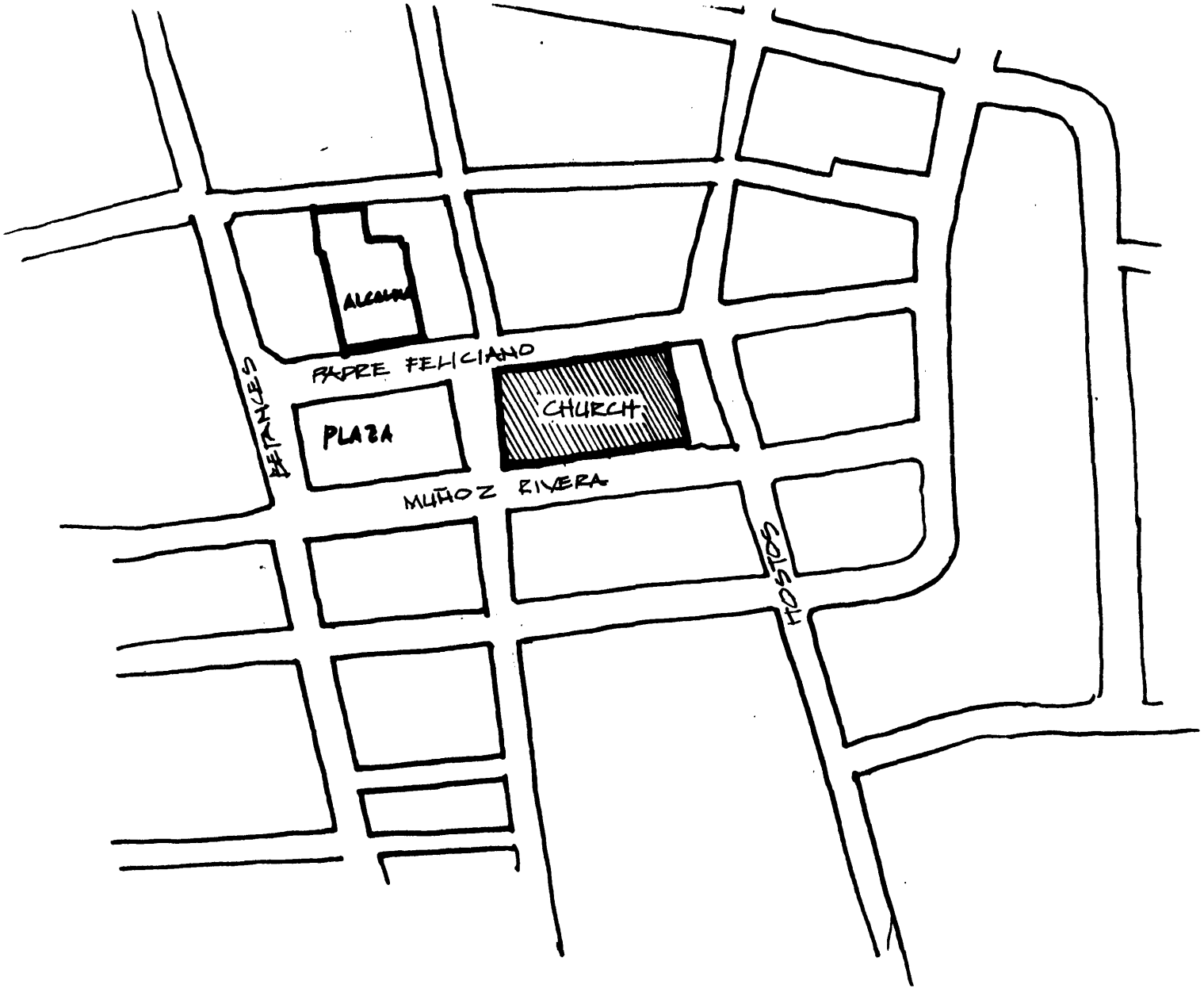
State Historic Preservation Officer signature [signature]

title State Historic Preservation Officer date July 20, 1984

For NPS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

See Continuation Sheet for Listing date
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date
Chief of Registration



town: SAN SEBASTIÁN scale: 1:2000 north

INVESTIGACIONES BONAIRE INC.

Calle de Tetuan nº 103, Viejo San Juan, Puerto Rico · Tel. (809) 724-4997