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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



### 1. Name of Property

historic name Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan / Old San Juan Historic District  
other names/site number Ciudad del puerto Rico; San Juan de Puerto Rico; Viejo San Juan; Ciudad Capital; Zona Histórica de San Juan; Casco Histórico de San Juan; Antiguo San Juan; San Juan Historic Zone

### 2. Location

street & number Western corner of San Juan Islet. Roughly bounded by the Avenidas Muñoz Rivera and Ponce de León, Paseo de Covadonga and Calles J A Corretejer, Nilita Vientos Gastón, Recinto Sur, de la Tanca and del Comercio.  not for publication  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 Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this Xnomination   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 at the following level(s) of significance:

X national      statewide local

Carlos A Rubio  
Carlos A Rubio Cancela Architect      June 6, 2012  
Signature of certifying official/Title      Date

Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official      Date  
Title      State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register      determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register      removed from the National Register

other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_  
Jay Salton      7/30/2012  
Signature of the Keeper      Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
 (Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
724	103	buildings
0	3	district
18	4	site
39	0	structure
17	9	object
798	119	<b>Total</b>

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
 9

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Government Building; Restaurant; House;  
 Pharmacy; Church; Theater; Movie Theater;  
 Hospital; Convent; Jail; Store; Cemetery;  
 Gunpowder Magazine; Military Fortress; Barracks

Government Building; Restaurant; House;  
 Pharmacy; Church; Theater; Store;  
 Cemetery; Department Store; Museum

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

**Materials**

Other: Gothic, Renaissance; Baroque;  
 Late Victorian: Second Empire;  
 Late 19<sup>th</sup>&20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Romanesque  
 (*Rundbogenstil*); Renaissance (Neo-Cinquecento)  
 Late 19th & Early 20th Century American  
 Movements: Prairie School, Chicago; Skyscraper  
 Modern Movement: Art Nouveau; Art Deco

foundation: Earth; Stone; Brick; Concrete;  
 Metal  
 roof: Wood; Brick; Concrete; Metal; Terracotta  
 other: Reinforced concrete  
 Steel

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## Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

### Summary Paragraph

The Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan / Old San Juan Historic District<sup>1</sup> is an urban district that includes the oldest post-Columbian buildings, architectural typologies and morphologies in Puerto Rico and the United States of America. An orthogonal matrix of 74 blocks frames Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Historicist Revivals, *Modernisme*, Art Deco and Modern architectural examples that are embraced by a formidable stone belt of bastions, defensive curtain walls and castles.<sup>2</sup> Public, domestic and military buildings huddle together inside this precinct creating a unique entity that still shelters an array of uses, dynamically and historically representing the island.

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## Narrative Description

According to the official government agency that assigns numbers to the *parcelas*<sup>3</sup> and blocks throughout the island, the Centro de Recaudación de Ingresos Municipales of the Government of Puerto Rico (CRIM), the Old San Juan Historic District is organized by 753 contributing and 109 noncontributing *parcelas* for a grand total of 862 *parcelas*. Of this number, approximately 758 were originally constructed as houses.<sup>4</sup> Presently, there are 724 contributing buildings and 103 noncontributing ones. In addition, there are 3 non-contributing districts; 18 contributing and 4 non-contributing sites; 39 contributing structures; and 17 contributing and 9 noncontributing objects. The *parcelas* listed in Table 1<sup>5</sup> contribute to the historic and cultural significance of the district.

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<sup>1</sup> The Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan / Old San Juan Historic District is the new name proposed for the sector subject of this National Register of Historic Places revised nomination. While the 1972 nomination used the name Zona Histórica de San Juan, a change in name is proposed for two reasons. First, San Juan is the name of a municipality that also includes other areas in San Juan Islet and the main island of Puerto Rico. Second, the district is commonly known as Viejo San Juan / Old San Juan. The word *viejo* (old) is commonly used in both languages to differentiate it from the rest of the San Juan Metropolitan Area. This traditional appellation has been in use since the early decades of the last century, at the earliest, and is the name used in the municipality's anthem. The new name validates the history of the district (and the municipality) and the islet.

A request is made to the National Register to include both the Spanish and English version of the name in the formal list in order to honor the mother tongue of Puerto Ricans. Both the Spanish and English versions will be used indistinctly throughout this work. Spanish names will be used for places and buildings given the fact that they are the best known and more common ones. All translations (quotes, poems and songs) from Spanish to English were made by the author.

<sup>2</sup> Although known as both *castillos* (castles) and *fortalezas* (fortresses) this work will use the first term for these defensive structures for it was the one utilized by the Spanish military until 1898.

<sup>3</sup> According to the CRIM, a *parcela* may include a single dwelling, an apartment building, a hotel, a plaza, a government building, a fortress and, at times, two or more buildings and/or structures. The site plan presented with this nomination revision is the official one used by all agencies of the Government of Puerto Rico. There exist inconsistencies between this document and reality. Numbers of blocks and, at times, *parcelas* are not continuous and some *parcela* numbers within a block may be duplicated. The inventory carried out by the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office (PRSHPO) during the summer of 2010 upon which this revision is based took into account the physical number of properties and matched them to the official document. Arleen Pabón Charneco, "Final Report: 2010 Inventory of the San Juan Historic Zone" (MS: Tallahassee, Florida, 2010). Given the fact that two or more buildings may share a *parcela*, the word is not necessarily synonymous with "lot." For this reason, the term *parcela* will be used throughout this work.

<sup>4</sup> Residences located in Block 172 and the guard house in Block 21 were not included in this number since this use was (still is) related to military activities.

<sup>5</sup> Thanks are extended to Mrs Aida Charneco Villanueva and Architect Berenice Sueiro for their help in organizing the tables included with this nomination.

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**TABLE 1  
 CONTRIBUTING PARCELAS AND ADDRESSES**

<b>BLOCK/ PARCELA</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b> (N/A = Not available/Not applicable)
<b>Block 1</b>	
1/1	de Norzagaray corner de Morovis corner de del Morro corner de Beneficencia N/A
<b>Block 2</b>	
2/1B* (NRHP)	Esplanade/Campo del Morro
<b>Block 3</b>	
3/1	del Santo Cristo de la Salud corner de Norzagaray N/A (Convento de los Dominicos)
3/2	de McArthur corner de Norzagaray 2
3/3	de McArthur 4
3/4	de Mc Arthur 6
3/5	de McArthur 8
3/6	de la Virtud 10
3/8	de San Sebastián corner del Mercado 111
3/9	de San Sebastián 109
3/10	de San Sebastián 107
3/11	de San Sebastián 105
3/12	de San Sebastián 103
3/13 (2 bldgs share this <i>parcela</i> )	de San Sebastián 101
3/14* (Site)	de San Sebastián corner del Santo Cristo de la Salud N/A (Plaza de San José)
3/15	del Santo Cristo de la Salud N/A (Iglesia de San José)
<b>Block 4</b>	
4/1	de Norzagaray corner Imperial corner de la Virtud corner Mc Arthur N/A (Plaza del Mercado)
<b>Block 5</b>	
5/2	de la Cruz 4
5/3	de la Cruz corner de la Tranquilidad 6
5/4	de la Tranquilidad corner Imperial 3
<b>Block 6</b>	
6/1 (1 bldg shares <i>Parcela</i> 1 and 2)	de Norzagaray N/A
6/2	de Norzagaray 204



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(1 bldg shares Parcela 1 and 2)		
6/3	de Norzagaray	206
6/4	de San Justo	2
6/5	de San Sebastián	217
6/6	de San Sebastián	215
6/7	de San Sebastián	213
6/8	de San Sebastián	211-209
6/9	de San Sebastián	207
6/10	de San Sebastián	205-203
6/11	de San Sebastián corner de la Cruz	201
6/12	de la Cruz	3
6/13	de la Cruz	1
6/14	de San Sebastián	219
6/15	de San Justo	4
6/16	de San Justo	6
6/17	de San Justo	8
6/18	de San Justo	10
6/19	de San Justo	12
<b>Block 7</b>		
7/1	de San Sebastián	251
7/2	de Norzagaray	N/A
7/3	de Norzagaray	254
7/4	de Norzagaray	256
7/5	de Norzagaray 258 / de San Sebastián 253	
7/6	de Norzagaray	260
7/7	de Norzagaray	262
7/8	de San Sebastián	263
7/9	de Norzagaray 264 / de San Sebastián 265	
7/10	de Norzagaray	266
7/11	de Norzagaray	268
7/12	de San Sebastián	271
7/13	de Norzagaray	272
7/14	de Norzagaray	274
7/17	de Norzagaray	N/A
7/18	de San Sebastián corner Callejón de la Tanca	N/A
7/20	de San Sebastián	273
7/21	de San Sebastián	269
7/22	de San Sebastián	261
7/23	de San Sebastián	257
7/24	de San Sebastián	255
7/25	de San Sebastián	267
7/26	de San Sebastián	275
7/28	de San Sebastián	253
<b>Block 8</b>		
8/4	de Norzagaray	306

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8/5	de San Sebastián	309
8/6	de San Sebastián	307
8/7	de San Sebastián	3-5
8/11	Callejón de la Tanca	N/A
<b>Block 9</b>		
9/1	de Barbosa corner de Acosta corner de Norzagaray corner del Sol (Escuela Abraham Lincoln)	N/A
<b>Block 10</b>		
10/3	de Norzagaray 406 / del Sol 407	
10/4	del Sol	409
10/5	de Norzagaray	410
10/6	de Norzagaray 412 / del Sol 413	
10/7	de Norzagaray	415
10/11	de Norzagaray 422 / del Sol 423	
10/19	del Sol 401/ de Norzagaray 400	N/A
10/20	del Sol	411
10/21	de Norzagaray	404
10/22	del Sol	405
10/23	de Norzagaray	402
10/24	del Sol	403
<b>Block 11</b>		
11/2* (Site)	Cementerio Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis	N/A
<b>Block 13</b>		
13-1	de San Sebastián (Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande)	N/A
<b>Block 14</b>		
14/1	de la Tranquilidad corner Imperial	5
14/2	de la Tranquilidad corner de la Cruz	8
14/3	de la Cruz	10
14/4	de San Sebastián	159
14/5	de la Virtud	155
14/6	de San Sebastián	157
14/9	del Mercado	9
14/11	de San Sebastián corner del Mercado	11
<b>Block 15</b>		
15/1A* (Site)	de San Sebastián (Casa Blanca Garden)	N/A
15/1B	de San Sebastián	4-2
15/1C* (Site)	de San Sebastián (Casa Blanca Garden)	N/A
15/2A	del Morro (Casa de Beneficencia)	N/A
15/2B	N/A (Asilo de Locos)	N/A
15/2C	de San Sebastián	6
15/3	de San Sebastián	8

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15/3B* (NRHP)	Esplanade/Campor del Morro	N/A
15/4	de San Sebastián	10
15/5	de San Sebastián	12
15/7	de San Sebastián	16 <sup>a</sup>
15/8	Callejón de Hospital	52
15/9	Callejón de Hospital	54
15/10	Callejón de Hospital	56
15/11	Callejón de Hospital	58
15/12A	Callejón de Hospital	60
15/12B	del Sol	11
15/13	del Sol	15
15/14	del Sol	13
15/15	del Sol	9
15/16	del Sol	7
15/17	del Sol	5
15/18	del Sol	3
15/19A	del Sol	1
15/19B* (Site)	del Sol (Entrance to Casa Blanca; Part of Casa Blanca Gardens)	N/A
15/20	de San Sebastián (Casa Blanca)	N/A
<b>Block 16</b>		
16/1	de San Sebastián corner Escalinatas del Hospital	N/A
16/2	de San Sebastián	N/A
16/4 (2 bldgs share this <i>parcela</i> )	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	N/A
<b>Block 17</b>		
17/1	de San Sebastián	100
17/2	de San Sebastián	102
17/3A	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	51
17/3B	de San Sebastián	104
17/4	de San Sebastián	106
17/5	de San Sebastián	108
17/6	de San Sebastián	110
17/7	de San Sebastián	112
17/8	de San Sebastián	114
17/9	de San Sebastián	116
17/10	de San José	52
17/11	de San José	54
17/12	de San José	56
17/13	de San José	58
17/14	del Sol	107
17/15	del Sol	105
17/18	del Sol	101
17/19	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	59

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17/20	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	57
17/21	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	55
17/22	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	53
17/24	del Sol (Iglesia de la Santísima Trinidad)	103
<b>Block 18</b>		
18/1	de San José corner de San Sebastián	49
18/2A	de San Sebastián	150
18/2B	de San Sebastián	152
18/4	de San Sebastián	154
18/5	de la Cruz	50
18/6	de la Cruz	52
18/7	de la Cruz	54
18/8	de la Cruz	56
18/9	de la Cruz	58
18/10	de la Cruz	60
18/11	de la Cruz corner del Sol (Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal)	62
18/12	del Sol	155
18/13	del Sol	153
18/14	del Sol	151
18/15	de San José	57
18/16	de San José	55
18/17	de San José	53
18/18	de San José	51
<b>Block 19</b>		
19/1	de San Sebastián corner de la Cruz	N/A
19/2	de San Sebastián	202
19/3	de San Sebastián	204
19/4	de San Sebastián	206
19/5	de San Sebastián	208
19/6	de San Sebastián	N/A
19/7	de San Sebastián corner de San Justo	N/A
19/8	de San Justo	52
19/9	de San Justo	54
19/11	de San Justo	58
19/12	del Sol	213
19/13	del Sol	211
19/14	del Sol	209
19/15	del Sol	207
19/17	del Sol	203
19/18	del Sol corner de la Cruz	N/A
19/19	de la Cruz	57
19/20	de la Cruz	55
19/21	de la Cruz	53
19/22	de la Cruz	51
<b>Block 20</b>		

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20/1	de San Sebastián corner de San Justo	N/A
20/2	de San Sebastián	252
20/3	de San Sebastián	254
20/4	de San Sebastián	256
20/5	de San Sebastián	258
20/6	de San Sebastián	260
20/7	de San Sebastián	262
20/8	de San Sebastián	264
20/9	de San Sebastián	266
20/10	de San Sebastián	268
20/11	de San Sebastián	270
20/12	de San Sebastián	272
20/13	de San Sebastián	274
20/14	de San Sebastián	276
20/15	del Sol	284
20/16	del Sol	285
20/18	del Sol	281
20/19	del Sol	279
20/20	del Sol	277
20/21	del Sol	275
20/22	del Sol	273
20/23	del Sol	271
20/24	del Sol	269
20/25	del Sol	267
20/26	del Sol	265
20/28	del Sol	263
20/29	del Sol	261
20/30	del Sol	259
20/31	del Sol	257
20/32	del Sol	255
20/34	del Sol corner of de San Justo	N/A
20/35	de San Justo	57
20/36	de San Justo	55
20/37	de San Justo	N/A
<b>Block 21</b>		
21/4	de Barbosa corner del Sol	N/A
<b>Block 22</b>		
22/1	del Sol	2
22/3	del Sol	6
22/5	del Sol	10
22/6	del Sol	12
22/7	del Sol	14
22/8	del Sol	16
22/9	del Sol	18
22/10	del Sol	20
22/11	del Sol	22
22/13	del Sol	30

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22/14	del Sol	32
22/15	del Sol	34
22/16	del Sol	36
22/17	del Sol	38
22/18	Escalinata de las Monjas	102
22/19	Escalinata de las Monjas	104
22/21	Caleta de las Monjas	23
22/22	Caleta de las Monjas	21
22/23	Caleta de las Monjas	19
22/26	Caleta de las Monjas	13
22/27	Caleta de las Monjas	11
22/28	Caleta de las Monjas	9
22/29	Caleta de las Monjas	7
22/30	Caleta de las Monjas	5
22/31	Caleta de las Monjas	3
22/32	Caleta de las Monjas	N/A
22/34	del Sol	
22/35	del Sol	
22/36	del Sol	
<b>Block 23</b>		
23/1	Caleta de las Monjas (Convento de las Carmelitas Calzadas)	N/A
<b>Block 24</b>		
24/1	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	99
24/2	del Sol	102
24/3	del Sol	104
24/4	del Sol	106
24/5	del Sol	108
24/6	del Sol	110
24/7	del Sol	112
24/10	de San José	104
24/11	de la Luna	106
24/12	de la Luna	109
24/13	de la Luna	107
24/15	de la Luna	103
24/16	de la Luna	101
24/17	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	105
24/18	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	103
24/19	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	101
24/20	del Sol	114
24/21	de San José	102
<b>Block 25</b>		
25/1	de San José	101
25/2	del Sol	150
25/3	del Sol	152
25/4	del Sol	154
25/5	del Sol	156



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25/6	de la Cruz	100
25/7	de la Cruz	102
25/10	de la Cruz	108
25/12	de la Luna	155
25/13	de la Luna	153
25/14	de la Luna	151
25/15	de San José	109
25/17	de San José	105
25/18	de San José	103
<b>Block 26</b>		
26/2	del Sol	200
26/3	del Sol	202
26/4	del Sol	204
26/5	del Sol	206
26/6	del Sol corner de San Justo	210
26/7A	del Sol	208
26/7B	de San Justo	100
26/8	de San Justo	102
26/9	de San Justo	104
26/10	de San Justo	106
26/11	de la Luna	108
26/12	de la Luna	205
26/13	de la Luna	203
26/14	de la Luna	201
26/15	de la Cruz	109
26/16	de la Cruz	107
26/17	de la Cruz	105
26/18	de la Cruz	103
26/19	de la Cruz	101
<b>Block 27</b>		
27/1	del Sol corner San Justo	250
27/2	del Sol	252
27/3	del Sol	254
27/4	del Sol	256
27/5	del Sol	258
27/6	del Sol	260
27/7	del Sol	262
27/8	del Sol	264
27/9	del Sol	266
27/10	del Sol	268
27/11	del Sol	270
27/12	del Sol	272
27/13	del Sol	274
27/14	del Sol	276
27/16	del Sol	280
27/17	del Sol	282
27/19	de la Tanca	279

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27/20	de la Luna	277
27/21	de la Luna	275
27/22	de la Luna	273
27/23	de la Luna	271
27/24	de la Tanca	271
27/25	de la Luna	267
27/26	de la Luna	265
27/27	de la Luna	263
27/28	de la Luna	261
27/29	de la Luna	259
27/30	de la Luna	257
27/31	de la Luna	255
27/33	de la Luna	250
27/36	de San Justo	101
<b>Block 28</b>		
28/2	del Sol	302
28/4	del Sol	306
28/5	del Sol	308
28/6	del Sol	310
28/7	del Sol	312
28/8	del Sol	314
28/9	del Sol	316
28/12	de la Luna	317
28/13	de la Luna	315
28/14	de la Luna	313
28/15	de la Luna	311
28/16	de la Luna	309
28/17	de la Luna	307
28/18	de la Luna	305
28/19	de la Luna	303
28/20	de la Luna	301
28/21	de la Tanca	107
28/22	de la Tanca	105
28/25	del Sol	300
28/26	del Sol	318
<b>Block 29</b>		
29/1	del Sol	350
29/2	del Sol	352
29/3	del Sol	354
29/8	del Sol	364
29/9	del Sol	366
29/13	de la Luna	365
29/19	de la Luna	351
29/22	de O'Donnell 102 / de la Luna 362	
<b>Block 30</b>		
30/3	del Sol	404
30/4	de Norzagaray	406

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30/5	de la Luna	411
30/7	de la Luna	407
30/9	de la Luna	403
30/10	de la Luna	401
<b>Block 31</b>		
31/1	del Recinto Sur	151
31/2	Caleta de las Monjas	50
31/3	Caleta de las Monjas	52
31/4	Caleta de las Monjas	54
31/8	Caleta de San Juan	63
31/9	Caleta de San Juan	61
31/11	Caleta de las Monjas	56
31/12	Caleta de San Juan	55
31/13	Caleta de San Juan	53
31/14	Caleta de San Juan	51
31/15	Caleta de San Juan	59
<b>Block 32</b>		
32/1*	del Santo Cristo de la Salud (Site) (Plaza de la Catedral)	N/A
<b>Block 33</b>		
33/1	del Santo Cristo de la Salud (Catedral de San Juan Bautista)	N/A
33/3	de San Francisco (Diputación Provincial)	N/A
33/4	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	N/A
<b>Block 34</b>		
34/1	de San José corner de la Luna	N/A
34/2	de San Francisco	N/A
34/5	de la Cruz	150
34/6	de la Cruz	152
34/7	de la Cruz	154
34/8	de San Francisco	157
34/9	de San Francisco	155
34/10	de San Francisco	153
34/12	de San Francisco	159
34/13	de San José	161
34/14	de San José	159
34/15	de San José	157
34/16	de San José	155
34/17	de San José	153
<b>Block 35</b>		
35/1	de la Luna corner de la Cruz	151
35/2	de la Luna	200
35/3	de la Luna	202
35/5	de San Justo	148
35/6	de San Justo	150
35/7	de San Justo	152

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35/8	de San Justo	154
35/9	de San Justo corner de San Francisco	209
35/10	de San Francisco	207
35/15* (NRHP)	de la Cruz	153
35/16	de San Francisco	203
<b>Block 36</b>		
36/1	de San Justo corner de la Luna	N/A
36/2	de la Luna	254-252
36/3	de la Luna	252-254
36/4	de la Luna	256
36/5	de la Luna	258
36/10	de la Luna	268
36/11	de la Luna	270
36/12	de la Luna	272
36/13	de San Francisco	269
36/14	de San Francisco	267
36/15	de San Francisco	265
36/17	de San Francisco	261
36/18	de San Francisco	259
36/19	de San Francisco	257
36/20	de San Francisco	255
36/21	de San Francisco	253
36/22	de San Francisco	251
36/23	de San Justo	157
36/24	de San Justo	155
36/25	de San Justo	153
36/26	de San Justo	151
<b>Block 37</b>		
37/1A	de la Tanca	N/A
37/1B* (Site)	de la Tanca corner de San Francisco Plaza de San Francisco	N/A
2	de San Francisco corner Callejón del Tamarindo	N/A
3-4-5	de San Francisco	301
<b>Block 38</b>		
38/1	de la Luna	350
38/2	de la Luna	352
38/3	de la Luna	354
38/4	de la Luna	356
38/5	de la Luna	358
38/7	de la Luna	362
38/8	de O'Donnell	N/A
38/9	de O'Donnell	152
38/10	de O'Donnell	N/A
38/11	de San Francisco	363
38/13	de San Francisco	359
38/14	de San Francisco	357

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38/15	de San Francisco	355
38/18	de San Francisco	351
38/19	de San Francisco	353
<b>Block 39</b>		
39/1	de la Luna	408
39/2	de la Luna	402
39/3	de la Luna	404
39/4	de la Luna	406
39/6	de la Luna	410
39/7	de la Luna	412
39/8	de la Luna	414
39/9	de la Luna	416
39/10	de la Luna	500
39/15	de San Francisco	411
39/16	de San Francisco	409
39/17	de San Francisco	407
39/18	de San Francisco	405
39/20	de San Francisco	401
39/21	O'Donnell	159
39/23	O'Donnell	155
39/24	O'Donnell	153
39/25	O'Donnell	151
39/26	de San Francisco	413
<b>Block 40</b>		
40/2	Caleta de San Juan	56
40/3	Caleta de San Juan	58
40/4	Caleta de San Juan	60
40/5	Caleta de San Juan	62
40/6	Caleta de San Juan	64
40/7	Caleta de San Juan	66
40/8	Caleta de San Juan	68
40/9	Caleta de San Juan	70
40/10	Caleta de San Juan	72
40/11	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	152
40/12	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	154
40/13	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	156
40/14	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	158
40/16	de San Francisco	67
40/17	de San Francisco	65
40/18	de San Francisco	63
40/19	de San Francisco	61
40/20	de San Francisco	59
40/21	de San Francisco	57
40/22	de San Francisco	55
40/24	de San Francisco corner Recinto del Oeste	49
40/25	Caleta de San Juan	3
40/26	Caleta de San Juan	54

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40/27	de San Francisco	53
40/28	de San Francisco	51
<b>Block 41</b>		
41/1	de la Fortaleza (Palacio Rojo)	N/A
41/2	de la Fortaleza (Real Audiencia)	N/A
41/3	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	248
41/4	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	250
41/5	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	252
41/7	de la Fortaleza (Asilo de Hermanas de la Providencia)	N/A
41/8	de la Fortaleza (Pabellones)	N/A
41/9* (NRHP)	de la Fortaleza (Palacio de Santa Catalina)	N/A
41/10* (NRHP)	Recinto del Oeste (Jardín de Palacio de Santa Catalina)	N/A
41/11	del Recinto Oeste	
41/12* (2 Sites) (1 NRHP)	Recinto del Oeste (Puerta de San Juan, Plaza de la Puerta de San Juan, Plaza de la Rogativa) Two sites and the listed Puerta de San Juan share one <i>parcela</i> .)	N/A
41/12A	Paseo de la Princesa (Presidio de la Princesa)	N/A
41/12B* (Site)	Paseo de la Princesa (Paseo de la Princesa)	N/A
41/12C* (1 Site) (1 Structure)	Recinto Sur (Bastión de San Justo y Plaza del Bastión de San Justo) (A structure and a site share one <i>parcela</i> .)	N/A
41/13* (Site)	Recinto del Oeste (Paseo de Ronda)	N/A
41/16* (Site)	del Santo Cristo de la Salud (Parque de las Palomas)	N/A
<b>Block 42</b>		
42/2	de San Francisco	52
42/3	de San Francisco	(same number as above)
42/5	de San Francisco	56
42/6	de San Francisco	60
42/7	de San Francisco	62
42/8	de San Francisco	64
42/9	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	200
42/10	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	202
42/13	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	208
42/14	del Santo Cristo de la Salud 210 / de la Fortaleza	65
42/15	de la Fortaleza	63
42/16	de la Fortaleza	61
42/17	de la Fortaleza	59



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42/18	de la Fortaleza	57
42/19	de la Fortaleza	55
42/20	de la Fortaleza (Offices Palacio de Santa Catalina)	53
42/21	del Recinto Oeste (Offices Palacio de Santa Catalina)	N/A
<b>Block 43</b>		
43/1	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	201
43/2	de San Francisco	100
43/5	de la Cruz corner de San Francisco (Real Intendencia)	N/A
43/6	de San José	202
43/8	de la Fortaleza	111
43/9	de la Fortaleza	109
43/10	de la Fortaleza	107
43/11	de la Fortaleza	105
43/12	de la Fortaleza	101
43/13	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	213
43/14	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	211
43/15	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	209
43/16	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	207
43/17	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	205
43/18	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	203
43/19	de San Francisco	102-104
<b>Block 44</b>		
44/1* (Site)	de San Francisco corner de la Cruz corner de San José corner de Rafael Cordero (Plaza de Armas)	
<b>Block 45</b>		
45/1	de Rafael Cordero	150
45/2	de Rafael Cordero	152
45/3	de Rafael Cordero	154
<b>Block 46</b>		
46/1	de San Francisco	200
46/2	de San Francisco	202
46/4	de San Francisco	206
46/5	de San Francisco	208
46/6	de San Francisco	210
46/8	de San Justo	204
46/9	de San Justo corner de la Fortaleza	206
46/13	de la Cruz corner de la Fortaleza	205
46/14	de la Cruz	203
46/15	de la Cruz	204
46/16	de San Francisco	204
<b>Block 47</b>		
47/3	de San Francisco	252
47/5	de San Francisco	258

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47/6	de San Francisco	260
47/7	de San Francisco	262
47/8	de San Francisco	264
47/9	de San Francisco	266
47/10	de San Francisco	268
47/11	de la Tanca	202
47/12	de la Tanca	204
47/13	de la Fortaleza	263
47/14	de la Fortaleza	261
47/16	de la Fortaleza	257
47/17	de la Fortaleza	255
47/18	de la Fortaleza	253
47/19	de la Fortaleza	251
47/20	de la Fortaleza corner de San Justo	209
47/21	de San Justo	207
47/22	de San Justo	205
47/23	de San Justo	203
<b>Block 48</b>		
48/1	de San Francisco	298
48/2	de San Francisco	300
48/3	de San Francisco	302
48/4	de San Francisco	304
48/5	de San Francisco	306
48/8	de San Francisco	312
48/9	de la Fortaleza	317
48/11	de la Fortaleza	313
48/12	de la Fortaleza	311
48/13	de la Fortaleza	309
48/14	de la Fortaleza	307
48/15	de la Fortaleza	305
48/16	de la Fortaleza	303
48/17	de la Fortaleza	301
48/18	de la Tanca corner de la Fortaleza	207
48/19	de la Tanca	205
<b>Block 49</b>		
49/1	de San Francisco	350
49/2	de San Francisco	352
49/3	de San Francisco	354
49/4	de San Francisco	356
49/6	de San Francisco	360
49/7	de San Francisco	362
49/8	de San Francisco	364
49/9	de San Francisco	366
49/10	de O'Donnell	200
49/11	de O'Donnell	202
49/12	de O'Donnell	204
49/13	de O'Donnell	206

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49/15	de la Fortaleza	365
49/16	de la Fortaleza	363
49/17	de la Fortaleza	361
49/18	de la Fortaleza	359
49/19	de la Fortaleza	357
49/21	de la Fortaleza	353
49/22	de la Fortaleza	351
49/23	de la Fortaleza	319
49/24	de O'Donnell	268
49/25	de O'Donnell	208-210
49/26	de la Fortaleza	367
<b>Block 50</b>		
50/1* (Site)	de la Fortaleza corner Ponce de León corner de San Francisco corner de O'Donnell (Plaza de Colón)	
<b>Block 52</b>		
52/2	de la Fortaleza	100
52/3	de la Fortaleza	102
52/4	de la Fortaleza	104
52/5	de la Fortaleza	106
52/6	de San José	250
52/8	de Tetuán	103
52/9	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	259
52/10	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	257
52/11	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	255
52/12	del Santo Cristo de la Salud	253
52/14	de la Fortaleza corner del Santo Cristo de la Salud	251
52/15	de San José	252
52/16* (NRHP)	de San José	254
<b>Block 53</b>		
53/1	de la Fortaleza	150
53/2	de la Fortaleza	152
53/3	de la Fortaleza	154
53/4	de la Fortaleza	156
53/5	de la Cruz	250
53/6	de la Cruz	252
53/8	de Tetuán	153
53/9	de Tetuán	151
53/10	de San José corner de Tetuán	151
53/11	de San José	255
53/12	de San José	253
53/13	de San José	257
53/14	de la Cruz corner de Tetuán	157
53/15	de Tetuán	155
<b>Block 54</b>		
54/1	de Tetuán	201 <sup>a</sup>
54/2	de Tetuán	207

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54/3	de Fortaleza	202
54/4	de Fortaleza	204
54/5	de Fortaleza	206
54/9	de San Justo	254
54/10	de San Justo	256
54/11	de San Justo corner de Tetuán	258
54/14	de Tetuán	203
54/15	de Tetuán	201 B
54/17	de la Cruz	257
54/18	de la Cruz	255
54/19	de la Cruz	253
54/21	de Fortaleza corner de la Cruz	200
<b>Block 55</b>		
55/1	de la Fortaleza	250
55/2	de la Fortaleza	252
55/3	de la Fortaleza	254
55/4	de la Fortaleza	256
55/6	de la Fortaleza	260
55/7	de la Fortaleza	262
55/9	de la Tanca	N/A
55/11	de Tetuán	259
55/12	de Tetuán	257
55/13	de Tetuán	255
55/15	de San Justo	257
55/16	de San Justo	255
55/17	de San Justo	253
55/18	de San Justo	251
55/19	de Tetuán	263
55/20	de Tetuán	261
55/21	de Tetuán	253
55/22	de Tetuán corner de San Justo	N/A
<b>Block 56</b>		
56/1	de la Tanca	251
56/3	de la Fortaleza	302
56/4	de la Fortaleza	304
56/5	de la Fortaleza	306
56/6	de la Fortaleza	308
56/7	de la Fortaleza	310
56/8	de la Fortaleza	312
56/9	de la Fortaleza	314
56/10	de la Fortaleza	316
56/11	de la Fortaleza	318
56/12	de la Fortaleza	320
56/14	de Tetuán	313
56/15	de Tetuán	311
56/18	de Tetuán	305
56/19	de Tetuán	303

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56/20	de Tetuán	301
56/21	de Tetuán	261
56/22	de Tanca	259
56/23	de Tanca	257
56/24	de Tanca	255
56/25	de Tanca	253
56/26	de Tetuán	311
<b>Block 57</b>		
57/2	de la Fortaleza	352
57/3	de la Fortaleza	354
57/4	de la Fortaleza	356
57/5	de la Fortaleza	358
57/6	de la Fortaleza	360
57/7	de la Fortaleza corner Tetuán	362
57/8	de Tetuán	367
57/9	de Tetuán	365
57/11	de Tetuán	361
57/12	de Tetuán	359
57/13	de Tetuán	357
57/14	de Tetuán	355
57/15	de Tetuán	353
57/17	de Tetuán corner Callejón del Gámbaro	351
57/18	Callejón del Gámbaro	251
<b>Block 58</b>		
58/1	de la Fortaleza corner de Tetuán corner O'Donnell corner General Pershing N/A (Teatro Tapia)	
<b>Block 60</b>		
60/1* (Site)	de Tetuán (Plaza Bastión de la Palma) Plaza Bastión de la Palma shares two <i>parcelas</i> .)	N/A
60/2* (Site)	de Tetuán (Plaza Bastión de la Palma) Plaza Bastión de la Palma shares two <i>parcelas</i> .)	N/A
60/3	de Tetuán	0 – 3
<b>Block 61</b>		
61/1	de Tetuán	150
61/2	de la Cruz corner del Recinto Sur corner de Tetuán	N/A
<b>Block 62</b>		
62/1	de Tetuán 200 – de Recinto Sur 201	
62/2	de Tetuán corner de Tizol corner de Recinto Sur	N/A
62/3	de Tetuán	204
<b>Block 63</b>		
63/1	de San Justo corner de Tetuán corner de Recinto Sur	N/A
<b>Block 64</b>		
64/1	de Tetuán	250
64/5	de Tetuán	258
64/7	de Tetuán 260 – de Recinto Sur	259

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64/12	de Recinto Sur	251
64/13	de San Justo	301
64/14	de Tetuán	252
64/15	de Tetuán	254
64/16	de Tetuán	256
64/17	de Tetuán	260
<b>Block 65</b>		
65/1	de Recinto Sur	301
65/2	de Recinto Sur	303
65/3	de Recinto Sur	305
65/4	de Recinto Sur	307
65/5	de Recinto Sur	309
65/7	de Recinto Sur	313
65/8	de Recinto Sur	315
65/9	de Recinto Sur	317
65/10	de Recinto Sur	319
65/11	de Recinto Sur	321
65/13	de Recinto Sur	325
65/14	de Recinto Sur	327
65/16	de Recinto Sur	331
65/18	de Tetuán	N/A
<b>Block 66</b>		
66/1* (Site)	de Tetuán corner de Recinto Sur (Plaza Somohano)	N/A
<b>Block 68</b>		
68/1	de Tetuán (Baños Públicos)	N/A
68/2*	de Recinto Sur corner de Comercio (Garden)	N/A
<b>Block 76</b>		
76/1* (NRHP)	La Puntilla corner de Comercio (Aduana Federal)	N/A
<b>Block 85</b>		
85/1	La Puntilla (Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla)	N/A
<b>Block 88</b>		
88/1* (NRHP)	de Tetuán corner de Recinto Sur corner de la Tanca corner de San Justo (Correo y Tribunal Federal)	N/A
<b>Block 94</b>		
94/2* (Site)	de Comercio (Plaza de la Dársena) The Plaza de la Dársena shares two parcelas.	N/A
94/3	de Comercio (Pabellón de Turismo)	N/A
94/84* (Site)	de Comercio (Plaza de la Dársena) The Plaza de la Dársena shares two parcelas.	N/A



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<b>Block 96</b>		
96/1* (NRHP)	Ponce de León corner de Norzagaray corner Fernández Juncos (Antiguo Casino de Puerto Rico)	N/A
<b>Block 101</b>		
101/1	Fernández Juncos (Escuela José Julián Acosta)	N/A
<b>Block 172</b>		
172/2A* (NRHP)	de Norzagaray (House, National Park Service)	N/A
172/2B* (NRHP)	de Norzagaray (House, National Park Service)	N/A
172/2C* (NRHP)	de Norzagaray (House, National Park Service)	N/A
172/3* (NRHP)	de Norzagaray (Bastión de Santo Tomás) (no building)	N/A
<b>Block 173</b>		
173/1	de Norzagaray	N/A
<b>Block 613</b>		
613/1	del Recinto Sur	N/A
<b>No Block</b>		
No Parcela	del Santo Cristo de la Salud (Capilla del Santo Cristo de la Salud)	N/A
No Parcela (Site)	Plaza de de Hostos	N/A
No Parcela* (Site)	Las Terrazas del Recinto Sur	N/A
No Parcela* (Site)	Plaza deCarrión	N/A

The *parcelas* marked with an asterisk (\*) were not tallied as part of the grand total of buildings. These properties are either individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places or categorized as sites. In one case (Block 68, Parcela 2), the *parcela* includes a small garden. Parcela 1B, Block 2 and Parcela 3B, Block 15 – as well as Parcelas 2A, 2B, 2C and 3, Block 172 – are part of the San Juan National Historic Site.

As mentioned previously, the total number of contributing *parcelas* in the historic district is 753 out of a total of 862. The percent of contributing *parcelas* is 87%.

**TABLE 2  
 NON-CONTRIBUTING PARCELAS AND ADDRESSES**

<b>PARCELA/ BLOCK</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b> (N/A = Not available/Not applicable)
<b>Block 2</b>	
2/4	Calle de Morovis corner Calle de Calle de Norzagaray corner Calle del Santo

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	Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud corner Calle de Beneficencia
<b>Block 5</b>	
5/1	Calle Imperial corner Calle de Calle de Norzagaray corner Calle de la Calle de la Cruz
<b>Block 7</b>	
7/15	Calle de Norzagaray 276
7/16	Calle de Norzagaray 278
7/19	Calle de San Sebastián 277
7/27	Calle de Norzagaray 270
<b>Block 8</b>	
8/3	Calle de Norzagaray N/D
8/8	Calle de San Sebastián 301
8/9	Calle de San Sebastián N/A
8/10	Calle de San Sebastián N/A
8/12* (Empty lot)	Calle de Norzagaray N/A
<b>Block 10</b>	
10/8	Calle de Norzagaray 416/Calle del Sol 417
10/9	Calle de Norzagaray 418/Calle del Sol 419
10/10	Calle de Norzagaray 420/Calle del Sol 421
10/12	Calle del Sol 425 corner Calle de Norzagaray
10/13	Calle de Norzagaray 408
<b>Block 12</b>	
12/1* (Site)	Plaza de la Beneficencia Calles Calle de San Sebastián y Calle de Beneficencia
<b>Block 13</b>	
13/0* (Site)	Plaza del Soportal Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud N/A
<b>Block 14</b>	
14/10	Calle de la Virtud N/D corner Calle del Mercado 7
<b>Block 15</b>	
15/6	Calle de San Sebastián 14
<b>Block 16</b>	
16/3	Calle de San Sebastián N/A
<b>Block 19</b>	
19/10	Calle de San Justo 56
19/16	Calle del Sol 205
<b>Block 20</b>	
20/17	Calle del Sol N/A
<b>Block 21</b>	
21/6	Calle de la Tanca corner Calle de Barbosa corner Calle de San Sebastián
<b>Block 22</b>	
22/2	Calle del Sol 4
22/4	Calle del Sol 8
22/20	Caleta de las Monjas 25 corner Escalinata de las Monjas
22/24	Caleta de las Monjas 17
22/25	Caleta de las Monjas 15

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<b>Block 24</b>	
24/14	Calle de la Luna 105
<b>Block 25</b>	
25/8	Calle de la Cruz 104
25/9	Calle de la Cruz 106
25/11	Calle de la Luna 157
25/16	Calle de San José 107
<b>Block 27</b>	
27/15	Calle del Sol 278
27/18	Calle de la Tanca N/A
27/32	Calle de la Luna 253
<b>Block 28</b>	
28/3	Calle del Sol 304
28/11	Calle del Sol 322 corner Callejón del Toro
28/23	Calle de la Tanca 103
<b>Block 29</b>	
29/4	Calle del Sol 356
29/10	Calle del Sol 368 corner Calle de O'Donnell
29/14	Calle de la Luna 363
29/17	Calle de la Luna 355
29/18	Calle de la Luna 353
29/20	Calle de la Luna 349 corner Callejón del Toro
29/21	Callejón del Toro 349
29/23	Calle del Sol 358
<b>Block 30</b>	
30/1	Calle del Sol 398 corner Calle de O'Donnell
30/2	Calle del Sol 402
30/6	Calle de la Luna 409
30/8	Calle de la Luna 405
30/11	Calle del Sol 400A
<b>Block 31</b>	
31/7	Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud 150
<b>Block 33</b>	
33/2	Calle de San José 152
<b>Block 34</b>	
34/18	Calle de la Cruz 148 corner Calle de la Luna
34/19	Calle de la Luna 150
<b>Block 35</b>	
35/4	Calle de la Luna 204
35/11	Calle de Calle de San Francisco 205
35/14	Calle de la Cruz 155
<b>Block 36</b>	
36/6	Calle de la Luna 260
36/7	Calle de la Luna 262
36/8	Calle de la Luna 264
36/9	Calle de la Luna 266
36/16	Calle de San Francisco 263

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<b>Block 38</b>	
38/6	Calle de la Luna 360
38/12	Calle de San Francisco 361
<b>Block 39</b>	
39/5	Calle de la Luna 408
39/11	Calle de Norzagaray N/A
39/12	Calle de Norzagaray N/A
39/19	Calle de San Francisco 403
39/22	Calle de O'Donnell 157
<b>Block 40</b>	
40/15	Calle de San Francisco 67
<b>Block 42</b>	
42/1	Calle de San Francisco N/A corner Calle del Recinto Oeste (aka Calle de Clara Lair)
42/4	Calle de San Francisco 54
42/11	Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud 204
42/12	Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud 206
42/22 (Empty lot)	Calle de San Francisco N/A
<b>Block 43</b>	
43/7	Calle de San José 204
<b>Block 46</b>	
46/7	Calle de San Francisco 212 corner Calle de San Justo
46/10	Calle de la Fortaleza 205
46/11	Calle de la Fortaleza 203
<b>Block 47</b>	
47/1	Calle de San Francisco 250
47/2	Calle de San Francisco 250
47/4	Calle de San Francisco 254-256
47/15	Calle de la Fortaleza 259
47/24	Calle de San Justo 201
<b>Block 48</b>	
48/6	Calle de San Francisco 308
48/7	Calle de San Francisco 310
48/10	Calle de la Fortaleza 315
48/20	Calle de la Tanca 203
<b>Block 49</b>	
49/5	Calle de San Francisco 358
49/20	Calle de la Fortaleza 355
<b>Block 54</b>	
54/6	Calle de la Calle de la Fortaleza 208
54/7	Calle de la Fortaleza 250 corner Calle de San Justo
54/8	Calle de San Justo 252
54/13	Calle de Tetuán 205
<b>Block 55</b>	
55/5	Calle de la Fortaleza 258
55/8	Calle de la Fortaleza 264 corner Calle de la Tanca

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<b>Block 56</b>	
56/2	Calle de la Fortaleza 300
56/13	Calle de Tetuán 315 corner Callejón del Gámbaro
<b>Block 57</b>	
57/1	Calle de la Calle de la Fortaleza 350 corner Callejón del Gámbaro
57/10	Calle de Tetuán 363
<b>Block 65</b>	
65/6	Calle del Recinto Sur 311
65/12	Calle del Recinto Sur 323 – Calle de Tetuán
65/15	Calle del Recinto Sur #329
<b>Block 71</b>	
71/1* (Site)	Municipal Parking Calle del Paseo de la Princesa - Calle de La Puntilla – Calle del Presidio

An asterisk (\*) marks the *parcelas* that are sites or that do not have buildings in them. There are two empty *parcelas* in the historic district. The number of non-contributing *parcelas* in the Old San Juan Historic District is 109 out of a total of 862. This represents 13% of all *parcelas*.

### Natural and Urban Physiognomy

The Old San Juan Historic District is located in the San Juan Islet, a small isle located on the northern coast of the island of Puerto Rico. This land mass is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean to the north, Bahía de San Juan (San Juan Bay) to the west and southwest, Caño de San Antonio (San Antonio Channel) to the southeast, and Laguna del Condado (Condado Lagoon) to the east. The enclave sits atop a promontory on the northwestern tip of the islet that gradually slopes down towards sea level along the east coast. This rock formation is between forty and ninety feet above the sea level. The cliffs formed by this land mass run parallel to the north shore of the islet. The promontory also slants towards the south, originally covered with mangroves and palm trees. The mangroves have dried and the now flat strip of land serves as transition to the bay. Both the Viejo San Juan and the San Juan Islet are part of the Municipality of San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico.

Four bridges connect the islet to the main island: the two-way Puente Dos Hermanos, which becomes the Avenida Dr Ashford in the Condado area and the inbound and outbound bridges of Route PR 1. This last route continues to Old San Juan as Avenida Fernández Juncos via the port area. Route 25 slices through the center of the islet in east-west fashion as Avenida Ponce de León following the historic Spanish *Carretera Militar* (Military Road) alignment. A spur of Route 25, the Avenida Muñoz Rivera, coasts along the northern shore of the islet. This roadway, provides the main formal entrance into the historic district entering through the sector where the 18<sup>th</sup> century Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra, a fierce defensive artifact that provided the only entrance into the urban core by land, was originally located. The artifact was destroyed during the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as part of the period's search for a healthier and less cramped urban center. The original moat scarp wall and its imposing height are still visible, providing a dramatic historic reference that contributes to the spirit of place of the district. A ferry service also connects the Viejo San Juan with the town of Cataño in the northern coast of the island.

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When in 1519 royal authorization was granted to move the then fledgling first European settlement from Caparra to the present location, the whole islet was declared its *ejido*.<sup>6</sup> At this time, the islet was uninhabited although only two pre-Columbian sites have been found within its territorial limits. Both are dated earlier than the 15<sup>th</sup> century. One rests within the defensive circuit and the other one outside, in the Puerta de Tierra sector. During the first centuries of Spanish colonization, the urban core was known by the same name as Caparra, the *ciudad del puerto Rico* (the city of the rich Port).<sup>7</sup> In spite of the extension of its *ejido*, all urban activities and the most important military fortifications, including the third and fourth lines of defense, were located on the northwestern tip of the islet within the boundaries of the Old San Juan Historic District. This region, from the Atlantic Ocean (in the north) to the bay (in the south) was considered a political and urban organism in its own right.

While the city congregated inside the walls for most of its history, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century the urban core had two *extramuros* (outside the walls) service areas. The first one is positioned between the northern defensive wall and the Atlantic Ocean and still serves as the district's burial ground, the Cementerio de Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis. The second service area was established in the mangrove sector between the southern curtain wall and the bay in the zone known as La Puntilla de San Lázaro (Point of Saint Lazarus) outside the southern perimeter of defensive walls. During the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the exterior areas of the city experienced further transformations. The La Perla neighborhood developed to the east of the cemetery along the northern curtain wall during the 1950s. This is a non-historic low income residential development that originated with squatters. Presently, the La Puntilla sector includes a large empty lot used as public parking, a 1960s non-historic residential complex and a US Coast Guard Base. In 1801, the Batería de Santo Toribio (St Toribio Battery) was erected on this site. The first two are noncontributing properties (sites) of the historic district. The Coast Guard enclave has one building, erected after 1898, listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C (Lighthouse Supervisor's House). While the rest of this early 20<sup>th</sup> century federal complex may be eligible under other criteria and/or historic context(s), it has never been considered an active part of the Old San Juan Historic District given the fact that, until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the sector was a mangrove. The Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places determined the US Coast Guard Base at La Puntilla is eligible as a historic district under Criterion A.

The distribution and organization of the urban core by means of an orthogonal grid was inspired by European Renaissance ideas, particularly Italian of Classical extraction. Presently, a liberal gridiron of 74 blocks of varying sizes organizes the core. The number of *parcelas* per block varies depending on the size of this urban component. The smallest blocks have one *parcela* (examples include: Block 1, Block 4, Block 9, Block 23, Block 44, Block 50, Block 58, and Block 63, among others) and the largest one (Block 20) includes 35 *parcelas*. The distribution of *parcelas* per block is detailed in Table 3.

**TABLE 3**  
**PARCELAS, CONTRIBUTING AND NONCONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS AND SITES PER BLOCK**

Block	Parcelas	Buildings (Contributing)	Buildings ( Non- Contributing)	Sites (Contributing)	Sites (Non
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<sup>6</sup> The Spanish word *ejido* refers to the land surrounding and under the jurisdiction of a particular town. It is defined as the: *campo común de un pueblo* (Translation into English: "the land surrounding a particular town"). *Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Lengua Española, 2001), 22<sup>nd</sup> edition, word: *ejido*.

<sup>7</sup> During the early stages of its history, the present day island of Puerto Rico was known as San Juan Bautista, the original name given by Christopher Columbus when he discovered it on 19 November 1493 during his second trip. *Rico* (rich) in this context (description of the port) is a synonym of bountiful.



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					<b>contributing)</b>
1	1	1	0	0	0
2	2 (1 <i>parcela</i> is part of the SJNHS)	0	0 (The parking building and the Plaza del Quinto Centenario share one <i>parcela</i> .)	0	1 (Plaza del Quinto Centenario)
3	14	14 (2 bldgs share one <i>parcela</i> )	0	1	0
4	1	1	0	0	0
5	4	3	1	0	0
6	19	18 (1 bldg shares 2 <i>parcelas</i> )	0	0	0
7	28	24	4	0	0
8	10	5	4 + 1 empty lot	0	0
9	1	1	0	0	0
10	17	12	5	0	0
11	1	0	0	1	0
12	1	0	0	0	1 (Plaza de la Beneficencia)
13	2	1	0	0	1 (Plaza del Soportal)
14	9	8	1	0	0
15	27	22 (1 <i>parcela</i> belongs to SJNHS, 3 <i>parcelas</i> belongs to Casa Blanca)	1	0	0
16	4	4 (2 bldgs share 1 <i>parcela</i> )	1	0	0
17	22	22	0	0	0
18	18	18	0	0	0
19	22	20	2	0	0
20	35	34	1	0	0
21	2	1	1	0	0
22	34	29	5	0	0
23	1	1	0	0	0
24	19	18	1	0	0

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25	18	14	4	0	0
26	19	19	0	0	0
27	34	31	3	0	0
28	23	20	3	0	0
29	16	8	8	0	0
30	11	6	5	0	0
31	12	11	1	0	0
32	1	0	0	1	0
33	4	3	1	0	0
34	16	14	2	0	0
35	14	10 (1 bldg included in NRHP)	3	0	0
36	26	21	5	0	0
37	4	3	0	1	0
38	17	15	2	0	0
39	24	19	5	0	0
40	26	25	1	0	0
41	16	9 (1 bldg included in the NRHP shares 2 <i>parcelas</i> )	0	6	0
42	22	17	4 + 1 empty lot	0	0
43	17	16	1	0	0
44	1	0	0	1	0
45	3	3	0	0	0
46	14	11	3	0	0
47	24	19	5	0	0
48	20	16	4	0	0
49	25	23	2	0	0
50	1	0	0	1	0
52	13	13 (2 bldgs share 1 <i>parcela</i> ; 1 bldg listed in NRHP)	0	0	0
53	14	14	0	0	0
54	18	14	4	0	0
55	20	18	2	0	0
56	24	22	2	0	0
57	17	15	2	0	0
58	1	1	0	0	0
60	3	1	0	1 (Plaza del	0

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				Bastión de la Palma shares 2 <i>parcelas</i> )	
61	2	2	0	0	0
62	3	3	0	0	0
63	1	1	0	0	0
64	9	9	0	0	0
65	17	14	3	0	0
66	1	0	0	1	0
68	2	1 (1 bldg shares 2 <i>parcelas</i> )	0	0	0
71	1	0	0	0	1 Municipal Parking
76	1	0 (1 bldg included in NRHP)	0	0	0
85	1	1	0	0	0
88	1	0 (1 bldg included in NRHP)	0	0	0
94	3	1	0	1 (1 site shares 2 <i>parcelas</i> )	0
96	1	0 (1 bldg included in NRHP)	0	0	0
101	1	1	0	0	0
172	4	0 (all properties part of SJNHS)	0	0	0
173	1	1	0	0	0
613	1	1	0	0	0
No Block	No <i>parcela</i>	1 Capilla del Cristo	0	0	0
No Block	No <i>parcela</i>	0	0	1 Plaza de Carrión	0
No Block	No <i>parcela</i>	0	0	1 Plaza de de Hostos	
No Block	No <i>parcela</i>	0	0	1 Las Terrazas del Recinto Sur	0

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<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>862</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>
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The Viejo San Juan orthogonal grid is formed by four types of public thoroughfares. The most common one is the *calle* (street). The following ways run from east to west, starting along the northern wall of the city: Calle de Norzagaray (also known as Boulevard del Valle and Bulevar del Valle), Calle de la Tranquilidad, Calle de la Virtud, Calle de la Beneficencia, Calle de San Sebastián, Calle del Sol, Calle de la Luna, Caleta de las Monjas, Caleta de San Juan, Calle de San Francisco, Calle de Cordero, Calle de la Fortaleza, Calle de Tetuán and Calle del Recinto Sur. Starting at the east side of the district, the following streets run from north to south: Calle de Norzagaray (this streets curves and also runs from east to west), Calle de O'Donnell, Calle de Acosta, Calle de Barbosa, Callejón del Tamarindo, Callejón del Toro, Callejón del Gámbaro and Callejón de la Capilla, Calle de la Tanca, Calle de San Justo, Calle de la Cruz, Calle Imperial, Calle de Tizol, Calle del Mercado, Calle de Mc Arthur, Calle de San José, Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud, Calle de Morovís, Calle del Hospital and Calle del Recinto Oeste. All the names except one were in used during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>8</sup> The roads bearing the name *recinto* (precinct) are located where the original defensive *camino de ronda* (pomoerium) was located. This interior way circled the district and provided rapid and unobstructed access to all the military defenses. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Calle de Norzagaray was also known as Calle del Recinto Norte precisely for this reason. Most streets were given name of saints, a Spanish tradition, although some – like the Calle de la Luna (Moon Street) – may be a reference to Madrid's famous medieval street bearing that name. Others are named after 19<sup>th</sup> century famous people, like Spanish governor Fernando de Norzagaray y Escudero (1852-1855), or battles that took place in Africa like the Calle de Tetuán.<sup>9</sup> Still, others are named after special objects. The Calle de la Cruz (Cross Street) owes its name to the metal cross that for many years crowned its highest point. As expected of thoroughfares that have existed for centuries plus, some have been known by different names.

Given the fact that they are part of the original urban orthogonal grid these thoroughfares are intrinsic contributing structures of the district. Although the San Juan National Historic Site (NPS) is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a structure, it is not counted at this time for it is already included in the list. The Bastión de San Justo (also known as the Semibastión de San Justo; Bastión de Santos Justos y Pastor and Semibastiones de Santos Justo y Pastor) is under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and, therefore, needs to be included at this time. The total of contributing structures within the historic district is 39. Table 3 lists all the thoroughfares and their known historic names.

**TABLE 4  
 PRESENT AND HISTORIC NAMES OF THOROUGHFARES (LISTED AS STRUCTURES)**

Present day name	Historic name(s)
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<sup>8</sup> Calle de Mc Arthur was organized quite late in the history of the city as result of which no evidence has been found regarding its possible historic names. Presently, the short version of the names is preferred by the US Postal Service. Thus, for example, the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud (Holy Christ of Health Street) is known as Calle Cristo and, also, as Calle del Cristo.

<sup>9</sup> For many years, the Calle de Tetuán was the southernmost street of the urban core, running from east to west. Given the fact that the first defensive wall constructed was the one along the southern border, one of its historic names, the Calle de los Cuarteles (Barracks Street), references the military presence it sheltered. During the 1770s, it was still informally organized along its south border although by the 1880s both of its sides had been developed. The street ran from Bastión de San José to the wall behind the present day Teatro Tapia, where the Batería de San Francisco de Paula was located. The Battle of Tetouán in Africa, fought by Spain in 1860, was led by Leopoldo O'Donnell, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Tetuán. The decisive victory helped shore Spain's claims in northern Africa. The Calle de O'Donnell, dedicated to the prime minister-cum-military leader, is another street in the district related to the event.

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Calle de Norzagaray	Calle del Recinto Norte ; Bulevar del Valle ; Boulevard del Valle
Calle de Francisco Goenaga	Calle de la Beneficencia
Calle de la Tranquilidad	
Calle de la Virtud	
Calle de San Sebastián	Calle de los Bobos; Calle del Mondongo
Calle del Sol	Calle del General Contreras
Calle de la Luna	Calle de Rafael Cordero; Calle del Padre Báez
Caleta de las Monjas	
Caleta de San Juan	
Calle de San Francisco	Caleta de San Francisco; Calle de Salvador Brau
Calle de la Fortaleza	Calle Allen; Calle de Santa Catalina
Calle de Tetuán	Calle de los Cuarteles; Calle de la Bella Unión
Calle del Recinto Sur	(Northern end transformed into Las Terrazas el Recinto Sur)
Calle del Comercio	
Calle de O'Donnell	Calle de la Estrella
Calle de Acosta	Calle Martinillo
Callejón del Tamarindo	
Callejón del Toro	
Callejón del Gámbaro	
Callejón de la Capilla	
Calle de Barbosa	Calle Oeste
Calle de la Tanca	Calle del Caño de la Tanca; Calle Degetau
Calle de Tizol	
Calle de San Justo	
Calle de la Cruz	
Calle Imperial	
Calle del Mercado	
Calle de Mc Arthur	
Escalinata de las Monjas	
Escalinata del Hospital	
Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud	Calle Real de San Juan; Calle del Cristo
Calle de Moroví	
Calle del Hospital	
Calle del Morro	
Calle del Recinto Oeste	Calle de Clara Lair
Calle del Arsenal	
Calle Paseo de la Princesa	
Carretera Muñoz Rivera	

The cultural power encapsulated in some of these names have inspired many, including modern writers and composers. Jose Curet's novel *Crimen en la calle Tetuán* (Crime on Tetuán Street) used the famed street as stage for his historic novel while singer Héctor Lavoe used the iconic streets Calle del Sol (Sun Street) and the Calle de la Luna (Moon Street) to summarize the polarity present in human life. His iconic song *Calle Luna Calle Sol* parallels the day (*sol* or sun) to the night (*luna* or moon) in order to describe human frailties, as well

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as crimes and punishments. The grisly images conveyed by the song pay homage for the fame these two streets had during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when their eastern sections were associated to all sorts of rugged lifestyles.

### ***Calle Luna Calle Sol***

*Metela mano en el bolsillo  
saca y abre tu cuchillo y ten cuidao.  
Pónganme oído en este barrio  
muchos guapos lo han mataó.  
Calle Luna, Calle Sol.*

All these by now fabled thoroughfares continue to be the subject of myths, short stories and poems to this day. From north to south, the oldest streets are: Calle de San Sebastián, Calle del Sol, Calle de la Luna, Caleta de las Monjas, Caleta de San Juan, Calle de San Francisco, Calle de la Fortaleza and Calle de Tetuán. From east to west, the following have that distinction: Calle de San Justo, Calle de la Cruz, Calle de San José and Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud.

There are four examples of the second type of thoroughfare, the *callejón* (alleyway or lane), narrow pathways reserved for pedestrian use. All these lanes run from north to south and depict a certain amount of informality in terms of their alignment and width. Callejón del Gámbaro (Shrimp Alleyway) best evidences this situation. It is possible *callejones* were used to subdivide very large blocks into two units. The *callejones* of the district are: Callejón del Tamarindo, Callejón del Toro, Callejón de la Capilla and Callejón del Gámbaro. Except for the Callejón de la Capilla (Chapel Alleyway), these lanes bear relatively informal names at odds with the saintly ones of the more prominent streets. Inspiration for their names was provided, from east to west, by the tamarind, bull, Iglesia de San Francisco and shrimp. Since Calle de la Tanca is very narrow as it approaches the Calle de Norzagaray, at times, it is known as Callejón de la Tanca.

The two streets that bear the historic description of *callejón* are examples of the third type of thoroughfare that had as its function to connect the city to the *fondadero* (port area).<sup>10</sup> Presently, there are just two, although historic sources mention that the Calle de San Francisco was also known during the early days as the Caleta de San Francisco.<sup>11</sup> Both *caletas* run from east to west and they connect the cathedral and the Plaza de la Catedral with the Calle del Recinto del Oeste and the Puerta de San Juan area. Historic records also mention the Caleta de los Frailes (Friars' Caleta) close to the Cerro de Santo Domingo (Santo Domingo Hill) that was originally defended by some of the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro bastions. Its exact location is now unknown.

There are two *escalinatas* (public stairways),<sup>12</sup> probably among the oldest public connectors in the district. Since they have flat sections between the flights of steps, at times they are also known as *callejón*. Both examples of this fourth type of thoroughfare run from north to south. The first one, the Escalinata del Hospital (Hospital Stairway), connects the Calle de San Sebastián (at the point where the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción El Grande is located) to the Calle del Sol. The Escalinata de las Monjas (Nuns' Stairway)

<sup>10</sup> *Caleta* can be translated into cove, inlet and small port. The *Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española* does not define the term as used in Puerto Rico where *caleta* is also the name given to certain streets that lead to bodies of water. *Diccionario de la Real Academia de Lengua Española*, word: *caleta*.

<sup>11</sup> Although presently the Calle de San Francisco does not connect to the sea, it did so during the early periods of the city.

<sup>12</sup> La Barandilla is not considered a thoroughfare but a monumental staircase part of a plaza.

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unites de Calle del Sol with the Caleta de las Monjas. This last one borders the present day Hotel El Convento and the Iglesia de las Carmelitas Calzadas, hence, its name.

All thoroughfares were originally unpaved. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Friar Abbad y Lasierra mentioned it was extremely difficult to walk the streets because of their incline and sandy composition allowed the rock underneath to be exposed in some sectors. He compared other sectors to walking over quicksand. It is possible principal streets may have received some special treatment in terms of pavement and sidewalks, usually in the shape of *chinos de río* (round pebbles), although most thoroughfares had no sidewalks until the 19<sup>th</sup> century and, even then, only the most important streets included this element. During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, slag mass-produced *adoquines* (similar to cobblestones) were used to pave sections of some of the streets. These silvery grey parallelepipeds are approximately three by five inches and four inches deep. They are set in sand and provide a beautiful and unique road pavement. The fact that vehicles do not have a smooth ride down the sharply inclined streets of the historic district because of these pavers is one of their traditional attractions. *Adoquines* also add a unique personality to the streets in terms of color and texture. At the present time, a modern *adoquín*, similar in color but of slightly different size is used to cover the unpaved historic roads. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries asphalt was used to pave streets, while the historic public staircases have concrete in some areas. At the present time, all streets are lined with sidewalks on both sides, except for the alleyways and the public stairways. During the last three decades, all sidewalks have been covered with dark grey *losa canaria* (stone from the Canary Islands). Some have been widened to permit safer pedestrian circulation. The district streets follow the natural contours of the terrain and some have steep inclines, particularly the ones aligned from north to south. These geographical conditions allow for beautiful perspectives and create softly undulating streetscapes. When looking north from the port, the streets create an amphitheater-like urban organization so charming it was mentioned in historic chronicles.

The Old San Juan Historic District has 18 contributing sites and 4 non-contributing ones. It is possible, however, that under another criterion and historic context(s) the non-contributing examples could be eligible to the National Register. The Cementerio de Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis (Parcela 2, Block 11) is considered a contributing site.

**TABLE 5  
 CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING SITES**

Common Name	Contributing	Historic Name(s)
Plaza de la Catedral	X	Plaza de la Catedral, Plaza Pública; Plazoleta de la Catedral, Plaza Dabán; Plaza Felisa Rincón de Gautier
Plaza de Armas	X	Plaza Mayor; Plaza Principal; Plaza Pública; Plaza de la Constitución; Plaza de Alfonso XII; Plaza de Baldorioty de Castro Nicknames: Panteón de Pezuela and Plaza de las Verduras
Plaza de San José	X	Plaza de Santo Domingo; Plazuela de Santo Domingo
Plaza de San Francisco	X	Plaza de Salvador Brau, La Barandilla
Plaza de Colón	X	Campo de Santiago; Plaza de Santiago Nickname: Plaza de Penélope; El Prado

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Parque de las Palomas	X	
Plaza de la Dársena	X	
Plaza del Bastión de las Palmas	X	
Plaza de la Rogativa	X	
Plaza de la Puerta de San Juan	X	
Plaza de Arturo Somohano	X	
Plaza de de [sic] Hostos	X	No Block, Parcela 82
Plaza Carrión	X	Plazoleta de los Bancos
Cementerio de Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis	X	Cementerio Municipal
Plaza del Bastión de los Santos Justo y Pastor	X	
Paseo de la Princesa	X	
Paseo de Ronda	X	
Las Terrazas del Recinto Sur	X	
Plaza del Quinto Centenario		
Plaza de la Beneficencia		
Plaza del Soportal		
Estacionamiento Municipal (Municipal Parking)		

The Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan has 26 objects, 9 of which are non-contributing. It is possible more time needs to elapse in order to make an unbiased artistic and historic significance judgment of these non-contributing objects, created during the last few decades.

**TABLE 6  
 CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING OBJECTS**

Name	Contributing
Sculpture of Juan Ponce de León, Plaza de San José	X
Sculpture of Christopher Columbus, Plaza de Colón	X
Sculptures of Four Seasons, Plaza de Armas	X
Sculpture of Abraham Lincoln, Escuela Abraham Lincoln	X
Bust of Francisco de Miranda, Plaza Bastión de la Palma	X
Sculpture of Salvador Brau, Plaza de San Francisco	X
Sculpture of Patricio Rijos (Toribio), Plaza de San Francisco	X
Bust of Isabel de Trastámara (Isabel La Católica),	X



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Extensión Paseo de la Princesa	
Sculpture of La Rogativa, Plaza de la Rogativa	X
Sculpture Colón, Plaza Bastión de Santos Justo y Pastor	X
Totem Telúrico, Plazadel Quinto Centenario	X
Sculptures of the Lambs, Plazadel Quinto Centenario	X
Sculpture of Eugenio María de Hostos, Plaza de de [sic] Hostos	X
Sculpture of the Rescate del Barrio Ballajá (Rescue of Ballajá Barrio), Cuartel de Ballajá	X
Sculpture of Felisa Rincón de Gautier, Paseo de la Princesa	X
Bust of Infante Dom Henrique, Plaza de Dársena	X
Columna Triunfal Victoria Españoles contra Holandeses (Triumphal Column Victory over the Dutch, Esplanade, Castillo de San Felipe del Morro)	X
Bust of Manuel Gregorio Tavares, Calle Tanca	
Sculpture of Arturo Somohano Portela, Plaza Arturo Somohano	
Sculpture Al Inmigrante, Plaza de Dársena	
Sculpture Eugenio María de Hostos, Plaza de la Beneficencia	
Fuente de la Herencia, Paseo de la Princesa	
Sculptural Group Raíces, Paseo de la Princesa	
Sculptural Group Crecimiento, Extensión Paseo de la Princesa	
Sculpture of Catalino (Tite) Curet Alonso, Plaza de Armas	
Sculpture of Ricardo Alegría, Paseo de Covadonga	

The Ponce de León (Plaza de San José) and Christopher Columbus (Plaza de Colón) sculptures are historic artistic works. Their age and aesthetics qualify them as museum pieces. Most of the objects listed contribute to the interpretation of the historic district. Some, like the ones depicting the four seasons, date to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Notice needs to be taken that the 19<sup>th</sup> century Cementerio de Santa María de Pazzis has dozens of magnificent examples of funerary art that include pantheons, tombs and sculptures.

### Overview of the District

Usually the main entrance into the city is via the Avenida Muñoz Rivera. After crossing the remaining moat wall of the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra, the Plaza de Colón, honoring Christopher Columbus, is encountered. On its east side sits the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Casino de Puerto Rico which presently houses the reception center of Puerto Rico's State Department. The dramatic Second Empire Baroque metal covered mansard roof balances the height of the historic scarp wall to the right. The building originally served as the headquarters of a private social club, known as *casinos*.

The Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra was part of the Castillo de San Cristóbal and, therefore, an intrinsic component of the third line of defense of the islet and urban enclave. It served as land entrance and, at the same time, as the first line of defense of the city proper. This mammoth defensive organism honoring Spain's patron saint also included a deep moat, bridge and auxiliary defensive artifacts. It was destroyed during the 1890s as part of the modernization and expansion of the urban core. Even though it no longer exists, remnants of the scarp wall and the moat still form part of the Castillo de San Cristóbal making possible to gauge the original position as one enters the historic district. This largely intangible presence creates an imaginary line visitors need to cross in order to get to the "inside" of the urban core. The mnemonic power of this land gate is so dramatic that all the area of the islet outside the historic district is known as Puerta de Tierra to this day.

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The Plaza de Colón is a well-sized public space anchored in the center by a 1890s marble sculpture of Christopher Columbus, commemorating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of Puerto Rico and America. Until that time, the plaza was known as Plaza de Santiago and, before that, as the Campo de Santiago (St James' Field), an empty space in front (on the inside) of the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra used for military purposes. Before the Columbus sculpture, there was a smaller bronze one of Juan Ponce de León created with the melted cannons the British abandoned after the failed attack during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Transferred to the Plaza de San José, it still graces this public square.

At the northeast corner of the Plaza de Colón, the Calle de Norzagaray and Calle de San Francisco meet. The first road has a sharp incline before reaching the summit, at the right of which is the main entrance to the Castillo de San Cristóbal in the shape of a monumental curved ramp. Created to reinforce defenses on the land side of town, this massive fortress acquired its present morphology during the 18<sup>th</sup> century as part of the defensive master plan organized for the city. Calle de Norzagaray curves at this confluence and continues from east to west along the northern defensive curtain wall and bastions allowing for magnificent views of the Atlantic Ocean and the cliffs facing the sea. The road encounters the 19<sup>th</sup> century Plaza del Mercado (Market Plaza) to the left, presently the Museo de Historia de la Ciudad de San Juan (History of the City of San Juan Museum), managed by the Municipality of San Juan. This, the earliest example of this 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural typology in the island, was erected on the outskirts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century urban core as a result of the period's preoccupation with hygiene.

Two blocks further west, to the left, is the 16<sup>th</sup> century Convento de los Dominicos (also known as Convento de Santo Domingo; Dominicans Convent or St Dominic's Convent), presently an art gallery administered by the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña (Institute of Puerto Rican Culture). The historic convent served as permanent location of this government agency created during the 1950s for many years. Before that, the US Army used the building to shelter administrative offices. The Convento is an example of Renaissance architecture and the oldest example of this architectural typology and style in Puerto Rico and the United States. The Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud is also to the left, bordering the western façade of the Convento. The space between this street and the Cuartel de Ballajá was originally occupied by city blocks that were destroyed by the US Army during the 1940s as a precautionary measure during World War II. During the 1990s, an underground parking with the Plaza del Quinto Centenario (Plaza of the Fifth Century) on top was created. The plaza has sculptural group inspired in the name of San Juan (St John the Baptist) and a huge ceramic-covered totem on its upper section. A bridge was also erected connecting the plaza to the green area in front of the Convento de los Dominicos. A sculptural group, an allegory of the rescue of the sector, the *Recate de Ballajá* (Rescue of Ballajá) was also located to the northwest of the Cuartel de Ballajá.

To the right, facing the Convento de los Dominicos is the 20<sup>th</sup> century Cuartel de Enfermeras del Rodríguez Army Hospital (Women Nurses Barracks of the Rodríguez Army Hospital) that sheltered the female nurses' corps who worked in this center located at the Cuartel de Ballajá during part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Mediterranean Revival detailing and open loggias were stylistic adaptations to the urban core's history. Down the steep road bordering on the west the Cuartel de Enfermeras, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Cementerio de Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis is found. An urban portal, known as the Puerta de San José (St Joseph's Door), must be crossed in order to enter the burial ground. The cemetery is organized by means of two sectors; the oldest one includes a charnel house, a round Classically-inspired Neo-Cinquecento chapel and a monumental portal entrance. The ossuary runs along the northern defense wall; the portal divides the original area from a later expansion; and the chapel anchors the two main lanes that divide the burial ground into four quadrants. The second sector, dated to the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was the result of the need for more space and almost doubles the size of the original site. Hundreds of tombs of all types, from humble ones to rich luxurious pantheons, line the lanes depicting all kinds of architectural styles and funerary sculptural works. Patriots José Julián Acosta, José Celso Barbosa, Salvador Brau, José de Diego, José Gautier Benítez, Antonio R. Barceló,

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Pedro Albizu Campos, Gilberto Concepción de Gracia, Samuel R Quiñones, Santiago Iglesias, as well as artists José Ferrer, Pedro Flores, Pedro Salinas, Rafael Hernández, Tito Lara, Gilberto Monroig, Rafael Tufiño and Tite Curet Alonso, are some of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century notables buried in this stunning place perpetually lulled by the sounds of the sea.

The portal allowing exit from the city into the cemetery is one of several urban portals or gates that once served the defensive walled circuit allowing entrance and exit into the precinct. The 18<sup>th</sup> century master plan planned for several such entities to exist along the walled perimeter. From east to west, the following urban doors were originally part of the defenses: Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra, the only one opening to land; the Puerta de Santa Rosa (St. Rose's Door), opening to the north, located to the west of the Castillo de San Cristóbal; the Puerta de San José, connecting to the cemetery; the Puerta de San Juan (St John Door) opening to the west connecting the Plaza de la Catedral to the *fondeadero*, the Puerta de San Justo (St Just Door), for centuries the only one connecting to the port area in the south; and the Puerta de San Rafael, also known as the Puerta de España (St Raphael Door; Spain Door) created during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Puertas de Santa Rosa, San José and San Rafael lacked real doors although this was not the case with the Puertas de Santiago, San Justo and San Juan. The last one still preserves two sets of massive doors.

Calle de Norzagaray ends at the Esplanade of the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro, the citadel and fourth and last line of defense of the city. The former Cuartel de Ballajá, Casa de Beneficencia and Manicomio are clustered around the formal entrance to the Esplanade. All three 19<sup>th</sup> century public buildings, created to serve the "Others" and the military, belong to the Government of Puerto Rico. The first one, a military barracks, houses the Museo de las Américas (Museum of the Americas), several non-profit organizations and the Puerto Rico's State Historic Preservation Office. The second one, originally a charity asylum, shelters the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña while the third one, a 19<sup>th</sup> century insane asylum, is home to the Escuela de Artes Plásticas (Fine Arts School). The buildings are important examples of European-influenced 19<sup>th</sup> century aesthetics, such as Neoclassicism, Neo-Cinquecento (Neo-Palladian) and Second Empire Baroque. A roundabout was created a few years ago by the US National Park Service in order to manage and organize the entrance to the Esplanade (also known as Campo del Morro and Parque del Morro) and the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro. During the 1990s, all the vegetation of this immense space was eliminated in order to duplicate the conditions of a military esplanade or *campo*. The views of the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro, the defensive walls and the sea from this vantage point almost fifty feet above sea level can best be described as spectacular.

The Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud is located to the left before arriving at the Plaza del Quinto Centenario. This street is informally known as the Calle Museo (Museum Street) due to the many significant buildings that align it. This is one of the earliest thoroughfares in the district and was once known as the Calle Real de San Juan (San Juan Royal Road). It starts in front of the 16<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> centuries Convento de los Dominicos and Iglesia de San José. This temple has unique Decorated Gothic masonry vaults in its interior and served the Convento de los Dominicos to which it is annexed. To the south of the temple is the Plaza de San José, one of the oldest ones in the core. This public space is framed on its eastern side by the Casa de los Contrafuertes – the oldest European house in the district, Puerto Rico and the United States – and on the southern border by the Calle de San Sebastián. The street has as its western terminus a Medieval *casa-torre* or *casa-fuerte* (tower-house or tower-fort), also known as Casa Blanca, the 16<sup>th</sup> century Ponce de León family residence. On the same street, on the south side, a block east of Casa Blanca, is the Baroque Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande, one of the earliest centers to serve as military hospital in the American continent.

At the intersection of Calle de San Sebastián and Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud a sharp downward incline is initiated that allows for a beautiful panoramic view of the streetscape. Some of the buildings along the way are: the 18<sup>th</sup> century Baroque Palacio Episcopal (Episcopal Palace); the 19<sup>th</sup> century Seminario Conciliar de

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San Ildefonso (St Ildephonse Seminary) currently sheltering the Centro de Estudios Avanzados del Puerto Rico y el Caribe (Center of Advanced Studies of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean); the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Convento and Iglesia de las Carmelitas Calzadas (Convent and Church of the Calced Carmelites); the 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries Catedral de San Juan Bautista (Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist); the Plaza de la Catedral, the first public plaza of the district created during the 16<sup>th</sup> century; the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries Casa del Cabildo (Town Council House), one of the first buildings constructed and first municipal center; the 19<sup>th</sup> century Diputación Provincial, located in the place that served as cemetery from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries; and several 18<sup>th</sup> century houses. The southernmost terminus of this street is occupied by the diminutive yet enchanting Baroque Capilla del Santo Cristo de la Salud (Holy Christ of Health Chapel). The building sits atop the southern defensive wall.

One block to the north of the Capilla del Santo Cristo de la Salud, is the Calle de la Fortaleza. This road starts in front of the Palacio de Santa Catalina, the official residence of the governor of Puerto Rico's and the executive branch work center. The building originated during the 1530s as a defensive tower known as the Fortaleza de Santa Catalina (and also as La Fuerza or The Force). During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the palatial Neo-Cinquecento section was added to the old medieval *casa-fuerte* or *casa-torre*. For centuries, the site has served as the official residence of the island's chief executive, making it the oldest building in America (the continent) to have sheltered uninterruptedly such a function for four centuries plus. The Calle de la Fortaleza presently serves as the formal exit of the district. Houses and stores organize fourteen blocks (seven on both sides). The street finishes in front of the Plaza de Colón the 19<sup>th</sup> century Teatro Tapia, named in honor of *sanjuanero* Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, one of the island's most distinguished theater writers.

If, upon entering the district, the Calle de San Francisco is taken instead of the Calle de Norzagaray, the route will end at the Plaza de Armas, the heart of the urban core. Before arriving at this central point, the 18<sup>th</sup> century Baroque Iglesia de San Francisco will be encountered on the right. In front of this temple, the Plaza de San Francisco is located as well as the Plaza de la Barandilla. The recently discovered 19<sup>th</sup> century curved public staircase that initiated a short promenade bordered by an *allé* has been rehabilitated and a replica of the famed artifact has been created. One of the schools constructed by the Americans during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Escuela Graduada y Técnica Ramón Baldorioty de Castro, is located on the north side of the church. Until the time of its erection, a Franciscan convent-cum-military barracks stood on this site. After a progression of ten blocks (five on each side), packed with houses and stores of all sorts, including one of two 20<sup>th</sup> century Catalan *Modernisme* examples, the *La Bombonera* cafeteria (also known as the Cafetería Puig y Abraham), the northeast corner of the Plaza de Armas, the second oldest public plaza in the historic district, is reached.

To the north of the Plaza de Armas is the Casa Alcaldía de San Juan, the seat of the municipal government since the early years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, at the latest. Although its elegant façade with its unique open two floors of arcades was erected during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the site sheltered the *ayuntamiento* or *alcaldía* (municipal) services, including a jail, since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the Plaza de Armas became the center of town. It still serves its original function and the complex is owned by the Municipality of San Juan. The Calle de la Luna façade was altered during the 1930s by means of a Mediterranean Revival small office building which contributes to the aesthetic and historic significance of the older structure.

At the northwest corner of the plaza sits the Diputación Provincial building. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> until the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the public cemetery was located here. The *diputación provincial* (provincial intendency) was Puerto Rico's representative body before the Spanish Cortes<sup>13</sup> in Madrid during certain periods of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Presently, the edifice – distinguished by its elegant architectural lines, dramatic interiors and beautiful metal

<sup>13</sup> The Cortes still serve as the legislative body of Spain.

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*rejas* (grills) sporting the letters “DP” (for Diputación Provincial) – houses the Puerto Rico Department of State. The majestic building to the west of the Plaza de Armas and to the south of the Diputación Provincial originally housed the 19<sup>th</sup> century Real Intendencia (also known as Real Hacienda; Royal Intendancy or Royal Treasury). Its Neo-Cinquecento façade underscores the relevance the *real Intendencia* had for San Juan and the island. The office of Puerto Rico’s Secretary of State is presently located here. Before the building was constructed there was an older edifice on the site that sheltered the Cuartel de San Carlos (St Charles’ Barracks) and a jail that, according to historic sources, could hold 800 prisoners.

Bordering the south of the Plaza de Armas are three early 20<sup>th</sup> century tall buildings, all contributing properties to the district. The Edificio de González Padín is a magnificent early 20<sup>th</sup> century structure inspired by the Chicago School that sheltered one of the first department stores in the urban core and the island, as well as offices. It was one of the very first office buildings constructed in the district. Its central service core, free floor plan, Chicago windows, and use of reinforced concrete confirm the Midwest’s typological and morphological precedents. To the west of this building is the Edificio Plaza, one of the finest examples of the Mediterranean Revival. It is also one of the earliest apartment buildings erected in the core evidencing the adaptations to the 20<sup>th</sup> century styles of living. At the west side of the Edificio Plaza is an early 1930’s commercial building that originally sheltered the Klein’s Store and later the New York Department Store. The original design had three floors and was designed by Architect Joseph O’Kelly. This building was one of the few built during the Depression Era and along with the González Padín Building, it was one of the first to bring the department store typology to Old San Juan. It is interesting to note that the original design could be influenced by the commercial building ideas created by Architect Louis Sullivan.

The ring of defensive walls, ranging from a height of ten to eighty plus feet above sea level, starts at the Castillo de San Cristóbal, the westernmost area of town, and runs along the northern cliffs until it meets the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro. From east to west, the northern defensive wall includes the following *baluartes* or *bastiones* (bastions): Bastión de San Sebastián (St Sebastian Bastion), Bastión de Santo Tomás (St Thomas Bastion), Bastión de las Ánimas (Souls Bastion), Bastión de Santo Domingo (St Dominic Bastion), Bastión de Santa Rosa (St Rose Bastion) and Bastión de San Antonio (St Anthony Bastion). They are all dedicated to saints, except for the Bastión de las Ánimas that honors Christian souls. It is possible the neighboring cemetery provided inspiration for the name. After embracing the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro, the defensive wall continues along the west and southern part of the district until it reaches the place where the Puerta de San Justo was once located, close to the Calle de Tizol. From west to east, the following bastions were part of the southern defensive curtain wall: Bastión de Santa Elena (St Helen Bastion), Bastión de San Agustín (St Augustine Bastion), Bastión de Santa Catalina (St Catherine Bastion), Bastión de Nuestra Señora de la Inmaculada Concepción (Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Bastion), Bastión de San José (St Joseph Bastion, also known as the Bastión de la Palma or Palm Bastion), Bastión de San Justo (St Just Bastion, also known as Bastión San Justo y Pastor or St Just and St Pastor Bastion and as a semibastion), Bastión del Muelle (Port Bastion), Bastión de San Pedro Martir (St Peter Martyr Bastion) and Bastión de Santiago (St James Bastion). The missing length of the wall that ran along the southern border of the core between the Bastión de San Justo and the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra, was destroyed during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The only preserved urban door along this section of the curtain wall is the Puerta de San Juan, the iconic symbol of the city, located between the Bastión de San Agustín and Bastión de Santa Catalina. For centuries, travelers would alight in the neighboring beach-like *fondeadero*, entered the city via this monumental door and walk the short distance uphill towards the Plaza de la Catedral and the cathedral. Facing the door from the outside, to the right, is the mighty wall upon which the Palacio de Santa Catalina is perched. At this point, the wall is forty plus feet high.

The La Puntilla de San Lázaro sector was formally developed during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. An orthogonal grid created at an angle to the original one used in the interior area of the historic district framed its

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urbanization. The area was quite close to the schooner and boat wharfs, generally known as the *dársena* (port) and limited by the Paseo de la Princesa and the Cárcel de la Princesa (also known as the Presidio de la Princesa; Princess Jail or Princess Presidium) to the north,<sup>14</sup> the Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla to the east, San Juan Bay to the west and a mangrove to the south. The prison aligns along the southern defensive wall that partly enclosed the prisoners' exercise yard. The Paseo de la Princesa runs parallel to the jail and the remaining section of the southern wall. The present walk is a reconstruction of the 19<sup>th</sup> century famed public promenade. The thoroughfare connects with a second 20<sup>th</sup> century *paseo*, known as the Extensión del Paseo de la Princesa, which runs along the base of the defensive west curtain wall starting at the Paseo de la Princesa and ending at the Puerta de San Juan. Another walk, informally known as the Paseo del Morro, continues in a parallel manner along the western walls north of the Puerta de San Juan.

Embracing the port area on the west, sits the Spanish Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla (La Puntilla Marine Arsenal). This complex, which includes a majestic centralized Late-Renaissance/Baroque-inspired chapel, sheltered the Spanish navy services. Both the former Presidio de la Princesa and the Arsenal de la Marina are presently owned by the Government of Puerto Rico. The first one is the locale of the island's Compañía de Turismo (Tourism Company) and the second one is managed by the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña (Institute of Puerto Rican Culture) as an exhibition gallery.

La Puntilla was the last place in the island over which the Spanish flag flew and the place where Spanish soldiers were quartered for months until the last one left after the 1898 debacle. Its urban grid was destroyed during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the US Coast Guard Base was organized in this area. During the 1960s, a residential complex was constructed and presently a huge vacant lot is also part of the sector. These sites are noncontributing under the present context and criterion.

Another transformation suffered by the sector was the destruction of the Puerta de San Justo in 1895. As mentioned, this was the only opening along the south curtain wall until the 19<sup>th</sup> century Puerta de España was opened. With the destruction of the Puerta de San Justo, the sector became available for urban development allowing for the construction of several early 20<sup>th</sup> century office buildings to either serve the federal government or private commercial enterprises. The striking flamingo pink Aduana Federal (Federal Customs) and more sober Edificio de Correos y Tribunal Federal (Post Office and Federal Courts) physically evidence the presence of the federal government in the capital city after 1898. The first structure is located on the north part of the historic Spanish Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla while the second one resides in the area next to where the Puerta de San Justo once stood. These two examples of the Mediterranean Revival are considered contributing properties for they are exemplary of the federal presence in the district and of the new aesthetic currents used to dress the buildings representing the political transformation. During the 1930s, a small jewel-like building, the Pabellón de Turismo (Tourism Pavilion) was erected to the east of the Aduana Federal, in front of the Edificio de Correos y Tribunal Federal. This third Mediterranean Revival creation housed a tourism office, at a time when maritime connections were the sole link between Old San Juan and the rest of the world. The building still serves the same function.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the sector was also favored by the new American and Canadian banks that settled in the island. The buildings housing the Royal Bank of Canada, Bank of Nova Scotia, American Colonial Bank, all erected during the first two decades, and the Art Deco Banco Popular, constructed during the 1930s, are characterized by their height and monumental size. Previously, the Banco Territorial y Agrícola sat on this block. They are contributing properties for they are aesthetic and morphological examples of the early 20<sup>th</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The *princesa* (princess) after whom the jail and the promenade in front are named was the Infanta Isabel, Princesa de Asturias, (1830-1904) who later reigned as Isabel II. She was Spain's first regnant queen, considering that Isabel I (Isabel la Católica, Christopher Columbus' patron) was regnant queen only of Castile and Juana (Isabel and Fernando's daughter) did not ruled over a unified Spain. Isabel II was deposed in 1868.

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century development of the urban core. They are also examples of the office building,<sup>15</sup> an American architectural typology developed in Chicago and New York during the 19<sup>th</sup> century that did not exist in the Viejo San Juan prior to 1898. Since most of them are found in the historic “borderland” between the interior and exterior of the city, they create a fascinating sector that underscores the transformations experienced by the urban center at the turn of the century. Other interesting examples of the novel (for the time) architectural type of the office building erected within the interior of the district proper are the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Edificio del *Periódico El Mundo y Puerto Rico Ilustrado* (*El Mundo* and the *Puerto Rico Ilustrado* Building) and the Edificio de Teléfonos (Telephone Building). The first one uses Neo-Arab motifs while the second one depends on Classicist and Second Empire Baroque aesthetic ideas to create their exterior architectural cloaks. They are both contributing properties of the district.

The Calle del Recinto Sur runs along the route where the defensive *camino de ronda* (pomoerium) along the southern curtain wall was originally located. The curtain wall curved towards the north as it exited the core until it met the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra. The small but impressive Baños Públicos (Public Bathrooms) building is located on this curve. This early 20<sup>th</sup> century Second Empire Baroque example responds to City Beautiful ideals. Its jewel-like qualities aspired to project modernity and to collaborate in the beautification of the city.

The Avenida Ponce de León, the original Spanish *Carretera Militar* that united the islet to the main island, is the formal exit of the historic district. Occupying part of the original Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra site is the Escuela José Julián Acosta, the first American school to be erected in the Viejo San Juan. With the Escuela Ramón Baldorioty de Castro and the Escuela Graduada Abraham Lincoln, the buildings are examples of a new architectural typology that brought into the urban core novel aesthetic currents, as well as a new type of edifice to shelter Puerto Rico’s first formal public educational system during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A small building located in Block 613 is included as part of the district for it sits on top of the remains of a section of the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra.

**Stylistic Periods**

Old San Juan 827 architectural examples may be subdivided into three general groups: public, domestic and military. In the first category, all non-military and non-domestic buildings are included, as well as the commercial buildings created during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and churches. A great variety exists in this group in terms of architectural typologies, including schools, social clubs, hotels, palaces, government buildings, restaurants, convents, among others. There are 54 contributing and 4 non-contributing public buildings<sup>16</sup> listed in Table 7 under the architectural period they belong.

**TABLE 7  
 PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND ARCHITECTURAL PERIODS**

Historic Name	Location	Contributing
<b>Conquest Period (1519-1625)</b>		

<sup>15</sup> The office building is intimately related to the skyscraper construction.

<sup>16</sup> The four non-contributing public buildings are located in: Parcela 4, Block 2 (Ballajá Parking); Parcela 3, Block 16 (building belonging to the Catholic Church); Parcela 1, Block 45 (private commercial building) and Parcela 11, Block 35 (Calle de San Francisco Parking).

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<b>Medieval Semantics</b>		
Iglesia de San José	Parcela 15, Block 3	X
Catedral de San Juan Bautista	Parcela 4, Block 33	X
Casa-Torre de Ponce de León (Casa Blanca)	Parcela 20, Block 1	X
<b>Renaissance Semantics</b>		
Convento de Santo Domingo	Parcela 1, Block 3	X
<b>Baroque Period (1625-1812)</b>		
Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande	Parcela 1, Block 13	X
Palacio Episcopal	Parcela 4, Block 16	X
Iglesia and Convento de San Francisco	Parcela 4-5, Block 37	X
Convento de las Carmelitas Descalzas	Parcela 1, Block 23	X
Capilla del Santo Cristo de la Salud	X <sup>17</sup>	X
Cuerpo de Guardia del Almacén de Pólvora de San Sebastián	Parcela 4, Block 20	X
<b>Historicist/Enlightenment Period (1812-1898)</b>		
Seminario Conciliar de San Ildefonso	Parcela 4, Block 16 <sup>18</sup>	X
Plaza del Mercado	Parcela 1, Block 4	X
Asilo de Beneficencia	Parcela 2A, Block 15	X
Casa Alcaldía de San Juan	Parcela 2, Block 34	X
Iglesia de Santa Ana	Parcela 14, Block 54	X
Palacio de Santa Catalina (also known as La Fortaleza)	Parcela 9, Block 41	X
Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla	Parcela 1, Block 85	X
Teatro Alejandro Tapia y Rivera	Parcela 1, Block 58	X
Cuartel de Infantería de Ballajá	Parcela 1, Block 1	X
Parque de Artillería	Parcela 1, Block 6	X
Casa de la Caridad y Oficios de San Ildefonso	Parcela 1, Block 20	X
Colegio de Párvulos	Parcela 8, Block 7	X
Manicomio	Parcela 2B, Block 15	X
Diputación Provincial	Parcela 3, Block 33	X
Real Audiencia	Parcela 2, Block 41	X
Presidio de la Princesa	Parcela 12A, Block 41	X
Casa de Salud San Luis (Edificio Acosta)	Parcela 16, Block 65	X
Antiguo Asilo (Edificio de Servicios Municipales)	Parcela 8, Block 3	X
<b>Post 1898 Historicist Period (1898-1930)</b>		
Escuela José Julián Acosta	Parcela 1, Block 101	X
Royal Bank of Canada	Parcela 3, Block 62	X
Colegio Santo Tomás de Aquino	Parcela 4, Block 33	X
Iglesia Presbiteriana Hugh O'Neill	Parcela 16, Block 42	X
Iglesia Metodista de la Santísima Trinidad	Parcela 24B, Block 17	X

<sup>17</sup> The CRIM has not assigned a *parcela* or block to the Chapel. Arleen Pabón Charneco, "Final Report: 2010 Inventory of the San Juan Historic Zone".

<sup>18</sup> According to the CRIM, both the Palacio Episcopal and the Seminario de San Ildefonso share one *parcela* and block number.



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Escuela Ramón Baldorioty de Castro	Parcela 1, Block 37	X
Casino de Puerto Rico	Parcela 1, Block 96	X
Baños Públicos	Parcela 1, Block 68	X
American Colonial Bank	Parcela 12, Block 64	X
Siervas de María	Parcela 7, Block 41	X
Tobacco Palace	Parcela 14, Block 57	X
Edificio CC Lord	Parcela 7, Block 64	X
Cámara de Comercio de Puerto Rico	Parcela 3, Block 60	X
Edificio Periódico <i>El Mundo/Puerto Rico Ilustrado</i>	Parcela 16, Block 52	
Edificio de Teléfonos	Parcela 21, Block 56	X
<b>Modern Period (1900-1939)</b>		
<i>La Bombonera</i>	Parcela 18, Block 36	X
<i>El Polo Norte</i>	Parcela 20, Block 55	X
Edificio de González Padín	Parcela 3, Block 45	X
Bank of Nova Scotia	Parcela 22, Block 55	X
Escuela Graduada Abraham Lincoln	Parcela 1, Block 9	X
Pabellón de Turismo	Parcela 3, Block 94	X
Correo y Tribunal Federal	Parcela 1, Block 88	X
Aduana Federal	Parcela 1, Block 76	X
Cuartel de Enfermeras del Rodríguez Army Hospital	Parcela 1, Block 173	X
Banco Popular de Puerto Rico	Parcela 1, Block 63	X
National City Bank	Parcela 2, Block 62	X

All of these public buildings present distinctive and unique architectural and/or urban characteristics that provide each individual building and their totality national cultural significance. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century Cuartel de Enfermeras del Rodríguez Army Hospital (Rodríguez Army Hospital Nurses Quarters) is the only example that may be judged not to possess architectural integrity under Criterion C. However, since it is a unique example of a building created to shelter the feminine gender, at a time when most nurses were women, it contributes to a better understanding of how the US Army military hospital worked, as well as the gender's professional development during that century.

The oldest public buildings are dated to the Conquest Period (1519-1625). The beginning and end dates of this stage are marked by historic events: royal approval of the move of the settlement from Caparra to the islet in 1519 and the Dutch attack of 1625. After this last event and in spite of a relative lull in terms of attacks, the defensive master plan of the urban core was carried out. The resulting urban organism was different from the one existing during the Conquest Period, principally because of the defensive stone circuit and imposing fortresses. The group of buildings belonging to the period includes the: Iglesia de San José, Catedral de San Juan Bautista, Casa-Torre de Ponce de León (Casa Blanca), and Convento de Santo Domingo, examples of the use of Medieval and Renaissance semantics. While the two temples used Gothic and Decorated Gothic stuccoed stone vaulting, the Casa-Torre de Ponce de León was inspired in medieval architectural ideas. The Convento de Santo Domingo, in turn, was influenced by Italian Renaissance stylistic and theoretical concepts. All were built of masonry (limestone from the islet's quarry) and *tapiería* (rammed earth walls). In order to protect the delicate fabric, all walls and ceilings were stuccoed. The arcuated was the preferred structural system, although the trabeated one was also used.

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The second architectural period is the San Juan Baroque (1625-1812) that principally took place during the 18th century. Finalization of this stage came in 1812 when the liberal constitution was enacted and profound social transformations took place. These fostered an interest in revivalist and academic architectural modes, as well as new architectural typologies. Edifices erected at this time are the: Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción El Grande, Palacio Episcopal, Iglesia and Convento de San Francisco (destroyed), Convento de las Carmelitas Calzadas, Capilla del Santo Cristo de la Salud and Cuerpo de Guardia del Almacén de Pólvora de San Sebastián. With the exception of the Convento de las Carmelitas Calzadas, these buildings are characterized by the elegant treatment given to the main façades, particularly the entrance portals. Their size and scale is grand and many occupy one urban block. *Tapiería* was still used for construction although *mampostería regular* (rubble stone masonry) was preferred by this time. All walls were stuccoed and both the arcuated and trabeated structural systems were used.

While the architectural revivals that characterized the Historicist and Enlightenment Period continued uninterrupted after 1898, the scale and motifs evidence differences that make it convenient to use this last date as a stylistic frontier of sorts. Architecture belonging to this period is characterized by varied typologies many of which sheltered government services and the "Others." This interest evidences the influence of the Enlightenment. The buildings that best exemplify this new spirit are: Seminario Conciliar de San Ildefonso, Plaza del Mercado, Asilo de Beneficencia, Casa Alcaldía de San Juan, Iglesia de Santa Ana, Palacio de Santa Catalina, Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla, Teatro Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, Cuartel de Infantería de Ballajá, Parque de Artillería, Casa de la Caridad y Oficios de San Ildefonso, Colegio de Párvulos, Manicomio, Diputación Provincial, Real Intendencia, Real Audiencia, Presidio de la Princesa and Casa de Salud San Luis (presently known as Edificio Acosta). All were designed to be large public symbols. Their external scale and elegance is matched by the richly appointed interiors usually organized around one or two patios that allowed for gender and/or services segregation. Many include tribune-like elements in their façades that underscore their civic role. Some also incorporate information about the patrons, designers and construction dates in their façades. Neoclassical, Neo-Cinquecento and Second Empire Baroque and cognate modes are all represented, along with *Rundbogenstil* aesthetic influences. Most of these structures were constructed of *mampostería regular* (rubble stone masonry) and brick and they use both the arcuated and trabeated structural systems.

The post 1898 buildings can be subdivided into varied aesthetic currents, from Modern and Art Deco to Mediterranean Revival. The interest in historicist revivals continued uninterrupted side by side with modernist inclinations. Some of examples include the: La Bombonera, El Polo Norte, Escuela José Julián Acosta, Royal Bank of Canada, Escuela Ramón Baldorioty de Castro, Colegio Santo Tomás de Aquino, Siervas de María, Iglesia Presbiteriana Hugh O'Neill, American Colonial Bank, Edificio de González Padín, Edificio de Teléfonos, Escuela Graduada Abraham Lincoln, Bank of Nova Scotia, Casino de Puerto Rico, Tobacco Palace, CC Lord, Baños Públicos, Iglesia Metodista de la Santísima Trinidad, Cámara de Comercio, Correo y Tribunal Federal, Aduana Federal, Antiguo Edificio Periódico *El Mundo*, Banco Popular and Pabellón de Turismo. The 1930s Cuartel de Enfermeras del Rodríguez Army Hospital is also part of this list. While the first two examples belong to the European *Modernisme* aesthetic current, the rest are Second Empire Baroque (Casino de Puerto Rico, Tobacco Palace, CC Lord), Neo-Palladian or Neo-Cinquecento (Escuela Ramón Baldorioty de Castro) and Neoclassical (The Royal Bank of Canada) expressions. Other historicisms are also represented, including the Neo-Mesopotamian (Cámara de Comercio de Puerto Rico) and Neo-Arab (Edificio Periódico *El Mundo*). The Bank of Nova Scotia depicts both Sullivan-esque and Wrightian influences by means of the fanciful stucco work and mosaics that decorate its exterior and the Art Deco was used in the Banco Popular and several domestic and commercial buildings.

New architectural typologies were introduced at this time to the district. Some of these are the office building (Edificio de Teléfonos), school, department store (Edificio de González Padín), non-Catholic Christian church

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(Iglesia Presbiteriana Hugh O'Neill), parochial Catholic school (Colegio Santo Tomás de Aquino), social club (Casino de Puerto Rico) and chamber of commerce (Cámara de Comercio de Puerto Rico). Following the local tradition with a new twist, are the cafeteria (*La Bombonera*) and small industrial building (El Polo Norte). Probably the most relevant statement made by this collection is the incorporation of novel architectural typologies and aesthetic currents to shelter new needs. In most cases, reinforced concrete was used with a skyscraper structure of free floor plans and curtain walls. Although the size and height of many of these edifices contrast powerfully to the rest of the urban context they are contributing examples that evidence the architectural development of the core. With the exception of the churches that are dispersed throughout the city, the government edifices are principally grouped around the Plaza de Armas and in the northwest area of town, close to the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro. The Palacio de Santa Catalina is located on the southwest area of the core while the Teatro Tapia sits at the eastern area of town. As mentioned, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century contributing buildings are congregated on the southwest part of the city.

**Plazas, Promenades and Gardens**

Plazas tend to organize relevant buildings in clusters creating distinctive urban sectors. A description of these public spaces contributes to an understanding of the urban development of the core. The early plazas, like the Greek agora and the Roman forum before them, served as multifunctional spaces. As such, they were known as *plazas públicas* (public squares or plazas). With time, it was not uncommon for these spaces to specialize becoming: (i) *plaza del recreo*, also known as *plaza del pueblo* (recreational or town's square) and *plaza mayor* (principal plaza), (ii) *plaza de armas* (where military exercises took place), or (iii) *plaza del mercado* (market place). In the Viejo San Juan, the principal square served as *plaza de armas*, *plaza del mercado* and *plaza del recreo*, although there were other ones used almost exclusively for recreational or special purposes, such as the Plaza de San José and Plaza de San Francisco. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the city had a formal building which sheltered the produce market, so the open squares were seldom used for this activity.

Squares are the product of Spanish settlement patterns. These urban and architectural nuclei were part of the public buildings program. They served as urban anchors, defining the different quadrants and barrios organized by the urban grid. Tapia y Rivera described the role plazas played for his generation: [L]as plazas son pulmones de toda población que se inutilizan desde el momento en que el aire, por la obstrucción del espacio, no puede arremolinar para repartirse en las calles que a ellas concurren.<sup>19</sup> The Viejo San Juan has a most interesting inventory of plazas, *plazoletas* (a small plaza), *plazuelas* (yet another name for small plazas), and varied public spaces such as promenades which counter balanced its introverted urban nature, providing its inhabitants with open areas in which to rest and frolic. Although formal gardens are limited in number they also form part of the rich urban tapestry. To this day, these public open spaces empower varied daily activities serving as social centers that frame cultural, political and religious interface. Table 8 lists all the formal plazas of the district and includes their historic names.

**TABLE 8  
 CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING PLAZAS, GARDENS, PROMENADES AND PARKS**

Present day name	Historic name(s)	Contributing
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<sup>19</sup> Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo dejo* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: El Edil, Inc, 1996), p 52. Translation into English: “[P]lazas are the lungs of all towns and cease to be so when the air flow is obstructed due to surrounding constructions and is unable to gather and then disperse to all the streets which intersect the plaza.”

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Plaza de la Catedral	Plaza de la Catedral, Plaza Pública; Plazoleta de la Catedral, Plaza Dabán; Plaza Felisa Rincón de Gautier	X
Plaza de Armas	Plaza Mayor, Plaza Principal, Plaza Pública, Plaza de la Constitución, Plaza de Alfonso XII, Plaza de Baldorioty de Castro, Panteón de Pezuela, Plaza de las Verduras	X
Plaza de San José	Plaza de Santo Domingo; Plazuela de Santo Domingo	X
Plaza de San Francisco	Plaza de Salvador Brau	X
Plaza de la Barandilla	La Barandilla	X
Plaza de Colón	Campo de Santiago, Plaza de Santiago, Plaza de Penélope; El Prado	X
Plaza de la Rogativa		X
Plaza de la Puerta de San Juan		X
Plaza de la Dársena		X
Plaza de Arturo Somohano		X
Plaza Carrión	Plazoleta de los Bancos	X
Jardín de Casa Blanca		X
Jardín de la Fortaleza		X
Plaza de la Puerta de San Juan		X
Parque de las Palomas		X
Parque del Morro	Esplanade; Campo del Morro	X
Plaza de Beneficencia		X
Paseo de la Princesa		X
Extensión del Paseo de la Princesa		X
Paseo del Morro		X
Plaza del Quinto Centenario		
Plaza del Soportal		
Plaza de la Beneficencia		

### Plaza de la Catedral

The Plaza de la Catedral is the oldest square in Old San Juan. In a city where structures belonged to the Crown, the Church and rich citizens, the space was separated for public use, hence its 16<sup>th</sup> century description as *plaza pública* (public plaza). Because it was organized before the *Laws of Indies* were enacted, at a time when the settlement acted as an urban laboratory of sorts, the plaza has a slightly trapezoidal shape, at odds with the regular geometric shape such spaces sported at a later time. Located in front of the main temple of the settlement it also served as atrium, albeit and uncomfortable one due to the topographical characteristics of the area. The square is separated from the cathedral by the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud and a set of steps that lead to the simple basilica façade modified during the early decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in order to make it higher.

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In keeping with the religious undertones established by the Cathedral visual and physical domination of the Plaza de la Catedral, the Convento and the Iglesia de las Madres Carmelitas Calzadas (Convent and Church of the Calced Carmelite Sisters) were erected on its north side during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The present temple dates to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to the fact that the earlier one was destroyed. The annexed cloister has a huge interior courtyard which was used by the nuns as burial ground. The church is an exquisite example of Neo-Cinquecento architecture, depicting elegant lines and an interesting 19<sup>th</sup> century interpretation of Palladian architecture, particularly in the treatment of the vault, the ample choir, and the single nave. The façade is a creative interpretation of the centuries old westwork organization that abandoned the basilica composition preferred by the district for ecclesiastical facades since the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The structure presently houses the Hotel El Convento, a by now historic use. This was the first major rehabilitation project carried under the supervision of the then recently created Institute of Puerto Rican Culture. The transformation occurred during the late 1950s - early 1960s, after the local government declared the San Juan Historic Zone. The complex was used for varied uses during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including a garage and a house of ill repute. The hotel is framed on its west side by the Escalinata de las Monjas (Staircase of the Nuns). As mentioned, the unusual thoroughfare directly responds to the topographic characteristics of the site, connecting the original urban center in front of the cathedral to the hill area where the Ponce de León land holdings were located. Two of the principal roads that connected the original port to the Plaza de la Catedral have been preserved: the Caleta de San Juan and Caleta de las Monjas. The first one also unites the Plaza de la Catedral to the Puerta de San Juan, the urban door opening unto the sea. Thousands walked the lane throughout the centuries as they arrived or departed town, although it is possible no clear demarcation existed between the plaza and the roads during the early days.

In front of the Convento de las Carmelitas Calzadas is the Casa del Cabildo which, in all probability, originally faced the Plaza de la Catedral. The building is privately owned and its origin dates to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The dungeon-like jail preserved in its basement evidences that the edifice was used as a government center. The main façade now faces the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud and is an exquisite example of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Baroque style.

The ensemble around the Plaza de la Catedral possesses a high degree of integrity which collaborates in the expression of its unique spirit of place as the original urban core, where the soul of the 1519 *ciudad del puerto Rico* still resides. The two *caletas* and, particularly, the visual and physical connection with the Puerta de San Juan, preserve the original layout of the settlement's main connecting routes from the center of town to the port and the Ponce de León tower-house and, later, to the Puerta de San Juan. The intimate scale of the Plaza de la Catedral and its physical relationship to the cathedral preserve a notable component of the first San Juan.

### **Plaza de Armas**

When the first area selected for the settlement in front of the cathedral and close to the *fondeadero* proved to be inadequate during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the embryonic center was moved to the present day Plaza de Armas. To this day, this square is considered the heart of the Viejo San Juan. In addition to this symbolic role as center of the urban core, the space continues to anchor the seats of both the island-wide and municipal governments, something it has done since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century and although the Spanish monarchy was not organized into independent branches (i.e. executive, legislative, and judicial), all the buildings relevant to the administration of the city and the island – Casa Alcaldía, Real Intendencia and Diputación Provincial – were located around this neuralgic square.

Since the earliest days of the city, the northwest corner was occupied by a cemetery. As mentioned, a building housing the municipal government (also known as Casa Consistorial, Casa Alcaldía, Alcaldía, Ayuntamiento)

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was erected on the northern boundary by the early years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. With time, other relevant services, such as prison, military hospital, and market gravitated to its periphery. The plaza's relevance was underscored by the fact that during the 19<sup>th</sup> century most of the enclave's stores were located on its eastern side. The streets which surround the space, the Calle de San Francisco, Calle de Rafael Cordero, Calle de la Cruz and Calle de San José were probably interpreted as part of the urban space for many centuries. In other words, it is expected the plaza was not surrounded by streets until much later. The space has been known by different names throughout history – Plaza Principal (Principal Plaza), Plaza Mayor (Principal Plaza), Plaza de la Constitución (Constitution Plaza), Plaza de las Verduras (Vegetable or Produce Plaza), Plaza de Alfonso XII (Alfonso XII Plaza), Plaza Baldorioty de Castro (Baldorioty de Castro Plaza), and Plaza de Armas (Military Arms Plaza). This last name, in use during the 19th century, made no sense to Tapia y Rivera.<sup>20</sup> One infamous rehabilitation project was nicknamed *el Panteón de Pezuela* (Pezuela's Pantheon). In 1851, Governor Juan de Pezuela y Cevallos, Marquis de la Pezuela<sup>21</sup> transformed the open space with the insertion of a raised platform in keeping with European ideas. It is probable the design was meant to provide more definition to the public space by clearly establishing a difference between the square proper and the vehicular areas surrounding it. The hated project was completely deconstructed some time later. Another idea abandoned was to create a continuous arcade around the plaza. This concept, Baroque in inspiration, had as its precedent the many towns and cities in Spain, particularly Madrid and Barcelona, that treat the periphery of important squares in this fashion. Two unfinished arches springing next to the Casa Alcaldía arcade, on both sides of the main façade, still evidence this historic intention.

The first proposed public square, the Plaza de la Catedral, was framed by the church to the east and the entrance to the bay on the west. Its irregular topography inhibited urban expansion. The Plaza de Armas allowed for uninterrupted urban growth in four different directions. This advantage was underscored by the fact that the Plaza de Armas was larger than the Plaza de la Catedral and in the shape of a regular rectangle. It is also possible that the new location encouraged the idea of moving the port to the south of the urban core. Because of its morphology and location the enclave developed in a different manner that it would have if the Plaza de la Catedral had served as urban anchor. This growth resulted in the emergence of some interesting and important urban characteristics, some of which are deviations from the *Laws of Indies*. First, the Plaza de Armas is free of religious association. Not only the feudal-like connection between the Ponce de León tower-house and the principal plaza disappeared, the link with the cathedral is non-existent. This last condition provides a secular personality to the space, at odds what was done in the rest of the American hemisphere. In fact, Old San Juan is the only example of an urban core founded by the Spaniards in the island which sports this visual, physical and symbolic disengagement. This reality evidences the urban experimentation that took place before the *Laws of Indies* came to rule. The Viejo San Juan's international cultural significance is based precisely on its status as an urban laboratory. The second important characteristic of the Plaza de Armas is the disconnection between the center of town and the port. Lacking the intimate relationship with the sea which existed when the core was organized around the Plaza de la Catedral, a more independent urban personality developed. The port area was also altered. From a dominant force, emphasized by the axis that existed between it, the Plaza de la Catedral and the church, the port became a secondary element, distinct and separate from the central area of the enclave. Even though this water venue – whether located at the *fondeadero* or south of the urban core – played a life-giving role until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was not treated as one of the main urban actors once the main square moved to the Plaza de Armas.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p 8. [L]a plaza principal o de Armas como ha dado. [llamarse, no sé por qué, puesto que sí la de La Habana se denomina así, es porque correspondió en otro tiempo a la primera fortaleza que allí se hizo. Translation into English: “[T]he principal plaza or de Armas as it is presently called, illogically due to the fact that Havana's can be termed that way because it did serve in this manner the first fortification constructed in that city.”

<sup>21</sup> The Marquis was governor from 1848 to 1851.

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The sculptures of the four seasons presently incorporated in the fountain which graces the area are 19<sup>th</sup> century artistic artifacts used that originally adorned the Paseo de la Princesa. They were removed from this location in 1872 and taken to the Plaza de Armas. Until the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, huge trees provided a park-like atmosphere to the square, in keeping with Picturesque and City Beautiful Movement landscape ideals. This was a departure of the norm for originally all squares in the Viejo San Juan followed European tradition and had no greenery. There are 1898 and 1899 photographs that depict the space without any trees. The present design tries to emulate the historic appearance while providing trees for the public in order to create a user-friendly atmosphere.

To the north of the Plaza de Armas is the elegant Casa Alcaldía de San Juan, the seat of municipal government to this day. Part of the site's cultural relevance resides in the role it has played for centuries: housing the Municipality of San Juan for almost four centuries. During its long history, it provided other services. For example, a jail and small hospital were also sheltered here during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. These varied historic functions underscore the edifice's social, political and architectural relevance. It is one of the few buildings in the enclave that opens to two streets, the Calle de San Francisco (south) and Calle de la Luna (north). The 19<sup>th</sup> century two-story-high frontal arcade, the only one of its kind in the district, is an important part of the urban and architectural landscape of the Plaza de Armas. The loggia creates an intimate and fluid relationship between the interior of the building and the square. This arcaded portico provides a highly symbolic urban and architectural transparency that is very appropriate given the building's use as the "house of the city." Prior to this intervention, the Casa Alcaldía was an unassuming, albeit large, building. Historic drawings evidence it looked like a big, rambling house. With its two neighboring structures, the Real Intendencia and Diputación Provincial, the building forms a monumental group which includes three of the finest architectural examples in the historic district and the island. Presently, some former stately houses in Block 34, where the Casa Alcaldía is sited, are also used for municipal activities.

The Palacio de la Intendencia (also known as Real Intendencia and Real Hacienda) is located on the west of the Plaza de Armas on the site of a former military jail and barracks (Cuartel de Artillería de San Carlos or St Charles' Artillery Barracks). The elegant Neo-Cinquecento architectural masterpiece was erected to shelter the fiscal branch of the Crown, the *real Intendencia*, when the local *intendencia* (treasury) was created and put in charge of the island's fiscal and administrative matters during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although governors continued to be in charge of the political sphere, once the *Intendencia* was created they had less control of administrative governmental affairs, including the treasury that was supervised by an independent *intendente*. The symbolic presence of the state government in the Plaza de Armas is still carried out for it shelters the Puerto Rico's State Department. The architectural precedent of the building is the Italian High Renaissance *palazzo*, particularly the type created by Donato Bramante for the Palazzo Caprini (also known as House of Raphael), considered the prototype of the Roman *palazzo* type. Some of the Cinquecento's influences are evidenced in the: (i) use of a pseudo-rusticated base or podium; (ii) organization of the façade into two levels (independent of the number of floors) by means of a base that visually supports engaged pilasters that unite the upper floors; and (iii) introduction of the Colossal architectural orders, in this case Composite.

The third government building hovering over the Plaza de Armas sheltered the Diputación Provincial during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As mentioned, the edifice was erected on the site of the first cemetery of the city. After this locale was closed, a building was erected to shelter an asylum and also a market with a main façade that faced the Calle de San José. In 1849, an indoor market was built. The transformations made in 1873 placed the main entrance along the Calle de San Francisco aligned with a majestic staircase centrally located regarding the two interior patios of the E-shaped floor plan. Its closeness to the Plaza de Armas evidences the desire to associate the Crown's administration of the island with the heart of the urban core. The Casa Alcaldía de San Juan, Palacio de la Intendencia and Diputación Provincial form a government triad from which the Spanish Crown governed the city and the island until 1898. Their elegance and monumentality is a reflection of their

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role as visual icons of the Crown. The fact that they still serve similar uses adds an additional layer of historic and cultural relevance.

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, families and civic organizations – such as the Casino Español and Ateneo Puertorriqueño – rejected the historic role played by the Plaza de Armas as center of their urban world and abandoned the residences aligned along the southern border of the square that had been transformed to house these groups. The former domestic-cum-social locales were destroyed during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and three high-rise buildings were erected. Three large buildings were built on the south of the plaza. All are contributing buildings of the district. Two included the first department stores in the island, as well as office buildings, while the third one is a 1930s apartment building, a relatively new architectural typology at the time.

The historic and cultural relevance of the Plaza de Armas is multilayered. In the first place, the square serves as evidence of the development of the urban core after its move to the islet prior to the enactment of the *Laws of Indies*. It is an example of the experimentation and fine tunings early Hispanic-American settlements were subjected to in order to make them work efficiently. Because the district was founded before specific guidelines ruled the establishment of urban cores, its urban and architectural ideas possess great national and international relevance. The Plaza de Armas anchors around it varied architectural typologies, including: private houses and specialized government buildings. The structures present diverse architectural styles and aesthetic solutions, from 19<sup>th</sup> century Neo-Cinquecento and *Rundbogenstil* to modern ones inspired by the Chicago School and Mediterranean Revival. This rich and unique architectural inventory educates about the continuous transformations urban historic landscapes like the Viejo San Juan undergo with time. The square is an open book regarding the role played by public official buildings created by the Crown and early 20<sup>th</sup> century private ones.

### **Plaza de San José**

The Plaza de San José, originally known as Plazuela de Santo Domingo, is one of the oldest ones in the city and is located on part of Ponce de León's family original estate. Historic documentation evidences the family donated this portion of their land so that the Iglesia de San José, then known as the Iglesia de Santo Domingo, and the Convento de los Dominicos (also known as Convento de Santo Tomás de Aquino) could be constructed. While this complex sits on the north side of the square, the three other sides were framed by houses until the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Presently, two streets border the space: the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud to the west and the Calle de San Sebastián to the south. The small street to the east that appears in 20<sup>th</sup> century photographs has been incorporated to the plaza as a narrow walk. As mentioned, the bronze sculpture of Juan Ponce de León that adorns the space was originally located at the Plaza de Colón when this space was known as the Plaza de Santiago and is made of melted abandoned British 18<sup>th</sup> century cannons. It is a highly symbolic place for his image to reside given the fact that he was responsible for the settlement of Puerto Rico, original owner of the land upon which the square is built, and rested for centuries in the crypt of the church next to it. The role of this artifact as a commemorative object, sculptural anchor of the space, and generator of myths and legends grants it, as well as the plaza, a high level of cultural relevance.

The oldest structures surrounding this square are the convent, the church and the Casa de los Contrafuertes. The Convento de Santo Domingo was started during the early decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century by the order of the Padres Predicadores (Order of the Preachers). During the early stages of the Conquest, the Dominicans were entrusted with the colonization and conversion efforts of the continent. This complex served as the seat of the order in the Viejo San Juan and the island. The convent is organized around a large and elegant interior cortile or courtyard surrounded by two floors of arcaded loggias. It probably opened to the small atrium in front of the temple's principal façade. The church was part of the convent and connected to its interior. The present name, Iglesia de San José (St Joseph's Church), was given in 1858 when the structure was given to the



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Jesuits after the political turmoil experienced in Spain at this time that caused the appropriation of Church property by the government for some years. The simple yet noble structure is the second oldest temple in the Western Hemisphere, as well as the oldest Christian church in continuous use in Old San Juan, the island and the United States. It is also one of two structures in the nation example of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Decorated Gothic. For centuries, many visited the temple to adore the crucifix known as the Cristo de los Ponce de León (the Ponce de León Christ) believed to have miraculous powers.

The church had no formal atrium; the square on its side served this purpose. It is possible the plaza was also used as burial ground during the early days of the settlement. As is the case with urban artifacts that have been in use for almost five centuries, the Plaza de San José has been transformed a number of times since its creation during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when it was probably unpaved. Historic photographs do not evidence any greenery in the small space during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The last rehabilitation carried out during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, introduced some greenery to the space and several *guayacán* (soap bush)<sup>22</sup> trees that add a native touch while providing shadow to its users. The precious wood trees have blue and white flowers that add color to the sober space.

According to most historic sources, the building framing the plaza to the east, the so-called Casa de los Contrafuertes (House of the Buttresses), is the oldest house in the core which would also make it the oldest European constructed house in the island and the United States. After the city grew, most houses shared *medianeras* (walls shared by two neighbors, e.g. the partition that divides two row houses). The fact that the Casa de los Contrafuertes required buttresses for its structural stability is a reflection of its age and construction technique (*tapiaría*). During the early days of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, no urban standardization was in place and it is probable this domestic structure was constructed as an isolated artifact. It could have also been part of the convent complex transformed into a residence at a later time. The house to the north of the Casa de los Contrafuertes now shelters the Museo Casals, a center dedicated to the famous Catalan cellist Don Pau Casals. Its façade was recreated during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the dilapidated non-original Art Deco one was substituted. Both former domestic artifacts are owned by the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture and house museums. The activities generated by these two centers add to the liveliness of the square which is also surrounded by several well-known restaurants, including the *Patio de Sam*, one of the first eateries in the area after the Government of Puerto Rico declared the San Juan Historic Zone during the 1960s.

Originally, the plaza was framed by residences on its west side providing an urban buffer of sorts between the space and the institutional structures which were erected close to the Campo del Morro during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This tightly developed urban nucleus was destroyed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the US Army created a kind of empty "moat" between the US Army Fort Brooke Military Base and the urban core. As a result, four historic city blocks and approximately 46 buildings were destroyed.<sup>23</sup> During the festivities to commemorate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "discovery" of America and Puerto Rico, the urban "moat" was developed and a new square, the Plaza del Quinto Centenario (Plaza of the Fifth Centenary) and would-be-square, the Plaza del Soportal, as well as an underground parking garage, were constructed in this sector. In this manner, the urban lacuna which, by the 1990s, was already several decades old received this infill. This is the reason for the unusual situation, in terms of Spanish urban patterns, of having three squares (Plaza de San José, Plaza del Soportal and Plaza del Quinto Centenario) opening one unto the other. In spite of their sophistic arrangement and noncontributing status, the array empowers much activity and is particularly suitable for crafts exhibitions. The elimination of this part of the urban fabric has made possible for the plaza to visually

<sup>22</sup> The *guayacán* or soap bush tree is a native species of America and is almost extinct in the island. The word supposedly comes from the Taíno word *waiacan*. *Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española*, word: *guayacán*.

<sup>23</sup> The destroyed historic blocks, *parcelas* and buildings are depicted in the "Number 1 General Plan of San Juan," The Porto Rico Board of Fire Underwriters, 30 September 1921.

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connect to the several monumental structures of the area, particularly the 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuartel de Ballajá and the 18<sup>th</sup> century Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande.

The Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción El Grande was started during the 1770s, making it the oldest building used as a military hospital in the United States and one of the earliest examples of this architectural typology in the world. Originally planned as a convent-like structure that would shelter the poor, the 18<sup>th</sup> century architectural plans also include a large and elegant church never finished. Contemporary interpretation of the building's historic and cultural relevance ascribes importance to the fact that, precisely because it was never finished as intended, it is a unique example of an "incomplete" building, an open book which educates on the processes of creating edifices within the historic district.<sup>24</sup> After 1898, the structure became part of the Rodríguez Army Hospital and was connected to the Cuartel de Ballajá by means of a bridge that has been demolished. It served this function until the 1960s. The edifice presently houses the Escuela de Artes Plásticas and occupies half a block which is framed by the Calle de San Sebastián, Calle de la Beneficencia (also known as Calle del Dr Rafael Goenaga) and the Callejón del Hospital.

Before the hospital headquarters extended towards the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud, the first theater of the historic district stood to the east of this building. Described by Tapia y Rivera as a wooden structure, its placement followed Western tradition since it was located on the outskirts of the core. At the time, it was known as the *corral de comedias* (comedies open air theater). The venue disappeared when the grand Teatro Tapia was constructed in front of the Plaza de Colón. At that time, an extension service wing for the hospital with residences for the medical staff was constructed connecting with the hospital building. This interesting architectural development reflected the changing times and needs has been preserved. The Liga de Arte, an educational arts center, occupies the former hospital service area and the possible site of Tapia y Rivera's *corral de comedias*.

The Asilo de Beneficencia (also known as Casa de Beneficencia and Casa de la Beneficencia) is another monumental building in the periphery of the Plaza de San José. At the time of its construction during the 1840s it sheltered a hodgepodge of humanity: orphans, destitute old people, the insane, those accused of incest and also soldiers since, at that time, there were no formal barracks. During the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a second story was added. While the present building echoes Classical and Second Empire Baroque aesthetic ideas, the original one story building included Gothick architectural details, making it the only one of its kind in the district and the island. The building has an "E" floor plan and two three-sided courts which help organize the two genders sheltered under its roof. After 1898 and until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, the building was part of the US Army Fort Brooke Military Base. It presently serves as the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture headquarters.

The Cuartel de Infantería de Ballajá (Ballajá Infantry Barracks), constructed after 1854, is another monumental structure erected in the area close of the Plaza de San José and the Campo del Morro (Esplanade). Its principal façade faces the Asilo de Beneficencia and two of its sides are aligned with the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande (south) and Plaza del Quinto Centenario (east). The centralized building, which urban legends claim to be the largest one of its type in America, is organized around a huge cortile that evidences Italian Cinquecento influences, particularly from Donato Bramante and Sebastiano Serlio. As was the case with other monumental buildings within the district, the structure was designed by the Spanish Royal Corps of Engineers. Its anachronistic structural solutions include groin vaults and *azoteas de Cádiz*. The building is an educational artifact which demonstrates the royal engineers less than avant-garde approach to architectural design. After 1939, it was transformed into an annex of the US Army Rodríguez Army Hospital

<sup>24</sup> Arleen Pabón Charneco, *Una Promesa Inconclusa: Apuntes socio-arquitectónicos sobre el Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Oficina Estatal de Preservación Histórica, 1999).

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serving this function until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The edifice is associated to the Batallón del 65 de Infantería (65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion), a Puerto Rican US Army corps that fought splendidly if tragically during the Korean War.

The final building constructed in this area was the Manicomio (also known as Casa de Locos and Asilo de Locos; House of the Insane and Insane Asylum) erected during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Before its construction, the insane were kept at the Asilo de Beneficencia. Both buildings have an “E” floor plan, a scheme used to organize the two genders sheltered by the edifice and a favorite Neoclassical Spanish organizational scheme. The center wing has a magnificent centralized domed chapel and is framed by two three-sided open courts, one on each side. In the Manicomio, in direct opposition to the Asilo de Beneficencia and other examples, the patios open towards the front of the building which creates a disturbing lack of privacy, particularly taking into consideration its use. This arrangement can be considered one of extreme social and cultural relevance that adds an additional layer of historic significance. At the time, many lunatic asylums in Europe and the United States provided “shows” to the public. This reality explains the atypical organization and also how mental illnesses were perceived and treated at the time. The use of the Ionic architectural order in its tetrastyle temple front façade is another interesting architectural symbol, since the order has been considered since Classical times intimately related to the female gender. Used in this fashion, the architectural order refers to mental instability since, at the time, many believed women’s behavior was “irrational” and, therefore insane.<sup>25</sup> It is interesting to contrast the use of the architectural order in the Manicomio with its counterpart at the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro, a relatively short distance away. As befits a manly establishment, the San Felipe portal uses the masculine Tuscan order. The Manicomio was also a part of the US Army Fort Brooke Military Base until the 1960s. It now houses the Escuela de Bellas Artes, a government-sponsored fine arts university-level educational center.

To the east of the Plaza de San José is the Plaza del Mercado (also known as Plaza del Mercado or Plaza del Mercado Municipal; Market Plaza or Municipal Market Plaza), a monumental 19<sup>th</sup> century building erected to specifically house this use. A staple of Spanish large towns and cities, the architectural type was considered an Enlightenment-inspired modern urban addition. As mentioned, during the very early years of the urban core, market activities took place in the central square or *plaza pública*, whether the Plaza de la Catedral or the Plaza de Armas. The first known formal market structure of the enclave was erected during the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the northwest corner of the Plaza de Armas, where the cemetery had been located. When the Diputación Provincial building was constructed to substitute the market structure, the venue moved to this new building, at the time located in the outskirts of town facing the northern section of the *camino de ronda* (or pomerium). During the period, the area was informally platted and was inhabited by freed slaves, hence the “uncultured” (according to Tapia y Rivera) name of Culo Prieto. The building follows one of the two standard spatial architectural solutions favored in Old San Juan: four arcaded wings organized around a central courtyard. Old photographs evidence stalls were also located in the central space. An added layer of significance comes from the design of the building that connected to various parts of town by means of several doors. This effort evidences the designer’s interest in making the building accessible to all areas of the core.

While the Plaza de San José does not have the spiritual grandeur associated to the Plaza de la Catedral or the majesty of the Plaza de Armas, it is one of the oldest urban public spaces, appearing in every single historic map of the city. The locale marked the point where the orthogonal urban grid deconstructed as it originally intersected the Ponce de León’s family real estate holdings. The statue of Juan Ponce de León is the perfect symbol, as he gestures with his hand towards his land and, in a sense, his city. As mentioned, the square was flanked by city blocks on the west. The space and its surrounding structures evidence the transformation of

<sup>25</sup> The term “lunatic,” in both Spanish and English, derives from *luna* (moon), the heavenly body which supposedly caused irrational behavior, particularly in women.

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the district from a feudal nucleus controlled the descendants of Ponce de León and the Dominicans into a modern urban center. The monumental buildings within its orbit are examples of its historic, cultural and architectural development. Several of them are icons of the medical services the government provided to the "Others" during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Cuartel de Ballajá is a 19<sup>th</sup> century example of a military architectural typology, one in the unique inventory displayed throughout the district. It is no coincidence that it is the largest structure in the entire precinct for even as late as the 19<sup>th</sup> century military concerns were quite relevant for the development of the town. In addition to the role the Plaza de San José plays as an anchor to this arsenal of architectural typologies (hospital, insane asylum, military hospital, orphanage, military barracks, convent, market, church, and houses), around this urban vortex different architectural styles and aesthetic solutions developed, from late Decorated Gothic masonry rib vaulting (Iglesia de San José) to Neo-Cinquecento (Cuartel de Ballajá) interpretations. Some of these represent the sole historic examples of their kind preserved in the United States. The oldest post-European house in the city, island and the United States is also intimately related to this urban space.

### **Plaza de San Francisco and La Barandilla**

The Plaza de San Francisco (also known as Plaza de Salvador Brau) and its neighbor to the west, the public area known as La Barandilla, are both anchored by the Iglesia de San Francisco (St Francis Church) and, originally, by its annexed convent, the Convento de San Francisco (St. Francis Convent). In fact, until burials inside the city were prohibited during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is possible the plaza served as both atrium and cemetery. During that century, the convent became the Cuartel Militar de San Francisco (St Francis' Military Barracks). Destroyed during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the lot is now occupied by the Escuela Graduada y Técnica Ramón Baldorioty de Castro, one of the first American-funded public schools erected in the district and one of the finest examples of the Neo-Palladian or Neo-Cinquecento style erected in the island. The building houses a university, one of two such centers in the precinct.

Another transformation to the area occurred after the 1980s when the temple façade was liberated from the reinforced concrete building erected to shelter a parochial school and church services during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The church-plaza relationship was recuperated, albeit in a limited manner, given the fact that the original Baroque façade of the church was destroyed when the 20<sup>th</sup> century building was erected. Old photographs of this façade depict a unique belfry with elegant curved elements. The interior of the 18<sup>th</sup> century temple follows *sanjuanero* interpretation of High Renaissance-Early Baroque ideas in a manner similar to the Catedral de San Juan Bautista, the Iglesia de las Carmelitas Calzadas and the Iglesia de Santa Ana. The church has a crypt where burials took place until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its southern wall aligns with Calle de San Francisco while the east end faces the Callejón del Tamarindo (Tamarind Lane).

The Plaza de San Francisco opens to the so-called La Barandilla, a plaza-like area that during the 19<sup>th</sup> century sported a metal *barandilla* (handrail or railing) and curved steps that bridged the height difference between the Plaza de San Francisco and Calle de la Luna. In 1918, the Calle de la Tanca was extended north and the steps were covered with a paved road. Even when out of sight, its famed handrail lost, the place never lost its name and continued to be known as La Barandilla evidencing that the at the time innovative transformation of a section of the plaza into a promenade with the inclusion of decorative details in the manner of a metal railing and graceful curved steps profoundly impacted the collective memory. La Barandilla was to be lined with trees forming a short *allée* on axis with the Calle de la Tanca and the Puerta de España, located at the southern end of this street. The visual connection between the La Barandilla staircase and promenade and the Puerta de España created an axis that countered the fragmentation present in the orthogonal grid. In this manner, one street of the urban matrix was transformed by Second Empire Baroque aesthetic ideas into a major urban axis. La Barandilla is an example of the adaptation of the Viejo San Juan to 19<sup>th</sup> century urban concepts. The promenade-like area, albeit small in size, planted with trees framing a baroquely curved public staircase,

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evidences European Second Empire Baroque aesthetic influences. A few years ago, the original 19<sup>th</sup> century steps were recuperated, the street closed and La Barandilla replicated.

The Plaza de San Francisco and La Barandilla organize a unique area within the city that evidences the historic evolution of squares within Old San Juan, from atriums serving churches and convents, to promenade-like areas that followed 19<sup>th</sup> century European ideas, to streets, to informal spaces citizens can use for modern recreational activities. During the 1950s, television sets were placed here and a crowd of neighbors decorated the place every night. The connection of both squares to the Calle de San Francisco, the road which connects the Plaza de Colón to the Plaza de Armas, transforms the area into part of the processional route marked by the main entrance into the city. The unique urban typology of La Barandilla, planned as a green boulevard-cum-plaza, makes it the only such space within the interior of the defensive circuit. In addition, the creation of an axis connecting the La Barandilla to the Puerta de España was a 19<sup>th</sup> century example of the reinscription of the urban grid.

### Plaza de Colón

The Plaza de Colón was originally known as the Plaza de Santiago (St James' Plaza) and previously as the Campo de Santiago (St James' Camp) for military maneuvers used to take place in the space described by Tapia y Rivera as a *descampado* (empty area) as late as the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The name of the square was changed when the white marble statue of Christopher Columbus was erected during the 1890s. The area was intimately related to the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra military defenses, the main entrance from the land into the city. It coalesced with the interior security perimeter and also with the entrance defense organization. This important urban space has served as the historic and contemporary urban vestibule into the city since the wall circuit was erected. Tapia y Rivera mentioned it was nicknamed both "El Prado" (in honor of the famed Madrid promenade) and "Plaza de Penélope" (of Homer's *Odyssey* fame) due to its many transformations:

*La plaza de Santiago . . . era un descampado que la presencia de aquel edificio [the Teatro Tapia] obligó a mejorar. Cercóse con asiento de granito cubierto de hermosos almendros y pavimentado su centro de hormigón. Así la conocí yo y presencié, niño aún, la gran concurrencia de máscaras de todas las clases sociales iban en busca de solaz, al son de la banda militar situada en el centro, todos los domingos por la tarde desde San Juan hasta Santa Rosa. Entonces, y por esta reunión carnalavesca, apellidábase aquel sitio El Prado, como remedo, aunque distante, del famoso de Madrid.*

*Aquella plaza ha sido llamada de Penélope, por las muchas variaciones que ha sufrido.*

*Los árboles fueron vandálicamente cortados, so pretexto de las hormigas, y desaparecieron los asientos, sustituyéndose todo con una especie de panteón, volviendo a ser la plaza pasto de cabras, hasta que al fin, tras de nuevos cambios, ha venido a ser lo que es hoy; un lugar alumbrado y con asientos, bien pavimentado y en vía de volver a tener aquel arbolado que aún no ha logrado reponerse.<sup>26</sup>*

The Plaza de Colón was always framed by residences along its north and west sides. To the east and south the space was informally contained by the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra and the fortification curtain

<sup>26</sup> Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo dejo*, pp 90-91. Translation into English: "The Plaza de Santiago was an empty space that the construction of the Teatro Tapia forced [the authorities] to renovate. It was fenced with granite and covered with beautiful almond trees and concrete pavement. This is how I knew the space when I watched as a child the presence of all social classes which visited the square for their enjoyment accompanied by the military band [which played] from its center all Sunday afternoons from [the feast of] St John until St Rose. Because of its carnival-like ambiance it was also known as El Prado, as a reminder – albeit quite different – of the famous promenade in Madrid." "It was also called Penelope's Plaza due to the many reforms it has undergone." "[At a later date], the trees were cut, using as a pretext the ants, the seats disappeared, and everything was substituted with a pantheon-like [structure]. One more time, the plaza became pasture for goats until finally, after some more changes, it is what it is now: an illuminated space with seats, well paved and on its way to recuperate some of its greenery."

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wall. Presently, the square is flanked by the Calle de San Francisco on the north and the Calle de la Fortaleza and Teatro Tapia on the south. Its eastern boundary is formed by the Paseo de Colón and the former Casino de Puerto Rico and to the west by the Calle de O'Donnell. As is the case with most of the district's plazas, this containment of the square by roads circling around them was not the original configuration but the result of centuries-old adaptations to make these spaces work providing its users some protection from the traffic (whether horse, carriages or cars).<sup>27</sup>

The Teatro Tapia was the first formal venue of its kind in the district. Although transformations, such as the creation of a new main entrance facing a side street rather than the Calle de la Fortaleza, have taken place in order to make possible its contemporary use, most of the character-defining features have been preserved. The building is contributing on the basis of Criterion Consideration E.

The small triangular-shaped 20<sup>th</sup> century square behind the theater is known as the Plaza de Arturo Somohano and it preserves a section of the original defensive interior circuit (pomoerium). The open space honors musical composer Somohano who directed the San Juan Philharmonic Orchestra for many years. In front of the Plaza de Arturo Somohano is the early 20<sup>th</sup> century building which housed the Baños Públicos (Public Baths). The small jewel-like building depicts Second Empire Baroque influences, as well as City Beautiful ideals. The petite edifice sits on top of the remains of the defensive wall. Another part of the pomoerium is now preserved as a small garden located on the west side of this building.

To the east of the Plaza de Colón is the early 20<sup>th</sup> century private club known as the Casino de Puerto Rico, presently owned by the Puerto Rico Department of State. Its bombastic Second Empire Baroque elegance provides the perfect counterpart as permanent architectural decoration and foyer of the precinct. In front of the old Casino de Puerto Rico is the Escuela José Julián Acosta (José Julián Acosta School), the first school built by the Americans shortly after 1898. The Baños Públicos, Casino de Puerto Rico and Escuela José Julián Acosta belong to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century development plan for the sector where the fourth line of defense, including the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra, originally stood. These buildings depict varied aesthetic influences that add elegance to the entrance (Avenida Muñoz Rivera) and exit (Avenida Ponce de León) corridors of Old San Juan. The Casino de Puerto Rico is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Plaza de Armas has represented the political and civic spheres while the Plaza de la Catedral is iconic of spiritual one. The Plaza de Colón, once a symbol of the power of the San Juan military plaza that, for more than four centuries, defined the personality of the historic district, was transformed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century into the elegant urban vestibule to the city.

In addition to the historic plazas, the Viejo San Juan includes several other special public areas, such as gardens, promenades and parks. Notice needs to be taken that these are modern interpretations of certain historic sites. They are relevant for they evidence the transformations needed to shelter new ways of life that guarantee the adaptation of the historic district to modern living and as stage for contemporary activities.

### Jardín de Casa Blanca

Two blocks west from the Plaza de San José and one block west from the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande, stands the Casa-Torre de Ponce de León (also known as Casa Blanca or White House), the *Adelantado's* family tower-house surrounded by the Jardín de Casa Blanca (White House Garden). The landscaped area was originally part of the limestone quarry that anchored a small residential

<sup>27</sup> This reality is underscored in historic documents where structures are described as being *en la plaza* (in the plaza) as opposed to *frente a la plaza* (in front of the plaza). Arleen Pabón de Rocafort, *Dorado: Un estudio en contrastes* (Municipio de Dorado: Dorado, Puerto Rico, 1996).

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area south of Casa Blanca known as *La Cantero* (The Quarry). The long Arab-inspired shallow pool of water, surrounded by tropical greenery, provides the perfect place to rest and to enjoy this unique intersection of nature and culture.

The name Casa Blanca was given because of the stuccoed exterior in this color. Built as the residence of the Ponce de Leóns after the move from Caparra, the estate was inherited after Ponce's death (1521) by his son Luis, a minor. Juan García y Troche, Juana<sup>28</sup> Ponce de León's husband, constructed a wooden house that burned down some years later. In 1523, the masonry construction began in earnest. When completed it became Old San Juan's first stone fort house. As was the case with the one built in Caparra, the building's architecture and décor eloquently established the relevance of the family living under its roof and the concern felt for security. In 1779, the family sold the structure to the Spanish government and, from that moment on, it was used as living quarters for the Real Cuerpo de Ingenieros (Royal Corps of Engineers). After 1898, the property was annexed to the US Army Fort Brooke Military Base and used as the residence of the post commanding officer until the 1950s when the complex became the property of the Government of Puerto Rico. For some years, it housed the Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y del Caribe, the first 20<sup>th</sup> century university level institution in the district, as well as the first formal Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office. The *torre* proper also served as a museum dedicated to Ponce de León managed by the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture.

While the other tower-house built in the islet, the Fortaleza de Santa Catalina, is now part of the Palacio de Santa Catalina, the one built for the Ponce de León family still allows for a complete understanding of this European medieval architectural typology. Defensive elements such as merlons or crenellations were traditionally incorporated to its design, as well as limited openings on the exterior walls. Casa Blanca's locale, on top of a hill, underscored its defensive capabilities. Since the surroundings have been preserved, the spirit of place of this unique site still brings to mind the feats of the early settlers in the islet. Considered historic by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the building and its context has been preserved in almost pristine manner.

### **Jardín de La Fortaleza**

In addition to the Jardín de Casa Blanca, the sunken garden at the Palacio de Santa Catalina is another historic landscape that has been preserved. Its medieval inspiration is evidenced by the hollowed garden area protected from the sea breezes characteristic at such an elevated height. The unique garden is part of the larger landscape area that surrounds the executive mansion. It is quite probable that the original design idea with its oval arrangement stems from 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape concepts.

### **Puerta de San Juan**

None of the above-mentioned spaces were formally considered public gardens throughout the history of the city even though they may have acted as such during some periods because they were open locales. During certain periods space was at a premium within the constricted interior of the walled precinct. The area close to the Plaza de la Puerta de San Juan was one of the few sectors where citizens could plant, once the city occupied the area defined by the fortification wall perimeter. The present small square preserves the memory of this unique spot.

The defensive belt of a fortified town was only pierced by monumental urban doors which established the boundary between the sacred (the interior of the precinct) and the profane (the outside world). The Puerta de San Juan (St John's Door) was the district's most important portal into the outside world. Its significance is underscored by its name that honors the patron saint of both the city and the island. Since Tapia y Rivera

<sup>28</sup> Juana was Ponce de León's eldest daughter. Her marriage to García y Troche was one of the very first to be celebrated in the ciudad del puerto Rico after the move to the islet.

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mentioned that the *fondeadero* was still in use as a port during the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the door served hundreds arriving and departing the city. According to some historic sources, a small chapel was located in the vicinity in order to impress the relevance of the fact that visitors were either departing into the unknown or arriving after months of perilous journey. The closed arched opening on the east side that has been preserved was probably a niche for a sculpture. It is relevant to note that there is a spring in the area (to the southwest of the present Puerta, outside the precinct) marked with a historic terracotta plaque dated to the reign of Felipe III. During the tenure of governor Capitán General Sancho Ochoa de Castro, from 1602 to 1608, the water source underwent rehabilitation work and the marker was put in place.

During the 1980s, a small plaza was created in the interior side of the wall south of the Puerta de San Juan. The square is anchored by a fountain made with a metal *caldera* (boiler, cauldron) found in the *tren jamaicano* (Jamaican train) of an old sugar mill in the island. The Paseo de la Puerta de San Juan and the Paseo del Morro start on its exterior side where a little plaza-like area faces a garite, the *fondeadero*, and the dungeons cut into the defensive wall. The area is also adorned by a bronze bust of Queen Isabel de Trastámara (Isabel La Católica who belonged to the Trastámara lineage). On the interior of the precinct, the area to the north is profusely landscaped, a mnemonic device the underscores the area's historic character as a pomarium-cum-planting area.

To the south of the Puerta de San Juan is the Palacio de Santa Catalina, home of the governor of Puerto Rico and his/her family and also the workplace of the first executive of the island. As mentioned, the complex originated with the construction of a *casa-fuerte* or *casa-torre*. When it became obvious the structure could not provide adequate defense, it became the residence of the Spanish governors. "La Fortaleza," as the palace is commonly known, is the oldest such residence in the Western Hemisphere. The two towers with crenellations that frame a defensive curtain wall are part of the *casa-fuerte*. One of the towers still had a solar clock while the other one is known as the Torre del Homenaje (Homage Tower). During the mandate of Rafael de Arestegui y Vélez, Conde de Miraflores, who served as governor from 1844 to 1847, a palatial wing was added facing the Calle de la Fortaleza. The elegant façade emulates the Italian Cinquecento *palazzo* solution also present in the Real Intendencia. A pseudo-rusticated podium organizes the base of the façade which sports Colossal Composite engaged pilasters. The principal floor (*piano nobile*) is emphasized by means of an iron balcony running the entire width of the façade in the manner of a tribune. The stately palace is organized around an open courtyard the western portion of which is formed by the two 16<sup>th</sup> century towers and curtain wall of the original fortress. The Palacio de Santa Catalina is listed in the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1983.

To the north of the Puerta de San Juan, is the Plaza de la Rogativa (Processional Prayer Plaza), a small 20<sup>th</sup> century plaza with a dizzyingly beautiful view. The open space was created during the 1960s in front of the defensive wall, where the Bastión de San Agustín is located. The irregular configuration of the bastion was ingeniously organized around the modern bronze sculpture of La Rogativa. The work of Lindsay Daen is a mnemonic device of the 1797 special processional prayer the *sanjuaneras* organized in to deliver the city from the British siege while their men fought the enemy. Led by the bishop, it is said the attackers assumed that the lights and chanting implied many more were available to defend the city. North of the Plaza de la Rogativa is a preserved sliver of the original *paseo de ronda* (pomarium). The modern Plaza de la Puerta de San Juan and Plaza de la Rogativa, as well as the Paseo de la Puerta de San Juan and the Paseo del Morro, allow pedestrians to enjoy the beautiful seascape formed by San Juan Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. The Caleta de San Juan also invites pedestrians for it is the only thoroughfare in the district that has a green canopy.

The area surrounding the Puerta de San Juan is culturally significant because, in addition to being one of three historic urban portals/doors preserved, for centuries it served as the main entrance/exit portal into the city from the sea. The earliest roads of the historic district, that connected the port to the first town center in front of the



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cathedral, initiated here. It is a preserved example of unique urban typologies: entrance portal to a walled city, defensive interior circuit or *paseo de ronda* (pomoerium), votive chapel/niche, and public spring. The fact that it is documented that this area was used for public farming adds another layer of significance. The sector's morphology is also of relevance for it defies the orthogonal grid arrangement used in the rest of the core.

Several areas within the historic district are presently considered public parks evidencing the urban development of the core. They are the: Parque de las Palomas (Pigeons' Park), Parque del Morro, Parque de Beneficencia (Asylum Park) and Jardín Paseo de Ballajá (Ballajá Garden Promenade).

### **Parque de las Palomas**

The Parque de las Palomas (Pigeons' Park) preserves part of the *camino de ronda* (pomoerium) inside the walled perimeter. It is framed by the Real Audiencia building on the west and the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud and Capilla del Santo Cristo de la Salud on the east. The park is bounded by the fifty feet plus high defensive southern wall on its southern side. The height allows for exceptional views of the defensive wall, La Puntilla, bay and the island of Puerto Rico.

### **Parque del Morro**

Historically known as the Campo del Morro and also as the Esplanade, the Parque del Morro stands where the Spanish military practice ground was located. During the time the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro was known as the US Army Fort Brooke Military Base, a golf course was installed in this hilly site that enjoys glorious views of the Atlantic Ocean, the entrance to San Juan Bay and the diminutive Isla de Cabras on the other side of the second body of water. At the present time, the US National Park Service presents the Esplanade empty of vegetation, as per its original historic military use although, until the 1990s, groups of pine trees covered the area. It is considered the classic place to fly kites due to its uninterrupted expanse. As a result, the famed *Festival de las Chiringas* (Kite's Festival) is sponsored by the federal agency every year.

### **Extramuros (Outside the walls)**

Once the fortification walls of the Viejo San Juan were erected, the outside of the city was considered no man's land. As the core developed, it started to embrace these sectors. By this time the principal port area was located south of the enclave, close to La Puntilla de San Lázaro. A service area to load and unload the ships was created known as the Dársena (Dock) surrounded by the schooners and the boats wharfs. As mentioned the Puerta de España was constructed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century to connect, in conjunction with the Puerta de San Justo, the interior precinct with this port area facilitating communication between the two.

It was also at this time that streets were laid to the west of the Dársena using an orthogonal grid of approximately ten blocks to create the loosely known Barrio de la Marina or Barrio de la Puntilla. An important transformation suffered by La Puntilla after 1898, was the establishment of a base of the US Coast Guard at the southernmost end of the point. While the Army and Coast Guard established themselves within the district and its southern service area, the US Navy used Puerta de Tierra for these purposes.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century configuration of the barrio was organized in the following fashion. The Calle del Presidio, ran from north to south meeting at a right angle with the Paseo de la Princesa directly in front of the façade center of the Presidio de la Princesa. At an angle of approximately 45 degrees the following roads connected these two thoroughfares: Calle Nueva (New Street), Calle de Isabel II (Isabel II Street), Calle del Depósito (Deposit Street). At a right angle, the following crossed these roads: Calle de Cuartelillos (Small Barracks Street), Calle del General Gamba (General Gamba Street), Calle de la Infanta Luisa (Infanta Luisa Street), and the Calle del Arsenal (Arsenal Street) which turned at a right angle when it crossed Calle de Isabel II and formed a triangle with the Calle de la Puntilla (La Puntilla Street) and Calle de Toribio (Toribio Street). La Puntilla grid organized

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varied structures, particularly those of a commercial nature, including *almacenes* (warehouses), stores, and varied *tinglados* (sheds). As mentioned, a large open parking and a 1960s residential development presently occupy the area of the 19<sup>th</sup> century barrio.

Government services were also located in the sector. The Presidio de la Princesa (also known as Cárcel de la Princesa or Princess' Jail) was erected during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although prison services had been moved to this location from the Plaza de Armas as early as 1837. While destined to house criminals, its elegant Second Empire Baroque lines and novel (for the time) individual cell organization spoke silently and volubly about civilized behavior. The structure houses the Compañía de Turismo de Puerto Rico, although it was used for more than a century as a jail. During the turn of the century, a wooden shed in the back patio of the jail housed the lepers.

The Paseo de la Princesa (Princess Promenade), described in historic documents as an *alameda* (a promenade lined with *álamos*<sup>29</sup> or poplars), was created in the year 1853. One of its landscape features (per historic plans) was a terraced parterre with the name "Ysabel II" formed with greenery. This second *paseo* (promenade) of the precinct was located outside yet close to the walled precinct while the first one, known as the Paseo de Puerta de Tierra, was situated within the sector of the San Juan Islet that bears that name. As mentioned, both promenades, in union with La Barandilla, were examples of 19<sup>th</sup> century ideas, influenced by Paris, Madrid and Barcelona urban transformations. For the *sanjuaneros*, who lived inside a tight perimeter of high walls, tree-lined avenues were a novelty. While the Paseo de Puerta de Tierra does not exist, the layout of the Paseo de la Princesa has been replicated connecting La Puntilla to the Puerta de San Juan (Extensión del Paseo de la Princesa or Extension of the Princess Promenade) and the Paseo del Morro, allowing the visitor to walk outside the perimeter of defensive walls for almost half a mile. A huge fountain marks the intersection of the Paseo with the first of these two promenades. In addition to it being an example of 19<sup>th</sup> century urban ideas, promenades were symbols of the growing and expanding role of women at the time. These urban artifacts, as was also the case of boulevards, provided outdoor spaces where the previously rigidly controlled gender could spend time, albeit under the watchful eye of many, exercising while walking in a less restrained area than the traditional squares. The fact that the jail was considered an interesting place to walk by is also a reflection of 19<sup>th</sup> century ideas. It is a fact that in some countries citizens could watch from the outside some of the daily rituals that took place inside of these centers.

The Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla (Marine Arsenal of la Puntilla) complex was erected in the Barrio de la Marina, between the water and the Calle de la Puntilla. Its informal organizational élan belied the fact that it was considered key in terms of the defense of the city. An arsenal stood on this site for decades prior to the construction of the present structures. In fact, the first mention of a defense-related structure at the site was made in 1797 when the English attacked. With time, this shack made of wood and *yagüas* (palm leaves) was replaced. The first masonry building of the group was finished in 1800 while others were erected later. The principal use of the complex was to protect armaments and materials needed in the defense of the city, particularly its port and bay. Other related services (like residences for certain officers) were also provided by the group of buildings. Stylistically, various aesthetic influences are present from the Classical and Renaissance revivals to Second Empire Baroque and Neo-Arab. The compound includes a centralized chapel crowned by an elegant dome that sits behind a crisp tetrastyle Classically-inspired temple front façade. The exquisite entrance portal depicts the symbols of the zodiac, an iconographical and decorative treatment that would have been unthinkable before 1812. A possible veiled attempt to equate Spanish military dominance with the universal laws of the cosmos, the use of non-Christian iconography is probably symbolic of the anti-clerical stance taken by many, particularly after the enactment of the *Constitución de 1812* (1812 Spanish

<sup>29</sup> In Spain, poplars are associated to memory and to life's progression, as well as to roads in the manner described by the famous song *Cómo el álamo al camino*.

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Constitution). The uncharacteristic décor is a product of the more liberal society which was trying to take a hold in Spain during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Framing the Dársena on the west is the strikingly pink US Federal Customs building, known as the Aduana Federal, a magnificent example of 20<sup>th</sup> century Mediterranean Revival aesthetics. The edifice with its distinctive flamingo-colored walls and glazed terracotta detailing that includes eagles and cartouches with the stars and stripes watches over port activity. It is possible the present building was built on the site of an existing humbler one built by the Spaniards that can be seen in some historic photographs. Even older was its use as site for the pen where slaves were kept as part of the infamous trade.

The structure housing the Edificio de Correo y Corte Federal was built in two stages. The lower part housed the first expressly built building for the US Postal Service in the island and was erected during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century introducing a different Mediterranean Revival interpretation to the core. A few years later, an Art Deco addition was annexed to the southern side to house the federal tribunal. In terms of height and construction technique the addition can be considered a small skyscraper. Both functions still take place within the building, a contributing property of the district.

In the same Art Deco style of the Federal Court annex another skyscraper was constructed during the 1930s close to where the Puerta de San Justo was located to house the Banco Popular (Popular Bank), a local financial institution. It is interesting to note that the “pagan” theme of the Spanish Arsenal portal was replicated on the bank façade facing the Spanish building and the port where varied Greco-Roman mythological figures are depicted in concrete bas-reliefs.

In addition to the public schools erected by the American government, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century office buildings huddling around this sector of town were the last buildings to be built within the original walled precinct. They represent the new government (schools, postal service and courts), as well as 20<sup>th</sup> century social and financial institutions. Life dramatically changed after 1898 yet the enclave still represented the center of power and culture for the whole island. It is highly symbolic that the first two modern newspapers (*El Mundo* and *El Imparcial*) had their central offices in the district, as scores of 19<sup>th</sup> century ones had done previously. The building that housed *El Mundo*, one of the first founded in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is on the northern corner of the Calle de San José and Calle de Tetuán intersection, a few blocks south of the Calle de la Fortaleza. The 1923 building used the Neo-Arab architectural style.

The Paseo de Gilberto Concepción de Gracia and the Plaza de de [*sic*] Hostos are 20<sup>th</sup> century additions to the area. The Paseo is aligned close to the port area and unites the different piers while the Plaza de de Hostos marks the location of the Puerta de San Justo, the original entrance into the city from the bay and the port. The Paseo is outside the historic district boundaries.

## Domestic Architecture

In spite of the dozens of public architectural examples and the mammoth military defenses, the house is the most common typology of the district.<sup>30</sup> Table 9 lists the approximate number of houses per block, as well as the contributing and non-contributing buildings.

<sup>30</sup> Presently, there are only two empty *parcelas* in the historic district; they both had residences in them prior to their destruction. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century three floors building located in the corner of the Calle de Norzagaray and Callejón de la Tanca (Parcela 12, Block 8) was demolished some years ago for it was on the verge of falling down. The *parcela* facing the Calle de San Francisco (Parcela 22, Block 42) is now a neighbors' park.

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**TABLE 9  
 NUMBER OF BUILDINGS, HOUSES AND NONCONTRIBUTING HOUSES PER BLOCK**

Block number	Number of buildings per block	Estimated number of houses per block originally built as houses	Number of non-contributing houses per block
1	1	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	14	12	0
4	1	0	0
5	4	4	1
6	18	18	0
7	28	27	4
8	9 + 1 empty lot	9	4
9	1	0	0
10	17	17	5
11	Cemetery		
12	0	0	0
13	1	0	0
14	9	9	1
15	23	21	1
16	5	0	0
17	22	21	0
18	18	18	0
19	22	22	2
20	35	34	1
21	2	1	1
22	34	34	5
23	1	0	0
24	19	19	1
25	18	18	4
26	19	19	0
27	34	34	3
28	23	23	3
29	16	16	8
30	11	11	5
31	12	12	1
32	0	0	0
33	4	1	1
34	16	15	2
35	14	13	2
36	26	26	5

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37	3	1	0
38	17	17	2
39	24	24	5
40	26	26	1
41	9	4	0
42	21 + 1 empty lot	20	4
43	17	15	1
44	0	0	0
45	3	1	0
46	14	13	3
47	24	24	5
48	20	19	4
49	25	25	3
50	0	0	0
52	14	14	0
53	14	13	0
54	18	13	2
55	20	18	2
56	25	23	2
57	17	16	2
58	1	0	0
60	1	0	0
61	2	1	0
62	3	1	0
63	1	0	0
64	9	6	0
65	17	16	3
66	0	0	0
68	1	0	0
71	0	0	0
76	1	1	0
85	1	0	0
88	1	1	0
94	1	0	0
96	1	0	0
101	1	0	0
172	4	4	0
173	1	0	0
613	1	0	0
No Block, No Parcela (Capilla del Cristo)	1	-	-
No Block, No Parcela (Plaza de Carrión)	0	-	-
No Block,	0	-	-

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No Parcela (Plaza de de Hostos)			
<b>No Block,</b> No Parcela (Las Terrazas del Recinto Sur)	0	-	-

The “Number of Houses per Block” section tallies the **estimated** number of buildings in each block built originally to serve as houses. Several aspects need to be clarified in order to understand this table. First, the uses of the buildings have changed with time. As a result, some houses now shelter other functions, such as stores or restaurants. Second, many houses roofed commercial ventures, in addition to serving as homes. This is still the case to this day regarding many examples. Third, many more houses existed within the Old San Juan Historic District than the number presented in Table 9. In addition to all the dozens razed by the US Army in the Barrio de Ballajá during the 1930s-1940s, others may have been destroyed and occupied by 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings. One such example is Block 63.

Houses in the Old San Juan have a unique spatial organization reflective of the narrow, long lots most occupy. Presently, they all share walls and are perceived as row houses for there are no side patios. Extensive back yards of any kind are also missing although this was not the always the case. It is known that before the urban core fully developed many houses sported *patios* (yards), *corrales* (animal pens) and even *traspacios* (further enlargement of the yards or patios). Except for a handful along the Calle del Sol that have slivers of front yards, the result of reinscriptions of the urban grid, all exterior patios and yards are gone. All residences align side by side to form the street façades that include a thin sidewalk on each side of the relatively narrow streets (20 to 25 feet in width). The width of façades varies; houses have from one to five openings. There is a handful of extremely narrow ones that sport only one opening with façades that do not exceed ten feet in width (e.g. Parcela 10B, Block 52). It is probable these units were created from existing empty spaces between houses. Most homes are either one or two stories high, although there are some that have three floors and some that are higher. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, apartment houses were erected interspersed with the rest of the domestic artifacts.

The first floor apertures open directly to the sidewalk, although some sport balconettes limiting the entrance to just one, usually the central one. Openings are invariably protected by doors that work in tandem with louvered sets in front of them. While the first levels always exhibit balconettes, balconies are quite common in the upper floors. A wide variety of these elements exist: from covered and uncovered wooden ones to many that have metal balustrades and accoutrements. This material came into fashion during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was also used in very narrow columns that support some of the balconies’ roofs. Metal consoles and bars were also introduced at times to strengthen the cantilevered structure. Since balconies rest on beams ends embedded on one side in walls that lack cohesion due to their construction technique and materials, the older the balcony the narrower it is. During the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, concrete was used for balconies and there are also examples that include concrete balustrades.

Domestic architecture follows the general stylistic periods found in public architecture, although dates vary. Most city blocks sheltered residential use and the oldest houses are found along the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud, around the Plaza de la Catedral and Plaza de Armas, as well as along Calle de San José. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there seems to have been no area that was preferred above the others. As a result, palatial 18<sup>th</sup> century houses are found in the Calle de San José and 19<sup>th</sup> century ones in the Calle de Tetuán.

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The house of the Conquest Period (1519-1700) was organized in an introverted manner sporting few balconies treated with balconettes. A *cuarto esquintero* (corner room) that may have Moorish precedents was usually also included. *Tapiería* construction was favored with wooden or flat roofs. During the Baroque Period (1700-1812) two vernacular floor plans evolved. Both types located the interior patio close to one of the *medianeras* (neighbors' shared wall). During the Historicist and Enlightenment Period (1812-1898) architectural revivals emphasized the elegance of the façade and its systematic organization and characterize the third domestic architecture period (1812-1898). This interest in architectural revivals continued uninterrupted during the fourth period, the Post 1898 Historicist Period (1898-1930) when the Modern Period (1900-1939) also developed in parallel manner.

Aesthetically, there is a collusion that forms a unique tapestry. Traditional composition, known since the early days of the city as the *usanza española* (Spanish architectural way), characterized by sober facades with openings that may or may not have encadrements and wooden balustrades to protect them, abound in the district. Although the word "Colonial" is used at times to describe these sober facades, they can be considered popular and universal architecture expressions. Other façades have varying decoration influenced by myriad architectural styles, such as: Neoclassicism, Neo-Cinquecento, Second Empire Baroque (in all its expressions), Mediterranean Revival, Art Deco and Neo-Mesopotamian. As mentioned, decoration increased during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Examples of the architectural orders, Second Empire Baroque pavilions, floral gesso decorative motifs, and curved finials vie for urban drama. In many cases, fancy metal balustrades add to the richness of the composition. Two historic treatments used to further empower decoration were pseudo-rustication and exposed bricks finishes. Although the two examples using exposed brick have been painted over, others still evidence the pseudo-rustication treatment. Since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, facades have been painted in pastel hues while encadrements were usually colored in white.

Parapets usually finish the composition and also play a structural role in the *azotea de Cádiz* structure used in the vast majority of the roof structures. The historic district evidences a strong preference for straight lintels although, in many cases, straight arches were used to achieve this. Throughout its history and in spite of the dozens of straight lintels, the district made ample use of the arcuated structural system. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, semicircular arches were also incorporated to many façade arrangements.

As mentioned, a development that took place during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was the conversion of many single family residences into tenement houses, a response to the overpopulation that impacted the city during the period. Another was the introduction of the apartment building architectural typology. It was also at this time that many well-to-do families abandoned the urban core in favor of the nearby suburbs of Miramar and Condado. With the declaration of the Zona Histórica de San Juan by the Junta de Planificación de Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico Planning Board) during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, many residences have been rehabilitated.

While a vast proportion of the domestic buildings have historic integrity, there is a very small group that does not. Both Block 8 and Block 10 sport an unusually high number of properties in a bad state of disrepair. Block 10 has five noncontributing properties out of a total of 17. In Block 8, out of a total of nine properties, five are noncontributing. The situation of Block 29 is bit different. Out of 16 properties, eight are noncontributing, which means that 50% of the number of lots has been adversely impacted.

### Military Architecture

It is highly probable that the high cliffs of the islet facing the Atlantic Ocean and the constricted entrance into the *puerto Rico*, the commodious bay, may have led some early settlers to believe there was only a need for a limited number of defenses. If this was the case, the 1528 French attack, the first of many, proved them

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wrong. In order to manage external aggression Old San Juan transformed from a placid settlement dedicated to gold mining activities to a powerful military machine capable of defending the city and island, as well as the Spanish Empire in America. The first structures built were the *casa-fuerte* or *casa-torre* known as the Fortaleza de Santa Catalina, isolated bastion-like defenses along the northern cliffs and a small fort on top of the *morro* (rocky outcrop) at the mouth of the bay. Time proved they were still not enough. As a result, by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a complex and mammoth system was in place that arrogantly invoked saints galore against the rest of the world. This amazing amalgam of defensive artifacts is the result of four centuries of layers of defensive ideas and master plans.

The district starts approximately on the north side of the Capitol of Puerto Rico. A parade of defenses known as the outworks is organized from that point until the area where the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra was located. The outworks artifacts are, from east to west and north to south the: Fuerte de la Princesa (Princess Fort), Fuerte del Abanico (Fan Fort), Contraguadía de la Trinidad (Trinity Counterguard), Revellín de San Carlos (St Charles Ravelin) and Batería de Santa Teresa (St Theresa Battery). After all these components, the scarp wall of the original moat is encountered, all that remains from the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra, a fierce defensive artifact that served as land urban portal that included, in turn, several military components. The only land urban door into the city until the 1890s, it was dedicated to Santiago, Spain's patron saint.<sup>31</sup> This formidable artifact silently yelled the invocation not with words but by means of its formidable size and accompanying structures. Its destruction in 1897 was countered by a sound argument: opening the cramped city in order to create a healthier environment. According to Tapia y Rivera, demolishing the massive structure was a most difficult undertaking. *No fue tarea fácil demoler una estructura que frente a la plaza de Colón tenía más de veinte varas de ancho, rellenar los fosos y contrafosos y hacer desaparecer la enorme masa del revellín de Santiago, de los baluartes y cortinas ya mencionados.*<sup>32</sup> Since a *vara* (pole or rod) measures 83.52 centimeters, if Tapia y Rivera was right, the wall close to the Puerta de Santiago (in front of the Plaza de Colón) measured approximately 54 feet and 10 inches in width. Given the fact that all the other artifacts from the easternmost corner of the Old San Juan defenses to the place where the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra was located are still in place, the sense of place as one "enters" the precinct created by this majestic inventory is quite impressive.

The Puerta de Tierra/Puerta de Santiago connected to the Castillo de San Cristóbal. The main entrance to this fortress is presently via the upper portion of the Calle de Norzagaray. A wide ramp leads to the plaza level, some 30 feet above the street. The plaza is entered via an elegant portal with wooden doors. Since the terrain at this point is almost 40 feet above sea level, the plaza has a commanding position with exquisite views of the city and the bay. A chapel dedicated to Santa Bárbara is also located here. Military exercises took place in this open patio that also served as spatial connector. In fact, a 19<sup>th</sup> century engraving depicts the area as a promenade of sorts used by both the military and elegant couples wishing to enjoy the sea breezes and magnificent views. The fortress is packed with *casamatas* (casemates) from which to shoot cannon balls at enemy ships, *troneras* (machicolations), dungeons, barracks, service tunnels and assorted artifacts. The highest point of this spectacular fortress is the Plataforma del Caballero (Gentleman's Platform) which rises 100 feet above sea level. The outworks, Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra and Castillo de San Cristóbal were considered part of the third line of defense of the islet and the city by land.

Along the Calle de Norzagaray and northern cliffs of the islet, six *baluartes* or *bastiones* (bastions) unite the Castillo de San Cristóbal to the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro. Each one has garites and defensive

<sup>31</sup> Spain's battle cry since the Middle Ages, ¡Santiago!, has been invoked when fighting Moors, Aztecs, Incas, as well as assorted American natives, British, French, Dutch, Americans, among many others.

<sup>32</sup> Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo dejo*, pp 90-91. Translation into English: "It was not easy to demolish a structure that, in front of the Plaza Colón was more than twenty *varas* in width, to fill the moats and counter moats and to eliminate the enormous mass of the Santiago Revalin, the bastions and wall curtains already mentioned."



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elements of its own and also served as mammoth links in the defensive chain united by sections of the defensive wall. From east to west the following are found: Bastión de San Sebastián, Bastión de Santo Tomás, Bastión de las Ánimas (Souls Bastion), Bastión de Santo Domingo, Bastión de Santa Rosa and Bastión de San Antonio. This last one connects the northern defensive wall to the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro.

Just as the Castillo de San Cristóbal was to be the definitive defense against land attacks, the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro was to be the first line in the defense of the bay against sea assaults. Both fortresses grew with time, from small fort-like structures into huge giants that impeded any enemy from conquering the city once they were fully deployed. The Castillo de San Felipe del Morro has an impressive array of components, including a moat, a sally port, an impressive Tuscan entrance portal, a chapel, an interior plaza, a *batería flotante* (floating battery) close to the sea, barracks, dungeons, and dozens of other spaces and areas. On the top platform a brick lighthouse was constructed during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to replace the older albeit smaller 19<sup>th</sup> century one, the first light to operate when the Spanish system was established. The Castillo de San Felipe del Morro was to work in tandem with the Fortín del Cañuelo, located in the small islet known as Isla de Cabras on the other side of the bay. The fortress was in charge of high shots and the *fortín* (small fort) of low ones. This crisscrossed fire at the mouth of the bay created an impregnable wall that protected the entrance, just as dramatically as a chain did across Havana's bay.

From the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro, towards the south, one encounters the following defensive elements the: Batería de San Fernando, Bastión de Santa Elena, Bastión de San Agustín, Puerta de San Juan, Bastión de Santa Catalina, Bastión de la Concepción (Immaculate Conception Bastion), Bastión de la Palma (Palm Bastion) and Bastión de San Justo. As mentioned, only remnants have been preserved of this last one, since the Puerta de San Justo annexed to it was destroyed in 1895. From this point towards the east, the southern wall no longer exists. Originally, the Puerta de San Justo was followed by: Bastión del Muelle; the Bastión de San Pedro and the Bastión de Santiago. This last structure was connected to the Puerta de Santiago that also included the Revellín de Santiago.

The north wall is approximately 3,700 yards long while the south one is 850 yards in length. The first one varies in height from 24 to 50 feet while the south one measures from 20 to 60 feet high. Widths vary from 24 to 50 feet. Basically, all the walls and the fortresses are constructed of "sandstone, with vaulting and piers in brick, and sand and earth-fill between all shelves."<sup>33</sup> Late 19<sup>th</sup> century additions, as well as World War I and World War II insertions, on the other hand, are constructed of reinforced concrete. The arcuated structural system was preferred in all its versions: semicircular and segmental arches, barrel vaults and groin vaults. Some elements, like the entrance portals of both fortresses make use of the trabeated structural system and include the Tuscan architectural order.

The subject of much controversy, it is possible that the defensive girdle was stuccoed regularly or as frequently as funds allowed. It is well known how during the 19<sup>th</sup> century some sections cracked and even fell due to poor maintenance. Poet José Gautier Benítez (1848-1880) mentioned white defensive walls when describing the color palette of the city. He did so in two of his poems dedicated to Puerto Rico/San Juan.

#### ***A Puerto Rico (Ausencia)***

*Puerto Rico, patria mía,  
la de blancos almenares  
la de los verdes palmares,  
la de la extensa bahía;*

<sup>33</sup> Department of the Interior, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory San Juan National Historic Site" (Washington DC: 1961).

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*¡Qué hermosa estás en las brumas  
del mar que tu playa azota,  
como una blanca gaviota  
dormida entre las espumas!*

In this verse, written while the author was studying in Spain, the poet equates Puerto Rico with Old San Juan, lovingly describing the white battlements or crenellations and the contrast they create with the green palm trees and expansive blue bay. Because of its coloring the city is compared to a sleeping white seagull. Upon his return, as the ship approached the bay, he described the city for a second time:

***Puerto Rico (Regreso)***

*Por fin, corazón, por fin  
alienta con la esperanza,  
que entre nubes de carmín,  
del horizonte al confín,  
ya la tierra a ver se alcanza.*

...

*Ya se va diafanizando  
de la mar la espesa bruma;  
el buque sigue avanzando,  
y va la tierra brotando  
como Venus de la espuma.  
Y allá sobre el fondo oscuro  
que sus montañas le dan,  
bajo un cielo hermoso y puro,  
cerrada en su blanco muro  
mi bellísima San Juan.*

...

Against the greenery of the mountains and the blue sky and greenish sea, the city was now portrayed as a lady protected by a white wall. Gautier Benítez's emotional descriptions were probably poetic license for the existence of an impeccable white stucco finish on all surfaces of the defensive ring is quite remote.

The exceptional stone girdle that made possible so many dreams and expectations still defies time and has transformed from a formidably fierce organism into a benign one beloved by thousands and considered by the international community part of humanity's cultural heritage. The San Juan National Historic Site is listed in the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1983.

## Conclusion

Almost a century after Gautier Benítez penned his heartfelt descriptions of the district, Noel Estrada wrote the nostalgic *En mi Viejo San Juan*, composed while serving during World War II.

***En mi viejo San Juan***

*En mi viejo San Juan  
cuantos sueños forjé  
en mis noches de infancia.  
Mi primera ilusión  
y mis cuitas de amor*

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*son recuerdos del alma.  
Una tarde me fui hacia extraña nación  
pues lo quiso el destino.  
pero mi corazón se quedó junto al mar  
en mi viejo San Juan.*

...  
*Me voy pero un día volveré  
a buscar mi querer  
a soñar otra vez  
en mi viejo San Juan.*

*Pero el tiempo pasó  
y el destino burló  
mi terrible nostalgia.  
Y no pude volver  
al San Juan que yo amé  
pedacito de patria.  
Mi cabello blanqueó  
y mi vida se va  
ya la muerte me llama.  
Y no quiero morir  
alejado de tí  
Puerto Rico del alma.<sup>34</sup>*

As was the case of Gautier Benítez, the author equates the Motherland with Old San Juan. Estrada's song is the Municipality of San Juan's official hymn and probably the most poignant paean to the city's ability to live forever in the memory of all. From romantic symphonies to staccato rap diatribes,<sup>35</sup> the Viejo San Juan continues to exert an impact upon the imagination of generations. Folklore, traditions, customs, and beliefs have created a cultural quilt that continually highlights the city's uniqueness. According to contemporary philosophical ideas, language shapes thought. Architecture is the most powerful language invented by humans, even if it lacks spoken or written expressions formed by words and sounds. The urban patterns used in the creation of the Old San Juan Historic District and the different aesthetic expressions used to compose its buildings and sites have the awesome ability to shape the behavior of its visitors and residents. This

<sup>34</sup> Translation into English: "In my Old San Juan / how many dreams I forged / during my infancy./ My first illusion / and lovesickness / are memories of the soul. One afternoon I departed to a foreign nation / because destiny wanted it so / but my heart remained by the sea / in front of my Old San Juan./ Time passed / and destiny mocked my terrible nostalgia / and I could not return / to the San Juan that I loved, / small piece of my soul./ My hair whitened / my life is drifting away / death beckons me / and I do not want to die / away from you / Puerto Rico of my soul!"

<sup>35</sup> One of the last tributes to the Viejo San Juan is the rap song *Viernes Trece* by Mr Vico C. The historic character of the core and the picturesque and, at times, forbidding milieu were used to emphasize tension in the manner of a Hollywood Halloween tragedy. The song relates what happens to a group of persons enjoying the traditional *viernes social* ("social Friday" is a local expression closely related to TGIF) in the district, as hundreds do every week. Mr Vico describes in harrowing detail his encounter with Jason, of Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> fame. It is relevant to notice that the historic *castillos* (San Felipe del Morro and San Cristóbal) play a significant role in the composition collaborating in the creation of a sense of mystery. Text of *Viernes Trece*: *Era una tarde nublada,/los adornos de Halloween/donde quiera estaban/yo esperando ese día por meses/el famoso día de viernes trece./Rápidamente busque a mi corillo/para hacer solo un viaje sencillo/viajando a sitios bien lejos yo me enzorro/así que fuimos al Castillo del Morro/era un grupo de setenta, solo veinte hombres/y mujeres cincuenta /inmediatamente logramos llegar sin espera/comenzamos a explorar, pero/había algo bien raro en San Juan/yo me pregunté y las personas donde están/San Juan estaba demasiado vacío/y además me sentía bien frío/se veía como si de algo escapaban/mi grupo poco a poco, se evaporaba /mi chica me preguntó qué es lo que pasa/olvídate mamita que nos vamos a casa. /Oh my God! Así pensé / Jason llegó y mi vida se fue/los otros desaparecidos están /primero fue Manhattan y ahora San Juan./El hombre nos persiguió hasta el Castillo/yo le dije: corre suave canto de pillo/mi novia cansada se fatigó/y ahí fue que Jason nos abacoró/yo bien valiente le saqué una navaja/y él me sacó una colección de espadas.*

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momentous role is something the precinct has the potential to continue doing as long as it is adequately managed by the present and future generations.

Architectural public, domestic and military buildings, squares, small plazas, promenades, and public thoroughfares are all instruments used to civilize and organize urban settlements. The district's unique personality is the result of cultural, urban and architectural patterns explored throughout the almost five centuries the core has existed. Some of these were the product of millennial European traditions while others were utilized in the islet for the first time. The goal at all times was to create a state of the art, modern, civilized center which could protect first Spanish then the local culture against social, religious and ethnic deconstruction.

During the 1950s, the Planning Board of the Government of Puerto Rico declared the interior area of the defensive circuit of San Juan a historic zone, the first governmental recognition of the cultural relevance of the district. The conglomerate was described in the following manner:

*Es una Zona Antigua e Histórica, un área dentro de la cual los edificios, estructuras, pertenencias y lugares son de básica y vital importancia para el desarrollo cultural y del turismo, por la asociación de los mismos con la historia; por su peculiar estilo colonial español [sic], incluyendo color, proporciones, forma y detalles arquitectónicos; por ser parte o relacionarse con una plaza, parque u área cuyo diseño o disposición general debe conservarse y/o desarrollarse acorde a determinado plan basado en motivos o finalidades culturales, históricas o arquitectónicas en general.*<sup>36</sup>

The National Register of Historic Places listed the Zona Histórica de San Juan (San Juan Historic Zone) in 1972 recognizing the significance the core has on a national (American) level. The next acknowledgement came from the UNESCO in the year 1983 when the defensive circuit with its castles and the Palacio de Santa Catalina were declared significant resources for all of humanity and listed in the World Heritage List. These recognitions underscore the relevance the Old San Juan Historic District has for the present and future generations.

This revision of the 1972 National Register of Historic Places nomination aims to update the information related to this most important of urban cores, the oldest European settlement in Puerto Rico and the United States and the second one continuously inhabited in the American continent.

<sup>36</sup> The San Juan Historic Zone was the first designated historic district in the island. Office of the Governor of Puerto Rico, Planning Board of Puerto Rico, "Resolución Núm.Z-7 Para establecer la zona antigua e histórica en el casco de San Juan." Translation into English: "An old and historic zone is an area which possesses buildings, structures and other artifacts and places which are of basic and vital importance to the development of culture and tourism, due to their historic association; their peculiar Spanish Colonial [sic] style, including color, proportions, form and architectural details; because they are part of a plaza, park or area that because of their design or general disposition merits to be preserved and/or developed according to a determined plan based on cultural, historic or architectural objectives."

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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.
- 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**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Community Planning and Development

**Period of Significance**

1519-1939

**Significant Dates**

1519 1898

1625 - 1700

1812

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Francisco Mestre: Manuel de Zayas; Pedro García; Santiago Cortijo; Enrique Gadea; Juan Bautista Antonelli; Tomás O'Daly  
Pedro de Castro; Antonín Nechodoma; Rafael Carmoega; Clarke, Howe & Homer; Alfred B Nichols; Humberto Landó

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### Period of Significance (justification)

### Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Not Applicable.

### Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan / Old San Juan Historic District is the second oldest continuously inhabited European settlement in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>37</sup> Conceived as the capital of the island of Puerto Rico and known for centuries as the *ciudad del puerto Rico* (the city of the rich Port), it is the oldest urban core in the island and the United States of America. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, some of its components – the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro, Castillo de San Cristóbal, circuit of defensive walls, and Palacio de Santa Catalina – are considered part of the cultural heritage of humanity. As such, they were included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1983. The district is an example of a historic urban landscape that includes unique architectural typologies, examples of aesthetic periods, distinctive methods of construction and works by 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries' architectural masters. The oldest house, Christian temple, executive mansion, convent and military defenses in the United States are found in this exceptional core. Its Gothic, Decorated Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque buildings represent the sole stylistic examples in Puerto Rico and the United States of their kind. Founded before the *Laws of Indies* were enacted, the center served as an urban laboratory, one of the first places in the American continent where Spaniards tried their hand at city founding. The use of the orthogonal grid and urban anchors such as plazas, evidence the early attempts made by the European powers to colonize the American hemisphere immediately after Columbus visit.

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### Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Viejo San Juan was reluctantly founded by famous conquistador Juan Ponce de León in 1519. Located in the islet of the same name, it was known as the *ciudad del puerto Rico*<sup>38</sup> because, from day one, the incomparable bay and the embryonic urban center were wed in a most intimate of embraces. With time, the center flourished becoming the *punta de lanza*<sup>39</sup> (point of the spear) of the Spanish Empire in America as a

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<sup>37</sup> It is historically documented that the Viejo San Juan had the first municipal government in the America continent after the city of Santo Domingo in neighboring Hispaniola. As expected, there are varied opinions regarding this topic. One important mistake incurred when considering San Juan's premier birth is that the founding date of the historic district used is 1521 rather than 1519, when royal authorization was granted for the settlement to establish in the islet. It is relevant to mention that some historic sources date the birth some years earlier than 1519. *En el año de 1514 por orden del Rey de España, después de haber unido la isleta que está en la boca del puerto á la grande Isla por medio de un puente, se dio comienzo á la ciudad más importante, que hoy conocemos con el nombre de Puerto-Rico, nombre que trae su origen del puerto que la baña, según antes dijimos.* Juan de Laët, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo Descripción de las islas occidentales Escrita en 18 libros* (1640) (Caracas, Venezuela: Universidad de Simón Bolívar, 1988), pp 64-65. Translation into English: "In the year 1514 the King of Spain ordered, after the islet had been joined to the main island by means of a bridge, the construction of the most important city with the name of Puerto-Rico, name that brings to mind the port that bathes the city."

<sup>38</sup> The beautiful and commodious bay was known since the earliest of times as the *puerto rico* or rich port. At times, the Latinized version *porto rico* was also used. This body of water provided the first name by which both Caparra, the first post-Columbian settlement in the island, and the city in the islet were called: *la ciudad del puerto Rico* (the city of the rich port). It is interesting to note that, as late as 1836, the city was still known by this name. This is evidenced by the tomb of Brigadier Juan St Just located in the crypt of the Iglesia de San Francisco. Born in 16 June 1793, St Just died in 1836. His epitaph describes him as born in *the ciudad del puerto Rico*.

<sup>39</sup> There are several historic references that use this figure of speech when referring to Puerto Rico and the Caribbean islands. As was the case with the eponymous description of Puerto Rico as the *llave de las Indias* (key to the Indies), the phrase belies the relevance the island had for Spain.

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result of its exceptional geographical location. For centuries, France, Great Britain, Holland and, ultimately, the United States tried to wrestle the colony away from Spain in order to incorporate it to their respective empires. This last power succeeded doing what all the others could not, forcing a break in 1898 in the political ties that had existed between Puerto Rico and Spain for four hundred and five years.

The historic district was founded when Queen Juana, daughter of Queen Isabel and King Fernando, reigned.<sup>40</sup> Founded in a gone-by world of chivalry and court intrigues, the core has survived adapting to centuries of cultural and political transformations. Four hundred and ninety two years of continuous habitation have created a unique historic urban landscape characterized by hundreds of inimitable buildings and exceptional sites that silently evoke the power of European civilization in the so-called New World.

Architecture is an endeavor that requires no postponement. This human creation, capable of framing both dreams and nightmares, organizes the city, the place where multiple exchanges of services takes place.<sup>41</sup> For almost five centuries, the Viejo San Juan has served in this manner the living and the dead; the pious and the sinners; the *españolistas* and *puertorriqueños*, as well as many others, in a seamless manner, just as its founders intended. According to experts, there are several reasons why humans create large urban centers in opposition to small familial enclaves. The primary one is to safeguard civilization, the leit motif of all Spanish cities founded in America during and after the 16<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, until 1898, Old San Juan had to accomplish several tasks for Spain while serving as a place where production and exchange of services could take place in the accepted European manner. Since the early decades, when the Spanish Crown contested the conquistadors it had once favored and won feudal rights over the American colonies, American urban centers were envisioned as havens that would invite varied professionals. The dream was for the Viejo San Juan to be a stage for intellectuals, military, clergy, and politicians, a center that was to actively collaborate in the preservation and empowerment of Spanish civilization. This was Old San Juan's most relevant historic goal.

A corollary of this objective was the creation of a new order in a milieu that was an unknown universe for decades. Thus, the core needed to be a hub where social order would reign supreme. In this manner, Spain legitimized its rule over the virginal islet and island while organizing the *vida y hacienda* (life and property) of its people. *España sueña un orden y ese orden soñado es urbano; se espera que se establezca en América un orden donde la jerarquización social está consignada a la jerarquización urbana.*<sup>42</sup> No rational order could be attained if daily life was not systematized and carefully ordered. Urban standardization was needed in order to carefully monitor all. The inflexible orthogonal grid used to form the settlement acted as a mandala of power, clearly establishing who was who in the core. The orthogonal gridiron of blocks was anchored by introverted houses, monumental churches, quiet convents and elegant public buildings that, at a later date, were embraced by Cyclopean forts and a ponderous defensive curtain wall. All these artifacts spoke (still do) eloquently albeit silently of the three relevant spheres that composed the Spanish universe: the public, domestic and military.

Deconstruction of Spanish culture was impeded by this urban stage established for daily life. Edifices and urban centers act as prompters that help people understand themselves as individuals and as part of a

<sup>40</sup> Queen Juan, nicknamed *la Loca* ("Crazy One"), inherited the kingdom of Castile from her mother. She was declared incompetent to rule and her father, King Ferdinand, was legally appointed until her son, Carlos I of Spain (also known as Holy Roman Emperor Carlos V), came of age. The concept of Spain as one country was born around this time with the union of Castile and Aragon and, after the defeat of the Moors, the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula.

<sup>41</sup> Françoise Choay, *Modern City: Planning in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (New York: Braziller, 1969).

<sup>42</sup> Carlos Alberto Torres Tovar, Fernando Viviescas Monsalve, Edmundo Pérez Hernández, Editors. Fabio Zambrano P, "La ciudad en la historia," *La ciudad: hábitat de diversidad y complejidad* (Universidad Nacional de Colombia: Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia, 2000), pp122-148. Translation into English: "Spain dreams a special kind of order and that dream is an urban one; the hope is to establish order in America where social hierarchy is equivalent to urban hierarchy."

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particular ethnicity. Peninsular elements, from open plazas to interior domestic patios, replicated the Spanish ancestral world in the tropical milieu representing, even if palely, Spanish culture. The center mimicked in idealized fashion Spanish cities, tangibly and intangibly acting as the stage where aspirations of a global empire, blind adherence to the Catholic faith, separation of the genders, and acceptance of slavery, among other historical cultural traits, could be showcased. Unexpectedly (for Spain), the urban core also became the arena for birthing the Puerto Rican architectural *gentium* as a separate and unique cultural expression. After 1898, the district continued this search embracing the urban and architectural transformations brought forth by modernity and, to a lesser extent, the transfer of sovereignty.

All these aspirations are tangibly represented by the urban and architectural artifacts that organize Old San Juan. Buildings are not created in a vacuum; they reflect fashions and conflicts, traditions and transformations. In the core some of these can be interpreted as mute oaths of allegiance to the Spanish Crown; others constructed after 1898 to the United States. Both governments wished for the Viejo San Juan to be a center that would clearly spell out the roles played by colonial power and colonial subject. Although allegiances may have shifted, the extant buildings silently echo historical links with nations on the other side of the Atlantic. With time, this collection of urban and architectural artifacts has become part of the Puerto Rican ethos and, more importantly, of humanity's cultural heritage, rather than the colonial powers that help shaped it. Houses still shelter families that aspire to live harmoniously and in peace within the centuries-old domestic artifacts just as dozens of families before them. Even the formidable examples of military architecture play a relevant role as educational tools for the present and future generations.

Although it was possible for the Europeans to adapt the indigenous artifacts found in the island for their use during the early decades of the Conquest, it soon became evident that this was but a temporary solution.<sup>43</sup> The reasons for this rejection were diverse. First, the local climate – characterized by bouts of humidity and intense rains, peppered with formidable and unexpected hurricanes – required substantial buildings if a city was to survive and prosper. More importantly, the settlers brought with them ingrained millennia-old architectural and urban traditions that many were not prepared to discard, particularly as they faced a new world characterized by constant surprises. In addition to traditional public and domestic architecture, with time military artifacts were also required for the urban core needed to manage aggression to the empire, in other words, attacks against Spanish culture. These started as early as the Caparra settlement. If it is true that, traditionally, the systematization of war has been an indispensable condition to the consolidation of any urban core,<sup>44</sup> it is no exaggeration to claim that war granted the Viejo San Juan its formidable persona. The city's urban and architectural personality as a *plaza militar* (military settlement) was defined forever by this reality.

A city exists because its Derridian cultural opposite, the suburbia, underscores its presence.<sup>45</sup> Old San Juan became a reality because of the slender Isleta de San Juan (San Juan Islet) off the main island of Puerto Rico, facing the Atlantic Ocean on the north side, and the *puerto Rico*, formed by the spectacular bay to the west and south. From day one, the urban center unequivocally claimed a much larger territory than the one the

<sup>43</sup> Due to the common use of the natives' architectural types of buildings by the Europeans during the early stages of the Conquest, distinguished Cuban architectural historian Joaquín E Weiss described the 16<sup>th</sup> century as the *siglo del bohío* (the *bohío's* century). *Bohío* is the Taino name for the natives' one room house. Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX* (La Habana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1996).

<sup>44</sup> Carlos Alberto Torres Tovar, Fernando Viviescas Monsalve, Edundo Pérez Hernández, Editors. Fabio Zambrano P, "La ciudad en la historia," *La ciudad: hábitat de diversidad y complejidad*, p 126.

<sup>45</sup> One of the leading writers regarding the concept of cultural opposites was French philosopher Jacques Derrida. According to this philosophical perspective, Westerners organize thought (and, thus, life) using the type of contrast that makes one term be the preferred one over the second one that is interpreted as the "Other."



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defensive circuit later encircled for the *ejidos* of Old San Juan included the whole islet.<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, from an urban perspective, the universe of the Viejo San Juan was extensive yet definitive. Until the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the town had a perimeter (the dramatic Cyclopean defensive walls), entrance urban doors (the Puerta de San Juan, the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra, among others) and unique architectural symbols (the quaint *ermitas* or hermitages located on the at the times outskirts sectors that “marked” the land as divinely protected) that physically separated it from the rest of the islet and the world.

## Caparra

As mentioned, the Viejo San Juan replaced the embryonic settlement of Caparra, the first formal European settlement in the then-named island of San Juan Bautista. Established in 1508 in the modern municipality of Guaynabo, close to gold mines that made Puerto Rico such an attractive place during the early decades of the Conquest, this small settlement was founded by Juan Ponce de León. Unfortunately, the choice of place reflected his ignorance about the new land and, most importantly, its inhabitants, those belonging to the human (the natives) and animal kingdoms (mosquitoes and other dangerous flying insects). These obstacles forced the settlers to abort the urban core when it was merely eleven years old and to move to a new locale.

Several historic reasons were given for the abandonment of the Caparra venture. Described as a place of *malas aguas* that were a hazard to all, it was also depicted as a locale where *no se criaban los niños*.<sup>47</sup> Its problematic access from the bay was personally experienced by *oídor* Rodrigo de Figueroa, the Crown’s envoy to settle the concerns of the settlers.<sup>48</sup> After the many weeks it took him to cross the Atlantic Ocean, he had to wait twelve extra days to reach Caparra. Problems presented by the unloading of the cargo and the tricky access to the settlement forced him to delay his arrival.<sup>49</sup> De Figueroa quickly gathered the evidence he needed. Caparra simply would not do, particularly when there was a much better site, famously described by him as *el mexor asiento para la Cibdad quen el mundo se pueda buscar*.<sup>50</sup>

Ignoring Ponce de León protests, he positively recommended the move of the settlement to the islet across the *puerto Rico* and sent his report to the king on 12 September 1519. Interestingly, on 15 June 1519 the Padres Jerónimos<sup>51</sup> (St Jerome Order), in charge of Spanish settlements in America, had approved the move. Their

<sup>46</sup> Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla, Patronato, Legajo 176, Ramo 3 “Carta del licenciado de Figueroa al rey describiendo la isla de Puerto Rico, cuyo plan hecho acompaña” (CRA), Folio 1/3. Published in: Ricardo E Alegría, *Documentos Históricos de Puerto Rico Volumen II 1517-1527*, pp 83-91.

<sup>47</sup> This much-repeated complaint is attributed to Gónzalo Fernández de Oviedo. Quoted in: Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Biblioteca Histórica de Puerto-Rico que contiene varios documentos de los siglos XV, XVI, XVII y XVIII* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Imprenta de Márquez, 1854), p 117. The description of swampy water probably refers to the mangrove areas surrounding Caparra. Allegedly, they particularly affected children. It is not known whether the reference to the water was in terms of drinking concerns or because they served as the breeding ground for dangerous insects. It is possible the description reflected both counts.

<sup>48</sup> *Oídor* was a royal position quite similar to that of a notary-judge. Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla, Patronato, “Información hecha por el licenciado de Figueroa en la isla de Puerto Rico, sobre mudar su asiento” (DIA, XXXVI, pp 457-526. *Boletín Histórico de Puerto Rico*, III, pp 82-113). Published in: Ricardo E Alegría, *Documentos Históricos de Puerto Rico Volumen II 1517-1527* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y del Caribe, 2009), pp 17-71 and Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla, Patronato, “Carta del licenciado de Figueroa al rey describiendo la isla de Puerto Rico” (DIA, XXXVI, pp 529-539. *Boletín Histórico de Puerto Rico*, III, pp 82-113). Published in: Ricardo E Alegría, *Documentos Históricos de Puerto Rico Volumen II 1517-1527*, pp 83-91.

<sup>49</sup> Archivo General de Indias, *Instrucciones*, 1509 - 1565. Quoted in Salvador Brau, *La colonización de Puerto Rico desde el descubrimiento de la isla hasta la reversión á la corona española de los privilegios de Colón* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Tipografía Herald Español, 1907), pp 277-278.

<sup>50</sup> Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla, Patronato, “Carta del licenciado de Figueroa al rey describiendo la isla de Puerto Rico” (DIA, XXXVI, pp 529-539. *Boletín Histórico de Puerto Rico*, III, pp 82-113). Published in: Ricardo E Alegría, *Documentos Históricos de Puerto Rico Volumen II 1517-1527*, pp 83-91; p 88. Translation into English: “[T]he best place for a city one can find in the whole world.”

<sup>51</sup> The Padres Jerónimos were sent to America in 1516 to administer the Crown’s colonies in the continent. Their mandate ceased with the death of King Fernando. Carlos I of Spain (Carlos V) empowered de Rodrigo with the mission.

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decision was suspended out of deference for de Rodrigo's report. Since the *óidor* was granted by the king decisional power, 12 September 1519 is the formal foundation date of Old San Juan.<sup>52</sup>

Caparra was an unsuitable place for an urban center. It lacked most of the things the verdant islet on the other side of the bay provided, particularly easy defense from natives, whether humans or mangrove insects. The great vistas and healthy sea breezes were added bonuses. More importantly, what Ponce de León failed to understand by refusing at first to move was that the end of the world where feudal lords determined all aspects of their feud was over. The move transformed the settlement from a 16<sup>th</sup> century "workers' town," dependant on gold mines activities, into an urban core capable of empowering the many other services that characterize a full-fledged city. The Viejo San Juan became a modern (Renaissance) city the moment the first person rejected Ponce de León's claim to unilaterally direct its urban development.

Caparra is most instructive in terms of interpreting Old San Juan's architecture. Historic and archeological sources evidence building materials like bricks, decorative elements such as ceramic tiles, and functional components including the terracotta *atanores* (drainage water pipes) used in the construction of the principal buildings were brought from Seville. Peninsular architectural typologies, like the *casa-torre* or *casa-fuerte*, were also imported. Architecture is not a generic artifact devoid of feelings and emotions for buildings shelter souls as well as bodies. This explains why European inspiration was fully embraced for centuries, although vernacular adaptations were a creative constant since the islet provided new sources of inspiration.

As mentioned, the Viejo San Juan buildings can be organized into three basic types: public, domestic and military. Each one of these, in turn, can be categorized within stylistic phases or periods intimately woven to the history and special events experienced by the urban nucleus. Public buildings – whether churches, hospitals, insane asylums, government buildings or the ones housing private enterprises – were considered icons of the power that resided on the other side of the ocean. This was true before and after the watershed year of 1898. Their expressions are intimately connected to European and American vanguard aesthetic movements and styles. Interpreting them as a group in the universe that is Old San Juan provides a summarized version of the development of its architecture.

## THE CONQUEST PERIOD (1525-1625)

During the first years of its existence, the Viejo San Juan architecture, in spite of its apparent simplicity, was charged with relevant missions. In addition to providing shelter to the settlers, the art was to organize the virginal (to the Europeans) new territory in order to provide physical icons reflective of Spanish civilization. This goal is clearly evident in the first embryonic core which settled close to the *fondeadero* (port or anchorage area), organized around the years 1519 and 1521, immediately after the abandonment of Caparra.

At that time, the *Leyes de Indias*<sup>53</sup> (*Laws of Indies*) had not been enacted. As a result, there was no formal regulatory body to guide the physical development of the new American towns. It is interesting to note, however, that in the urban and architectural laboratory that was Old San Juan, regularization and organization were of paramount importance, even before the *Laws of Indies* made it mandatory. Settlers were not writing upon a blank slate but following centuries-old traditions for, in Spain, regulations of all kinds guided the design

<sup>52</sup> As expected, there is disagreement amongst historians regarding the exact date of the move. The facts are the following: research as to the suitability of the islet started in 1517, if not earlier. De Rodrigo's map stating: *Aquí ha de estar la cibdad* is dated to the year 1519, the same year the Padres Jerónimos granted the authorization for the move. It is highly possible some took the matter into their own hands and moved before royal authorization was received.

<sup>53</sup> The so-called *Laws of Indies* were part of the *Plan de Ordenamiento Urbano para las Indias* (Urban Plan for the Indies) enacted in 1573 by Emperor Felipe II. The model established the basic guidelines for all Spanish urban settlements in America.

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and construction of buildings. In fact, the *Laws of Indies* formalized ideas that had taken three-dimensional shapes in the Iberian Peninsula, islet and other settlements, long before their inception. A *plaza pública* (public plaza), the present day Plaza de la Catedral, a communal area, anchored the little settlement. This first urban nucleus was not organized in the perfect geometric shape Renaissance ideals called for at the time although it was theoretically and physically conceived as the center of the settlement and as visual reminder of the reigning powers. The wide open square-like area and the three thoroughfares known as *caletas* routed people from the port while present day Caleta de las Monjas connected it with the Ponce de León *casa-torre* or *casa-fuerte*. The embryonic core was surrounded by buildings representing the Catholic Church (the cathedral) and the Crown (*casa del Cabildo*<sup>54</sup>), the two organisms that controlled every single aspect of the life of all settlers.

Since the new city depended for its sustenance on the same *puerto Rico* as Caparra, for centuries it was known by the same name: *la ciudad del puerto Rico*. The name and the *puerto Rico*, however, were the only two things the settlements shared, with the possible exception of some inhabitants for the islet was quite different from Caparra, providing novel sources of inspiration. Rather than a plane surrounded by limestone outcrops close to a mangrove that made connection with the port difficult and dangerous, the new location had hills, spectacular views, and refreshing sea breezes, even if mangroves did flourish in the southern area known as the Puntilla de San Lázaro. Best of all, the relationship of the urban center to the port cove was intimate and lacking the problems of Caparra. Finally, defense could be organized with relative ease given the fact that the islet was not only uninhabited by natives and surrounded by water it also provided high areas that facilitated defense.

This first phase of urban development by the *fondeadero* was organized at the foot of the hill where the Ponce de León family's second house in the island was located. In a sense, this building continued to act in European feudal manner, like a lord's castle, overseeing the town and, thus, daily life. Caparra had been different for the *casa-torre* was located in front of the plaza and church. This is one of the most important differences between Caparra and the enclave by the *fondeadero*. While both seem to have been organized with reference to the Ponce de León land holdings, in the islet the core achieved an independent personality, particularly after the move of the public plaza to the present Plaza de Armas. From day one, the new San Juan was a city and not a feud because there was an urban core, albeit small, which acted in an independent manner from the *casa-torre*. It is no exaggeration to claim that – in spite of the use of medieval architectural typologies and style – the new settlement abandoned all traces of a medieval urban personality in favor of a more modern (Renaissance) approach.

The decision to build the Ponce de León's family house on top of the highest hill merits attention. At the time, Renaissance fashion established that the family house of a rich and powerful lord was located within the urban core, if possible in front of a public space such as a plaza. In fact, during the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the *palazzo*, a new architectural typology, was invented in Florence for this specific purpose.<sup>55</sup> These buildings were imposing in terms of size yet they were designed to be an intrinsic part of the urban fabric. The *casa-torre* or *casa-fuerte* architectural typology, on the other hand, reflects medieval architectural goals. Its introverted and bellicose architectural nature precludes any intention of playing an interactive role with the

<sup>54</sup> Presently, the building has a plaque that reads: *Casa Cabildo construida en 1523 es una de las primeras estructuras fue centro de gobierno durante el siglo XVI. Sirvió además como primera alcaldía y en sus sótanos estuvo la primera cárcel. Desde 1960 fue residencia del Lcdo José Alegría Gallardo 1910-1998.* Translation into English: "House of the Municipal Council constructed in 1523 is one of the first structures was center of government during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It also served as the town's first council meeting hall and in its basement the first jail [of the city] was located. Since 1960, it served as residence of Attorney José Alegría Gallardo 1910-1998."

<sup>55</sup> While some establish the origins of the *palazzo* stem back to the design by Lorenzo di Bicci for Niccolò da Uzzano during the 1420s, the earliest full-fledged example is the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi (Florence) by Michelozzo Michelozzi, constructed during the fourth century of the same century. This Italian architectural typology is known in Spanish as *palazzo* and *palacete*.

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urban nucleus. By electing<sup>56</sup> as the site of his future home the top of the northwest hill over the bay, Ponce de León eschewed a more direct presence within the town center. His son-in-law's choice of the medieval typology underscored its introspection and isolation.<sup>57</sup> This architectural and urban aloofness is evidenced in all the early illustrations of the enclave that depict the house as an isolated organism surrounded by empty land. The idea that was Old San Juan at the time gained much from the physical separation and the breaking of feudal architectural and urban ties. The settlement upon which so many hopes were deposited could become a full-fledged city owing alliance to no lord, only to itself.

Another relevant urban feature of the new center was its intimate relationship to the *fondeadero*, the area which served as its maritime anchorage area or port. How quickly this water venue became central to the development of the city is evidenced by the fact that, by 1510, the urban core was a required stop for all ships sailing between Spain and Hispaniola. "Statistics from the West Indies indicate that, during the years 1548-1555, a total of twenty-four ships sailed for Hispaniola, twelve to Puerto Rico. . . . Hispaniola thus enjoyed pre-eminence in the Spanish Caribbean Empire, and Puerto Rico ranked above Cuba and Jamaica."<sup>58</sup> Known originally as *la caleta* (cove), it was still in use during the year 1890.<sup>59</sup> The intimate physical connection between the *plaza pública*, cathedral and *fondeadero* transformed this last area into an active component of the enclave. The location was very different from Caparra where the port could only be reached after trailing humid and pest-infested mangroves for hours.<sup>60</sup>

As mentioned, the *iglesia mayor* (principal church) was located facing the main entrance from the sea that is directly across the *fondeadero*, on top of a low hill sited to the southeast of the Ponce de León house. This location, like that of the *casa-torre*, was determined by the geography of the site. The *fondeadero* was the shallowest and most protected part of the bay for ships to anchor. As a result, it made sense to have the main door to the city (Puerta de San Juan), when it was decided to construct a defensive walled circuit, facing this part of the bay. It was fortunate that the cathedral could face the port and, at a later time, the door and still comply with the centuries old tradition that the main altar face east.<sup>61</sup> The location created a powerful physical

<sup>56</sup> Some confusion exists regarding how Ponce de León came into possession of the land. According to at least one writer: *La familia* [de Ponce de León] *obtuvo prioridad frente a la población de las tierras descubiertas*. Translation into English: "The Ponce de León family had priority over the rest of the settlers when selecting their land." Álvaro Hueriga, *La Familia Ponce de León Historia Documental de Puerto Rico Tomo XVIII* (Madrid: Taravilla, 2009), p 57. The same author, however, also states: . . . *le asignaron unos solares en la isleta para que edificase, si quería, una nueva casa familiar.*, p 37. Translation into English: "[H]e was assigned some land in case he wanted to build a new family house." Given the fact that, by this time, Ponce de León was: (i) the most relevant person of all the settlers; (ii) the Crown's *Adelantado*; (iii) in charge of settlement activities in Puerto Rico; (iv) present in the island at the time of the move to the islet; and (v) became the owner of the best land in the islet, it can be inferred that he had a chance to make a choice before the rest of the settlers.

<sup>57</sup> Given the fact that he constructed an example of this architectural typology in Caparra, it can be inferred Ponce de León would have erected a second example had he not died in 1521.

<sup>58</sup> Eric Williams, *From Columbus to Castro The History of the Caribbean* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), p 50.

<sup>59</sup> Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1979),

p 8.

<sup>60</sup> The above-mentioned urban interaction between these three sites was responsible for some unique features that characterize this first phase of development. At least two early Spanish colonial cities, San Agustín (St Augustine, Florida) and Panamá la Vieja (Panama) depict a similar intention of relating to the sea by means of physical intersection between the urban core and the port. Pedro Arias de Ávila (also known as Pedrarias Dávila) founded Nuestra Señora de la Asunción de Panamá (Panamá La Vieja) on 15 August 1519 while St Augustine was founded in 1565 by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés. In these cities established before the enactment of the *Laws of Indies*, the port link was underscored in different ways. In some cases, important buildings were constructed close to the wharf area. In Panamá la Vieja this approach is exemplified by the location of the cathedral only a few meters away from the shore. In other examples, a plaza of some sort connects the urban core to the water. The first phase of urban development in the islet established this second kind of advantageous connection, in a similar manner as St Augustine was to do at a later date. Both types of urban experimentation were abandoned when the need to defend the enclaves from predatory pirates arose.

<sup>61</sup> Most churches in the Viejo San Juan – the Catedral de San Juan Bautista, Iglesia de San José, and Iglesia de San Francisco – comply with this centuries-old mandate. The exceptions are the Iglesia de las Carmelitas Calzadas and Iglesia de Santa Ana.

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path and a symbolic axis connecting the principal entrance into the city and the *fondeadero* to the main façade of the church.

Axes reach across space to draw together the important points in a place. They are mental constructs that help us position ourselves and make alliances with things; buildings or spaces. Paths are where your feet actually trod, so that what happens along the way becomes the important thing. In some of the most interesting places, axes and paths interweave, with the axis allowing the mind to do the connecting, and the path allowing the feet to wander, explore, make choices, and put things in sequence.<sup>62</sup>

The planners of Old San Juan recognized the organizational power of urban axes, particularly the role they can play in ordering secular public areas. The main axis of the early settlement by the *fondeadero* intersected a mental construct and a physical reality into one experience: the spatial connection between the place of arrival (the *fondeadero*) and the façade of the church and the actual physical path the feet trod roughly located along the present day *caletas*, and the public plaza. This urban corridor intersected a spiritual one, governed by the image of the cathedral at the top of the hill. It must have been a particularly emotive experience, especially when arriving after weeks (if not months) of traveling by ship<sup>63</sup> a seemingly endless sea, still known by many as the *Mar Tenebroso* (Gloomy or Sinister Sea), to first set eyes on this exceptional approach.

The religious presence of the cathedral served as an architectural and urban stage for the gatherings that took place in the *plazapública*. This open space played the traditional roles assigned to such artifacts since time immemorial: from meeting place to open air markets. It also served as the proscenium for all the processions that were part of daily life, including the arrival from and departure into the unknown. The main axis of the city was, thus, anchored in front of the cathedral by this open space which was probably larger than it is today. The square descended towards the *fondeadero* and also routed, via an ascending lane (present day Caleta de las Monjas), to the Ponce de León estate. On the east side, the square was bordered by the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud, known as the Calle Real de San Juan (San Juan Royal Street) in the early days and the first north-south street to be organized, while on the south side of the plaza, the *casa del Cabildo* was located. Although it is not clear how this building ceased to be a public one, the fact that it had a jail in the basement evidences its communal use. The Plaza de la Catedral served as the intersection of the temporal and religious powers with the physical entrance to the urban core. This collusion created a powerful urban tapestry rich in symbolism and drama. This quartet of relevant places (the Ponce de León *casa-torre*, *fondeadero*, *casa del Cabildo* and cathedral) and the matrix it creates has been preserved to this day.

Judging from the placement of the above-mentioned space and surrounding buildings, apparently the plans were for the city to develop between the *fondeadero*, the slope of the hill on top of which the Ponce de León estate was located and the hill in which the cathedral was constructed. A linear organization guided the development of the Calle Real de San Juan and the *caletas*. It is possible that the negative Caparra experience with flat land that did not drain well and could not be protected from the attacks of natives. It was not the first time in history a culture organized its urban center on the slopes of hills or small mountains. Examples abound: Mycenae, Tiryns, Priene and Athens (all Greek cities), as well as Pergamum (located in present day Turkey), represent but a few, not to mention Rome's iconic seven hills. In all probability it was decided the slopes would serve best in terms of defense and hygiene.

<sup>62</sup> Donlyn Lyndon and Charles W Moore, *Chambers for a Memory Palace* (Boston: The MIT Press, 1996), p 6.

<sup>63</sup> In 1831, Alejandro Tapia y Rivera's father trip from Puerto Rico to Spain took two months minus a few days. According to Torres Vargas, in 1640, it took three days to reach Santo Domingo, eight to Havana, six to Cartagena de Indias and twenty to Nueva España (México). Adolfo de Hostos, *San Juan Ciudad Murada*, p 8.

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Contrarily and in spite of its urban elegance, spiritual and political eloquence and possible utilitarian considerations, the *fondeadero* arrangement was completely unsuitable due precisely to the geographical characteristics of the site. Even today, the plaza straddles a significant incline between the two streets (the Caletas) that frame it and the cathedral façade. As a result, no formal frontal atrium for the Catedral was possible. A small area, strangled between the entrance and the large number of steps needed to bridge the height difference between the Plaza de la Catedral and the temple, serves this purpose. For this reason, the atrium space had to be located on the north side of the building, while the cemetery (atria were used as burial places at the time) was localized to the south. In terms of utilitarian concerns (i.e. water drainage from higher ground, the slopes would have made possible for these areas to drain easily, however, all the water would puddle up in the plaza in front of the church.

It soon became obvious that some refining was needed in terms of the location of the core. If a public plaza was to anchor the organism and serve as its center, it could not be situated in the chosen position. A new place for the main plaza was discussed as early as 1528:

*[Q]ue al tiempo que la dicha ciudad [ciudad de Puerto Rico] se mudó a la isleta donde ahora está, se trazó en lo alto, y la plaza vino a caer en una ladera de una cuesta, y que ahora, como en lo alto no se halla agua, toda la ciudad se ha venido a poblar en lo bajo de aquesta, de manera que la plaza pública queda en el cabo de toda la ciudad; y que, demás de esto, está en un lugar muy barrancoso y fuera de conversación. Sobre lo cual yo envíe a mandar al licenciado Ayllón, nuestro oidor de la nuestra Audiencia Real de la isla Española, juez que era en dicha isla, que viese la dicha traza y la plaza y la hiciese enmendar y mudar la dicha plaza, si conviniese; el cual diz que lo vio y le pareció que la dicha plaza se debía mudar junto a las nuestras casas que allí tenemos, en unos solares yermos . . . y que como el dicho licenciado se fue sin lo poner en efecto y se proveyeron algunos regidores que tienen casas en la dicha plaza, no se han mudado, diciendo que reciben daño de quedar fuera de ella, y como vecino de la dicha ciudad me suplicó y pidió . . . que la dicha plaza no es de los vecinos que en ella viven, sino nuestra, la mandásemos mudar y asentar en los dichos solares que están junto a las dichas nuestras casas, pagando por ellos lo que costaron a la persona que los tiene, porque es lugar muy llano y conveniente para la plaza y en medio de dicha ciudad . . .*<sup>64</sup>

The runaway prose of the 16<sup>th</sup> century historic document preserved at the Archivo de Indias in Seville, establishes definitive reasons for the move. In the first place, it claims there was no water at the top of the hill where the Ponce de León land holdings were located.<sup>65</sup> The place had magnificent views, refreshing breezes, good drainage but apparently it lacked water, the most relevant sustenance substance the settlers needed. Without an accessible water source, no urban enclave could exist. Interestingly, the document makes no mention of the spring that exists close to where the Puerta de San Juan is presently located. In the second place, the problems presented by the public plaza location were quite imposing. It was not only located on one extreme of the area where the town could possibly developed, but the terrain's geography was inappropriate for development since it was situated on a ravine. Its location on the side of the steep hill not only limited its size, it also restricted future urban development around the space. Drainage was just one of the many problems of the site. Finally, it is interesting to note that some neighbors took the solution to the many

<sup>64</sup> Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla, Indiferente general, "Real cédula al obispo, oficiales y regidores de la ciudad de Puerto Rico para que estudien e informen si conviene o no reubicar la plaza" (CP, III, pp 190; 339-340. Published in: Ricardo E Alegría, *Documentos Históricos de Puerto Rico Volumen II 1517-1527*, p 681. The document is dated 15 November 1527. Translation into English: "At the time when the city was organized in the islet on a high location and the plaza ended up on the hillside and since there is no water on the high part of the hill many have settled on the base of the hill and now the plaza is at the end of the town and in a ravine and in a place that cannot be considered and I ordered our royal oidor Ayllon to study the plaza and move it if necessary and he saw it and agreed that it be moved to where our houses are constructed close to some empty lots . . . some *regidores* that built houses around the old plaza do not want to move and they say they are affected for they are not around the plaza any more and as the neighbors of the city have asked me . . . that said plaza does not belong to the neighbors . . . but ours to order its move to the empty lots close to our houses paying for them because it is a most convenient place, flat and in the middle of town . . ."

<sup>65</sup> Not all historians agree with this contention.

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problems into their own hands. Another *oídor* was directed to analyze the site. He positively recommended moving the center, paralleling what had happened in Caparra. By the time the above-quoted document was written, some settlers had already moved to the southeast area of the cathedral, around present day Plaza de Armas. This second move (the one from Caparra to the islet counting as the first one) is instructive for it clearly evidences the spunk and determination of the colonizers. It is easy to imagine the pressure they exerted upon the Crown, forcing decisions in order to make sure their investments (time and money) would produce the desired results.

It is probable the final move took place during the third and fourth decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The new area was originally conceived (when the Plaza de la Catedral was considered the urban heart) as the outskirts of town. This contention is evidenced by several facts. First, most of the houses and relevant buildings (cathedral, *casa del Cabildo* and Ponce de León *casa-torre* or *casa-fuerte*) either huddle or hover over the Plaza de la Catedral, close to the entrance from the sea, and along the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud. Second, in frank opposition to what the *Laws of Indies* mandated, the new public plaza faced the back of the church. Third, the cemetery was located in the northwest corner of the new plaza, seating prominently within the city center until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The new public plaza was larger in size than what has been preserved of the first one by the *fondeadero* (almost twice in length) and located on a flat terrain that made construction of structures around it much easier. As was the case with the Plaza de la Catedral, the idea was for the new space to serve as *plaza pública* and to anchor the most relevant buildings of the enclave. With time, the Casa del Ayuntamiento, Palacio de la Intendencia and Diputación Provincial were constructed around it, framing the iconic space that still plays a central role in the daily life of the city. It is probable the rest of the structures surrounding the space were houses until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

By the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the urban core's most relevant public point of reference was the Plaza de Armas and not the Plaza de la Catedral. However, the first public plaza continued to act as urban vestibule for many decades although it ceased to be the primary place it was originally intended to be. After the organization of its substitute, the idea of San Juan also transformed, for the city grew in other directions in an expansive manner, limited only by the cliffs on the north, the sea to the west, the bay on the south and, after the 17<sup>th</sup> century, by Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra on the east. The grid and not a linear urban organization became the instrument of choice. Urban and architectural developments are reflections of events shaped by culture and politics. From a settlement in the main island (Caparra), surrounded by mangroves and rocky outcrops, reflecting feudal urban ideas, the core was moved to the islet in close contact with the life-giving *fondeadero*. Further refinement of this location was needed in order to organize the city in a proper fashion. This fine-tuning proved to be essential in terms of the final urban enclave we know today. During these early stages, the guiding urban principles were the ones established by reason and experience. This liberal approach needed some guidelines which came into effect by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in the form of the *Laws of Indies*.

By the time the second location in the islet was decided, the settlers were still cautious about formal and definitive construction. Many probably felt it was best to wait before investing time, money and labor in a permanent building. They had moved from Caparra to the *fondeadero* sector, only to find out the place had its own insurmountable problems. Another move was needed in order to find the final, definitive place. Because of this state of affairs, construction during the period from 1525 to 1625 was limited. Physical development was protracted if compared to other Spanish cities in the American continent. The move to the islet took place between the years 1519 and 1521 and it is estimated that, at that time, the settlement consisted of about 80 houses, most of which were constructed of wood and roofed with straw and *yagüa* (palm leaves) in frank imitation of native constructions. By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the district had almost doubled in size and

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sheltered 170 families and 14 priests. In 1604, there were 300 houses made of *tapias* and *cantería* covered by *tejados* (wooden roofs) or flat brick and wooden beams (*azoteas de Cádiz*) and 120 *bohíos*.<sup>66</sup>

It took centuries for Old San Juan to achieve a healthy status as a city. Its sluggish early development, described by historians as a *period estático* (static period),<sup>67</sup> was the result of several historical conditions with poverty at the root of all evils. On 24 February 1534, Francisco Manuel de Lando described the urban core in the following fashion: *Esta ciudad es pauperísima y nada tiene para las obras públicas*.<sup>68</sup> Scarcity was so predominant that scores of settlers wanted to leave. A communication sent to Emperor Carlos I (Carlos V) – dated 23 February 1534 and signed by Manuel de Lando, Francisco Mexia, Bachiller de Castro, Juan García y Troche, Pedro de Espinosa, and Alonso de la Fuente – summarizes the state of mind of many living in the embryonic city:

*Las nuevas que del Perú é de otras tierras nuevas vienen, son tan estremadas [sic], que á los viejos hacen mover, cuanto más á los mancebos. Todos aquí están oprimidos de deudas y piensan marcharse. Es necesario venga muy presto el remedio.*

*De cuatro años acá siempre escribimos que la isla va despoblándose: el oro afloja, los indios se han acabado. En 1532 se descubrieron nacimientos de que se cojieron [sic] hasta 20,000 pesos de oro. Pensamos sería esta parte para que resucitase, y ha sucedido al contrario. Los vecinos fatigados de las tormentas del año de 1530 . . . [u]nos han huido, otros están presos, quienes en los montes, quienes hurtando barcos del servicio de la isla han marchado con sus negros sin saber á do van. Con esto y las nuevas del Perú no quedaría un vecino, sino se les atajara. . . .*<sup>69</sup>

*¡Dios me lleve al Perú!* (May God take me to Peru!) was the rallying cry of many who wanted to leave the Viejo San Juan in search of better opportunities elsewhere. Rich, more exotic locales intoned a siren's song that invited to leave the poverty stricken island.

Old San Juan was on the verge of becoming an abandoned town several times during the Conquest Period. The gold mines, the original main attraction to the island, were exhausted by the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This made the fledging city an unpopular location due to its lack of promising future for those wishing to make money out of the exploitation of the precious material. In fact, so many wanted to leave in order to try their luck at prosperous places like Peru that, in 1534, Governor Francisco Manuel de Lando decreed anyone caught leaving would be killed. Other governors followed suit. Although Draconian in manner this provision was needed in order to assure the Crown's investments. Finding settlers was not an easy task. People had to be married, *limpios de sangre* (not have any Jewish ancestors) and, if possible, they had to be *hijos de algo* or *hidalgos* (of noble birth). Probably de Lando and other government officials understood the difficulties of maintaining a thriving urban center. Forceful colonization was simply one the many tribulations.

<sup>66</sup> Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, pp 26-27.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p 55.

<sup>68</sup> Juan Bautista Muñoz, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo* (1793), "Extracto [sic] de varias cartas dirigidas al soberano de 1515 a 1555." Quoted in Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Biblioteca Histórica de Puerto Rico que contiene varios documentos de los siglos XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII*, p 302. Translation into English: "This city is extremely poor and has no funds for public works."

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 300-301. Translation into English: "The news from Peru and other territories are so fantastic that even the old want to go there, never mind the young people. Everyone here is in debt and all they think about is leaving the island. A remedy must come as soon as possible." "We have been writing for the last four years for people are leaving the island: the gold diminishes, the natives are gone. In 1532, new gold mines discovered produced 20, 000 gold pesos. We thought that would help to better conditions but the opposite has happened. The neighbors, apprehensive due to the 1530 storms . . . [s]ome have ran away; others are in prison, some are hidden in the mountains; others have stolen ships and have left with their Blacks to go God knows where. After all this and the news of Peru, not one neighbor would remain if they are not stopped."



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The island did not have the resources of other Spanish colonies. Governor Francisco Bahamonde y Lugo description, to be repeated time and time again throughout the centuries, is instructive: *Esta república es pobre y no tiene Propios*.<sup>70</sup> Periods of great scarcity and poverty were common until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A 17<sup>th</sup> century anonymous poem best describes the perennial dearth condition.

*Esta es Señora, una pequeña islilla  
falta de bastimientos [sic] y dineros  
andan los negros como en esa [Santo Domingo]  
y hay más gente en la cárcel e Sevilla.*

...  
*ay agua en los algibes [sic] si ha llovido,  
Iglesia catedral, clérigos pocos  
hermosas damas faltas de donaire,  
la ambición y la envidia han nacido  
mucho calor y sombra de los cocos  
y es lo mejor de todo un poco de ayre [sic].<sup>71</sup>*

Infighting also contributed to the unstable climate. The move to the islet was fraught in dissent for the head of the settlement, Juan Ponce de León, had opposed it and settlers had circumvented him in order to get to the king and state their complaints. The first years in the islet only brought more problems due to the inadequacies of the *fondeadero* location. Bickering forced the move to the islet and away from the *fondeadero* and it remained one of the few constants of the settlement.

Once settled in the islet, the inhabitants had to contend with people like Diego Colón (son of Christopher Columbus) who sought to exercise his right to have a say in the appointment of the *alcaldes* (mayors) and *alguaciles* (high constables).<sup>72</sup> Other factions, including the Crown, believed this important right was theirs. Legal misunderstandings continued to grow exponentially when a 1541 law made pastures, woodland and water in Puerto Rico public domain, a first step in the Crown's assertion that America was the personal property of the reigning Spanish king or queen. Squabbles between the ones who thought they were owners and the representatives of the Crown made life difficult in the young colony.

Devastating hurricanes visited the island during the early years after the foundation of the core. Mammoth ones came in the years 1515 and 1526 and another three came in 1530 in a span of only two months. Major ones also affected the city in the years 1537, 1568 and 1575. As expected, these phenomena brought ruin, desolation and devastation to the struggling colony, unprotected by modern conveniences such as radio and concrete and metal structures. It is no surprise such occurrences had the power to impede further urban

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, p 59. Translation into English: "This republic is poor and has no funds of its own." In 1703, even official paper was in short supply. Authorization was sought and granted to use ordinary paper for all official correspondence.

<sup>71</sup> Anonymous, 17th century (?). Quoted in Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, p 57. Translation into English: "Lady, this is a very small island / that has no provisions or money / the negroes [sic] are like the ones in Santo Domingo [known for their poverty] / and there are more people in jail than in Seville. / There is water in the wells if it rains / a cathedral for church but scarce clergy / beautiful ladies lacking grace / ambition and envy have grown / lots of heat and shadows from coconuts palm trees / the best of all is the breeze."

<sup>72</sup> Diego Colón's claim stemmed from his interpretation of the rights he inherited from his father. "Columbus had stipulated before his departure, and the Sovereign had agreed, that he would be appointed Admiral and Viceroy over all the lands he might discover, the former honour being transmittable to his heirs and successors in perpetuity; that he should recommend the names of three persons for each office in the new territories, from which the Sovereigns were to choose one; and that he should receive ten percent of the profits and have the privilege of supplying one-eighth of the cargo, in return for which he was to receive a further one-eighth of the profits." Eric Williams, *From Columbus to Castro The History of the Caribbean*, p 20. Unfortunately for Diego, the Crown changed its mind. Spain finally obtained this as well as other rights, as a result of which, until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the American colonies were considered the personal property of the monarch.

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development. Florida's first Spanish settlement, the original Pensacola, was destroyed by one such storm. It took centuries for the place to recover from its fate and start anew.

During the early decades, the small settlement also suffered constant incursions from the Arawaks and Caribs. Attacks started very early during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, a violent one took place in 1529. At this time, the core was a thriving center with 120 houses and a cathedral, a second church, and a convent (Iglesia de San José and Convento de los Dominicos) under construction. The fact that the natives attacked such a substantial settlement evidences their desperation regarding European occupation. It was not until the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the danger posed by the natives, whether local or visiting from neighboring islands, was eliminated from the settlers' long roster of hazards. Slaves revolted too. Two years before the natives' attack, in 1527, there was one such uprising.<sup>73</sup>

To add to the climate of instability, European pirates also launched attacks even before the threat posed by the natives disappeared. France started as early as 1528 and kept organized assaults until 1554. The English and Dutch followed suit. Given the fact that, during this stage, Old San Juan was the only town of substance, an attack to the island meant a siege to its main city. These European pirates, at times euphemistically described as privateers and buccaneers, were the bane of the locals until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Famous names, such as Sir John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake, set envious eyes on the small Spanish colony.

The British returned in 1598 under George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, who forced the capital's surrender only to abandon it five months later due to plagues of all kinds. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, more problems arose in the form of Dutch aggression. In 1625, General Boudewijn Hendriksz attacked the city, besieging it for days. In the end, his forces burned the urban core destroying more than 100 houses, the bishop's palace, the library, and the city archives. The Spanish counter offensive won the day and the Dutch departed leaving behind one ship and many dead. The last important incursion was the one staged by Sir Ralph Abercrombie in 1797. It ended, like all others, in defeat for the enemy and in triumph for the Spanish Crown. The city still treasures a memento of these attacks: the bronze sculpture of Juan Ponce de León which graces the Plaza de San José. According to Cayetano Coll y Toste, its material came from the melted abandoned British cannons. In spite of the 1797 British attack, the Dutch incursion of 1625 marked the end of an era for San Juan and initiated a period of relative calm. It also signaled the initiation of the holistic strategic defensive plan for the urban core.

La Fortaleza de Santa Catalina (Fortress of Saint Catherine), also known as La Fuerza (The Force), was the first defense artifact built in Old San Juan during the period from 1533 to 1540 with the objective of protecting the entrance to the bay. Rejected as useless by experts such as Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, who famously described the designers as blind men who could not see how illogical the location was, in 1540 the main defensive artifact was moved to the top of the *morro* (rocky outcrop) located at the eastern side of the bay entrance. With time this imposing and fierce war machine – the work of Italian and Spanish military designers, prisoners and slaves – came to be known as the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro (also known as the Fortaleza de San Felipe del Morro). Construction of the military defense of the city continued until 1609. Since the arrangements proved to be insufficient, it was decided to surround the city with a defensive wall started during the third decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The formal defensive architectural program was finished in 1771 with the inauguration of the Castillo de San Cristóbal (Fortaleza de San Cristóbal). At this time, the city did become an impregnable *plaza militar*, unique in the entire Western Hemisphere.

During the period Spain was organizing new urban enclaves in America, European cities had experienced a rebirth. The feudal system had withered away and the urban core was considered again, as in Greek and Roman times, the civilizing public stage that sheltered important buildings and offered a social framework for all

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p 66.

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kinds of services. Three different urban categories co-existed at this time. The first type was the enclave founded either before or by the Romans that survived, even if in a feeble manner, after the fall of the empire. Barcelona, Tarragona, London, Paris, and Rome, among others, are examples of this kind. The second category is the one formed by urban entities which developed around a nucleus – the castle of a feudal lord; a church; a geographic or social accident, like the intersection of two roads or the place where a market took place on certain days of the week; or along the principal pilgrimage or commercial maritime routes – during the Middle Ages. An example of this variety is Madrid. The third and more limited (in terms of numbers) is the French bastide,<sup>74</sup> medieval fortified towns planned according to the principles of the Roman *castra* (military camps). In the islet there were no Roman cities to use as the basis for the new centers. Pilgrimage and formal commercial routes were also non-existent,<sup>75</sup> as was also the case with feudal castles or markets which served as embryo for some European urban entities. No professional groups, such as guilds, existed that could collaborate in the organization of services to be provided. The delicate native “touch”<sup>76</sup> probably fostered the idea that there were no limits to possible expansion except the ones provided by topography.

During the early decades of the Conquest Period there was much improvisation and experimentation. Quite rapidly, however, a new interpretation to city living was generated, profoundly influenced by Renaissance ideas and peninsular urban expressions. Spanish colonial cores in America evidence four phases of territorial organization.<sup>77</sup> The first one is the Columbian organization, guided by the *Capitulaciones de Santa Fe* of 1492, the contract between Queen Isabel and King Fernando and Christopher Columbus. All settlements established under its aegis were considered *factorías* (factories), centers for the extraction of minerals. The goal of this type of organization was principally utilitarian since settlements were to serve as 16<sup>th</sup> century “workers towns.” Caparra can be considered an example of the type since most activities centered on gold mining. (In fact, the location of the mines was instrumental in the choice of the site.) When the settlement moved to the islet, it transformed in a radical manner: from a “workers town” it became a full-fledged, albeit small in the beginning, urban center that embraced varied activities, not just mining and agriculture.

The second phase of Spanish territorial organization is known as Ovandina and is dated to the year 1502. The name derives from Friar Nicolás de Ovando who was first governor of Santo Domingo and in charge of colonizing missions in America. This urban scheme is based on the idea of colonizing territory by means of:

*. . . la repartición de tierras, estímulo del mestizaje, elección de alcaldes y mejoramiento de vida por mérito. En adelante, toda tierra que fuera explorada y que tuviera los recursos adecuados para establecerse en ella, podría ser poblada, por capitulación o por comisión. Una vez conquistado el territorio, podía fundarse una ciudad.*<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Bastides were new settlements constructed during the 13<sup>th</sup> century with the goal of colonizing certain isolated parts of France. The inhabitants of a bastide were not subject to the rule of a feudal lord because residence within the organism guaranteed complete freedom from such ties. It can be established that these enclaves were equivalent to the contemporary version of a new town. In fact, many bastides are still known by this name. Most were organized following the reticular arrangements of the Roman *insulae* (orthogonal city blocks).

<sup>75</sup> There must have existed native communication routes, possibly commercial, and maybe even markets in the island. Their nature, however, was quite different from the European counterparts or the ones found in places like Tenochtitlán.

<sup>76</sup> While the concept of “near invisibility” is questioned by some historians, the Puerto Rican natives’ presence in the islet, as of today, can certainly be defined as light. This is evidenced by the fact that only two prehistoric settlements have been found in the small isle. Both are dated before to the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>77</sup> Francisco Muñoz Espejo, “Estudio sobre el urbanismo colonial y las fortificaciones hispanoamericanas con relación de los principales itinerarios culturales de comunicación (caminerías reales y rutas comerciales interoceánicas)” *Comité Español del Consejo Internacional de Monumentos y Sitios* (Toledo, Spain: Seminario Internacional de Ciudades Históricas Iberoamericanas, 2001), p 4. Digital source: [www.esicomos.org](http://www.esicomos.org).

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p 5. Translation into English: “[T]he partitioning of land, stimulus of interracial unions, election of mayors and betterment of life on the basis of personal merit. From this moment forward, all explored land with adequate resources could be settled, either by means of a *capitulación* (commission). Once the territory was conquered, a city could be founded.”

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The resulting morphology is based on Classical ideas, such as the Greek urban grid and Roman *castrum*. The paradigm depends on straight roads, rectangular or square blocks and a central plaza known as the *plaza mayor* (principal plaza). The *iglesia mayor* (principal church) and the *ayuntamiento* (mayor's house) or *cabildo* (town council) buildings help define this public space. Originally, only the *ayuntamiento* was required to be close to the plaza although, with time, it became traditional for the church to be also located in its periphery. The settlement by the *fondeadero* generally followed this scheme, although a linear organization was principally used for the organization of the enclave.

The third stage is the *Plan de Ordenamiento Urbano para las Indias* (Urban Plan for the Indies) decreed by Emperor Felipe II and approved by the Consejo de Indias (Council of Indies) in 1573. This model, known as the *Laws of Indies*, incorporated Ovandian concepts as well as traditional guidelines present in existing peninsular regulations, such as the *Ordenanzas de Sevilla* (Seville Ordinances). Italian Renaissance theories regarding ideal cities were also integrated to its philosophical perspective.

The Renaissance's obsession with the idealization of urban life – paradigmatically represented by means of a centralized urban core where the relevant religious, political and social strata symbolically merged – was this model's most relevant precedent. Even though the period's ideals provided urban inspiration for Old San Juan and the *Laws of Indies* in general, there is no specific example that can be hailed as direct precedent. During the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Spain had yet to travel down the road of Renaissance urban ideals. Even Italy, the cradle of all that was considered *avant garde*, was still experimenting at this time. In spite of this reality, some of the urban concepts explored in the district echo Italian ideals dated to the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. One such influence is the insistence and preeminence given to public squares. Another one is the use of the gridiron to organize the urban core. Since Classical times (Priene and Pergamum in Greece are two of the earliest examples), the grid proved to be a most flexible instrument, adapting to all kinds of sites and terrains. Its *regla y cordel* (ruler and cord) approach proved to be definitive to the personality of the Viejo San Juan. The advantages of the Philipian orderly model established by the *Laws of Indies* were many. Most importantly, large areas of virginal territory could be systematically organized for the glory of Spain.

### ***El modelo de Felipe II***

*El modelo Filipino plantea como principio esencial una óptima selección del lugar para ubicar las poblaciones al disponer que no se debían ocupar tierras con asentamientos de indios para construir ciudades, ya que ello podría traer perjuicios culturales de convivencia.*

*Este modelo considera como tarea primordial para construir una ciudad el trazado de la Plaza Mayor a eje y cordel, con definición de las calles, solares y cuadras, y con especificación distintiva entre caminos, calles y carreras principales. Así mismo dispone que de la plaza salgan cuatro calles principales destinadas al comercio.*

*Las ciudades costeras deben contar con plazas portuarias o embarcaderos, en una proporción de un largo de ancho y uno y medio de lado. En los lugares cálidos se dispone la construcción de calles angostas para que las edificaciones permitan un rápido sombreado, y en los sitios fríos calles anchas que faciliten la entrada e irradiación de los escasos rayos solares.<sup>79</sup>*

<sup>79</sup> *Idem.* Translation into English: "The Philip II model: The Philipian model has as its principal goal the selection of the best site available to create settlements by establishing that the lands occupied by the natives were not to be settled since cultural prejudices could arise because of their proximity." "This model considers that the first task in the building of a city is to create the principal plaza following a straight axis and straight lines, with a definition of streets, lots and blocks, and with specificity regarding roads, streets and principal streets. At the same time, it ordered that four streets are to be located around the plaza and that these be dedicated to commercial activity." "The cities located in the coast must have a port-plaza or *embarcadero* with a proportion of 1:1.5. In hot climates streets should be narrow so that shadows help cool the environment and in cold places wide so that the scarce sun rays can enter and provide heat."

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The *Laws of Indies* took the form of a legal body that included 148 ordinances. Their ultimate goal was to systematize the organization of urban towns, whether *presidios* (military towns), *misiones* (missions), or *pueblos* (towns) in America. Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the fourth development phase of Spanish territorial organization – the Carlos III's *Plan de Reformas Urbanas* (Carlos III Plan of Urban Reforms) – was generated, the *Laws of Indies* provided the theoretical urban frame for most of the Hispanic-American settlements.

After the enactment of the *Laws of Indies*, the legal corps liberally guided the development of the core. The analysis of some of its tenements sheds light upon how the social, urban, political, cultural and architectural goals were met after their enactment. After establishing in Article 36 that converting “Indians” [*sic*] was “the principal objective for which we mandate these discoveries and settlements be made,” the bylaws codified the following issues: (i) the selection of the settlement site, (ii) planning and design strategies instrumental to the organization of the enclave, and (iii) composition and location of the varied buildings and areas. According to the *Laws of Indies*, the ideal location for a town was characterized by:

. . . an elevated and healthy location; with means of fortification; fertile soil with plenty of land for farming and pasturage; [must] have fuel; timber and resources; fresh water; a native population; ease of transportation, access and exit; open to the north wind; and, on the coast, due consideration should be paid to the quality of the harbor and that the sea does not lie to the south or west; and if possible not near lagoons or marshes in which poisonous animals and polluted air and water breed.<sup>80</sup>

The regulations also mandated urban cores were to be organized around a plaza that was to measure in length at least 1.5 times its width. Due to the early date of their creation, both the Plaza de la Catedral and the Plaza de Armas closely follow the Golden Rule proportional scheme rather than the *Laws of Indies* specific recommendation. The mandated size created an open area of adequate size where *fiestas* (celebrations), including bullfighting, could be celebrated. The space would also provide a communal gathering place and an area for open markets. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Plaza de Armas in Old San Juan was also known as the Plaza de las Verduras (Produce Plaza or Vegetable Plaza) since the vegetable market was located here on certain days. A most important role played by the central square was to serve as urban anchor. All relevant buildings – the church, town hall, jail, hospital – facing the plaza were to sport *pórticos* or *portales* (porticoes, portals or loggias) in order to create a continuous and protected public area surrounding the space.

An orthogonal grid, with blocks that slightly vary in size, was imposed upon the hilly terrain of the western part of the islet as a direct result of the enactment of the *Laws of Indies*. As mentioned, the core is one of the earliest urban examples of the Spanish use of the *regla y cordel* (ruler and cord) urban approach, which was to become the philosophical basis of the *Laws of Indies*. The grid provided standardization by fragmenting the organism into diverse perspectives which, at a later date, offered relief from the constricting defensive belt, in exactly the same manner as Classical Priene (Greece), where the first grid designed by Hippodamus of Miletus was used. The Viejo San Juan's is the oldest example of the use of this matrix in the island and the United States.

The urban grid has a long and distinguished history stemming all the way back to Classical Greece.<sup>81</sup> The grid was also the favorite urban tool of the Roman Empire, used repeatedly whether organizing an *urbis* (city) or a

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in: Spiro Kostof, *A History of Architecture Settings and Rituals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p 444.

<sup>81</sup> Aristotle (*Pol.* 2. 5) granted authorship of the idea to Greek Hippodamus of Miletus, in spite of the fact that the matrix was used in some Greek cities, like Smyrna and Megara, before Hippodamus' interventions in: (i) Miletus and Priene (Turkey), (ii) Thurii (Italy), and (iii) Piraeus (Athens' city port). All these urban cores were intervened during the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth, *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p 711.

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*castrum* (military camp).<sup>82</sup> The paradigm was borrowed from the European past and brought to America where it was transformed into a sacred mandala aimed at the creation of an ideal place, an icon that represented the intersection of the religious, political and social spheres. The fractal relationship between the block and the whole provided the anchor for daily life away from the peninsula; its orderly and standardized scheme served as a permanent reminder of the Crown's control of daily life. The orthogonal arrangement of straight lines also created the perfect military artifact facilitating movement and accessibility. In spite of all possible theoretical precedents, the designers of Old San Juan formulated their own urban theories, undoubtedly inspired by European concepts but also responding to the reality found in the islet. This resulted in the unique urban arrangement.

European urban and architectural conventions, whether physical or theoretical in nature, had to be recreated in order to generate a proper cultural landscape for the settlers to thrive. While Italy was still experimenting with varied Renaissance urban design concepts, Spain decided to organize its new borderland in the American continent with a uniform urban morphology. The Viejo San Juan, Havana (Cuba), Panamá la Vieja (Panama), Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), among others, received the most inflexible of treatments: the "ruler and cord" approach. The urban personality of the American enclaves had nothing in common with traditional European ones. Cramped, irregular urban enclaves framed reality in the Spanish peninsula. Nevertheless, it was decided that the orthogonal urban matrix was best suited for *la otra España* (the other Spain). Old San Juan and scores of other Spanish urban cores in America confirm the need for order and class and ethnic definition. These orderly grids, reflecting Classical theories infused with Renaissance principles, made possible for the American enclaves to guarantee proper social, political, religious and cultural stages for everyday life.

A new twist to city living was explored: the use of the urban grid as an instrument for *de facto* segregation of the varied social strata. The regimented urban scheme strictly enforced the apartheid system which governed Spanish presence in Puerto Rico. The orthogonal grid has been described by some as democratic in essence, a judgment that may be reflective of the fact that it was a Greek creation and that, usually, all blocks have the same size. In America, however, Spanish grids were democratic only because they tried to create the illusion of an ideal place. The rigid pattern was used not so much as an egalitarian tool but as a mandala of power. Michel Foucault has explained that power: "[D]oes not link forces together in order to reduce them; it seeks to bind them together in such a way as to multiply and use them. Instead of bending all its subjects into a single uniform mass, it separates, it analyses, differentiates, carries its procedures of decomposition to the point of necessary and sufficient single units." Following this interpretation, in the Viejo San Juan the "single uniform mass" approach was rejected in favor of "units" (city blocks) which "decompose" the city organism. In this manner, "differentiation" – whether political, social or ethnic – could easily be achieved.<sup>83</sup>

The lots around the central plaza were reserved for relevant uses, including both domestic and public buildings and its periphery was the favored place for the houses of the *españoles* or *peninsulares* (people from Spain) and, at a later date, of the rich *criollos* (creoles). This was still the case until the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, the Casino Español and the Ateneo, two elite social and cultural organizations, were located in elegant houses in front of the Plaza de Armas. Until the early decades of that century, the "Others" – as can be surmised from the 1776 plan created by Thomas O'Daly, Abbad y Lasierra's description of the city, and several historic 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries plans – lived outside the gridded area, in sectors described during the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the following manner: *Las casas de esta construcción están a los extremos de la Ciudad, y*

<sup>82</sup> Ferdinando Castagnoli classified the use of the urban grid by the Romans into five categories: (i) the examples deriving from Hippodamean ideas, (ii) the ones exhibiting intersecting axes, (iii) the cores depicting an axial plan which evidences the military camp influence, (iv) the centers exhibiting an axial plan and divisions created by moats, and (v) the military camp proper.

<sup>83</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p 170. The terms "single uniform mass," "unit," "decompose," and "differentiation" are used by Foucault.

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*aunque dentro de los muros, se pueden considerar como arrabales.*<sup>84</sup> A century later, these groups inhabited places which sported *inculto* (uncultured) names (Alejandro Tapia y Rivera *dixit*) such as Culo Prieto and Hoyo Vicioso. This urban dichotomy was evidenced in most towns in the island, a pattern followed in all Hispanic America. The grid “separated” rather than unified. The interpretation of the district as a tight, cohesive unit is the result of the constricting circuit of defensive walls which controlled expansion by multiplication, the most important characteristic of the gridiron.

The orthogonal matrix is democratic only in terms of the standardized size of its blocks, something missing in Old San Juan where the blocks vary in size. An 1880 copy of a 1771 plan clearly depicts how the urban development took place in the areas away from the heart of the enclave.<sup>85</sup> The farther away the grid was from the center of power that was the Plaza de Armas, the more it deconstructed and the larger the urban blocks became. The Foucaultian “reality of power” managed for centuries to create a silent social challenge, evidenced by means of the urban physiognomy. The “Others” refused to accept the “ruler and cord” organization and, for some time, the authorities ignored this rejection due to the fact that the areas were not considered important parts of the enclave. As a result, the eastern ends of the Calle del Sol and Calle de la Luna, located between the 18<sup>th</sup> century city and third line of defense, defied the traditional façade-street relationship present throughout the rest of the enclave by means of which houses opened directly onto the street (now sidewalks). With time, as the city grew, the streets of the area were formally platted. Since some façades did not align, small gardens were inserted between them and the street proper. This is how evidence of the former deconstruction of the orthogonal grid in the areas far away from the center of power was preserved and larger city blocks came to exist. While the oldest sectors evidence a tight, standardized and rigid approach in terms of the grid, as the city grew it was organized in large irregular blocks. This is the reason the capacity of the blocks dramatically differs, from 10 to 39 *parcelas* (lots) while the size varies from 1,000 to 10,000 square meters.<sup>86</sup> The Campo de Santiago (Plaza de Colón), an open empty field until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is another example of the grid’s deconstruction. In this particular case, the area reflected the decreased social relevance of a place considered to be on the outskirts of town and exclusively of military consequence.

Old San Juan was founded half a century before the enactment of the *Laws of Indies*. The urban core was, therefore, a laboratory where urban notions were experimented with, decades before official regulations were ratified. This fact increases exponentially its international and national cultural significance. In the absence of concrete rules, it is probable inspiration came from many sources, such as traditions and theoretical interpretation regarding the representation of power in a three-dimensional manner. The resulting experimental paradigm of the core rests on a complex and utopian philosophical background expected to provide the basis for the “taming” of America and, in this case, the islet. In spite of this reality, its design reveals a high degree of rationality in terms of its urban philosophy, symbolic of the socio-political order it framed. The regular scheme, with its geometric blocks where buildings are surrounded by streets, was the perfect model of organization, formally separating pedestrian and vehicular circulations from the built areas. As mentioned, the city bears strong similarities with Priene and Miletus, two of the Greek cities intervened by

<sup>84</sup> Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra, *Historia geográfica, civil y política de la Isla de S Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Imprenta y Librería de Acosta, 1856), pp 211-212. Translation into English: “The houses of [this type of] construction are located in the outskirts of the city and, even though they are inside the defensive circuit, they can be considered slums.”

<sup>85</sup> The copy was prepared by Francisco J de Zaragoza(?) and dated 9 December 1880. The American administration copied the copy dating it to 16 October 1908. The original third copy is housed at NARA (RG 71 75 “Plano de la Plaza de San Juan de Puerto Rico y sus ymediaciones [sic]”). Arleen Pabón Charneco, “*Por la encendida calle antillana: Africanisms and Puerto Rico Architecture*” *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* (National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, Volume I Number 1 Fall 2003), pp 14-32.

<sup>86</sup> Oficina Estatal de Conservación Histórica, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, Comisión del Quinto Centenario del Descubrimiento de Puerto Rico, “Estudio de revitalización integral del centro histórico de San Juan” (San Juan de Puerto Rico, 1992), Tomo V: Estudio de Tipologías, p 9.

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Hippodamus. All three have topographic profiles defined by irregular (due to the geography of the site) defensive wall perimeters and grid patterns organizing the interiors. In Old San Juan, the landscape modified the matrix's regularity and deconstructed its rigidity. It also plays a protagonist role. The often repeated description of the historic district's resemblance to an amphitheater, when contemplated from the bay, is the result of the dramatic terrain, kept in check by this millennia-old urban type of organization.

According to Foucault, power "produces reality," as well as "domains of objects and rituals of truth." In the Viejo San Juan, the urban organization obtained with the grid was an instrument aimed at creating a physical domain that would actively keep reality in check. Citizens were to emulate the strict "ruler and cord" grid that served as stage for their daily life. Thus, the enclave can be interpreted as: "[A] diagram of power that acts by means of general visibility."<sup>87</sup> The orthogonal matrix created a highly visible scheme of how power worked and how the inhabitants were expected to conduct their daily lives. Interestingly, the general visibility of the straight axes was highly symbolic of the expected straight as a rod moral and social behavior. In a colony that had as its main responsibility to guard the hemisphere, even if it was months away from Madrid, tight control was a must: everyone and everything needed to maintain its carefully established place. In the Viejo San Juan, the sources of power utilized the location of churches, plazas, convents, fortifications, domestic areas for the diverse social classes, cemeteries and, at a later date, asylums and urban promenades, within a strict urban grid to organize daily life, social castes and also gender interaction within the walled precinct.<sup>88</sup> The grid was the most important of all the instruments used to manipulate the lives of thousands for centuries. It was an icon of the government's control over the population and of the desire to systematically organize the settlement. The gridiron created a stage that made possible civilized life according to Spanish culture in the *ultramar* (beyond the sea) city on the other side of the ocean. In conjunction with what is preserved of the stone embrace provided by the military architecture, the grid is the main protagonist in the urban theater that is Old San Juan.

The goal was to create a functional city that would work in an orderly fashion, particularly as a military plaza. This objective remained constant throughout the centuries. As late as the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an official comment regarding plans for the alignment of some streets established that the expansion had to be: *conforme a buena y arreglada población y sin ofensa de la fortificación*.<sup>89</sup> The width and configuration of the streets, as well as the urban blocks that measured approximately 100 *varas*,<sup>90</sup> complied with military requirements in the same manner as did the height of the walls encircling the core.

## THE CONQUEST PERIOD ARCHITECTURE

The earliest preserved architectural artifacts in Old San Juan exhibit characteristics from both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The Ponce de León residence and the Fortaleza de Santa Catalina duplicated medieval

<sup>87</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish The Birth of the Prison*, pp 171, 194.

<sup>88</sup> The Old San Juan typical interior domestic space arrangement also responds to these conventions. The *enfildade* (shotgun room arrangement) model formed of multipurpose *aposementos* (multi-functional rooms) restricted female privacy within the home, carefully monitoring her role, as did the tightly social and religious guidelines prevalent at the time. The preferred roof solution, the *azoteas de Cádiz* (flat roofs) or *terrados* (roof terraces) made no sense in a humid and tropical climate but they provided one of the few open spaces where women could enjoy open air activities. Until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (some may contest this date and suggest the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), balconies were also used as agents of social ordering. While Old San Juan never imitated Lima, where women were imposed a kind of *pardah* and balconies included shutters in order to protect female decorum, appearances in these open spaces was rigidly controlled by social mores. Arleen Pabón Charneco, "La ciudad del puerto Rico Reinterpretando los artefactos urbanos y arquitectónicos del viejo San Juan," *Patrimonio* (San Juan de Puerto Rico, 2010), Volume 1, p 52.

<sup>89</sup> *Actas del Cabildo de San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico 1815-1817*, quoted in María de los Ángeles, *Arquitectura en San Juan de Puerto Rico (siglo XIX)* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Editorial Universitaria, 1980), p 134. Translation into English: "In a good and orderly fashion and without negatively impacting the fortifications."

<sup>90</sup> A *vara* (pole or rod) was a Spanish unit of length measuring approximately 83.52 centimeters. In 1568, Felipe II – who royally commanded an official *vara* be kept in Burgos – made it a standard measurement.



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ideas found in the Spanish *casa-torre* or *casa-fuerte*, as well as the castle architectural typologies. They both exhibit characteristic introverted personality, crenellations and, in the case of the second one, round defensive towers in the manner of a French *donjon*. The two churches initiated during the period, the Catedral de San Juan Bautista and Iglesia de Santo Domingo, replicated the European Gothic and Decorated Gothic in the first spaces that were erected. Embracing the by then centuries-old tradition of Gothic aesthetics, masonry was used to create ribbed vaults with pointed arches in frank imitation of European models. The lack of skilled laborers during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, however, obliged the designers to cover the masonry work with stucco.<sup>91</sup> At the same time and while medieval patterns were used as precedents, Early Renaissance or Quattrocento concepts were incorporated in the Convento de Santo Domingo. Two of these were the semicircular arcaded loggias surrounding the open patio and the full-fledged *cortile*, architectural motifs that the likes of Filippo Brunelleschi and Michelozzo Michelozzi<sup>92</sup> had made fashionable during the early decades of the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Florence. As mentioned, the use of a centralized communal plaza and the orthogonal grid were also inspired by the humanist perspective characteristic of the age.

The turbulent socio-political period in the Viejo San Juan was interested in a plurality of construction expressions and semantics, from Decorated Gothic ribbed vaults to Renaissance motifs and architectural morphologies. This “best of two worlds” architectural attitude reflects the stylistic situation within the peninsula. At the time, Spain was divesting from its ponderous medieval architectural garb in order to embrace Italian Renaissance theories. In other words, peninsular architecture was experiencing a stylistic transition. A noted Spanish architectural historian has described the aesthetic displacement between Spain and Italy as a syndrome, the *habitual retraso* (habitual delay).<sup>93</sup> In the district replication of known concepts and ideals was the basic goal, guaranteeing a decorous and traditional architectural artifact that, like a rhizome, could act as a reminder of the land beyond the sea. In spite of the fact that they served as direct sources of inspiration, European architectural fashions were not followed in a strict manner. As a result, during the first stage of development, Classically-derived concepts made popular by the Renaissance, such as symmetry and regularity, impacted local designs in a limited manner.

This initial aesthetic collusion disappeared with time. There is ample evidence that throughout the four centuries plus of its existence the Viejo San Juan was always intimately attuned to architectural trends and ideas. Regarding this issue it is interesting to read Alejandro Tapia y Rivera’s comments about the 19<sup>th</sup> century design of the Teatro Tapia, at the time known as the Coliseo Municipal. He commented that instead of a theater these second rate professionals had created a restrictive *casa-fuerte* (fort-house) with a façade that made the building look *gacho* (lopsided) and, as such, defective. *Se planeó hacer de tres pisos pero como lo dirigían ingenieros militares, no solo hicieron el edificio una casa fuerte, con gruesos murallones que se comían la mayor parte del local, sino que arrepentidos del plano . . . le suprimieron a última hora el 3º o 4º pisos, dejándolo como está; de lo que resultó bastante gacho.*<sup>94</sup>

During the Conquest Period, however, there were too many distractions and uncertainties accompanied by limited funding, to strictly follow European architectural fashions. Experts were limited and when they visited the island they attended the more pressing concerns of the all-important defense system. Nevertheless, the

<sup>91</sup> The 19<sup>th</sup> century painting of black lines that imitate isodomic masonry construction visible in historic photographs probably replicates historic treatments.

<sup>92</sup> Brunelleschi used the loggia at the Ospedale degli Innocenti and Michelozzo the *cortile* in the Palazzo Medici-Ricardi. Both structures are located in Florence, Italy and belong to the Quattrocento.

<sup>93</sup> Javier Hernando, *Arquitectura en España 1770-1900* (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedras, 1989), p 233.

<sup>94</sup> Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo dejo*, p 89. Translation into English: “Originally, it was meant to have three floors but since it was designed by military engineers not only did they make a fort house with wide walls that occupied most of the interior spaces, they changed their minds about the height which supposedly presented an obstacle to the defense of the Fortress of San Cristóbal and eliminated the third or fourth floors, leaving it as it is; which resulted in a lopsided building. This defect has been reduced presently excavating the floor in order to gain from under what was lost higher up.”

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abandonment of the Gothic pointed arch and ribs, took place relatively early, evidencing knowledge and acceptance of Renaissance ideals. An Englishman described the urban core at this time in the following fashion:

The Towne [*sic*] consisteth [*sic*] of many large streets, the houses are built after the Spanish manner, of two stories height onely [*sic*], but very strongly, and the rooms are goodly and large, with great doors instead of windows for receipt of aire [*sic*], which for the most part of the day wanteth [*sic*] never.

The Towne in circuit is not so bigge [*sic*] as Oxford, but very much bigger then all Portesmouth [*sic*] within the fortifications, and in sight much fayrer [*sic*]. In all this space there is very little lost ground; for they have been still building, insomuch as that within these three yeeres [*sic*], it is augmented one fourth part. . . . The situation of this place is exceedingly delightfull [*sic*]: it standeth [*sic*] upon an easie [*sic*] hanging of a hill inclosed [*sic*] on three parts well neere [*sic*] by the Sea.<sup>95</sup>

The oft-repeated description of houses built in the “Spanish manner” describes introverted houses that did not sport a great amount of decorative details in their exterior. At this point in time, domestic architecture in Spain was profoundly influenced by Moorish architectural ideas. Simplicity, intimacy and minimalism were the most admired architectural characteristics of this ethnic architectural approach. Public architecture, in turn, depended on a *mélange* of ideas and interests, reflecting the influence of varied aesthetics semantics.

There is a small group of contributing properties in Old San Juan that belongs to this bilingual period, when Medieval and Renaissance ideals and semantics vied for preference. The group includes the: Iglesia de San José, Catedral de San Juan Bautista, Ponce de León *Casa-Torre* and Fortaleza de Santa Catalina, now embedded in the Palacio de Santa Catalina. These examples are culturally significant and contributing elements because they embody types (convent and *casa-torre*), period (Gothic, Decorated Gothic and Renaissance), and method of construction (*tapiería* and *cantería*, two of the earliest constructions techniques use by the Spanish in America) unique in Puerto Rico and the United States.

### ARCHITECTURAL EXAMPLES OF THE USE OF MEDIEVAL SEMANTICS (1525-1625)

There exist three contributing properties in the district that used medieval semantics by means of two European architectural typologies: the church and the *casa-torre* or *casa-fuerte* (tower-house or fort-house). The ecclesiastical examples used the Gothic and Decorated Gothic in order to create majestic spiritual icons. The Ponce de León family, in turn, favored a typology stemming from medieval castles. While it did serve as a residence, it was also conceived to defend a family (and, at times, some settlers). Masonry ribs, stellar/lierne vaulting and crenellations, among many other semantic components, were imported from Europe and brought to the virginal islet to create buildings that reflected the Spanish agenda.

#### Iglesia de San José (Parcela 15, Block 3)

Located at the northernmost section of the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud, the Iglesia de San José was started in 1532, under the aegis of Dominican friar Pedro Antonio de Montesinos. By 1575, the building appeared in a map of the city authored by Juan Escalante de Mendoza. Known until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the Iglesia Conventual de Santo Domingo (Conventual Church of St Dominic), it served as temple of the annexed Convento de Santo Tomás de Aquino (St Thomas of Aquinas Convent) sheltering the Dominican Order.<sup>96</sup> When the order left the island during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the convent was used by various

<sup>95</sup> Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and others* (Glasgow: MacLehose & Sons, 1907), Volume XVI, pp 71- 72.

<sup>96</sup> While some historians establish that the name change took place in 1863, others claim it happened in 1858.

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religious groups until the Spanish government transformed the cloister into military barracks. The change in use and name – from Iglesia de Santo Domingo and Iglesia de Santo Tomás de Aquino to Iglesia de San José – are symbolic of the 19<sup>th</sup> century political turmoil experienced in Spain and Puerto Rico. In 1858, the church was given to the Jesuits.<sup>97</sup> While the restoration of the Spanish autocratic monarchy was instrumental in the return of the Church property, the local government kept the old convent.

The interpretation of the basilica façade relies on a simple yet elegant gable crowned by a sumptuous cornice characteristic of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Spanish temples in America. The incorporation of the simple *piñón rectilíneo o mixtilíneo* (rectilinear or curved upper façade)<sup>98</sup> disguises the different nave heights. In spite of having three naves, there is only one entrance on the main façade, visually anchored by a small arched opening which, in turn, is topped by a quatrefoil window. There were three other doors to access the interior: two facing the small Plazoleta de Santo Domingo (Plaza de San José) along the south and a third one connecting the temple to the convent, providing a private entrance for the friars. One of the doors facing the Plaza de San José belongs to the chapter house, located on the southwestern corner of the building. This location established intimate contact between the space and urban context, a creative novelty for, usually, chapter houses were located in more private areas.

The interior is organized by means of three longitudinal naves. Lierne<sup>99</sup> or stellar vaults, of the type used during the Decorated Gothic, cover the main altar, crossing, and the two bays on both sides of this last space. Each vault has several such elements in addition to the traditional ribs present in quadripartite Gothic vaulting. A vernacular adaptation is the absence of the main longitudinal ridge rib. Terracotta vases were placed between the two masonry skins forming the vaults. This Mediterranean structural solution allows for a wide vault capable of supporting momentum forces yet lighter in weight than if solidly built of stone. The origins of this construction technique go all the way back to Ancient Rome.

Strict adherence to medieval ideals was underscored by the annexation of the temple to the convent for during the Renaissance, churches were conceived as independent artifacts that principally served the city. It is possible that the Iglesia de San José location on the outskirts of town, the convenience of a garden and *hortus* around the complex<sup>100</sup> and the need for a temple to serve the convent made the at the time modern concept of an independent church problematic. In addition, it took some time for Spain and the rest of Europe to shed its Gothic vestments, even in the face of Italian Renaissance ideas, as the use of the liernes and pointed arches evidence.

As was the case with most Old San Juan churches, the main nave sported a temporary wooden roof until the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the present barrel vault was erected. When funding was again available to continue construction, the Gothic stellar vault arrangement was abandoned in favor of a Renaissance/Proto-Baroque barrel vault with a creative clerestory inserted in its base. This organization owes much to Cinquecento and Baroque examples, such as San Giorgio Maggiore (Venice) by Andrea Palladio and Il Gesù (Rome) by Domenico da Fontana and Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola.

Although built of stone, the structure was completely stuccoed to protect the relatively frail local limestone from the humidity, sea air, and daily tear and wear. Construction details of the stellar vaults evidence the masons

<sup>97</sup> After the Jesuits, the St Vicente de Paul order took charge of the structure. Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico A Guide to the Island of Boriquén* (New York: The University Society Inc, 1940), p 208. The building presently belongs to the Catholic Church of Puerto Rico.

<sup>98</sup> A similar solution is found in Havana buildings, such as the Iglesia de San Francisco de Paula. Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX*, p 127.

<sup>99</sup> A lierne is a tertiary rib uniting two other vault ribs. It is a characteristic element of the lierne or stellar vaults.

<sup>100</sup> Originally, the land belonging to the complex extended towards the east to the sector where the Plaza del Mercado building was constructed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. To the west, it ended close to where the 19<sup>th</sup> century Manicomio is presently located.

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were not up to par with European specialized master builders. This architectural naiveté grants the spaces a high degree of significance for they are testimony of local adaptations of European structural and aesthetic expressions. The stucco was painted to provide a pseudo-isodomonic rustication effect and with very early mural paintings of religious figures discovered under one of the stucco layers years ago. Roses decorate the Capilla del Rosario (Rosary Chapel) and sirens also make an appearance in the frescoes, as well as assorted divinities.

The crypt areas, located under the main altar and the main nave, reflect a European tradition, providing burial areas within the temple to distinguished members of the community. The Ponce de León family donated the land where the church and the convent stand with the expectation that the temple would be their final resting place.<sup>101</sup> Honoring his request, Ponce de León remains were brought from Cuba in 1559 by his grandson and interred in the church<sup>102</sup> where they remained until 1909 when, as part of the commemorations of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “discovery” of America and Puerto Rico, they were moved to the Catedral de San Juan Bautista.

The Iglesia San José<sup>103</sup> is one of two examples of Gothic (as opposed to Neo-Gothic) vaulting in the district and one of two buildings erected in the style in the United States. (The other one is the Catedral de San Juan Bautista.) The stellar Decorated Gothic vaults are the only ones of their kind in the district, island and United States. For centuries, the property has played the urban role of organizing and defining the northern boundary of city, maintaining and intimate connection with both the Plaza de San José and Convento de los Dominicos. It has the status of an urban terminus since the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud, known by many as the “Calle Museo”<sup>104</sup> (Museum Street) for the number of historically relevant buildings that line it, starts in front of the temple. Particularly relevant is the church’s urban connection to the Plaza San José which is still preserved. At the time of its construction, temples were surrounded by atria that – on many occasions – also served as burial grounds. This physical reality has been preserved, as well as the Convento de los Dominicos, the church’s *raison d’être*.

The Iglesia de San José is considered a contributing property of the historic district deriving its primary significance from its architectural, urban, and artistic distinction. The building is exceptionally significant because it is the second oldest Christian church in continuous use in America and the oldest one in Old San Juan, the island, and the United States. Although the building is used for religious purposes it is considered

<sup>101</sup> A 19<sup>th</sup> century note on the subject evidences the authorities wanted to renege the apparently centuries-old agreement: *Si la familia de Ponce desmembró su caudal para adquirir el privilegio de dar sepultura á su progenitor en la iglesia de los P. P. dominicos, y ese privilegio, autorizado por las Leyes de Indias, tenía en su abono secular consuetud [sic], por incorrecta debía tenerse toda innovación arbitraria. Y como el Estado, al decretar la supresión de las comunidades religiosas, se incautó de todos los bienes afectos á los patronatos y capellanías que proporcionaban rentas á los frailes, habiéndose apoderado del capital, por obligado debía tenerse al cumplimiento de los servicios que mediante su usufructo se prestaban.* Salvador Brau, *La colonización de Puerto Rico desde el descubrimiento de la isla hasta la reversión á la corona española de los privilegios de Colón*, p 475. Translation into English: “If the Ponce family lost part of its inheritance to acquire the privilege of burying their progenitor in the church of the Dominicans and that privilege, authorized by the *Laws of Indies*, had been accepted, any alteration of the terms needs to be considered arbitrary. And since the state, by suppressing religious communities, took all the property of patronages and chaplaincies that produced rent money for the friars, it can be considered a taking of the religious community funds, therefore, it is obligatory to comply with the services carried out by virtue of usufruct.”

<sup>102</sup> His original epitaph read: *Mole sub hac fortis requiescunt ossa leonis Qui vicit factus nomina magna suis.* Translation into English: “This narrow place / serves as the sepulcher of a man / that was in name León [a play on words with the surname León which means lion] / and was more so in deeds.” The transfer took place under the auspices of the Casino Español.

<sup>103</sup> The site of the Iglesia de San José coincides with the location of the only known prehistoric archaeological site within the defensive belt. It is one of only two that have been found in the whole islet. The formal name of the site is: Dominicos (former SJ-1) TAG Number: SJ0100001. This presence and the historic collusion of a native site under a very early Spanish church add another layer of significance to the edifice. Personal communication, Mr Miguel Bonin, PRSHPO.

<sup>104</sup> Personal communication, Dr Osiris Delgado, 1983.

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eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion Consideration A for it is part of a holistic district and derives its primary significance from its architectural, historical and archaeological importance.

### **Catedral de San Juan Bautista** (Parcela 1, Block 32)

A large part of the block surrounded by the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud, Calle de la Luna, Calle de San Francisco and Calle de San José occupied by the Santa Iglesia Catedral de San Juan Bautista (also known as the Catedral Metropolitana de San Juan Bautista and Catedral de San Juan Bautista). The name honors St John the Baptist, the patron saint of the city and the island.<sup>105</sup> The first Catholic cathedral in Puerto Rico was located in Caparra. A thatch structure built for this purpose under the auspices of Ponce de León in 1509 was blessed in 1513 by Alonso Manso, the first bishop assigned to the island.<sup>106</sup> When the settlement moved to the islet, Bishop Manso selected the hill opposite the *fondeadero* as locale for the temple.

The first sanctuary constructed on the site was a thatch hut similar to the one in Caparra. Erected in 1521, it was destroyed five years later by a hurricane. When the second bishop assigned to Puerto Rico, Rodrigo de Bastidas, arrived in 1542, he initiated the reconstruction of the building in a more permanent manner. The present building foundations date to this period, as well as the extant *campanario* (bell tower) and its impressively built masonry *escalera de caracol* (circular staircase). Also constructed at this time were the *sala capitular* (chapter hall) and *estudio* (study) located on the north side of the apse, both roofed with quadripartite ribbed Gothic vaults.<sup>107</sup> At a later time, university-level lay courses were taught in the second space. In keeping with the limited resources of the city, both in terms of materials and masons, the masonry work evidences a simple and direct approach. According to a preserved 18<sup>th</sup> century architectural plan, a huge stellar vault was planned for the crossing. The designer reserved the Decorated Gothic lierne or stellar vaults for the main part of the temple (the crossing) and the straightforward quadripartite ones for all secondary spaces.

The history of the Catedral de San Juan Bautista includes partial destruction by a 1615 earthquake, a 1625 fire caused by the retreating Dutch and a 1787 formidable hurricane. Work on the building was protracted in the manner of many European cathedrals. In 1662, the temporary wooden cover over the main nave was taken down due to its bad conditions. It is surprising, considering the importance the building had in the daily life of the settlement that the church remained without a nave roof for more than fifty years.

In 1598, when George Clifford, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Cumberland, attacked and captured the city, one of his companions, Doctor Leyfield, described the building as both "faire" and "handsome" even when, in his opinion, it could not compare to British examples.

The Cathedrall [*sic*] Church [*sic*] is not so goodly as any of the Cathedrall [*sic*] Churches in England, and yet it is faire and handsome; two rows of proportionable [*sic*] pillars, make two allies besides the middle walke [*sic*], and this along up to the high Altar. It is darker then commonly Countrey [*sic*] Churches in England. For the windows are few and little, and those indeed without glasse [*sic*] (whereof there is none to be found in all the Towne) but covered with Canvas, so that the most light is received by the doors, the greatest whereof is just in the West end to the seaward, so that out of it a man walking in the Church may behold the ships riding in a very faire Harbour. The other two doors (besides that which is private from the Bishop's house) are on either side, a

<sup>105</sup> The name Juan, given to the island by Columbus, honored both St John the Baptist and the Infante Juan, eldest and only son of King Fernando and Queen Isabel and, at the time, heir to the Spanish throne.

<sup>106</sup> Bishop Manso, Canon of Salamanca and first bishop to serve in America, was appointed to this position by Pope Julius II in 1511 when the diocese of Puerto Rico was formally created.

<sup>107</sup> Started in the year 1531, a year before the Iglesia de San José, these spaces are the earliest masonry ecclesiastical constructions in Old San Juan. The second church is considered older because the Cathedral chapter house and study are not part of the church interior space proper.

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little above the Quire[sic]. For that of all other things is the most singular and differing from the fashion in England, that their Quire [sic] is in the very lowest and Westernmost part of their Church, wherein is the Bishops seate [sic] rayed [sic] three good steps above the rest, and pompously built. . . . Their Church wanteth no necessarie [sic] implement. . . . This Church is sacred to Saint John Baptist, as is all the Island . . . . There are in the Citie [sic] three or foure [sic] litle Chappels [sic] to Saint Anne, Saint Barbara, and others.<sup>108</sup>

At the time, the windows were covered with a hemp canvas, as they were in 1640. *La Ciudad tiene una Iglesia Catedral, de elegante arquitectura con doble orden de columnas y pequeñas ventanas elaboradas en fino cáñamo por la escasez de cristales: hay también dos capillas, que así les llaman, y muy cerca, hacia el nordeste, un Convento de dominicos.*<sup>109</sup> The description depicts the unfinished temple as elegant in spite of the absence of a roof and glass for the windows. Work started again in 1695 under Juan Franco de Medina although not much was accomplished. In fact, when Friar Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra visited the temple during the 1770s, it was still unfinished. The priest also considered the extant work quite lavish:

*La Iglesia Catedral, única parroquia de la ciudad, es de una suntuosa planta; tiene tres naves bien capaces; el pavimento, paredes y columnas de excelente sillería, con dos órdenes de capillas muy decentes; pero la bóveda es de tabla, excepto la capilla mayor que es de piedra bien labrada; su ornato es poco y nada se ve de primor en los retablos, coro ni demás piezas.*<sup>110</sup>

Work lagged behind until the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the vault of the principal nave was started (1802) only to be suspended again in 1813. It is not surprising that in 1834 the temple was in a deplorable state: "The cathedral is a large mass of building, which has never been finished."<sup>111</sup> When the pro-religious groups gained power, a final attempt was made to finish the temple as a symbol of the triumph of religion over the "dangerous" liberal ideas of the period. Nineteenth century anti-clericalism forged great antipathy towards the government's constant aide to the Catholic Church. In fact, many factions blamed this last institution for the various ills suffered by so many throughout centuries.

The present Neo-Palladian barrel vault covering the main nave dates to the period between 1849 and 1852. A transversal nave intersects it and the side aisles and a semispherical dome marks the crossing. This last element is situated in the place where the stellar vault depicted in the historic architectural plan appears. The substitution was proposed as early as 1801, as evidenced in an architectural drawing dated to this year.<sup>112</sup> The spectacular barrel vault includes a clerestory located along its base which provides light to the interior in frank imitation of models such as the Roman Il Gesú and the Venetian San Giorgio Maggiore. The dome and barrel vaults are examples of the 19<sup>th</sup> century revival of Cinquecento architectural morphologies and aesthetic

<sup>108</sup> Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and others*, pp 71-72.

<sup>109</sup> Juan de Laët, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo Descripción de las islas occidentales Escrita en 18 libros (1640)* (Universidad Simón Bolívar, 1988), Reprinted, p 65. Translation into English: "The city has a cathedral church of elegant architecture with double rows of small columns and small windows made of hemp due to scarcity of glass: there are also two chapels, this is what they are called, and quite close, towards the northeast a Dominican convent."

<sup>110</sup> Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra, *Historia geográfica, civil y natural de la isla de San Juan Bautista*, p, 213. Translation into English: "The Cathedral, the only parish church of the city, has a sumptuous floor plan; it has three large naves; pavement, masonry walls and columns constructed in excellent manner, with two very decent chapels; but the vault is made of wood, except the principal chapel which is of well executed stone; its decoration is absent and there are no beautiful altar paintings, choir or other areas."

<sup>111</sup> George Flinter, *An account of the present state of the Island Puerto Rico. Comprising numerous original facts and documents illustrative of the state of commerce and agriculture, and of the condition, moral and physical, of the various classes of the population in that Island, as compared with the colonies of other European powers; demonstrating the superiority of the Spanish slave code,—the great advantages of free over slave labour, & C* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Green and Longman, 1834), p 44.

<sup>112</sup> "Catedral San Juan de Puerto Rico 1801," Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain, Mapas y Planos, Santo Domingo, Number 622. While some believe the stellar or lierne vault was never constructed, others have argued it was built and destroyed during the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the present dome and barrel vault were constructed. According to this point of view, the idea was for the interior to look "modern" and present a single stylistic unit.

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ideals. As a result, the interior presents a fascinating aesthetic collusion, including Gothic, Renaissance and Neo-Cinquecento or Neo-Palladian architectural influences.

The façade belongs to the Il Gesú progeny, particularly the use of console-like elements which became fashionable after Leon Battista Alberti first used them in the façade of Santa Maria Novella in Florence during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This arrangement rejects the Northern European westwork tradition in favor of the Italian basilica arrangement. The present façade composition owes much to Bishop James H Blenk, the first American bishop of Old San Juan, who arrived in 1899. He wanted the church to be higher than the now gone Neo-Gothic one created for the Lutheran church across the Plaza de la Catedral. For the first time in four centuries and six years, the Catholic Church had spiritual and architectural competition in the core and island. As a result of Bishop Blenk's urge to have a higher and more prominent façade, the simple two storied original composition was altered by means of an additional section that was inserted to the original *espadaña* (belfry or gable-like frontal element).

In spite of the late date of its conclusion, the building was considered the cathedral of the capital city and the island since the 16<sup>th</sup> century and, as such, figured prominently in the daily life of the district. At such it served as stage for interesting ceremonies. For decades, if not centuries, every Sábado Santo (Holy Saturday), the Cofradía de Nuestra Señora de la Soledad y el Santo Entierro (Brotherhood of Our Lady of Solitude and Holy Burial) brought an image of the Resurrected Christ that resided in the Convento de los Dominicos to the Catedral. Before the sun came out on Easter Sunday, the sculpture was taken back to the convent in a procession. Meanwhile, from the convent, an image of Nuestra Señora de la Soledad exited at the same time. When one calculates the distance, the point where the two processions met on Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud is the Palacio Episcopal, the residence of the bishop. At this point, the groups gave each other a *saludo* (greeting) moving the images back and forth. After this symbolic greeting, both images were taken to the convent. For centuries, the Catedral was also a terminus for the processions marking the arrival of ships. Passengers alighted at the *fondeadero*, walked along the Caletas and the Plaza de la Catedral and entered the Catedral where a *Te Deum* was offered in thanksgiving for their safe deliverance. The building also anchored a cemetery until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Lacking a frontal atrium due to the topography of the site, tombs were located around the church. The interior Gothic crypt under the main altar was exclusively reserved for the rich and the powerful.

The church has sheltered important events and is considered the birthplace of the *concepto de la puertorriqueñidad* (concept of Puerto Ricaness [*sic*]). On 16 August 1809, Bishop Alejo Arizmendi, the first bishop born in Puerto Rico, while participating in a Cabildo meeting, handed his ecclesiastical ring to *diputado* to the Spanish Cortes Ramón Power y Giralt *pidiéndole que se le vinculase a su pueblo*.<sup>113</sup> By means of this act, the bishop declared himself, first and foremost, a Puerto Rican, separating his ecclesiastical role from that of a patriot. The building is also the burial site of Juan Ponce de León; Juan Alejo Arizmendi (1757-1803), first Puerto Rican bishop; Bernardo de Balbuena (1588-1627), bishop of Puerto Rico; and William A Jones (1885-1921), a much-loved American bishop (1907-1921). There is also a commemorative plaque dedicated to Alonso Manso, first bishop of America. He was also the first bishop of the island, assuming spiritual guidance of Puerto Rico in 1513, when while still in Caparra.

According to experts, the Catedral de San Juan Bautista is the oldest cathedral church still in continuous use in America. Some modifications, like the 20<sup>th</sup> century substitution of brick pavement with a two-toned marble one, respond to its continued use and modern ecclesiastical requirements. To this day it is – hierarchically speaking – the most important Catholic temple in the city and the island. As was the case with many temples

<sup>113</sup> Commemorative plaque at the Catedral de San Juan Bautista presented by the Asociación Puertorriqueña de la UNESCO in 2000. Translation into English: “[P]leaded to be considered part of the people.”

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prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it took centuries to finish the building. Rather than detract from its historic and cultural significance, this protracted construction period made possible an assemblage of architectural ideas and theories that resulted in an impressive catalogue of architectural styles, ranging from Gothic to Neo-Cinquecento expressions. This aesthetic reality adds considerably to its cultural and historic significance and architectural merit.

The Catedral de San Juan Bautista is a religious property still in use that is eligible due to its local and national architectural, artistic and historical importance. Some of the individual architectural elements of distinction are: the Gothic (as opposed to Neo-Gothic) ribbed quadripartite stone vaults, the only examples of their kind in San Juan, Puerto Rico and the United States; the Neo-Palladian (Neo-Cinquecento) main nave motifs, such as the exquisite barrel vault and elegant thermal (Palladian) windows, as well as the crossing dome; the 20<sup>th</sup> century transformation of the façade responding to post-1898 feuds with other religious denominations; the Gothic crypt that encapsulates burial differences between the powerful and the “Others,” given the fact that it was reserved for the exclusive use of the powerful; the extant 16<sup>th</sup> century bell tower and its impressively built masonry circular staircase; and the open areas surrounding the edifice, part of the original atrium. Although properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes are not considered eligible, the Catedral de San Juan Bautista is part of a holistic district and it derives its primary significance from its architectural, historical and archaeological importance. The building is eligible under Criterion Consideration A.

### **Casa-Torre de Ponce de León (Casa Blanca) (Parcela 20, Block 15)**

In spite of Juan Ponce de León protests regarding the move to the islet, he was the first one to stake a claim for a new site in which to build his family house.<sup>114</sup> The locale was the best one in the entire area: elevated upon the highest hill with commanding views of the Atlantic, the *fondadero*, the bay, and the main entrance to the city. In addition, it was blessed with sea breezes which undoubtedly made the tropical weather and humidity more palatable. The salty winds also helped in terms of flying insects, the bane of Caparra. Most importantly, defense against what may come was much easier from this aloft perch. It is an imposing location that, even today, dominates the urban district. The site was also close to the best stone quarry in the islet, located on the southeastern side of the building. As mentioned, the sector, described during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a *caserío* (a group of several houses), was known as La Cantera (The Quarry) until the end of that century. For this reason, the block on which the structure presently sits, Block 15, was one of the last ones to be developed.

Between 1523 and 1525, a wooden structure was constructed at the site by Juan García Troche, Ponce de León's son-in-law. At the time, García Troche served as *regidor alcalde* (mayor) and comptroller for the *ciudad del puerto Rico*. When it was decided a more formal building was needed, the peninsular architectural typology of the *casa-torre* or *casa-fuerte*, at times known simply as *torre*, was chosen, as was also the case in Caparra and the nearby Fortaleza de Santa Catalina. The architectural type is a medieval one characterized by its introspective and bellicose personality. The original structure was a square of approximately 24 feet by 24 feet, built like a fort looking towards its interior with only a few, small windows. The composition was finished by merlons or crenellations that could be used in its defense. The name of Casa Blanca (White House) is a historic one stemming from the stucco which covered the edifice. Although built principally as a house, it was used on several occasions by the settlers during the attacks suffered by the embryonic urban core.

<sup>114</sup> Ponce de León, enmeshed in his second expedition to Florida (the first one took place in 1513 and the second one in 1521), found death before he was able to inhabit this second *casa-torre*.



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In 1779, the property was sold to the Crown and assigned to the Maestranza de Ingenieros Militares (Military Engineers Arsenal). During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a west wing was added, the door to the Calle de San Sebastián closed, and the wall which separated the house proper from the La Cantera *caserío* destroyed. All these transformations made possible for the structure to become a military complex that sheltered the Spanish royal engineers' corps in the island until 1898. These changes add a layer of significance for they evidence the development patterns of the Spanish regime and the evolution of the contributing properties of the historic core. In 1834, the building was described in the following fashion:

The first house, built in 1525, and inhabited by the first governor of the island, Don Ponce de Leon, still exists. It is called the White House. It is built on the side of a hill, which is cut, and strengthened with stone abutments and a stockade. It is preserved with great care, by order of government, as a venerable piece of antiquity. It appears to have been built for the purpose of resisting a sudden attack; and, even at the present day, it could present a formidable resistance to an armed body unprovided with artillery. It is now the workshop for the engineer department, which attends to its preservation.<sup>115</sup>

It is noteworthy that by this time (third decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) the edifice was already considered “a venerable piece of antiquity” and “was preserved with great care.” It is also particularly relevant that the building was (still is) directly associated to conquistador Juan Ponce de León and his family.

After 1898, the US Army annexed the building to the Fort Brooke Military Base, a complex that included the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro and its grounds; the Beneficencia and Insane Asylums; the Cuartel de Ballajá; the Convento de los Dominicos; and the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande. Until the 1950s, Casa Blanca was used as the house of the post commanding officer. As was the case with all of Fort Brooke, for security reasons, the locals were not allowed inside this special historic place so intimately tied to the history of the islet and the island until 1967 when it was returned to the local government.

At that time, the Centro de Estudios Avanzados del Caribe y Puerto Rico, a graduate studies educational center, was established here. During the 1980s, the building also sheltered Puerto Rico's first formal State Historic Preservation Office. The complex includes a garden of inspiring beauty that anchors one of the few green areas in the whole urban core. As was the case regarding other such sectors, the green space so close to the quarry was used as a communal area. It still is used as a public garden.

The Ponce de León *casa-torre* or *casa-fuerte* is the only example of this architectural medieval typology in the Viejo San Juan, the island and the United States. The building is one of the oldest structures of the district being one of the three special sites chosen, as early as 1519, when the settlement by the *fondeadero* was first organized. Since it was designed as a defensive artifact, it marks the initiation of the defensive program in the islet. It can also be considered the oldest preserved post-European domestic structure in the precinct and the country. Casa Blanca has been considered a prominent icon throughout the history of the district due to its direct association to the founder of the first settlement in the island and his family. As such, the house is directly associated to Juan Ponce de León, his family, and Juan García Troche, the second governor of the island and husband of the *Adelantado's* daughter.

### ARCHITECTURAL EXAMPLES OF THE USE OF RENAISSANCE SEMANTICS (1519-1625)

As mentioned, the Conquest Period was a fluid one in Old San Juan regarding dates as well as architectural semantics. Traditional interpretations favoring medieval aesthetics – as seen in the Gothic and Decorated Gothic vaulting and in the use of the medieval architectural typology of the *casa-torre* – went hand in hand with

<sup>115</sup> George Flinter, *An account of the present state of the Island Puerto Rico*, p 43.

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Renaissance-inspired aesthetics. On occasion, as the Convento de los Dominicos-Iglesia de San José evidence, different stylistic vocabularies were used in one same complex.

The Renaissance rejected Gothic architectural principles in favor of a humanistic approach to design, as per Classical dictum. Born in Italy during the early years of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, its theoretical underpinning believed man was the center of the universe as a result of which architecture needed to imitate the perfection found in the human body. Although intensely religious, the period devoted much time and effort to the imitation of Classical models, canons, mathematical proportions, and aesthetic ideas. Of particular impact to Old San Juan at this early stage were the Quattrocento lessons established by Florence, including the use of the full-fledged *cortile* with surrounding arcaded loggias, the semicircular arch, and mathematical proportional schemes. As mentioned previously, the Renaissance ideal interpretation of the city also reverberated in the preference for the orthogonal grid matrix after the move of the urban center to the Plaza de Armas.

### Convento de los Dominicos (Parcela 1, Block 3)

The Convento de los Dominicos,<sup>116</sup> located at the corner of Calle de Norzagaray and the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud, was originally known as the Convento de Santo Tomás de Aquino. The present name is associated to the order of the monks it was to shelter: the Orden de los Padres Predicadores (Order of the Preachers), commonly known as Dominicans.<sup>117</sup> According to historic sources, the Dominican convent in Caparra moved to the present site when this settlement was abandoned for the islet. The community which established in Old San Juan during the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was part of a new ecclesiastical region, the Santa Cruz de Indias (Holy Cross of the Indies) that also included Cuba, Jamaica and Hispaniola. In charge of the colonies development and the Holy Inquisition the powerful group administered their duties for almost four centuries from this building, until the institution was banished during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to some historians, the city's *quemador de la santa Inquisición* (burning pyre of the Holy Inquisition) was located outside the city walls in the Puerta de Tierra area.

The complex provided both an urban cloister for monks and a church that served the friars and the townfolk. In addition to the responsibilities traditionally associated to a monastery, the institution was authorized in 1532 by Pope Clement II to establish a university. No such a center was formally organized but *cátedras* (classes) were offered by the Dominicans during the course of the centuries. In fact, the Gothic area named the *estudio* (study) in the Catedral de San Juan Bautista was used for this purpose for many years.

The first prior of the Convento de los Dominicos was Friar Luis Cáncer, a proto-martyr of the Catholic Church killed in Florida. With Friar Antonio de Montesinos,<sup>118</sup> leader of the first group of Dominican friars who settled in Hispaniola and Puerto Rico, he founded the convent in Old San Juan during the period from 1521 to 1523. De Montesinos was the first member of the clergy to denounce the inhumane treatment of the American

<sup>116</sup> While convent is a word usually used to describe the building sheltering a female religious community, in the historic district the name is also used for the male establishments.

<sup>117</sup> Considered to be organized by the intellectual soldiers of the Catholic Church, members of the congregation were also known as the *Domini canes* (hounds of God). As such, they were specifically charged to battle heresy. In Spain, for centuries, the group was synonymous with the Santa Inquisición (Holy Inquisition) because, according to tradition, St Dominic – the founder of the order – was the first inquisitor. St Dominic's followers were originally known as Militia of Christ and after St Dominic's death in 1221 and his beatification as a saint, as the Dominicans. Later they become known as the "hounds of God" and first inquisitors. The most famous of inquisitors, Tomás de Torquemada, was a Dominican friar. James Reston Jr, *Dogs of God Columbus, the Inquisition, and the Defeat of the Moors* (New York: Anchor Books, 2005), p 10. The first *Inquisidor general de las Indias, islas é tierra firme del mar océano* (General Inquisitor of the Indies, islands and continent of the Sea Ocean) was Alonso Manso, the first bishop of Puerto Rico. He was appointed to this position on 7 January 1519. In 1533, he was still signing documents in this capacity. Salvador Brau, *La colonización de Puerto Rico desde el descubrimiento de la isla hasta la reversión á la corona española de los privilegios de Colón*, p 291.

<sup>118</sup> De Montesinos' (?-1545) religious zeal led him to present day New York, where the group of monks he was travelling with offered the first Mass ever said in the continental United States.

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natives by the Spaniards.<sup>119</sup> In the year 1511, by means of a now famous sermon, he criticized the *encomienda* system and, thus, the Crown's treatment of the native inhabitants of the island. He convincingly presented the argument that the Spaniards were: "[I]n mortal sin and live and die in it, because of the cruelty and tyranny they practice among these innocent peoples."<sup>120</sup> Although persecuted and vilified by many, including Christopher Columbus and his son Diego, de Montesinos managed to convince the king. As a result of his denunciation, the first legal code protecting the indigenous people, the *Leyes de Burgos* (*Laws of Burgos*), was promulgated. The *Leyes de Burgos* regulated how the natives were to be treated and converted, setting limits on the activities of Spanish colonizers.

The Convento de los Dominicos was finished approximately one hundred years after it was started in a terrain donated by the Ponce de León family. In 1598, during his brief stay in the city, Dr Leyfield visited the cloister and described it in the following manner:

There is also a faire Frierie [*sic*] standing on the North side of Towne, but little distant from it: it is built of Bricke [*sic*] in a good large square with a Church and hall and all necessary rooms for a Pryor [*sic*] and Covent [*sic*] of Fryers [*sic*], it seemeth [*sic*] not to be perfected yet, for they are beginning of a Cloyster [*sic*] not yet covered. The Covent [*sic*] was fled all, saving one old Fryer [*sic*], who in the little broken Latine [*sic*] that he had told me, that they were *Dominicani ordinis praedicatorum mendicantium*.<sup>121</sup>

According to Leyfield, the building was unfinished at the time of the English invasion for the cloister roof was missing. The enormous size of the edifice, particularly, when compared to the rest of the buildings in the embryonic urban core, and its solid construction were iconic of the power held by the Dominicans during the Conquest Period in the Viejo San Juan and America. Interestingly, while the cathedral was not finished until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Dominican complex was richly appointed a mere 100 years after the move to the islet.

In 1645, an extension was constructed to the west of the convent known as the Casa del Noviciado (House of Novices). It was at this point that the "good large square" described by Doctor Leyfield was transformed into the present morphological organization (a square with two protruding wings). During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the Dominican order was dissolved, the Real Hacienda took charge of the building. In 1843, the Real Audiencia Territorial<sup>122</sup> occupied the Casa del Noviciado as well as the northern part of the building. Some years later, the military moved to the eastern and southern areas using them as administrative offices and military academy. Other government units that made use of it were the: Real Audiencia Territorial (1867-1898) (Royal Territorial Audience); Tribunal Supremo de Puerto Rico (1898-1933) (Supreme Court of Puerto Rico); Corte de Distrito de San Juan (San Juan District Court); and the Oficinas del Tribunal (Offices of the Supreme and District Courts). The building was hit by an American bomb in 1898, specifically around the area where the Real Audiencia Territorial was located.

When the courts vacated the building during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was transferred to the National Guard and then to the United States War Department. Restored with Puerto Rico Reconstruction Act funds, it became the seat of this agency from 1939 until the late 1950s. During the time, the building was part of the US Army Fort Brooke Military Base and administrative offices were located here. When it was returned to the Government of Puerto Rico (1960s), it served as locale for the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña (Institute of Puerto Rican Culture). This institution, created during the 1950s, was the first government unit designed to promote and

<sup>119</sup> As a result of de Montesinos' concern, in the year 1516, Friar Bartolomé de las Casas was appointed "Protector of the Indians" [*sic*] by the Spanish Crown.

<sup>120</sup> Quoted in Carl Warner, "'All Mankind Is One': The Libertarian Tradition In Sixteenth Century Spain," *The Journal of Libertarian Studies* (8, 2:293-309), 1987, page 295. De Montesinos published his ideas in *Informatio juridica in Indorum defensionem*.

<sup>121</sup> Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and others*, p 72.

<sup>122</sup> The Real Audiencia Territorial was the provincial court of first instance under Spanish rule.

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preserve the cultural heritage of the island. The San Juan Historic Zone was the first historic district established by this organism. The structure is presently used as a public painting gallery.

The building's architectural significance stems from several noteworthy aspects. Belonging to an architectural typology developed during the Middle Ages, it is an example of the urban convent<sup>123</sup> designed to serve its religious inhabitants but dependent on the neighboring urban core for its existence. This is the reason its church also served the populace. By the time the Convento de los Dominicos was built, the concept of a Christian temple annexed to a cloister was considered an archaism. Interestingly, while the architectural morphology had a medieval precedent, the stylistic vocabulary used reflects Renaissance influence. The structure was the first to introduce Renaissance architectural aesthetic theories to the islet and island. One example of this influence is the beautiful *cortile* that served both as heart and lung of the huge building. A *cortile* is no ordinary courtyard since it is usually part of the building's main spatial sequence. This Quattrocento interpretation of the Mediterranean morphology creates an introverted building with a central source open for light and ventilation which is also capable of providing an elegant place for leisure, be it the open area proper or the majestic loggias which surround and frame the space. In a similar manner as was done several centuries later at the Cuartel de Ballajá, the Convento *cortile* is surrounded on both floors by these elegant elements on all four sides.

Renaissance tenements are particularly evident in the design of the southern loggias. That side of the building abuts the church and there were no rooms to be served by these elements. The designer, however, treats all sides of the *cortile* in the same manner, creating a regular and systematic organization in the manner preferred by Renaissance architects. The Italian period is famous for its idealized interpretation of architecture, particularly the interest in holistic design and correct mathematical proportions, for architecture was perceived as an interpretation of nature and the human condition and, as such, aspired to be perfect. A three-sided *cortile* would have opposed this architectural philosophical interpretation. Much emphasis was given to the mathematical proportions of the parts and whole in order to obtain a harmonious totality, a Renaissance must. Examples of proportional schemes abound throughout the building. First, the heights of the piers which support the semicircular arches of the loggias equal the span between the piers, measured from the center lines. Second, the spans between the bases of the piers at floor level equal the height of the piers. Although not a square, the rectangle described by the loggias is quite close to the geometric figure obtained when using the Golden Rectangle traditional proportional system, a much admired Renaissance numerical scheme. The rich, ponderous cadence of the carefully designed semi-circular arches contrasts dramatically with the delicate filigree of the wooden balustrades creating a space imbued with Renaissance ideals.

The semicircular arches rest on square piers, unadorned in the first floor and treated with Tuscan capitals in the second. This traditional treatment, using the architectural orders to signify elegance and consequence, emphasizes the relevance of the *piano nobile* (noble floor or second level) vis-à-vis the *pian terreno* (first utilitarian floor). All these theoretical and aesthetic concepts evidence that the designer was cognizant of Italian Renaissance ideas. The building is a beautiful example of the elegance and correctness the period sought to achieve in all edifices, particularly religious ones. In this manner, they were to be interpreted dually as symbols of the power of the Catholic faith and humanism.

Although the *cortile* was centralized, there seems to have been no desire to axially connect it with the main entrance of the building. It is possible that the existing elegantly framed south side portal served as entrance. This doorway is close to the church's main façade in a manner similar as to the now destroyed Convento de

<sup>123</sup> The convent architectural typology can be subdivided into three general groups: (1) closure convents where the inhabitants lived a hermitic life completely isolated; (2) cloisters sited on the outskirts of towns; and (3) urban monasteries that belonged to orders such as the Franciscans, Mendicants and Dominicans. Arleen Pabón Charneco, *La arquitectura patrimonial puertorriqueña y sus estilos* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: State Historic Preservation Office, 2010), p 60.

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San Francisco one. The elegant north porch was added during the 20<sup>th</sup> century when a *zaguán* was also inscribed in that part of the first floor. This insertion is symbolic of the many uses the building has sheltered. It is of interest since it emphasizes the fact that the convent was an urban entity that faced the town, albeit in a non-dramatic manner. There was no need for a northern door before the 20<sup>th</sup> century since when the Convento was built its northern frontier were the cliffs facing the sea. This portal transformation is culturally relevant in its own right for it is not only a small architectural jewel but iconic of the many uses the august structure has sheltered throughout its history.

The Convento de Santo Domingo is nationally significant from an urban, architectural, and artistic perspective. It is the first example of the architectural typology constructed in the island and the United States, as well as one of the first ones in the America continent. The building is the only Renaissance building in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico and the United States. The structure is annexed to the Iglesia de San José, a venerable building, being the oldest temple in Puerto Rico and the United States and the second oldest in the Western Hemisphere. The size and splendor of the complex, particularly when compared to the rest of the buildings that existed at the time in the embryonic settlement, reflects how it was planned from the beginning for the Catholic faith to dominate the lives of the inhabitants of the Viejo San Juan.

The edifice is also associated to important international historic figures, such as, Friar Luis Cáncer and Friar Antonio de Montesinos, relevant personalities during the Conquest Period in Santo Domingo, San Juan de Puerto Rico and Florida.

### THE BAROQUE PERIOD (1625-1812)

The period from 1625 to 1812 in the Viejo San Juan was characterized by great transformations, including the end of the Hapsburg rule and the enthronement of the Bourbon dynasty. After the attack of the Dutch in 1625, an era of relative tranquility ensued during which the city grew contentedly, albeit slowly. Danger of attacks never ceased to exist for it was during this period that the neighboring islands – Santa Cruz, Antigua, Montserrat and Guadeloupe, among others – were colonized by European powers enemies of Spain. No attack took place from 1625 until the British one in 1797. In spite of this lull, it was at this time that O'Daly's military formal defense master plan was executed. As a result, the district urban persona totally transformed, from a loosely organized gridded organism into a tight core. The date 1625, then, is iconic of the dramatic urban transformations that were to take place from that moment on: from a city with some defenses to an urban organism surrounded by an impressive defensive wall and massive *castillos* (fortresses). The period was marked by the British attack of 1797 and ended with a bang in 1812, when the *Antiguo Régimen* (in French, *ancien régime*), the old way of doing things, came to an abrupt end.

Population augmented dramatically in both the district and the island for at this time Puerto Rico definitively veered away from gold mining activities in order to concentrate on agricultural ones. The full-fledged development of capitalism, based on commerce and agriculture and the transformations brought forth by the Industrial Revolution indelibly changed all facets of life. Most importantly, a bourgeois class was born as a result of the development of a capitalist economy that vied for private control of land property.<sup>124</sup> Old San Juan, Puerto Rico's principal port and urban core, was directly impacted by these transformations. From 1509 until 1715, the capital city was closed to all flagships except ones from Seville and a fist of others coming from Antillean Spanish settlements. Until that time and since the colonies were considered the personal property of the monarch, a royal monopoly transformed the Caribbean Sea into a *mare clausum*, exclusively dedicated to

<sup>124</sup> Ana Aguado, "El proceso económico," *España Crisis imperial e independencia* (Madrid: MAPFRE y Santillana Ediciones Generales, SL, 2010), pp 167-168.

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Spanish commerce,<sup>125</sup> a centuries-old situation that resulted in the financial strangling of the colony. In 1715, conditions changed when trade links with Cádiz were established. Authorization to trade with powerful and rich Barcelona followed in 1755 and with six other Spanish ports in 1754. In 1777, Mallorca became part of this select group.<sup>126</sup> This liberalization made possible all kinds of commercial ventures to emerge. One of the most important ones was the Compañía de Barcelona, dedicated to the commerce of Barcelona and Cádiz products. Fernando VI's interest in strengthening commercial links between the Caribbean colonies and the peninsula directly empowered this enterprise, as well as similar ones. The Compañía's first boat arrived at the Viejo San Juan in 1758. At the time, the new business opportunities were interpreted as responsible for the end of: . . . *la época miserable de esta Isla que en muchos tiempos estuvo [sic] constituida; pues es increíble [sic] el conocido aumento que ha tenido en todas sus partes.*<sup>127</sup> When this description was written, everything seemed to point out that the miserable times—by then a traditional state of the city and the island—were a thing of the past.

Another much-needed economic boost to Old San Juan was provided by the Compañía de Caracas, dedicated to the slave traffic that used the city as a distribution center. The wooden holding pen where the poor souls were kept was located close to where the Aduana Federal building is today, next to the Plaza de la Dársena. Slaves traded by this company could not be sold in the island but the commercial venture was considered good for the local economy for food, medicines, clothes, and other such necessities, had to be provided locally. It was not until the year 1815 that the port opened to free international trade, albeit strictly controlled by the Spanish authorities. Nevertheless, the above-mentioned exchanges provided a welcomed opportunity to establish business contacts if not with the rest of the world at least with other Spanish colonies and cities in the peninsula.

During this period and even though the core still faced security issues until the defensive master plan was completed, the district consolidated as an urban reality becoming a relatively tight social organism populated by 2,600 inhabitants by the beginning of the century.<sup>128</sup> The core was not particularly large or elegant (when compared to other Caribbean ones such as Havana) but it was able to forge the embryonic Puerto Rican culture. As a result, the concept of *ius gentium* slowly emerged. It was at this time that locals and liberal Spaniards realized a new being had emerged with individual rights the Crown had to respect.<sup>129</sup> Hand in hand with the realization of the locals' inalienable rights, came the understanding that they also had the right to free themselves from Spanish colonial rule. In fact, as early as the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, some—like Jesuit Juan Pablo Vizcardo y Guzmán—published entreaties underscoring the need for the Hispanic-American colonies to sever their allegiance with Spain. His *Carta a los españoles americanos* ("Letter to the American Spaniards"), published between 1782 and 1791, suggested the imitation of the British colonies in North America, the recently organized United States of America, in order to obtain independence and enact their own constitutions.<sup>130</sup>

According to some, Puerto Rican consciousness of their different *gentium* or ethnic personality, as opposed to the peninsular one, can be dated to the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Architecturally, this momentous transformation took place earlier, during the Baroque Period. The domestic artifacts produced during this time evidence the most relevant components of this emerging personality. By means of the transformations and

<sup>125</sup> Eric Williams, *From Columbus to Castro The History of the Caribbean*, p 46.

<sup>126</sup> As a result of all the interest in strengthening naval and commercial ties with the district and in order to facilitate travel, the first state of the art map of the bay was created in 1793 by cartographer Cosme Damián de Churrua.

<sup>127</sup> Fernando Miyares y González. Quoted in Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, p 64. Translation into English: "[T]he miserable times in the Island ended, after a long time; it is incredible how much it has grown in recent times in all aspects."

<sup>128</sup> Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, p 61.

<sup>129</sup> José María Portillo, "España en el mundo," *España Crisis imperial e independencia*, p 136.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p 141.

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adaptations of varied European traditions and sources of inspirations *sanjuaneros* were able to create two unique vernacular architectural domestic types. Old San Juan's personality as a military war machine was also birthed at this time.

Once the Puerto Ricans found a voice of their own the stage was set for the construction of many things, including a social class composed of artisans and craftsmen. It is safe to state that, at this time, the Viejo San Juan was composed principally of two groups: the Europeans and their descendants (the *criollos*) and the "Others." This last group was, in turn, subdivided into the free and the enslaved. While the last faction worked the fields and served as domestic servants, the *libertos* (free slaves) and others slowly embraced construction professions, such as bricklaying and carpentry. The personality of the district owes much to the special aesthetic, social and cultural atmosphere that colluded to create the basis of a distinctive urban organism and vernacular architecture.<sup>131</sup>

Friar Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra and André Pierre Ledrú visited the island during the seventh decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>132</sup> Their descriptions, both verbal and drawn, provide great insight into the living conditions of the time. The first man established that there were three social classes in Old San Juan: (i) the Spanish and rich people, (ii) the mulattos and "colored people," and (iii) the Blacks. This humanity shared, by the year 1775, a city that was approximately 682 meters long and 430 meters wide with houses constructed of *tapiería* and masonry, many of which had two floors. The monk was not impressed by the local architecture:

*Hay un convento de religiosos Franciscos [sic], otro de Domínicos y uno de monjas del Carmen calzado: los dos primeros son edificios mas grandes que hermosos, aunque sus iglesias y claustros están con arco y bien fabricados: el de las Religiosas es mas reducido y pobre. No se halla en ninguno de los tres un solo rasgo de arquitectura que acredite habilidad particular de sus artífices, como ni tampoco en las hermitas [sic] de Santa Ana y Cristo de la Salud, edificadas junto á la muralla con el debido decoro y aseo.*<sup>133</sup>

Although Abbad y Lasierra described the core as a forest, there existed eleven to thirteen streets and twenty-some blocks. The west side of both the Calle del Sol and Calle de San Sebastián took shape during the period, while the easternmost sides of the Calle de la Luna, Calle del Sol and Calle de San Sebastián remained undeveloped. In this general location, the areas described by the friar as *arrabales* (slums) were located.

During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, European architecture evolved from the High Renaissance to the Baroque. In Spain, this last style generated two magnificent currents: the loosely called Spanish Baroque, a powerful mix that included both Italian and French ideas, as well as Plateresque and Churrigueresque ones, and the so-called *severo herreriano* (severe de Herrera style), named in honor of its creator Juan de Herrera, the premier 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish architect.<sup>134</sup> When analyzing the genesis and development of this last current, it is relevant to mention that in 1744 the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando) was created in Madrid. Highly critical of Baroque-derived modes, the institution was responsible for the relatively short life of the style in Spain. The Real Academia identified the style and its

<sup>131</sup> The internationally recognized José Campeche, one of the island's premier artists, worked during this period in the city.

<sup>132</sup> Friar Iñigo visited America during the period from 1771-1778; the Frenchman during the year 1797.

<sup>133</sup> Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra, *Historia geográfica, civil y natural de la isla de San Juan Bautista*, p. 213. Translation into English: "There is a Franciscan convent and a Dominican one and one of Calced Carmelites: the first two are larger rather than beautiful buildings, even though their churches and cloisters are constructed with arches and well built: the nuns' one is very small and poor. One cannot find in any of the three even one element that evidences the creativity of their designers, and this is also the case regarding the hermitages of Santa Ana and Cristo de la Salud, located close to the wall with the expected decorum and neatness."

<sup>134</sup> Juan de Herrera (1530-1597) was the author, among many other works, of the Palacio Real de Aranjuez (Royal Palace at Aranjuez, Spain) and the Palacio y Monasterio del Escorial (Escorial Palace and Monastery). He was also the designer of the original Plaza Real de Madrid (Madrid Royal Plaza).

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cognate modes with non-architects who lacked culture, elegance and, most importantly, formal education in the field. The odious “usurpers” (builders, master builders and, at a later time, royal engineers) pretended to do an architect’s work.

Baroque influence crossed the ocean and gained favor in Old San Juan during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. All the local architectural examples evidence de Herrera’s influence and tendencies that reflect academic traditions rather than the three-dimensional plastic drama preferred in other Spanish colonies. For this reason, the style’s aesthetics are not as theatrical as those present in Italy, France, and Central and South America. Although there is a parallel to Havana’s interest in optical effects and the use of Classical elements to highlight movement and chiaroscuro,<sup>135</sup> local Baroque elements are devoid of the architectural exuberance that characterizes the style and its rhizome modes. The role played by the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando and its blind preference for Classical modes needs to be underscored given its definitive interpretation that there existed only “correct architecture” and the infamous rest. Decorum, elegance and sophistication, naturally, were reflected only in the examples belonging to the first group. This local preference for quieter modes is quite relevant for it forged a *sui generis* Baroque architecture *sanjuanero* interpretation.

Unity of the façade composition was the most relevant contribution made by the period to the architecture of the Viejo San Juan. There were both aesthetic and cultural reasons for this preference. Eighteenth century architecture in the district was symbolic of the ideas of the *Antiguo Régimen* (in French, *ancien régime*). In domestic architecture, this interpretation was used to dignify the upper echelons of society by means of carefully crafted domestic façades. Public architectural examples, in turn, were interpreted as powerful three-dimensional images at the service of the church or the state. Although architecture seems to have a life of its own, political and cultural transformations mark it profoundly. The Baroque façades in Old San Juan, with their portal-like entrances and fancy (for the local context) decoration, were the products of a society in which things like lineage and family decorum were importantly expressed by means of the architectural orders and decorous, systematic organization. By the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the grandiose treatments in the manner of Baroque porticoes that signaled the uniqueness of a family – at the time, distinguished by its connection to the Crown and old money – were a thing of the past. The façade became a democratic canvas treated as a holistic unit where the goals of society in general could be presented. Ironically, the most Classicists of motifs and the oldest of floor plans configurations were used to achieve these goals in Old San Juan.

Abbad y Lasierra’s description of the Viejo San Juan allows a better understanding of Baroque architecture. He described the city in the following manner:

*Seis calles que corren a lo largo de Occidente y Poniente son llanas, espaciosas y derechas. Las siete que cortan la Ciudad por lo ancho de N a S, aunque son igualmente anchas y rectas, y tienen una parte de cuesta incómoda: se extienden a lo largo como 500 toesas, y poco mas de 200 a lo ancho: todas están desempedradas: en algunas partes se ve la peña viva: en otras es el piso de arena movediza, que fatiga para andar. La posición pendiente en que se halla la Ciudad, le da una perspectiva mas extensa, la hace gozar mejor de los ayres [sic], y es menos molestada de la variedad de mosquitos, y otros insectos que atormentan la Isla.*<sup>136</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX*, p 191.

<sup>136</sup> Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra, *Historia geográfica, civil y natural de la isla de San Juan Bautista*, p 211. Translation into English: “Six streets run from east to west, they are leveled, wide and straight. The seven which cut the city’s width from north to south even though they also are leveled and straight have an uncomfortable incline: they extend in length about 500 *toesas* and more or less 200 in width: all are unpaved: in some places one can still see the live rock: in other the sand, and this causes difficulties when walking. The incline of the city provides it with a wide perspective makes possible for it to enjoy better circulation and protects it from a variety of mosquitoes and other insects that torment the Island.”



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According to this description, the best thing about the urban core was its location on the hilly terrain. Although the incline of some streets was bothersome, the author was charmed by the beautiful perspective of the city, the direct result of its location. He also mentioned how convenient the site was in term of air circulation and protection against the many insects which tormented the settlers. The other elements admired were the regular, wide and straight streets although, since they were not paved, it was difficult to walk over them. If the streets measured 500 *toesas*<sup>137</sup> in length by 200 *toesas* in width, as Abbad y Lasierra claimed, the extension of the core was approximately 990 meters by 396 meters. The friar described the city's public architecture in the following manner:

*En cuanto a los edificios públicos se puede decir son el fruto de los esfuerzos de un pueblo que hace pocos años empezó á respirar de la languidez y pobreza en que lo tuvieron sepultado las calamidades padecidas desde sus principios, y que libre ya de aquellos conflictos se aplica á aprovechar este tiempo favorable para hermohear su patria. Considerados bajo este punto de vista se ve en ellos un aire de magnificencia y hermosura.*<sup>138</sup>

Although somewhat of a backhanded compliment, it is obvious Abbad y Lasierra was sensitive enough to detect that the Viejo San Juan Baroque architecture had as ultimate goals magnificence and beauty. More importantly, he claimed the architecture was created by a people who aspired to beautify their country. The use of the word *patria* (country or motherland) by Abbad y Lasierra is quite telling and reinforces the interpretation that the Puerto Rican architectural *gentium* emerged at this time. It was during this period that the Viejo San Juan first stretched its architectural wings. Although there was limited funding for public projects, the buildings erected are quite interesting and unique. By 1653, work on the Iglesia de San Francisco ended and the annexed convent was finished by the 1670s. The curved belfry of this temple was the district's first Baroque artifact.

By the end of the Baroque Period, ominous clouds appeared in the horizon that presaged an end to the *Antiguo Régimen* and, thus, to a way of living which had existed since the Middle Ages. The problems and concerns were many and varied: from external ones, like the Napoleonic harassment, to internal ones, such as the growing discontent within the Spanish peninsula and the American colonies. Spain faced the ruin of its *Hacienda Real* (Royal Treasury) and a dangerous degradation of its international clout in the face of the emerging French and British empires.<sup>139</sup>

If a building were to be chosen to iconically represent this social transformation from the *Antiguo Régimen* to the Enlightenment in the Viejo San Juan, the Baroque Hospital Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande would be the best example. The unfinished hospital for the poor of the city, paid by the citizenship and sponsored by the Church and its illustrated clergy, was forcefully taken away by the military, claiming urgent need due to the British menace to the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico.<sup>140</sup> The Church was trumped by the military which had now become the *par excellence* instrument of the Crown. Gone were the days when the Church was in charge of the American colonies. The philosophical axis had shifted. Puerto Rico and America

<sup>137</sup> A *toesa* is equivalent to approximately 1.98 meters.

<sup>138</sup> Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra, *Historia geográfica, civil y natural de la isla de San Juan Bautista*, pp 212-213. Translation into English: "Regarding public buildings it can be stated that they are the product of a people who only recently started to break away from the tiredness and poverty that buried them under the calamities which they have suffered since its beginnings, and that it is now free from those conflicts of the past and takes this time to beautify its motherland. When considered from this perspective one can see in them magnificence and beauty."

<sup>139</sup> Jordi Canal, "Introducción Doscientos años de historia de España," *España Crisis imperial e independencia*, p 23.

<sup>140</sup> Military hospitals were a relatively modern architectural typology at the time. During the 1680s, Sir Christopher Wren was commissioned to design the Royal Hospital in Chelsea, inspired in the Hôtel des Invalides in Paris, organized around the 1670s. The Royal Hospital for Seaman at Greenwich (also known as Old Royal Naval College), another work by Wren, is dated to the late 17<sup>th</sup> – early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Spain became one of the few enlightened countries to have this service for its armed forces by usurping the structure from its rightful owner.

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were no longer bases from which to catapult Christianity, as the conquest of the American continent had piously if obtusely been described by the Crown. The *mission civilizatrice* had imploded and raw colonialism came to the forefront, completely naked of the histrionic and hypocritical shroud it had hidden behind. The island was not alone in its indignation. Hundreds on the American side of the Atlantic Ocean decided to revolt against the unnatural limitation of basic human rights.

The Crown failed to recognize the old days were gone and that a new future was gestating, rationally orchestrated around commerce and not militarism or blind religious obeisance.<sup>141</sup> The gaggle of insensitive and weak monarchs, not to mention plain crazy ones (even if described as *hechizado*),<sup>142</sup> who festoon the period, could not detain the imminent social revolt. The weak Crown was an obstacle to any transformation since the American colonies were considered the king's personal fiefdom. The Seven Years War and Napoleon were the straw that broke the camel's back. It is no exaggeration to state that the Baroque style in Old San Juan and the Spanish Crown imploded more or less at the same time.

The taking of the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande, an unjust and illegal act of contempt against *sanjuaneros* and *sanjuaneras*, was one example of many that proved that Spanish presence in America simply responded to the age-old desire of subjugation. The colonies in the American continent, including Puerto Rico, nakedly became the means to an end: the fiscal survival of a flagging empire. The status quo required for Spanish subjects born and raised in America to consider themselves different, in an inferior manner, from those in the peninsula. While the *Constitución de Cádiz de 1812* (Cádiz Constitution of 1812) rejected this concept in an outright manner by means of Article I: *La nación española es la reunión de los españoles de ambos hemisferios*,<sup>143</sup> *La Pepa*, the nickname given to the document because it was enacted on St Joseph's day, had but a short time to live.

### Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande (Parcela 1, Block 13)

The Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción El Grande was the brainchild of Bishop Manuel Giménez Pérez, who served in this position from 1772 until 1781. Given the fact that there was a very small 16<sup>th</sup> century hospital with the same name located close to La Fortaleza de Santa Catalina, the descriptive "El Grande" (the Big One) was used in order to differentiate the two establishments. In a town that still had not finished its cathedral, it was very difficult to obtain funding for such a structure that was to serve the dispossessed "Others." In spite of this reality, work on the charity hospital commenced in the year 1775 and three years later only the roof was missing. Five years later, the first patients were moved to the new facility from the Hospital Real de Santiago. In spite of the many limitations, the building was described by Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra as the best one in the whole city.

*El edificio mas útil y bien construido es el Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción, formado en un cuadro perfecto, con cuadras dobles en los dos lados de Oriente y Mediodía, sostenidas por el centro sobre hermosos arcos, con cuatro órdenes de camas en cada una, pudiendo acomodarse 500 enfermos con distinción de personas y enfermedades. En la parte del Norte están las oficinas y habitaciones de los sirvientes, y en la del Poniente está la iglesia, que es capaz y hermosa. La plaza del centro la ocupan dos grandes algibes [sic] que reciben las aguas de las azoteas del edificio, ceñido de primorosas cornizas [sic]. Las dos portadas principales*

<sup>141</sup> José María Portillo, "España en el mundo," *España Crisis imperial e independencia*, p 115.

<sup>142</sup> Carlos II, who reigned from 1661-1700, was known as *El Hechizado* ("The Hexed"). Most modern historians agree he suffered from serious mental instability.

<sup>143</sup> Article I, *Constitución Española de 1812*. Translation into English: "The Spanish nation is the meeting of Spaniards from both hemispheres." This admirable document made no distinction between *peninsulares* (people born in Spain) and *criollos* (those born in America of Spanish ancestry). In fact, both were to have representation at the Cortes on equal footing. According to contemporary historiography, *La Pepa* may have already contemplated the idea of a Commonwealth-like political union between Spain and its American colonies.

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*son de excelente sillería, perfectamente entalladas de esquisitas [sic] molduras y relieves coronados de blasones, formando entre las dos á la parte del Mediodía un frontispicio magestuoso [sic], cuya utilidad, situación y hermosura se lleva la atención de todos.*<sup>144</sup>

Both examples make use of the *palazzo*-church architectural typology, an Italian and Spanish Baroque creation. In the Convento de los Dominicos/Iglesia San José and the Convento de San Francisco/Iglesia de San Francisco complexes, two uses were sheltered by two distinct organisms that shared a wall. The Baroque type, in turn, includes two distinct functions, church and hospital, in one structure.<sup>145</sup> This architectural type is considered iconic of the Spanish Baroque period and a *de rigor*<sup>146</sup> (*de rigueur*) architectural aesthetic solution.

Bartolomé Fammí signed the 1780 architectural drawings that have been preserved. They depict a sober, large building which allows the church to assume the protagonist role in the façade composition. The proposed temple followed the general lines of Il Gesú, using as creative basis for the façade a basilica arrangement with Albertian consoles. A barrel vault with thermal or Palladian clerestory windows was to cover the solitary nave. The hospital, in turn, was organized around a large *cortile*.

In 1779, the building was used to shelter the royal soldiers for, at the time, Spain and Great Britain were embroiled in a war. It soon became evident Governor Dufresne had no intention of returning it to its legitimate owner. According to Abbad y Lasierra:

*Este Hospital fundado de orden de S. M. en 1615 para alivio de los vecinos que tan generosamente pelearon contra el General Balduino, estaba situado sobre la muralla, contiguo á la casa del Gobernador; pero por la estrechez del edificio y el embarazo que causaba para la defensa de la plaza en caso de ser forzado el puerto, resolvió el Ilmo Don Fray Manuel Jiménez Pérez, Obispo de aquella diócesis, por especial encargo de S. M. proporcionar el consuelo posible á los enfermos; y en 1774 dió principio á este Hospital bajo la misma advocación, llegando á concluir perfectamente esta obra admirable en seis años á pesar de las indecibles contradicciones y obstáculos que la malicia de los intrigantes supo fraguar.*<sup>147</sup>

Abbad y Lasierra was quite specific in declaring that the malice of some, obviously referring to the military, impeded the original pious function to be fully carried out. Although the unfinished area to the northeast was

<sup>144</sup> Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra, *Historia geográfica, civil y natural de la isla de San Juan Bautista*, pp 213-214. Translation into English: "The most functional and best constructed building is the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción formed by a perfect square, with two wings in the west and south, supported by beautiful arches, with four rows of beds in each one, where 500 sick can be accommodated separated by person and sickness. To the north are the offices and the servants' rooms, and to the west the church which is large and beautiful. The plaza in the center is occupied by two large wells that receive water from the roof, circled by handsome cornices. The two entrance doors have excellent masonry work, perfectly framed by exquisite moldings and reliefs with escutcheons, forming between both of them a majestic southern façade, distinguished by all because of its utility, location and beauty." The spirited defense quoted above may be tinged by Abbad y Lasierra's indebtedness to Jiménez y Pérez, who defended him before the authorities for bringing into the island *un negrito* (a small Black child) in violation of the established laws.

<sup>145</sup> Arleen Pabón Charneco, *Una Promesa Inconclusa: Apuntes Socio-arquitectónicos sobre el Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande*, p 47. The most distinguished example of this architectural type is the Palazzo della Cancelleria (c 1485) and Church of San Lorenzo in Damaso in Rome. The façade of the Old San Juan building parallels the one of the Iglesia and Hospital de San Francisco de Paula in Havana, a Cuban example of the same Baroque type. Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX*, p 243. The Cuban Baroque example, unfortunately destroyed during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was constructed in 1730.

<sup>146</sup> Javier Hernando, *Arquitectura en España 1770-1900*, p 153.

<sup>147</sup> Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra, *Historia geográfica, civil y natural de la isla de San Juan Bautista*, pp 213-214. Translation into English: "This Hospital was founded by request of His Majesty in 1615 to help the neighbors of the town that courageously fought against General Balduino and it was placed over the defensive wall, next to the house of the governor, but it was very small and was an obstacle to the defense of the plaza in case the port was attacked, Ilmo Don Fray Manuel Jiménez Pérez, bishop of the dioceses at the time, specially commissioned by His Majesty to provide charity to the sick; and in 1774 this new Hospital was started with the same religious dedication, finalizing this admirable work in six years in spite of numerous problems and obstacles that the malice of those opposed was able to generate."

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returned much later to be used for the poor, the military kept the rest of the building until 1898. When they took control of the structure it became a de facto military hospital, a novel 18<sup>th</sup> century architectural typology. In this manner, Spain was able to provide health services to its military in a modern manner with a very limited investment. In 1834, the following description was made of the establishment:

The royal military hospital is a large stone edifice. It is well situated on the hill at the top of the town, and to leeward of it, and commands an extensive view of the sea to the north of the bay and the surrounding country to the south. At present it may contain beds for 350 persons; but they are now building in addition two large saloons for the sick ward. From four to twelve poor persons are daily admitted and taken care of, gratis, besides the soldiers of the garrison. This hospital is attended by a physician, two surgeons, and several hospital mates. It has an apothecary's shop and laboratory within itself. It is under the immediate inspection of the intendant, and is internally governed by a comptroller, who receives a salary of \$1000 yearly, and a major domo; both of whom give in their accounts to the intendant for his approval. The sick are carefully attended to with respect to food, care, and cleanliness.<sup>148</sup>

The structure also sheltered the Real Botica (Royal Pharmacy) or Farmacia Militar (Military Pharmacy)<sup>149</sup> that served both the public and the military. Pharmacists had special uniforms and were guided by royal regulations established to govern their profession. At a time when most sicknesses were treated with home remedies, the existence of such an establishment evidences royal hospitals were organized in a relatively modern fashion.

A series of relevant medical events took place in the Hospital Nuestra Señora de la Concepción El Grande. The first school of medicine in the island was located in the building during the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; its first graduate was Dr Emidgio de Antique, a Puerto Rican. The first smallpox inoculation and first autopsy ever to be performed in the island also took place inside the edifice. The building is also significant because of its association to Dr José Espailat, an illustrious personality who for decades directed the hospital and school of medicine, distinguishing himself for his dedicated and exemplary work. He was instrumental in the creation of the school of medicine and in the modern management of the establishment. Dr Espailat also performed the first autopsy ever to be carried out in Old San Juan and the island.

After 1898, the building became part of the US Army General Hospital of Fort Brooke and continued to serve as a military hospital until the 1960s. On 31 August 1944, General Order No 7 changed its name to Rodríguez General Hospital, honoring Major Fernando E Rodríguez Vargas (1888-1832), a dentist. Dr Rodríguez, a Puerto Rican, carried out pioneer work establishing the relationship between the bacteria *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and dental caries.

The fact the building was never finished is one of its most relevant architectural attributes for the information potential it can provide. Its unfinished state contributes to our understanding of 18<sup>th</sup> century architecture, in particular buildings belonging to the architectural typology of the hospital. Information regarding the local use of materials, morphological arrangements, and construction techniques can be gained from the study of the edifice. It possesses urban, architectural and artistic national significance. It was the first important structure to be constructed in the Campo del Morro and the first formal military hospital in the city and island. As mentioned, it was one of the earliest military hospitals in America. Its architecture evidences the impact of Italian and Spanish Baroque concepts and their adaptation to the Viejo San Juan. The building is associated to important historic events like the founding of the island's first school of medicine. It also served as the stage for the first autopsy and smallpox inoculation performed in the island. The Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la

<sup>148</sup> George Flinter, *An account of the present state of the Island Puerto Rico*, pp 40-41.

<sup>149</sup> Sandra M Fábregas Troche, *La Institucionalización de la Farmacia en Puerto Rico* (Colombia: Printer Colombiana S A, 2003), p 218. In the year 1793, the Nuestra Señora *botica* was still known as the Real Botica. The *botica* that existed at the Hospital de Santiago, established in 1767, was moved to the Nuestra Señora de la Concepción El Grande when the building was finished.

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Concepción El Grande is also associated to relevant figures, such as Dr Emidgio de Antique, the first Puerto Rican to graduate from the first school of medicine in the island and Dr José Espaillat, who performed the first autopsy and directed the school of medicine and hospital. The fact that the building also sheltered the Royal Pharmacy adds another layer of significance for it provides information about the medical and pharmaceutical practices throughout history.

### Palacio Episcopal (Parcela 4, Block 16)

The Palacio Episcopal (Episcopal Palace)<sup>150</sup> was originally a large private house facing the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud bought by Bishop Sebastián Lorenzo Pizarro from Doña María Amézquita y Ayala. After rebuilding the original structure, the bishop moved into the building in 1733.<sup>151</sup> Five years later, royal authorization was granted and the edifice became the permanent home of the bishop of San Juan, a function it still shelters. Its size and corner location classifies it as a *palacio* (palace) or *palacete*.

As befitted the relevant role played by the residence of the Catholic bishop within the community, the structure is located two blocks north of the Catedral de San Juan Bautista and one block south from the Iglesia de San José. It is highly possible the location was dictated by the fact that, during the second and third decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, these were the two most important ecclesiastical establishments in the district. There is historic evidence that, prior to the establishment on this particular site, there was a 16<sup>th</sup> century episcopal palace closer to the cathedral, partially burned during the Dutch attack of 1625. Confirmation that this first building really existed is provided by Abbad y Lasierra's description of the area surrounding the Catedral de San Juan Bautista during his visit. *En su inmediación se ven las ruinas de otros edificios contiguos á la Catedral que se cree fueron el Palacio episcopal y Seminario.*<sup>152</sup>

Abbad y Lasierra described the present structure during the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the following manner: *El palacio episcopal reedificado por el Ilmo. Sr. Don Fray Manuel Ximénez Pérez, aunque es muy bueno, excede poco en su extensión y perspectiva á la casa de un caballero particular. Nada hay en él más recomendable que la virtud y modestia del Prelado que lo habita.*<sup>153</sup> Interestingly, credit for the rehabilitation was given to Bishop Jiménez Pérez who was also responsible for the erection of the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción El Grande. Abbad y Lasierra was not impressed with the size of the structure which he found to be barely adequate. The demanding friar failed to recognize not only the beauty and uniqueness of the entrance portal but also the elegance and imposing size of the composition, particularly when compared to the rest of the houses in the district. The edifice's striking volume and scale was noted in 1834: "The episcopal palace is a commodious building; it was originally a private house purchased from its owner: the ecclesiastical tribunal and secretary reside there."<sup>154</sup> From this description it is obvious several religious administrative functions were sheltered within the *palacete*.

The principal façade composition is interesting given the fact that while the first floor openings do not have encadrements the second floor ones receive elegant and smart frames. This contrast may point out to the fact that, in the absence of money for architectural orders to be inserted in the different floors, elegant detailing

<sup>150</sup> The building is also known as El Obispado (the Bishopry). In an official 1940 publication it is also described as the Palace of the Catholic Bishop.

<sup>151</sup> María de los Ángeles Castro, *Arquitectura en San Juan de Puerto Rico (Siglo XIX)* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial Universitaria, 1980), p 363.

<sup>152</sup> Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra, *Historia geográfica, civil y natural de la isla de San Juan Bautista*, p 213. Translation into English: "Close [to the Cathedral] one can see the ruins of other buildings believed to be the Episcopal Palace and Seminary."

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p, 214. Translation into English: "The Episcopal Palace was reconstructed by Ilmo Sr Don Fray Manuel Ximénez Pérez, it is just a bit larger and more elegant than the house of a private gentleman. There is nothing outstanding about it, except the virtue and modesty of the prelate who inhabits it."

<sup>154</sup> George Flinter, *An account of the present state of the Island Puerto Rico*, p 45.

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such as encadrements were used alternatively to establish the relevance of the *piano nobile* (the noble or principal floor) of the façade. In other words, the encadrements were given a special role to play in addition to their functional, structural and aesthetic ones. Historic photographs indicate that during the 19<sup>th</sup> century *fin-de-siècle* the façade was pseudo-rusticated. It is impossible to know with certainty if this treatment was original or added at a later time. In any case, it increased the sense of splendor of the building, suggesting it was made of masonry blocks and not plastered walls. The use of a balcony-cum-tribune over the main entrance further emphasizes the elegance of the establishment in the same manner that the wide and dramatic staircase does in the interior. Although balconies were used in the principal and north façades, balconettes were preferred for the rest of the openings, as per 18<sup>th</sup> century taste, particularly in the first floor. The central opening is treated as an elegant portal crowned by the balcony-cum-tribune that underscores the Tuscan-inspired frieze. The composition is framed by Tuscan engaged round section columns. The posts and entablature add sophistication to the façade. Triglyphs border concentric circles inscribed within the metopes. The sharp incline of the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud is solved by means of the introduction of a base or podium-like level upon which the first floor balconettes rest.

As previously mentioned, during Holy Week a traditional activity was the locally-called the *Encuentro* (Encounter), when the building was transformed into a stage for the commemoration of the Virgin Mary's encounter with Her Son after His Resurrection. During Holy Saturday, the members of the Cofradía de Nuestra Señora de la Soledad y el Santo Entierro de San Juan took an image of the resurrected Christ that resided permanently in the Convento de los Dominicos to the Catedral de San Juan Bautista. Before sunrise, the Resurrected Christ was taken in procession from the cathedral while the image of the Virgin was taken from the Dominican church down the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud towards the cathedral.

*Al aparecer ambas imágenes en las puertas de sus respectivos templos, los ruidos nacidos de las armas de fuego y artilugios sonadores y de las esquilas, se incrementaban. Las dos comitivas, rememorando la aparición de Cristo a su Madre se movían hacia su encuentro y cuando estaban cerca, frente a frente, los portadores de los pasos a la par que andaban hacían al unísono un amago de arrodillarse, simulando las imágenes una inclinación, una reverencia. Esta ceremonia se ejecutaba por tres veces.<sup>155</sup>*

After the encounter, both processions became one and the images were taken back to the Iglesia de San José. In this yearly ritual, the two sculptures met in front of the Palacio Episcopal since the building is located approximately halfway between the Catedral de San Juan Bautista and the Iglesia de San José. It seems logical to think that the bishop may have appeared in the balcony-cum-tribune to participate in this important ritual and maybe bless those taking part in the activity.

The Palacio Episcopal is a contributing property of the Viejo San Juan Historic District, possessing urban, architectural and artistic national significance. Its architectural stylistic elements, particularly the Tuscan-inspired portal, make it a unique example of the Old San Juan Baroque style. Of special interest is the use of encadrements and the tribune-cum-balcony to dignify the upper level, considered the most important, as well as the creative treatment of the podium-like level. The decorated frieze is a unique example that evidences intimate knowledge of Classical semantics. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the building has served in an uninterrupted manner as the house and office of the highest ecclesiastical figure of the Catholic Church in the island. It is also significant because of its association with local religious traditions. Although the Palacio Episcopal is

<sup>155</sup> Ángel López Cantos, *La Religiosidad Popular en Puerto Rico (Siglo XVIII)* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, 1992), pp 38-39. Translation into English: "When the images appeared at the door of their respective temples, the noise from the firearms and sound artifacts and small bells increased. The two groups accompanying the images, repeating Christ's apparition to His Mother, approached each other and when they were one in front of the other those carrying the images simulated a platoon, as if the images were reverencing one another. This ceremony was performed three times."

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owned by a religious institution (the Catholic Church) it derives primary significance from its architectural importance (Criterion Consideration A).

### **Iglesia and Convento de San Francisco** (Parcelas 5, 4 and 3, Block 37)

The Plaza de San Francisco, also known as the Plaza de Salvador Brau, and its neighboring area, La Barandilla, are open urban spaces anchored by the Iglesia de San Francisco and the Escuela Graduada y Técnica Ramón Baldorioty de Castro. In fact, until burials inside the city were prohibited during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the plaza served as both church atrium and cemetery. The original square – that included the La Barandilla area – served the church, as well as the cloister, the Convento de San Francisco, once located where the school is presently sited. This monastery, the second largest one in Old San Juan, was dedicated to St Francis of Assisi, patron saint of the Franciscans. There was a second church, finished in 1653, next to the west façade of the present church.

The Franciscan order was one of the first religious groups to arrive to the island. In fact, according to some sources,<sup>156</sup> they established a “convent” in Caparra in 1515. Rather than move to the islet, the order decided to leave, only to come back during the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. License for their establishment was granted a few years later, in spite of stern Dominican opposition. Since the Franciscans, like the Dominicans, were mendicant orders, the second group was probably concerned that two organizations should “compete” in such a relatively poor urban core. In 1834, the following description of the Convento de San Francisco and the other two cloisters that existed in the urban core was written:

There are three convents within the walls of the city, – one of the order of St Francis, another of St Dominic, and the third a convent of Carmelite nuns. They are maintained by the rents which they possess. These convents are spacious, commodious, and well situated; but they are now occupied only by friars, and are nearly empty; and many parts of the buildings are in ruins.<sup>157</sup>

Construction of the Convento de San Francisco, uncomfortably positioned against the topographical elevation that separates the area and Calle de la Luna, was carried out between the years 1642 and 1670.<sup>158</sup> As was the case with the Convento de los Dominicos, in 1835 the government took control of the building and the Real Intendencia was placed in charge of the structure. By 1851, the former cloister was transformed into barracks for the Spanish artillery corps and the name changed to Cuartel de San Francisco (San Francisco Barracks).<sup>159</sup> Infamous stories were woven around the convent-cum-barracks. For some time, the area surrounding the cloister, particularly towards the north, was known as Hoyo Vicioso (Vice Hole). The problems caused by the extreme humidity were many and, as evidenced by the above-mentioned quote the building was in a ruinous state in 1834. Urban legends ascribed the building the role of breeding center for all kinds of plagues and vices.

The ground floors are upon different levels with obstructed drainage, which act as catch basins, and the soil is permeated with the excretions from the cesspools above on Luna Street. The whole structure is a shell of old walls and arches of masonry forming confined air spaces. The stairways are narrow, broken down, tile-and-

<sup>156</sup> Salvador Brau, *La colonización de Puerto Rico, desde el descubrimiento de la isla hasta la reversión á la corona española de los privilegios de Colón*, p 372.

<sup>157</sup> George Flinter, *An account of the present state of the Island Puerto Rico*, p 42.

<sup>158</sup> Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, pp 335-336. Some sources establish that the temporary church was finished in 1651. Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, p 197.

<sup>159</sup> For a short time after 1898, it also served as “a magazine for public works of the Island.” Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, p 197. According to some sources, the building also sheltered the Central Grammar School (1909). Osiris Delgado, *Historia General de las Artes Plásticas en Puerto Rico Tomo I* (Santo Domingo: Editora Corripio, 1994), p 163.

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cement work, and the flooring consists of inferior rough patched boards, with their edges and under surfaces stained from the drippings and washings of years. With moisture, mold, and absence of sunlight and air, and an average temperature above 70 degrees F, throughout the year, and ideal culture bed is formed for the propagation of disease germs. This is thoroughly borne out in the history of the place during the occupancy of the Spanish soldiery, who afforded the non immune material to complete the facts in the case.

Dr Gabriel Ferrer, of this committee, is personally cognizant of the origin and development of yellow fever in these quarters, he having been frequently called in as a consultant. He states: "I can affirm, because experience has taught me so, that the greater number of people attacked with yellow fever always proceeded from the soldiers located in these barracks."

This is also personally known to Dr Ricardo Hernandez. Cases were allowed to remain until in a desperate condition, often dying during removal to the hospital, and the death rate was as high as 47 percent, showing a virulent type of disease.<sup>160</sup>

Originally, the convent had one *cortile*. The floor plan was organized almost as a square, in frank imitation of traditional examples, including the Convento de los Dominicos. Each side had two floors and the north side abutted against the topographical elevation that separates the site from Calle de la Luna. The main entrance to the convent was located facing the Plaza of San Francisco on the building's southern corner. As was also the case with the Convento de los Dominicos, there seems to have been no desire to create an axial entrance aligned with the cortile. The convent was a private building and there was no need for formal academic spatial organization, particularly related to the main access. In keeping with Old San Juan Baroque motifs, a wide straight entablature supported by Tuscan columns framed this entrance.

When the Spanish military took over, the building was extended towards the east, an addition that formed a second quasi-*cortile*. The new area was erected in the place where the former garden and *huerta* of the monks had been located. This probably contributed to both the humidity and darkness problems noted by the American authorities in 1898.

These barracks are situated in the eastern portion of the city of San Juan, bounded by the Calles Luna, Tamarindo, Tanca, and San Francisco, all these streets having different grades, with Luna as high as the second floor of rear building, abutting the walls, causing dampness and mold.

Facing San Francisco street are the old church and chapel of the same name, with a more recent public building on the southeast corner of the block. These barracks were originally constructed by the order of the San Francisco Monks, in medieval [*sic*] style of architecture. The greater portion of the work was begun in 1650, and completed in 1680. It has been somewhat added to since that time, and was occupied by the San Francisco Monks until 1835, when the religious orders were suppressed.

A few years later it was converted into a military barrack under the direction of Colonel Cortigo [Cortijo], of the engineers.

They now consist of thick walls of masonry surrounding two inner courts and archways, inclosing [*sic*] numerous cells and dark rooms. The only sunlight and air upon the ground floor was obtained by the animals stabled beneath the open archways.<sup>161</sup>

<sup>160</sup> Report of the "Special Committee to Inspect the San Francisco Barracks" made for the American military government with the goal to: "make a sanitary inspection of the San Francisco barracks with a view of determining their fitness for a jail." This was one of many such inspections made by the federal government immediately after 1898. Military Government of Porto Rico, *Military Government of Porto Rico From October 18, 1898, to April 30, 1900 Appendices to the Report of the Military Governor* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1901), pp 44-45.

<sup>161</sup> *Idem*.



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The physical condition of the convent was so disastrous that the visiting authorities believed destruction was the only solution to its many problems. Describing the urban core as “an already overcrowded city,” the “Special Committee to Inspect the San Francisco Barracks” established:

While the dictum may be true that there is no building which cannot be disinfected, it is equally true that disinfection does not correct bad sanitary structural conditions, which preeminently exist in the San Francisco Barracks. Already this season yellow fever has broken out in several like buildings in Cuba, the last in the marine barracks in Havana a few weeks ago, and it is not possible to suppose that they had not been disinfected prior to occupancy. . . .

For those reasons your committee earnestly recommends that at the close of the present summer season, after fractional disinfection, the whole structure be dismantled, available material used for other purposes, the dry, clean and disinfected debris utilized in grading and terracing the block, upon which a top dressing could be placed, and proper sewer and drainage established.

It may be a little out of the province of this report but still a matter of sanitation to state that public air spaces are very limited in San Juan, which is compactly built and contains a dense population. For this reason many of its citizens wish the site of the San Francisco Barracks converted into a public park.<sup>162</sup>

The 1898 recommendation to substitute the “medieval” [*sic*] structure with a more “modern scientific” building was followed some years later, during the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the old convent was destroyed and the Escuela Graduada y Técnica Ramón Baldorioty de Castro constructed.

The Convento de San Francisco was part of a religious complex that included the present day Iglesia de San Francisco and another church. Little is known about this church for it was demolished during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since then the Iglesia de San Francisco has stood alone. In 1645, when authorization was granted, a *bohío* (hut) that accommodated thirty persons was erected.<sup>163</sup> A few years later, a masonry church was started and formally finished by 1653. As was traditional, the main façade of the church faces west in order for the most important part of the temple, the apse, to look towards the rising sun as mandated by Christian beliefs. The interior of the temple follows the local interpretation of Baroque ideas, deeply influenced, in turn, by the Counter-Reformation architectural aspirations. Like the 19<sup>th</sup> century Iglesia de las Carmelitas Calzadas and the Iglesia de Santa Ana, a splendid barrel vault crowns the single nave with clerestory openings in the manner of thermal or Palladian windows. Absence of distracting side aisles or chapels is beautifully underscored by the single, wide and elegant vault. A single nave is critical to this type of design in order to emphasize the unity of the interior space. The specific approach derives from the Counter-Reformation architectural guidelines which stressed longitudinal-centralized floor plans, rather than traditional longitudinal basilica ones, in order to concentrate the attention on the altar. Side aisles were not encouraged in this type of spatial arrangement. None of the three local examples mentioned above include side chapels or aisles, a *démodé* solution during the Baroque. The design concept aims to obtain airy and well illuminated interiors and also a more intimate connection between all the interior spaces. In the Iglesia de San Francisco, entrances are located along the west and southern walls of the structure, allowing direct access from both the Plaza de San Francisco and the Calle de San Francisco. As was the case with the Iglesia San José and the Iglesia de las Carmelitas Calzadas, the temple served the religious order as well as the city. Varied entrances underscored the urban service the edifices had to provide.

The Iglesia de San Francisco is the only Baroque ecclesiastical example in the Viejo San Juan Historic District. Its interior bears a strong resemblance to the church of Il Gesú in Rome, designed by architects Giacomo

<sup>162</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>163</sup> Report, Governor Diego de Aguilera y Gamboa, 1651. Quoted in: Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, p 335.

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Barozzi da Vignola and Giacomo della Porta during the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, considered the model for the one nave barrel-vaulted temples forged by the style. The Church of San Giorgio Maggiore, the work of Andrea Palladio,<sup>164</sup> started around 1566 and finished during the early decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, may have also provided inspiration. From the first precedent derives the use of a single, wide barrel vault. Both examples, in turn, provide influences regarding the: (i) elegant and functional clerestory treated as thermal or Palladian windows that intersect the curvature of the barrel vault along its base, (ii) single engaged pilasters crowned with Tuscan capitals supporting the entablature from where the vault springs, and (iii) subdivision of the vault into bays by means of semicircular arches.

While the exterior of the Iglesia included a Baroque *espadaña* (multiple belfry), the façade composition was *sui generis*, a vernacular adaptation of the style. Historic photographs from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century depict the *piñón rectilíneo* (rectilinear end motif) which has been determined to be one of the characteristics of the Baroque in Havana.<sup>165</sup> This façade was adversely impacted when a concrete building was added during the period from 1918 to 1920 to house a parochial Catholic school, the Academia Católica de San Juan. Its remains were liberated decades later when the 20<sup>th</sup> century building was demolished.

The Iglesia de San Francisco followed centuries-old traditions and included a crypt where burials of relevant personalities took place until urban internments were prohibited by the government during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>166</sup> The crypt is roofed by an exposed brick barrel vault. Several steps lead down to its underground interior where a person can stand comfortably. Burial niches align along the walls that support the vault. Of special interest is the tomb of Brigadier Juan St Just, a notable of the island.

The so-called La Barandilla is a plaza-like sector next to the Plaza de San Francisco that during the 19<sup>th</sup> century sported a metal *barandilla* (handrail or railing) and curved steps that bridged the height difference between the Plaza de San Francisco and Calle de la Luna. Although originally part of the Plaza de San Francisco, the design dates to 1870.<sup>167</sup> As mentioned, the whole arrangement was buried in 1918 under a section of Calle de la Tanca that was extended north. Even when not in sight and the famed handrail lost, the place still preserved the name and the area continued to be known as La Barandilla.<sup>168</sup> This part of the plaza was lined with trees forming a short *allée* on axis with Calle de la Tanca and the Puerta de San Rafael, also known as the Puerta de España (Spain's Door), the last fortification urban door opened to connect the interior

<sup>164</sup> Although Andrea Palladio's work does not belong to the Baroque, his oeuvre deeply impacted this aesthetic movement.

<sup>165</sup> Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX*, p 127.

<sup>166</sup> The American transitional government was obsessed with the burial practices in Old San Juan and the island and their possible impact upon the health of the urban core. Inspection visits to the different crypts were organized during the early months of the American occupation to correct any problems found by the committee. The same committee that visited the Carmelite crypt also inspected the Iglesia de San Francisco burial vault made the following comment to the military governor: "[I]n this church [Iglesia de San Francisco] we found one vault under the floor of the church, reached by a stairway, the entrance to which was covered by rather light wooden hatches. The vault contains some twenty niches. The burials here are made as in Carmelitas, the bodies being first interred in an outside cemetery, the bones only transferred here. This place, so the priest in charge informed us, has room for only three more bodies (bones), and when these places are filled he is opposed to any attempt to make room for more. The place is reserved for the Order of St Francis, and only a few burials occur here. The entrance to the vault is very poorly closed, and this is a subject of complaint from the priest in charge, whose living quarters are directly above on the next floor. The place had a close, confined odor, but nothing more. It appeared clean and dry." The findings of the group included specific recommendations: "[U]nder the methods employed and under proper supervision we can see no objection to the burial of the dead in these places as it is practiced, and the only recommendation we have to make is that the entrance to the vault in San Francisco Church should be fitted with some better means of closing it, as sealing it with a stone slab or using heavy metal doors of some kind." Military Government of Porto Rico, *Military Government of Porto Rico From October 18, 1898, to April 30, 1900 Appendices to the Report of the Military Governor*, p 49.

<sup>167</sup> Archivo General de Puerto Rico, Fondo: Obras Públicas, Serie: Obras Municipales, Legajo 102. Thanks are extended to Mr José Marull for providing this source.

<sup>168</sup> Around 2007, the original urban steps (La Barandilla) were discovered and rehabilitated. At that time, the section of the Calle de la Tanca between Calle de San Francisco and Calle de la Luna was eliminated and the La Barandilla area incorporated – one more time – to the Plaza de San Francisco. This work also recuperated the historic block morphology.

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walled precinct with the outside. The visual connection between the La Barandilla staircase, the small *allée*-cum-promenade and the Puerta de España created an axis that countered the fragmentation present in the orthogonal grid. The promenade-like area, albeit small in size, planted with trees framing a baroquely curved public staircase, was the result of Second Empire Baroque aesthetic influences. The at-the-time innovative arrangement of the area as a public walkway and the inclusion of decorative details, in particular, the metal railing and the graceful curved steps, profoundly impacted the *sanjuanero* collective memory. Although a limited urban intervention, it silently spoke of elegant 19<sup>th</sup> century European promenades, boulevards and *paseos*.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was an interest in organizing boulevards and promenades, urban elements that were to transform the traditional cramped cores into user-friendly organisms. They also evidence concern with the “health” of traditional enclaves. Their trees help the “breathing” process while their walks provided a place where the citizens could leisurely walk. While La Barandilla was an example of one such a space inside the city the Paseo de Puerta de Tierra (Puerta de Tierra Promenade) and the Paseo de la Princesa (Princess Promenade) were to achieve the same goal outside the walled precinct. All examples are philosophically and aesthetically connected to the experimentations taking place in European cities like Madrid, Barcelona, Vienna and Paris.

*[L]os lugares frecuentados por casi todas las clases sociales como espacios de sociabilidad eran los paseos, existentes prácticamente en todas las ciudades españolas. Ir de paseo era algo divertido y, sobre todo, barato. . . . El paseo era, pues, una actividad social más, pero sobre todo, un entretenimiento burgués. En días festivos podía ser frecuentado por gente más modesta, pues era evidente que los absorbentes horarios de trabajo no les permitían pasear en los días de entre semana.*<sup>169</sup>

These insertions are important reflections of the social changes that took place during the 19th century which empowered a more democratic core, one the lower classes could also use for recreation and where the feminine gender could venture out and parade in a safe and carefully controlled environment.

The innovative La Barandilla area and the Plaza de San Francisco received a boost during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the Municipality of San Juan placed television here. At the time, few could afford to have their own set. This new use transformed the Plaza de San Francisco into the outdoor living room of dozens of *sanjuaneros* and *sanjuaneras*. As a result, the public use of the square was exponentially underscored and many, from domino players to troubadours, came to socially interact within it. A statue to *güiro* player, Patricio Rijos (also known as Toribio), has inspired some to call the square Plaza de Toribio.<sup>170</sup> The sculpture keeps company to the seated one of patrician and historian Dr Salvador Brau (1842-1912).

The Plaza de San Francisco and La Barandilla organize a unique sector of town and serve as evidence of the evolution of squares within the district, from atrium serving a church and convent to promenade-like area that followed 19<sup>th</sup> century European ideas, to outdoor communal living room, to informal space citizens could use for modern recreational activities. Facing the Calle de San Francisco, the road that unites the Plaza de Colón to the Plaza de Armas, makes the space part of the processional route marking the main entrance into the city. The unique urban typology of La Barandilla, planned as a green boulevard-cum-plaza within a plaza, makes it

<sup>169</sup> Ivana Frasset, “Población y sociedad,” *España Crisis imperial e independencia*, p 259. Translation into English: “But the spaces visited by almost all social classes as social spaces were the promenades that existed in practically all Spanish cities. To go for a walk along these spaces was fun and, above all, cheap. . . . Going for a walk was, then, another social activity, but above all, it was a bourgeois entertainment. On holidays more humble people went there since their work schedule did not allow them to come during the week days.”

<sup>170</sup> Patricio Rijos, Toribio, was a first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century *güiro* player. The *güiro* (shekere) is a percussion instrument made of a hollow gourd that has parallel notches in one of its sides. It is played by rubbing along the notches to produce a ratchet-like sound as the *pua* (scraper) is scratched against the notches. The instrument may be Taíno in origin.

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the only space of its kind. The creation of a major axis connecting the La Barandilla to the Puerta de España was a 19<sup>th</sup> century reinscription of the urban grid.

In 1919, one of the first American public schools in the district, the Escuela Graduada y Técnica Ramón Baldorioty de Castro (Ramón Baldorioty de Castro Graded and Technical School) was constructed in the place where the old Franciscan convent-cum-barracks had been located. This building now houses the Universidad Carlos Albizu and is one of the finest examples of the Neo-Palladian in the island. Sometimes, historic preservation disgraces have a silver lining. While no park was created at the site, as the special committee to the military governor recommended in 1898, one of Old San Juan's architectural jewels, now sits where monks and Spanish soldiers once lived and died.

The Iglesia de San Francisco and the surrounding Plaza de San Francisco and La Barandilla are contributing properties of national significance. The complex possesses urban, architectural, artistic, and landscape significance. Since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the area has served uninterruptedly religious and communal uses. The magnificent church with its breathtaking barrel vault and effective clerestory is a unique example of the adaptation of European Baroque ideas. The site is also significant because of its association with local public traditions. Although the Iglesia de San Francisco is still used as a Catholic Church it is a unit of a holistic district, deriving its primary significance from its architectural importance, as per Criterion Consideration A.

### Capilla del Santo Cristo de la Salud

Located at the southern terminus of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud, the petite Capilla del Santo Cristo de la Salud is a small, unique place of worship, an iconic image of the district. Its Baroque elements comingle with its unique morphology that rejects the traditionally enclosed floor plan of hermitages in favor of that of an open *templete* (small temple). It is possible that during the first stage of development the chapel was just a commemorative *hornacina* (a niche-like room). During the period from 1773 to 1780, military engineer Juan Francisco Mestredesigned the porch and the curvy *espadaña* (belfry) that is balanced by two vertical elements rising from the upper level of the structure.<sup>171</sup>

The dramatic semicircular arch that serves as main entrance and the multi-curved belfry are both Baroque in inspiration. Both elements and the brick masonry open portico add drama to the building and streetscape. This last element also serves as congregational area since the edifice was a church, albeit small. The west arch originally opened to a private garden "which in ancient days must have been [a] public or military walk along the top of the city wall."<sup>172</sup> Possibly, it was part of the *paseo de ronda* (pomoerium) that connected the whole city along the inside perimeter of defensive walls. The east arch faces the Calle de Tetuán, one of the two streets that intersect at the Chapel, considered important thoroughfares for centuries. Pedestrians could easily circumvent the building; circulation was fluid even though the porch was located at the corner of both streets. The portico was open until the 1940s. "Between the portico and the chapel a well-designed cast-iron grille has recently been set into the masonry jambs. The opening being wide, the grill is divided into three panels. The central portion has two leaves and opens on the portico." It is interesting to note that, in 1940, when the above-quoted lines were written, mention is made that there were plans to tear the building down to make room for increasing car traffic. "But thanks to the Catholic Daughters and the Women's Civic Club, it was restored to its former condition in 1927. On the west wall of the portico is a tablet commemorating this restoration."<sup>173</sup> The park to the west is presently known as the Parque de las Palomas (Pigeons' Park), located in Parcela 16, Block 4. Children are taken regularly to it, where they feed pigeons in a garden-like atmosphere that sits on top of the fortification wall and enjoys a dizzying view of the port, La Puntilla, and the main island.

<sup>171</sup> Mestre came to the island in the year 1766. Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, p 334.

<sup>172</sup> Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico A Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, p 201.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 201-202.

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Cultural significance of districts does not reside exclusively on the architectural and urban artifacts. Intangible values, such as the folklore woven around centuries-old buildings, are also an intrinsic component of the cultural significance of a particular area. According to historic sources, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, horse races used to take place down the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud. Riders would group at the northern end of the street and gallop down the sharp incline towards the southern part of the city. According to a possible event which became a legend published by famed Puerto Rican writer Cayetano Coll y Toste, during the Fiestas de San Juan of the year 1753, Baltazar Montañez could not rein his horse on time and plummeted down the fifty feet plus precipice which exists at this point. The Secretary of the Government, Tomás Mateo y Prats, a witness to the event, asked for divine intervention along the lines of “¡Sálvalo, Santo Cristo de la Salud!”<sup>174</sup> The rider survived and Mateo y Prats had the chapel built as a memorial to the miracle via divine intervention.

The Capilla del Santo Cristo de la Salud is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, artistic, and landscape national significance. The isolated structure acts as urban terminus to the impressive, long axis established by the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud. The edifice and its history are significant for they have inspired local legends, traditions and literary works. Although the Capilla del Santo Cristo de la Salud belongs to the Catholic Church it is a unit of a holistic district, deriving its primary significance from its architectural and urban importance. It is a contributing building on the basis of Criterion Consideration A.

### **Convento and Iglesia de las Madres Carmelitas Calzadas (Parcela 1, Block 23)**

The Convento and Iglesia de las Madres Carmelitas Calzadas (Convent and Church of the Calced Carmelite Sisters) is the only property located in the block defined by the Calle del Sol (north), Caleta de las Monjas (south), Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud (east), and the Escalinatas de las Monjas (Nuns' Staircase) (west). This last thoroughfare is one of two public stairways that have been preserved in the district. The religious cloister complex was the third one to be founded in the city and the first to shelter women since the other two, the Convento de los Dominicos and Convento de San Francisco, housed monks. The cloister dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> century was annexed to a church. The present temple was erected during the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after an earlier one burned down. Underscoring the religious undertones established by the Catedral de San Juan Bautista's visual and physical domination of the Plaza de la Catedral, the complex was erected on the north side of the small plaza.

Felipe IV gave authorization for its establishment and the center was inaugurated in the year 1651 with the name of Monasterio de Nuestra Señora del Carmen de San José (Monastery of Our Lady of the Carmel of St Joseph). In the early days, the congregation lived in the founders' home, Ana de Lanzón, a *casa solariega* (large sprawling house) located on the corner of the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud and Caleta de las Monjas. A 1720 historic free-hand drawing of this establishment evidences the structure was a large one, covered with a wooden roof protected with terracotta tiles.<sup>175</sup> The building was surrounded by tall *tapias* (masonry walls) and large gardens. Several houses seemed to have been united into one large rambling complex until funding was available to create a formal, albeit humble, cloister.

Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the female convent was the only decent place where unmarried women of good families could live, particularly if they were alone in the world. The building offered solution to the protection of well-to-do single women, a most serious social problem until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>174</sup> Translation into English: “Save him, Blessed Christ of Health!” According to Adolfo de Hostos, historic documents belonging to the Catholic Church evidence the young man died a short time later, probably as a result of his injuries. Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, p 333.

<sup>175</sup> Archivo General de Puerto Rico, Mapas y Planos, Number 30. A copy of this drawing appears in María de los Ángeles Castro, *Arquitectura en San Juan de Puerto Rico (siglo XIX)*, p 61.

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*Ofrecía así una solución al problema de asilo de las solteras de buenas familias sin prospectos matrimoniales. Por aquel entonces las mujeres dependían totalmente de los hombres. Eran, por describirlo sucintamente, sus arrimás [sic]. La vida ideal de cada una de ellas transcurría en el vaivén de ser la “hija de,” “esposa de,” y “madre de.” Si a manos venía, también era posible ser conocida como la “hermana de,” o la “sobrina de,” ya que era de rigor poseer una asociación familiar con un hombre. La vida se tornaba zozobra perenne si estas conexiones fallaban y quedaba “desamparada” (la palabra empleada por mi abuelo).*

*En el mundo de doña Ana, los peninsulares eran los únicos considerados adecuados como cónyuge. Desafortunadamente, escaseaban. Se necesitaba un lugar donde poder refugiarse del tormentoso mundo y de la soledad personal. La dote que técnicamente una familia pagaba por casar a una de sus féminas se le ofrecía ahora al convento.*

*En sus comienzos, el grupo se estableció en la casa de doña Ana, una gran casona solariega que se asentaba en la importantísima esquina de la hoy calle del Santo Cristo y caleta de las Monjas. Un plano de la época muestra una gran casa con techo de aguas que daba el frente a la primera plaza pública que tuvo la ciudad. Con el tiempo y con muchas dificultades las monjas pudieron construir un convento (parte del cual se conserva dentro del Hotel El Convento); años más tarde, en el 1854, se edificó la iglesia.<sup>176</sup>*

The structure, therefore, was of extreme importance to the feminine gender of the urban center for it provided a haven for those who found themselves alone. It also offered shelter to those that opted “out” of social life.

As mentioned, the present temple substitutes an earlier one and is an exquisite example of Neo-Cinquecento architecture, depicting elegant decorative details and a crisp 19<sup>th</sup> century interpretation of Palladian architecture, particularly in the treatment of the barrel vault over the single nave. Work on the present church started in 1854. Manuel de Zayas, *arquitecto y maestro mayor de fortificaciones*,<sup>177</sup> was the designer.

Four Tuscan *en ressault* columns frame the entrance supporting a narrow epistyle and a Tuscan frieze. This element is crowned by an entablature which correctly imitates Classicist architectural and decorative prototypes.<sup>178</sup> The only entrance door on this façade it is capped by a semicircular arch which is repeated in a thermal window located above this element. The façade composition is framed by two *avant-corps* that imitate towers. They originally ended in belfries crowned by small domes. It is interesting to note that the designer abandoned the traditional Old San Juan preference for the basilica façade in favor of a westwork-inspired arrangement that emphasizes verticality and plastic drama by means of the two vertical tower-like elements. Historic photographs from the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century depict how the sumptuous façade composition sharply contrasted to the humble character of the cloister wall annexed to the west. The convent’s exterior lacked special decorative or aesthetic treatment for elegant detailing was exclusively reserved for the temple.

<sup>176</sup> Arleen Pabón Charneco, “La ciudad del puerto Rico Reinterpretando los artefactos urbanos y arquitectónicos del viejo San Juan,” pp 5-6. Translation into English: “It offered a solution to the problem of sheltering single women of good families. At that time, women depended completely on men. They were – to put it succinctly – their *arrimás* (dependant). The ideal life occurred between being the “daughter of,” “wife of” and “mother of” someone. It was also possible to be known as the “sister of” or the “niece of,” since it was considered de rigueur to have some familiar link with a man. Life turned into a stormy passage if these connections failed and a woman found herself destitute (the word employed by my grandfather).” “In Doña Ana’s world, Spanish men were the only ones considered adequate as husbands for well-to-do ladies. Unfortunately, they were scarce. A place was needed were women could be sheltered from the tormented world and personal solitude. The dowry that some families paid to have a daughter married was in these cases given to the convent.” “In the beginning, the group lived in Dona Ana’s house, a big rambling house that was located in the very important corner where the Santo Cristo and Caleta de las Monjas Streets intersect. A drawing made at the time depicts a big house with inclined roofs that faced the first public plaza of the city. With time and with many difficulties, the nuns were able to construct a convent (enclosed in the Hotel El Convento); much later, in 1854, the church was built.”

<sup>177</sup> María de los Ángeles Castro, *Arquitectura en San Juan de Puerto Rico (Siglo XIX)*, p 258. Translation into English:

“[A]rchitect and principal master builder of fortifications.”

<sup>178</sup> The façade has been erroneously if comically described as “in the Etruscan style.” Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico A Guide to the Island of Borinquén*, p 206.

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The uppermost parts of the tower-like elements were destroyed during the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the structure was rehabilitated to serve as the *Hotel El Convento*, a by now a historic use.<sup>179</sup> The rehabilitation work eliminated the church apse and added a pool to the interior courtyard that originally served the nuns as both patio and graveyard. As was the case of other churches, the temple had burial crypts.<sup>180</sup>

The Convento and Iglesia de las Madres Carmelitas Calzadas is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural and artistic national significance. The sumptuous church façade, with its *en ressault* Tuscan columns and elegant frieze, defines the northeast corner of the Plaza de la Catedral, the earliest *plaza pública* of the district. It also marks the intersection of the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud and the Caleta de las Monjas, two of the oldest and most relevant thoroughfares of the core. The edifice is bordered on the west side by the Escalinata de las Monjas, one of two remaining public staircases, examples of the oldest pedestrian connectors adapted to the hilly site. The original topography shaped this unique urban solution that, with time, has become a source of inspiration for countless artists. The complex belongs to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

### Palacio Rojo (Parcela 1, Block 41)

The Fortaleza de Santa Catalina may not have been located at the best site from which to defend the entrance to the bay but the area was still an active component of the defense of the precinct. Therefore, it required all kinds of auxiliary services, including an artillery park, a function sheltered by the Palacio Rojo (Red Palace),

<sup>179</sup> As part of Operation Bootstrap, Robert Frederic Woolworth, heir to the Woolworth fortune, bought the structure in 1959 rehabilitating it into the El Convento Hotel which opened in 1962. Digital source: [www.elconvento.com](http://www.elconvento.com). This was the first major rehabilitation project carried out under the supervision of the then recently created Institute of Puerto Rican Culture. The transformation occurred during the late 1950s-early 1960s, after the San Juan Historic Zone was declared by the local authorities. Until that moment, the complex was used for a variety of uses, including a garage and, according to at least one urban legend, a house of ill repute. In the "Number 1 General Plan of San Juan," The Porto Rico Board of Fire Underwriters, 30 September 1921, the Convent is described as *Edificio Borinquen* (Borinquen Building) while the church is annotated as: *Garage 1a planta* (Garage 1<sup>st</sup> floor). "Number 1 General Plan of San Juan," The Porto Rico Board of Fire Underwriters, 30 September 1921.

<sup>180</sup> As mentioned, there is ample evidence that the Americans were puzzled by the burial practices of the historic district. Obsessed with health concerns and probably mystified with Mediterranean-inspired death rituals, on February 1, 1900 "[A] committee was appointed to investigate the conditions of the crypts beneath the San Francisco and Madres Carmelitas churches." The group's description reads as follows: "There are two places for the burial of the dead in connection with this church – the vaults or crypts of the convent of the cloistered order (*Las Madres Carmelitas*) adjoining the church and the crypt under the floor of the church itself." "The vault of the convent is situated below the ground floor of the convent, but is probably above the level of Luna Street, which makes a sharp descent in front of the convent. The vault consist of a small enclosure (masonry) reached by a flight of stairs, open to the air, but provided with heavy doors for closure, and contains some six or eight niches built in the walls and one cemented box-like enclosure, having a high crescent opening, unclosed, admitting partial inspections of the interior. The entire place is neat, clean, and without any odor. We were informed that the bodies of all dying in the convent are buried here; the body properly coffined being first placed in one of the niches, which is then closed with brick, cement, or something similar, and there it remains for several years (ten to fifteen); the niche is then opened and the bones remaining are thrown into the cemented enclosure described above. There were so few bones in this enclosure that it occasioned comment. The sister superior informed us that they rapidly disintegrated in this climate. Under the system above described there is ample room here for bodies of such dead as are buried in this place." "The crypt below the church we were unable to inspect as the entrances were sealed. We learned, however, that there are two small rooms (vaults), each containing some sixteen or eighteen niches. These two rooms are not connected, but each has a separate entrance into the church. These entrances which we saw are two openings in the floor of the church fitted with stone slabs and closed with cement. Only bones are placed in these crypts, the dead being first buried in an outside cemetery and removed to this place after a variable number of years (ten to fifteen), properly prepared and under proper supervision, to be sealed in one of the niches. We were informed that the niches were not all filled." Once the report was presented "The board ordered that the condition referred to in the report regarding the Iglesia de San Francisco, be included in a letter to be sent to the bishop of Porto Rico." No mention is made of what recommendation, if any, was made to this ecclesiastical figure. This anecdote is relevant for it evidences that, although prohibited during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was still a common practice to bury bone remains in the historic crypts within the defensive perimeter of the city. Military Government of Porto Rico, *Military Government of Porto Rico From October 18, 1898, to April 30, 1900 Appendices to the Report of the Military Governor*, 31; 48-49.

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also known as the Sala de Armas of the Palacio de Santa Catalina (Palacio de Santa Catalina Artillery Park). Armaments and other artifacts needed were stored here, in close proximity to the Palacio de Santa Catalina and to the western and southern portions of the *camino de ronda* (pomoerium). The edifice doubled as the residence of the *segundo cabo de la plaza* (the post commanding officer). After 1898, it continued to function as a government structure for: "During the military government the building was occupied by Brigadier General Grant, and with the establishment of civil rule in 1900, the upper floor became the residence of Attorney-General Harlan."<sup>181</sup>

The building was constructed in 1792 and the designer was Juan Francisco Mestre, author of the Capilla del Santo Cristo de la Salud. During the next century, it was considered one of the architectural jewels of the district. Pedro Tomás de Córdoba described how its *solidez* (firmness) and *bella forma* (attractive shape) contributed to the beauty of the city.<sup>182</sup> Architectural drama was carefully balanced with sobriety in the striking façade, as befitted a military structure that played a role in the defense of the city. Its scale and elegant portal evidence Baroque influence. The impact of the style is also seen in the contrast between the plain surfaces and the quoin-like motif framing the corners. A small number of windows rest on a high podium on the first floor and on a small cornice in the second one. All openings are crowned by segmental arcuated elements with a keystone crowning each one of the arches. This detail echoes the quoin-like decoration present in the corners.

The entrance portal facing the Calle de la Fortaleza is asymmetrically situated and includes an elegant masonry frame with an impressive cornice and engaged pilasters. The portal's complicated cornice sharply contrasts with the simple one used in the rest of the edifice. A characteristic of Baroque architecture in Old San Juan, decorated entrance portals are contrasted to the simple planes of the rest of the façade. Hierarchical organization of the entrance as the most important part of the building distinguishes almost all buildings of this stylistic period, including domestic ones. The design presents a cohesive understanding of architectural issues. For example, the height of the first floor podium coincides with the base upon which the engaged pilasters of the portal rest. Careful attention was also paid to mathematical proportions. Each one of the two floors is almost the same height, although the first level receives special attention by means of the high podium.

The Palacio Rojo is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural and artistic national significance. The sumptuous and elaborate portal is an example of the craftsmanship that distinguished Baroque architecture in the district. The decorated portal, asymmetrical organization and elegant façade contribute to its architectural and urban distinction. The fact that the structure was also part of the defense of the city grants it an additional layer of cultural relevance.

### **Cuerpo de Guardia del Almacén de Pólvora de San Sebastián (Parcela 4, Block 21)**

An 1887 plan of the district labels this small building located in the northwestern corner of Calle de Barbosa and Calle del Sol intersection as the *Cuerpo de guardia del almacén de San Sebastián* (Guard House of the San Sebastián Warehouse). Block 9 – its neighbor to the east – was the site of the Polvorín de San Sebastián (St Sebastian Gunpowder Magazine). The Cuerpo de Guardia served this structure by providing residence to the guards that were in charge of its custody. During the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Polvorín de San Sebastián was destroyed and the Escuela Graduada Abraham Lincoln was erected in its place.

<sup>181</sup> Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, p 194. In 1940, the Department of Justice moved to the building. It now houses the La Fortaleza press corps (Office of the Governor of Puerto Rico).

<sup>182</sup> Pedro Tomás de Córdoba, *Memorias geográficas, históricas, económicas y estadísticas de la Isla de Puerto-Rico* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Oficina del Gobierno, 1831), p 13.



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Tomás O'Daly's 18<sup>th</sup> century defensive plan for the city included *polvorines* (gunpowder magazines) scattered throughout the core. Originally located in isolated areas, these places were designed so that explosive material could be safeguarded and would not pose a danger to the citizens.<sup>183</sup> Theoretically, the storing of gunpowder was a hazard although it is a well known fact that the military in the island traditionally complained about the substandard quality of combat materials, including gunpowder. During the defense of the Viejo San Juan in 1898, for example, the Spanish military vociferously complained about both the inferior quality and severe shortage of the explosives, as well as ammunitions. In fact, practices were almost non-existent prior to the war because of this situation.

The magazines were designed with very thick walls and low, steep inclined exterior roofs. The wide walls protected the material from the local humidity while the roof would force any projectile hitting the buildings to slide to the side. The interior space was usually covered with a barrel vault. Four such structures were constructed to serve the defense of the city: the Polvorín de San Jerónimo (1768), Polvorín de Miraflores (1776), Polvorín de Santa Elena (1783), and Polvorín de San Sebastián (1791). In the early days of the historic district, a hermitage dedicated to San Sebastián was located in the area where the magazine with the same name was later erected. When the Polvorín de San Sebastián and Polvorín de Santa Elena were engulfed by the growing city, the second one was closed and no construction was allowed thirty yards around the first one. In the year 1880 it was officially closed. During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the buildings were used as storage areas (*almacén*).

The unique historic use of the building explains the building's elegant and unusual façade. The entrance is located on the short side of an open loggia framed by a quadripartite arcade of semicircular arches that faces the Calle del Sol. Each arch is framed by Tuscan engaged pilasters which support an entablature organized by means of an epistyle and a cornice. The architectural order is most appropriate for an edifice serving the military.

The Cuerpo de Guardia del Almacén de Pólvora de San Sebastián is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural and artistic national significance. It is the only extant example of this type of military architectural artifact (residence of gunpowder magazine guards), one type in the vast array of architectural artifacts needed to support the defense of the city. The elegant treatment of its façade evidences the relevance military buildings had for the district, as well as the social standing of the Spanish guards.

### THE HISTORICIST AND ENLIGHTENMENT PERIOD (1812-1898)

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Spanish world was characterized by instability. A political ballet was danced during the period, slowly but surely moving the peninsula into the debacle that marked for two centuries a long and tragic pendular swing between autocracy and democracy. The final resolution arrived quite late: after scores of American colonies proclaimed their independence, the implosion of the First Republic (11 February 1873-29 December 1874); the disappearance of the freely-elected Second Republic (declared in 1931) after a terrible civil war; and a forty years plus dictatorship. Thus ended the largest and grandest empire the world has ever known, proudly described as one where the sun never set. Regimes of absolute monarchy, parliamentary monarchy with a missing king, absolute monarchy, constitutional monarchy with a reluctant king, absolute monarchy imposed by force, including the deposition of a regnant queen and the return from exile of her son, all took place during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, during the early years of the century, Napoleonic activities

<sup>183</sup> Gunpowder was also used in the district to create *ingenios atronadores* (noise-making fireworks) on special holidays. Archivo General de Indias, Escribanía de Cámara, 123 C and 141 A, Cuentas de los tenedores de bastimentos, 20 April 1622 and 16 October 1721. Quoted in Ángel López Cantos, *Fiestas y juegos en Puerto Rico (siglo xviii)*, p 68. Translation into English: "[F]or noise-making artifacts."

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cast a long shadow over Spain and her colonies. Puerto Rico was profoundly affected by this intricate and dangerous political situation that had, as its direct result, the declaration of independence of all Spanish colonies in Central and South America, with the exception of Cuba and Puerto Rico in the Atlantic side and the Philippine Islands in the Pacific. As a result of the pendular regimes, the island went from a dependent colony that belonged to the Spanish emperor/king to a full-fledged province with representation at the Cortes, back to a subjugated colony, to a province, and back to a colony ruled by the archaic *Laws of Indies*. All took place in a span of a few decades.

While one of the island's sons, Ramón Power y Giralt, who served as Vice-President to the exceptional Cortes de Cádiz,<sup>184</sup> that authored the 1812 Constitution, and others forcefully battled against the colonial status, the island ended up being a colony time and time again. Some islanders demanded more autonomy, others wished for independence, following the example of the former Spanish colonies in Central and South America. Full autonomy much less independence was never forthcoming, even when Puerto Rico was granted the right to have a *diputación provincial* (a locally elected body that represented the island's interests before the Cortes), considering that the *capitán general* (captain general) or governor was appointed by the Crown without the advice or consent of anyone in the island or Spain.

Many of the landed gentry favored subjugation to the Crown. Protected by their medieval *fueros* (special laws), they saw no reason to venture into uncharted waters. *La sociedad de principios de siglo xix estaba dividida en dos grupos claramente diferenciados: los privilegiados y los no privilegiados. La diferencia entre ambos era de cuna (es decir, se pertenecía a uno u otro al nacer), y de jurisdicción (los privilegiados estaban protegidos por las leyes y fueros especiales).*<sup>185</sup> In Puerto Rico many belonging to the powerful castes preferred to preserve the alliance with Spain, no matter how politically unbalanced. They were generally known as *españolistas*. Others favored transformation. The Enlightenment, as well as the American and French Revolutions, empowered a new interpretation of the social order. The Industrial Revolution not only fortified the bourgeois class but created new social and cultural expectations. A special and privileged social class, with its own protective laws and immense benefits was now understood as an obstacle to the aspirations of a democratic and free society. It is ironic that some belonging to the powerful echelons were the first ones to realize Spain was en route to a dead end. As a result and as early as the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, underground movements of all kinds demanded a complete break with the peninsula. Uprisings took place throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the island; the most famous one is known as the *Grito de Lares*.<sup>186</sup> Those fighting on freedom's side and against Spanish rule were known by many names. The most famous of all was *mambises*. They were cruelly persecuted, killed, jailed abroad for years and subjected to unjust military tribunals like the famed *Comparte*.

In spite of this calamitous state of affairs, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Old San Juan grew exponentially experiencing, among many other things, an influx of foreigners. When, as a result of the Treaty of Basilea (1795), Spain irresponsibly (in the opinion of many) ceded Santo Domingo to France, a wave of émigrés from this island arrived to Puerto Rico.

<sup>184</sup> Besieged by Napoleon, the Cortes, the Spanish legislative body, found themselves isolated in Cádiz surrounded by the armies of the French emperor. This body authored the Constitution of 1812 the document that help usher the Primera República (First Republic). The members of the Cortes de Cádiz were not aware of the shady deals the Borbón king, Fernando VII, had entered with Napoleon. This is the reason the constitution originally called for a parliamentary monarchy.

<sup>185</sup> Ivana Frasquet, "Población y sociedad," *España Crisis imperial e independencia*, p 230. Translation into English: "The society of the early 19th century was divided into two different groups: the privileged and not privileged. The difference between them was established by birth (one was born into either group) and by jurisdiction (the privileged ones were protected by the laws and special *fueros*)." <sup>186</sup>

<sup>186</sup> As was the case of the Cuban Grito de Yara, the political coup was known as a *grito*, a term that, in this particular context, can be translated into rebel yell.

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*El abandono, ya que inevitable, vergonzoso, de la Isla de Santo-Domingo cuya desatentada anexión acababa de costar no pocos sacrificios de hombres y de dinero a la Nación, y había arrojado cierto desprecio sobre el nombre español, debido todo menos al reconocido brío del soldado, que a la mala administración, que allí se llevara, o tal vez más bien a las malas pasiones de los hombres, que en España se disputaban el poder.*<sup>187</sup>

This group was joined by those seeking refuge from the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804). Still many more came from Louisiana when the territory was sold to the United States by France in 1803. Waves of French migrations continued during the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. When independence was declared in Venezuela in 1813, loyalists fled and also came to settle in the island. The flood of people arriving at the island's shores was, in most cases, the result of incorrect decisions by the Spanish government, from ceding prime territory in the United States to France to the Spanish king's humiliating selling out to Napoleon. The first mistake made possible for France to sell the land as part of the Louisiana Territory. In this manner, Spain lost its foothold in North America. The second error forced the American colonies to one by one declare their independence from Spain. By the time *La Pepa* was enacted it simply was too late. Unfortunately, many more disastrous decisions were to come. Not all newcomers came as émigrés. Thanks to the Intendente Ramírez's policies, natives from the Canary Islands were encouraged to come to Puerto Rico after 1816 in order to work in the island's farmlands. Still others came from Louisiana when special tax exemptions were granted to them. Catalans and Basques quickly followed suit, particularly after the War of Independence in the peninsula. This influx of people of varied ethnicities created a new milieu, one that valued cultural exchange and diversity. As expected, the groups of foreigners also introduced new architectural and urban ideas. It is no exaggeration to claim that thanks to these circumstances the Viejo San Juan became a more sophisticated city.

Organization and systematization of all urban components became a must at this time. The *Bando del Buen Gobierno* (Good Government Edict) enacted by Governor Miguel de la Torre in 1823 required special authorization to construct houses and buildings within the urban area of Old San Juan. The erection of an edifice or alteration of its façade was now considered activities that affected all and, therefore, required governmental approval. Article 19 of the *Bando* established the following activities related to the design and construction of buildings were to be under government control: *su arreglo, delineación y demás para el buen orden y hermoejamento de la ciudad, con arreglo a lo dispuesto en varias reales órdenes*. Article 20 established: *No permito la fabricación de bohíos [sic] techados de paja o yaguas; han de cubrirse precisamente de tejas.*<sup>188</sup> This last regulation was aimed at solving the many social and urban problems created by the areas described by Abbad y Lasierra as *arrabales* (slums) during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In order to empower the organization (*buen orden*) and beautification of the city (*hermoejamento de la ciudad*) the governor proposed the destruction of all *bohíos* and similar constructions within the defensive circuit. The Policía Urbana (Urban Police) was charged with this task. Many vociferously complained and, as a result, little was accomplished. In 1842, another decree established all wooden houses were to be demolished within the next six years and no new wood constructions were to be erected. It took a long period for the citizens to comply with these requirements. A new ordinance enacted twelve years later tried one more time to force the elimination of all structures considered eyesores. It is not known how many wooden structures were destroyed at this time, if any. One thing is certain, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century fin-de-siècle, there were still wooden houses in the city. In fact, there is a historic set of architectural plans dated 1900 that depicts the building which existed at

<sup>187</sup> José Marcial Quiñones, *Un poco de historia colonial (Incluye de 1850 – 1890)* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1978), p 95. Translation into English: "The inevitable and shameful abandonment of the island of Santo Domingo with its unfortunate annexation has cost the Nation many sacrifices, human and financial, and has thrown some disparaging considerations upon the Spanish name, and not because of the soldiers who fought valiantly but because of the bad administration which characterized the place or maybe because the bad passions which characterize the men which fought for power in Spain."

<sup>188</sup> *Bando del Buen Gobierno*, 1823. Quoted in Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, p 78. Translation into English: "[I]ts organization, delineation and others for the order and beautification of the city, as established in the royal orders." "I do not allow the construction of *bohíos* with straw or palm leaves roofs, they must be covered with terracotta tiles."

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the Calle del Mercado 9 (Parcela 9, Block 14).<sup>189</sup> The document is very important for it depicts an example of the probable types of structures Governors de la Torre and Governor Dabán were trying to eliminate. Achieving the urban *buen orden* (good order) involved much more than regulating designs, materials and location, in 1836, all the buildings within the defensive circuit received a number. For the first time in its existence, all of the district's edifices had formal addresses. In 1893, Governor Dabán tried to reduce the danger of urban fires. In order to accomplish this, he divided the district into three sectors. In zone one, only masonry (stone) constructions could be erected. The second one was to house edifices made of strong building materials, like brick and *tapiería* walls while the last one was reserved for wooden buildings and *bohíos*. Another attempt at eliminating wooden structures was tried, only to generate complaints from the residents. The government caved in and allowed the wooden constructions, as long as the wooden buildings were in a good state of repair and conservation. Although modest, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century the urban core presented a decorous sight with straight and well taken care of streets and sidewalks. In 1842, Pedro Tomás de Córdoba described it in the following fashion:

*Desde el puerto se ve la ciudad como en un anfiteatro, y el conjunto de sus casas, edificios y murallas forman un todo de grato e imponente aspecto al observar y considerar sus hermosas fortificaciones, que descuellan sobre sus edificios . . . Las calles están tiradas a cordel, son de un mismo ancho, divididas en cuadras o manzanas de poco más de cien yardas, muy bien empedradas y con hermosas e iguales losas en las aceras. Las casas, que llegan a mil, son de piedra y ladrillo, de bastante regular construcción, la mayor parte en las casas principales con segundo piso y casi todas con azoteas como las de Cádiz, y con cisternas o aljibes . . . De poco acá ha mejorado el caserío en su construcción y repartimiento interior y han ido desapareciendo las casuchas o bojíos [sic] de gente pobre que había en los barrios.*<sup>190</sup>

Half a century later, a visitor described the city along the same general lines:

I have thus endeavored to point out to the foreigner the principal public buildings and institutions of the capital of Puerto Rico. On the whole, the town of San Juan may be considered one of the best in the West Indies; and when the streets shall be newly paved and flagged, as is projected, it will be rendered still more neat and agreeable.<sup>191</sup>

It is interesting to note that the first writer quoted above claims there were 1,000 houses regularly (*regularmente*) constructed within the historic district,<sup>192</sup> many of which had two floors.

The urban core was composed of the following barrios (wards): San Francisco, San Juan, Santo Domingo, Santa Bárbara, Puerta de Tierra and La Puntilla. In 1846, San Sebastián was added to the group and in 1858 the Barrio de Ballajá and Barrio de la Marina were also included. Ballajá was one of the last barrios to develop because of its closeness to the military area of the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro and the Dominican convent. During the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the sector only had three streets – Calle del Rosario, Calle de la Beneficencia and Calle de Morovis – in addition to some informal lanes. The protracted development was

<sup>189</sup> The architectural drawings (a floor plan and an elevation) belong to "Casa del Mercado n[úmero] 1." The sheet is signed by Andrés Ramos and dated 27 November 1900. According to the "Estudio de revitalización integral del centro histórico de San Juan," Inventory Sheet: Parcela 9, Block 14, the plan is located at the Archivo General de Puerto Rico.

<sup>190</sup> Pedro Tomás de Córdoba, *Memorias geográficas, históricas, económicas y estadísticas de la Isla de Puerto-Rico*, p 11. Translation into English: "From the port one can see the city looks like an amphitheater, and its houses, buildings and defensive walls organize a most pleasing and imposing sight particularly in the manner the fortifications contrast with the buildings . . . The streets are straight, they all have the same width, and they are divided into blocks of approximately 100 yards, well paved and with beautiful and very regular tiles in the sidewalks. There are about 1,000 houses made of stone and brick, of relatively regular construction, the principal houses have second floors and *azoteas* like the ones in Cádiz, and have cisterns . . . Recently, construction and interior organization within the settlement have become better and all small houses and *bohíos* of the poor have started to disappear."

<sup>191</sup> George Flinter, *An account of the present state of the Island Puerto Rico*, p 45.

<sup>192</sup> Presently, there are 827 edifices in the Old San Juan Historic District. If the 42-44 destroyed houses of the Ballajá barrio are added, the total of buildings is 869-871.

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intimately connected to its location. As mentioned, the development of La Puntilla, considered for centuries merely a *manglar* (mangrove) and *palmar* (palm grove) distinguished by its extensive *ranchería* (small, humble houses) and the Spanish navy arsenal complex, dates to the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1888, La Puntilla was expanded to include the area formerly known as La Carbonera, located to the south of the Bastión de la Concepción and Bastión de la Palma. The name was directly connected to the *carbón* (coal) kept in the area.

In the year before the American invasion the urban core covered an area of approximately 250,000 square meters packed with houses that sheltered approximately 27,000 residents. Most buildings had *azoteas de Cádiz*, although there is also evidence that some *tejadós* covered with terracotta tiles existed as late as the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The elegance of the urban environment continued to be a concern particularly for the government. In 1841, Governor Méndez de Vigo enacted a law requesting all empty lots within the city to have a façade similar to the ones of their neighbors.

Throughout its history, Old San Juan was a city unto itself, physically isolated from the main island. Only the Puente de San Antonio connected the two bodies, a fragile link that disappeared with relative ease. For example, Hurricane Santa Ana (26 July 1825) completely destroyed the structure breaking all physical contact. In 1881, the king approved Pablo Ubarri's plan for a tramway to connect the district with the then important town of Río Piedras on the main island, where the governor's *quinta* (summer villa), commonly known as the Casa de Convalecencia,<sup>193</sup> was located. During the 1890s, the tramway station was described in the following manner: *Al pie de la plaza de Colón . . . [se encuentra] [u]n modestísimo cobertizo de madera, con pequeño andamio donde para un tren de una locomotora y dos vagones a la americana que hacen la navette, como dicen los franceses, en vía estrecha, no se si de un metro o de 75 centímetros de anchura.*<sup>194</sup> The same year the tramway was inaugurated, authorization was granted to Ramón Valdés to establish a similar transportation line connecting Cataño and Bayamón. Since the Viejo San Juan had close water links with the first town transportation was facilitated with the northern coast of the main island.

The authorization to establish the tramway came later than the one to create a train connecting Old San Juan with a series of towns including: Arecibo, Mayagüez, Ponce, Humacao and Caguas. In addition to facilitating commercial links, the locomotive transportation fostered the flight into the suburbs. As early as 1892, the Miramar and Santurce areas were already peppered with *hotelitos y jardines* (small *hôtels* and gardens).<sup>195</sup> Santurce and Miramar became Old San Juan's suburbs; it was here the rich scamped in order to avoid the congestion of the district. Both the tramway and the train were instrumental to this urban exodus. General communications, in turn, were empowered when in 1869 royal approval was granted for the establishment of a telegraph line that connected the urban core to other cities of the island.

Drastic and dramatic transformations of the world outside the *ciudad del puerto Rico* forced changes within the district. The effect of these transformations was described as follows:

*Sea lo que fuere, entonces comenzamos a tener una existencia de mayor expansión y actividad. Hasta aquella época, no habíamos participado en efecto más que de la vida de la infancia de los pueblos. De repente, como si no pudiéramos darnos cuenta de lo que nos sucediera, habíamos despertado hombres. No sabría explicar lo que había pasado por nuestras venas.*

<sup>193</sup> The summer villa was also used as a convalescence center for soldiers. This is the reason the main plaza of the town of Río Piedras is known to this day as the Plaza de la Convalecencia (Convalescence Plaza.)

<sup>194</sup> Salvador Puig y Valls, *Viaje a América, Estados Unidos, Exposición Universal de Chicago, México, Cuba y Puerto Rico* (Barcelona: Tipolitografía Luis Tasso, 1894), Tome II, pp 249-250. Translation into English: "At one end of the Plaza de Colón there is a very modest wooden shed, with a small platform where a train with one locomotive and two wagons in the American manner form the *navette*, as the French call it, with a narrow track one meter or 75 centimeters wide."

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, p 250. Another name for this type of houses is *chalet*, a word still used in Spain to describe one family suburban houses surrounded by gardens.

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*Los que se han visto siempre anémicos, y al influjo de bebidas ferruginosas, han sentido regenerársele la sangre y con ella han recuperado fuerza y salud, podrán sólo dar razón de lo que experimentamos.*<sup>196</sup>

This last moving comparison described how the “anemic” city of yesteryear had suddenly transformed into an exciting and novel place.

Political transformations during the 19<sup>th</sup> century had a dramatic impact upon the architectural persona of Old San Juan. In fact, the buildings built to house the new government entities – the Real Intendencia and Diputación Provincial – can be considered some of the jewels in the city’s architectural crown. In addition, novel architectural typologies, structures, and places were created to shelter entertainment activities, such as the theater, promenades, cafes, and restaurants. The military were not forgotten as the majestic Cuartel de Ballajá evidences. Even historic organisms like the *alcaldía* and the governorship also transformed by means of luxurious architectural examples. Alas, not all fully appreciated these new venues for some found them commonplace!

*En parte opuesta al barrio descrito [the area around the Teatro Tapia] . . . se halla la Capitanía General, edificio típico y con cierto aire de grandiosidad; en sus cercanías un cuartel espacioso con un patio central donde puede formar un regimiento, y cuadras ventiladas y espaciosas, cuartel que costó tanto dinero, que doña Isabel II preguntó si se construía de plata.*<sup>197</sup>

The queen was not alone in complaining about the vast amounts spent in luxurious buildings.

*[T]oda solicitud en nuestro favor demostrada se ha reducido, por una mal entendida política, a la construcción improductiva de cuarteles lujosísimos en la Capital y otros pueblos. . . . Extraer y nunca beneficiar la propiedad, fiándolo todo a la riqueza exuberante el suelo, tal ha sido siempre el procedimiento de todos los Gobiernos con nosotros; imita el proceder seguido con la oveja, que trasquilada un año, se espera que le vuelva a crecer la lana al siguiente, para trasquilarla de nuevo.*<sup>198</sup>

On 4 May 1809, the islanders found out that, [c]onsiderando el rey, nuestro señor, D Fernando Séptimo . . . que esta Isla no es propiamente una Colonia o Factoría, como la de las otras naciones, sino una parte integrante de la Monarquía Española,<sup>199</sup> His Majesty saw fit to allow Puerto Rico the right to have representation in his government and in the Junta Central Gubernativa del Reino (Central Government Board of the Kingdom). Ramón Power y Giral, a *sanjuanero* and a lieutenant of the Royal Navy, was appointed as first representative. Power y Giral accomplishments were many, from becoming vice-

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p 111. Translation into English: “Regardless of why it happened, we started to grow and expand and have more activity. Until that time, we had only participated of the infancy of our people. All of a sudden, as if we could not notice the change, we woke up being men. I have no way of explaining what went through our veins.” “Those who suffer from anemia and the influx of iron beverages have felt their blood rejuvenate and have recuperated their strength and health can best explain what we went through.”

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p 248. Translation into English: “On the opposite side of the barriol have just described . . . the *Capitanía General* is found, a typical building with a certain air of grandiosity; close to it one finds the spacious barracks with a central patio where a regiment can meet, with ventilated and spacious wings, so expensive Doña Isabel II asked if it was being constructed of silver.” Apparently her majesty was referring to the Cuartel de Ballajá.

<sup>198</sup> José Marcial Quiñones, *Un poco de historia colonial (Incluye de 1850 – 1890)*, p 107. Translation into English: “All we asked for is denied due to a badly understood policy and assigned funding to the unproductive construction of extra luxurious barracks in the capital city and other towns. . . . To take and never to benefit the local property thinking the exuberant richness of the soil will take care of everything, this is the way most governments have acted in the island; they imitate the wool gatherers, one year the lamb is sheared, they wait one year and do it again.”

<sup>199</sup> Quoted in Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, p 93. Translation into English: “Considering our King, our lord, Fernando VII . . . that this island is not properly a colony or factory, like those of other nations, but an integral part of the Spanish monarchy . . .”

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president of the legendary Cortes to obtaining important legal guarantees for the island.<sup>200</sup> Probably, the most relevant 19<sup>th</sup> century transformation, one that was to last until 1898, was the separation of the civil and military spheres of government by means of the creation of the Real Intendencia (Real Hacienda or Royal Treasury), an autonomous organism from the military. Starting on November 1811, the *intendente* (intendant) was in charge of all civil matters while military issues were under the jurisdiction of the *capitán general de la isla* (captain general of the island). This last person, chosen by the king, also served as governor.

The schooner *Galatea*, in charge of ordinary mail transportation between Spain and Puerto Rico, brought official copies of the constitution to Old San Juan and the island on 9 July 1812. Several formal activities celebrated this important occasion, starting with a formal reading of the document at La Puntilla. The proclamation and oath-taking ceremonies took place on 25 July of the same year.<sup>201</sup> In honor of the document, the principal plaza's name was changed to Plaza de la Constitución (Constitution Plaza). This name was used until the 1880s, when, under cover of night, the sign that named it such was taken down. The next name of the principal square was Plaza de Alfonso XII, in honor of the king who reigned from 1874 to 1885. He was the son of the ousted Queen Isabel II.

By 5 August 1813 the first Diputación Provincial de Puerto Rico, as per the Constitution, was organized with seven full and three at-large members. The Diputación had a short life since the next year Fernando VII discarded the constitution and the country returned to absolutism. To understand the relevance of *La Pepa* regarding individual rights and Puerto Rico it is important to read how the governors' powers in the island were described: [E]l *Gobernador ha sido aquí más rey que el mismo rey de España*.<sup>202</sup>

The creation of the Real Intendencia was of great benefit to the city and the island. Its first intendant played a momentous role in the history of Puerto Rico, given the fact that some of Intendente Alejandro Ramírez de Villa-Urrutia's accomplishments transformed many relevant aspects of society.<sup>203</sup> Probably the most important event under Ramírez's tenure was the enactment of the *Cédula de Gracia* on 10 August 1815, a decree that allowed: (i) free trade between the Viejo San Juan and the peninsula, as well as foreign ports; (ii) inter-colonial commerce with other Spanish colonies; and (iii) tax exempted entrance of Blacks.<sup>204</sup> The authority granted to participate in this last abhorrent commercial trade was a means to provide an impulse to the local economy.

<sup>200</sup> One such concession was the express prohibition to the effect that the governor could oust any employee he so decreed. Until that moment, the first executive was entitled to this right by means of vague and capricious provisions that allowed him to carry out said termination whenever he *lo estime conveniente* (when he thinks it is appropriate). He could also imprison people where *más bien le parezca* (where he sees fit). This meant some islanders could be imprisoned for life in Spain. This prerogative was also abolished at this time.

<sup>201</sup> July 25 has become a most relevant date for Puerto Rico. For centuries, it was a holiday honoring Spain's most revered patron, Santiago de Compostela (St James). Coincidentally, on 25 July 1898 the American troops landed in Guánica. The date is celebrated to this day as "Constitution Day," referring to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico's 1952 constitution.

<sup>202</sup> José Marcial Quiñones, *Un poco de historia colonial (Incluye de 1850 – 1890)*, p 111. Translation into English: "[In Puerto Rico] the governor is more of a king than the king of Spain."

<sup>203</sup> Ramírez founded the *Real Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País* (Royal Economic Society of the Friends of the Country) in 1813, an education center which offered courses in geography, commerce and mathematics. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the *sociedades* (societies) were the only instruments of social transformation, providing the public with the grassroots impetus missing in the state. Ramírez also created the *Diario Económico de Puerto Rico*, a newspaper that had as its main objective to guide small businesses and artisans manage their commercial ventures in a modern manner. He was also the driving force behind the establishment of the first lottery in the historic district in 1814. The goal of this last scheme was to generate much-needed revenues for the treasury.

<sup>204</sup> The *Cédula* also allowed buying ships from foreigners without having to pay the *derecho de extranjería* (foreign tax) and fixed the import and export tax at 6% of the value of the artifact. It also organized the customs administration and eliminated the special tax paid by foreigners. Finally, it granted foreigners the right to naturalize after five years of residence. The more liberal atmosphere fostered by the *Cédula de Gracia* empowered the establishment of foreign consuls and consul-like representatives in the core.

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Fernando VII swore the Constitution, against his will, one more time in 1820. The *restauración* (restoration) of the constitutional monarchy was celebrated in Old San Juan with the same fervor as the original enactment of the document. During this reign the Corporación Municipal of San Juan (Municipal Corporation of San Juan) received the honor of *Excelencia* (Excellency) treatment. This evidences the historic district's ranking among peninsular cities and its long existence. The Corporación Municipal continues to participate in the decision-making processes of the Municipality of San Juan.

On 1 October 1823, Fernando VII annulled all acts carried out under the Constitution and the country returned to an absolute monarchy regime. The first governor after this period was Miguel de la Torre, an authoritarian and strict moralist who created special punishments for those who used "foul language" or sang "dishonest songs," among other holier-than-thou restrictions, such as the *Bando de la Policía y Buen Gobierno* (Edict of the Police and Good Government). He is also remembered for his infamous *baile, botella y baraja* ("dance, drink and gambling") description, his version of the Roman *pane et circenses*. He believed this to be the best way to keep the citizens content and avoid social revolts.

In 1832, the Real Audiencia y Cancillería (also known as Tribunal de Apelaciones and Audiencia Territorial; Appeals Tribunal or Royal Audience and Chancellery) was established in the Viejo San Juan. In spite of the fact that this was no independent judiciary since the president of the tribunal was the governor until 1891, at least legal remedies could be addressed on Puerto Rican soil rather than Cuba. It was decided to locate the audience chamber in *una antigua casona*<sup>205</sup> in Calle de la Fortaleza, close to the Fortaleza de Santa Catalina. The building was rehabilitated and even sported Neo-Gothic decoration motifs. The court was sheltered in this building until 1867, when it was transferred to the Cuartel de Santo Domingo where it was still located in 1898. At the former convent, it shared quarters with the Colegio de Abogados de Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico Lawyers Association) established in 1840. A meteorological tower was constructed at the back of this building. A spiral wooden staircase provided access to the upper part of the tower from where weather readings and observations were carried out.

Times were quite unstable as the 1835 and 1838 soldier rebellions proved. Even if short-lived, these acts evidenced the growing social discontent. The same year, by means of the *Decreto de 1835* (Edict of 1835), religious orders were suppressed in Spain and its colonies. All convents were closed and the government confiscated Catholic Church property. The Viejo San Juan was doubly impacted for both the Dominican and the Franciscan monasteries were closed.<sup>206</sup>

On 21 September 1835 the citizens in Old San Juan were informed that Queen María Cristina had ordered the 1812 Constitution was to rule again. The new political state lasted but a short time since, on 18 April 1837, the Cortes declared that the Constitution would not apply to the *provincias de ultramar* (provinces beyond the sea). These territories that included Puerto Rico were to be governed by special laws. This meant there would be no *diputados* from the island and no direct representation at the Cortes. The archaic *Leyes de Indias*, outdated royal orders, and outmoded governors' edicts were to govern with no regard for the individual rights of the citizens.

When, in September 1869, Queen Isabel II was ousted, Puerto Rico regained its representation at the Cortes. On 28 August 1870, as per royal decree, the third Puerto Rican Diputación Provincial was solemnly inaugurated on 1 April 1871. Severo Quiñones, the Diputación president, summarized the moment brilliantly. According to him, the organism was to:

<sup>205</sup> Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, p 119. Translation into English: "[A]n old large house."

<sup>206</sup> Church property had previously been expropriated during the 1821-1824 constitutional period. In fact, in 1835 there were still monks living in some of the convents paying rent for their use of the facilities.



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*. . . ejercitar uno de los derechos más importantes que concede a los pueblos el gobierno representativo, el de intervenir de una manera inmediata y directa en las gestiones de sus propios intereses. Decid Señor, al Gobierno de S M que la Isla de Puerto Rico no tiene más que una sola aspiración: la de sentarse en el banquete nacional al lado de sus hermanas las demás Provincias españolas: que queremos ser ciudadanos españoles y usar de los mismos derechos de que gozan los altivos Aragoneses, los fieros Catalanes, como todos los demás pueblos que cobija la gloriosa bandera de Castilla . . .*

The Diputación, that *nace pobre y desnuda; sin hogar donde albergarse, ni sillas siquiera donde sentarse para celebrar tranquilamente sus sesiones*,<sup>207</sup> was given the old market building that stood where the cemetery existed for almost four centuries close to the Plaza de Armas. In 1873, 30,000 pesos<sup>208</sup> were assigned and the *vetusto mercado* (old market) was transformed into the Palacio de la Diputación (Diputación Palace). Occupied three years later, the needs of the Diputación provided the historic district with one of its architectural gems: a beautiful building with simple yet elegant lines, double *cortiles*, a majestic staircase and exquisite *rejas* (metal grilles).

In 1869, there were public elections to elect the *diputados* to the Cortes. While some called themselves *Liberales* (Liberals) and others *Conservadores* (Conservatives) there were no formal Crown-authorized political parties.

*La prensa periódica, como era consiguiente, con aquel despotismo enmudeció o mejor dicho dejó de existir para los Liberales. El país no conoció, por aquel tiempo, casi ningún otro periódico más que El Boletín Mercantil, en cuyas columnas continuóse insultándonos; y como estábamos como los pobres esclavos atados a la picota para ser castigados, los Conservadores se despachaban a su gusto, peleando solos como Don Quijote con los molinos de viento.*<sup>209</sup>

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Old San Juan straddled between medieval and modern times.<sup>210</sup> While trying to present a fresh face to the world, a plague of cholera *morbus* invaded the enclave in spite of the extreme vigilance kept at all the urban doors. It first struck on 7 December 1855. Regardless of the many *hogueras de enebro* (juniper bonfires) and other plants burning in all corners of the streets, hundreds died in three weeks. As was the case during medieval times, the congested conditions of the city accelerated the spread of pandemics.

<sup>207</sup> Severo Quiñones. Quoted in Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan Ciudad murada*, p 143. Translation into English: "[E]xercise one of the most important rights given to people with a representative government, to intervene in an immediate and direct manner in all business that have to do with its own interests. Pray tell the government of His Majesty that the island of Puerto Rico only has one goal, to seat in the national banquet next to her sisters the other Spanish Provinces: we wish to be Spanish citizens and have the same rights that assist the proud Aragonese, the forceful Catalans, like all the other people protected by the glorious flag of Castille." "[I]s born poor and naked, has no home where to find shelter, not even chairs where it can sit peacefully to celebrate its sessions."

<sup>208</sup> María de los Ángeles Castro, *Arquitectura en San Juan de Puerto Rico (siglo XIX)*, p 302.

<sup>209</sup> José Marcial Quiñones, *Un poco de historia colonial (Incluye de 1850 – 1890)*, p 172. Translation into English: "In such a despotic climate, newspapers became silent. In reality, the press ceased to exist for the *Liberales*. At that time, the country only had the *El Boletín Mercantil* which continued insulting us and we were like poor slaves, tied down and waiting to be punished, while the *Conservadores* continued to behave as they so pleased and we kept up fighting like Don Quixote against windmills." The editor of the *El Boletín Mercantil*, José Pérez Morís, an ardent *españolista* also wrote *Historia de la Insurrección de Lares*, a biased account of the coup. Pérez was assassinated entering his house located in Calle de Tetuán. The episode inspired the novel *Crimen en la calle Tetuán* by José Curet.

<sup>210</sup> As part of its coming of age, the district shed some of its medieval traditions. In 1840, the privilege of *acogerse a sagrado* (seek holy shelter) that had existed since the 16<sup>th</sup> century was abolished. The right gave those persecuted by justice the opportunity to seek refuge in churches. Thirty years later, on 20 March 1870, the *limpieza de sangre* (cleaning of the blood) process [*sic*] was also terminated. This practice allowed people to buy their way into the higher social echelons by paying the church for the privilege of being inscribed in the baptismal book kept for whites. In this manner, they could legally claim they belonged to this ethnicity. It was also during this century that the Holy Inquisition was finally abolished in the district and Spain.

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Inspired by the expositions that were the rage in Europe, starting with the Crystal Palace one in London (1851), a regional exposition took place on June 8 to June 23, 1854. Industrial and textile local products were exhibited in the Junta de Comercio building. An equine show was also part of this celebration. It was located in the Plaza de San Sebastián while the bovine exhibition took place at the *corral de la Caballería* (Cavalry animal pen). Pigs and sheep could be observed at the Campo del Morro and all sort of products decorated the Plaza Mayor.<sup>211</sup> Another such fair took place in 1855 and a third one in 1860. The fourth one was celebrated in the locale of the Real Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País (Royal Economic Society of Friends of the Country) in 1865.

While the Milicias Urbanas were established in 1817, in 1872 the project to create the Orden Público (Public Order) took shape. Formed by Spaniards, this vigilance group substituted the Cuerpo de Serenos (Night Watchmen Corps), a night law and order group founded on 16 October 1837 and eliminated in 1875. The guards of the Orden Público were in charge of myriad responsibilities, from policing the city to making sure façades and streets were kept clean, from checking patios to making sure people did not throw water into the street.<sup>212</sup>

One of the most dramatic transformations of the period was the abolition of slavery during the seventh decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As expected, a lull was felt in all agricultural and manufacturing activities when free labor was eliminated. The Viejo San Juan was particularly affected for many former slaves came to the city to start a new life. Enclaves such as Culo Prieto, notwithstanding the vulgarity of the name, provided a living place for many of these citizens. The interior precinct area of the city, calculated at the time to be 249,660 square meters, was architecturally composed of the following:

Description	Number
<i>Casas o piso bajo (o terreras)</i>	511
<i>Idem con piso principal incluso los edificios públicos</i>	398
<i>Idem con piso principal y 2º</i>	16
<i>Idem con piso 3º</i>	1

According to these numbers the total number of properties was 926.<sup>213</sup>

Special commemorations and extraordinary visits also took place during the century. When the Infanta María Eulalia, daughter of Queen Isabel II, and her husband Antonio María de Orleans visited the island in 1893, triumphal arches were erected along many streets of the district. To celebrate the four hundred anniversary of the "discovery" of America and Puerto Rico, a marble monument to Columbus was erected in the Plaza de Santiago, located at the entrance of the city. The forty-two feet high sculptural group motivated a change in name for the space: from a plaza honoring St James it now honored Columbus. The sculpture was the work of Genoese Achille Canessa.<sup>214</sup> The old and beautifully executed bronze sculpture of Juan Ponce de León which had graced the Plaza de Santiago until that moment was moved to the Plaza de San José where it still resides.

<sup>211</sup> Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, p 128.

<sup>212</sup> Originally the corps was located in the Casa Alcaldía. In 1897, it moved to barracks situated where the Escuela de Medicina Tropical was constructed at a later time, in the Puerta de Tierra sector, outside the enclave.

<sup>213</sup> José Pérez Morís, *Guía general de la isla de Puerto Rico con el almanaque correspondiente al año 1879* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Establecimiento Tipográfico del *Boletín*, 1879), p 105. Translation into English:

<i>One story houses</i>	511
<i>The same with principal floor including public buildings</i>	398
<i>The same with principal floor and a second one</i>	16
<i>The same with a third floor</i>	1

<sup>214</sup> The monument is quite similar in shape, if not size, to the one that crowns Las Ramblas in Barcelona created by Rafael Atché. Canessa's oeuvre is accredited to include more than 220 monuments. Sandra Berresford, *Italian Memorial Sculpture 1820-1940 A*

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Progressive ideas inspired by the Enlightenment found an echo in architecture and planning strategies. As a result, many public buildings evidence its impact, specifically regarding the interest in historic revivals or historicisms. While it had taken centuries to construct a hospital to house the destitute, only to have it commandeered by the military before it was completed (Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción El Grande), during the 19<sup>th</sup> century all sorts of elegant public structures, specifically designed for the “Others,” were erected. The group includes the elegant Asilo de Beneficencia for abandoned children and elders; the creative Manicomio for the insane; the progressive grade school Casa de Párvulos; the sober trade educational center Casa de la Caridad y Oficios de San Ildefonso; and the graceful jail known as the Presidio de la Princesa. The military were not forgotten. The imposing Cuartel de Ballajá with its huge *cortile* and magnificent Renaissance-inspired loggias provided shelter to the troops while the Parque de Artillería was rehabilitated to house the artillery rifle school. Public buildings, meant to be interpreted as communal icons, such as the elegant arcaded façade of the Casa Alcaldía, the stylish east wing of the Palacio de Santa Catalina, the majestic Palacio de la Intendencia, the sophisticated Diputación Provincial and the refined Plaza del Mercado Municipal graced the city with their architectural eloquence. The church joined the construction fever by also erecting stylish buildings, such as the Seminario Conciliar de San Ildefonso, Iglesia de las Carmelitas Calzadas and Iglesia de Santa Ana. Even the creation of a new cemetery outside the defensive walls reflected the new progressive social ideas.

The European city was reinvented at this time. From the medieval warren of streets transformed here and there with some Renaissance and Baroque insertion, city cores became the stage for creativity. New urban artifacts, such as the *paseo* (promenade) and the boulevard as well as architectural typologies beautified the enclaves. *Ensanches* (urban widening or expansion) were a preferred instrument for development.

*Por lo que respecta a las ciudades se inició el proceso de transformación de las urbes medievales en ciudades más modernas, que a partir de mediados del siglo xix se convirtieron en el centro de la actividad comercial, administrativa y de servicios. En este sentido destacaron especialmente los ensanches de Madrid y Barcelona. Hasta entonces la mayoría de las ciudades estaban amuralladas, y sus calles, estrechas, irregulares y sin alinear, no estaban enlosadas, sino que eran de tierra y no tenían piedra firme, ni aceras ni desagües. En la época de lluvia se convertían en lodazales intransitables, mientras que en el verano el polvo lo cubría todo. La calle era un lugar de uso común por el que transitaba todo tipo de animales sueltos y utilizado también como lugar de trabajo por los artesanos.*<sup>215</sup>

The Viejo San Juan was no less than its Spanish sister cities and, as mentioned, two exterior boulevards, the Paseo de Puerta de Tierra and Paseo de la Princesa, were organized in order to provide its citizens with leisure areas that had never existed before. During the 1890s, part of the defensive circuit came down so that the core could abandon its restrictive stone girdle. Whatever the political turn in Madrid, transformation was the order of the day in Old San Juan. Even historic plazas received special treatment. Some were formally organized, trees were planted in others, urban furniture was provided for the people to enjoy the open areas, and sculptures were used to anchor the spaces and educate the public. The theater added sophistication to the historic core, emphasizing the new interest in communal entertainment for all social classes.

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*Legacy of Love* (London: Frances Lincoln Limited, 2004), p 63. The Columbus Monument, located at Druid Park in Baltimore, Maryland, was modeled after one of Canessa's works.

<sup>215</sup> Ivana Frasquet, “Población y sociedad,” *España Crisis imperial e independencia*, p 239. Translation into English: “Regarding cities, a process of transformation took place during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in most cities: from medieval to modern ones. Cities had become the center of commercial, administrative and service activities. Prominent examples are the *ensanches* of Madrid and Barcelona. Until then, most of the cities were walled and their streets were narrow, irregular and unpaved dirt ones without pavement, sidewalks and drainage. During the rainy season they were transformed into mud pads no one could cross while during the summer dust covered everything. Streets were used by all including all kinds of unleashed animals and they were also used as the work place of artisans.”

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With the formulation of the enlightened ideas brought forth by the Enlightenment came the mandate that personal interpretations and “creativity” were to be abandoned in favor of a more academic understanding of architecture. This was not a request made by the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando but a directive. In the Viejo San Juan, evidence of the impact of these ideas are the many domestic facades and, naturally, public ones that rejected excessive decoration now interpreted as baroque capriciousness, the hallmark of non-educated construction people. Although the Real Academia preferred tradition, it was prepared to embrace modernity, providing it complied with the decorum standards of correct and proper, as per their standards, architecture. The whimsically decorated gorgeous façades which grace Old San Juan are the product of the Second Empire Baroque and cognate modes such as the Belle Époque which lasted until 1930, at the earliest. Because of their Classicist roots they were accepted by the Real Academia.<sup>216</sup> Picturesque modes were also introduced at this time.

Very appropriately, not one architectural style was adopted. On the contrary, influence from such semantics as the *Rundbogenstil* and Neoclassicism are evident, as are Neo-Cinquecento ideas. In fact, this last style was a popular one used to create a palace (Palacio de Santa Catalina), military barracks (Cuartel de Ballajá) and the official seat of the Treasury (Palacio de la Intendencia). In all these cases, the pseudo-rusticated podium was contrasted to the architectural orders on the upper level(s) echoing the by then centuries old assignment of the *opera di mano* (symbol of the work of man), represented by the architectural orders, to the most important level of the edifice while the *opera di natura* (the work of nature), symbolized by pseudo-rustication, was used in the first, more pedestrian floor. In all cases, the architectural orders are Colossal and unite two or three levels. Ionic, Corinthian and Composite take turns in decorating façades and, most importantly, providing special symbolism to the building to be conveyed to the users. Second Empire Baroque fantasies also make an appearance at this time. This stylistic impact is specifically evidenced in the use of façade pavilions and applied decoration. The Viejo San Juan looked towards Europe for inspiration regarding its architecture and decor, just as all did for fashions and books and magazines. It was a most orderly world: the Catholic Church was responsible for everything related to education and religion, the state was in charge of politics, and architectural sophistication resided in European precedents. The Enlightenment-inspired design in Old San Juan, whether domestic or public, is characterized by the following: (i) dependence on architectural historicisms and revivals; (ii) strict and formal approach to the design of the façade; (iii) interpretation of the balcony as the protagonist element of the façade, whether constructed of wood or metal; and (iv) favoritism towards decoration of Classicist and Renaissance extraction.

In 1893, the city was described by a Spanish visitor in the following fashion: *No tiene aquella isla [Puerto Rico] la grandeza de líneas de Cuba, ni presenta la bahía de San Juan el encanto de una gran ciudad, como la Habana con su puerto, sus dársenas, edificios públicos, iglesia y campanario, cuarteles y fortificaciones . . .* After this standard comparison to Havana, he continued: . . . *la ciudad escalonada, en rápida pendiente, mostrándose, toda ella, a la vista del viajero, con tonos vivísimos de color, sus persianas pintadas de verde, su jardinito a la orilla del mar, sus edificios públicos que asoman por todas partes, capitanía general, cuarteles, iglesias, con ansias de contemplar la bahía.* He was charmed by the organization of the core and some of its offerings, even if more limited than those of Havana, Old San Juan’s majestic sister city. His poetic description of the urban core as an enclave that had *ansias de contemplar la bahía* (wishes to contemplate the bay) still remains true to this day, recalling the days when it was known as the *ciudad del puerto Rico*. The Spanish traveller made a point to remind the reader that: *De aquel vasto imperio colonial en América, no nos queda ya más que Cuba y Puerto-Rico, dos joyas valiosísimas de aquella corona ceñida durante tres siglos por los Reyes de España* and believed that *no creo opinión optimista asegurar que la isla de Puerto Rico goza de*

<sup>216</sup> With the advent of schools of architecture in Spanish universities, the role of educating the architect was shifted from the Real Academia to these centers. Therefore, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was much *laissez-faire* in terms of stylistic choices.

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*envidiable prosperidad y que es una de las colonias que han dado y dan prestigios más justificados al colono y al comercio español.* He also believed: *España, mientras cuente con su imperio colonial, nunca será tan pobre como se dice, pues posee las islas más ricas, más hermosas y más fecundas de la tierra.*<sup>217</sup> It is interesting to note that, notwithstanding Spain's demeaning treatment of Puerto Rico and Cuba, the islands were considered "the limbs of Spain."<sup>218</sup> In fact, at one point during the century, the peninsula rejected an offer from Great Britain to return Gibraltar in exchange for the Caribbean islands.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the city experienced its most dramatic urban transformation.

*. . . las murallas que van a derribarse a petición del vecindario, que se ahoga ya dentro de un recinto amurallado que los técnicos juzgan ya inútil para la defensa de la plaza, y los higienistas cinturón que oprime con sus ligaduras los pulmones y la fuerza expansiva de una ciudad que crece y se desarrolla a impulsos de su riqueza y trabajo.*<sup>219</sup>

It was difficult to become modern and grow appropriately when a city was surrounded by impregnable fortification walls. The Viejo San Juan sacrificed her huge land entrance portal during the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in an effort to embrace contemporary life.

The group of nineteen public buildings built at this time made a magnificent contribution both to modernization and beautification of the urban milieu. In addition, the Cementerio de Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis and the Presidio de la Princesa and Paseo de la Princesa transformed the external areas surrounding the city into active service components of the core. They form a distinguished group of contributing properties that have local, national and international cultural and historic significance.

### **Cementerio Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis (Parcela 2, Block 11)**

For centuries, Old San Juan buried its death in various places inside the defensive circuit. Until the construction of the Cementerio de Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis during the 19<sup>th</sup> century burials in the district were organized in the underground crypts of the oldest churches (Catedral de San Juan Bautista, Iglesia de San José, Iglesia de San Francisco and Iglesia de las Carmelitas Calzadas) and in the atria surrounding the first two. Who was buried where in these areas was rigidly controlled by means of the *tramos de entierro* (burial tracts).<sup>220</sup> For example, only important people were buried in the churches' crypts. As

<sup>217</sup> Salvador Puig y Valls, *Viaje a América, Estados Unidos, Exposición Universal de Chicago, México, Cuba y Puerto Rico*, pp 175; 213; 246. Translation into English: "Puerto Rico lacks the grand lines of Cuba and the San Juan bay does not present the charm of a great city, like Havana and her port, her *dársenas*, public buildings, church and bell tower, barracks and fortifications." "[T]he stepped city with its steep incline shows itself complete to the traveler with its bright colors, its green painted louvers, its small garden next to the sea, its public buildings that are everywhere, *capitanía general*, barracks, churches, with a desire to contemplate the bay." "From that vast colonial empire in America, we only still have Cuba and Puerto Rico, two most valuable jewels of that crown worn for three centuries by the kings of Spain." "I am not over optimistic in stating the island of Puerto Rico enjoys an enviable prosperity that it is one of the colonies that have given the colonial power and Spanish commerce more prestige." "As long as Spain has its colonial empire it will never be as poor as it is said because it possesses the richest, most beautiful and fruitful islands on earth."

<sup>218</sup> Eric Williams, *From Columbus to Castro The History of the Caribbean*, p 91.

<sup>219</sup> Salvador Puig y Valls, *Viaje a América, Estados Unidos, Exposición Universal de Chicago, México, Cuba y Puerto Rico*, p 248. Translation into English: "[T]he walls are to be demolished as per the neighbors' request who are asphyxiated inside the walled precinct that the specialists judge can no longer defend the plaza and hygienists consider the belt strangles the lungs of an expansive city that grows and develops as a result of its richness and dedication."

<sup>220</sup> The *tramos* refer to both the interior and the exterior of the temple. The *primer tramo* (first tract) included both the presbytery, close to the main altar and atrium. The *segundo tramo* (second tract) included the atrium sides. The third one was sited in the principal entrance close to the façade. The *tramo* closest to the Gospel side, the left side of the church (from the point of view of the laity), was always preferred. Slaves and *insolventes* (the destitute) or *pobres de solemnidad* (formally-declared poor) were buried in the *tercer tramo* (third tract), on the side of the Epistle, or the right side of building (from the point of view of the laity). In terms of the Iglesia de San José, the Convento de San José would occupy the preferred *tramo* while the plaza area would serve as the *tercer tramo*. In the

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mentioned, for centuries, the public cemetery was located on the northwestern corner of the Plaza de Armas. It seems the enclave's burials never took place outside the walls as was the standard European practice.<sup>221</sup> On occasion, when there was an emergency, impromptu burial places were assigned. This happened during the Dutch attack when, albeit sketchily, areas were reserved for those dying belonging to the different armies.

Nineteenth century concerns with hygiene inspired the government to reform the traditional burial ways. Considered the direct result of the Enlightenment movement, it was mandated burial grounds were to move outside the urban cores, paralleling what the Greeks and Romans had done centuries before. The *Real Cédula del 3 de abril de 1787* (Royal Law of 3 April 1787), enacted by Carlos III, dictated the *reestablecimiento de cementerios* (reestablishment of cemeteries). This interest can also be interpreted as a desire to empower the secularization processes that had taken root, albeit shakily, in Spain. By forcing burials to take place outside the city walls and not in the area surrounding temples, death was taken away from under the control of the Church. Although no exact analysis of possible new sites for cemeteries is incorporated to the *real cédula* (law) some reference was made to using the hermitages located outside the urban cores as chapels anchoring the new burial grounds. In the Viejo San Juan, however, this was not possible for the old hermitages dedicated to Santa Ana, San Sebastián and Santa Bárbara were by now part of the tight urban fabric. In spite of its sterling intentions, little came out of the 18<sup>th</sup> century royal mandate.<sup>222</sup> During the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, another effort was made by the government to regulate burials. The general plan established a schematic concept explained by means of a May 1814 architectural plan signed by Ignacio Mascaró, who also proposed a plan for the Old San Juan. The design depicts a cruciform arrangement closely following the general plan suggested by the government. The main axis is defined by an entrance portal that could include: "[A] place where autopsies could be performed, and also a small walled-in place where disinterred bones were heaped."<sup>223</sup> Mascaró proposed a round element to anchor the crossing of the axes.

On 1 November 1813, specific mandates regarding burial places were again enacted.<sup>224</sup> A month was given to organize all related activities and to carry out the prohibition of interments. A new cemetery was planned sited outside the precinct between the northern coastal defenses and the Atlantic Ocean. The cemetery was accessed through an urban portal dedicated to Saint Joseph,<sup>225</sup> located between the Bastión de Santa Rosa and the Bastión de Santo Domingo. The cemetery was placed under the advocacy of St Mary Magdalene of Pazzis (1566-1607), an Italian Carmelite mystic who was canonized in 1699. The site chosen was blessed in 1814. By 1841, the *osario* (ossuary, charnel house) was constructed and three years later the first temporary chapel made of wood was finished. The choice of being buried in a niche or in the open ground, provided inspiration to famed local poet José Gautier Benítez:

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Catedral de San Juan Bautista, the public cemetery on the southeast side of the cathedral's block occupied the tract of lesser standing. José A Oquendo Pabón, "Léxico de terminos más frecuentemente encontrados en las partidas de entierro o defunción en Puerto Rico," Digital source: <http://www.pewb.com/documentos>.

<sup>221</sup> The only mention of a "religious" site outside the city was the 1596 Holy Inquisition burning pyre. According to Diego de Torres Vargas Zapata, the then bishop and inquisitor Nicolás Ramos supervised the burning of those who practiced non-Christian rites. The place was located in the mangroves which bordered the islet along the southern coast, close to a *charca* (lagoon-like body of water) located to the east of Islote del Carbón. The pool of water was also known as the Charca de las Brujas (Witches' Lagoon) precisely because three "witches" had died in the close-by pyre.

<sup>222</sup> Madrid did not have a formal cemetery along the new guidelines proposed by the *Real Cédula* until the year 1809. José E Serrano Catzim and Jorge L Castillo Canché, "La reforma de los cementerios y el conflicto civil-eclasiástico por su administración: Yucatán 1787-1825," *Ketzalcalli* (2/2006: 68-80), p 70.

<sup>223</sup> Military Government of Porto Rico, *Military Government of Porto Rico From October 18, 1898, to April 30, 1900 Appendices to the Report of the Military Governor*, p 138.

<sup>224</sup> Article 321 of the 1812 *Constitución de Cádiz* granted full authority to the different municipalities for the administration of hygiene which, naturally, included cemeteries.

<sup>225</sup> Religion, like all of culture's products, is guided by current trends. During the pontificate of the Blessed Pope Pius IX (Pope from 1846 until 1878), St Joseph was declared patron saint of the peaceful death.

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### ***A mis amigos***

*Cuando no reste ya ni un solo grano  
de mi existencia en el reloj de arena,  
al conducir mi gélido cadáver,  
no olvidéis esta súplica postrera:*

*No lo encerréis en los angostos nichos  
que llenan la pared formando hileras,  
que en la lóbrega, angosta galería  
jamás el sol de mi país penetra.*

*El campo recorred del cementerio,  
y en el suelo cavad mi pobre huesa;  
que el sol la alumbre y la acaricie el aura,  
y que broten allí flores y hierbas.*

*Que yo pueda sentir, si allí se siente,  
a mi alrededor y sobre mí, muy cerca,  
el vivo rayo de mi sol de fuego  
y esta adorada borinqueña tierra.<sup>226</sup>*

The poem is part of his epitaph. This work of art evidences the relative modernity of the new burial ground that provided different choices between being buried in wall niches in dark, underground crypts or in a cramped burial ground or in an open space caressed by the sea breeze and the sun.

After the ossuary was finished, construction work lagged until, in 1862, Municipal Architect Manuel Sicardó presented a comprehensive project that included a centralized chapel surrounded by a circular arcaded loggia. He directed the construction work until he got sick and José I Hernández Costa substituted him. The design was guided by utilitarian ideas:

*Como es muy justo dejar a los particulares ricos la facultad de embellecer las tumbas de sus deudos, con tal que no perturben el orden de los demás, se han destinado a este objeto los extremos [sic] de cada manzana, de modo que así, puedan no solamente llenar sus piadosos fines, sino también contribuir al ornato de todo el Cementerio.*

*Sauces llorones, siempre-vivas y otras plantas propias de la triste solemnidad de este recinto cabe perfectamente en la plaza que precede a la Capilla y en la ancha calle central que se ha dejado al afecto.<sup>227</sup>*

The designer was counting on the need of the living to remember their dead by means of funerary monuments for the beautification the place. It is also interesting that the choice of landscape features include weeping willows and flowers known locally as *siempre vivas* ("always alive"), a favorite offering due to their long life.

<sup>226</sup> Literal translation into English: "When not a single grain of sand / of my existence is left / and you are about to bury me / please remember this petition. / Do not bury me in the narrow niches / that fill the wall forming lines / because in this lugubrious and contracted gallery / the sun of my country never shines. / Walk around the cemetery / and open a hole to place my insignificant remains / so that my tomb is lighted by the sun and caressed in the mornings / and that flowers and herbs may also grow. / So that I can feel, if one feels in such a place / all over me very close / the spirited ray of my fire sun / and this adored Puerto Rican soil."

<sup>227</sup> *Memoria descriptiva*. Quoted in María de los Ángeles Castro, *Arquitectura en San Juan de Puerto Rico (siglo XIX)*, p 285. Translation into English: "Since it is only natural we should allow rich people to beautify the tombs of their deceased, as long as they do not perturb the order of the rest, the ends of each block have been assigned for this purpose so that they can carry out their pious wishes and also beautify the Cemetery." "Weeping willows, *siempre-vivas* and other plants appropriate to the sad solemnity of this precinct can be planted in the plaza before the Chapel and also along the wide central street that has been created for this purpose."

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The organization of the burial ground followed the same ruler and cord theoretical approach of the urban core: an orthogonal arrangement organized the quadrants defined by the main axes. The principal portal was treated as a triumphal arch symbolic of Christian triumph over death. This architectural artifact bears much resemblance to the Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla portal entrance. Both seem to have been loosely inspired in the interpretation of Classical architecture made by Leo von Klenze and others. This is clearly seen in the treatment of the pediment-like element which crowns the semicircular arch. Curious vertical accents compete with the horizontality of the main body of the arch. At a later date (late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries), the original burial ground was expanded almost doubling in size. This is the reason the original entrance portal is presently inside the graveyard.

The chapel was a standard element of Spanish cemeteries and it would become a traditional artifact in most of the island's 19<sup>th</sup> century cemeteries. Mass could be celebrated on occasion in the building, as well as the vigil of a body. The first chapel at the Cementerio was made of wood and had burial space for six bodies. This temporary structure was replaced by the present extraordinary circular chapel during the 1860s. The chapel, dedicated to the same saint as the cemetery, is an example of the Classical *tholos*, a centralized building that throughout history has been intimately connected to memorials. It is also influenced by Renaissance morphologies and aesthetic concepts of idealized centralized buildings, particularly Quattrocento and Cinquecento Italian architectural and pictorial models. Since it closely follows the aesthetic semantics created during this period, the style of the structure can best be described as Neo-Cinquecento.

The cemetery is a virtual who's who of distinguished Puerto Ricans. Like the city it serves, all walks of life are in evidence: former patriots, industry leaders, writers, television stars, politicians, among many others. Elegant pantheons, usually erected on relevant spots, contrast with humbler ones, mirroring the varied and complex Puerto Rican personality. As per tradition, distinguished families were given prominent places along the principal walkways. The oldest sector can be interpreted as a *casino* (private social club characteristic of most of the island towns) dance of sorts.<sup>228</sup> As was the case in these private clubs, the pecking order was carefully preserved since social standing and communal appreciation were considered part of the family honor. Those deemed inferior were not accepted as members of these special venues; this is the reason why *casinos de segunda* (second class casinos) existed. At the burial ground, as intended by the designer, humbler tombs were relegated to secondary positions.

The contrast between rich and poor can be quite dramatic. A poignant example is provided by two tombs which share side by side an area close to the chapel. The pantheon of patriot and poet José de Diego is monumental and elegant, sporting his Classically-inspired bust in the manner that befits a scion of the highest social class. Although he died in New York, he asked to be buried here. A copy of one of his poems is inscribed in the stele-like portion of his monument. The writing proclaims for eternity that he considers himself, first and foremost, a Puerto Rican.

### ***Última actio***

*Colgadme al pecho, después que muera,  
mi verde escudo en un relicario;  
cubridme todo con el sudario,  
con el sudario de tres colores de mi bandera.*

*Sentada y triste habrá una Quimera  
sobre mi túmulo funerario...*

<sup>228</sup> The comparison of cemetery arrangements to *casino* dances is made in Arleen Pabón Charneco, *La arquitectura patrimonial puertorriqueña y sus estilos*.



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*Será un espíritu solitario  
en larga espera, en larga espera, en larga espera...*

*Llegará un día tumultuario  
y la Quimera, en el silenciarlo  
sepulcro erguida, lanzará un grito...*

*¡Buscaré entonces entre mis huesos mi relicario!  
¡Me alzaré entonces con la bandera de mi sudario  
a desplegarla sobre los mundos desde las cumbres del Infinito!*<sup>229</sup>

When the day of the Final Judgment arrives he will rise and fly the flag of his country. This will be his *última actio*, the last thing he will ever do. Until that moment comes, the ensign, described as both flag and reliquary, will also serve as shroud. Next to his patrician pantheon is the humble tomb of his former slave, Juan León, who keeps him company proclaiming: *Vivo o muerto siempre a tu lado* (“Dead or alive always at your side.”).

Beloved 1950s television actor and comedian Ramón Rivero (also known as Diplo) was less formal when choosing his epitaph: *Perdone que no me levante* (“Please excuse me for not standing up.”). Since he is unable to stand up and greet visitors who are “introduced” to him (as happens when a person visits the tomb and someone says: “Here is Diplo!”), he apologizes for his lack of manners. Serious, pathetic, arrogant, humble, and, at times funny, all kinds of personalities are captured by means of the dozens of examples of funerary architecture and sculptural art located within the confines of this cemetery found between the fortification walls and the vociferous Atlantic Ocean.

The Cementerio de Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis is a contributing property of Old San Juan, possessing urban, architectural, artistic, and sculptural and landscape national significance. The amount of culturally significant burials sites and varied tomb morphologies adds to its historic relevance. Still in use, considered by many locals the ultimate resting place, the site reflects upon the historic evolution of this architectural typology within the district, as well as the development and transformation of tomb morphology as a product of time and social ideas. The place is also unique in that dozens of examples of funerary sculptural art can be found, including some evidencing varied stylistic inspiration (i.e. Neo-Gothic, Picturesque, Victorian, Art Deco, among others). Although the property is still used as a cemetery, it derives its primary national significance from its distinctive design, artistic and architectural merits and unique landscape setting, as well as from the dozens of graves of important historical figures, as per Criterion Consideration D.

### **Seminario Conciliar de San Ildefonso (Parcela 4, Block 16)**

The Seminario Conciliar de San Ildefonso, located in the iconic Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud, was founded by Bishop Gutiérrez de Cos in 1832 with funds partly donated by the government. During one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century anti-liberal lulls, the Crown went back to its historic pattern of funding Church buildings. This particular donation resulted in the postponement of the construction of the district’s first formal theater. The Seminario Conciliar de San Ildefonso served two main functions: it was an educational center for future

<sup>229</sup> Literal translation into English: “After I am dead please hang on my breast / my green escutcheon like a reliquary / cover me with my shroud / with the three-colored shroud of my flag. / A sad Chimera will sit by / over my funerary tumulus. . . / it will be a solitary spirit / in long wait, long wait, long wait. / The tumultuous day will come / and the Chimera will stand in the silent sepulcher / and shout . . . / I will then look for my reliquary amongst my bones! / I will stand up with my flag-shroud / and will fly it over all the worlds from the top of Eternity!” The poem is symbolic of the wait Puerto Rico has endured – *larga espera larga espera larga espera* (long wait long wait long wait) – to become an independent nation. De Diego seems assured that, even if it takes place during the Final Judgment, the moment will indeed come. If not, he will clamor for it still then. Considered the father of the independence movement, de Diego advocated an Antillean confederacy of Spanish-speaking Caribbean nations, once the island severed its political ties from Spain.

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members of the clergy, a seminary, and also for regular students of secondary level (roughly equivalent to high school). For this last chosen group the experience was to prepare them so that they could go to Spain and finish their university studies. Many important Puerto Ricans studied in the rooms sheltered by the building before crossing the Atlantic to finish their education.<sup>230</sup>

It is almost impossible to interpret the Viejo San Juan without analyzing the role played by the Catholic Church in the local culture given the fact that it was one of its most powerful social and cultural components. From its onset, the organization dictated the form and shape of the urban core. During the early centuries of development of the historic district, the most important buildings were religious ones, such as churches and convents. As expected, education became another one of the aspects of daily life controlled by the institution.

During the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a site next to the Palacio Episcopal was chosen and by 1827 the building was under construction. The masterful design elegantly adapts to the problematic incline presented by the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud. A series of engaged pilasters supporting a triangular pediment organize the main entrance portal. The decorative details of this element, which include moldings and triglyphs, depict insightful knowledge of Classical aesthetic traditions. This portal and the corner quoins sharply contrast with the exotic baldachin-like curved elements that crown the elegant openings, transparently covered with *rejas abalaustradas* (balustrade wooden grills). The structure is a great example of Romantic-Classicism aesthetics, a mixture of Classically-inspired elements imbued with a Picturesque interpretation of exotic motifs. Although the *rejas abalustradas* may have been a staple of southern Spanish architecture they were not common in the district. Their sculptural magnificence, size and number transform them into a dramatic component of this façade, particularly in a district used to balconies and balconettes. The baldachin-like elements finish with a flourish each opening.

It is probable that Agustín Canter, *maestro mayor* (principal master builder) of the fortifications, worked with *sobrestante* (foreman) Silvestre Andino, carpenter Marcelo Figueroa and metal smith Gualberto Muñoz in the creation of this masterpiece.<sup>231</sup> The first part of the complex facing the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud was finished in 1832. Two years later it was described in the following fashion:

The seminary for the education of the clergy, erected by the zeal and indefatigable exertions of the present bishop, is contiguous to the episcopal palace. It is built in a modern, chaste style of architecture. It is two stories high in the back parts, where the nature of the ground allows it. There are funds for the maintenance of the professors, and it is nearly finished. This is an establishment of great public utility, and does infinite honour to its worthy, venerable, and virtuous founder. The greatest advantages may be expected to result from an institution which, under the eye of the prelate, will be the nursery of a well-educated and virtuous clergy, who, by propagating useful knowledge, and by the force of good example, will correct the vices of the lower classes. The money thus expended may be considered as a productive capital; for it teaches the ignorant countryman his duty to God, his king, and his country, and inculcates the maxims of honesty and industry.<sup>232</sup>

The description of the building's style as both "modern and chaste" and the omission of the mention of any particular revival as source of inspiration is quite interesting. It is understandable for a native of Great Britain, a country on the throes of all sorts of historicisms, particularly the Neo-Gothic, to perceive the massive volume as both "modern" and "chaste."

<sup>230</sup> Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico A Guide to the Island of Borinquen*, p 206. At one point, the complex housed a Jesuits boy's school. In 1940, it was still used as a seminary.

<sup>231</sup> "Relaciones semanales de la Obra del Colegio Seminario Conciliar de esta Ciudad, correspondiendo a todo el present año 1830." Archivo Eclesiástico de Puerto Rico, Fondo: Seminario Conciliar. Quoted in: María de los Ángeles Castro, *Arquitectura en San Juan Puerto Rico (Siglo XIX)*, p 182.

<sup>232</sup> George Flinter, *An account of the present state of the Island Puerto Rico*, p 39.

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During the tenure of Bishop Gil Esteve y Tomás (1848-1855) a vacant lot on the northeastern corner of the Calle del Sol and the Escalinata del Hospital was bought to increase the size of the establishment. Architect and *maestro mayor de fortificaciones* Manuel de Zayas authored the splendid addition. The designer of both the Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla and Iglesia de las Carmelitas Calzadas created an independent building with its own cortile masked on the outside as part of the original one and with connected interiors. A centralized chapel, with a Pantheon-like dome, very similar to the one in the Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla, was also part of the new complex. In addition, there was also a refectory and a large kitchen.

The building has several unique features that signal it as one of the most relevant structures within the historic district. In addition to two elegant *cortiles*, one sporting one floor of semicircular arcades on three sides, and a second one with two arcaded floors on all four sides, it has a centralized chapel of exquisite beauty crowned by an elegant dome, a large kitchen with its original *fogón* (cooking stove-like area) and also a refectory. The kitchen is one of a handful of 19<sup>th</sup> century such spaces that has been preserved. The refectory,<sup>233</sup> the only 19<sup>th</sup> century example preserved in Old San Juan and the island of this type of space, is roofed with a unique and splendid *bóveda vaída* (sail vault), the only one of its kind in the district, island and United States.

The Seminario Conciliar de San Ildefonso is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, artistic, and landscape national significance. It is the only 19<sup>th</sup> century interpretation of the cloister architectural typology and preserved example of a secondary school in the Viejo San Juan and the island. The elegant and creative Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud façade, two distinct cortiles with their stupendous arcades and varied proportional arrangements, original 19<sup>th</sup> century kitchen, neighboring refectory with its unique sail vault, and centralized chapel with its semispherical dome adorned with historic grisaille frescoes are all relevant architectural elements that grant this building cultural relevance. Presently, the Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y del Caribe, a university, is located here. Although the Seminario Conciliar de San Ildefonso belongs to the Catholic Church it is a unit of a holistic district, deriving its primary significance from its architectural importance, as per Criterion Consideration A.

### Plaza del Mercado Municipal (Parcela 1, Block 4)

Open urban plazas had varied uses in Spanish towns since they were considered gathering places as well as outdoor markets. As mentioned, the Plaza de Armas was also known as the Plaza de las Verduras since the vegetable market was located here on certain days of the week. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century and as a result of the Enlightenment ideas regarding the hygiene of urban cores, a formal *plaza del mercado* (market plaza) was constructed on the northwest corner of the Plaza de Armas, where the first cemetery of the urban core had existed until the early part of that century. This example of a prototypical Spanish architectural typology served as an indoor market for some time, however, the site was judged inadequate.

A few years later, the establishment was moved to a new building specifically designed for this use and located on the other side of town, on the outskirts of the core, facing the northern section of the *camino de ronda* (pomoerium). The sector was not formally urbanized and was characterized by the amount of freed slaves residing in it and its surroundings earning it the “uncultured” (Tapia y Rivera *dixit*) name of Culo Prieto. The land where the new structure was built originally probably belonged to the Ponce de León family and later to the Dominicans. When the military took control of the Catholic Church property during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Convento de Santo Domingo was used as administrative center for the military and other government services, this use spilled to this area until the new plaza was erected.<sup>234</sup> In fact, a 19<sup>th</sup> century plan of the city describes

<sup>233</sup> The refectory was a traditional space of cloisters and convents since the creation of the architectural typology in the Middle Ages. It was close to the kitchen for the inhabitants took all their meals in this room.

<sup>234</sup> In a 1773 map of the urban core, 18 to 20 very small buildings appear in the area, while in the O'Daly 1776 map only 10 such construction are drawn.

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the area immediate to the east of the Plaza del Mercado as: *hornos y administración militar* (ovens and military administration).<sup>235</sup>

The building was created to serve as the official Plaza del Mercado or Plaza del Mercado Municipal in a new block carved from the northern part of the city surrounded by the Calle de Norzagaray, Calle Imperial, Calle de la Virtud and Calle de Mc Arthur. In order to facilitate communication between the new *plaza del mercado* and all parts of the district, three new streets were created: the Calle de Mc Arthur, Calle de la Virtud and Calle Imperial. This urban configuration isolated the building as an urban block providing it with drama and splendor and facilitating access to its interior. Originally, there was no Calle de Norzagaray and the building had no formal northern urban boundary in spite of the fact that the principal door is located on this side. To facilitate circulation with the southern part of the town, the short Calle del Mercado, running from north to south, was also created. Until this moment Block 3 and Block 14 had been one urban organism. The Calle de la Tranquilidad, dividing present day Block 5 and Block 14, did the same thing for the eastern part of the urban core. The existence of multiple entrances evidences the designer's interest in physically connecting the building to the different areas the *plaza del mercado* was to serve, thus, facilitating access.

This monumental structure was erected by the Municipality of San Juan to provide a formal and hygienic place in which to sell produce, in keeping with the ideas of the Enlightenment. By this time, *plazas del mercado* were a staple of most Spanish cities. While smaller settlements used any open space available, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, larger urban cores, particularly in Spain, constructed specialized buildings where produce and other products were sold at a time when people lacked refrigeration and bought food on a daily basis. As a result, this architectural type was considered an important one and, in a sense, a modern urban addition. Underscoring its modernity, scores of Spanish examples use metal and glass as construction materials. Days were assigned for the activity and, on occasion, certain products – like meat – would have their own special sale day. The *matadero* (slaughterhouse) was moved at this time to the exterior of the urban precinct, in the area where part of La Perla now stands. According to Tapia y Rivera, the previous slaughterhouse was located where the Casa de la Caridad y Oficios de San Ildefonso was situated at a later time, inside the walled circuit (Parcela 1, Block 20).

The building follows one of two favorite spatial architectural solutions favored by the district: four arcaded wings covered with a roof made of wooden trusses, where the stalls were located, organized around a central *cortile* or open courtyard. Historic photographs evidence this central area was also used for displaying and selling purposes. In following this traditional morphology, the designer abandoned the contemporary interpretation used in the peninsula for the architectural typology. In many examples, such as the Mercat de la Boquería in Barcelona, a basilica or hall-like arrangement was preferred. The formidable and elegant central *cortile* can be considered an architectural archaism, a creative interpretation of a 16<sup>th</sup> century model that now sheltered a new use.

The arcuated system is used in the façade in a curious manner. Rectangular windows seem to support smaller ones crowned with segmental arches. The end result of this arrangement is that all openings look like they are framed by a sequence of stilted arches. The principal entrance facing present day Calle de Norzagaray is treated in a triumphal arch manner. A cartouche acts like a pediment emphasizing the urban and public relevance of this entry way. The treatment also serves to visually distinguish the entrance from the powerful horizontal organization created by the arcuated elements. As mentioned, the choice of the main entrance is puzzling given the fact it faces the sea (as opposed to the town) and that the Calle de Norzagaray did not formally exist at this time.

<sup>235</sup> San Juan Historic Site, National Park Service Archives, "Plano de la Plaza de San Juan de Puerto Rico Levantado por el Cuerpo de Ingenieros Militares," AR J T 4 C 2 61.

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The Plaza del Mercado Municipal is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural and artistic national significance. The elegant building with its impressive cortile is an example of a unique and novel (for the time) architectural typology. Of special distinction is the north portal, elegantly interpreted to provide decorum to the relatively pedestrian activities which took place within the interior of the edifice. The use of a central *cortile* evidences the evolution of certain centuries-old architectural morphologies within the district. The fluid interaction of the edifice with its urban surroundings grants it an added layer of significance.

### Asilo de Beneficencia (Parcela 2A, Block 15)

Located on the Calle del Morro, the Asilo de Beneficencia was the first large public building erected during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Campo del Morro, the area that served as the defensive esplanade of the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro, the last line of defense of the city. Before the first phase of construction of the building was started in 1840, the area served as the orchard of the Convento de los Dominicos. Therefore, it is possible it formed part of the original Ponce de León family estate. At a later time, the Cuartel de Caballería (Cavalry Barracks) and the city's Cuartel de Milicias (City Armory) were also sited here. The locale for the new asylum made sense given the fact that the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción El Grande was quite close and the sector was the only large, uninhabited area of the city. "The selection of the site was determined by its special conditions, lying on the most elevated part of the city, and favored by the breezes of the nearby sea."<sup>236</sup> The building – in addition to its alarming mélange of inmates that included abandoned elders and orphans, those accused of incest and the insane – sheltered soldiers before the Cuartel de Ballajá was constructed. It also served as the locale for a primary school for the troops.

Architect Pedro García design for an asylum were presented in 1840 and a year later Santiago Cortijo, commander of the royal engineers, took charge of the construction. Some historic documents also mention José de Pezuela, supervisor of the workers corps formed by prisoners. A Juan de Villanueva-inspired E-floor plan was created formed by two *cours* (courts) surrounded by wings on three sides that allow for the separation of genders with a common central vestibule where the administrative offices were located. The *salas* (halls) were subdivided into a *sala para mujeres blancas* (hall for white women), *sala para mujeres de color* (hall for colored women), *sala para hombres de color* (hall for colored men) and *sala para hombres blancos* (hall for white men). In other words, in addition to gender segregation, separation of inmates also existed on the basis of skin color. The *lavadero* for cleaning clothes and *baños* (showers) were located at the center of both courts. An 1843 architectural plan signed by Santiago Cortijo, evidences the central area had pointed arches and Neo-Decorated Gothic vaulting. The collusion of Classicist elements with Gothic-inspired motifs can best be described as a Gothick exercise, a parallel to the aesthetic semantics that was the rage in Europe, principally in Great Britain during the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The architectural mélange present in the building created the perfect stage for the diverse groups it sheltered.

The idea that the government was responsible for the care of the less fortunate was a novel if obtuse one in Spain until 1812 when the liberal Constitution made the local municipalities responsible for these groups. It was not until 1822 that this mandate generated any direct consequences in the Viejo San Juan, although in 1810 some tried to open a private asylum in the city. Unfortunately, "the inquiry ordered by Ferdinand VII, to prove the convenience and utility of the projected institution was of such a vain and obstructive character, that not it only delayed, but frustrated its accomplishment."<sup>237</sup> The next try was to establish an asylum for indigent women. This second private effort to serve the "Others" also failed. In 1879, the following description was written:

<sup>236</sup> Francisco R de Goenaga, *Memoria Anual del Manicomio de San Juan Puerto Rico – 1906/Annual Report of the Insane Asylum of San Juan Porto Rico – 1906* (New York: York Printing Company, 1906), p 43.

<sup>237</sup> *Idem.*

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*El edificio del Asilo de Beneficencia se empezó a construir en Mayo de 1840, siendo fundador el Excmo Sr, Don Santiago Méndez Vigo, Teniente General que gobernaba entonces esta Isla, y se terminó en Marzo de 1847, siendo Gobernador General el Conde Mirasol. Dirigió la obra el Coronel de Ingenieros Don Santiago Cortijo. El Asilo está hoy dividido en dos departamentos, uno para niños y otro para niñas.*

*Existen en la actualidad Acogidos 130 Acogidas 117 . . .*

*A estos acogidos se les dá, además de los alimentos, vestidos y asistencia en sus enfermedades, educación religiosa y civil, dirigida por un Profesor de instrucción primaria con dos auxiliares. Existen talleres de sastrería, carpintería y zapatería, donde los niños, á su vez, aprenden el oficio que tienen en más inclinación. Hay además una academia de música dirigida por un Profesor, donde aprenden este ramo los que tienen don. En la actualidad asisten unos 50 alumnos. La instrucción de las niñas está dirigida por las hermanas de la caridad, enseñándoles además de la instrucción primaria, las labores propias de su sexo como son la costura, bordado, lavado, planchado, &a.<sup>238</sup>*

The insane were also secluded in the building. In fact, even though a special edifice was constructed next door later during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, historic documents evidence there was no clear distinction between the asylums population.

*Los dos establecimientos se hallan unidos bajo una misma dirección.*

*El personal de ambos lo componen: un Director-Administrador y 18 hermanas de caridad para el gobierno, régimen y administración interior de los cuatro departamentos, un capellán, un Médico-Cirujano, un Profesor de instrucción primaria, un Profesor de música y otros empleados.*

*Los gastos del Asilo y Manicomio están a cargo de la Excma. Diputación Provincial, la que demuestra un celo é interés extraordinario por estos establecimientos, no omitiendo gasto alguno para el mejoramiento de ellos.*

*El gobierno e inspección superior del Asilo Manicomio está á cargo de un Diputado provincial con el carácter de Comisario de Beneficencia; en la actualidad está vestido de este cargo el Excmo Sr Don Pablo Ubarri.*

*El Jefe inmediato de los establecimientos es el Director; lo es en la actualidad el Sr Lcdo Don Francisco Delgado y García, Pbro Capellán de ambos el Rvdo P Paul Don Félix García; Médico-Cirujano, Dr Don José Baralt y Gneco; Profesor de escuela, Don Miguel J Gorbea; Profesor de música, Don Sandalio Callejo; una comunidad de 18 hermanas de la caridad y otros empleados subalternos.<sup>239</sup>*

<sup>238</sup> José Pérez Moris, *Guía General de la Isla de Puerto Rico, con el almanaque correspondiente al año de 1879*, pp 109-110. Translation into English: "The building of the Asilo de Beneficencia was started in May 1840, founded by Excmo Sr Don Santiago Méndez Vigo, Lieutenant General who then governed this Island, and finished in March 1847, being governor the Count of Mirasol. The construction work was directed by Don Santiago Cortijo." "Presently, there are 130 men and 117 women . . ." "The sheltered receive, in addition to food, dress and assistance in their sickness, religious and civic education directed by a grade school Professor with two assistants. There are clothes making, carpentry and shoe-making workshops where children are trained in the area they prefer. There is also a music academy directed by a Professor where those that have talent learn music. Presently, there are 50 students. The instruction of girls is directed by the sisters of charity; they are educated at grade school level, and in activities proper of their gender, such as sewing, embroidering, washing, ironing, ect."

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p 110. Translation into English: "Both establishments are united under the same administration." "The personnel is organized as follows: a Director-Administrator and 18 sisters of the charity to govern and administer the four departments, a chaplain, a Surgeon, a grade school Professor, a music Professor and other employees." "The expenses of the Asilo and the Manicomio are covered by the Excma Diputación Provincial, which exhibits great and extraordinary interest in these establishments, never limiting funds." "The government and superior inspection of the Asilo Manicomio is the responsibility of a Diputado provincial named Comisario de Beneficencia; the Excmo. Sr Don Pablo Ubarri presently occupies this position." "The Director is the immediate chief of both establishments; presently this position is held by Sr Lcdo Don Francisco Delgado y García, the chaplain is the Reverend P Paul Don Félix García; Surgeon, Dr Don José Baralt y Gneco; grade school professor, Don Miguel J Gorbea; music professor, Don Sandalio

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This state of affairs prevailed until the year 1906. In that year's annual report, *Memoria Anual del Manicomio de San Juan Puerto Rico – 1906/Annual Report of the Insane Asylum of San Juan Porto Rico – 1906*, the photographs of the building presented as the insane asylum belong to the Casa de Beneficencia. Regarding this issue, the American military governor reported:

The insane asylum has been, and it still is being, administered jointly with the orphan asylum. Supplies are received by the sisters for both institutions and issued from the common storeroom. Besides this, they have in common a dispensary and the medical staff, consisting of one physician in charge, who is at the same time the apothecary of the institution.<sup>240</sup>

When the central portion of the building was finished, the facilities were inaugurated on 19 November 1844. Fifteen male and eight female inmates became the first residents of the establishment.<sup>241</sup> Some of the hellish preparations for inauguration day included:

*Avanzando las obras de la Casa de Beneficencia, y estando ya listas las jaulas para los locos, lo aviso á Ud. Para que arregle los términos de su traslación para el 18 del próximo mes de Noviembre, á fin de que el 19, día de S M la Reina N Sra amanezcan estos desgraciados en las cómodas y excelentes habitaciones que la piedad de S M les destina, y en las cuales encontrarán baños de golpe templados, calientes ó fríos y todos los demás auxilios que la medicina reconoce para atender á esta clase de dolencia.*<sup>242</sup>

The mention of *jaulas* (cages) for the inmates and hot, cold and tepid water baths, described as *de golpe* (hard and strong showers), were standard treatments for mental illnesses at the time all around the globe. Three years before its completion, in 1848, a primary school for soldiers was located within the building. Poor, abandoned children from the towns of Arecibo, Aguada, San Germán and Coamo also came to live in the edifice. In a sense, the Casa de Beneficencia was in charge of the destitute needs of the entire island, as well as some military ones. Even when the Diputación Provincial took charge of the establishment in 1872 and in spite of the second floor expansion (dated 1895) the place was extremely congested and considered by some hell on earth. Dr Goenaga, who served as director of both establishments until the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century described the place in the following manner:

*Al cabo, el Asilo de Beneficencia convirtiéndose en un presidio; y ya no fue por largos años el hogar de la caridad pública, sino antro de abominaciones y horrores increíbles.*

*Hombre y mujeres pervertidos; locos, imbéciles, idiotas, inocentes niños abandonados, reunidos en un mismo local, haciendo vida común, depravados por la ociosidad; y luego un régimen brutal de crueldad: los grillos y cadenas en que se aprisionaba á los locos furiosos, como sola medida de preservación y curación; y por último, el azote, usado como castigo en el establecimiento.*

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Callejo; a group of 18 nuns and other employees." Mention needs to be made of the fact that this information appeared in a publication gathered, edited and printed by José Pérez Morís, a recalcitrant *españolista*.

<sup>240</sup> Military Government of Porto Rico, *Military Government of Porto Rico From October 18, 1898, to April 30, 1900 Appendices to the Report of the Military Governor*, p 37.

<sup>241</sup> Francisco R de Goenaga, *Memoria Anual del Manicomio de San Juan Puerto Rico – 1906/Annual Report of the Insane Asylum of San Juan Porto Rico – 1906* (New York: York Printing Company, 1906), p, p 44.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, p 12. Translation into English: "Work on the Casa de Beneficencia has progressed and since the cages for the insane are ready, I inform you so that you organize the transfer for the coming 18 November, so that the next day – day of her Majesty the Queen – these unfortunate souls can wake up in the excellent and commodious rooms that the piety of Her Majesty has made possible and where they will find cold, hot and warm shower baths and all the other treatments medicine recommends to treat those suffering from their malady."

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*Tórnose, pues la Casa de Beneficencia en centro de vicios amparados y desarrollados por el extravío de la piedad social; y los infelices locos, que eran los más victimizados por estos torpes errores, lejos de sanar en el Asilo empeoraban en él irrevocablemente.*<sup>243</sup>

These conditions were the direct result of the times and were experienced in other places around the globe. The Enlightenment brought to the fore the idea that it was the government's responsibility to deal with the downtrodden. It took time for the novel concept not only to take root but for the services to be provided in a humane manner.

As mentioned and judging from the architectural plans, the original structure included Gothick elements, such as pointed arches and Decorated Gothic vaulting. These were contrasted to the Classically-inspired decorative motifs used in the exterior. The second floor added during the 1890s evidences the abandonment of Gothic inspiration and the collusion of Second Empire Baroque and Classicist architectural ideas. Classically-derived motifs, such as the triangular pediment that crowns the central pavilion and the *en ressault* pairs of columns, are contrasted to Second Empire Baroque pavilions (*avant-corps*). The principal façade is organized by means of corner and entrance pavilions that seem to project from the principal plane, in a manner quite similar to the arrangement present in the Universidad Central de Madrid.<sup>244</sup> The rich decoration obtained with the Classicist detailing is also a contribution of this style. The building includes several architectural elements of distinction. Among these is the elegant pedimented front with the filigree balcony and the *en ressault* Tuscan columns that decorate the main entrance. The alternate use of trabeated and arcuated windows throughout the façade creates a diverse and most interesting composition. The 1890 *memoria descriptiva* (descriptive memory) of the rehabilitation project established that: *El estilo arquitectónico adoptado ha sido en cierto modo dictado por el que predomina en la fachada principal del edificio que hoy existe. Perteneciendo al estilo grecorromano [sic], nos pareció natural no separarnos de él: y ya que primitivamente se erigió el orden Dórico [sic] Romano. . .*<sup>245</sup> It is quite interesting how the style was confusingly described by the engineers as *grecorromano* (Greco-Roman). The building's main façade bears the following inscription:

*Comenzaron las obras de este asilo en 1841 siendo gobernador y capitán general  
el Exmo Sr Don Santiago Méndez Vigo se terminaron en 1847  
bajo el gobierno del teniente general Exmo Sr Conde de Mirasol,  
en 1897 y con la dirección el vice-presidente de la Comisión Provincial  
Exmo Don Manuel Egozcue  
se construyó la planta alta del edificio  
apadrinando la bendición del local hecha por el Illmo Sr Fray Toribio Minguella  
los Exmo Srs Sabas Marín gobernador Gral esta provincia  
y su distinguida esposa Da Matilde de León de Marín*<sup>246</sup>

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p 15. Translation into English: "In the end, the Asilo de Beneficencia became a jail and for long years it did not work as a place of public charity but as a center for incredible abominations and horrors." "Perverted women and men; crazy; imbeciles; idiots; innocent abandoned children, all living under the same roof, sharing life, depraved by their lack of work or entertainment; a brutal regime of cruelty; the chains and shackles with which furious crazy people were tied down as a means to preserve and cure them; and, lastly, the whipped as punishment in the establishment." "In this manner the Casa de Beneficencia transformed into a center for all vices sheltered and developed by the incorrect social piety; and the sad insane, who were the most victimized of all due to their mistakes, did not get better but, on the contrary, got sicker in the Asilo."

<sup>244</sup> The Universidad Central de Madrid building was designed by Francisco Javier Mariategui in 1842. Javier Hernando, *Arquitectura en España 1770-1900*, pág 155.

<sup>245</sup> "Proyecto de ampliación del Asilo de Beneficencia para la instalación de una escuela de artes y oficios," 10 October 1895, Luis Rubio. Archivo General de Puerto Rico, Obras Públicas, Edificios Públicos, Legajo 132, Expediente 3, Caja 699. Quoted in: María de los Ángeles Castro, *Arquitectura en San Juan de Puerto Rico*, pág 330. Translation into English: "The architectural style chosen was dictated by the style of the existing principal façade. Since the Greco-Roman was used it seemed logical not to abandon it."

<sup>246</sup> Translation into English: "Construction of this asylum was initiated in 1841 under the governorship of the governor and captain general of the Exmo Sr Don Santiago Méndez Vigo and ended in 1847 under the governorship of lieutenant general Exmo Sr Count of



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The wings that form the E-shape floor plan help organize the spaces and the patios making possible the segregation of the genders and varied uses. Considered a Neoclassical contribution, the organization was used by Spanish leading architect de Villanueva.<sup>247</sup> His work is characterized by: [L]a *austeridad del exterior y sobretodo la potente cubicidad de los volúmenes*.<sup>248</sup> The stellar architect was able to generate a new interpretation which profoundly impacted architecture not only in the peninsula but also in the Viejo San Juan. His vanguard designs organize: [U]na *arquitectura “clásica” y “casticista” al mismo tiempo. Clásica en el sentido de la permanencia, de universal. Casticista porque enlaza y da continuidad a los modelos históricos locales, formalizados por Herrera y sus continuadores. [Su obra representa] [u]n verdadero hito en la arquitectura española*.<sup>249</sup> De Villanueva's unique composition provided the perfect mirror upon which local architecture could reflect itself while embracing late 19<sup>th</sup> century Second Empire Baroque and Beaux-Arts semantics.

The Asilo de Beneficencia is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, and artistic national significance. The building's architectural solution creatively unites Classical and Second Empire Baroque motifs that organize a sumptuous façade composed of a dramatic and sophisticated pediment, manly Tuscan order and delicate metal filigree balustrades. The creative adaptation of the de Villanueva “E” floor plan to divide the genders and the administrative areas also adds significance to the building. The Asilo de Beneficencia is the only example of an historic asylum in Old San Juan and the island, a unique 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural typology specifically designed for the “Others.”

### Casa Alcaldía de San Juan (Parcela 2, Block 34)

As mentioned, the foundation of the Casa Alcaldía on the present day site dates to the early days of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, after the settlement moved from the *fondadero* to the area surrounding the Plaza de Armas. Therefore, tis site has housed the Municipality of San Juan seat of government since that period, sitting in a lot that presently runs between the Calle de San Francisco, where the principal façade is located, and the Calle de la Luna. It is an iconic structure that symbolizes the history of this organism throughout the almost five centuries it has served the city. Interestingly, it is the government unit that has least changed, in terms of its administrative responsibilities.

Since the moment it was founded during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Old San Juan, implicitly as well as explicitly, represented Puerto Rico. Given the urban core's relevance, it was up to the governors of the island to finish

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Mirasol in 1897 and with the direction of the Vice-President of the Provincial Commission Exmo Don Manuel Egozcue the upper floor was constructed with the Exmo Sr Sabas Marín governor general of this province and his distinguished wife Doña Matilde de León de Marín acting as godparents to the benediction made by the Sr Fray Toribio Minguella.”

<sup>247</sup> *Juan de Villanueva, hermano de Diego, es considerado el primer exponente del neoclasicismo español. En su obra podemos apreciar las características que se consideran típicas del revival clásico peninsular. El personalísimo vocabulario vilanovino poseyó tal impacto que el mismo se evidencia en ultramar en edificaciones boricuas. Su característica principal fue la independencia con que se tratan las partes del edificio sin abandonarse el principio de unidad de conjunto. Arleen Pabón Charneco, La arquitectura patrimonial puertorriqueña y sus estilos, p 196. Translation into English: “Juan de Villanueva, brother of Diego, is considered the first neoclassical architect in Spain. His work evidences the characteristics of the Classical revival in the peninsula. The very personal vilanovino architectural language was so powerful that it impacted the other side of the ocean and can be seen in Puerto Rican examples. His principal characteristic was the independence of the different parts of the building without abandoning the idea of unity of the whole building.”*

<sup>248</sup> Javier Hernando, *Arquitectura en España 1770-1900*, p 49. Translation into English: “The austerity present in the exterior and above all the cubic approach to the volume characterize his architecture and is one of his most powerful influences.”

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, p 69. Translation into English: “[A] *casticista* [vernacular-inspired] and Classical architecture at the same time. It can be considered classic in the sense that [the style] was considered permanent and universal. It is also *casticista* because it agglutinated and continued the historical local models formalized by Herrera and his followers. [His work represents] a high point for Spanish architecture.”

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and maintain the *casa consistorial* (town council house), as the building was also known, since it was used for both municipal and island-wide activities. As such, it encapsulates the importance the district had for the rest of the island. For example, the *postillones* (postillion coaches) left this building in order to deliver mail to their Bayamón and Río Piedras peers, serving as the Spanish central postal distribution center for the island. For centuries, then, all mail to and from the outside world went through this building. In 1860, the central arch of the first floor loggia was established as point zero of all of the island's roads. The large audience room located on the second floor, known as the *sala capitular* (chapter hall), behind the elegant arcade was the first public space to be artificially illuminated with gas, a measure of its social importance.

As expected, the building has suffered transformations. It has sheltered not only the municipal unit of government but also its jail, as well as other services. Probably, the most dramatic intervention – not counting the historic ones which took place during the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries – was the 1930s addition facing the Calle de la Luna inspired by the Mediterranean Revival. The San Juan Municipality has grown exponentially during the almost five centuries of its existence. The historic insertions respond to the many services the structure needs to provide. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century addition, as all the rest, adds a layer of significance to the building and positively contributes to its architectural significance.

When Abbad y Lasierra visited the Viejo San Juan during the 18<sup>th</sup> century he left a detailed description of all buildings surrounding the Plaza de Armas. The at the time new prison (located at the site of the Real Hacienda), the Hospital del Rey (King's Hospital), and the Casa Alcaldía, described by the friar as the "Casa de la ciudad" (House of the City), marked three of the sides of this important public space. The building also sheltered the *cárcel pública* (city prison).

*La plaza mayor es un cuadro bien capaz, hermozeado con buenos edificios. El cuartel de los presidiarios, que ocupa un frente, aloja en sus cuadras hasta 800 hombres. Es obra moderna hecha con todas las precauciones y seguridades que pide su destino, coronada de hermosas azoteas, y en su línea es edificio perfectamente acabado. El Hospital del Rey, que hace esquina al otro frente de la plaza, no es más que un conjunto de casas que se han unido sucesivamente. Su estrechez es tan incómoda para la tropa que se cura en él, como perjudicial su situación para el pueblo en un país tan cálido. Al lado opuesto del Hospital está la Casa de la ciudad, que es igualmente cárcel pública. Es poco decente para el primer destino y demasiado reducida para el segundo.*<sup>250</sup>

All these structures served the public in different manners empowering the iconic significance of the plaza as the most important open space of the urban core. The square, in turn, granted each one of them urban and architectural relevance. It is interesting to note that the Casa Alcaldía was considered by Abbad y Lasierra not decent enough for its use and too small for a prison. After the 19<sup>th</sup> century rehabilitation, this perception changed drastically. Tapia y Rivera contrasted the new rehabilitated building with the one he had known as a small child (probably the one described by Abbad y Lasierra): . . . [N]o se parecía entonces a la de hoy sino en pequeña parte, pues sólo tenía una torrecilla en el lado izquierdo, o sea, el más próximo a la calle de san Francisco. El edificio consistorial primitivo fue levantado en 1602 durante el gobierno de Sáncho Ochoa de Castro y reedificado luego de esta época.<sup>251</sup> The writer felt justly proud of the beautiful 19<sup>th</sup> century work.

<sup>250</sup> Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra, *Historia geográfica, civil y natural de la isla de San Juan Bautista*, p. 213. Translation into English: "The plaza mayor is a large square, beautified by good buildings. The jail occupies the main side and can shelter 800 men. It is a modern work and it includes all precautions and securities needed for its function, crowned with beautiful roofs and it is a perfectly finished building. The King's Hospital is located at the corner and is really but a group of houses that have been united with time. Its limitations are uncomfortable for the troop seeking health in it and also very unhealthy in such a hot country. On the opposite side of the Hospital is the Casa de la ciudad [House of the city] that also serves as public jail. It is quite indecent for its first use and too small for the second one."

<sup>251</sup> Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo dejo*, p 27. Translation into English: "[I]t looked differently except for a small portion because it only had one small tower on the left side, that is the side closest to the Calle de

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The building seems to have been a work in progress for several centuries. Historic documents mention that it was still not finished in 1777. In 1789, work continued under the governorship of Francisco Torralba and, from 1795 to 1804, under Governor Ramón de Castro. At this time it only had one tower, the way Tapia y Rivera knew it during his childhood. In 1811, Governor Salvador Meléndez ordered Luis de Huertas to design a royal prison opening to the Calle de la Luna.

A British visitor described the building in 1834 in the following manner: "The town-house is a very handsome building, situated in the market square."<sup>252</sup> It is interesting to note that it was considered a "handsome building" even before the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century transformation. The design was described by Tapia y Rivera: *Más tarde, allá de 1838 a 41, se varió la fachada, desapareciendo la torrecilla y sustituyéndola dos, una en cada lado, en la forma que hoy tiene. Este nuevo diseño se debió al arquitecto del Municipio, don Pedro García, pensionado.*<sup>253</sup> The above-mentioned quote describes the present day façade constructed between the years 1842 and 1843, following the design of municipal Architect Pedro García.<sup>254</sup>

It is interesting to note that the first public clock in the façade was installed in 1815, when the fervor of liberalism and the Enlightenment required a new interpretation of everything, including time. The fact that the clock was to serve all and that it was conceived as part of the public services provided by the building at a time when such artifacts were owned by a handful of people needs to be underscored. Tapia y Rivera described the tower in the following fashion: *La torrecilla que daba abrigo al reloj, componíase de una pequeña cúpula sustentada por columnillas de orden dórico, coronando la dicha cúpula, una figura de bronce dorado con forma de ángel en ademán de tañer una trompeta.*<sup>255</sup> Other services sheltered by the building during the 19<sup>th</sup> century were the Cuerpo de Orden Público (Public Order Corps) and Caja de Ahorros (Savings Bank).

In addition to Architect Pedro García, the name of *albañil* (mason or bricklayer) Ramón Santos is also associated to the work. García, the first city architect of the historic district, also acted as state architect for the island. He was a Spanish architect formally educated at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid, the organism that directed the education and professional practice of architects, while strictly supervising construction activities carried out by engineers in Spain and its territories. He was a distinguished personality in the Viejo San Juan community and founder of the Colegio Museo de la Juventud, a private educational center where young boys could study before going to Spain to finish their university education. One of his students was Tapia y Rivera. García was instrumental in the defense of architects against "usurpers," the name given by the Real Academia to engineers and other construction-related professionals, and fought vigorously against the government's intention of placing non-architects in certain positions within the city and the island's hierarchy. In his communications to the Real Academia, he described himself as *arquitecto de la Academia Nacional de San Fernando* ("architect of the National Academy of St Ferdinand") and municipal architect since 1837. The dispute merited the intervention of the governing body of the Real

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San Francisco. The original building was erected in 1602 during the governorship of Sáncho Ochoa de Castro and rebuilt at a later date."

<sup>252</sup> George Flinter, *An account of the present state of the Island Puerto Rico*, p 43.

<sup>253</sup> Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo dejo*, p 28. Translation in English: "Later, around 1838 and 1841, the façade was modified and the tower disappeared and was substituted by two, one on each side, in the manner it is today. This new design was the work of municipal architect Don Pedro García who, at the time, was also director of the Colegio Museo de la Juventud where I was a student."

<sup>254</sup> In spite of the fact that the two known architectural plans for this building (dated 1841 and 1843) are signed by Lieutenant Colonel Engineer Santiago Cortijo, it is generally accepted that Architect Pedro García is the author of the basic design concept.

<sup>255</sup> Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo dejo*, p 78. Translation into English: "The small tower to which the clock was attached had a small dome supported by small Doric columns crowned by a bronze angel with a trumpet."

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Academia; the historic professional clash was fought via rivers of ink on official paper preserved at the archives of this institution.<sup>256</sup>

Traditional descriptions of the building mention that García was inspired by the Casa Consistorial (Casa del Rey) in Madrid. In fact, it has even been stated that the edifice is a “reproduction”<sup>257</sup> of this peninsular building. The “similarity” is non-existent since the inspiration comes from other sources, such as the many peninsular interpretations of the architectural typology of *casa alcaldía* that used open arcades, particularly in the first floor. Other architectural precedents can be pointed out for the elegant arcaded front framed by two towers. One such example is St Paul’s Cathedral in London, the work of Sir Christopher Wren, and the church of Sant’Agnese in Agone in Rome by the Rainaldis (Girolamo and Carlo) and Francesco Borromini. The bell towers in the façade serve as vertical elements that frame the two arcades. In a sense, the use of towers is an architectural usurpation of the quintessential church *campanile* (bell tower). This appropriation is symbolic of the political changes experienced in the Spanish peninsula and the island at this time.

The design of the elegant façade evidences the aesthetic influence of European styles, particularly the *Rundbogenstil*, although the idea of civic spaces including an open loggia in its front façade goes back to ancient Greece and Rome. The morphology was reinvented during the Renaissance; the first example was designed by Filippo Brunelleschi. The Alcaldía’s frontal arcade, the only one of its kind in the district, forms part of the urban and architectural landscape of the Plaza de Armas. The public space creates a more fluid relationship between the interior of the municipal building and the square. The arcaded portico also provides urban and architectural transparency, a highly symbolic motif, given the building’s use as *casa alcaldía* (mayor’s house) and *casa de la ciudad* (house of the city). As per 19<sup>th</sup> century liberal ideals, the building was to collaborate in the interpretation of the mayor as the servant of the people. The double arcade silently conveyed the aspired transparency of this officer and his work. The arcaded loggia reflects the influence of the Plaza Mayor in Madrid and Plaça Reial in Barcelona, among other distinguished examples. There is evidence that the intention was to frame all four sides of the Plaza de Armas with a continuing arcade, comically described during the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century as designed “in the traditional romantic style.”<sup>258</sup> Sections of two semicircular arches, one on each side of the arcade, mutely proclaim to this day this intention.

The façade is also a great example of the 19<sup>th</sup> century reinterpretation of the Cinquecento *opera di mano* versus *opera di natura* existential conflict. Balance, elegance, and propriety seem to be the desired goals rather than the architectural expression of existential Angst as was the case during other periods. Nevertheless, the use the explicit pseudo-rustication treatment on the first floor and its treatment as a podium and the signaling of the second level as the relevant floor containing the balcony-tribune is iconic of the education Spanish architects and, to a lesser extent, the military engineers received. The pseudo-rustication further distinguishes the balcony-cum-loggia-cum-tribune located in the second level. One more time a favorite Western theme was expressed by means of the façade: civilization – represented by the second level and the loggia-cum-tribune-cum-balcony, the most important one – trumped nature, represented by the pseudo-rustication.

The building’s two level arcades are framed by elegant towers in the manner of French pavilions. The arcaded loggia in the *piano nobile*, which also serves as a tribune since it faces the Plaza de Armas, opens to the *sala*

<sup>256</sup> Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Ultramar 5063, Expediente 4, “Establecimiento de estudios en la isla (1837-1843),” “Don Pedro García, Arquitecto de la Academia nacional de San Fernando,” 16 February 1839. Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Ultramar 5063, Expediente 4, “Establecimiento de estudios en la isla (1837-1843),” “Don Pedro García, Arquitecto de la Academia nacional de San Fernando,” March 1841. The professional dispute is analyzed in Arleen Pabón Charneco, *La arquitectura patrimonial puertorriqueña y sus estilos*, pp 159-161.

<sup>257</sup> Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, p 197.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, p 198.

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*capitular* (chapter hall). This was the main room where sessions and important activities took place. In 1834, this space was described in the following manner: “[A] magnificent hall, decorated with the king's portrait and that of the governor, as large as life. It is here the Cabildo, over which presides the captain-general, deliberates. Public balls are also given in this hall on extraordinary occasions, – such as the king or queen's birthday.”<sup>259</sup> It was such an important locale that it was considered the *salon de la ciudad* (the city's salon or hall).<sup>260</sup> The room and its arcaded loggia, as well as the tribune, have witnessed the formal presentation of the 1812 Constitution; the announcement of the successful vaccination of smallpox performed at the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción El Grande; dozens of receptions honoring the births, coronations and deaths of kings and queens, governors, princes and princesses; the establishment of the Real Audiencia de Puerto Rico; the first formal meeting of the Diputación Provincial de Puerto Rico; among many other relevant activities, including the blessing of the local and Spanish regiments that fought in the Spanish-American War.

The Calle de la Luna façade, constructed during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, reflects the growing needs of the municipality, as well as the period's architectural trends. In the first place, the skyscraper<sup>261</sup> architectural typology was used, emphasizing the height of the annex in a manner foreign to the district. The 19<sup>th</sup> century sober two floors arcaded cube transforms into a small six floors skyscraper on this thoroughfare. The impact of modern architecture in general and American culture specifically is evidenced both in the use of the skyscraper morphology and the Mediterranean Revival. A hodgepodge of aesthetic elements from all corners of the Mediterranean, aedicule, curved pediments, glazed terracotta decoration, and Classically-derived architectural orders are used to create a new, jewel-like exterior, symbolic of the modern and more affluent times brought forth by the new period experienced by the island politics ushered after 1898.

The Casa Alcaldía de San Juan is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, artistic and urban landscape of national significance. It is the only extant example of the *casa alcaldía* architectural typology that has served this function in the exact same place since the early years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the island and the United States. The Calle de San Francisco façade was designed by a notable designer, Architect Pedro García, the first city and state architect, inspired by European styles, such as the *Rundbogenstil*. The unique open loggia on the first level and *sala consistorial* or *salón de la ciudad* on the second one are two unique spaces of the district. With its two neighboring structures, the Real Intendencia and Diputación Provincial de Puerto Rico, the Casa Alcaldía forms a monumental group which includes three of the finest architectural examples in the city and the island. Their location and architectural uniqueness are intrinsic components of the historic urban landscape forming Old San Juan.

### **Iglesia de Santa Ana (Parcela 14, Block 54)**

Before the Iglesia Santa Ana at the Calle de Tetuán was erected, the site was occupied by a small hermitage dedicated to Santa Ana, the mother of the Virgin Mary. In 1597, the structure was mentioned by George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland<sup>262</sup> who described it as a hermitage. During the Middle Ages, it was a common Christian tradition to construct such artifacts on the outskirts of town, considered no man's land and thought to be in special need of spiritual protection. As mentioned, Old San Juan had several of these ecclesiastical buildings.

The present temple was constructed between the years 1847 and 1849. The design is an example of the 19<sup>th</sup> century interpretation of the urban temple, one that shares *medianeras* (walls) with a domestic edifice (on the

<sup>259</sup> George Flinter, *An account of the present state of the Island Puerto Rico*, p 43.

<sup>260</sup> The word *salon* is used in this context paralleling the French and Spanish interpretation of the term, as a place where free discussions could take place. In a sense, the space served as the “living room” or “parlor” of the city.

<sup>261</sup> The use of the word “skyscraper” refers to the construction structural type and also to the height of the building.

<sup>262</sup> Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico A Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, p 199.

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left) and the Convento de Santa Ana (on the right) as it obediently aligns with the street. As a result, there is no atrium and the interior opens directly to the sidewalk and street. No effort was made to establish a formal physical connection with the cloister located nextdoor. As mentioned, 19<sup>th</sup> century Spain was impacted by severe anti-clericalism currents. Since many interpreted liberalism as a Masonic influence, an organization the times associated with atheism, the construction of a temple was a way to assert the influence of Catholicism in a convulsed world while providing a presence in the urban fabric.

The façade composition includes an eclectic mixture of aesthetic elements from different stylistic sources and architectural revivals. The temple front façade with its commanding pediment goes back to Classically-inspired architecture, particularly Cinquecento and Baroque examples. One of the most distinct sources of inspiration was Sebastiano Serlio, who popularized the façade later used in Il Gesú by means of his architectural publications. In this most repeated composition, two bodies (an upper and lower one) relate to each other by means of consoles, the standard solution since Leonbattista Alberti used it in the Florentine façade of Santa Maria Novella during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. His was also the idea of creating a horizontal band in the middle that unites both bodies acting as a bilingual architectural element, reading as the cornice of the first level and the podium of the second one. This element, the consoles, and the triangular pediment add elegance to the traditional basilica façade organization. Both Serlio and Palladio used full-fledged temples fronts and engaged pilasters to add decorum to the arrangement. The use of engaged Tuscan pilasters on both levels in the Santa Ana façade also evidences these architectural precedents. All these elements create an interesting urban composition that, as per the Counter-Reformation and Baroque standards, invites the faithful to its interior.

The Romanesque and Gothic inspired central rose window may also be a reference to Alberti and his masterful use of roundels in the above-mentioned church. Curious tower-like elements, which depart from both Alberti and Serlio, crown the front façade. The other example built at this time, the Iglesia de las Carmelitas Calzadas, also rejected the basilica façade morphology in order to include two side towers that frame the central portal, a favorite motif in the Old San Juan at this time. One “archaism” included in the Iglesia de Santa Ana is the use of engaged Tuscan pilasters on both floors rather than the Colossal architectural order used in the Iglesia de las Carmelitas Calzadas.

The sophisticated single nave interior is roofed by means of an impressive barrel vault. Its architectural precedents can be found in Neo-Cinquecento or Neo-Palladian and Baroque Italian and Spanish examples. The same applies to the creative clerestory formed by thermal or Palladian windows that provides light to the interior and a decorative touch to the massive, breathtaking vault.

The Iglesia de Santa Ana is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, and artistic national significance. It is the only example in the Viejo San Juan of a 19<sup>th</sup> century urban church. The building has landscape significance for it embellishes the Calle de Tetuán by unexpectedly participating in the block façade composition providing a striking architectural variation. The fact that the temple stands where the old hermitage building was located adds another layer of significance. Although the Iglesia de Santa Ana is still used as a Catholic Church it is a unit of a holistic district, deriving its primary significance from its architectural importance, as per Criterion Consideration A.

### **Palacio de Santa Catalina (La Fortaleza) (Parcela 9, Block 41)**

The western terminus of the Calle de la Fortaleza is the Palacio de Santa Catalina, the home of the governor of Puerto Rico and his/her family, as well as the seat of the executive power in the island since time immemorial. As mentioned, the complex originated during the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the construction of the first defensive artifact of the historic district, a small, probably unfinished, *casa-torre* or *casa-fuerte*, known as the

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Fortaleza de Santa Catalina. The colloquial names of La Fortaleza (The Fortress) and La Fuerza (The Force) are intimately tied to this original structure constructed to defend the bay.

For centuries, many have stated: "According to La Fortaleza," "La Fortaleza proclaims," "La Fortaleza denies," and similar such phrases. This metonymy which derives from the substitution of the term "La Fortaleza," the name of a building, for the person of the governor and/or the executive power is iconic of the intimate relationship which exists between the island, Viejo San Juan, governor of Puerto Rico, and Palacio de Santa Catalina. Since the first governor, Juan Ponce de León, established a center of power in Old San Juan, albeit against his will, the enclave has acted as the most relevant stage for the culture of politics in the island. La Fortaleza summarizes this preeminence for it is an island-wide symbol, the center of the hurricane which defines political life in Puerto Rico.<sup>263</sup>

On 27 February 1534, Francisco Manuel de Lando wrote to the emperor regarding the defensive artifact being built: *La fortaleza, si toda se hiciera de cantería, fuera inmortal la obra: Para escusar gastos y dilación, yo y los oficiales hemos dispuesto se haga la pared que mira á la mar, de cantería, las otras de tapiería.*<sup>264</sup> Whether built of *tapiería* or *cantería* the location doomed it as a defensive artifact from the start for it could not provide adequate defense given its position regarding the entrance of the bay. In military terms, by the time it could actually collaborate in the defense of the bay and city, the enemy would have already entered the *puerto Rico*. In spite of this, during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the fortification was considered quite impressive:

Besides the Fort, which held out those few days, and is of some twice twelve score removed from the Towne [*sic*]: there is in the West and by the South side of the Towne a strong Castle, built of squared stone, commonly called the Kings house, named before Fortileza [*sic*], wherein was found a good store of Munitions. Betwixt this Castle, and the Fort Mora[*sic*], there is another peece [*sic*] of fortification of squared Stone and battlemented, is also coasteth [*sic*] along the sea, and may beate [*sic*] the harbor. So that all things considered, it was the mightie [*sic*] hand of God, which with the losse [*sic*] of two men onely [*sic*] . . . .<sup>265</sup>

With time, the idea to use the fortress as the main defense of the bay was abandoned although the structure continued to be utilized as the house of the *capitanes-generales* or governors.

*El palacio del Gobernador es una fortaleza antigua, que hay en un ángulo saliente de la muralla sobre la Caleta de San Juan. Dánla el nombre de real fortaleza de Santa Catalina; pero solo es un conjunto de viviendas fabricadas á expensas de la Real Hacienda, y de la arquitectura. Esto no obstante, tiene habitaciones cómodas, salones magníficos, un jardín bastante extenso, una Capilla aseada, y vistas alegres por todas partes. En el piso baxo [*sic*] está la Tesorería general, adonde concurren los Oficiales reales, y demás dependientes de Real Hacienda al despacho de estos ramos. Quizá este edificio sería muy á propósito para hospital de la tropa; pero non nostrum tantas.*<sup>266</sup>

<sup>263</sup> Arleen Pabón Charneco, "La ciudad del puerto Rico: Sections National Heritage Area Feasibility Study San Juan Historic Zone(MS: Tallahassee, 2008), p 170.

<sup>264</sup> Juan Bautista Muñoz, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo* (1793), "Extracto de varias cartas dirigidas al soberano de 1515 a 1555." Quoted in Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Biblioteca Histórica de Puerto Rico que contiene varios documentos de los siglos XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII*, p 302. Translation into English: "The fortress if made completely of masonry would last forever: To limit costs and time, the officials and I have decided the wall facing the sea be made of masonry and the other ones of *tapiería*."

<sup>265</sup> Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and others*, pp 71- 72.

<sup>266</sup> Antonio de Valladares de Sotomayor, *Historia geográfica, civil y política de la Isla de S Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico* (Madrid: Imprenta Antonio Espinosa, 1788), p 148. Translation into English: "The palace of the Governor is a very old fortress that exists in an angle of the wall over the Caleta de San Juan. Its name is the Royal Fortress of Santa Catalina; but it is only a group of houses constructed by sacrificing the Royal Treasury funds and architecture. In any case, it has comfortable rooms, a quite large garden, a well-kept Chapel, and beautiful views on all sides. In the lower floor is the General Treasury, where the royal officers go and also the rest of the employees of the Royal Treasury. Maybe this building could very well serve as a military hospital; but *non nostrum tantas*." The phrase *non nostrum tantas* comes from Virgil and means: 'Tis not for us to end such great disputes'."

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It is interesting to note that the author described the edifice as both historic and palatial. Later, during the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the following description was penned:

The Government-house, called the fortress of Santa Catalina, has stood for upwards of 200 years; and, as it was originally designed for strength and not for beauty, it has a most somber appearance, having more the aspect of a prison than a palace. It has, however, some spacious saloons, and is not destitute of convenience. The offices of the intendant and secretary, and the treasury, are within its walls. Many additions and improvements have been made to it by different governors. The east wing, which is the secretary's and registrar's office, was built in 1800, and contains a spacious suite of apartments, well adapted for the purposes intended. There is a chapel for the governor to hear mass underneath, communicating by a staircase with the interior of the palace. A piece of land enclosed for a garden is attached to it, but the north wind, to which it is exposed, destroys the trees and prevents vegetation. It has also stables, and a large cistern.<sup>267</sup>

During the governorship of Rafael de Arestegui y Vélez, Count de Miraflores (1844-1847), a new wing, perpendicular to the Calle de la Fortaleza, was added, designed by Santiago Cortijo. Its impressive Neo-Cinquecento façade can be considered one of the jewels in Puerto Rico's architectural crown. The elegant composition, also used in the Real Hacienda building, emulates the one utilized in Italian Cinquecento *palazzi* inspired by Donato Bramante's Palazzo Caprini in Rome (first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century). A pseudo-rusticated base organizes a podium which visually supports elegant Colossal Tuscan pilasters. The attic windows of the third floor relate to Cinquecento, Mannerist and Baroque solutions adopted by Michelangelo, Peruzzi and scores of other designers. The same organization was used in the Royal Palace in Madrid, one of many examples that favored the treatment. This building, credited to Italian architects, also sported a pseudo-rusticated podium and Colossal pilasters as decoration.<sup>268</sup> It is no coincidence that the Conde de Mirasol may have wished for his residence to emulate the royal palace in the capital.

The *piano nobile* (main floor) of La Fortaleza is emphasized by means of an imposing long balcony-cum-tribune with a beautiful metal balustrade that runs the whole width of façade. The center is marked by a pediment-like element that includes the following inscription:

*Reynando Da Ysabel 2a y siendo capitán general el conde de Mirasol  
hizo esta fachada el teniente coronel de ingenieros  
Dn Santiago Cortijo, año de 1845.*<sup>269</sup>

The stately palace is organized around an open courtyard, the western portion of which is formed by the two towers and curtain wall of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Fortaleza de Santa Catalina. An enfilade of luxurious rooms, decorated in an eclectic manner, reside behind the elegant 19<sup>th</sup> century Mirasol façade. Of special interest is the decoration of the Salón del Trono (Throne Room) where stucco allegorical figures of peace, justice, constancy, fidelity, fortitude, charity, vigilance and Mars and Minerva protecting the arts garland the walls and ceiling.

*La decoración del Salon [Salón del Trono] de pilastras jónicas, con cornisa arquitrabado, tallados sus miembros y plafón, por el que corre una greca de gusto romano relevado, para dejar en su centro y extremos [sic] tres florones para las arañas, es toda de blanco y oro alternativamente, siguiendo la época del renacimiento. . . .*

<sup>267</sup> George Flinter, *An account of the present state of the Island Puerto Rico*, p 42.

<sup>268</sup> Filippo Juvarra (1719–1720) impacted Spanish architecture thanks to his work at the Palacio Real de Madrid. Upon his death, Italians Sacchetti and Sabatini continued the work. Arleen Pabón Charneco, *La arquitectura patrimonial puertorriqueña y sus estilos*, p 128.

<sup>269</sup> Translation into English: "Lieutenant Coronel Don Santiago Cortijo made this façade in 1845 while Doña Ysabel II reigned and the Count of Mirasol was the captain general."



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*Cuatro medias columnas istriadas y equidistantes en los testeros, con grupo de bujía, sostienen candelabros de bronce antiguo, y tres suntuosas lámparas de a veinte luces en que compite el gusto con la rijidez [sic] del antiguo, pareciendo producto de Herculano y Pompeya . . .*<sup>270</sup>

Other important rooms are the Salón de los Espejos (Mirrors' Room) and the Salón Azul (Blue Room). It is common knowledge that once the Galerie des Glaces was created in the Versailles Palace during the 17<sup>th</sup> century the need was felt to include a similar space in every palatial establishment. At the Palacio de Santa Catalina, several large mirrors framed in gold wood occupy all four walls of the first space. The second room is characterized by the blue color used in the walls coverings and furnishings which respectfully try to match the huge portrait of Queen Isabel II hanging from one of the walls. The monarch gave the painting to the island and is depicted wearing a sky-blue court dress.

The main staircase leading to the enfilade of rooms is a unique example of the Neo-Arab in Old San Juan. Horseshoe arches collude with gesso *groteschi* of Mannerist extraction to create a fanciful first space in the luxurious spatial sequence that ends in the Throne Room. Contrary to what may be expected, the Neo-Arab was not a popular revival in Spain during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its use in this important spatial unit underscores the uniqueness of the palace's decoration.

### **Los Pabellones (Parcela 20, Block 41)**

The service area known as Los Pabellones (The Pavillions) is an interesting feature of the Palacio de Santa Catalina. Constructed by the Spaniards and still known by this name it continues to shelter the same administrative use. The word belies the informal character of the structure for, in Spanish, *pabellón* usually refers to a transitional building of sorts and also to structures that have a decorative purpose. In this particular case, Los Pabellones were used to provide additional space for administrative services.

There are other buildings in this block (Block 41) that presently serve the Palacio de Santa Catalina. These are: Parcela 1 (Calle de San Francisco corner of Calle de Clara Lair); Parcela 15 (Calle de la Fortaleza 63), Parcela 18 (Calle de la Fortaleza 57), Parcela 19 (Calle de la Fortaleza 55) and Parcela 21 (Calle Recinto Sur). The only one built for the purpose of serving the governor is Los Pabellones and the structure located in its front (Parcela 8, Block 41). All the others came to be part of the Palacio de Santa Catalina universe by appropriation. The presence of this precinct within the urban core should not be underestimated. The daily activities generated by the executive power add vibrancy and urban intensity of the area.

The Palacio de Santa Catalina is also surrounded by formal gardens, some of which may date to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when mention was first made of them. Parcela 10 includes a unique sunken oval garden. The beautiful spot enjoys wonderful views of the bay and the island proper.

The Palacio de Santa Catalina, the oldest executive mansion in continuous use in America, is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, artistic and urban landscape national and international significance. Listed in 1983 in the UNESCO World Heritage List, the complex embraces the 16<sup>th</sup> century Fortaleza de Santa Catalina, the first European defensive artifact constructed in the district. For almost five centuries it has sheltered the activities of the governor of the island. The Count of Mirasol wing is a unique example of Neo-

<sup>270</sup> *Gaceta del Gobierno de Puerto Rico*, Number 141, Thursday 23 November 1848, p 3. Quoted in: Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, p 228. Translation into English: "The Ionic pilaster and architrabeated cornice with its carved details a Greek key runs throughout and organizes the decoration of the Hall [Throne Room], leaving in its center and ends three flower-like motifs for the chandeliers, is all white and gold following the Renaissance ideals. . . ." "Four half fluted columns with equal spacing at the ends, with light bulbs, support candelabra made of antique bronze and three sumptuous lamps with twenty lights balance good taste with the decorum of ancient times as if it were a product of Herculaneum and Pompeii."

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Cinquecento architectural aesthetics. The impressive decoration of both the exterior and the interior of this wing is unique in Old San Juan, the island, and the United States. Although not as luxurious as the White House in Washington DC, this building has been considered a “palace” for centuries, being the only structure, with the possible exception of some buildings in Hawaii, which includes a Throne Room meant to represent real historic monarchs, even if they never visited the island. The building acts as the urban terminus of the Calle de la Fortaleza and is an icon of the executive branch in Puerto Rico. The impressive Neo-Arab staircase nestled in the Mirasol wing and the sumptuous enfilade of majestic rooms contributes to the significance of this building, one of the architectural jewels of the Viejo San Juan.

### **Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla (Parcela 1, Block 85)**

The Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla (Spanish Navy Arsenal of la Puntilla) is located in the area of La Puntilla de San Lázaro, originally a mangrove between the southern defensive perimeter and the bay. In spite of its natural condition, the place was considered neuralgic to the defense of the city since it was located next to the port and the *puntilla* (small point) that framed the entrance into the interior body of the bay. To the north of the complex the *muelle de las goletas* (schooners’ wharf) and *muelle de los barcos* (boats’ dock) were located. The Arsenal de la Marina complex was organized as a self-sufficient district that included personnel residences, huge barracks, as well as an impressive centralized chapel.

The first defensive structure on the site was a shack constructed around 1791 with the objective of reinforcing the southern flank of the islet. In spite of its transient nature, the building did serve its purpose during the defense of the city in 1797 against the British. In 1800, it was replaced by a masonry building. Construction of varied edifices continued during the 19<sup>th</sup> century allowing for Neo-Cinquecento, Neoclassical, Neo-Baroque, Neo-Arab and Second Empire Baroque influences to collide in a fascinating mosaic. In 1834, the complex was described in the following manner:

The arsenal is a large space of land enclosed with a stone wall, outside the walls near the wharf, with stores, offices, workshops for constructing vessels, quarters for the workmen and the troops, and a guard-house. A wharf has been constructed, and a machine for embarking and debarking cannon. A few years ago, the land on which this arsenal now stands was a mangrove swamp, which was highly injurious to the health of the city; for the land breeze, which sets in every evening and lasts till morning, blowing from the south, could not fail to waft to the town its deadly miasma, so prejudicial to human life in tropical climates. Were it not that it would weaken the defence of the place, by allowing an attacking enemy ground on which to construct batteries for assailing the fortress on the land side, great benefit would no doubt arise from cutting down the mangrove trees to the east of the town, and draining the swamp on which they grow.

The custom-house was built in 1826. It is most conveniently situated outside the walls, near the wharf. It is not large enough for a deposit of goods,<sup>271</sup> but a new one for this purpose is about to be erected near it, which, I trust, will fully meet the object intended.

The magnificent entrance portal, dated to the fourth decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is organized as a triumphal arch with *en ressault* Tuscan columns that support a finial similar in treatment to the one used at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin (1788 to 1791). Carl Gotthard Langhans designed this monumental gate to frame the Unter der Linden promenade leading to the palace where the Prussian kings lived. Rather than use the traditional triumphal arch semantics, as done in the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel and Arc de Triomphe de l’Etoile in Paris, Langhans united two architectural typologies from the Classical world. In this manner, the triumphal arch central opening was contrasted to the treatment of the upper portion in the manner of the Athenian Propylaeum. At the time the monument was erected, it was considered a novel design for it sought

<sup>271</sup> George Flinter, *An account of the present state of the Island Puerto Rico*, p 44.

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inspiration in Greek and not Roman architecture. Prussian military science and education were much admired in Spain. Therefore, it made sense for the military engineers to use German architectural precedents and design ideas. The entrance portal to the Cementerio de Santa María de Pazzis is another example of this morphology.

The San Juan example has metopes decorated with the signs of the Zodiac, instead of the more traditional Classical or Christian motifs. The rejection of the Church by certain sectors of the Spanish society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century accounts for this “pagan” incorporation.<sup>272</sup> The structure is an icon of the radicalization of the times and the desire to eschew tradition by favoring unorthodox decoration. On top of the stepped attic that resembles a triangular pediment *alla* Langhans, a sculpture serves as base for the flagpole. The inscription evokes the patrons and author of the ceremonial gateway.

*Reinando S M D Isabel II siendo capitán de esta isla el E S Conde de Mirasol  
i Comandante de este arsenal el capitán de fragata D Francisco Anrich  
se principió esta portada en 1847, y, se finalizó en 1848 mandando esta isla  
el E S Teniente General D Juan de la Pezuela  
bajo el proyecto i dirección del arquitecto D Manuel de Zayas.*<sup>273</sup>

While the guard house of the complex was initiated in 1818, structures continued to be erected until, by the 1880s, a maze of patios and edifices had been created. Manuel de Zayas was also in charge of the design of the chapel which was started in 1853, his second design for a church in the Viejo San Juan for he was the designer of the Iglesia de las Carmelitas Calzadas. The elegant temple front façade frames a magnificent centralized chapel roofed by a semispherical dome. Rather than use the westwork approach of the Iglesia de las Carmelitas Calzadas, de Zayas organized the main façade by means of a crisp tetrastyle temple front that includes elegant free-standing Tuscan columns.

During the week of October 16 to 23, 1898 the Arsenal de la Marina was the last official building over which the Spanish flag flew. All remaining royal forces lived in La Puntilla for several weeks until they finally departed for Spain. Its strategic location made possible for the complex to also be used by the American armed forces after this date. “During the first years of the American occupation this was the Naval Section. It now serves as office for the Insular Department of Labor and other governmental agencies.”<sup>274</sup> The complex is presently managed by the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture.

The Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla is considered a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, artistic and landscape national significance. It is the only example in Old San Juan of this architectural typology, an example of the varied military artifacts needed to defend the city and one of the earliest naval shipyards in the United States. The uniqueness of its architectural components is evident in the entrance portal, richly appointed arcades, magnificent groin-vaulted galleries, exotic Neo-Arab detailing and centralized church with its tetrastyle portico and handsome Tuscan columns. The building has landscape significance for it frames the port area.

### Teatro Alejandro Tapia y Rivera (Parcela 1, Block 58)

<sup>272</sup> There exist European medieval churches that include the signs of the Zodiac in their tympana. This decorative scheme, however, was not a common one in Spain.

<sup>273</sup> Translation into English: “The portal was started in 1847 following the design and direction of Architect D Manuel de Zayas while Her Majesty Isabel II reigned and the E S Conde de Mirasol was captain general and finished in 1848 Captain D Francisco Anrich was commander of this arsenal; it was finished in 1848 while Lieutenant General D Juan de la Pezuela was governor.”

<sup>274</sup> Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico A Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, p 181.

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The Teatro Alejandro Tapia y Rivera is located in the area where part of the eastern fortification wall of the city was once situated. Presently, the structure sits in an urban block of its own defined by the Calle de la Fortaleza, Calle de Tetuán, Calle del General Pershing and Calle de O'Donnell. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the edifice was constructed it was known as the Teatro Municipal (Municipal Theater) and also as the Coliseo Municipal (Municipal Coliseum). The present name of the building honors Alejandro Tapia y Rivera (1826-1882), a native *sanjuanero*. In addition to being a historian, he was a drama writer, the first one in the district and the island. It is most appropriate that the building should bear his name for he is also the author of *Mis memorias o San Juan como lo encontré y como lo dejo*, a personal memoir of his life in the Viejo San Juan that has allowed generations of Puerto Ricans to learn fascinating details about the urban core.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the theater became a preferred venue of social entertainment. Although, previously, only the very rich could enjoy it, during this period it became an activity available to all social classes.

*El teatro era una de las diversiones más populares de la sociedad del Ochocientos. En épocas anteriores se había intentado prohibir por parte de la jerarquía eclesiástica, que veía en él una distracción profana. Sin embargo, el teatro subsistió y a finales del siglo xviii acabó desligándose de la influencia eclesiástica y convirtiéndose en una actividad lúdica completamente laica. El teatro, que era una de esas diversiones que atraía a todas las capas de la sociedad, era un fiel reflejo de las diferencias económicas de la España del momento, pues mientras la nobleza y la aristocracia se ubicaban en palcos y plateas – normalmente adquiridos mediante abonos de temporada –, la incipiente clase media se situaba en el patio de butacas y las capas populares lo hacían en las sillas justo delante del escenario.*<sup>275</sup>

Before its construction, as previously mentioned, *sanjuaneros* who dared defy the Catholic Church's prohibition (theater activities were considered sinful) visited a small wooden structure located in the Barrio de Ballajá next to the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande. Described with scorn by Tapia y Rivera as a *teatrucho*, many tried for decades to construct a proper theater that would substitute this much-vilified locale.

*El teatro o coliseo de la Plaza de Santiago comenzó a hacerse por suscripción particular y nació del pensamiento de construirlo de la afición que iba desarrollándose en esta ciudad, cuyo Ayuntamiento las autoridades superiores quisieron llenar el vacío que hacía más notable para una sociedad que iba ya estimando la cultura, el deficiente y poco aceptado teatrucho de la calle del Hospital.*<sup>276</sup>

Since the government spent the money on other projects, including a seminary for the Catholic Church (Seminario Conciliar de San Ildefonso), the citizens collected funds in order to make possible its construction.<sup>277</sup> Erection of the present structure dates to the period between 1824 and 1830, although work continued during the 1850s and as late as 1868. The designer was José I Hernández, who followed the plans created by Engineer Antonio María Guitán *et al.* The name of royal engineer José Navarro y Herrera is also mentioned as a participant.

<sup>275</sup> Ivana Frasset, "Población y sociedad," *España Crisis imperial e independencia*, p 248. Translation into English: "The theater was one of the most popular sources of entertainment during the 1800s. Before the period, the ecclesiastical authorities had tried to prohibit it for they believed it was a profane distraction. Nevertheless, the theater prevailed and by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it rejected all ecclesiastical influence and became a non-religious activity. It was an entertainment that attracted all social classes, a faithful reflection of Spain's economic differences during the period since while the nobility and the aristocracy sat in the preferred seats and the balconies – usually, acquired for the season – the burgeoning middle class sat in the main seating area and the popular strata did it in chairs in front of the stage."

<sup>276</sup> *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo dejo*, p 90. Translation into English: "The theater or coliseum of the Plaza de Santiago was started thanks to a private subscription to collect funds, the result of the love for the theater that developed in the city and the Municipality that wished to fill the vacuum created by the deficient and unloved Calle del Hospital theater used by a society that was learning to appreciate culture."

<sup>277</sup> The building was first managed by the *Sociedad Conservadora del Teatro Español en Puerto Rico* (Conservative Society of the Spanish Theater in Puerto Rico).

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The original principal façade evidences influences of the *Rundbogenstil* favored in Europe at the time. Its use of an arcade in the first floor parallels the similar motif used in the Casa Alcaldía. The theater arcade, however, only opened to allow patrons in and out of the building in the manner favored in Europe. The Teatro Real (Royal Theater) in Madrid, for example, follows a similar arrangement, as does Havana's Coliseo or Teatro Principal. The Cuban building also includes pseudo-rustication and arches, as well as a pediment crowning the principal façade. In Old San Juan, the pseudo-rusticated arcade creates a visual podium for the Colossal Tuscan pairs of engaged pilasters. These elements seem to support a cornice which, in turn, upholds a triangular pediment in the middle of the composition. This façade facing the Plaza de Colón was the principal one until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when, for security reasons, it was moved to the east side of the building. It is interesting to note that in the descriptive memory mention is made that:

*En el edificio se guardarán los tres principios esenciales de comodidad, firmeza y hermosura, que requiere esta clase de obras, como se manifiesta en los planos, en los que se nota la aplicación que se ha hecho de las de arquitectura, relativamente a la distribución, ordenanza, disposición, simetría y ornato; y de las de física con referencia al sonido y rayos visuales.*<sup>278</sup>

The quote evidences Vitruvian<sup>279</sup> principles were used to theoretically justify the design. The iconic triad established by the Roman architect and theorist – *utilitas* (comodidad or usefulness), *firmitas* (firmeza or structural stability) and *venustas* (belleza or Beauty) – was presented by the Spanish engineers as the theoretical basis for the composition. The explanation also mentions Vitruvius' components of the *venustas* tenement: *distributio* (distribución or distribution), *ordinatio* (organización or organization), *dispositio* (disposición or disposition), *symmetria* (simetría or symmetry), and *décor* (decoración or decoration).

This type of design involvement by engineers was exactly the kind of usurpation the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando fought against. The organism was adamant about engineers assuming the role of architects. These novel (at the time) professionals were accused by the institution of many things, specifically of their lack of theoretical underpinning. Hence, the convoluted theoretical-like description which misses, whether out of ignorance or relevance to the designer, *eurythmia* (ritmo or rhythm), one of the Vitruvian components of *venustas*. In spite of the fanciful Vitruvian semantics, functional and aesthetics faults were found immediately. Tapia y Rivera was unwavering: the theater design was bad because it did not serve its function well and had deficient aesthetics.

*Se planeó hacer de tres pisos pero como lo dirigían ingenieros militares, no solo hicieron el edificio una casa fuerte, con gruesos murallones que se comían la mayor parte del local, sino que arrepentidos del plano que resultaba por lo alto como estorbo a los fuegos del vecino castillo de San Cristóbal, le suprimieron a última hora el 3º o 4º pisos, dejándolo como está; de lo que resultó bastante gacho. Este defecto se le ha quitado hoy rebajando y nivelando el suelo para ganar por lo bajo parte de lo que se había perdido por lo alto.*<sup>280</sup>

<sup>278</sup> "Proyecto para el establecimiento de un teatro permanente en la Capital de la Isla de Puerto Rico: 1824." Archivo General de Puerto Rico, Obras Públicas, Edificios Públicos, Legajo 164, Expediente 1, Caja 715. Translation into English: "In this building, the three essential principles of comfort, firmness and beauty that are required in all works were applied, as can be seen in the plans, which evidence the application that has been made of the architecture, as it pertains to the distribution, order, disposition, symmetry and decoration; and physics regarding sound and visual rays."

<sup>279</sup> Marcus Vitruvius Pollio was the author of the first preserved architectural treatise, *De Architectura Libri Decem*, dated to the year 27 BC.

<sup>280</sup> Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo dejo*, p 89. Translation into English: "Originally, it was meant to have three floors but since it was designed by military engineers not only did they make a fort house with wide walls that occupied most of the interior, they back tracked about the height which supposedly presented an obstacle to the defense of the Fortress of San Cristóbal and eliminated the third or fourth floors, leaving it as it is; which resulted in a lopsided building. This defect has been reduced presently excavating the floor in order to gain from under what was lost higher up."

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According to Tapia y Rivera, the awful design was due to the fact that the theater was designed by the royal engineers. Architecture is much more than the recitation of someone else's theoretical ideas, even if Vitruvius. By the same token, enjoyment of stage works can take place in a theater that does not follow academic architectural standards in a strict manner.

The opinion of an Englishman who visited the district in 1834 is interesting since the theater was a common architectural typology in his country. "A very handsome theatre has been built at the public expense. When finished, its architecture, painting, and ornaments, will cost upwards of 200,000 dollars; and it would most certainly do credit to a second rate city of Europe."<sup>281</sup> The backhanded compliment is unable to disguise how much effort and money was put into the building in order to make it a suitable venue. The first floor arrangement seated approximately 1,142 persons. In 1893, some thought it was too small a venue:[Es] *un teatrillo muy bonito, demasiado chico, quizás, para una población de 30,000 almas.*<sup>282</sup>

Following age-old Greek and Roman patterns (as well as British Renaissance ones), the two known theatrical venues of the district (Tapia y Rivera's *teatrillo* located in the Calle del Hospital [*sic*] and the Teatro Tapia) were erected on the outskirts of the city. The use of the elegant arcade in the central façade opened to the former Plaza de Santiago, by this time the second most important urban space in the district. In addition to its contribution to the organization of this public space, the building is located along the main exit route of the city. The building sheltered other uses. In 1899, an American visitor stressed this fact:

Facing this square [Plaza de Colón] is the grand theater, which is not only a handsome building, but has a seating capacity of nearly 5,000. The stage is wide and deep, and the settings admirable. Some of the most noted opera-singers have sung to crowded audiences in this house. Theatrical performances, however, have been, as a rule, far apart, the French vaudeville having, oftener than anything else, brought laughter from San Juan audiences. This great opera-house has served, too, as a public meeting-place, and all vital political questions have been discussed in its auditorium, by eloquent speakers who easily pass into frenzies of meaningless rhetoric, and arouse, to the boiling-point, the enthusiasm of this mercurial people for a few short hours.<sup>283</sup>

This admiring if somewhat prejudiced description evidences the building was used as a theater, opera house and also as a public arena or meeting hall for varied civic activities, including the ever-present political events.

The Teatro Tapia is still in use and is the only such venue in the entire enclave. It was the first formal theater erected in the Viejo San Juan and in Puerto Rico, which makes it the oldest one in the island. The building is considered contributing on the basis of Criterion Consideration E for it is partly reconstructed. Since it is still used as a theater, interventions have been necessary in order to enable it to continue its service to the public. In spite of this, the original bulk, façade elements and character-defining interior spaces have been preserved.<sup>284</sup> The building possesses urban and architectural national significance.

### Cuartel de Infantería de Ballajá (Parcela 1, Block 1)

Calle de Norzagaray, Calle de la Beneficencia, Calle de Morovi and Calle del Morro are the four streets that shape Block 1 where the grand Cuartel de Infantería de Ballajá is located. The block-size structure served as military barracks for the Spanish militia. A 1880s architectural plan also describes the building as the locale for the *Gobierno militar de la plaza* (Military Government of the island). From 1898 until 1939 it was used as US

<sup>281</sup> George Flinter, *An account of the present state of the Island Puerto Rico*, p 39.

<sup>282</sup> Salvador Puig y Valls, *Viaje a América, Estados Unidos, Exposición Universal de Chicago, México, Cuba y Puerto Rico*, p

248. Translation into English: "[It is] a beautiful little theater quite small, perhaps, for a population of 30,000 people."

<sup>283</sup> William Dinwiddie, *Puerto Rico Its Conditions and Possibilities* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1899), p 183.

<sup>284</sup> National Park Service, National Register Bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (1995).

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Infantry Barracks. In that year, it became the Rodriguez Army Hospital, a use it continued to have until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While serving as a hospital, it was connected by an elevated covered bridge to the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande. The Cuartel de Ballajá derives its name from the surrounding barrio, known as the Barrio de Ballajá.

The Cuartel de Ballajá is a unique building built for an exceptional use. In fact, it cost so much money Queen Isabel II pettily asked if it was being constructed in silver.<sup>285</sup> Its design opens a window of understanding unto many topics, including how the Real Cuerpo de Ingenieros (Royal Corps of Engineers) interpreted architecture. Most importantly, it is evidence that, as late as the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the military were considered a most relevant class of the city. Even today, the structure is the largest one in the historic district; the grand *cortile* alone is 2,422 square meters in area.

In spite of the fact that the defense of the empire depended on the soldiers, they were not always treated in an appropriate manner.<sup>286</sup> Mention has been made of the execrable conditions of the former Cuartel de San Francisco (originally constructed to house the Convento de San Francisco) during the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the troop lived in the structure. The Cuartel de Ballajá, one of the last public structures built by Spain in the island, was erected during the period from 1857 to 1864 to shelter 2,000 men,<sup>287</sup> providing them with well-built, ventilated, spacious and commodious military quarters. Since it served as headquarters for the Spanish military, its location makes sense for it was close to both the last line of defense, the Fortaleza de San Felipe del Morro, and the urban core. The main façade faces the Asilo de Beneficencia which, before the construction of the Cuartel de Ballajá, served as limited military quarters, among many other uses. There were secondary openings located in the east and south façades and a chapel in the first floor.

<sup>285</sup> Salvador Puig y Valls, *Viaje a América, Estados Unidos, Exposición Universal de Chicago, México, Cuba y Puerto Rico*, p

247.  
<sup>286</sup> George Flinter, who visited Old San Juan in 1834, noted that soldiers were treated by the Spanish military, or the British, for that matter, military in terrible fashion. "When the troops are disembarked, they should be lodged in airy and spacious quarters, made to get up early, and for the first three months they should not be employed on fatigue duties in the heat of the day, unless there is a great scarcity of men. The soldier should be kept continually employed to prevent vicious habits, so destructive to health and discipline. Exposure to the dews of night is an infallible cause of sickness to new comers. Each soldier should be provided with a cloth cloak, to be worn only when on night duty or in rainy weather; this will prevent the dew and rain from injuring them; the light linen jackets which the soldiers now wear in Puerto Rico being totally insufficient for this purpose. I have seen sentries, wet to the skin both from the rain and dew, return to the guard-room and remain all night in damp clothes, which is a never-failing cause of sickness. Formerly in the island of Jamaica, whose climate is much the same as that of this island, great numbers of British troops were annually carried off from fever and dysentery. Some seasons whole regiments were reduced to skeletons, and the government was put to a great expense in order to replace them. But since the period when every soldier was obliged to wear a flannel waistcoat next the skin, not one-third of the mortality prevails which happened before flannel was used by the troops; which is a proof that these diseases, so fatal to Europeans, generally originate in suppressed perspirations, or from remaining in damp clothes. I understand that the French troops which garrison the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe have recently adopted this salutary system to prevent disease. I am persuaded that if the Spanish government commanded this plan to be adopted in regiments serving within the tropics, by this simple method many useful lives would be saved to the nation, and the progress of many diseases would be arrested. Every soldier should be provided with three flannel waistcoats; and officers commanding corps should enforce orders that no soldier should ever neglect continually wearing them. There is another cause which contributes to increase the mortality among the troops in this climate. The soldiers when on duty, overpowered by heat, and not finding a breath of air in the guardrooms, spread their blankets under the open sky, thereby exposing themselves to the pernicious consequences of the dew: great numbers have lost their sight, and others have brought on incurable diseases by this thoughtless conduct. The want of good and well-ventilated barracks is severely felt in Puerto Rico; troops shut up in the casemates of the fortress, without any other ventilation than the door, must suffer great detriment to their health. It is therefore to be hoped that the government will turn its attention to an object of such paramount importance." George Flinter, *An account of the present state of the Island Puerto Rico*, p 61.

<sup>287</sup> While some claim the building could shelter 2,000 men, the original architectural plan states the building was designed for 1,000 men. The drawing "Proyecto de un Cuartel de Infantería para mil hombres con pavellones [sic] para oficiales en el Barrio de Ballajá de la Plaza de Puerto Rico" is dated 18 February 1854 and signed by Juan Manuel Lombera.

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The architectural plans are signed by Juan Manuel Lombera. There is evidence of a second design dated three years later and authored by Antonio María Guitián. A third design also exists executed by Timoteo Lubelza Martínez de San Martín and Mariano Bosch y Arroyo, engineers of the Real Cuerpo de Ingenieros. The present building generally follows Lubelza's ideas. José López Bago, *comandante de ingenieros* (engineers commander), directed the construction work.<sup>288</sup>

The exterior is peppered with Classicist motifs, such as the pairs of Colossal Tuscan engaged pilasters which frame the main entrance, a most appropriate choice, since this architectural order associated with the masculine gender inhabiting the building. The first floor of the main façade was interpreted as a pseudo-rusticated podium upon which the architectural orders rest. A stepped cornice creates the impression of a pediment and elegantly draws attention to where the flag would have been placed on top. The Neo-Cinquecento influence, derived from the Italian Cinquecento *palazzo* type, is evident in the way the first level is treated as a base by means of the pseudo-rustication and the presence of the architectural orders in the second and third levels. The use of Colossal engaged pilasters emphasize the relevance of this part of the building. In addition to the Classicist-inspired elements, the treatment of the central portal as an *avant-corps* of sorts reflects Second Empire Baroque influence.

Since the High Renaissance, contrast between pseudo-rustication (or full-fledged rustication) and the architectural orders was used as a symbol of the nature and culture relationship of cultural opposites. As explained, in this paradigm, the rusticated or pseudo-rusticated treatment is interpreted as *opera di natura* (work of nature). As such, the treatment is exclusive to the first floor, considered the least important one although it served as the base of the building. It is contrasted to the upper levels that depict *opera di mano* (work of hand or by humans), principally the architectural orders. In this manner, the favorite Western civilization Derridian cultural opposition of nature versus man (the iconic representative of culture) is represented architecturally. In the Cuartel de Ballajá façade nature, represented by the first floor, supports civilization, symbolized by the rest of the building, specifically the architectural orders.

This traditional interpretation acquires an added layer of significance given the fact that this was a military establishment. As mentioned, a phenomenological interpretation of historic cities recognizes that the systematization of war was essential to the consolidation of the idea and reality of an urban core like Old San Juan. War was the reason behind the district's formidable persona. The Cuartel de Ballajá summarizes this intention using an architectural allegory that the 19<sup>th</sup> century culture was cognizant with. The use of the Tuscan architectural order for the façade engaged pilasters and the free standing columns in the monumental staircase inside, is extremely appropriate for, as mentioned, the orders have been associated to the genders since time immemorial. Both the Doric and the Tuscan represent masculine values and pursuits while the Ionic is associated to feminine ones. Corinthian and Composite, in turn, are related to the collusion of both genders. A building that was part of the defense establishment and framed masculine military activities was best associated to the most virile of all the architectural orders.

Neo-Cinquecento influence is also evident in the magnificent *cortile* with its direct stylistic influence from Cinquecento architect and theorist Sebastiano Serlio, although it is possible to also find a creative connection to Donato Bramante, particularly his design for the Cortile del Belvedere in Rome (1506). Serlio was a favorite of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, therefore adherence to his ideas and principles was expected from the royal engineers.<sup>289</sup> Although invented during the Early Renaissance in Italy, the *cortile* is an

<sup>288</sup> María de los Ángeles Castro, *Arquitectura en San Juan de Puerto Rico (siglo XIX)*, p 268.

<sup>289</sup> Serlio's influential *I sette libri dell'architettura*, at times presented as part of his collected works, *Tutte l'opere d'architettura et prospetiva*, codified the use of the architectural orders and their symbolism and gender association. The treatise also contributed to the systematization of church façades. The publication was considered a basic educational instrument by the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando.



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adaptation of the Roman *atrium* and the medieval cloister. As mentioned, during the Quattrocento, surrounding elegant loggias were added to ennoble the space, an essential component of the main spatial sequence. At Ballajá, the *cortile* is centrally located and axially aligned with the commodious and elegant entrance *zaguán* that connects the open interior area to the exterior of the building. The patio is surrounded by three floors of loggias on all four sides creating a most imposing and dramatic composition. The spacious loggias and large open rooms provided the perfect architectural military stage in which to live and rest. The sophisticated play of arcuated elements and circular openings present in the arcades can best be described as exquisite. The rhythmic play created by the arches and the oculi along the loggias contrasts with the large semicircular arches and the smaller ones that nestle in the piers supporting them. Only the arches in the second floor are semicircular. The ones in the first floor are segmental as if to visually depict how this floor copes with the weight of the other two levels. The ones in the third floor are of the same type, although the curvature is not as low as the ones in the first floor. This splendid *cortile* defined by the four elegant and imposing arcaded sides is a unique example in the district, the island and the United States.

Of particular interest is the entrance *zaguán* and its rustic stone pavement paved with so-called *losa canaria* (Canary tiles), original to the building. The choice makes sense for it is possible animals entered the *cortile*. The monumental staircase is accessed from the west loggia and is framed by imposing Colossal Tuscan columns located in the first floor and the second floor landing, a treatment unique in the district and the island. Typical of the Royal Corps of Engineers' interpretation of architecture, the trabeated and arcuated structural systems collude. Arcuated elements, such as semicircular and segmental arches, as well as groin vaults, are used side by side with flat *azoteas de Cádiz*.<sup>290</sup>

As mentioned, the building served as military barracks until the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was used as such by both Spain and the United States. Afterwards, as a hospital, it was an active component of the US Army Fort Brooke Military Base. In 1940, it also was used as headquarters for the US 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion of Puerto Rico, a famed local division led by Major General Guy V Henry. The group was approved by Congress on 2 March 1899 and is famous for its splendid if tragic participation in the Korean War. The Cuartel de Ballajá is the only edifice that is directly associated to this unit, except for the monument that exists in Río Piedras, built during the 1960s.

The Cuartel de Ballajá is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural and artistic national significance. This splendid and majestic building with its huge cortile is a unique example of the creative work of the royal Spanish engineers in Puerto Rico. Its unique interpretation of European Cinquecento stylistic motifs, magnificent arcades, architectural iconography and play of volumes and spaces makes it a unique edifice within the local and national contexts. The fact that this elegant structure was a defensive artifact grants it an added layer of significance, contributing to a better understanding of the daily life of soldiers. A contributing urban landscape component of Old San Juan, it serves as entrance portal to the Campo del Morro, the open military area known historically as the Esplanade, and the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro, the last line of defense of the city and islet.

### **Palacio de la Intendencia (Parcela 5, Block 43)**

The Palacio de la Intendencia (Royal Treasury Palace, also known as Real Intendencia and Real Hacienda or Royal Treasury), one of the crown jewels of the district, currently houses the Puerto Rico Department of State. During the Spanish regime, the structure sheltered the Real Intendencia or Real Hacienda. The building is iconic of the 19<sup>th</sup> century cultural and political transformations experienced in the capital city and the island. As

<sup>290</sup> During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1990s), parts of the original roof were removed and substituted by a concrete slab with concrete beams.

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such, it is a three-dimensional representation of the granting to the island of the right to have its own *hacienda* (treasury).

One of *diputado* Power y Giralt accomplishments while in Spain was making possible a new administrative organization for the insular government by means of a division of the civil and military spheres. Starting 28 November 1811, the *intendente* was in charge of civil matters while military issues remained under the governor. As stated, the first *intendente* was Alejandro Ramírez de Villa-Urrutia.<sup>291</sup> The establishment of the Real Intendencia and Ramírez de Villa-Urrutia's tenure was a political and administrative watershed for Puerto Rico, for the new organism provided the island with the opportunity to have more direct control of its internal affairs.

The building is an icon of the 19<sup>th</sup> century interpretation of the relationship between government and the people and also of the links that tied Spain and the island. It is not a coincidence that it was termed the palace of the treasury. The edifice was located on the site of the former Spanish Cuartel de Artillería de San Carlos (St Charles Artillery Barracks), also used as jail, on the west of the Plaza de Armas. According to historic sources, this *presidio* (prison) could house the staggering amount of 800 prisoners and was located in a building designed by Santiago Cortijo (1841).<sup>292</sup> The structure was almost completely destroyed to create the present one.

The present building was started during the period between 1850 and 1852, although the architectural design is dated 1852 and attributed to Juan Manuel Lombera, *comandante de ingenieros* (engineers' commander), author of the first design for the Cuartel de Ballajá. The structure frames the Plaza del Armas on the west and organizes the southwest corner of Calle de San José and Calle de San Francisco intersection. Given its

<sup>291</sup> *Al autorizarse el establecimiento de la intendencia, el rey nombró a don Alejandro Ramírez para dirigir tan importante agencia gubernamental, hombre que se había distinguido por su fecunda labor en América Central, contribuyendo a su éxito su afebilidad en el trato y su habilidad administrativa. El nuevo oficial español fue el fundador de El Diario Económico de Puerto Rico, órgano de la intendencia . . . Luis M Díaz Soler, Historia de la esclavitud negra en Puerto Rico (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2000), p 104. Translation into English: "When authorization was granted to establish the *intendencia*, the king appointed Don Alejandro Ramírez to head this important government agency, a man who had distinguished himself in his fruitful work in Central America, contributing to his success his affable personality and administrative ability. The new Spanish official was the founder of the *El Diario Económico de Puerto Rico*, the publication of the *Intendencia*. . . ."*

<sup>292</sup> *"Ya en 1837 se había construido el Presidio, en el sitio que hoy ocupa en la Marina, y se había librado a la Plaza Principal de aquella repugnante morada. El hermoso edificio que hoy ocupa la Intendencia y oficinas de Hacienda tenía antes vetusto y desagradable aspecto." "Componíase únicamente de la planta baja y otro piso. El costado que da a la Plaza Principal no tenía puertas sino ventanas con rejas de hierro; el que da a la calle de San Francisco contaba tres puertas. Por la primera, hacia la Plaza, se entraba a la planta baja, que era depósito de curenas y enseres de artillería; por la del centro se subía al presidio y por la de más allá al cuartel de artillería, cuya brigada componíase de dos compañías, ambas completadas con lo que se llamó artilleros segundos que eran sacados de la gente de color y campesinos del país. También había una compañía titulada de Morenos Leales, aunque éstos eran del arma de infantería y cuyos oficiales procedían de la misma clase social, distinguidos por su conducta y honrados antecedentes, casi todos laboriosos artesanos." "Era en verdad bien triste espectáculo el de las ventanas de un presidio en el centro y plaza principal de la población. . . . De 1837 al 40 se reparó el edificio, ocupando toda la planta baja, de que solo se compuso entonces el batallón de artillería; todos veteranos ya; hasta que de 1850 a 52 se reconstruyó el edificio con dos altos, pasando a ocuparlo en 1853 las oficinas de Hacienda Pública, que antes estaban alojadas en el palacio de la Fortaleza, en los bajos." Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo dejo*, pp 93-94. Translation into English: "By 1837 the jail had been constructed in the place it is today in the sector of the Marina and the Plaza Principal had been cleaned of this repugnant locale. The beautiful building of the Intendencia and the Hacienda offices had an ugly and ruined aspect before." "It only had two floors. The side that faced the Plaza Principal had no doors but windows with iron bars; the one facing the Calle de San Francisco had three doors. Through the first one, closest to the Plaza, one entered the artillery deposit; through the central one could go up the jail; and the last one had access to the artillery barracks of the second class artillerymen who were colored [*sic*] people and farmers. There was also one company named Morenos Leales, although they belong to the infantry and its members came from the same social class, distinguished by their conduct and of honorable ancestry, almost all responsible artisans." "It was really a very sad spectacle to see the windows of a prison facing the principal plaza of a town. . . . From 1837 until 1849 the building was repaired and the artillery battalion occupied the whole first floor; all veterans; until the period from 1850 to 1852 the second floor was reconstructed and occupied in 1853 by the Public Treasury that used to be located in the first floor of La Fortaleza."*

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relevance and the spatial interaction with the public plaza, it was organized by means of very elegant balconettes and a long balcony-cum-tribune with a metal balustrade in the second floor. The main façade faces the Plaza de Armas rather than the Calle de San Francisco as the previous building. The balcony dignifies the building and, since it is treated as a tribune, its public role is visually established. The main façade of the Real Intendencia is crowned by a pediment-like motif with a historic inscription that reads:

*Reinando SMD Isabel II y siendo capitán general de los E E S S de San Juan  
D A Pezuela: el Marqués de España  
y Superintendente de R R E E Miguel López de Acevedo,  
se hizo esta obra dirigida por el Tte y Corl Comandante de Ingenieros D J M Lombera.<sup>293</sup>*

The architectural precedent of the building is the Italian High Renaissance *palazzo*, particularly the type that incorporated Donato Bramante's ideas, first expressed in the Roman Palazzo Caprini. Some of the borrowed architectural concepts are: (i) the use of a pseudo-rusticated podium to emphasize the relevance of the *piano nobile* and detract attention from the first, more pedestrian level; (ii) the organization of the façade into two levels independent of the number of floors (the podium and the rest) to underscore the variety and importance of functions; and (iii) the introduction of Colossal architectural orders – in this case Composite – to unite the portion resting on the podium. In addition to a functional delineation of the levels, the composition permits a varied contrast between the rusticity present in the pseudo-rustication and the elegance inherent to the architectural orders, creating a dramatic interplay between the *opera di mano* (human's work represented by the architectural orders) and the *opera di natura* (nature's work characterized by pseudo-rustication). As mentioned when interpreting both the Casa Alcaldía and the Cuartel de Ballajá, the Derridian cultural opposites nature/culture were thus represented architecturally, granting culture and civilization the protagonist role.

The Palacio de la Intendencia is one of two Old San Juan interpretations of the Italian High Renaissance architectural typology of the *palazzo*, now interpreted as the "palace for the people," according to 19<sup>th</sup> century new liberal ideas. The other example is the Palacio de Santa Catalina. These Neo-Cinquecento designs evidence the revival of High Renaissance motifs experienced in Europe and Spain at the time, principally used in public buildings. In both cases, the elegant façades have a direct impact upon the neighboring landscape. La Fortaleza acts as terminus of the Calle de la Fortaleza while the Real Intendencia organizes and beautifies the Plaza de Armas, the urban heart of the city. It is interesting to note that the same style was the chosen for the buildings representing the two spheres of island's government that existed at this time.

The use of the Colossal Composite order contrasted to the pseudo-rusticated base emphasizes the difference in terms of first floor and the rest of the building. While the Renaissance preoccupation with the conflict expressed by the *opera di mano* and *opera di natura* contrast may have taken second billing during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the different treatment seen in the two levels responds to the desire to symbolically define which floor was considered the most relevant one. This was also carried out in the neighboring Casa Alcaldía, although in a different manner (by means of the use of an arcaded porch). The use of engaged Composite pilasters, metal balustrades, elegant entablature and exuberant frieze decoration provides the Palacio de la Intendencia with an air of distinction matched only by the Palacio de Santa Catalina.

The Palacio de la Intendencia, Palacio de Santa Catalina and Casa Alcaldía façades represent two different 19<sup>th</sup> century interpretations of public buildings. The first two are more interested in the architectural drama created by the Colossal and exquisitely decorated engaged pilasters that are contrasted to the rusticity inherent to pseudo-rustication. The *Rundbogenstil* approach of the Casa Alcaldía, on the other hand,

<sup>293</sup> Translation into English: "This work, directed by the Lieutenant Colonel Commander of Engineers D J M Lombera, was constructed while Miguel López de Acevedo was Superintendent of the RR EE and D A Pezuela, Marquis of España, was Captain General of the EE SS of San Juan while Her Majesty Isabel II reigned."

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emphasizes the desire to invite people into its universe, a feeling the other two are not interested in achieving. The inclusion of the loggia on both floors of the Casa Alcaldía underscores the very public persona of the building.

As is the case with a majority of the monumental structures in the historic district, the building interior is organized around a huge *cortile* surrounded by arcaded loggias. The extraordinary metal curved staircase located inside was imported from Europe and is a rare example of this kind of architectural artifact. The use of such an element underscores Spanish architectural trends during the 19<sup>th</sup> century when historicist architecture incorporated modern materials and artifacts.

The Real Intendencia building is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, artistic and landscape national significance. The building housed the first treasury of the island and, as such, was interpreted as the architectural peer of the Palacio de Santa Catalina, housing the other power, the governorship. The fact that the building and its use were inspired by Enlightenment ideals grants it additional cultural significance. The intimate urban link the edifice has with the Plaza de Armas emphasizes its uniqueness in terms of both 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural and urban ideas. The arcades of the cortile and capitals of the engaged Colossal Corinthian pilasters are considered contributing elements. As per Criterion Consideration E, even though they are reconstructed elements (1980s), they have been accurately executed in a suitable environment and are presented in a dignified manner, as part of a restoration master plan. There is no other building or structure with the same associated significance as the Palacio de la Intendencia that has survived.<sup>294</sup>

### **Parque de Artillería del Ejército (Parcela 1, Block 6)**

The Parque de Artillería del Ejército (Spanish Army Artillery Training School) was a military facility where machinery and ammunitions for the artillery corps were kept until needed for either practice or defense. The building is located between the two main fortresses: the Castillo de San Cristóbal and Castillo de San Felipe del Morro. From this position, on the corner of the present day Calle de Norzagaray and Calle de la Cruz, it could easily and efficiently serve both establishments. At the time of its construction, the first street did not exist. Therefore, the north side of the building faced the *paseo de ronda* (pomoerium).

The edifice is similar to the Cuartel de Milicias (Militia Barracks), later Maestranza de Artillería, in Havana, a structure dated to the year 1787 that honored Saint Telmo,<sup>295</sup> in that they both disregard regularity in the floor plans. This type of building was one of several military architectural typologies needed by cores such as Old San Juan and Havana. Regularity and academic interpretation were probably not considered essential due to their basic function as storage areas for military material and ammunitions. As a result, these large structures lacked the traditional square or rectangular cortile although the wings enclosed an irregular area that served as an open patio.<sup>296</sup> The two short and uneven wings extend the irregular parallelogram and create a small patio that also organizes the principal entrance which seems to have faced Calle de la Cruz.

Just in front of the north façade of the Parque de Artillería was the Batería de Santa Bárbara (Battery of Saint Barbara), one of the oldest defenses in the city. Located at this high vantage point, it visually dominated the northern cliffs facing the Atlantic Ocean at a time when the city was not yet defended by a circuit of walls. The sector was also charged with special symbolism. Tapia y Rivera recounted that before he was born in 1826

<sup>294</sup> National Park Service, National Register Bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

<sup>295</sup> Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX*.

<sup>296</sup> Luis Alvarado, *Impresiones sobre el bombardeo de Puerto Rico* (Memorial de Artillería, Serie IV, Tomo XII, 1899). Alvarado was *comandante* (commander) of the Parque de Artillería in 1898.

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there was a hermitage known as the Ermita de Santa Bárbara<sup>297</sup> next to the Parque de Artillería. As mentioned, during the early centuries of the existence of the city, several hermitages were constructed on what, at the time, were the outskirts of the core. Two other examples are the Ermita de San Sebastián and the Ermita de Santa Ana, substituted by a gunpowder magazine and a church, respectively, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Centuries after the creation of the Ermita de Santa Bárbara, a Spaniard living in San Juan named Perico planted a metal cross aligned to its entrance. *Desapareció la ermita y quedó la cruz por muchos años, denominándose aquel lugar El Alto de Santa Bárbara.*<sup>298</sup> The cross symbolism was not lost for the Calle de la Cruz (Street of the Cross) bears the name in its honor to this day.

The hermitage, erected in 1529 and closed during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, served as gunpowder magazine for some time.<sup>299</sup> In 1846, the so-called Almacén de Pertrechos de Santa Bárbara (Santa Bárbara Provisions Storage) was used to also shelter troops. At this time five windows were opened on the north side and two on the south side.<sup>300</sup> It is possible the name Almacén de Pertrechos de Santa Bárbara refers to the Parque de Artillería.

The Parque de Artillería played an important role in the defense of the Viejo San Juan during Admiral Sampson's attack in 1898.<sup>301</sup> Equipment was kept here, as well as some of the troops that successfully defended the city. After 1898, the Parque de Artillería housed the US Army Quartermaster until the historic structure was returned to the government of Puerto Rico. The building presently shelters the Asilo de la Providencia. Relatively unknown and humble looking in spite of its size, the building is an architectural coffer, an example of the many architectural typologies needed to successfully defend the city.

The Parque de Artillería del Ejército is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural and artistic national significance. Its irregular morphology, severe architectural style and location speak of its unique function. It is the only example of this military typology that has been preserved in Old San Juan and the island.

### **Casa de la Caridad y Oficios de San Ildefonso (Parcela 1, Block 20)**

The building that housed the Casa de la Caridad y Oficios de San Ildefonso (St Ildephonse Charity and Trade Learning Asytum), also known as the Colegio de San Ildefonso, is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of the Calle de San Justo and the Calle de San Sebastián. The cultural and social relevance of this structure is commemorated by means of a plaque on its principal façade describing this historic function.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a direct result of both the Enlightenment and the 1812 Constitution, a new social awareness came into existence. It particularly impacted urban development and the architecture of the district because the *obras de caridad* (charity works) needed buildings to shelter their work. During this period, Spain suffered wave after wave of anticlericalism. As a result, the Church's most conspicuous instruments were

<sup>297</sup> The ubiquitous Saint Barbara was the patron saint of artillerymen and military engineers for she was associated to lightening and, thus, fire. She was also invoked against thunder and gunpowder accidents and associated to mathematics, a much needed military art. Since her symbol is a tower, she was the patron saint of all activities related to the defense of cities. Santa Bárbara is the patron saint of the US Navy. Shangó, the god of thunder of the Yoruba religion, is at times disguised as St Barbara in *santería* rites. To this day, offerings are made to the historic figures of Santa Bárbara scattered throughout the Old San Juan defenses.

<sup>298</sup> Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo dejo*, p 47. Translation into English: "The hermitage disappeared and the cross remained in place for many years, the place came to be known as the Alto de Santa Bárbara."

<sup>299</sup> María de los Ángeles Castro, *Arquitectura en San Juan de Puerto Rico (siglo XIX)*, p 89.

<sup>300</sup> A historic document establishes that, in the year 1856, a wall was constructed in front of the property known as the Cuartel de Santa Bárbara in order to: [D]ejar completamente expedito el paso al mercado nuevo. Translation into English: "[L]eave open the area around the new market." José Marull, Personal communication, 2 February 2011, AGMM, Reference code 5629.4.

<sup>301</sup> Luis Alvarado, *Impresiones sobre el bombardeo de Puerto Rico* clearly details the service provided by the building at this time.

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either abolished (the Inquisition was suppressed and later prohibited) or proscribed. The Jesuits were expelled from the kingdom, many convents and churches were closed, including the Convento de Santo Domingo and the Convento de San Francisco in Old San Juan, and religious property was confiscated by the state.

When, during the fourth decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Venerable Jerónimo Mariano Usera y Alarcón's religious order was suppressed in Spain, he followed the route of many religious and became a lay teacher. For several years, he was a professor of Latin and Greek at the Universidad Central de Madrid. After the social and political unrest settled down and the Church experienced a comeback, he was appointed Dean of the Catedral de San Juan Bautista in 1853.<sup>302</sup> Usera y Alarcón was quick to understand the many social problems existing in Old San Juan and Puerto Rico. His admirable work initiated with the creation of rural missions designed to help the slave population. Padre Usera also founded the Hermanas del Amor de Dios (Love of God Sisters). He is considered one of the earliest 19<sup>th</sup> century social educators.

In 1857, he founded the Casa de Caridad y Oficios de San Ildefonso, a center where poor children of both sexes could be educated in religion, reading, writing and arithmetic. As per the ideas of the time, vocational instruction was also available so that they could learn a trade. A year later, he founded the Asociación de Damas de San Ildefonso (San Ildefonso Ladies Association), a group of wealthy local women interested in helping the poor. Groups like these became the characteristic manner for charity to be dispensed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although still a far cry from the understanding and acceptance that it was the government's responsibility to care for the downtrodden, it was a dramatic change from the idea that only the Church was in charge of charity, and even so in a strictly limited manner, given the fact that, for millennia, many believed poverty was a punishment from God for sins.<sup>303</sup> Philosophers like Usera y Alarcón were instrumental in the transformation that took place around this time in the highest social echelons as both the government and society came to realize they were responsible for the caring of the forsaken. The tandem, whether they wanted it or not, was part of Rousseau's social contract based on what was moral, rather than on what was "legal" or "traditional." This responsibility included the education of the masses.

On 23 March 1858, Usera y Alarcón's charity house was inaugurated and dedicated to San Ildefonso.<sup>304</sup> As was the case with the neighboring establishment, the Asilo de Párvulos, the institution was dedicated to the education of marginalized children. Historic documents make no mention if children had to pay for the services offered as was the case in the Asilo de Párvulos. Given the fact that it was considered a *casa de la caridad* (charity house) as well as a *casa de oficios* (a place where trades could be learn) it is possible there was no charge. It is interesting to note that, according to Tapia y Rivera: *Lo que hoy es el Colegio de San Ildefonso, establecimiento para huérfanos debido a la iniciativa de mi coetáneo don Julio Vizcarrondo, a quien se deben otros pensamientos benéficos, fue en mi niñez carnicería municipal.*<sup>305</sup> During the period that the slaughterhouse was located here the site was considered the outskirts of town.<sup>306</sup>

<sup>302</sup> Queen Isabel II appointed him to this position which he occupied from 3 December 1853. In 1855, Father Usera caught yellow fever and was ordered back to Spain to recover. While there he enlisted six Jesuits for his seminary in Puerto Rico and also worked in the organization of the district's elementary and secondary schools.

<sup>303</sup> By means of his 1843 book, *Demonstration of the Truth of the Roman Catholic Christian Faith*, and his doctoral thesis in theology, Usera y Alarcón advocated the government's responsibility to adhere to morality. Decrees like constitutions were needed, he argued, but all laws needed to be the result of Catholic morality.

<sup>304</sup> A respected figure of the Spanish Catholic Church, San Ildefonso (St Ildephonse) was bishop of Toledo during the 7<sup>th</sup> century. He is known for his book on the Virgin Mary.

<sup>305</sup> Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo dejó y como lo encontré*, p 51. Translation into English: "In the building that presently shelters the Colegio de San Ildefonso, an orphan asylum established thanks to the interest of my peer Julio Vizcarrondo, author of other charitable acts, the municipal meat market was located during my youth." It is important to note that Tapia y Rivera credits Julio Vizcarrondo with the initiative of creating the Casa de la Caridad y Oficios de San Ildefonso and makes no mention of Father Usera y Alarcón. A similar situation occurs regarding the Asilo de Beneficencia. While some point out to the great work carried out by the nuns, Dr Goenaga, the medical director of the center, accused them of everything that was wrong with the

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The building is similar to a city *palacete* in terms of its exterior treatment. The use of windows instead of doors and tall narrow openings, however, is not common for palatial houses. Each opening is framed with a segmental arch while the main entrance, located facing the Calle de San Justo, receives a special treatment by means of a wide encadrement. The decorous treatment is finished by a wide cornice that makes a 90 degree angle in order to encompass both façades. A pilaster-like element frames the corner of the building and seems to provide support to the cornice. Of interest too is the use of a metal cannon-like artifact to protect the building's corner. People, carriages and animals continuously posed problems for the relatively delicate construction materials particularly in heavily transited street corners that had no sidewalks. The use of this element evidences the reality of urban daily life at a time when specific areas for carriages (roads) and people (sidewalk) were still very fluid in interpretation.

The Casa de la Caridad y Oficios de San Ildefonso is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural and artistic national significance. With the Asilo de Párulos, the building is a physical reminder of the philosophical and educational ideas fostered during the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Enlightenment. Created to serve the "Others," the edifice evidences changing social, political and religious currents. It is the only extant architectural example directly related to the distinguished Venerable Jerónimo Mariano Usera y Alarcón.

### Asilo de Párulos (Parcela 8, Block 7)

The Asilo de Párulos<sup>307</sup> is an interesting example of a building that faces two streets, the Calle de Norzagaray and Calle de San Sebastián, although, at the time the structure was built, the first road did not yet exist in a formal manner. The north façade, therefore, faced the *paseo de ronda* (pomoerium), an open space that probably allowed for several other functions including cooking facilities. Plans for the actual building are dated 1861, the same year Bishop Pablo Benigno Carrión bought two houses located on Calle de San Sebastián to shelter the institution.<sup>308</sup> This northernmost area of town was close to the sectors where the pupils would live. Until the time it was closed (2010-2011), it was the oldest Catholic school in the district and island. The educational center was placed under the order of the *Hermanas de la Caridad* (Charity Sisters) after construction was finished in 1865.<sup>309</sup>

In Spanish the word *párulo* has two meanings: a small child of a very tender age and something that is humble. The center was the result of 19<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment concerns related to the "Others," in this case the children of poor families, as well as abandoned ones. This last situation is acknowledged in the historic name Asilo de Párulos (Infants Asylum). In spite that the 19<sup>th</sup> century attendees had to pay one *peso* a month, it was an inexpensive way to receive an education and some food during the day. The building is iconic of a dramatic social transformation which took place at this time in both Spain and the island. In spite of the fact that during the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century ninety percent (90%) of the population in the Spanish peninsula could not read or write,<sup>310</sup> many opposed the education of the so-called lower classes. A Liberal *diputado* who later became minister, Nicolás Garelli, went so far as to claim: *El proyecto de crear un pueblo de*

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establishment in his 1906 report to the federal authorities. While Tapia y Rivera does not accuse Father Usera y Alarcón of any wrongdoing, it is interesting to read his silence on the subject. Tapia y Rivera describes the establishment as an orphanage.

<sup>306</sup> At a later time, reflecting hygiene ideas proposed by the Enlightenment, the venue was moved outside the walls to the northern area known today as *La Perla*.

<sup>307</sup> The institution was also known as both the Colegio de Párulos and Colegio de Párulos del Corazón de María.

<sup>308</sup> María de los Ángeles Castro, *Arquitectura en San Juan de Puerto Rico (siglo XIX)*, p 364.

<sup>309</sup> "San Juan: Colegio de Párulos," *Enciclopedia de Puerto Rico* (August 2010), Digital source: <http://www.encyclopediapr.org>.

<sup>310</sup> Buenaventura Criado Delgado, *Historia de la educación en España y América La educación en la España contemporánea (1789-1975)* (Madrid: Ediciones Morata SM Fundación Santa María, 1994), Volume 3, pp 199-202.

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*filósofos es el proyecto de un loco.*<sup>311</sup> In any case, the creation of such a luxurious (for the context) building to house the education of the less privileged was a momentous step for the district.

The principal façade faces the Calle de San Sebastián since, as mentioned, the Calle de Norzagaray did not exist formally at this time. The main and back entryways, however, connect by means of a wide *zaguán*. On both sides of this space the different rooms were located. The building's main façade was originally quite simple: four openings crowned by "floating lintels" anchored by a slightly higher opening located at the center. A triangular pediment, framed by a balustrade that read as a wide cornice crowned the composition. This Classicist element provides a stylish touch granting the façade an air of dignity and elegance. At a later time, the building expanded and some transformations were needed to unite the old section and the new addition. All openings were converted to tall arcuated windows framed with quoins. The central opening became the lowest one although, since it is crowned by the elegant pediment, it clearly stands out as the most relevant one. The façade transformations evidence the growth of the institution as well as the new aesthetic influences of the period. The tympanum of the pediment exhibits a highly decorated heart, symbolic of the Virgin Mary, the order's patroness. Although the imposing triangular arrangement evidences Classicist influences, the segmental arches and dramatic pseudo-rustication around all windows confirm the impact of the Second Empire Baroque, a style that favored applied decoration to achieve architectural drama. In this design, the goal is obtained via de pseudo-rustication and the organization of the original façade into bays that read as pavilions.

It is known that, when a design for the façade was presented by Rafael Clavijo to the Sección de Arquitectura of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid, the body refused to review it claiming the design lacked stylistic correctness.<sup>312</sup> In spite of this finding, the Sección finally: [A]cordó aprobarles [los planos] *atendiendo que su escasa importancia que excusaba la falta de arte que en el se advertía y que hacia innecesario su misma índole.*<sup>313</sup> As mentioned, the Real Academia was charged with the revision and approval/denial of all construction projects, whether in Spain or the colonies. Seated in its aloft perch in Madrid's famous Calle de Alcalá, steeped in architectural academicism and formalism, it promoted "correctness" and "decorum" as the ultimate goals of every building. Non-academic innovation was unacceptable, as was commenting designs created by non-architects.

The Colegio de Párvulos is a contributing property of Old San Juan. The building possesses urban, architectural, artistic, and landscape national significance. Its use of Classically-inspired and Second Empire Baroque motifs collide to create a splendid design that adds decorum to the educational processes of the less fortunate. The edifice is relevant as a symbol of the transformations education underwent during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and how Enlightenment-inspired interest in the "Others" found a three-dimensional expression by means of architecture. The presence of the building along the Calle de San Sebastián proclaims its function to serve the "Others" given the fact that, at that time, that sector of the city was populated by the social echelons in need of such services. It is also the only preserved example of the architectural typology of primary school

<sup>311</sup> Juan Francisco Fuentes, "La cultura," *España Crisis imperial e independencia*, pp 305-306. Translation into English: "The project to create a country of philosophers is the project of a crazy man."

<sup>312</sup> Arleen Pabón Charneco, *La arquitectura puertorriqueña y sus estilos*, pp 34; 150-151.

<sup>313</sup> In the historic documents, mention is made that Clavijo was the creator of the manuscript which included *copias de Manuel F Castro*. Translation into English: "[The Sección de Arquitectura] agreed to approve the architectural plans in consideration of their lack of relevance that excused the absence of artistic merit and made unnecessary any further revision." Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Signatura: 29-5/2. Ultramar. "La Dirección General de Instrucción pública remite a informe el proyecto de Casa asilo de Párvulos para Puerto Rico, formado por Don Rafael Clavijo." "Informe de la Sección de Arquitectura de la Academia," 28 de mayo de 1862. A drawing of this façade (Archivo General de Puerto Rico, Fondo: Obras Públicas; Serie: Obras Municipales; Legajo 62(1); Expediente 1-7; Caja 325, San Juan) appears in Aníbal Sepúlveda, *San Juan Historia Ilustrada de su desarrollo urbano, 1508-1898*, pág 268.



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pre-1898. Although the Colegio de Párvulos belongs to the Catholic Church it is a unit of a holistic historic district, deriving its primary significance from its architectural importance, as per Criterion Consideration A.

### **Manicomio (Casa de Locos) (Parcela 2B, Block 15)**

The architectural typology of the insane asylum – the *manicomio* or *casa de los locos* – as was also the case with the *casas de beneficencias* and assorted asylums, was a 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural typology inspired by the spirit of the Enlightenment. As mentioned, a transformation took place at this time when the Spanish government realized the “Others” were the moral and legal responsibility of the state. According to experts, the *manicomio* – as a building type – is the result of this new understanding and also of the birth of the science of psychiatry. In other words, a liberal, new understanding of society’s responsibility coupled to new scientific knowledge colluded to create the architectural type. *De hecho, se ha argumentado que la vinculación entre el manicomio y la psiquiatría es un claro caso de identificación entre espacio y saber científico.*<sup>314</sup> During the reign of Carlos III (1716-1788), the writings of Tomás Anzano and Pedro Rodríguez had profound social and political impact in Spain, particularly their interpretation that such centers needed to educate all sectors of society.<sup>315</sup> In fact, some came to believe that: *Tienen los hospicios íntima relación con la enseñanza.*<sup>316</sup> The *Ley de Beneficencia de 1849* (Beneficence Law of 1849) established in its first Article: *Los establecimientos de beneficencia son públicos.* Article 4 emphasized the government’s responsibility by declaring that: *La dirección de la beneficencia corresponde al Gobierno.*<sup>317</sup>

As was the case in most places around the globe, for many centuries Old San Juan treated its mentally sick with little interest or knowledge. Known as the *enfermos del alma* (the sick of the soul),<sup>318</sup> for eons they were on their own, completely abandoned. If they had families, they could receive some care. If not, they just wandered around the city. When concern was felt, it was not unusual to place them in existing buildings, from fortresses to military barracks. The present day Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid is one such example. This was also the case in the district: the insane were placed in the Asilo de Beneficencia that also housed abandoned children, destitute grownups, those accused of incest, and soldiers.

By the 1860s, it was obvious that the Casa de Beneficencia was dangerously overcrowded. As a result: “In 1861, a two-story masonry house was built contiguous to the home [Casa de Beneficencia], to the east, for the male insane.”<sup>319</sup> It is interesting to note that the historic architectural drawings clearly state that the wings were to be used to separate the two genders while the central one was to shelter a striking centralized chapel crowned with an elegant semispherical dome that balances the sophisticated tetrastyle temple front façade. In this central wing *talleres* (workshops) where the inmates worked were also located. The architectural project dates to the 1860 and by 1863, although not finished, the building was used to temporarily house soldiers. The chapel and its magnificent temple front façade were constructed between 1883 and 1886 following the design of Antonio María Guitián and under the supervision of José I Hernández, credited as *maestro de obras* (master

<sup>314</sup> Olga Villasante, “El ostracismo de los locos,” *Bostezo Digital* (23 November 2009), <http://revistabostezo.com>. Translation into English: “In fact, some argue that the relationship between psychiatry and the asylum is a clear example of identification between space and scientific knowledge.”

<sup>315</sup> Antonio Ferrer del Río, *Historia del reinado de Carlos III en España* (Madrid: Imprenta de los Señores Matute y Compagni, 1856).

<sup>316</sup> Pedro Rodríguez Campomanes, *Discurso sobre la educación popular de los artesanos y su fomento*. Digital source: <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com>. Translation into English: “All hospices have an intimate relationship with education.”

<sup>317</sup> *Ley General de Beneficencia de 20 de junio de 1849*, Ministerio de la Gobernación del Reino, Spain. Translation into English: “The *beneficencia* asylums are public.” “The administration of the *beneficencia* is the responsibility of the government.”

<sup>318</sup> Olga Villasante, “El ostracismo de los locos.”

<sup>319</sup> Francisco R de Goenaga, *Memoria Anual del Manicomio de San Juan Puerto Rico – 1906/Annual Report of the Insane Asylum of San Juan Porto Rico – 1906*, p 45.

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builder). The architectural orders, temple front façade and elegant de Villanueva disposition of the E-floor plan were elements that colluded to create the impression of a dignified and decorous establishment.

As mentioned, the composition of the E-shaped floor plant owes much to Neoclassical Spanish modes inspired in the work of de Villanueva. The stylish pediment supported by Colossal Ionic columns, the rigid triangular pediment and the delicate curve of the volutes and dome which roofs the centralized chapel behind the tetrastyle portal creates a magnificently balanced composition that also owes much, in terms of precedents, to Schinkel, von Klenze and other German architects influenced by Romantic Classicism expressions. Decorative cartouches and pseudo-rustication on the side wings provide secondary vertical axes that balance the principal one. Use of the impressive Ionic columns in this façade, silently spoke of the building's function:

*Los órdenes arquitectónicos, cargados del simbolismo antropomórfico antes explicado, civilizaban y humanizaban la tarea constructiva y, por tal razón, eran parte integral del esfuerzo de hacer arquitectura que emulaba el pasado clásico. Este simbolismo continuó aceptándose por siglos. Por ejemplo, el orden arquitectónico utilizado en el frontón del portal de entrada al Castillo de San Felipe de El Morro en San Juan es el toscano, asociado con la virilidad, tal como correspondía a un establecimiento de naturaleza bélica. A unos metros de distancia, en la portada del Asilo de Locos, se utilizó el orden jónico. Al momento de diseñarse este edificio durante el siglo XIX, el género femenino (representado por el jónico) era asociado con todo tipo de comportamientos irracionales y lunáticos, similares al de los enfermos mentales que el edificio albergaba.<sup>320</sup>*

As known, the architectural orders have been considered anthropomorphic elements since time immemorial, architectural symbols used to “humanize” architecture. The Renaissance codified them and, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Ionic represented the feminine gender. Given the fact that, for eons, irrational behavior was attributed to women the choice of the Ionic order seems quite “logical” for an insane asylum.

This unique building was constructed almost perpendicular to the Casa de Beneficencia, facing the defensive Campo del Morro or Esplanade. The open sides of the two patios forming the “E” are located along the main façade, a departure from the traditional use of this morphology in the district and Spain. In all other local examples the patios of the de Villanueva “E” floor plan face the back side of the building. It is possible that – in keeping with 19<sup>th</sup> centuries perceptions of the insane – watching them behind the iron *rejas* (grills) that closed the patios may have been some sort of social activity. This was not the only example of such architectural treatment of the “Others” in the historic district. The Paseo de La Princesa was laid along the main façade of the jail (Presidio de la Princesa) in the southern part of town for the same reason.

It is interesting to point out that, while the central wing of the Asilo de Beneficencia sheltered the main entrance hall and administrative area, a chapel occupies this central position at the Manicomio. At the time this last project was built, the liberal times had ended and Spain, having rejected the 1812 Constitution, went back to an autocratic monarchical regime. As a result, the power of the Catholic Church came back in full force. Buildings are silent books from which one can read multiple stories. The Manicomio temple front façade with its centralized Renaissance and Baroque-inspired chapel is a reflection of an architectural “return to order” experienced in Spain and Old San Juan. In 1879, the following description was written about the establishment:

<sup>320</sup> Arleen Pabón Charneco, *La arquitectura patrimonial puertorriqueña y sus estilos*, p 100. Translation into English: “The architectural orders, charged with anthropomorphic symbolism, civilized and humanized construction and, for these reasons, were an integral part of the effort to create architecture that emulated the Classical past. This symbolism was accepted for centuries. For example, the architectural order used in the entrance portal to the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro in Old San Juan is the Tuscan, associated with virility, a logical choice for an establishment dedicated to war. A few meters away, the portal of the Insane Asylum uses the Ionic order. When this building was designed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century the feminine gender (represented by the Ionic) was associated to all kinds of irrational and lunatic behaviors, similar to the ones suffered by the sick sheltered by the building.”

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*Al NO del Asilo de Beneficencia está situado el Manicomio Provincial. Este edificio, cuya fachada mira al castillo del Morro, se empezó a construir en Setiembre de 1861, gobernando esta Isla el teniente General Don Rafael Echagüe, quien colocó la primera piedra de sus cimientos, y se terminó en 10 de octubre de 1883, siendo Gobernador General de esta Isla el Excmo Sr Don Félix María de Messina.*

*El Manicomio está dividido en dos departamentos, uno para hombres y otro para mujeres dementes, con dos habitaciones para cierto número de pobres impedidos.*

*Existen en la actualidad Hombres dementes 58 Mujeres dementes 54  
Hombre pobres 5 Mujeres pobres 1*

*El departamento de hombres está a cargo de tres Celadores y el de mujeres á cargo de las hermanas de la caridad.*

*A estos asilados que contiene el Manicomio, se les suministra, además de los alimentos, vestidos y asistencia en sus enfermedades, todo lo necesario para la curación de sus dolencias físicas y morales.<sup>321</sup>*

The number of patients was quite large for the size of the buildings and conditions were not necessarily the best ones. This is evidenced by the great number of deaths experienced during the year 1898.

At the opening of the year there were 88 patients in the institution. There are now 125 patients present. With repairs, another 25 additional patients could be accommodated. The number of deaths during 1898 was 58, which for the number of patients present was very high.

The present number of inmates of the institution is as follows: fifty eight males and 67 females, a total of 125, who are being cared for by 4 sisters for the female insane and 5 attendants for the male. The capacity is for 60 males and 70 females.<sup>322</sup>

During the 1898 American shelling led by Admiral Sampson the building was hit. Historical accounts describe how patients fled hysterically, their world shattered inexplicably. By 1940, after a complete renovation using Puerto Rico Reconstruction Act funds, the building was handed to the US War Department and became part of the US Army Fort Brooke Military Base. During the 1960s, it was returned to the government of Puerto Rico and, at the present time, it houses the Escuela de Artes Plásticas de Puerto Rico (School of Fine Arts of Puerto Rico), a public art institution.

The Casa de Locos or Manicomio is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, artistic, and landscape national significance. It is the only example of a unique 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural typology that offered services to the "Others." The edifice was the first formal insane asylum to be constructed in the Viejo San Juan, the island and one of the earliest ones in the United States. The imposing architectural components, such as the Ionic Colossal order, the inverted "E" floor plan arrangement depicting de Villanueva inspiration, the magnificent centralized chapel and its dome, the sumptuous temple front façade and decorative details provide added layers of significance. The open courtyards design that allowed the public to view the

<sup>321</sup> José Pérez Morís, *Guía General de la Isla de Puerto Rico, con el almanaque correspondiente al año de 1879*, p 110. Translation into English: "To the northeast of the Asilo de Beneficencia is the Manicomio Provincial. This building, with a façade that faces de Castillo del Morro, was started in September 1861, when the Island was governed by Lieutenant General Don Rafael Echagüe, who placed the first stone in its footings, and was finished on 10 October 1883 when the Excmo Sr Don Félix María de Messina was governor of this Island." "The Manicomio is divided into two departments, one for insane men and another for insane women with two rooms for handicapped poor." "Presently, there are 58 insane men and 54 insane women; 5 poor men and 1 poor woman." "The men's department is under the supervision of three guards and the women's under the sisters of charity."

<sup>322</sup> Francisco R de Goenaga, *Memoria Anual del Manicomio de San Juan Puerto Rico – 1906/Annual Report of the Insane Asylum of San Juan Porto Rico – 1906*, p 45.

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inmates going on about their daily activities reflects 19<sup>th</sup> ideas about the mentally sick and their relationship to society adds another layer of significance.

### Diputación Provincial de Puerto Rico (Parcela 3, Block 33)

The Diputación Provincial de Puerto Rico building is located in the northwest corner of the Plaza de Armas in the block surrounded by the Calle de San Francisco, Calle de la Luna, Calle de San José and Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud. The lot's location within the urban matrix and its closeness to the principal plaza explains the diverse uses it has sheltered throughout the history of the city. When the first settlement was established during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the cemetery was located here since it is next to the Catedral de San Juan Bautista. At that time, it served as atrium, a Christian immemorial function of the sectors surrounding a temple.

When the city center was moved to the present day Plaza de Armas during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the area continued to serve as cemetery, a function it still maintained until the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the site was known as the *güiriguiví*.

*Donde está el edificio que hoy sirve para la diputación provincial, fue cementerio anteriormente. A mi venida al mundo ya no enterraban allí. Lo conocí de corral cercado de mampostería con algún arbolado, ect. Llamábase el güiriguiví. De 1850 a 52 se construyó en aquel corral un edificio que se destinó a plaza de mercado y presto dejó de serlo por haberse construido otro con este fin en lo que fue barrio de Culo Prieto.<sup>323</sup>*

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it made sense to eliminate a burial ground located in such a prominent locale. The Enlightenment emphasized hygiene as a most relevant goal of any city. Having a cemetery next to the central area of the urban core was considered detrimental to both the settlement and its inhabitants. When it was royally mandated to move these venues outside the walls during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the space became available for a more compatible urban use. A building designed to serve as *plaza del mercado* (indoor market) was built in 1849 and rented to the Municipality of San Juan. It was used for this purpose for a short period of time, from 1851 to 1852,<sup>324</sup> when a new market, close to the northern wall, was erected. The move of the venue from this congested area to a more isolated one was also dictated by contemporary sanitary ideas. While the edifice made it unnecessary to use the Plaza de Armas as an open market, as had been done for centuries, the location was too prominent for such a pedestrian use. It was unsuitable, not to mention uncomfortable, to have a market located next door to the central plaza and other important buildings representing the Crown.

After the market closed, the building sheltered varied uses, including a *ciudadela* (*casa de viviendas* or *casa de vecindad* or tenement house), an *asilo de beneficencia* (asylum) and an *instituto civil* (a kind of high school), known as the *Instituto de Segunda Enseñanza* (Institute of Secondary Education). This last use continued after the 1873 remodeling work. It is known that the Instituto occupied the western half of the building while the Diputación Provincial de Puerto Rico was located in the eastern half of the second floor in 1871. Other governmental units were also sheltered by the structure. The Lottery, for example, was situated on the eastern half of the first floor. Complete rehabilitation work of the building was finished in 1875. After 1898, the eastern half of the building became the US Post Office, the first US postal center in Old San Juan and Puerto Rico. In 1921, the Biblioteca Insular (Insular Library), Telégrafo y Teléfonos (Telegraph and Telephone) and Colecturía

<sup>323</sup> Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo dejo*, p 94. Translation into English: "The lot where the building used for the Diputación Provincial is located was previously a cemetery. When I was born burials no longer took place in here. I knew it as an animal pen surrounded by a masonry wall with some trees, ect. It was called the *güiriguiví*. From 1850 to 1852, a building was built and used as *plaza del mercado* and quite soon it ceased to be used as such when the one housing the Diputación Provincial was erected and the market moved to the special edifice built for this purpose in what once was the Culo Prieto neighborhood."

<sup>324</sup> María de los Ángeles Castro, *Arquitectura en San Juan de Puerto Rico (siglo XIX)*, pp 298-299.

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de Rentas Internas (Island Revenue Agency) could also be found here, continuing the building's 19<sup>th</sup> century tradition of housing government organisms. Most appropriately, the structure has served as the Puerto Rico's Department of State work center since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Enrique Berrocal, *ayudante de Obras Públicas e inspector de Obras Públicas* (Assistant and Inspector of Public Works) and Pedro A Bisbal are credited with the design. The elegant structure with its unique metal *rejas* (iron grilles) that include the letters "DP" (Diputación Provincial) faces three streets and is organized around two cortiles. The principal entrance is located along the Calle de San Francisco facing the side façade of the Palacio de la Intendencia. A monumental entrance *zaguán* leads to a central, elegant staircase that provides access to the second floor. Following de Villanueva's semantics, the floor plan has an "E" shape; the two courtyards have loggias on three sides, abutting on the north to the religious buildings serving the Catedral de San Juan Bautista. The use of the E-shaped floor plan is a most creative solution given the relative narrow width (when compared to the length) of the lot. The "E" shape floor plan, a preferred solution of the period in the district, also facilitated the varied uses sheltered under its roof.

The central section of the principal façade creates a dramatic sculptural portal-like element that emphasizes the main entrance. Pairs of Tuscan engaged pilasters are used to subdivide the long façades into pavilion-like elements, a Second Empire Baroque aesthetic motif. As per Classical tradition, the first floor makes use of the Tuscan architectural order while the Ionic decorates the second one. An elegant horizontal band divides the two floors on top of which sit a wider band in the manner of a podium. All the second floor openings are crowned with rectangles that have gesso floral motifs in their interior. This decorative motif can also be considered a Second Empire Baroque influence.

The lot's diverse uses summarize the history of the city: cemetery, market, tenement house, government office, site of the Diputación Provincial de Puerto Rico, first US postal center and the Government of Puerto Rico's Department of State. Undoubtedly, the most important of all its historic functions was when it served as domicile of the Diputación Provincial de Puerto Rico. This is physically reminded by means of the extraordinarily beautiful iron grilles that nestle the "DP" letters in the fancy decorative elements that crown each window ensemble.

Spain's centuries-old rule of the colonies by means of autocracy came to an end during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The unjust system, that established everything of relevance was dictated unilaterally by a person sitting in a fancy chair on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, was seriously questioned in the American colonies and, to the credit of many, in Spain. Like the *intendentes* the goal behind the creation of the *diputación provincial* (county councils) was to incorporate the colonies to Madrid's sphere of influence.

*. . . Gálvez tuvo ocasión de formarse de una idea clara del sentido de la reforma que precisaba la monarquía en sus territorios americanos, reforma que posteriormente impulsaría tras su encumbramiento al Ministerio de Indias en 1776. Hacía tiempo ya, en efecto, que venía aconsejando introducir en América un sistema de administración basado en las intendencias, al entender que éstas permitirían a la metrópoli un más estrecho control fiscal y material de sus posesiones. La intención era deshacerse, por una parte, de la red de intereses creados por los corregidores y alcaldes mayores – cargos que se hacían apetecibles y se compraban, debido al control que otorgaban a sus titulares sobre los recursos de las comunidades y el comercio local –; y por otra, deshacerse también de la presencia criolla en estos y otros destinos de mayor relieve, como las audiencias. Podemos decir que, más que anticriolla, la política de Gálvez era promonárquica, puesto que el fin que perseguía era la creación de un sistema efectivo desde un punto de vista imperial. Se trataba, definitivamente, de desvincular el oficio de los intereses locales y aferrarlo al servicio de la política ministerial, con la*

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*consecuencia de que la presencia criolla en audiencias y en otras altas magistraturas coloniales se redujo drásticamente.*<sup>325</sup>

The political organization of the *diputación provincial* was not necessarily designed to grant more independence to the colonies, as some would like to believe, but to further strengthened the ties with the central Madrid government. By making Puerto Rico direct subject of ministerial policies, locals would feel empowered while Madrid tightly controlled their actions. *Intendencias* and *diputaciones* were two way streets which had on opposite sides different expectations.

The Diputación Provincial de Puerto Rico building is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural and artistic national significance. It is the only extant architectural evidence that exists of the momentous transformations introduced by means of the *diputación provincial* political system within the Spanish colonial 19<sup>th</sup> century scheme. As such, it is a symbol of the cherished dream to have full, or as full as allowed, representation in the central peninsular government. The masterful floor plan, inspired by architectural genius de Villanueva, the beautiful staircase, and unique grill work signify it as one of the architectural jewels of the historic district.

### Real Audiencia (Parcela 2, Block 41)

Located in the Calle de la Fortaleza and presently named Edificio Fernando Chardon (1907-1981), the building was originally a house, outfitted during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to serve as the Real Audiencia,<sup>326</sup> the center for the administration of justice in the island.<sup>327</sup>

During the early days of the settlement, *oidores* (judge-like personages) were assigned to render justice in the king's name.<sup>328</sup> These officials were royally appointed and vested with special powers in order to ascertain that justice was carried out in the different parts of the kingdom. In fact, it was an *oidor*, Rodrigo de Figueroa, who personally visited Caparra and the San Juan Islet making the definitive decision that the settlement had to be moved to the second locale. Another *oidor* sided with the neighbors and decided in favor of the move from the *fondeadero* to the Plaza de Armas sector. Traditionally, the *reales audiencias* (royal audiences) were composed of a president, a position occupied in the island by the governor, and several *oidores*. A *fiscal* (prosecutor), *alguacil* (sheriff) and *escribano* (scribe) formed the group whose jurisdiction included both civil and criminal suits. As per the civil law tradition, they were also consulting bodies. The institution had legislative responsibilities for it had the power to examine all *ordenanzas* (laws), *reglamentos* (regulations) and *decretos* (decrees) enacted by the governors. They were additionally mandated to watch over the treatment of

<sup>325</sup> José María Portillo, "España en el mundo," *España Crisis imperial e independencia*, pp 117-118. Translation into English: ". . . Gálvez had a chance to form a clear idea regarding the reforms the monarchy needed to carry out in the American territories, which he later favored when he became a part of the Ministry of the Indies in 1776. He had previously recommended introducing an administrative system based on *intendencias* in America, because he understood it would allow Madrid a more direct fiscal and material control of its colonies. The intention was to do away, on the one hand, with the interest network created by the *corregidores* and mayors – positions that were sought and bought – and, on the other, to do away with the *criollo* presence in these and other more relevant forums like the audiences. We can state that more than against the *criollos*, Gálvez's policy was pro-monarchy, since he was trying to obtain the creation of an effective system from an imperial perspective. Definitively, the aim was to separate local interest and to tie it to the ministerial policy, with the consequence that the *criollo* presence in the audiences and other colonial magistrates was drastically reduced."

<sup>326</sup> Although the structure is dated to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (*Estudio de revitalización integral del centro histórico de San Juan*, Inventory Sheet: Block 41, Parcela 2, the floor plan and location of the building makes this dating questionable. An analysis of the floor plan and its architectural components suggests the residence was built at an earlier date.

<sup>327</sup> During the 1940s, the building sheltered the Department of Education and the Insular Civil Service Commission. Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, p 194.

<sup>328</sup> The *oidores* became part of the Audiencia (Audience) and the personal exercise of justice by the sovereign in Spain during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. While the first Audiencia was established in Valladolid at this time, it quickly became the norm to institute them in varied parts of the kingdom. The first Audiencia in America was created in 1511 in Santo Domingo.

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the natives and act in an inquisitorial manner prohibiting certain books and publications serving as the Crown's eyes and ears regarding the behavior of the priests assigned to a particular territory.

As mentioned, when the Real Audiencia was established during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Old San Juan no special building was erected to shelter the organism but a private house located close to the Palacio de Santa Catalina was remodeled. The use of this structure was probably most convenient, given its physical closeness to the Palacio de Santa Catalina. The rehabilitation included wall frescoes, decoration of the majestic stairway and Neo-Gothic wooden decorative motifs in some of the rooms. In the patio, a meteorological observation tower with a unique spiral wooden staircase was erected.

Although the façade sports an elegant five bay treatment with no encadrement borders around the first floor openings (which may evidence its age), the main entrance door is elegantly framed by an impressive border which includes moldings. A long open balcony with a wooden balustrade unites all five openings in the second level. The balcony, in conjunction with the rich wooden balustrade, provides elegance to the *piano nobile* and dignified the activities that took place in this level of the building.

The Real Audiencia is considered contributing as per Criterion Consideration E. It is a partially reconstructed building that is accurately executed in its original placement and environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan. There is no other building or structure with the same associational value,<sup>329</sup> for it was the first building in Old San Juan to be used as a tribunal. As such, it is iconic of the momentous transformation that took place when, after more than three centuries, Puerto Rico was given its own local judiciary system. The tower used to carry out meteorological observations by the Spanish military adds another layer of relevance to this edifice. The Real Audiencia possesses urban, architectural, scientific and cultural national significance.

### **Presidio de la Princesa (Cárcel de la Princesa)**

Until the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra was demolished during the 1890s, the walls created a definitive and impregnable perimeter that clearly divided the *intramuros* (inside the walls) from the *extramuros* (outside the walls) of the city. As the urban core grew, service areas were carved from the exterior sectors surrounding it. The Cementerio de Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis and the La Puntilla de San Lázaro were two of the new *extramuros* zones. Due to its closeness to the port and the complex services it provided, this second precinct was organized by means of varied types of buildings and urban artifacts.

For centuries, La Puntilla was characterized as the mangrove area located to the south of town. It was slowly urbanized and by the third decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the swampy grounds had been dried. Because it was outside the defensive perimeter, the military authorities continued to prohibit formal constructions made of anything other than wood until 1847 when the queen granted authorization to erect masonry structures in the area. A royal engineer, Manuel Soriano, presented a plan for an urban grid that was conceived at a 45 degree angle from the one used inside the city. This proposal for urbanization was understood as an *ensanche* (widening or expansion) of the interior of the defensive belt, an ubiquitous 19<sup>th</sup> century urban development. Authorization was granted to carry out the master plan and, a few years later, masonry structures peppered the new *ensanche*.

In 1837, the prison was moved to this location from the Plaza de Armas. The original edifice only had three openings on each side of a central portal. Responding to the city's needs, the structure was extended on both

<sup>329</sup> National Park Service, National Register Bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

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sides in 1865. The plans for the reconstruction<sup>330</sup> were signed by Enrique Gadea, a royal engineer who designed several lighthouses in the island and surrounding smaller islands, isles, and keys. Following a 19<sup>th</sup> century tradition, the historical context and patrons of the building were recorded by means of an inscription over the central door:

*Reynando S.M. Da Isabel Ila y Gobernando esta Isla  
el Escmo Sor Teniente General Don Fernando de Norzagaray  
se edifica la torre y se colocó el reloj.  
Año 1854.<sup>331</sup>*

The structure consolidated prison services for it substituted both the historic municipal jail that was part of the Casa Alcaldía and the services provided by the building that stood where the Cuartel de San Carlos was once situated and the Real Intendencia is now located. The change of location, from the crowded urban interior to the exterior of the city, also reflected 19<sup>th</sup> century ideas about punishment and the rehabilitation of criminals. Improvers of the system believed it was easier to reform criminals in this type of semi-bucolic milieu, away from the congested urban centers. In spite of this intention, it should be noted that, at the turn of the century, the following description was written of the jails in the district and the island: "It is known that many of the public institutions on the island are in bad sanitary condition. This is especially true of jails. These institutions have for hundreds of years been recognized as pests spots, in every community they have existed. Those in Porto Rico are not the exception to the rule."<sup>332</sup>

The three preserved high custody cells at the Presidio de la Princesa, located at the back of the building, evidence that life in this prison was, at best, unbearable. The *azotea* roofs have iron bars and only one window and a very narrow grill door allows light into the interior. A single bed would fit most uncomfortably in each one of these spaces yet, surprisingly, eight to ten prisoners were kept at times in each one of the cells. There is no pavement for the rocky terrain was needed to prevented inmates from reclining on the floor to sleep. For more than a century, this structure served as the jail of the capital city. In spite of the fact that the infamous *Oso Blanco* prison was constructed on the outskirts of Río Piedras during the 1930s, the building in the district was used as jail until the early 1960s. Attorney Pedro Albizu Campos was one of its most famous inmates. Mr Albizu, the leader of the Puerto Rican Nationalist movement, spent many years here, where he died.<sup>333</sup>

Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, jails were simply places where people waited their physical punishment, usually death. They were not locales designed to be lived for a long time, much less places where any positive change in conduct was to take place after the period of punishment had elapsed. At that time, as a direct result of the Enlightenment, jails evolved and became locales where people paid for their crimes by being imprisoned for a period of time. This change was reflected in architecture. Gone were the days when some could be imprisoned in dark and forbidden *mazmorras* or *calabozos* (dungeons).<sup>334</sup> The new architectural typology of the prison was born at this time.

<sup>330</sup> A new design never constructed proposed individual cells as per the *Ley de 11 de octubre de 1869* for 1,000 people with a Panopticon plan.

<sup>331</sup> Translation into English: "During the reign of HM Doña Isabel II while His Excellency Señor Lieutenant General Don Fernando de Norzagaray governed this Island the tower was erected and the clock placed. Year 1854."

<sup>332</sup> Military Government of Porto Rico, *Military Government of Porto Rico From October 18, 1898, to April 30, 1900 Appendices to the Report of the Military Governor*, p 17.

<sup>333</sup> Arleen Pabón Charneco, "*La ciudad del puerto Rico: Sections National Heritage Area Feasibility Study San Juan Historic Zone*," p 121. Attorney Albizu is known as *El Maestro* (The Teacher) and is considered a patriotic martyr. Another former political inmate was Juan Antonio Corretjer.

<sup>334</sup> Dungeons in Old San Juan were located in varied structures. This included the Casa del Cabildo in front of the Plaza de la Catedral and the Casa Alcaldía in front of the Plaza de Armas at a later time.



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In 1834, the prison located to the west of the Plaza de Armas in the Cuartel de San Carlos was described in the following manner:

The house of correction is a large old building, forming one side of the principal square. Here male offenders for crimes of a political or civil nature are confined for the term of years specified in their sentence. They are obliged to labour at the fortifications and other public works. The greater part of them are soldiers who have been condemned for desertion, and malefactors from the Havannah [*sic*] and the Peninsula. It is contemplated by government to build a house of correction outside the walls. This is loudly called for; for the public morals receive little benefit from the continual view of these men, morning and evening dragging their chains through the streets.<sup>335</sup>

The move to La Puntilla was dictated not only by modern ideas about reform but as a way to eliminate the two jails located in the periphery of the Plaza de Armas.

In spite of the multiplicity of venues, the confinement of criminals in the historic district was *ad hoc*, at best. It is known, for example, that those accused of incest were kept in the Asilo de Beneficencia, in the midst of abandoned children and elders, as well as soldiers. Many convicts were shipped to Spanish jails. Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, crime was associated with sin. In the inflexible Catholic environment that characterized Old San Juan, it comes as no surprise to find that, in many instances, this institution was in charge of punishment. Like the Holy Inquisition, the final objective of the penal process was for the accused to confess. Torture, isolation and *escarnio publico* (public scorn) were some of the instruments used in the so-called search for truth. Since, according to the Spanish civil system, judges had the last word and there were no juries or formal classification of crimes until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century – and, then, only for a limited number – minor offenses met with gargantuan punishments. Small infractions were punishable with *destierro* (banishment), *multa* (fine), *vergüenza pública* (public humiliation) or *reclusión* (imprisonment). Alejandro Tapia y Rivera had to banish himself to Spain because one morning he fought a duel in Cataño with a Spanish soldier who tried to push him off the sidewalk on the pretense that he was a lowly *criollo*. (Ironically, Tapia y Rivera's father was a Spanish military officer.) Had he remained in the island, he would have been killed since duels were prohibited. Offenses merited *azotamiento* (scourge), mutilation, forced labor, *galeras* (galleys) and death, usually in the form of the *garrote vil* (garrote).<sup>336</sup> The Holy Inquisition pyre, in turn, used burning at the stake as punishment.

This state of affairs characterized all European so-called civilized nations. When Cesare Beccaria published his book *Dei Delitti e delle Pene*<sup>337</sup> in 1764, he started a revolution regarding the penal system and, most importantly, how convicted felons were to pay for their offenses. Opposed to the death penalty, he also believed all legal processes, from the accusation to the witness's participation and actual judgment was to be public. By the 1770s, experimentations with the building that was now to keep inmates for a long time and help transform them into law abiding citizens came to the fore. The first architectural idea of the new trend was the creation of the individual cell prison.<sup>338</sup> In the Presidio de la Princesa, the cells were organized in long lines known as *galeras* (galleys).<sup>339</sup> Some faced the promenade known as the Paseo de la Princesa. This is clearly depicted in the 24 October 1865 façade drawing.<sup>340</sup> While some of the openings in this elevation sport two

<sup>335</sup> George Flinter, *An account of the present state of the Island Puerto Rico*, p 42.

<sup>336</sup> Javier García Algarra, "La reforma carcelaria en el pensamiento ilustrado y sus modelos arquitectónicos," *Frentes Avanzados de la Historia*, Digital source: <http://maytediez.blogia.com/2007>. The *garrote vil* was applied to the neck and it killed by slowly suffocating the victim.

<sup>337</sup> Spanish translation: *De los delitos y las penas*; English translation: *On Crimes and Punishments*.

<sup>338</sup> According to some architectural historians, the precedent for this idea was the convent or monastery. Pope Clement XI had two such buildings built in Rome during the 1770s.

<sup>339</sup> *Galeras* is the Spanish term also used to describe the area where the slaves who rowed large ships were located.

<sup>340</sup> Archivo General de Puerto Rico, San Juan, "Proyecto de reparación del presidio provisional," Obras Públicas, Edificios Públicos, Legajo 157, Expediente 1.

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door louvered windows, at least one of these is depicted having a very small horizontal opening that unmistakably depicts bars. Jeremy Bentham<sup>341</sup> continued to develop the architectural typology and is recognized as one of its great reformers and designers. His Panopticon guaranteed constant supervision of a large number of inmates. The idea of continuous vigilance was part of the repertoire of reforms the judicial system was to incorporate during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The objective was for the inmates to experiment that there were superior forces that kept them imprisoned in the jail and, thus, under control. This sense of lack of control was not achieved by force but through the design of the building.

A well-lighted central area was considered essential in this type of architectural organization. The Presidio de la Princesa includes one such a space from where the cells in the *galeras* could be observed constantly. Exercises were carried out in a yard that was situated between the building and the fifty feet plus high defensive wall of Bastión de la Palma. In this manner, the building and its milieu truly were: "A way of obtaining power, power of mind over mind, in a quantity hitherto without example."<sup>342</sup> During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the patio of the Cárcel de la Princesa sheltered a structure created for the district's lepers. A number of these unfortunate people were collected in a rough frame building located at the back of the jail. In this manner, they could be close to the city but physically separated, posing danger only to a number of inhabited cottages located in the adjoining low marshy lands and to the jail inmates.<sup>343</sup> It is probable some inmates preferred not to go out to exercise for fear of infection. It was, truly, the worst of two worlds.

Continuous vigilance and, more importantly, the sense that you were observed constantly, were to be obtained by means of several architectural elements. First, each cell was to have a window opening unto the exterior through which light could enter. In the interior, only a grill closed the cell. This allowed for the inmate to be observed at all times. Both architectural treatments were included in the design of the Presidio de la Princesa. As mentioned, in Old San Juan, some of the cells opened to the Paseo de la Princesa where folks would promenade leisurely. The idea was, in a sense, to punish elegantly without savagery (when compared to previous times), but to punish all the same. The social benefits of the collusion of these two urban and architectural artifacts were two-pronged. Some of the imprisoned would have ample time to watch free people enjoying life. The free could look at the prison as if it was an animal cage in the zoo. The expectation was that most would ponder on the terrible punishment that came as a result of breaking the law. Strollers could also feel part of the government's commitment against crime by acting as additional "guards" even if for short periods.

The long, elegant building was constructed very close to the defensive wall so that it was protected on its northern side by the tall and massive fifty plus feet stone curtain. There is an intimate relationship between the

<sup>341</sup> John Bowring, *The works of Jeremy Bentham* (Edinburgh, United Kingdom: William Tait, 1843), Vol 4, p 44.

<sup>342</sup> Jeremy Bentham, *Panopticon Letters*, 1787 (MS: London, University College London Library, 1787). Quoted in Robin Evans: "Bentham's Panopticon. An Incident in the Social History of Architecture," *Architectural Association Quarterly* (Oxford/New York, 3, No.2, April-July 1971), p 22.

<sup>343</sup> "During the early part of the past winter [1900], when a home by home inspection of San Juan was made by the local military board of health, of which I was an advisory member, a number of cases of leprosy was discovered concealed in different parts of the city in crowded tenements, and in some instances, which I personally observed, where laundering, and other work was taken in from American residents." "As a pressing temporary measure, these cases were collected and returned to this crude asylum until better isolation and quarters could be obtained. . . . There are now 14 cases collected in this building, 8 males and 6 females." "[T]he estimate is that there are about fifty cases upon the island." ". . . The present location of the leper hospital, in a single rough building in the rear of the jail and within the city limits, is totally unfit for the purpose, and a menace to the community." *Ibid.*, pp 39-147.

According to an official Spanish report, the jail was used as a leper's asylum because no funds were available to construct a leper's hospital. In 1872, the Diputación Provincial de Puerto Rico "intended to build a leper hospital, and, as no funds were available, it finally accepted the motion of Dr Francisco J Hernández, that suggested each municipality should isolate and care for the lepers in the district until the original plan could be carried out." Plans for a leprocomium included the construction of a building in a place the federal authorities called island or cay of San Luis [?]. One such structure was erected in Isla de Cabras during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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building's architectural form and the function is was to shelter. Its morphology reflects the long collection of cells that formed the *galeras*. While it was a building destined to house criminals, the elegant lines spoke silently and volubly about civilized behavior. The design depicts Second Empire Baroque ideas, particularly in the treatment of the façade architectural details and in the incorporation of the concept of the pavilion to emphasize the main entrance of the establishment. The use of a belfry and a clock grant the structure an air of elegance at odds with its grisly function.

The Presidio de la Princesa is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, artistic and landscape national significance. It is the earliest preserved example of the 19<sup>th</sup> century jail in the island, the only one in the district and one of the earliest ones in the United States. The fact that the Presidio de la Princesa design reflects Enlightenment ideas grants this building a high degree of cultural significance. The creative intersection of Classically-inspired decorative details with Second Empire Baroque components results in an extraordinary aesthetic collusion. The building's intimate urban link with the Paseo de la Princesa makes it a unique example of both 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural and urban ideas. It also provides information regarding society's interpretation of crime and punishment. The preserved high custody cells are unique spaces that silently voice the terrible conditions endured by some. The place is associated to Attorney Albizu Campos' period of incarceration and his death, as well as several other important local figures, granting the building an additional layer of significance.

### **THE POST 1898 HISTORICIST AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY PERIOD (1898-1939)**

The momentous political transition that occurred in the island in 1898 brought innumerable urban and architectural transformations to Old San Juan. At that time, the historic district occupied the original interior precinct delineated by the defensive circuit, as well as the former La Puntilla de San Lázaro and urbanized sectors to the east, including the barrios of La Carbonera and Puerta de Tierra. Transformation of the La Puntilla sector was completed when the US military occupied its southernmost tip. The historic district was tangibly invaded by urban and architectural United States symbols, particularly military. To the north of the city the US Army Fort Brooke Military Base was established and on the south a US Navy one that, at a later time, became a US Coast Guard Base.

The interior area bounded by the defensive circuit was extremely congested, although a limited amount of space for new buildings within the city area proper became available when the Puerta de San Justo and sections of the southern defensive wall were demolished during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The group of new buildings can be subdivided into two although they both served the public. In addition to those constructed to provide federal services – such as the post office, federal court, and customs – there were the educational centers, three magnificent schools that still adorn the urban core. Examples of private commercial architecture also merged at this time. This last category abandoned the centuries-old tradition of mixed uses (commercial and domestic) sheltered by one building and established a distinct presence of their own.

Aesthetic dependence on varied historicisms and revivals that started during the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century continued uninterrupted during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, the new public and private projects an influx of novel architectural typologies, morphologies and styles, stemming from uncountable sources of inspiration that supplied architectural impetus to the changing social and political agendas. Belle Époque, a Second Empire Baroque cognate mode at times known as Beaux Arts, interpretations continued to reign as the favorite solutions providing façades packed with a multiplicity of design motifs. Although it can be stated that revivals from Classical and Renaissance semantics were preferred, more adventurous stylistic sources of inspiration, like the Neo-Mesopotamian and Neo-Arab, were also explored.

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While it is true that European-inspired architecture continued to be appreciated and used within the district, styles like the Mediterranean Revival were reflected in the semantics used in many American government and private buildings. This expression, favored during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was based on varied sources of inspiration which included Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, and Italian decorative elements. Curiously, there was no interest in this aesthetic trend under the Spanish regime. After 1898, however, Old San Juan embraced this American stylistic expression with architectural gusto. The federal government edifices used it liberally, probably in an effort to fully distinguish traditional and modern architectural artifacts with a “hispanizing” [*sic*] touch. Hand in hand with the historicisms came an interest in contemporary aesthetics. The Catalan *Modernisme*, an architectural expression akin to the French Art Nouveau, was used to create dramatic façades that abandoned traditional concerns, such as stucco finishes and planar subjugation of the building to the façade block. Another modern expression favored at the time was the Art Deco, used in traditional architectural typologies, like houses, and also in modern ones, such as movie theaters and banks. Regarding this last use it is interesting to note that while foreign banks depended on Classicist modes to create their façades, the local Banco Popular used the Art Deco to create a building that iconically represented the new times (1930s). The most drastic architectural transformation was the introduction of American architectural typologies and structural morphologies. In addition, modern materials, such as reinforced concrete and glass, made possible new semantics to the urban core. The skyscraper broke the centuries old height limitations while the skyscraper construction provided the historic district with the opportunity to explore expansive, free interiors by means of the open floor plan. Traditionally limited interior spaces, with their dark beams embedded into thick walls, were substituted by airy ones lighted and ventilated in a new manner. Architectural types, such as the office building, department store, movie theater and apartment building were also introduced during the period.

Post 1898 architecture within the historic district, whether public or domestic, is usually characterized by exuberant decoration and dramatic aesthetics. Of special interest is the unspoken desire to abandon some urban and architectural *sanjuanero* traditions, such as strict alignment of the façade with its neighbor(s) and the sharing of *medianeras*. Energetic detailing was favored; traditional stucco finishes were abandoned; the historic palette brightened; and sculptural buildings that owe very little to their neighbors were preferred as symbols of the new times and novel ways of living.

### **Iglesia Presbiteriana Hugh O’Neill**(Parcela 16, Block 42)

The Iglesia Presbiteriana Hugh O’Neill (Hugh O’Neill Presbyterian Church) is sited on Calle de la Fortaleza, a few buildings away from the Palacio de Santa Catalina. The temple was donated by the O’Neill family to shelter the religious group that established in Old San Juan in 1904. Three years later, an existing building<sup>344</sup> was bought and the present church was erected. A place of worship, separated from the street by a diminutive atrium, a residence, and a classroom were constructed.<sup>345</sup>

The presence of this Protestant temple a mere five buildings away from the Palacio de Santa Catalina is indicative of the changes that took place within the district immediately after 1898. Prior to the American invasion, only Catholic churches were allowed in Old San Juan and the island.<sup>346</sup> The presence of a non-Catholic house of worship so close to the governor’s mansion was iconic of the profound social and cultural

<sup>344</sup> No information related to the transformation that took place during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the building became a temple is available. Digital source: <http://netministries.org/churches>.

<sup>345</sup> “In the rear of the church and annex was built in 1929; the upper room is used as manse and in the lower is a kindergarten.” Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico A Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, p 194.

<sup>346</sup> There were exceptions to this rule. During the 1890s, special authorization was granted to the British community in Ponce to erect an Anglican church.

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transformations experienced at this time. The all-powerful institution that had ruled the life of all for centuries was no longer the only religious option.

The church façade is a graceful interpretation of favorite ecclesiastical motifs, albeit reduced in scale due to the constricting site. Semicircular arches frame the principal entrance, creating an archivolt effect. A round opening, in the manner of a rose window, and finials for the side encadrements create a sober and simple interpretation of the traditional basilica façade. The fact that the building is set back from the street is important for this is a departure from the district's traditional façade treatment. The Iglesia Metodista de la Santísima Trinidad (Parcela 24 B, Block 17), constructed during the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and located on Calle del Sol, also incorporated this approach. The solution of organizing the structure as a "building-sculpture" independent of *medianera* (party wall) constrictions may stem from a desire to distinguish the building from its neighbors providing it with a definitive "modern" urban personality of its own. The opposite interpretation, allowing the temple to be an integral part of the street façade, was used during the 19<sup>th</sup> in the Iglesia de Santa Ana.<sup>347</sup>

The Hugh O'Neill Memorial Presbyterian Church is considered a contributing property possessing urban, architectural and artistic national significance. It is an early example of the new kind of non-Catholic churches in the district, the direct result of American presence after 1898. The use of traditional basilica elements in the façade and the treatment of the building as an independent unit in terms of its immediate context add additional layers of significance. The building is still used as a church; it is a unit of a holistic district, deriving its primary significance from its architectural importance as per Criterion Consideration A.

### **Baños Públicos (Parcela 1, Block 68)**

The small building that sheltered the Baños Públicos (Public Baths) during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is located on the site where the defensive south wall curved before meeting the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra. Built c 1909-1910, the petite edifice was erected in the area also occupied by part of the old southern *camino de ronda* (pomoerium).

Second Empire Baroque architectural ideas were used in its design to create a "jewel building," a structure which is keen to emphasize its independence from other edifices. The curved corners; exuberant decoration, evidenced in the exquisite decorative treatment of the entrance portal facing the Teatro Tapia; balustrade ending the composition, pseudo-rustication treatment; and Classicist detailing, like the dentil moldings, silently express the aesthetic goals of this architectural current. Of special interest is the elegant staircase that adorns the southern façade and the organization of the composition by means of pavilions or *avant-corps*. The style's goal was to create beautiful architectural artifacts that spoke of sophistication and elegance by means of profuse decoration. City Beautiful ideas impacted Old San Juan around this time, hence the preference for the Second Empire Baroque and its rhizome modes. One of the sectors where the movement's concepts were explored was Puerta de Tierra to the east of the Baños Públicos. The ultimate architectural goal of every City Beautiful-inspired building was to create an exotic and unique decorated entity representative of a culturally rich and sophisticated city.

The Baños Públicos is considered a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, artistic and landscape national significance. It is the only extant example of the architectural typology of urban public baths, inspired in the 19<sup>th</sup> century urban furniture installed in large, sophisticated cities as part of the City Beautiful Movement. The exuberant use of Second Empire Baroque motifs and the treatment of the building

<sup>347</sup> Twentieth century examples of this urban approach are the Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal Movimiento Internacional (Parcela 11, Block 18) and the Iglesia Defensora de la Fe La Hermosa (Parcela 29, Block 20). In both cases, the buildings are aligned along the urban façade of their respective blocks and seek no physical independence from their neighbors.

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as an independent unit from the urban organism add additional layers of significance. The edifice sits on top of the remains of the historic wall that was partly demolished when the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra was torn down during the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its physical relationship to these archaeological remains provides additional relevance to the building.

### **Correo General and Tribunal Federal (Parcela 1, Block 88)**

An iconic Federal government building constructed during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Old San Juan, the Correo General (General Post Office) is situated close to where the Puerta de San Justo was once located. According to the "Number 1 General Plan of San Juan," The Porto Rico Board of Fire Underwriters, 30 September 1921, at this time the building housed the US General Post Office and the customs services, as well as the federal courts. The date for the first phase is the period from 1911 to 1914.<sup>348</sup> The second phase, consisting of a small skyscraper for the Federal courts, was constructed during the years 1938 to 1940.<sup>349</sup>

During the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a trend in the United States to organize varied federal services in one building.<sup>350</sup> In fact, the architectural firm that designed one of the American schools in the district, Clarke and Howe, planned one of the first examples of this type of multi-purpose federal structure in Providence, Rhode Island – known as the Providence Post Office, Custom House, and Court House.<sup>351</sup> Characteristically, monumentality was a much desired goal of the new architectural typology for the designers aspired to create elegant, sophisticated civic centers. The great industrial expansion experienced by the country at this time, the population explosion and the impact of the City Beautiful Movement forced the abandonment of the former straightforward (in terms of function) treatment that created individual structures for each one of the federal services. The new type was interpreted as a précis of the civic accomplishments of the city it graced. When the chosen entry for the above-mentioned building in Rhode Island was described to the public, the following merits were listed: "[It is] an artistic building, excellently planned for its purpose, which will be an ornament to the city of Providence."<sup>352</sup>

The same holds true for the Old San Juan example. In addition to being a functional multi-purpose building excellently planned for the uses it served, it was also conceived as an artistic one, a unique urban ornament of sited in a most special location. It was to also serve as an icon of American presence, the new services provided to the people, and the luxurious civic progress associated to them. A new kind of government had arrived and architecture was used to proclaim its ideas. A Mediterranean Revival interpretation was utilized with generous loggias and an elegant hip roof covered with terracotta tiles organize a handsome building decorated with various Classically-inspired motifs. The style and the treatment of the building as a "building-sculpture" was quite different from the traditional approach of the district where buildings huddled together sharing *medianeras* (party walls).

During the 1930s, a small skyscraper was added to the south part of the building in the Art Deco style to house the Federal Court. Of particular relevance in terms of this design are the two towers which end in dramatic

<sup>348</sup> At least one source establishes 1913 as the inauguration date of the Correo General and Tribunal building. Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico A Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, p 179.

<sup>349</sup> Dates for the construction of the federal courts annex vary. The GSA website states that the addition is dated to the period between 1911 and 1914. This is an incorrect assessment for the court annex does not appear in the "Number 1 General Plan of San Juan," The Porto Rico Board of Fire Underwriters, 30 September 1921.

<sup>350</sup> During the third decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some of the following services were located in the building: US Post Office, US District Court, Immigration Service, Hurricane Relief Commission, Federal Internal Revenue Service Bureau and the US Steamboat Inspection Service.

<sup>351</sup> Other examples of the type were the New York Federal Building and Post Office (1885-1892) and the Old Post Office Building in Washington DC, inaugurated in 1899.

<sup>352</sup> *Providence Board of Trade Journal*, 111903:442. Digital source: [www.rid.uscourts.gov](http://www.rid.uscourts.gov).

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lamplights. It is interesting to note the seamless intersection obtained from the two different morphologies and aesthetic and stylistic personalities. The 1930s addition notably contributes to the architectural significance of the building.<sup>353</sup>

The Correo General and Tribunal Federal, the first federally-built edifice of this scale in Old San Juan and Puerto Rico, is a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, artistic and landscape national significance. It is the only extant example of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century civic center architectural typology inspired by the City Beautiful Movement in the district and the island. The use of the Mediterranean Revival and Art Deco and the treatment of the building as an independent unit from the urban organism add additional layers of significance to the structure. The building sheltered the first formal post office and federal court in the island and city and was conceived as an emblematic symbol of American presence after 1898.

### **Aduana Federal (Parcela 1, Block 76)**

As mentioned, one dramatic transformation that took place as a result of the American invasion in 1898 was the presence of the federal government in Old San Juan. Buildings like the Aduana Federal (US Customs) and the Edificio del Correo y Tribunal Federal (US Postal Service and Federal Court), as well as the varied schools erected, were meant to be symbols of American presence. The tangible existence of the federal authorities within the district by means of the architectural artifacts resulted in some impacting examples. One of these emblematic buildings was created to shelter the US Customs in front of the Spanish Muelle de las Goletas (Schooners' Wharf) and to the west of the old Muelle de los Botes (Boats' Dock), where the 19<sup>th</sup> century Spanish Custom House used to stand. In this area, close to where the Caleta de San Justo was located, the large wooden slave *cuartel* (barracks) property of the Compañía de Caracas had been situated during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>354</sup>

The Aduana Federal was constructed during the period from 1924 to 1931 following the design of Architect Albert B Nichols. Work was supervised by the US Treasury Department. It is instructive to compare this building with Nichols' design for a customs edifice in Ponce, also created during the 1920s. While the Ponce example is relatively sober in term of its decoration, the Old San Juan building is an exuberant explosion of color, textures and decoration. A few years later, the building was portrayed as the "most beautiful customhouse in America"<sup>355</sup>

The building's stunning architectural composition reflects Mediterranean Revival ideals. The organization depends on the striking contrast created by the delicate flamingo pink stuccoed walls and the brightly colored glazed terracotta decorative details. These motifs introduce metaphorical figures, such as eagles and stars and stripes cartouches, in order to impart its silent if overt message. The Mediterranean Revival style, known in the island as the Hispanomediterráneo for its intimate ties with several architectural traditions stemming from the *mare nostrum*, has multiple interpretations and personalities. In spite that, at times, it is superficially termed "Spanish Revival," the expression was really a series of varied modes that became the fashionable in the United States during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Aduana Federal is one of the most spectacular uses of the semantics in the island. Four centuries of traditional architectural examples sharply

<sup>353</sup> Rafael A Crespo and Arleen Pabón Charneco, *Arquitectura, Patrimonio e Historia* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Oficina Estatal de Preservación Histórica, 1994).

<sup>354</sup> Slaves brought from Africa waited in this locale in Old San Juan until they were dispatched to their final destinations. The city served as a distribution center of sorts. The infamous structure disappeared with time as did the nearby thoroughfares known as the Caleta de San Justo and Calle del Depósito.

<sup>355</sup> The interior of the building was described in the following manner: "The ground floor is entirely devoted to storage rooms, and offices occupy the second floor. Two interior courtyards surrounded by arched galleries furnish light and cross ventilation to both floors and provide a beautiful setting for lily pools, potted palms, and colored tropical plants." Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico A Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, p 179.

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contrasted with this building that defied everything *sanjuanero* architecture had represented for eons, from color palette to decor.

The Aduana Federal is considered a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, artistic and landscape national significance. It is the only extant example of the architectural typology in Old San Juan and the first US Federal Customs edifice in the island. The exuberant use of Mediterranean Revival motifs and the treatment of the building as an independent unit, in terms of the urban context, add additional layers of significance to the structure. The terracotta exquisite decorations have aesthetic importance for the building, the sector and the city.

### **Colegio Santo Tomás de Aquino (Parcela 4, Block 33)**

In 1921, the Colegio de Santo Tomás de Aquino was erected facing the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud, abutting the Catedral de San Juan Bautista on the north side and the Diputación Provincial building on the south. The structure housed a private Catholic school similar to American parochial schools. The architectural design presents a unique interpretation of this American architectural typology that did not exist in the historic district until this edifice and the one that once stood on the Plaza de San Francisco were constructed.

In keeping with the Catholic Church desire to establish *colegios católicos* (Catholic parochial schools) within the district that would offer an alternative to the new lay educational centers, a four floors reinforced concrete building was built before 1921 in front of the Iglesia de San Francisco. In the "Number 1 General Plan of San Juan," The Porto Rico Board of Fire Underwriters, 30 September 1921, it appears labeled as the Academia Católica (Catholic Academy).<sup>356</sup> It is quite interesting how the previous religious educational centers transformed during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by means of the concept of parochial schools.

The Colegio Santo Tomás de Aquino, which now houses the offices of the Archdioceses of San Juan of the Catholic Church, was constructed in the area where the atrium and part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century cemetery were located. The monumental principal façade incorporates four Colossal Corinthian engaged pilasters that unite the two floors and visually support a massive entablature carefully proportioned. Tripartite arcuated openings organize the composition on both floors. The two belonging to the first floor rest on the same podium that serves as base for the Colossal pilasters. This element is almost the exact same width as the entablature, creating a balanced aesthetic composition. While the entrance looks smaller (it does not rest on the podium), it is, however, almost the exact same size as the two arched openings included in the first floor. The base is eloquently and creatively used to transition the different heights that exist between the level where the entrance to the cathedral is and the street. The cathedral's small frontal atrium provides access to the building's second level.

The Belle Époque or late Second Empire Baroque vocabulary is evidenced in the use of the Colossal engaged pilasters; decorated arcuated openings meant to ennoble the façade; effective decorative clerestory that crowns the main entrance door; and sumptuous cornice. The building and its rich architecture was meant to be a symbol of the new type of Catholic education that came to the historic district and island during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In a sense, the treatment parallels what the American government architecture for local public schools accomplished during the same period.

The Colegio Santo Tomás de Aquino is considered a contributing property possessing urban, architectural and artistic national significance. It is the only preserved example of the Catholic parochial schools that became

<sup>356</sup> At this time, the Academia Católica was described in the following manner: "Adjoining the church [Iglesia de San Francisco] is the Academia Católica, an elementary and secondary parochial school with a large enrollment."



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fashionable after 1898 and an icon of the Catholic Church's desire to compete with the lay educational centers established by the Americans, using elegant and fancy architecture that sharply contrasted with the cloister-like edifices that had been used for centuries. Although the Colegio Santo Tomás de Aquino is church property it is a unit of the holistic district, deriving its primary significance from its architectural importance, as per Criterion Consideration A.

### **Pabellón de Turismo (Parcela 3, Block 94)**

In 1893, a visitor arrived in Old San Juan on board the *Alfonso XII* after visiting the United States and Mexico. Describing how the [b]arqueros ofrecen lanchas to reach the shore, he established that: *El microscópico jardín que está junto a la escalinata del muelle, no merece más que una rápida ojeada.*<sup>357</sup> Block 94, where the diminutive garden once stood, was always a relatively sparse area even though it served as foyer to the city when arriving by sea. The area was loosely called *la Dársena* (the port), a name still in use. Next to the Dársena and the above-described 1890s area, a beautiful jewel-like building was built during the 1930s.

The Mediterranean Revival was used in the Pabellón de Turismo to create an isolated "building-sculpture," completely different from traditional *sanjuanero* interpretations. A small loggia with a three semicircular arches faces the city and provides access to the interior. The highly decorated arcuated elements, gesso motifs, and terracotta tiles covering the roof are all characteristics of this aesthetic expression. The exuberantly decorated building was placed close to the port as a symbol of the new face of the city in the sector where visitors first encountered Old San Juan, particularly at a time when every visitor arrived via the sea.

In the *Informe del Comisionado del Interior al Honorable Gobernador de Puerto Rico Año Fiscal 1932-1933*<sup>358</sup> two other different proposals are included for this building that was to serve as a "*Pabellón para la Información de Turistas*" (Pavilion for Tourist Information), a use it still shelters. It is relevant to point out that the building represents the first formal urban and architectural activity by the island's government to empower tourism activities. Although a more decisive push was made during the 1950s, efforts to attract visitors to the island formally started at this time. The jewel-like building, in a sense, substituted the staid small garden of the 1890s like a promise for a better future.

The contrast and comparison of the two preserved proposals with the executed design provides a unique opportunity to better understand the fluid state of architecture in the island during the third decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While one of the proposed designs clearly identifies with Art Deco aesthetics, the Expressionistic-cum-Neo-Arab second one evidences architects had choices: from modern to historicist styles. The final style selected creates a fantasy artifact that appeals to the senses and the exoticism of Old San Juan, sold as part of tourism propaganda. Its author, Architect Rafael Carmoega, was a distinguished designer educated in the United States who felt at ease working in various aesthetic modes. Of interest too is the use of a central loggia in two of the three designs. This evidences that morphological components and spatial organization, at time, had nothing to do with the architectural style chosen which, in a sense, served as an exterior cloak.

The Pabellón de Turismo is considered a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, artistic and landscape national significance. It is the earliest preserved example of a 20<sup>th</sup> century tourism service center. Its locale frames the Dársena and the port area, bringing attention to this sector because of its outstanding and

<sup>357</sup> Salvador Puig y Valls, *Viaje a América, Estados Unidos, Exposición Universal de Chicago, México, Cuba y Puerto Rico*, p 247. Translation into English: "[T]he boatmen offer boats to reach the shore." "The microscopic garden which sits next to the staircase to the port only deserves a quick glance."

<sup>358</sup> *Informe del Comisionado del Interior al Honorable Gobernador de Puerto Rico Año Fiscal 1932-1933* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1933). Translation into English: "Report of the Interior Commissioner to the Honorable Governor of Puerto Rico 1932-1933." Personal communication, Architect Santiago Gala, January 2011.

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unique architectural treatment. The exuberant use of the Mediterranean Revival is representative of the hopes and aspirations nurtured at the time by the city and echoes City Beautiful ideals. With the Edificio de Correo y Tribunal Federal and Aduana Federal it is an example of the style's architectural versatility.

### **Casino de Puerto Rico (Parcela 1, Block 96),**

The building constructed to house the Casino de Puerto Rico during the early years of the 20th century now serves as the Centro de Recepciones del Departamento de Estado de Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico State Department Reception Center). Situated in the sector where the formidable Puerta de Santiago /Puerta de Tierra was once located it frames the main entrance to the core.

As mentioned, the precinct had several urban doors that pierced the stone circuit of walls providing entrance/exit to the interior of the core. The Puerta de San Juan connected with the *fondeadero* while the Puerta de San José, provided access to the northern shore and the Cementerio de Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis after it was organized. Originally, only one door connected the urban interior with the southern part of the islet, the Puerta de San Justo. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Puerta de España was constructed to facilitate traffic traversing to and from the harbor. An additional opening, the Puerta de Santa Rosa, also opened to the northern shore. The Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra framed the islet's land entrance and was part of the third line of defense. In the year 1897 the mammoth complex – that also included a deep moat, bridge and secondary defenses – was destroyed. The act was considered by the citizenry and the Spanish and local authorities a sign of progress, a needed activity resulting from the dramatic transformations experienced by the core. The Industrial Revolution and the population growth it fostered generated a material explosion of the traditionally confining urban enclaves. In addition, dirigibles and potent armaments had rendered defensive walls obsolete, resulting in the destruction of many medieval wall circuits, now perceived as physical obstacles to healthy urban development. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, tight, intimate urban cores were interpreted as the fountain of all kinds of social problems, particularly regarding health and hygiene. Sacrifices of this kind were needed in order to open up the urban organism to different kinds of development.

Visitors to the Viejo San Juan during the 1890s invariably described how restrictive the military artifacts were. The Castillo de San Cristóbal was depicted as a “grim-old sentinel” and the city as an entity sitting under the “frowning walls of the great castle.” “As we enter the city proper it seems as if we were stepping back into medieval times. There are all the marks of the walled towns of feudal days, portcullis, battlement, parapet, bastion and remains of a moat. An immense wall surrounds it making San Juan the only city of its kind belonging to the United States.”<sup>359</sup> Even today, the height of the impressive Castillo de San Cristóbal moat wall still has the power to impact the visitor thanks to its height and forbidden personality. It was such a redoubtable enclosure that – in spite of the fact that parts of it were demolished – the personality of a closed precinct is still intangibly alive within the district, partly because the San Cristóbal Fortress was completely preserved. The main entrance into the core is still framed by the reminders of this dramatic artifact empowering the precinct's spirit of place.

The century witnessed how several fortified European cities, like Barcelona (1854) and Vienna (1857), “opened” their city to modernity by means of *ensanches* (urban widening or expansion) of the previously constricting urban core. In order to accomplish this, their historic defensive belts were eliminated. Many in Old San Juan wanted to follow suit comparing the city with the Catalan capital and the southern defensive wall with Barcelona's Muralla del Mar (Sea Wall).<sup>360</sup> Destruction of centuries-old defensive circuits evidences the

<sup>359</sup> Joseph B Seabury, *The World and Its people Book XII Porto Rico: The Land of the Rich Port* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1908), pp 124-125.

<sup>360</sup> An 1883 military report to the royal engineers' corps compares the Viejo San Juan to Barcelona. [E]n donde para completar las obras del puerto, se llevó a cabo la destrucción del fuerte de Atarazanas y de todo el lienzo de muralla que se hallaba en iguales

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transformations cities went through in order to adapt to the changing times. Since the historic district could not grow along three of its four cardinal points, the only direction it could expand was towards the east, bounded by the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra. It was naturally assumed the precinct could only face modernity by “opening” its interior towards the Puerta de Tierra sector.

After a *vigorosa campaña de la Prensa local* (“a vigorous campaign by the local press”) and amidst much merriment, the enclave, figuratively and physically, *abrió sus puertas* (opened its doors) on 17 May 1897. Tapia y Rivera’s description of the activity allows a better understanding of how this feat was accomplished:

*La aprobación despertó singular entusiasmo en todas las clases sociales. Proyectóse primeramente un parque en parte del espacio que ocupaban los muros y baluartes. Los jóvenes y señoritas de la buena sociedad ofrecieron sus servicios gratuitamente para coadyuvar a la obra demoledora. Los primeros, en Número de doscientos, organizaron diecinueve brigadas de honor que bautizaron con los nombres de Ortega, Lealtad, Rey, Reina, Regente, Colón, Matilde, Pura (en honor de la hija del gobernador), etcétera. Proveyéndose de palas y picos en la Casa Consistorial, uniformándose con un ancho sombrero de jipi-japa y una camisola . . . . Las señoritas, por su parte, formando grupos de aguadoras, acudieron, amables y solícitas, en sus primaverales toilettes, provistas de lindas canastillas adornadas con flores y lazos, a mitigar la sed y a ofrecer delicado sustento a aquellos jóvenes obreros del civismo. Colocóse la primera brigada bajo la dirección de la señorita Pura Marín y León, primogénita del gobernador Marín. Improvisóse un campamento de tiendas de campaña a lo largo de la calle San Francisco, frente a la plaza de Colón, para proteger del sol a las aguadoras.*

*Pareció político a las autoridades españoles de la Isla imprimir cierta solemnidad al acto de sacrificar al progreso de la ciudad un jirón del famoso Presidio de San Juan, secular exponente del poderío de España en el Nuevo Mundo. Dio comienzo la tarea el 28 de mayo de 1897, previamente declarado festivo por el gobernador Marín y anunciado al público por el alcalde, doctor José M Marxuach, en un ambiente que contribuían a hacer alegre un sol espléndido y el esperado júbilo de la población. Arbolóse una hermosa bandera nacional sobre la puerta de Santiago, empavesáronse las naves ancladas en el puerto y cubriéronse de colgaduras los balcones de las residencias que circundaban la plaza de Colón. Mantenido a raya la multitud en la esquina nordeste de dicha plaza, ascendieron al terraplén que cubría la bóveda de la vetusta puerta el gobernador y capitán general Marín, el general Ortega y la comitiva oficial, para presenciar la colocación del primer cartucho de dinamita. Descendió la comitiva, despejéronse los alrededores, y el gobernador hizo explotar aquella primera carga. Arremolináronse entonces al pie del terraplén las brigadas de honor y los trabajadores para comenzar la labor de remover en carretillas de mano las piedras y la tierra de la enorme obra.<sup>361</sup>*

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*condiciones respecto a aquel puerto que las de la muralla sud de que se ha habla de respecto a este.” Informe de la Comandancia de Ingenieros,” March 6, 1883, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Ultramar, Legajo 407, File 18, Number 3, quoted in María de los Ángeles Castro, *Arquitectura en San Juan de Puerto Rico (siglo XIX)*, p 368. Translation into English: “[In Barcelona] . . . where in order to complete the port, the Atarazanas Fort was destroyed, as well as the whole wall facing the port which was in the same conditions as the southern wall here [Puerto Rico].” Twenty years earlier, in 1863, neighboring Havana had emulated the European precedents.*

<sup>361</sup> Adolfo de Hostos, *San Juan Ciudad murada*, p 260. Translation into English: “The authorization [to destroy the fortification walls] was received with enthusiasm by all social classes. At first, it was projected to construct a park in the area occupied by the walls and the bastions. Young men and women belonging to the higher echelons of society offered their services in order to help with the destruction. The group of young men, which numbered two hundred, organized nineteen brigades which they baptized with the names of Ortega, Lealtad, Rey, Reina, Regente, Colón, Matilde, Pura (in honor of the daughter of the governor), etc. They were provided with shovels by the Municipality and they were dressed with a uniform of their own creation: a *jipi-japa* straw hat and a camisole . . . . The young ladies, in turn, organized groups to provide water, solicitously and amiably dressed in their spring toilettes, carrying beautiful baskets adorned with flowers and bows, offered the liquid to slack the thirst of the young civic workers. The first brigade was placed under the direction of Miss Pura Marín y León, the first born daughter of Governor Marín. A tent camp was improvised along the Calle de San Francisco in front of the Plaza Colón to protect the ladies providing water from the sun.” “The authorities thought an air of solemnity should be given to the sacrifice implicit in the destruction of part of the famous Presidium of San Juan to modernity, a secular example of Spain’s power in the New World. Work started on 28 May 1897, declared a holiday by Governor Marín and announced to the public by the mayor, Dr José M Marxuach, in an environment that was joyous due to the presence of a splendid sun and the joy of the people. A beautiful national flag was hoisted over the Puerta de Santiago, the ships on the port were festively prepared and the balconies of the residences surrounding the Plaza de Colón were covered with hangings. The multitude was contained at the northeast corner of the Plaza while the governor, Captain General Ortega and the official special guests climbed the embankment that covered

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According to Tapia y Rivera, destroying the massive structure was a most difficult undertaking. *No fue tarea fácil demoler una estructura que frente a la plaza de Colón tenía más de veinte varas de ancho, rellenar los fosos y contrafosos y hacer desaparecer la enorme masa del revellín de Santiago, de los baluartes y cortinas ya mencionados.*<sup>362</sup> If Tapia y Rivera was right, the astounding defenses were approximately 23.76 meters in width.

The destruction of the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra is a reflection of the intimacy which existed between the urban core and military activities. Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Old San Juan experienced growing patterns that were “obstinately” European (Spiro Kostoff *dixit*). These, in turn, were completely determined by the defensive belt that encircled the city and the role it played in the defense of the empire. For centuries, the city was an introverted organism that forced its citizens to live a life marked by dramatic man-made boundaries. There were no extensive parks, except the Campo del Morro which, in spite of its present personality, was never considered such a venue but part of a military installation, hence the name of Esplanade. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century there were no large green areas, no interior promenades. The only places where the citizens could experience contact with nature were the diminutive green areas carved out of the patrolling circuit inside the city. Their location and size, however, were limited. This is the reason why the design of the 19<sup>th</sup> century La Barandilla and its petite green promenade, the *extramuros* Paseo de La Princesa and Paseo de Puerta de Tierra were considered such novelties. After the destruction of the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra, the entrance to the district from the two main roads into the city, Avenida Ponce de León and Avenida Fernández Juncos, had no urban or architectural “portal” for the present day Block 96 and 101 were empty, until two buildings were erected during the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the Casino de Puerto Rico in the first block and San Juan School Number 1 in the second one.

The firm of Montilla and Ferrer is associated to the first building which was constructed in 1917 to house the Casino de Puerto Rico. The Spanish and Puerto Rican *casino* was a social institution equivalent to the British gentlemen club. In addition to *ateneos* they were a characteristic 19<sup>th</sup> century organization. By the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the social centers welcomed the families of its members. At this time some of these groups abandoned the urban enclaves in favor of suburbia, where swimming pools and tennis courts could be constructed.<sup>363</sup> Although no swimming pool was included in this venue, the one floor building located “at the right of the Casino”<sup>364</sup> originally served as bowling alley for the club. Earlier *casinos* – whether in Old San Juan or island towns – were located around the main plazas. In the historic district, until the construction of this edifice, they were found around the Plaza de Armas, inside the protected precinct in buildings that originally served as houses on the south side of the Plaza de Armas. The “Number 1 General Plan of San Juan,” The Porto Rico Board of Fire Underwriters, 30 September 1921 evidences that both the Ateneo Puertorriqueño and Casino Español were located here.

This is the most elegant and exuberant of all the Second Empire Baroque examples in the Viejo San Juan and the island. The luxurious decoration speaks of a desire to impress by means of grand architectural gestures and elegant semantics. The *porte cochère* evidences the novelty of the architectural typology that now invited cars into its universe. The composition is crowned by a dramatic mansard roof originally covered with bronze

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the old vault to see the placement of the dynamite. The group came down, all surrounding areas were cleared of people, and the governor exploited the first charge. Then the honor brigades and the workers approached the area and started to remove the stones and the earth of the enormous structure using wheelbarrows.”

<sup>362</sup> *Idem*. Translation into English: “It was not easy to demolish a structure that in front of the Plaza Colón was more than twenty varas in width, to fill the moats and counter moats, and to eliminate the enormous mass of the Santiago Revalin, the bastions and curtain walls mentioned.”

<sup>363</sup> During the 1950s, the Casino de Puerto Rico moved again to a new locale, the then residential area of El Condado. Rafael Carmoega designed a Modern style masterpiece that sheltered the venue until its destruction during the 1980s.

<sup>364</sup> Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico A Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, p 213.

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tiles. During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they were substituted by the present copper ones. The trend established during this period towards independently conceived buildings that owe little to their context is evidenced in this design. The Casino is set apart as a “building-sculpture” disdaining any allegiance to the urban context surrounded by exuberant greenery. In fact, its main façade does not face the Plaza de Colón as traditionally expected. Its dramatic persona owes much to the City Beautiful Movement that considered buildings elegant decorative artifacts that had as their main function to beautify the city. In the 1940 the Casino de Puerto Rico was used as a USO facility; after 1952 it served as the first headquarters of the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña.

The elegant *porte cochère* led into the first floor foyer that connected by means of a sumptuous staircase with the main floor (the second one), where the dance area was located. In 1940, this last space was described as “decorated with festoons in Louis XV style.”<sup>365</sup> It is obvious the desire was to create a fanciful building that sharply contrasted to the traditional and relatively sober architecture of the district. The original *faux* marble treatment in the interior was substituted with real marble during the 1980s rehabilitation.

In spite of the 1980s transformations (bronze tiles substituted by copper and real marble for *faux* marble) the Casino de Puerto Rico is a contributing property of the historic district possessing urban, architectural, artistic and landscape national significance. As such, it was included in the National Register of Historic Places on 22 September 1977. It is the only preserved example of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural typology of the private social club known as *casino*, characteristic of both Spain and Puerto Rico, specifically created to be located on the outskirts of town in order to serve the members’ families by including sports activities. Its locale at the entrance of the district exemplifies the transformations these sedate institutions underwent during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The unique architectural solution is a magnificent example of the Second Empire Baroque. The bombastic mansard roof is the only one of its kind in the city and the island. The Casino de Puerto Rico has landscape significance for it is part of the main entrance/exit portal to the Viejo San Juan, occupying part of the area where the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra was once located.

## The American Public Schools

The period after 1898 was characterized by architectural transformations, particularly in terms of the new buildings added to the core’s distinguished roster. These federally-funded and private edifices represented a new aesthetic layer superimposed to the core, not only stylistically but also in terms of architectural typologies. Most were interpreted as new examples representing the elegance and uniqueness of the urban context. Some of the most important buildings constructed as a direct result of the American invasion were public schools.

Education under the Spanish regime was rocky at best.<sup>366</sup> Most historic sources agree that the government assumed education, whether private or public, was a dangerous activity. Because of this: *los amantes del progreso eran tachados de filibusteros, de enemigos de España.*<sup>367</sup> As a result and for all practical purposes, in the Viejo San Juan, as was the case in the rest of the island, the school as a building did not exist. The vast majority of the educational centers were sheltered in private houses and religious buildings such as the Seminario Conciliar de San Ildefonso and the *estudio* (study) in the Catedral de San Juan Bautista.

<sup>365</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>366</sup> Arleen Pabón Charneco, “Los palacios del saber ponceños Proyecto de rehabilitación de la escuela Ponce High, Investigación Histórica, Determinación de Elegibilidad Registro Nacional de Lugares Históricos, Señalamiento de Elementos de Significación Patrimonial Escuelas Roosevelt, Grammar, McKinley y Ponce High” (MS: San Juan de Puerto Rico, 1997).

<sup>367</sup> Eduardo Newmann, *Verdadera y auténtica historia de la ciudad de Ponce desde sus primeros tiempos hasta la época contemporánea* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: 1913), p 140. Translation: “The lovers of progress were thought to be filibusters.”

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It is instructive to analyze Alejandro Tapia y Rivera's memoirs regarding his education in the Viejo San Juan during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in order to better understand education within the historic district at this time.<sup>368</sup> As a small boy, he attended the Juan Basilio Nuñez's school located in Calle de la Cruz 1 ("old number"). To round up the traditional education, he also took courses at an *escuela de dibujo* (drawing school) tutored by Juan Cleto Noa. (Notice should be taken that the names of the schools are quite informal; the names of their founders are simply added to the word *escuela* or school.) In 1837, Tapia y Rivera attended the *Liceo de San Juan*, a relatively new institution guided by the *padres secularizados* (secularized priests) from the Escuelas Pías de Cataluña (Escolapian Catalan School), known as the Escolapios (Escolapians) and directed by Fulgencio Angla. The center is described in the following fashion:

*Este colegio, de carácter puramente particular, extendía el estudio, en parte, a la segunda enseñanza, puesto que, a más de la aritmética y gramática, se enseñaba la retórica, latín, francés, italiano, matemática, dibujo de todas clases, música vocal e instrumental, agrimensura práctica, contabilidad, cálculo mercantil, geografía universal, cosmografía, etc. Este colegio, como se ve, constituía un progreso en la enseñanza. La escuela del Padre Bobadilla, doctor dominico, era la única que entonces podía competir en nombre con los Escolapios, aunque en ella había menos ramos de enseñanza.*<sup>369</sup>

At a later date, Tapia y Rivera changed schools one more time in order to attend the Museo de la Juventud educational center, located in front of the Plaza de Armas in the house that sheltered the Ateneo Puertorriqueño from 1882 to 1920s. The director of this center – that was less expensive than the previous one he attended – was Architect Pedro García, a native of Madrid and city architect who had also distinguished himself as a drawing teacher. Catalan Ramón Castans was in charge of mathematics and Galician Francisco Salgado of Latin and French. By 1840-1841, the school had closed and only Castans continued to teach privately.

Only limited opportunities were available to boys like Tapia y Rivera whose family, albeit with effort, could pay for his education. Those with no money had no chance at all to be educated since the government made no effort to help the financially challenged. Furthermore, what little funding was available was given by the government to the Catholic Church:

*[D]e nada han servido repetidos decretos y órdenes del Gobierno supremo, o inclumplidos por sus representantes en esta tierra . . . Una disposición de 9 de Diciembre de 1868 ordena la creación de una Escuela Normal, y tal centro no existe todavía: dos Reales órdenes de 27 de julio de 1863 y 23 de agosto de 1866 disponen la fundación de un Instituto civil de segunda enseñanza, y transcurren los años hasta el de 1873, y cuando en éste un puñado de hombres de buena voluntad lo fundan y cimientan, una violentísima reacción [del gobierno] lo destruye . . .*

*Y en tanto la misma diputación construye y entrega a los jesuitas un palacio, que le cuesta \$200,000, para que exploten la enseñanza de la juventud acomodada . . . No pueden crearse la Escuela Normal . . . [ni otras]; pero entre tanto la Diputación provincial trae y aloja en su propia casa a las llamadas Madres del Corazón de Jesús, para que dirijan un colegio de señoritas, proponiéndose construirles otros suntuoso edificio y subvencionándolas . . . a expensas de la olvidada segunda enseñanza y de la abandonada instrucción popular.*<sup>370</sup>

<sup>368</sup> Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo dejo y como lo encontré*, p 83.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, p 91. Translation: "This private school included all the secondary grades since – in addition to arithmetic and grammar – rhetoric, Latin, French, Italian, mathematics, drawing of all types, vocal and instrumental music, surveying, accounting, mercantile calculus, universal geography, and cosmography were also taught. This school represented progress in terms of education. Father Bobadilla, a Dominican doctor, had the only school that could compete with the Escolapios, although the variety of classes taught at this other center was not as large."

<sup>370</sup> Carlos Peñaranda, *Cartas Puertorriqueñas 1878-1880* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Editorial El Cemí, 1967), pp 104-105. Translation into English: "The repeated decrees and orders from the supreme government have come to naught and have not been

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What happened after 1898 was not the substitution of one educational system for another, as some like to obscurely debate, but the creation of the first formal public educational system that aspired to educate all free of charge. The island had a history of a highly educated patrician class because that social echelon always had access to education. Dozens went to Spain to finish their university studies and, at times, their high school. What truly changed after 1898 was that now everybody was not only given the opportunity but forced to study. In order to accomplish this goal, the island was covered – paraphrasing the medieval description for churches – with a mantle of schools. The spectacular architectural blanket became tangible in Old San Juan by means of the construction of three palatial schools designed and erected during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These solid-looking and luxurious buildings can be interpreted as *palacios del saber* (educational palaces),<sup>371</sup> not only because of their size but also because of their elegance. Temple front façades, arcades, loggias, varied tympana and peristyles of all kinds, as well as a dizzying array of decorative elements came to shelter the activity. The schools' architectural drama touched each and every one of the island's towns and left an enduring mark in Old San Juan where three public schools were created to serve the district: the primary school known as the San Juan School Number 1 and, at a later time, as the Escuela José Julián Acosta y Calvo (José Julián Acosta y Calvo School); the Escuela Graduada y Técnica Ramón Baldorioty de Castro (Ramón Baldorioty de Castro Graduate and Technical School), finished in 1918; and the Escuela Graduada Abraham Lincoln (Abraham Lincoln Graduate School).

These school buildings sheltered the activity that was interpreted as a right of each citizen and a responsibility of the state but also an opportunity for a better life and a source of enjoyment. The buildings were conceived as showcases, unique urban artifacts. The educational process was a jewel that needed to shine from the right coffer packed with luxury and splendor. The Abraham Lincoln and the José Julián Acosta examples, take up whole urban blocks while the third one, the Escuela Baldorioty de Castro, occupies more than half of one of these units. Their size and splendor certainly contrasts with the rest of the core.

The structures do not pretend to be part of the traditional urban fabric either in terms of their size, architectural morphology or style. On the contrary, they establish their independence by means of their treatment as isolated "sculpture buildings." Each educational phase – *primaria* (elementary), *secundaria* (secondary), *superior* or *alta* (high school) – was given a special edifice of its own, since each educational phase was considered a personal and communal triumph. The highest educational level was the "agriculture and industrial school." This education in non-academic fields was a 19<sup>th</sup> century idea which, in the United States, resulted in the creation of university-level centers that were designed for African Americans, hence the "agricultural" and "mechanical" specialization. The concept was probably felt to be appropriate for the inhabitants of the new colony.

At the time, the United States was in the process of completely transforming its educational system. The country found inspiration – as most countries in the world – in the German schooling system. As expected, this

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followed by the representatives in this land . . . A 9 December 1868 decree orders the creation of a Normal School and this center still does not exist: two Royal commands from 27 July 1863 and 23 August 1866 mandate the foundation of a secondary level Civil Institute and years go by until in 1873 a group of well-intentioned men finally organized it only to face a most violent reaction from the government that closed it." "Meanwhile, the same Diputación constructs and hands to the Jesuits a palace that cost \$200,000.00 so that it can be used to teach the rich . . . They cannot create the Normal School [or any of the others] . . . but in the meantime the same Diputación Provincial brings and shelters in its own house the so-called Madres del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús so that they can direct a school for rich young women, while proposing to construct another luxurious building with its funds . . . abandoning secondary education and popular instruction."

<sup>371</sup> The concept of educational palaces was first explored in Arleen Pabón Charneco, "Los palacios del saber ponceños Proyecto de rehabilitación de la escuela Ponce High, Investigación Histórica, Determinación de Elegibilidad Registro Nacional de Lugares Históricos, Señalamiento de Elementos de Significación Patrimonial Escuelas Roosevelt, Grammar, McKinley y Ponce High."

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country's architectural typology, developed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, was carefully studied.<sup>372</sup> Regardless of the Picturesque organization present in some façades, the buildings were carefully organized in a symmetrical manner with a centralized main entrance that provided access to the service corridors that united the wings in the different floors. The architecture of the Old San Juan educational centers not only created an aesthetic shelter but a refuge from daily chores. While at school, every student was expected to disconnect from the daily life cares that characterized so many in those difficult times. The building's architectural semantics were in charge of creating this Romantic approach to reality. It is no surprise that the City Beautiful Movement ideas provided inspiration for all these edifices.

### **Escuela José Julián Acosta y Calvo (Parcela 1, Block 101)**

The Escuela José Julián Acosta y Calvo was constructed between the years 1906 to 1910 in part of the area once occupied by the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra. At the time of its erection, it was known as San Juan School Number 1, the first "palatial" school created by the United States in Old San Juan.

The firm of Clarke, Howe & Homer Architects authored the design, although the main consultant was Architect EB Homer and the builder was Antonio Higuera. At that time, Clarke & Howe was a young firm specializing primarily in domestic architecture.<sup>373</sup> An important early commission of the firm was the Providence US Federal Building and Courthouse (1904-1908), a project that help establish the young group and led to many other works, including the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company Building (1917; 1931), the Providence Gas Company Building (1924), and three buildings for Brown University designed between the years 1903 and 1927.

The Clarke and Howe Federal Building built in Providence, Rhode Island is considered an example of the Beaux Arts Style, the American equivalent to the Second Empire Baroque and the Spanish Belle Époque. The use of this architectural style was inspired by the City Beautiful Movement, therefore, its principal goal was to create elegant civic buildings to frame various public activities. Not one aesthetic current was used for this purpose but a fusion of semantics that organize elegant, exuberant and grand buildings full of architectural drama and decorative richness.

The Escuela José Julián Acosta's main objective was to create a beautiful artifact that would elegantly frame the educational process at its earliest stage. A Neo-Palladian approach was embraced in which hierarchical and symmetrical organization acted as a rational symbol of its use. This Classically-inspired composition was contrasted with the liberally-inspired decorative elements, such as the curved gables and applied décor. The Neo-Palladian main façade with its curved gables effectively ends the wings which are used to organize the interior spaces. An "E" shape floor plan was utilized with the middle part of the "E" shorter than the other two wings. As was also the case with the Escuela Abraham Lincoln, a small center loggia acts as entrance foyer. The structure was renovated in 1927, when the present day fence and portal, contributing elements, were added.

### **Escuela Ramón Baldorioty de Castro (Parcela 1B, Block 37)**

<sup>372</sup> School buildings such as the Realschule, Karlsruhe in Baden with its E-shaped floor plan and one sided service corridors and the Oberrealschule, Leitomisch, Bohemia in Austria with its U-shaped plan and corridor located on the inside of the U profoundly influenced many American school buildings. The floor plans of these and other examples were included in several publications of the period. One of these was Edmund March Wheelwright, *School Architecture* (Boston, Rogers and Mason, 1901).

<sup>373</sup> The firm originally had two partners Prescott Orlott (senior one) and Wallis Eastburn Clarke. In 1901, the Rhode Island firm was joined by Wallis Eastburn Howe and in 1903 the tandem became Clarke and Howe. During the period from 1910 to 1913, Eleazer B Homer acted as third partner. *Providence Board of Trade Journal*, 1/903: 442. Digital source: [www.rid.uscourts.gov](http://www.rid.uscourts.gov).



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The Escuela Ramón Baldorioty de Castro was constructed at the site of the old Convento de San Francisco which, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, became the Cuartel de San Francisco (San Francisco Military Barracks). As mentioned, the infamous establishment was considered the epicenter of all kinds of social evils. “The apartments of the north side of the lower floor were, at the time of the Spanish dominion, the source of all sorts of maladies, including one yellow fever bout that spread throughout the city and the whole island. The area surrounding the edifice (roughly located to the north) was locally known as Hoyo Vicioso (Vicious Hole), a name that refers to both the height difference of the terrain and the men living in the structure and the unholy services they required. In 1918, the building named the Román Baldorioty de Castro Technical School, the first of its kind in the Island, was erected.<sup>374</sup>

The Neo-Palladian composition creates a virtual palace facing the Plaza de San Francisco and La Barandilla. As mentioned, the new morphology and architectural style provided a completely new association with education. The monumental scale of the building sharply contrasts with the traditional ones of the district and is symbolic of the role education was expected to have for all people. Free standing Colossal Doric columns organize a portico that is framed by two pavilions crowned by pediments. A wide Doric frieze, with roundels inserted in its metopes, embraces the T-shaped building. Of special interest are the Neo-Roman concrete balustrades used throughout the edifice.

### **Escuela Graduada Abraham Lincoln (Parcela 1, Block 9)**

Until 1923, Block 9 – where the Escuela Graduada Abraham Lincoln is currently located – was occupied in its entirety by the Polvorín de San Sebastián.<sup>375</sup> The “Number 1 General Plan of San Juan,” The Porto Rico Board of Fire Underwriters, 30 September 1921 depicts the gunpowder magazine as a solid structure with buttresses, quite similar in size and shape to the Polvorín de Santa Elena, located in the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro grounds. The block upon which the building sat was framed by four streets named: Boulevard del Valle, Calle del Oeste, Calle Martinillo and Calle del general Contreras antes del Sol.<sup>376</sup> The use of the lot for a new school makes sense if we take into account that it was one of the few sites in the congested city that was not in use. In addition, it was the property of the government and not necessary for the defense of the historic district. It was indeed a coup for the Americans to substitute an old fashioned military artifact that in Spanish times constantly posed imminent danger to the neighborhood with a palatial public school where scores could be educated for free. This dream was to become a reality at the Abraham Lincoln Graduate School finished in 1924.<sup>377</sup>

<sup>374</sup> Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, p 197.

<sup>375</sup> By the time of Tapia y Rivera published his memories the structure was not in use: *Siguiendo lo que hoy se denomina calle de San Sebastián, hacia San Cristóbal, se encuentra el expolvorin, en cuyo lugar en tiempo remoto hubo una capilla de aquel Santo, que dio su nombre después al polvorin y a la calle.* After 1898, the building became the property of the United States. Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo deajo*, p 51. Translation into English: “Following the present day Calle de San Sebastián, one finds the former gunpowder magazine; at this site before the structure was constructed there was a chapel dedicated to the saint who later gave name to the gunpowder magazine and the street.”

<sup>376</sup> Notation appearing in the “Number 1 General Plan of San Juan,” The Porto Rico Board of Fire Underwriters, 30 September 1921. The Calle del general Contreras was named in honor of Juan Contreras Martínez, who served as the island’s governor for the first time from 10 January 1887 to 23 March 1887. After the brief governorship of Romualdo Palacios González (23 March 1887 – 11 November 1887), Contreras Martínez served for a second time from 11 November 1887 until 1888. The street no longer bears his name but the historic one of Calle del Sol.

<sup>377</sup> This date implies that the structure was constructed in three years or less, given the fact the gunpowder magazine still appears in the “Number 1 General Plan of San Juan,” The Porto Rico Board of Fire Underwriters, 30 September 1921. The name Abraham Lincoln for the school is interesting for the other two educational centers in the district memorialize Puerto Ricans patriots: Ramón Baldorioty de Castro and José Julián Acosta y Calvo.

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The American educational system included the philosophical concept that: "The industrial school is an organization which places the formation of character above everything else."<sup>378</sup> Maybe because of this, an imposing sculptural memorial was included in the design. Surrounded by a low decorative curved wall, a marble Abraham Lincoln sits in the southwest corner of the block. This Romantic interpretation of the martyred president was quite fashionable since the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC was inaugurated in 1922. The seated President solemnly facing eternity was obviously inspired by the famous sculpture in the American capital city. The monument can be considered a City Beautiful Movement urban expression.

The use of reinforced concrete and the Mediterranean Revival architectural style added to the building's sense of modernity. Among the architectural elements of interest are the decorative details – such as cartouches, arches, and garlands – characteristic of this architectural style. The Calle de San Sebastián entrance portal includes a small loggia which serves as foyer repeating the iconic Mediterranean-inspired semicircular arch motif. The open area of the U-shaped floor plan looks over the northern cliffs of the islet and the Atlantic.

The three American schools – the primary school originally known as the San Juan School Number 1 and, at a later time, the Escuela José Julián Acosta y Calvo; Escuela Graduada y Técnica Ramón Baldorioty de Castro; and Escuela Graduada Abraham Lincoln – are contributing properties possessing urban, architectural, artistic and landscape national significance. They are examples of different architectural styles used at the time to create palatial and elegant edifices, iconic of the new educational system introduced to the island by the Americans after 1898. The Escuela José Julián Acosta y Calvo is the oldest American school in the district and probably in the island depicting monumental scale, elegance and richness befitting a palace. The use of concrete and modern internal spatial organization evidences the transformations the American educational system was undergoing at this time. The three school buildings underscore their relevance by abandoning the traditional urban fabric intimacy and proposing City Beautiful Movement ideas to the historic core. This reality adds other layers of significance to these three buildings.

### **Iglesia Metodista de la Santísima Trinidad (Parcela 24B, Block 17)**

The first Methodist temple in the district was located on Calle de la Cruz before it was relocated to this site on Calle del Sol and became the first formal temple of this congregation in the island.<sup>379</sup> In the "Number 1 General Plan of San Juan," The Porto Rico Board of Fire Underwriters, 30 September 1921 a narrow open space is depicted between the building and its neighbor to the east. This space continues towards the back of the building that existed prior to the church. A very small structure also appears in this document, next to the eastern neighbor. At some point after this date, these structures were demolished and new buildings constructed to house the church and parish services. In order to accomplish this task, the eastern *parcela* was incorporated into the property. In other words, in 1921 there were six *parcelas* and one open area facing Calle del Sol while, presently, there are only five.

The three nave church is an example of the American architectural influence. As mentioned, before 1898, there were no other Christian temples in the district, except Roman Catholic ones. After 1898, new faiths came to the core meant, at first, to serve the American citizens. Originally, they were housed in historic structures adapted to the new use. When funding became available, permanent buildings were erected. The present temple was designed by Czech architect Antonín Nechodoma and built by contractor Frank B Hatch in 1922. The building uses the Mediterranean Revival semantics to create a traditional façade with a non-symmetrical westwork which, uncharacteristically for a Christian temple, faces south. Urban considerations made this impossible due to the tightly congested conditions of the historic district. Another departure from

<sup>378</sup> Georg Kerschensteiner, *The Idea of the Industrial School* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1913), p 77.

<sup>379</sup> The first Methodist service in the Iglesia Metodista de la Santísima Trinidad took place on March 30, 1900. That day's preacher was Reverend Charles W Dress.

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traditional schemes is the non-alignment with the historic urban Calle del Sol façade. The building establishes urban and architectural independence by not sharing *medianeras* (party walls) as most buildings in the district do and by the set-back that distances it from its immediate context, the sidewalk and street. The tympanum, archivolt, niches, rose window, gabled frontispiece and glazed terracotta decorative elements are all favorite motifs of the architectural style. The interior of the temple presents a contrast when compared to traditional local ones. While all historic examples were all made of masonry covered with stucco and sported lofty barrel vaults, this one was made of concrete and sheathed in wood in the manner characteristic to British and American churches.

The Iglesia Metodista de la Santísima Trinidad is considered a contributing property possessing urban, architectural and artistic national significance. It is the earliest Methodist temple in the Viejo San Juan and the island and a building designed by famed Architect Antonín Nechodoma, who distinguished himself by interpreting all sorts of revivals and famously adapting Frank Lloyd Wright's designs to the island. The building's urban adaptation to the historic core and its aesthetic elements also contribute to its cultural and architectural significance. Even though it is a religious property, it is a unit of a holistic district, deriving its primary significance from its architectural importance, as per Criterion Consideration A.

#### **Cámara de Comercio de Puerto Rico (Parcela 3, Block 60)**

The site where the Cámara de Comercio de Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico Chamber of Commerce) is presently located was carved in 1926 from the historic southern defensive *paseo de ronda* (pomoerium). A guardhouse serving Bastión de la Palma was originally erected in this location. When the building was constructed in 1926 it was meant to serve as the headquarters of the Federal Land Bank of Baltimore.<sup>380</sup> In 1937, the building was sold to the Cámara de Comercio de Puerto Rico, an island-wide chamber of commerce. It still shelters the same function. A green planted area was left in front in the manner of a garden, making it the only public building in the whole historic district to formally receive this treatment. Twentieth-century urban and architectural ideas favored the interpretation of the edifice as a "building-sculpture" that is independent from the urban context and neighbors.

The Cámara de Comercio de Puerto Rico was founded in 1913 by a group previously known as the *Lonja de Valores y Víveres de San Juan*.<sup>381</sup> A Spanish tradition, *lonjas* were guild-like groups formed by businessmen that united to further their interests and protect their individual commercial ventures. This one was originally interested in *valores* (value property) and *viveres* (food). Another important function they played was to act as arbiters in business disputes. The Cámara de Comercio de Puerto Rico was the brainchild of Sosthenes Behn, one of the ubiquitous Behn Brothers, who also served as president of the local Compañía del Teléfono (Telephone Company). The brothers were instrumental in the development of the suburban Condado area and Iso in the creation of the first radio station in the district and the island. The pair is symbolic of the modernization process experienced in the metropolitan area of San Juan empowered by American entrepreneurship.

The architectural style used in the building is based on an eclectic historicist reinterpretation of exotic Middle Eastern semantics, in all likelihood Mesopotamian in origin, that present a striking contrast to the common stylistic preferences evidenced throughout the city. This revivalist inspiration is paired to a Classicist organization in terms of the arrangement of the facade. A loggia-like area framed by multifaceted columns serves as the main entrance. The peristyle holds a frieze-like element which reads "Cámara de Comercio de

<sup>380</sup> Tomas Marvel. *Antonin Nechodoma, Architect 1877-1928: The Prairie School in the Caribbean* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press, 1994), 188-189.

<sup>381</sup> Digital source: <http://www.camaraapr.org>.

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Puerto Rico.” This central, relatively transparent area is framed by two short wings which complete the composition.

The Cámara de Comercio de Puerto Rico is considered a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, artistic and landscape national significance. The building was designed by famed architect Antonín Nechodoma who specialized in the adaptation of Frank Lloyd Wright’s designs for the upper social echelon in the island and in the experimentation with varied architectural revivals. The building’s adaptation to the historic pommerium and unusual (for the district) aesthetic elements also contribute to its significance, being the only Neo-Mesopotamian public architecture example in the Viejo San Juan. It is also the only preserved example of the chamber of commerce building. While there was a local tradition of *lonjas*, the emphasis on commercial activity can be interpreted as evidence of yet another American influence in the district.

### **The Royal Bank of Canada (Parcela 3, Block 62)**

One of the most important new economic and social concepts imported from the United States during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the banking institution,<sup>382</sup> which impacted the historic district architecturally and culturally. After 1898, in addition to American banks Canadian ones also established here. The Royal Bank of Canada building was constructed in 1912 in the Calle de Tetuán, historically known as the Calle de los Cuarteles (Barracks Street), considered for centuries a premier thoroughfare of the urban core. The building was erected for the bank that began to operate in Old San Juan three years earlier.

These novel institutions spare no expense in terms of the architecture of their buildings. Luxury tinged with exoticism and grandeur – symbolic of financial wealth – was sought. In this particular case, neoclassical semantics were liberally incorporated into the design. During the year 1940, the structure was described in the following fashion: “Designed in the Corinthian style [*sic*] and executed in cut stone, the main entrance is flanked by magnificent columns. The building rests on a rusticated base with small heavily barred windows which provide a powerful feeling.”<sup>383</sup> This is precisely what bank design aimed to do at the time: create a sense of financial power and stability.

Colossal Composite fluted pilasters frame the entrance portal which sits on a podium. These engaged vertical elements support a frieze with the inscribed date of “AD MCMXII.” Classicist semantics are lovingly scattered throughout the building, particularly in the entablature that includes a liberal use of dentils and varied moldings. Another novelty was the use of exposed ashlar masonry which substituted the traditional stucco finish present in most buildings of the historic district. Calle de Tizol’s façade has much in common with Leo von Klenze’s architectural solutions, particularly in the rational approach to the openings and floors vis-à-vis the decorative elements of Classicist inspiration.

The Royal Bank of Canada is considered a contributing property possessing urban, architectural and artistic national significance. The building is a prime example of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Classicist-inspired revival and an icon of the early banks that established operations in Old San Juan after 1898.

### **La Mallorquina (Parcela 18, Block 36)**

*La Mallorquina* is one of two examples evidencing the impact of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries Catalan aesthetic expression known as *Modernisme*. This unique stylistic movement can be considered part of the Art

<sup>382</sup> For millennia, the Catholic Church prohibited certain fiscal activities, such as lending money for interest, considering them a sin. As a result, banking was seen as a social evil.

<sup>383</sup> Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, p 199.

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Nouveau, an expression that swept throughout Europe during the period. Since the early years of the past century, the unusual first floor façade has housed the famed *La Mallorquina* cafeteria.<sup>384</sup>

The transparency of this façade's storefront is iconic of the architectural transformations experienced at this time. The traditional Old San Juan solid façade wall with limited openings was abandoned allowing for a more transparent window-shopping experience. The rich stained glass bow window frames the jewel-like pastries for which the establishment was known for decades attracting, via a most refreshing architectural style, clients. The first floor is organized with a side door for clients and the wide *vitrina* (window) previously mentioned. Another door reserved for service frames the central window on the other side of the entrance. It is interesting to note that the rest of the building is treated in the district's traditional manner. In other words, there was no desire to integrate the upper floors of the building to the decorative uniqueness of the first one. A liberal use of Spanish ceramic tiles also adorns the façade, evidencing that the cultural and aesthetic ties with Spain were still in place.

*La Mallorquina* is considered a contributing property possessing urban, architectural and artistic national significance. It is the only preserved example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century cafeteria and one of two examples of the *Modernisme* in the Viejo San Juan. The famous grilled *pan de mallorca* (sweet Mallorca bread) and *café au lait*, still percolated in the original 1920s Cuban coffee-making machine, have made it a favorite of generations. The venue, a local interpretation of Spanish cafeterias and the American counter-type venue, has inspired multiple short stories, novels and other artistic expressions.

### **Fábrica de Refrescos *El Polo Norte* (Parcela 20, Block 52)**

The *Fábrica de Refrescos El Polo Norte* is one of two *Modernisme* buildings in the Viejo San Juan. Loosely related to the Art Nouveau, the movement was born in Catalonia and is characterized by the sophisticated use of decorative elements, including mosaics and tiles, as amply demonstrated in the façade of the *Fábrica de Refrescos El Polo Norte*, the only façade in the district to sport such a treatment. The ornate plane follows countless Spanish examples created at this time in the peninsula. It was designed to serve as the "corporate image" of the *El Polo Norte* (The North Pole), a factory (*fábrica*) that specialized in soft drinks (*refrescos*). *Modernisme* used tiles in an unconventional manner. In addition to their traditional decorative role, at this time, they also became permanent artistic ceramic "posters" that adorned and also publicized a particular product. Examples are found all over Spain, with images that range from *cava* (champagne) to olive oil and from soaps to flour.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, even small factories were located within the city's historic boundaries. This is the only preserved example. The *El Polo Norte* most famous drink, the kola-champagne, was invented by the owner of the enterprise, Ángel Rivero Méndez. Captain Rivero commanded the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro during the Spanish-American War and wrote the classic history of the conflict known as *Crónica de la Guerra Hispanoamericana* (*Chronicle of the Spanish American War*). This is the only building directly associated to his person.

*El Polo Norte* is considered a contributing property possessing urban, architectural and artistic national significance. It is the only preserved example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century factory and one of two *Modernisme* examples in the historic district. The building also has associational ties to the invention of the *kola-champagne* soft drink and Captain Rivero, its inventor. Captain Rivero not only fought in the Spanish-

<sup>384</sup> Arleen Pabón Charneco, "The *Swiss Chalet Restaurant* Historic and Architectural Documentation of the Building and Determination of Eligibility of Adjacent Buildings" (MS: San Juan de Puerto Rico, 2002).

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American War but also wrote the book that is considered the classic account of the conflict. The *El Polo Norte* is the only building associated to his person.

### **Edificio de González Padín (Parcela 3, Block 45)**

The Edificio de González Padín is located on the southeast corner of the Plaza de Armas, at the intersection of the Calle de Rafael Cordero, Calle de la Cruz and Calle de la Fortaleza. Built in 1923, for decades it housed one of the first department stores in the district and the island, the Tienda por Departamentos de González Padín (González Padín Department Store). Considered the type's most important example in Puerto Rico for centuries, the building housing the main store became an icon for thousands.

The principal entrance to the store stood on the chamfered corner of Calle de la Cruz and Calle de Rafael Cordero, although there was a second one located on the corner of Calle de la Cruz and Calle de la Fortaleza. The sharp incline of Calle de la Cruz allowed for the insertion of a basement, which was also part of the store. The building had a third entrance on Calle de Rafael Cordero that connected to the floors of private offices. In the foyer of this entrance the Cafetería de González Padín was located, an emblematic eatery, one of the first to introduce counter-eating to the district.

The department store and office floors, as well as the façade and the morphological organization of the floor plan were designed following the ideas of the Chicago School. The store was located on the first two floors and basement and made ample use of the innovative free plan to organize its departments. The service core was composed of two striking elements: an elevator and an elegant marble staircase organized in spiral fashion around the elevator shaft. This last element, one of the first ones in the district and the island, had open metal gridded doors. For decades, it needed an operator to go from one floor to the other.

The floor plan of the offices was organized around a central open area enclosed by glass. As mentioned, the offices could be reached through a private entrance of their own facing the Plaza de Armas. The use of the skyscraper construction; reinforced concrete, metal and glass; free floor plan; core organization; and "Chicago windows" evidence the impact of modern American architectural ideas in the Viejo San Juan during this period.

As is the case with many other structures in the core, this one is part of the folklore of the district and island. The cafeteria, one of the first in the island to sport such a name, was a simple counter with stools that created a sensation due to the novelty of its arrangement. It was famed for its *mallorcas*, *café au lait*, and grilled *bocadillos* (a kind of sandwich that uses sweet bread). In addition to sheltering one of the very first large department stores in the city and the island, the edifice was also known for its *vitrinas* (large glass fronts). The nostalgically remembered *vitrinas de Navidad* ("the González Padín Christmas decorated shopping windows") were the first of their kind. The Christmas decorations displayed all sorts of moveable dolls and was considered a must visit during the season when hundreds came from all parts of the island in order to enjoy the varied themes. The term *vitrinas de González Padín* has become part of the local vernacular inspired by the core, as well as the subject of short stories and novels. As such it appears in local literature to reflect the more innocent gone by days of yesteryear.

The Edificio de González Padín is considered a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, artistic and landscape national significance. The building is a prime example of the adaptation of modern architecture tenements, such as the free floor plan, skyscraper type of construction, use of reinforced concrete, metal and glass and "Chicago windows." It is the oldest examples of this architectural type that pretended to transform the old core into a "small New York." The impact the Christmas *vitrinas* had upon several generations has been duly recorded in literature examples.

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### **Banco Popular de Puerto Rico (Parcela 1, Block 63)**

During the 1920s, the concentration of banks on Block 62 and Block 63 was such that the square in front of the present Banco Popular de Puerto Rico building, known presently as the Plaza de Carrión, received the name of Plazoleta de los Bancos (Banks Plaza). Some of the neighboring institutions located in the sector were the: *Banco Comercial* (Block 61), *Royal Bank of Canada*, *National City Bank* (Block 62), *American Colonial Bank* (Block 64), and *Bank of Nova Scotia* (Block 55). Thanks to this impressive collection the sector became the banking district of Old San Juan. As mentioned, with the acceptance of full-fledged formal banking activities after 1898, American and Canadian financial institutions ventured into the island's market.

At the lot where the Banco Popular de Puerto Rico now stands – surrounded by the Calle de Tetuán, Calle del Recinto Sur, Calle de San Justo and Calle de Tizol – the Banco Territorial y Agrícola (Territorial and Agricultural Bank) was located until the 1920s. The *Sociedad Anónima Banco Territorial y Agrícola de Puerto Rico* (Anonymous Territorial and Agricultural Society) was founded in 1869 by Manuel Martínez y José Rodríguez with the exclusive purpose of providing *financiamiento refaccionario o agrícola* (agricultural financing). In 1894, the objectives of the institution changed to commercial banking. As such, it became a regular banking center, albeit limited in size, with no particular exclusive interest. It was at this time that the name was changed to Banco Popular de Puerto Rico, a financial institution that still exists.

The present Art Deco tower substituted the 1890s building described as:

*El edificio reconstruido para albergar el Banco Territorial y Agrícola en 1896 en el Viejo San Juan demuestra una interesante fase del barroco del segundo imperio en la isla y cómo dicho vocabulario se atemperó a las ideas clasicistas. La elegante organización propuesta para la portada de la calle Tetuán emuló sin ambages el antes mencionado edificio de la Ópera en París, en particular la elegante subdivisión de dos niveles y el rol protagónico que los balcones enmarcados por los órdenes clásicos juegan en la portada. El carácter plástico de la pseudo-rusticación y la decoración en general también reflejaban los principios estéticos explorados por el estilo en su versión francesa.*<sup>385</sup>

During the year 1936 plans started for the construction of the new building that was inaugurated in 1939. The contemporary architectural style was undoubtedly chosen to provide an air of financial modernity. The architectural typology (the office building) and structural morphology (the skyscraper construction) were relatively new to the historic district. Its proportions and height distinguished it from its immediate surroundings in dramatic fashion. Considered at the time the highest building in the island, its scale was partly possible through the use of reinforced concrete. Concrete material made possible the height of the edifice, its open floor plan, the creation of a curved façade and the special bas-relief decoration.

The façade facing the port has a central curved element with a stained glass window that runs the height of several floors. Using this centuries-old motif, associated to Gothic temples and spirituality, probably meant to inspire both respect and admiration. It also allowed for light to enter the main lobby, adding a sense of transparency and modernity. The stained glass window is extensively and ostentatiously framed with ten sculptural reliefs of Classical gods. Some of the deities of the pantheon depicted are Zeus, Apollo and

<sup>385</sup> Arleen Pabón Charneco, *La arquitectura patrimonial puertorriqueña y sus estilos*, p 298. Translation into English: "The reconstructed building that sheltered the *Banco Territorial y Agrícola* in 1896 in Old San Juan is an example of an interesting Second Empire Baroque phase in the island and the impact Classically-inspired semantics had on this particular expression. The elegant proposed organization for the Calle de Tetuán façade emulated the already mentioned Opera in Paris by Charles Garnier, particularly the elegant division of the façade into two levels and the protagonist role played by the balconies framed by the classical architectural orders. The plastic character of the pseudo-rustication and decoration in general also reflected the aesthetic principles explored by the style in its French version."

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Mercury. These geometric concrete bas-reliefs provide decoration at the base of the central, curved section of the building.

Use of this pagan theme is a bit obtuse, particularly in terms of its iconography. It is possible the reference to Classical antiquity was meant to underscore the bank's discourse as a serious institution. It is also possible it was meant to reinforce Western values. It is interesting to note that the building faces the Spanish Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla and its central entrance portal, depicting a most unusual, for a recalcitrant Catholic district, representation of the "pagan" Zodiac signs. In this particular case, it is possible to interpret these symbols as icons of 19<sup>th</sup> century Spanish liberalism and anti-clericalism. In any case, the Banco Popular de Puerto Rico designer also chose Classical mythology as a source of inspiration.

The Banco Popular de Puerto Rico is considered a contributing property possessing urban, architectural, artistic and landscape national significance. The building is a prime example of the adaptation of Art Deco decorative tenements with modern concepts such as the office building typology, free floor plan, skyscraper type of construction, and use of reinforced concrete, metal and glass. The impact the building has on the port area landscape due to its height adds another layer of significance. The decorative motifs of the Classical gods in the façade are a prime example of architectural sculpture and a unique example in the district and the island.

## DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE IN THE OLD SAN JUAN HISTORIC DISTRICT

The main difference between the house and other architectural typologies is that it is an artifact that serves as icon of personal as well as societal aspirations. As such, domestic architecture is symbolic of cultural ideas and precepts that impact the individual and his/her family. Each feature – whether located in a façade or the interior – mirrors life's aspirations, including those that are never completely fulfilled. Because of this highest of callings, domestic architecture is a register of the lives of people, their social goals and dreams, as well as their nightmares.

As mentioned and according to the 2010 inventory of the Viejo San Juan, there are 862 *parcelas* within the historic district and a total of 827 buildings. Out of this number, approximately 770, or 93%, were originally designed to serve as houses (there are 671 contributing houses and 99 noncontributing ones).<sup>386</sup> While some also housed commercial activities, there is no doubt that the vast majority of the properties within the urban core were originally conceived as residential artifacts. For this reason, the impact domestic architecture has within the historic district is dramatic and needs to be interpreted as a phenomenon in its own right.

It comes as no surprise to find out that, throughout the history of the core, the house was the most treasured property of many. In Old San Juan, most rented and moved whenever needed. It is instructive to read how many times some relatively well-to-do families like Tapia y Rivera's moved around the district during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. When Alejandro's parents married, they lived in a small home appropriate for a young couple. After Tapia *pere* left for Spain, the mother moved a number of times with her children. The family never owned a house in spite of their respected social position. On the other side of the spectrum, there is evidence that some families inhabited the same house for generations. The house located at Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud 202 (Parcela 10, Block 42) was lived until 1872 by Bibiana Benítez and her niece Alejandrina. Famous for their literary salons, the distinguished poet José Gautier Benítez, a member of the third generation living in the house, penned his first poems while residing here. Yet another example is the house sited in Calle de la Cruz corner Calle de la Fortaleza (Parcela 13, Block 46) where Manuel de Elzaburu y Vizcarrondo, founder of

<sup>386</sup> These numbers are estimates for there is no formal record of which buildings were constructed as houses or still serve as homes. Arleen Pabón Charneco, "Final Report: 2010 Inventory of the San Juan Historic Zone," p 28.



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the Ateneo Puertorriqueño, was born on January 2, 1851. His lawyer's office in the same building served as meeting place for several literary and political groups.

## Introduction

The first homes that sheltered the early settlers and their families in the islet probably imitated the morphology and techniques of the native examples, a situation that lasted for centuries. When Abbad y Lasiera visited Puerto Rico during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, he described these domestic artifacts, still in use, particularly among the poor:

*Las casas las construían sobre vigas o troncos de árboles, que fijaban dentro de la tierra, a distancia de dos o tres pasos uno de otro de figura oval, cuadrilatera [sic], según disposición del terreno: sobre dichos troncos formaban el piso, que era de cañas o varas: al rededor [sic] de este piso hacían los tabiques, o paredes de las casas, que eran asimismo de cañas, cruzando sobre ellas al través muchas latas, que hacían de los hojas de las palmas con que aseguraban la obra. Todas las cañas que formaban los tabiques, se juntaban arriba en el centro de la casa, afianzándolas unas con otras, quedando el techo en figura de pabellón. No dexaban [sic] ventanas, chimenea ni tenían más luz, que la que entraba por la puerta que era angosta.*

*Otras casas construían también sobre troncos, y de los mismos materiales pero más fuertes y de mejor disposición. Desde la tierra hasta el piso que formaban sobre los troncos, dexaban [sic] sin cercar una parte que servía como de zaguán: en lo alto dexaban [sic] ventanas, y corredores, que hacían de cañas: el techo estaba a dos vertientes mediante un caballete que ponían sobre horcones cubierto de hojas de palma. Toda la fábrica de aquellas casas se aseguraba, en lugar de clavos, con vejucos [sic] silvestres, que son flexibles, y de gran duración. Hoy en el día las casas que hay en la Isla de Puerto-Rico son de esta misma construcción e idea, sin más diferencia, que el de ser por lo común los pisos, y costados de tabla: algunas están cubiertas de texas [sic], y hechas con más curiosidad; aunque estas son las menos, y todas las hacen sobre los troncos expresados.<sup>387</sup>*

In spite that some in the island continued to live in similar homes until the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, after the first wave of the Spanish Conquest was finished in the island, familiar domestic architectural artifacts were needed in order to impede social deconstruction. The first preserved houses in the historic district date to this period. Architectural semantics traveled across the ocean as did ideas regarding domestic organization. It probably would have been much easier to start afresh and use the materials, if not the native morphologies available. This, the newcomers refused to do. Architecture is not a generic artifact devoid of feelings and emotions. Buildings, particularly homes, shelter souls as well as bodies. In the Viejo San Juan they also protected Spanish family life, as well as gender and class organization as per peninsular mores. These are some of the reasons why, when the stage of using native artifacts and/or copies ended, Iberian domestic modes were imported and duplicated.

<sup>387</sup> Iñigo Abbad y Lasiera, *Historia geográfica, civil y política de la Isla de S Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico*, p 44. Translation into English: "The houses were constructed over beams made of tree trunks that they inserted in the soil at a distance of two to three steps from each other forming an oval or a quadrilateral, depending on the locale: over these trunks they placed the floor which was made of reeds; around this floor they constructed the walls, also made of reeds, crossing them over many times, made with palm tree leaves which they also used to secure the components. All the reeds that formed the walls were united at the top in the center tying them together forming a pavilion. They did not use windows or chimneys, the only light entered through the narrow door." "They also constructed the houses over tree trunks and of the same material but stronger. From the terrain to the floor over the tree trunks they left an area without border which served as a *zaguán*: on the upper portion they had windows and corridors made of reeds: the roof was constructed with two slopes over a wooden truss placed over posts covered with palm tree leaves. All the parts of the house are secured by using very flexible and long lasting wild reeds instead of nails. Today the houses in Puerto Rico follow these construction techniques and ideas without much difference except that the floor and walls are made of wood: and some are covered with terracotta tiles and evidence more creativity, even though these are small in number and all are made over the tree trunks described above."

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While at first the *sanjuanero* domestic artifacts adhered to peninsular time-honored ideas, with time they adapted to the social and cultural conditions present in the Caribbean borderland that was Old San Juan. One example of such transformation is the organization and use of the interior patio. While in Spain only the rich had right to this type of space, in the islet it became the right of all, regardless of social class. Small or large, richly or sparsely decorated, this element can be considered essential to all the historic district's houses. Another local adaptation was the abandonment of the omnipresent peninsular *estrado*.<sup>388</sup> While far away Hispanic-American urban centers, such as Santa Fe de Bogotá (Colombia), adopted the concept, in the Viejo San Juan it was rejected. There was no need for this traditional morphology in the very hot and humid climate of the islet. In addition to the constricting width of most lots, social patterns were more fluid in the historic district making this architectural gender barrier unnecessary. Finally, the *zaguán*,<sup>389</sup> considered de rigueur in the peninsula and Colonial cities like Havana, was sparingly used in Old San Juan due to the morphology of most lots. The new domestic types created allowed European families and their descendants to dwell appropriately. The only difference was that these transformed artifacts also responded to the ways of living and climate of the new land.

The two major influences that shaped domestic architecture in the southern part of Spain during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries were the Greco-Roman (that generated the so-called Christian type of home) and Moorish. From the first source came the dependence on an interior patio, a combination of the Greek peristyle and Roman *atrium*. The horizontal organization – the result of a preference for narrow, deep lots – is another attribute that can be considered a precedent from these civilizations.<sup>390</sup> Interior galleries and porticos, introspective character and less than transparent façades owe a great deal to Mediterranean culture, specifically Moorish domestic ideas.

In general terms, houses in the Viejo San Juan can be subdivided into two basic categories: the corner ones and the rest. The homogeneity present in the *sanjuanero* home in terms of this aspect is paralleled in Havana where two types exist, the: *casas decentro* (center houses) and *casas de esquina* (corner houses). Although the last type was the favorite one to locate commercial ventures due to the lots' user-friendly personality – the result of having the potential to have entrances on two sides – stores were also sheltered by *casas de centro*. Tapia y Rivera mentions that there were but a few stores in the district. *En cuanto a mi calle [Calle de San Francisco], era la única en que había tiendas, y eso en una mitad de la manzana, continuando por sólo el costado este de la plaza principal o de Armas . . . Las señoras iban de tienda en tienda que no eran muchas . . .* According to the author, the house his parents inhabited after marrying – Calle de San Francisco #37 (“old number”) – was relatively compact: [Era una] *mansión modesta en tamaño y apariencia, propia todo lo más para la familia, aún escasa, de un pobre capitán de Infantería . . . nido de amor bastante para dos nuevos esposos*. In spite of its diminutive size: *La planta baja de la casita ha servido siempre para tienda de comercio y en cierta época ha sido por excepción peluquería. Solo ha variado en la desaparición de un tabique que formaba un zaguán pequeño, frente a la escalerilla hoy cubierta por los anaqueles del establecimiento.*<sup>391</sup>

<sup>388</sup> The *estrado*, an architectural domestic component of Moorish inspiration, was a platform usually made of wood upon which the women of the house spent much of their time. Patricia Lara Betancourt, “La sala doméstica en Santa Fe de Bogotá. Siglo XIX. El decorado. La sala barroca,” Digital source: <http://dialnet.unirioja.es>, pp 94-95.

<sup>389</sup> A *zaguán* is defined in the following manner: [E]spacio cubierto situado dentro de una casa, que sirve de entrada a ella y está inmediatamente a la puerta de la calle. Translation into English: “Covered space located inside the house that serves as entrance and is situated next to the street door.” According to experts, the word derives from the Arab *istawán*. The space has characteristics in common with an entrance hall, although its morphology responds to a different interpretation regarding the role it plays within the interior of the house. *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, word: *zaguán*. Because of its uniqueness, the word will be used in Spanish throughout this work.

<sup>390</sup> María Dolores Crespo Rodríguez, “Arquitectura doméstica de la Ciudad de los Reyes (1535-1750)” (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2005), Digital source: [www.agapea.com](http://www.agapea.com), pp 163-195; 163.

<sup>391</sup> Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo dejo*, p 8. Translation into English: “Regarding my street [San Francisco Street] it was the only one that had stores and only in one half of the block continuing on the east side of the principal plaza or Plaza de Armas . . . The ladies visited store after store since there were not that many . . .” “It was a

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Until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even corner buildings were used primarily as houses within the district. It is likely small businesses peppered the rest of town, sometimes quite far from the area described by Tapia y Rivera. During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for example, a *ventorrillo* (a very small store) existed in front of the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción El Grande, a relatively deserted part of town. This small commercial venture, the patrons of which brought much misery to the sick in the hospital,<sup>392</sup> was located in a corner building which faced the Calle de San Sebastián and the Escalinata del Hospital. Corner buildings were also the favorite place to locate a *palacete* (palace-like structure),<sup>393</sup> although no definitive rule existed regarding the location of these structures, as the 19<sup>th</sup> century Marqués de la Esperanza – located in the Calle de Tetuán 252 (Parcela 14, Block 64) – palatial *casa de centro* evidences. There are, however, several examples that do exhibit this preference. In all cases of corner *palacetes*, the elegant structures are usually aligned towards one of the two streets, the Calle de la Cruz Street rather than Calle de San Sebastián in the case of the example sited at Calle de la Cruz 50 (Parcela 5, Block 18). There seems to have been little interest in having entrances on both streets of a corner in these cases.

## The Domestic Architecture Periods

Although there are hundreds of different domestic façades in the Viejo San Juan, it is possible to organize them into four periods that share commonalities in terms of design and spatial organization.<sup>394</sup> The first group includes the residences dated to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Spanish Conquest Period. All kinds of issues existed at the time, from acculturation pains to concerns about attacks by both natives and pirates. The domestic artifacts produced at this time present similarities with traditional peninsular examples. The period examples use enfilade sequences, *cuarto esquinero*<sup>395</sup> (corner room), semicircular arches, arcaded galleries, façade *antepechos* (balconettes), irregular exterior composition, and an introverted spatial approach, the result of the limited number of openings to the outside. Encadrements are usually non-existent and most walls were constructed using *tapiería* (rammed earth) techniques.

The second stage, the Baroque Domestic Architecture Period, is centered on European Baroque ideas. During this time, two distinct vernacular types of floor plans evolved becoming the two *sanjuanero* prototypical spatial organizations: the Type A and Type B. It is possible to describe residential examples constructed at

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modest residence in both size and appearance, very adequate for the small family of a poor infantry captain . . . [a] nest of love for a new married couple. . . . The lower floor of the little house has always sheltered a store and once it was exceptionally used as a barber shop [or beauty salon]. The only thing which has varied is a wooden partition that formed a small *zaguán* in front of the small staircase, presently covered by the shelves of the establishment.”

<sup>392</sup> Arleen Pabón Charneco, *Una promesa inconclusa: El Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción El Grande Apuntes socio-arquitectónicos*, p 90. On occasion, patrons of this establishment made life difficult for the patients inside the hospital by crashing empty rum containers into the windows of this last building.

<sup>393</sup> The word *palacete* is defined as a house that is: [C]onstruida y alhajada como un palacio, pero más pequeña. *Diccionario de la lengua española*, word: *palacete*. Translation into English: “[C]onstructed and decorated like a palace although smaller.”

<sup>394</sup> The four groups are the result of the interpretation of information gathered by means of research activities, which includes careful study of information compiled by means of inventories (specifically, the ones carried out during the 1990s and in 2010), site visits, and contrast and comparison of similar aesthetic and theoretical contexts (particularly, in Spain and Havana, as well as other Hispanic American urban centers). Houses dated to the same century were grouped together and a preliminary distillation of their main characteristics, both in terms of façade and floor plan, was made. In this manner, commonalities were discovered and the groups reorganized using as stylistic frame European styles. Thanks are extended to Architects Wanda Bogdel and Kirsten González who participated in the 1990s’ inventory and collaborated in explaining that work’s theoretical underpinnings. Findings have been interpreted in: “Vivir la ciudad del puerto Rico: Una interpretación de la arquitectura doméstica sanjuanera” (MS: Tallahassee, Florida, 2012), “La casa Alegría: Excepcional ejemplo de la morada sanjuanera,” *Ricardo Alegría una mirada íntima* (San Juan Puerto Rico: Chendo Pérez, 2011) and “La ciudad del puerto Rico Reinterpretando los artefactos urbanos y arquitectónicos del viejo San Juan,” *Patrimonio* (San Juan de Puerto Rico, Volume 1, 2010) all by Arleen Pabón Charneco.

<sup>395</sup> A characteristic of Havana domestic architecture during the same period, the corner room (usually sheltering the main living room in the first floor) may have both Moorish *mirador* influences, as well as medieval ones from the *casa-fuerte* or *casa-torre*.

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this time as vernacular expressions. Sophisticated and elegant entrance portals contribute to the distinction of the façade and, by implication, the family it sheltered. This stage starts around 1700 and ends approximately in 1812.

During the third period, roughly covered by the years from 1812 until 1898, the façades evidence Enlightenment ideas and European aesthetics. The inclusion of stylistic elements from different architectural revivals and Second Empire Baroque and cognate modes characterize the epoch. During this period, the individual façade was imbued with the role of dignifying the city by means to its adhesion to historicisms. The Historicist and Enlightenment Domestic Architecture Period also witnessed a population explosion that forced myriad transformations and forged the *casa de vecindad* (tenement house), a new domestic architectural typology.

The fourth period includes the years from 1898 to 1939, the eve of Second World War. This time frame includes *Modernisme*, Mediterranean Revival, and Art Deco stylistic expressions, as well as varied historicisms. Examples also depict influence from the Second Empire Baroque and cognate modes such as the Belle Époque. During the Post 1898 Domestic Architecture Period, residences aspired to be “modern,” as a result of which new spatial organizations and morphologies emerged, even when dressed as historicist examples. The apartment building appeared for the first time at this stage. Although some apartment buildings were constructed after the Second World War, at least one was erected during the 1960s, the declaration of the San Juan Historic Zone by the local agencies during the 1950s put an end to new constructions, dampening the isolated clamors to transform Old San Juan into “a small New York.”<sup>396</sup>

The above-mentioned stylistic periods need to be carefully considered. In the first place, aesthetically speaking, the Viejo San Juan presents a very fluid context. The use of certain aesthetic and organizational motifs lasted for centuries. This tenacious embracement of favorite ideas complicates the dating and, thus, the organization of the stages. One such example is the use of the *sala-saleta* composition, used without variation from the moment it was created during the 18<sup>th</sup> century until today. Another one is the motif of the “floating lintel,” incorporated time and time again in dozens of façades. A third one is the reversion to the use of the 18<sup>th</sup> century *zaguán* in some 20<sup>th</sup> century apartment buildings.

Secondly, the academic names used – Baroque, Enlightenment and Historicism – need to be interpreted in a flexible manner for the Old San Juan expressions are different from the Italian, French and American examples classified under the same names. For example, there are no Roman curved facades or the imposing grandeur of Versailles in the houses belonging to the first group. The name Baroque is given because certain concepts – such as axiality, interest in three-dimensional sculptural effects and use of the oval shape – were used at a date that roughly coincides with the development of this stylistic trend in Spain and Europe. One example of this need for care is the fact that the same houses that reflect Baroque ideas may also echo concepts that stem back to the Renaissance. Use of historicisms, in turn, is seldom a purist interpretation. Dozens of façades gregariously embrace motifs with diverse aesthetic origins.

In the third place, there is a need to remember that the Enlightenment took place in Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the Spanish Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando was founded as a direct result of this powerful social and intellectual current. However, the new emphasis on the individual and his/her inalienable rights did not take root in Spain, in a formal manner, until *La Pepa*, the 1812 Constitution, was enacted. The role architecture could play in this new world did not initiate until after his date.

<sup>396</sup> This was the rallying cry of some modernists during the 1950s: to reshape the historic district into a small version of New York. Personal communication, Dr Osiris Delgado and Dr Ricardo E Alegría, 1983-1984.

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Fourth, the 1898 boundary date that generates two distinct architectural periods, albeit related, is underscored by the injection of new projects and the introduction of new construction materials, such as reinforced concrete, glass and mass-produced metal. The influx of American-educated architects (both natives and foreigners) came hand in hand with the importation of new architectural domestic typologies, such as the apartment building.

Fifth, the concept of a building erected to exclusively serve as a commercial and/or office one was, for all practical purposes, non-existent prior to 1898. *La Mallorquina*, located in Calle de San Justo 207 (Parcela 21, Block 47) and founded in 1848, may be the exception to this rule. Although some servants may have used areas in the back as makeshift homes the building was designed to serve as a restaurant. In the district, domestic architectural expression sheltered both residential and commercial activities until the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Finally, while varied styles impacted the *sanjuanero* façade in the manner architectural fashions generally do the interior spatial arrangement was subjected to more limited transformations. Not only a façade dated to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century may mask portions of a floor plan constructed during the 18<sup>th</sup> century or earlier, the 19<sup>th</sup> century design may incorporate archaisms. Although floor plan changes were introduced between the first and second periods, as well as between the third and fourth ones, the stages are best discernible in the façades. Regarding this reality, it can be stated that the liberal 19<sup>th</sup> century currents provided much impetus to the exploration of façade creativity within the traditional composition. It is safe to interpret that interiors underwent few dramatic transformations, once the *sala-saleta* configuration appeared during the late 17<sup>th</sup>-early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. As a result, this spatial organization with its perpendicular wing organized by means of an enfilade of rooms framing the side interior patio became the most common one. When, at a later time, tenement houses were organized, no special morphology was exclusively created for this use. The old types were simply transformed, usually by means of the insertion of a *zaguán*.

### The Conquest Domestic Period (1519 – 1700)

The earliest recount of domestic architecture in Old San Juan was made by Juan de Laët during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, the historic district houses were described as *espaciosas* (spacious) and built *a la usanza española* (in the Spanish manner).<sup>397</sup> His description mentions that they had no windows but wide doors that allowed the breeze to circulate within the interior. This last portrayal is extremely important because it evidences that the later inclusion of the tandem of solid and louvered sets of doors, as well as the use of balconies, were vernacular adaptations to the climate and daily life activities. As mentioned, respected Cuban architectural essayist Weiss believes the systematic introduction of balconies to façades, as organizational and aesthetic components, is a Spanish Caribbean architectural contribution. *Toda vez que los balcones se dan en distintas ciudades hispanoamericanas, debemos concluir que estamos frente a una creación independiente de los constructores y artesanos criollos, de los cubanos y de aquellos países que tiene afinidades ambientales con el nuestro.*<sup>398</sup> For structural, aesthetic and cultural reasons, during the Conquest Period the limited number of exterior openings mostly sported balconettes, known locally as *antepechos* because balconies were incorporated to façades at a later date. Most of the period's residences were constructed of *tapias* or *cantería*, sporting *tejados* (wooden roofs) covered with terracotta tiles. Others used the flat roofs known in Spain as *azoteas de Cádiz*. It is very probable, scores of residences continued to be built of wood and roofed with straw and *yagüa* (palm leaves), in frank imitation of native constructions. Although no

<sup>397</sup> Juan de Laët, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo Descripción de las islas occidentales Escrita en 18 libros*, pp 64-65.

<sup>398</sup> Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX*, p 197. Translation into English: "Since balconies are found in many Hispanic American cities, we must conclude that we are in the presence of an independent creation of the *criollo* builders and artisans of Cuba and those countries that have environmental similarities with us."

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examples from the type have been preserved, it is relevant to remember that dozens of homes may have been inspired by this precedent.

Only three structures can be dated with certainty to this period: the Casa del Cabildo (Parcela 11, Block 40), the Casa de los Contrafuertes (Parcela 13, Block 3) and the so-called Casa de los Ratones (Parcela 14, Block 52). This limited number needs to be carefully interpreted for it is likely earlier constructions may be buried under later transformations. A three floors 19<sup>th</sup> century structure may include, buried under successive layers of changes, a much earlier construction. The Viejo San Juan is a living historic urban landscape. As such, it has evolved during several centuries, adapting and embracing architectural modifications. This condition adds exponentially to its cultural significance for the city is a laboratory from which information related to Hispanic-American architectural styles, morphologies, typologies, aesthetic preferences, and living lifestyles can be distilled.

Domestic architecture minimalism, termed by Laët as *usanza española*, was a tradition echoing Mediterranean conventions carried out in the peninsula and American colonies in a persistent manner. Even when houses had a distinct architectural presence, in terms of size and scale, their relative simplicity was an outstanding characteristic. Regarding this issue, it is instructive to compare the 19<sup>th</sup> century Viejo San Juan to Havana, its sister city. As late as the 1860s, houses in this last urban core were described as fortifications in terms of their unadorned looks. Their austere façades – naively described as “vandal” – masked surprisingly (to the American author) luxurious interiors.

The streets inside the walls, as a rule, run at right angles and are very narrow; the best are badly paved, and undrained. The houses suggest that they have at one time or another been used as fortifications, they have such an appearance of unnecessary strength, and are so covered with heavy iron gratings

Delicate lace curtains inside, and rich, heavy furniture, satisfy you they are no prisons. But their Moorish, oriental expression, gives them an intensely dull exterior . . .

The style suggests a dull grandeur, and antique and almost vandal character, which deeply impresses the stranger; but with all this barbaric magnificence which one sees occasionally exhibited, there is, apparently, a great deficiency of comfort and convenience. And any regularity of style seems never to be thought of, for, close beside an elegant arcade, with frescoed walls, stands a ruin, deserted old building, the very representative of hopeless desolation.<sup>399</sup>

Some years later, an American visiting Old San Juan described the local domestic artifacts in a similar fashion: “Buildings for residences and business are hemmed in by stone walls. The thousand dwelling houses are of mortar or stone, built regardless of convenience or taste.”<sup>400</sup> Domestic architecture in both cities may have looked “vandal” and “barbaric” because residences were “hemmed by walls” and built in materials the foreigners were not used to. However, regardless how different the concepts of “convenience” and “taste” in Havana and the Viejo San Juan may have been from those the North Americans 19<sup>th</sup> century authors were familiar with, the reality is that the desire to create substantial, elegant artifacts was inherent to most domestic constructions in both cities. Sobriety in architecture was simply a traditional approach rooted in Greek and Roman precedents. While it is possible that during some early stages in the development of these two cores aesthetic concerns may have not been considered of primary importance, houses in both cities do exhibit an interest in elegance and architectural decorum. Sixteenth and early 17<sup>th</sup> century Old San Juan houses exemplify architectural straightforwardness, both in terms of their organization and decoration. Those built at a

<sup>399</sup> “Something about Cuba, its History, Its Climate, Its People,” *Appleton’s Journal of Literature, Science and Art* (Volume First, No 1-20, April 3-August 14, 1869), pp 616-621; 619.

<sup>400</sup> Joseph Bartlett Seabury, *The World and Its People Book XII Porto Rico: The Land of the Rich Port*, pp 24; 124-125.

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later time, however, are characterized by their interest in complex architectural issues, such as hierarchical organization, proportional systems, and symmetry.

During the Conquest Period, the domestic interior was subdivided into few rooms. Most houses in the historic district probably started life as one or two space structures surrounded by open area or yards on the sides and the back of the lot. Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were houses in the island that only had one room. In the early stages of development, if and when other spaces were added, on occasion they were lower in height, in the manner of lean-ons. It is not farfetched to assume this conditioned was influenced by peninsular houses.<sup>401</sup> The house located at Calle de la Fortaleza 363 (Parcela 16, Block 49) is a preserved example of this kind of treatment. The heights of the spaces become lower the farther away they are from the façade evidencing how they were added sequentially as the needs of the family changed.<sup>402</sup>

During the 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, European aesthetic and stylistic fashions were not followed in a strict manner in the islet. There were too many distractions, innumerable uncertainties, and scant amount of money. A domestic façade was interpreted as a private undertaking and the relationship between street and building was still guided by medieval ideas. The urban thoroughfare was considered a source of noise, dust, and, on occasion, danger. It took time for houses, particularly, ordinary ones, to be considered an intrinsic component of an urban core. During the early stages, therefore, building a house was an individual enterprise that followed established traditional guidelines but introduced a great amount of individuality. Early 18<sup>th</sup> century plans of Old San Juan clearly depict how sketchily location was organized in the central area of town until the authorities took control and forcibly used the orthogonal grid to align the structures along the roads. As a result, during the Conquest Period, academic concepts impacted local domestic designs in a minimal manner for most façades sported straightforward arrangements. Doors and windows were treated as openings cut into the stretched stuccoed walls that formed the house. Since there was a sparse use of balconies at this time, due to the construction techniques and materials used, balconettes were much favored.

In the early days few openings adorned the building and solid doors – expensive to build, install and maintain – were kept at a minimum. Although the Inquisition required doors be open during the day, there were many reasons to keep them closed in a place like the Viejo San Juan, particularly during the early periods. The weather and possibly a more relaxed religious atmosphere contributed to this situation. Small window-like openings in the door, in the manner of *postigos* (wickets), provided controlled entry of light and breeze to the interior. Doors were made of wood sections kept in place with large metal hand made nails. In Havana they were known as *puertas a la española* (Spanish doors) and also as *puertas clavadas* (nail doors). Nails were so expensive that, at a later date, they were considered decorative elements: the greater number of nails on a door, the richer the family. Metal fittings were simply non-existent. According to Juan de Laët, doors in Old San Juan were quite wide. This is readily confirmed by studying the extant examples and comparing them to later ones. It was not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the *persianería francesa* (French louvers), known in Puerto Rico as *celosías* and *persianas*, became common. With the introduction of this novel item, always used in tandem with solid doors, came the option of having a visual and physical connection with the exterior of the residence while preserving the privacy provided by doors. While some may find this introspection curious, particularly taking into account the characteristic heat and humidity, Northern African and Mediterranean domestic architecture depend on tightly secured interiors protected by thick walls to keep the spaces cool.

The first constructed domestic buildings in the Viejo San Juan are characterized by thick walls and wide, low openings cut directly into the fabric with no encadrement or framing element. This detail, characteristic of

<sup>401</sup> Adolfo de Hostos, *Las excavaciones de Caparra Investigaciones Históricas* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Oficina Estatal de Conservación Histórica, 2011), p 157.

<sup>402</sup> "Estudio de revitalización integral del centro histórico de San Juan," Inventory Sheet: Block 49, Parcela 16. The building is dated to the first half of the 19th century.

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*sanjuanero* architecture, had myriad uses, the most relevant of which was to protect the wall arises. The fact that some houses do not include these elements as late as the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries evidences that they were principally considered decorative components of the façade. They were easier to construct when the wall was not made of *tapias*, the preferred construction technique for houses during the early stages. A formal façade composition was not considered essential, as evidenced by the irregular rhythm, liberal placement of the openings, balconettes and balconies found in the three oldest domestic examples. In the Casa de los Contrafuertes and Casa de los Ratones no alignment exists between the apertures on the different levels and no standardization was sought in terms of the size (width and height) of the exterior openings. Some have a straight lintel, usually accomplished by means of a straight arch, while its neighbor is topped by a segmental arch. Door openings compete with window openings in the same floor, a condition that will disappear from the panorama once façades start to be interpreted as holistic organisms.

As mentioned, most 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century houses were constructed of *tapiería*, a system abandoned by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, in favor of *mampostería ordinaria* (ordinary masonry).<sup>403</sup> Historic research reveals that *tapiería* was also the favorite Spanish construction method in Havana during this period. In this city, the system included: *la tierra, mojada y apisonada entre moldes paralelos de madera de un metro cuarenta a un metro sesenta de altura (tapias), rematándose cada tapia con dos o tres hiladas de ladrillos por vía de enlace y nivelación.*<sup>404</sup> De Hostos describes the *tapias* found at the Caparra casa-torre in the following manner:

*Para formar las tapias de Caparra se ha pisonado, en moldes de madera clavados, tierra mezclada con pedazos de piedra, a menudo pedazos de cantería, de ladrillo y otras sobras de fábrica, así como, en mucho menor cantidad, piedra caliza y algunos cantos rodados.*

*La tierra es suelta y, a juzgar por su color ligeramente más oscuro que la arena, parece contener alguna cantidad de ella. Algunos muros contienen poca mezcla de piedra u otra materia extraña, teniendo entonces la tierra que los forma la propiedad, si se la perfora o se la libra de la sujeción del encalado, de desmoronarse, para decirlo figuradamente, con fluidez parecida a la de arena suelta. . . .*

*Nuestras tapias de 3 pies 1 pulgada con los muros exteriores y de 2 pies y 3 pulgadas en los de partición descansan directamente y sin enlace mecánico alguno entre ambas estructuras, sobre un cimient o zócalo de dureza muy superior a la de la tapia y de mayor espesor que ésta, formado por una mezcla de color chocolate, de cal y de un material muy parecido a la tosca, por no afirmar, faltando un análisis químico, que lo es.*

All walls made of *tapias* had to be protected: *en ambas cara, por una capa de cal de un cuarto de pulgada, más o menos, de espesor.* The covering protected the soft interior, particularly against the prevailing humidity. De Hostos described: *Es de sentirse que a menudo esta capa, después de excavadas las ruinas se reseca al aire y al sol, y se cae a pedazos.*<sup>405</sup> In other words, constant maintenance of the stucco is needed in order to

<sup>403</sup> In Spanish, *mampostería ordinaria* refers to construction characterized by: [M]ampuestos tal y como se extraen de la cantera sin retocar. Siendo muy ostensible la desproporción entre los distintos mampuestos; el asiento de los mampuestos se realiza con gran cantidad de ripio y mortero. Este suele quedar al exterior pues generalmente se enlucen. Digital source: <http://www.arquba.com/monografias-de-arquitectura>. Translation into English: “[R]ough blocks of stone are used in their original shape. Since there is much variation, the setting is obtained using smaller pieces and mortar. Generally, this kind of construction is stuccoed.”

<sup>404</sup> Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX*, p 95. Translation into English: The *tapias* include: “[D]irt, wet and packed, between parallel wooden molds one meter and 40 centimeters to one meter to 60 centimeters in height, each *tapia* (wall section) ends with two to three rows of bricks to level and unite the sections.”

<sup>405</sup> Adolfo de Hostos, *Las excavaciones de Caparra Investigaciones Históricas*, pp 109 and 111. Translation into English: “To form the Caparra *tapias* earth mixed with rocks, at times pieces of stone, bricks and other materials, as well as smaller quantities of limestone and pebbles, was packed into wooden forms sunk into the soil.” “The dirt was loose, a bit darker than sand, although it seems to have contained some amount of this material. Some walls have a small amount of rocks and other strange matter and it is characteristic for it to cave in like sand if the stucco is absent.” “Our *tapias* are three feet one inch (exterior walls) and two feet three inches (interior partitions) and they rest directly without any tie to the other walls over a base much harder than the *tapia* and wider than it, chocolate brown in color made of lime and a material quite similar to *tosca*, if it is not *tosca* which I dare not to affirm because a



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safeguard the stability of the wall. The interior of the wall limited cohesion is the reason behind the rounded finishes used in arises. As mentioned, the sober façades of the Conquista Period are characterized by an absence of *retallos* (encadrements), the border many openings in the district include in the manner of a frame around openings. When using this construction method, the sharp and defined edges which characterize encadrements are almost impossible to achieve. Furthermore, no need was felt to frame the openings of the façade plane, perceived as a non-relevant element from an aesthetic point of view. This is why houses belonging to this period lack this treatment. While it is tempting to associate the absence of encadrements to an early construction date and interpret its absence as characteristic of the “simplicity” associated to early phases, it would be incorrect to date solely on this basis. It is a well-known fact that encadrements are missing in many structures in Havana, notwithstanding their date of construction. The same applies to Old San Juan. Some *sanjuanero* houses reached the 20<sup>th</sup> century without this decorative element. It is probably more correct to relate the absence of encadrement to the construction method utilized in the creation of the wall in which the opening was made than to date considerations. The same applies to the use of balconies and other projecting elements. Obviously, financial considerations also have to be taken into account.

The straightforwardness of the façade composition present in the Conques Period examples was alleviated by the use of small balconettes that have total independence among themselves. These components, when present, do not protrude from the façade plane. As mentioned, balconies, at the time known as *voladizos* (cantilevers) and *colgadizos* (hangings), were limited in terms of size during this time for several reasons. First, the structural system used, the trabeated, presented natural limits regarding the cantilevered elements – in this case, the embedded short wooden beams – which would support the balcony. Until the advent of metal – used in iron bars, consoles, as well as balustrades during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries – and reinforced concrete during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, balconies in the historic district were built of wood. Beams made of this material were inserted into the exterior façade wall that, although thick, lacked tensile strength. *Tapiería* walls have an almost negligible structural cohesion to support embedded cantilevered structural elements. Not only were balconies difficult to build, they were also expensive, requiring structural strength and the always costly balustrades made of wood which had to be perennially maintained. It is safe to assume that, when and if used prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, any cantilever structure would have as narrow a span as possible. In other words, the balcony would have been very narrow in order to make sure the wall unto which the beams were embedded could resist the resulting structural efforts.<sup>406</sup> By the same token, given the negligible structural resistance of the wall, long balconies from one side of the façade to the other would have sagged in the middle. In any case, given the limited number of rooms during the period that were as wide as the lot, this type of balcony did not come into use until much later. In addition, social mores limited the exposure empowered by these elements.

Architecture is a reflection of the buying power of the society it shelters. The Viejo San Juan never had the majestic stone porches or the dainty corner balconies which characterize Havana. The hot climate had no use for the fanciful Peruvian covered balconies or the northern Spain *solanas* (balconies specifically designed to take the sun). Craftsmanship and materials limited the elaboration of these elements. This is the reason balconettes were so popular, particularly during the early stages of the urban development. They are a great design solution providing most of the benefits of a balcony without the added cost and structural complications the cantilevered balconies required.

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chemical analysis is missing.” “Both sides of the wall are covered with a layer of lime one quarter of an inch in width. It is unfortunate that on many occasions this layer falls after the ruins are excavated because it dries up and crumbles.”

<sup>406</sup> There is scant information related to the history and development of each one of these three houses. Therefore, there is no way to date the balconies. Early 20<sup>th</sup> photographs evidence the Casa de los Contrafuertes present balcony is a liberal 1950s interpretation of the original ones, particularly in terms of their roof and width.

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A study of the interior organization of the period's house using the three preserved examples needs to be undertaken with great care. On the one hand, the Casa de los Contrafuertes probably started life as a church-related structure and not necessarily as a regular family house. It has also undergone transformations evidenced when one compares historic photographs taken before the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century rehabilitation. The Casa de los Ratones, in turn, was a corner building. In Old San Juan, these properties exhibit *sui generis* characteristics, the principal one being that the house is not constructed between *medianeras* but faces two streets. Finally and as expected, important transformations may have taken place in all three after the original buildings were erected. In spite of these conditions, it is important to analyze their floor plans in order to better understand how domestic interior arrangements may have been prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> century Baroque evolution.

In the Casa de los Ratones, a square room occupies the corner formed by the intersection of the Calle de la Fortaleza and Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud. The Casa de los Contrafuertes may be considered another example of the use of such a space.<sup>407</sup> The *cuarto esquinero* (corner room), is considered one of the oldest interior organizations present in Havana. The room, which may exist even when the lot is not a corner one, is probably of Moorish extraction and is related to the corner *miradores* (outlooks) favored by this architecture. The space may also derive from the *casa-torre* or *casa-fuerte* medieval architectural typology. While some of these spatial archaisms go all the way back to 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish architecture,<sup>408</sup> they were combined in a unique manner in Old San Juan.

The Casa de los Contrafuertes<sup>409</sup> is organized by means of an enfilade of rooms that aligns four spaces on the west side of the lot behind the *cuarto esquinero*. A room is sited to the east of the *cuarto esquinero* and a monumental staircase sits between this space and the patio. This early presence of the emblematic *sanjuanero enfilade-martillo*<sup>410</sup> organization is very informative for it evidences it existed prior to the *sala-saleta* arrangement. The row of rooms frames the patio, located on the eastern side of the property. One of the openings facing the Calle de San Sebastián<sup>411</sup> roughly aligns with the loggia that borders the patio, a transitional zone between the rooms in the enfilade and the patio.

The use of the trabeated structural system characterizes early constructions in Old San Juan almost exclusively, particularly in terms of the façade. It is relevant to mention, however, that *arcos planos* or *dinteles adovelados* (flat arches), as well as straight arches, were invariably used to create straight lintels. This is a constant in the district since the early stages of its development. In other words, while the arcuated structural system was used, there was a marked preference for the aesthetics created by straight lintels, particularly for the exteriors. Post and lintel construction requires less complexity in terms of construction. The same is true

<sup>407</sup> Lillian Llanes, *The Houses of Old Cuba* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), p 28.

<sup>408</sup> Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX*, p 88.

<sup>409</sup> There is no formal study of this structure, considered the oldest Post-European house in the Viejo San Juan and, thus, in the United States. According to Dr Ricardo E Alegría, the level of original floor pavement, thickness of the walls and proportions of the openings support this theory. Dr Alegría carried out the first rehabilitation of the structure while directing the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture. Personal communication, Dr Ricardo Alegría, January 2011. An early 20<sup>th</sup> century photograph clearly depicts how the building looked at this time.

<sup>410</sup> Enfilade can best be described as a suite of aligned rooms opening to each other. In this type of organization, the doors of all the rooms are linked forming an axis and providing a vista of the entire suite. This kind of arrangement is known as shotgun in the United States, *enfilade* in French and *seriada* in Spanish. In Argentina, a house that has an enfilade running along a side patio is known as a *casa chorizo* (sausage house). In Puerto Rico, the word *martillo* (hammer) is used to describe an enfilade located at ninety degree angle to the main part of the house. This composition creates an L-shaped floor plan.

<sup>411</sup> It is dangerous to assume the main entrance of the Casa de los Contrafuertes was located along the Calle de San Sebastián, particularly given the fact that the other façade faces the Plaza de San José, a more relevant urban space. The "Number 1 General Plan of San Juan," The Porto Rico Board of Fire Underwriters, 30 September 1921 and photographs dating to the middle of the past century depict a small street between the plaza and the Casa de los Contrafuertes that provided street access to Parcela 13B, Block 3. This may have been a late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century transformation that may reflect the main façades of both residences faced the Plaza de San José. The CRIM lists both houses (Casa de los Contrafuertes and the house abutting it on the north wall and the Iglesia de San José) as Parcela 13, Block 3.

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of flat arches. It is possible tradition played a most relevant role in the choice of the trabeated structural system, favored by Moorish architects for domestic architecture. The system underscored the sober design approach. Interestingly, the arcuated system was preferred in the interiors. *Arcos capialzados* (skew arches) appear behind lintels, forming small vaults over some openings. They were principally employed to create a transition between the thick walls (at times wider than 25 inches) and the opening also to increase the structural resistance of the wall. In addition, semicircular arches appear in the interior of some structures. In the Casa de los Contrafuertes a two floors ponderous arcade created with semicircular arches faces the patio. The stocky proportions, thick walls, low ceiling, and the irregularity present in terms of the span, location of the individual arches and first and second floors alignment, provides additional evidence as to the early date of this straightforward yet elegant composition. The use of semicircular arches, regardless of how irregular their organization may be, is a Renaissance element. Although the loggia behind the arcade has a long history that goes all the way back to Rome, it is significant that arcaded loggias surrounding interior patios were also a favorite Renaissance organizational component.

Although the Viejo San Juan residences are usually associated with *azoteas de Cádiz*, historic documentation evidences that *tejados* were also used until the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Tapia y Rivera mentions the demise of this kind of roofs, even though historic drawings evidence they existed as late as 1901.

*En el tiempo que me refiero (1833) fabricábanse de azoteas y no eran muchas las que quedaban con tejados; así como por la necesidad de fabricar dentro de las murallas, comenzaron a desaparecer los corralones y, por consiguiente, la ventilación y desahogo al par que los árboles que los hermooseaban, oxigenando el aire durante el día con beneficio de la salud. . . . En la actualidad, ni cocoteros ni corrales han quedado, gracias al enorme cinturón de piedra que ciñe la ciudad condenando sus edificaciones a la estrechez, su atmósfera a la insalubridad y sus habitantes a la asfixia.*<sup>412</sup>

He established that the disappearance of these roofs was directly related to the overcrowding of the city. Two examples that preserved their *azoteas* until the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were the houses located in the Calle de San Francisco corner Calle del Recinto Oeste (Parcela 24, Block 40) and the one sited in the Calle de la Fortaleza 255 (Parcela 17, Block 47). By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, most houses in the district sported *azoteas de Cádiz*, the kind of roof that creates a *solería* (flat roof). The standard *azotea de Cádiz* was composed of wooden beams running in one direction embedded into two thick walls and wooden *alfarjías* (battens) placed at ninety degree angles. Terracotta tiles, bricks or wood – particularly, when there was a second floor – were placed on top of the battens. If the structure had two floors, an *apisonado* layer (rubble or compacted earth)<sup>413</sup> served as the base for the floor of the second level, usually made of terracotta tiles, brick or wooden planks. In more humble houses this floor finish was substituted by a sand and limestone layer.

### The Baroque Domestic Period (1700-1812)

The writings of Friar Abbad y Lasierra provide important information related to 18<sup>th</sup> century Old San Juan. According to him, there were three general types of houses each one serving different population strata: (i) the *españoles y ciudadanos acomodados* (the Spanish and rich citizens), (ii) *los mulatos y gente de color* (the mulattos and colored people) and (iii) the Blacks and poor people. The variations intimately related to social caste and economic class, classifications related to skin color.

<sup>412</sup> Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo dejo*, p 32. Translation into English: "At the time I am describing (1833) *azoteas* were used and not many remained with their roofs; due to the need to build inside the defensive circuit, many animal pens disappeared resulting in less ventilation and the cutting of trees that added beauty and oxygenated the air in a healthy manner. . . . Nowadays, there are no more animal pens or palm trees, thanks to the enormous stone belt that circles the city condemning its buildings to narrowness, its atmosphere to pollution and its inhabitants to asphyxiation."

<sup>413</sup> This method of construction is known as *tierra pisada* and *tierra apisonada* in Spanish and *pisé de terre* or *pisé* in French. The name is also used for *tapiál* or rammed earth construction.

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*La construcción de las casas es tan varia, como las castas y clases de sus habitantes. Las de los Españoles y ciudadanos acomodados, están hechas de cal y canto, cubiertas de teja, algunas tienen techos de azotea. Nunca les echan más de un piso alto, que generalmente es de tabla, algunas veces cubierto de ladrillo, bien que por lo común aun estas casas de piedra son baxas [sic], y solo tienen el piso de la tierra; pero evitan darle elevación por los huracanes y terremotos que son muy terribles, y por ser muy costosos los materiales, y los artifices. Una casa de piedra con un piso alto, no obstante las pocas comodidades que suele tener, no costará menos de diez mil pesos.*

The residences belonging to the rich were constructed in *cal y canto*, a technique that constructs walls in horizontal bands so that the *mampuestos* (rough blocks of stone) are squeezed tight holding each other. This kind of construction is quite resistant to compression forces and was a change from the *tapiería* method favored until the period in both the Viejo San Juan and Havana.

Richly appointed houses had either a *tejado* (wooden roof with trusses) or an *azotea de Cádiz* roof. Interestingly, Abbad y Lasierra noted most residences had only one floor. In spite of their high cost (a two floors house was worth *diez mil pesos* or 10,000 pesos) they were quite uncomfortable. Their simplicity was the result of the weather, the earthquakes, as well as the expensive cost of materials and builders.

*Las casas que habitan los mulatos, y gente de color son de tabla y viga. Fixan [sic] estas en hoyos, que abren en la tierra, y bien aseguradas, clavan en ellas por sus cuatro frentes las tablas, que son constantemente de palmas, por su mucha duración y resistencia a las inclemencias del tiempo; su techo forma dos vertientes, mediante un caballete de vigas: cúbrenlo con cañas o tablas, sobre las cuales aseguran con buen orden hojas, o más bien corteza de palma que suplen muy bien por las texas [sic] y llaman Yagüas; el ámbito interior de la casa está cortado por el centro por un tabique de tablas o cañas; esta sección dexa [sic] dos piezas, la primera en que esta la puerta de la casa, sirve de zaguán y sala: la interior está destinada para dormitorio de la familia, bien que la primera tiene el mismo uso, y en ella cuelgan las Amacas [sic], que es su canapé, en el que pasan día y noche. Este método de hacer las casas, y los materiales, que emplean en ellas, producen multitud de monstruosas arañas, cien-pies, cucarachas, comegen [sic], y otras especies de reptiles peligrosos, e incómodos.<sup>414</sup>*

It is interesting to note the spatial subdivision used in the second type for it is clearly an architectural precedent of the *sala-saleta*<sup>415</sup> arrangement, the organization that was to become characteristic of the

<sup>414</sup> Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra, *Historia geográfica, civil y política de la Isla de S Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico*, p 211. Translation into English: "The construction of the houses varies depending on the castes and social class of its inhabitants. The ones made for the Spanish and rich citizens are made of *cal y canto*, covered with terracotta tiles and some have *azotea* roofs. They never have more than one floor, usually made of wood, sometimes covered with brick, the houses are commonly low in height and have earth for a floor, since they avoid tall structures because of the hurricanes and earthquakes which are very dangerous, and because materials and builders are very expensive. A masonry house with a second floor even if limited in terms of comfort will cost no less than 10,000 pesos." "The houses inhabited by the mulattoes [sic] and colored [sic] people are made of wood and beams. They embed them in the soil, well secured, nail the wooden planks from palm trees in front, they use this material because it lasts a long time and resists weather quite well; the roof has two slopes as a result of the truss; it is covered with *cañas* (wooden planks), over which they place lots of leaves, or bark from the palm trees which they call *yagüas*; the interior of the house is divided in the center by means of a wall made of wooden planks; this wall divides the space in two, the first one is located close to the entrance of the house, and serves as a *zaguán* and a living room; the interior one is used as a bedroom of the family, although the first one can also have that use and they hang hammocks which serves them as sofa, where they spend night and day. This method of constructing houses and the materials that they use produce a multitude of monstrous spiders, millipedes, cockroaches, termites and other species of dangerous and nasty reptiles."

<sup>415</sup> The Spanish word *sala* comes from the French *salle*. *Sala* is defined as: *Habitación principal de una casa*. Translation into English: "[P]rincipal room in a house." *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, Word: *sala*. In Puerto Rico, until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the *sala* defined a space where activities sheltered by a modern living room and formal parlor colluded. It is interesting to note that, in the United States, the following dichotomy has been established: "The American middle class (and above) had two front rooms, the living room and the parlor. The parlor was used for weddings, funerals, birthdays, promotions, and retirement. Viewing the recently

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district from this period onwards. The friar describes one such interior divided into two spaces by a wall with the area closest to the entrance serving as both *sala* and *zaguán* (entrance hall of sorts). In other words, the “living room” area was used as entry hall and living area. This multiplicity of uses became part of one of the two paradigmatic *sanjuanero* arrangement (Type A). The second more private space, divided from the main one by the wall, was used to sleep although it was not uncommon for some to also utilize the first space for this use. In terms of construction materials, the same ones used by the natives were incorporated to the construction of this type of residence.

*Los Negros y gente pobre forman sus casas a esta misma idea, aunque más groseras y reducidas. Apenas son otra cosa, que una jaula hecha de cañas, sostenida por dentro de estacas, que ponen para darle firmeza. El techo es también de cañas cubiertas de Yagüas, como las antecedentes. A estas casas llaman buxios [sic]: no suelen tener división en el interior, ni más luz que la que entra por la puerta, que es baxa [sic] y angosta.*

The second type of residence also sheltered the third caste although their artifacts are described as yet more informal. In fact, Abbad y Lasierra depicts them as cages. It should be noted these interior spaces consisted of one area like the native *bohíos* and had no windows.

Patios and yards were a must in all houses and had multiple uses. They were used as kitchen, *corral* (outdoor working area) and animal pen. The first area was also the place where certain fruits and vegetables – like papayas, plantains and pumpkins – grew. Many houses had no clear distinction between the patio, *traspatio* and *corral*. Mention is also made that the homes belonging to the third type were located on the outskirts of town, although inside the area protected by the defensive walls. Abbad y Lasierra defined these sectors as a *arrabales* (slums).

*Son pocas las casas de esta Ciudad, que no tienen algún patio, o huerto que les sirve de mucho desahogo: en ellos componen sus comidas: sin más cocina, ni hornillos, que el fuego que encienden en el suelo a las sombra de algunos papayos, plátanos o enramadas, cubiertas de calabazas, que siembran para gozar de su sombra, y guarecer a las gallinas comunes, de guineas, patos u otras aves . . . Las casas de esta construcción están a los extremos de la Ciudad, y aunque dentro de los muros, se pueden considerar como arrabales.*

There was a shortage of construction fineries, such as woodwork and metal fittings for doors and windows. Because of this, doors were solid and closed by means of a *tranca* (a wooden bar used to secure a window or door). According to the demanding priest, construction in general was rough (*tosca*) and there was no great aesthetic distinction, as per traditional mores.

*El lujo [sic] de la ebanistería, tapicerías, y adornos, no ha entrado todavía en Puerto Rico: todos sus muebles están reducidos a las hamacas, y alguna silla tosca de madera, las puertas y ventanas no tienen más primor; se mueven sobre sus quicios, y las cierran con trancas, pues faltos de hierro, lo están igualmente de visagras [sic], y demás piezas de metal. Generalmente, la fábrica de las casas es tosca, su extensión y comodidad reducida; su adorno y hermosura ninguna; y todo el conjunto manifiesta su grosería, y ningún gusto en esta parte. Últimamente se han empezado a construir algunas casas de mejor idea y comodidad.*

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deceased in the parlor is what gave the living room its name as a residual formal space – for the living.” Dean MacCannell, *The Ethics of Sightseeing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), p 22.

*Saleta* – a Spanish, Portuguese and Catalan word – is formally defined as: *habitación anterior a la antecámara del Rey* (Translation into English: a room before the King’s antechamber). *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, word: *saleta*. The term also defines a small hall. In Havana, *saleta* is the word used for the smaller room that follows the *sala* and was utilized for varied uses, including sewing and other female domestic activities. While the term is very common in Cuba, it is not in Puerto Rico. In spite of this and given the fact that this is the correct term used in Cuba, it will be used in this interpretation. Thanks are extended to Architect Berenice Sueiro and Ms Silvina L Vázquez for their help in understanding the role *salas* and *saletas* play in Cuban culture. Because their unique personalities do not necessarily coincide with the terms living room and parlor, the words *sala* and *saleta* are used in Spanish throughout this work.

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*Con todo la posición de la Ciudad en el declive de la cuesta, con muchos huertos, o patios poblados de vistosas plantas, las azoteas de las casas, algunos edificios públicos perfectamente contruidos, y la proporción y la rectitud de las calles, le dan de lexos [sic] una prespectiva [sic] extensa y agradable, hermoçada por árboles y plantas que resaltan entre las casas, formando un bosque en poblado.<sup>416</sup>*

Not all residences were humble for there was a construction trend that created imposing public and domestic buildings. The defensive walls were finished by the 1770s, at a time when work on the Capilla del Santo Cristo de la Salud and Convento de las Carmelitas Calzadas was initiated. The Palacio Episcopal was also reconstructed at this time by Bishop Jiménez Pérez. The main body of the Catedral de San Juan Bautista was in place although the vault of the principal nave was missing. The city also initiated the erection of a grand hospital, the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción El Grande, located in the Calle de San Sebastián, at this time.

During the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Enlightenment proved to be a fountain of great change impacting every aspect of daily life, including the roles played by the genders and their relation to the domestic artifact. *“Las ideas roussonianas que dividían perfectamente lo público y lo privado tendrían amplia difusión, relegando los roles femeninos a la esfera privada y centrándolos en la domesticidad. En este sentido, la casa era el lugar donde se ejercía el aprendizaje de la familia, tanto para las capas altas como para los artesanos.”<sup>417</sup>* Domesticity became an important part of the private sphere, one of the two that organized life. This differentiation was novel and responded to a rational organization of human activities. Conceived as the first schooling center, the design of the home took added importance as a symbol of intelligibility and decorum. As a result, rationality became the guiding light of domestic architecture. Many façades became a testimonial to the people they were serving and representing within the urban context and a new interest in elegance proclaimed the time of irregularly organized and makeshift-looking architectural artifacts had ended. It is not surprising that the Viejo San Juan house experienced some modifications during this period intended to make this architectural typology a useful artifact that could shelter the changing times. As a result, *sanjuanero* domestic architecture was born at this time.

One of the most relevant characteristics of the 18<sup>th</sup> century domestic architecture is the emphasis on the portal or entrance door, an Italian Baroque influence and also a favorite motif of both Spanish Baroque currents: the so-called Plateresque and the *severo herreriano* (severe de Herrera style). While the theatricality found in the peninsula and in some American locales is absent in the Viejo San Juan, this component emphasizes both the elegance of the building and the social standing of the family living behind its façade. This most unusual

<sup>416</sup> Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra, *Historia geográfica, civil y política de la Isla de S Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico*, p 212. Translation into English: “The Blacks and poor people organize their houses following the same general idea although they are more grotesque and small. They are really nothing but a cage made of reeds, supported by wooden slats, placed to make it more stable. The roof is also made of reeds covered with *yagüas*, like the ones mentioned before. They call these houses *bohíos*: they have no internal subdivision or any light except the one coming from the door which is low and narrow.” “Very few houses in this city do not have a patio or garden: they cook in these spaces; as kitchen they use a fire lighted under the shadow of some papayas, plantains or creepers with pumpkins that they plant to enjoy their shadow and to protect the hens and guinea hens, ducks and other fowl . . . The houses of this type are constructed on the outskirts of the city and even though they are within the interior of the defensive circuit they can be considered slums.” “The luxury of fine woodwork, tapestry and adornment has yet to come to Puerto Rico: all furniture is reduced to hammocks and some rough chairs, the doors and windows have no decorative detail, they move on their frames and are closed with wooden, because they do not have iron, they also do not have hinges, and other metal fittings.” “In spite of its placement on the side of a hill, its many gardens or patios planted with bright colored plants, the roofs of the houses, some public buildings perfectly constructed, and the proportion and alignment of the streets provide the city a wide and agreeable perspective, beautified by the trees and plants that exist between the houses, forming a forest within the settlement.”

<sup>417</sup> Ivana Frasset, “Población y sociedad,” *España Crisis imperial e independencia*, p 245. Translation into English: “Rousseau’s ideas about divided public and private spheres amply circulated, relegating feminine roles to the private sphere centralizing them around domesticity. In this sense, the house was the place where learning first took place, from the highest to the lowest of social strata.”

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architectural feature, abandoned during the following stylistic periods, is the key to the understanding of the deep transformations which occurred at this time.

Several types of treatments were invented at this time to emphasize the entrance door. In the first kind, openings received a decorative border, either straight or curved, in the manner of encadrement. A three-foiled cusped arched frame was also used to crown the opening providing a sense of movement and decorative flourish that establishes the central opening as the most important one. In some examples, all openings receive special treatment while in others only the central one incorporates singular decoration. One example of the first type is the 18<sup>th</sup> century façade of the Casa del Cabildo (Parcela 22, Block 40) facing the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud. The secondary openings are crowned by a cusped arched frame while the central opening is treated with a wide segmental arch bordering on a small vault due to the width of the walls. The house located on the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud 53 (Parcela 22, Block 17), in turn, incorporates wide encadrements on all secondary openings and reserves the cusped arch treatment for the central one. This element also includes an oval window that further emphasizes the main entrance. Another house, located in the Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud 154 (Parcela 12, Block 40), uses delicate encadrements on all its squat openings and a segmental arch in its central and principal opening. In all these cases, the decorative treatment distinguishes in some special way the central entrance, highlighting its iconic relevance. This architectural and decorative treatment is symbolic of the social prominence of the family.

As mentioned, it is unusual for the main entrance of an Old San Juan house to receive a *portada* treatment as elegant as those found in Havana and other American cities. However, there is a stylistic parallel with simpler examples used in the Cuban capital.<sup>418</sup> The emphasis on the entrance portal is a unique Baroque characteristic that was never used before or after the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the district. Two other *sanjuanero* examples of the special attention paid to this motif are the houses located in the Calle de San Sebastián 107 (Parcela 10, Block 3) and the Calle de San José 101 (Parcela 1, Block 25). While they are closer to de Herrera's prototypes and the simpler Cuban examples than the other façades described above, they are also excellent examples of the *sanjuanero* Baroque. In the first example, two Tuscan engaged pilasters support a broken architrave. This element is treated in an *en ressault* manner over the vertical supporting elements creating a three-dimensional plastic composition resembling a portal-like structure. This interest in sculptural effects denies, to a certain extent, the structural role of the composition. The type was more interested in the decorative effects created by the play of light and shadow of the surfaces than in the abstemious compositions which characterize de Herrera.

In the second example, the Ionic pilasters are engaged to a second set paralleling the multiple-planes treatment present in the above-mentioned architrave. The planar succession motif is the result of posts that are composed of two vertical engaged elements. The symmetrical arrangement present in this façade sharply

<sup>418</sup> According to Weiss, in Havana: *Algunas [casas] fueron trabajadas con portadas con una guarnición formada por pilastras sencillas adosadas a los lados que sostienen un entablamento más o menos simplificado que revuelve sobre las pilastras. Solo por la sencillez de las formas podemos hablar aquí de carácter herreriano. En ninguna de las obras de Juan de Herrera ni de su escuela figura un entablamento quebrado sobre los órdenes; la puerta predilecta del maestro está enmarcada por una faja con molduras, coronada por una cornisilla que se apoya a los lados en sendas ménsulas o consolas, al estilo del Erecteo griego y del Panteón romano. La fórmula antedicha se empleó en la metrópoli en el plateresco – primera mitad del siglo XVI – y, nuevamente, con las modificaciones del caso, en el barroco, se discontinuó precisamente en el herreriano por el rigor clasicista de éste, que no admite la interrupción de los entablamentos.* Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX*, p 94. Translation into English: "Some [houses] included façades with a portal treatment formed by simple pilasters on both sides of the opening framed by a relatively simple architrave. The simplicity of the composition can be associated to de Herrera's architecture. Not one of de Herrera's or his school works includes a broken architrave supported by orders; the master's favorite door composition is framed by moldings and crowned by a small cornice supported by small consoles, in the style of the Greek Erechtheum and the Roman Pantheon. The above-mentioned formula was used by the Plateresque in the metropolis – first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century – and, one more time, with modifications, during the Baroque. It was not used during the de Herrera period; it was deconstructed precisely because of the Classicist rigor that did not admit the fragmentation of architraves."

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contrasts with the irregular organization of the balconies and balconettes of the side façade where informality in terms of the composition is in evidence. By the time the century came to an end, a different approach to the façade was favored.

The Baroque interest in the decoration of the openings of the façade, particularly the central one, takes many forms as can be seen in the Baroque *sanjuanero* examples that have been preserved.<sup>419</sup> It should be noted that the central decorative treatment is used whether the opening was utilized as main entrance or not. In other words, no *zaguán* is necessarily located behind such a decorated central opening. The idea of introducing a portal-like element had as objective to architecturally distinguish the façade, providing it with an air of substance and refinement that would silently echo the family's elegance and not necessarily to mark the entrance.

Another interesting Baroque addition to the façade composition is the "floating lintel"<sup>420</sup> that crowns each one of the openings including the one sheltering the principal entrance. Interestingly, while the use of this element is dated in Havana to the 17<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>421</sup> it was not until the 18<sup>th</sup> century that it became commonplace in Old San Juan. The motif is an example of how designers tried to decorate the sober façade inherited from the earlier period. These inclination towards Baroque and Plateresque "transgressions" – such as the decorative emphasis of the openings, underscoring of the central entrance, multi-planar treatment of architraves, and incorporation of "floating lintels" that defy their traditional structural role in favor of an ornamental one – were the kind of "deviations" the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando would fight against with a vengeance during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These and similar Plateresque-inspired motifs were slowly abandoned by architects when the Real Academia-inspired Classicist fervor inundated Spanish architecture. At that time, decorum and correctness, gravity and rationality, became key words for all architectural creations. Nevertheless, the historic district loved this decorative element and non-architects would insert the "floating lintel" Baroque decorative element during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as an architectural archaism.

Another Baroque component that had an impact upon the Viejo San Juan façade organization during the 18<sup>th</sup> century is the *entresuelo* or *entrepiso* (mezzanine). The use of this type of composition is exemplified paradigmatically by the Baroque houses located on the Calle de San José Street 109 (Parcela 13, Block 25), also known as the Casa de los Dos Zaguanes, and the Calle de San José Street 159 (Parcela 14, Block 34). In the Casa de los Dos Zaguanes, this level is visually incorporated only on the side bays of the principal façade. A grand staircase, unique in its composition, morphology, and ingenuity exists behind the two central bays. As a result, there is no need to express a mezzanine in this area. In all other examples, the level is inserted and expressed between the first and last floors on all façade bays. At the Casa de los Dos Zaguanes, the roof of the mezzanine space is quite low, particularly when compared with the traditional lofty interiors although it was still able to provide additional living area. In Old San Juan the use of the *entresuelo* is limited to a handful of houses since it never gained the popularity it experienced in Havana. A third example of an *entresuelo* is located in the house constructed at the corner of the Calle de la Cruz and Calle de la Fortaleza (Parcela 13, Block 46). This structure, known as the Elizaburu House, was erected in 1749.<sup>422</sup> While in the first

<sup>419</sup> Other Baroque examples in the Viejo San Juan are the residences with the following addresses: Calle del Sol 115 (Parcela 17, Block 15); Calle del Sol 104 (Parcela 3, Block 24); Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud 101 (Parcela 19, Block 24); Calle de la Cruz 104 (Parcela 8, Block 25); Calle de San José 103 (Parcela 18, Block 25); Calle de la Cruz 109 corner Calle de la Luna Streets (Parcela 15, Block 26); Calle de la Fortaleza 105 (Parcela 11, Block 43); Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud 255 (Parcela 11, Block 52); and Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud 257 (Parcela 11/12, Block 52). According to the "Estudio de Revitalización Integral Centro Histórico de San Juan Puerto Rico," all these residences are dated to the 18th century.

<sup>420</sup> The "floating lintel" rejects de Herrera's favorite motif of a straight small cornice supported by two consoles.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*, p 127.

<sup>422</sup> As mentioned, the *entresuelo* of the third example housed the law office of Manuel Elizaburu y Vizcarrondo. It also sheltered the *Parnasillo* literary club from 1879 to 1884, the Partido Liberal Reformista (Liberal Reform Party) and the liberal wing of the Diputación Provincial. Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, p 62. The house was one of the first ones to be



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two examples, balconettes are used in this area in the third building only windows appear. The south façade of the building still evidences the existence of this level.

Fancy-shaped *oculi* windows can be considered another Old San Juan Baroque element. They are found on their own and without a frame of any kind, as is the case of the house located in Calle del Sol 104 (Parcela 3, Block 24). Other examples include them as part of the decorative treatment of the openings proper, as seen in the residences situated in the Calle de San Francisco 55 (Parcela 22, Block 40) and Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud 53 (Parcela 22, Block 17). One such oval window that both decorates the façade and emphasizes the central opening is used in the home sited in Calle de San José 159 (Parcela 14, Block 34). The use is similar to the one present in Parcela 22, Block 17, although in the first example the *oculus* is treated as an independent decorative element. Both round and oval shapes were favored, this last one a favorite of the Baroque Period. Regarding its use of *oculi*, it is also relevant to mention the Baroque's obsession with light and special illumination effects.

It was around this time that the influence of the *hispano-mahometana* house (Moorish type of house), characterized by the non-alignment between the *zaguán* and the interior patio, waned in Spain to be substituted by the *hispano-romana* type (the Hispanic-Roman house, also known as the Christian type). In this last category, the *zaguán* and patio are axially aligned either by means of a central or lateral axis. The rebirth of Classical ideas that emerged during the 15<sup>th</sup> century had a dramatic impact upon Spanish domestic architecture. As a result, a new interest in Roman patterns characteristic of the *domus* and *insula* emerged.<sup>423</sup> In addition to the axial alignment of entrance, *zaguán* and patio, another influence was the incorporation of the *viviendas accesorias* (accessory housing units) that appeared at this time in the first floor, the historic precedent of which was the Roman *taberna* (commercial space). The *viviendas accesorias*, like the *taberna*, were spaces that could be rented or let as stores or offices and, at times, individual residences. This modification had a most profound impact in the Viejo San Juan, specifically in houses that had two floors. Corner houses were particularly suitable for this arrangement. The palatial home located in the Calle de San José 101 (Parcela 1, Block 25) has several of these units designed as perfect squares opening to both streets (the home is located in the southeastern corner of the Calle de San José and Calle del Sol intersection).

The embracement of the Classically-inspired model in Spain and the district underscored the visual and physical connection between entrance and patio. Two local interpretations were created around this idea: the *sala-saleta* (Type A) and the *zaguán* (Type B) floor plans. Type A has been styled the *sala-saleta* organization for the protagonist role of the spatial sequence rests on the sequential *sala* and *saleta*. Some ideas present in this type find a parallel in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Havana domestic architecture. Old San Juan homes present an innovation regarding the *zaguán* since this space was not solely associated to luxurious houses, as was the case in Cuba,<sup>424</sup> but to varied examples regardless of the economic power of its inhabitants. Since the Type A lacks a *zaguán*, entrance to the interior of the house is made directly via the *sala* which faces the street. This space, used as living room and formal entrance into the home, is followed by at least one *saleta*. When there is just one *saleta* it opens directly to the interior patio; when there are several, the last one in the series connects to the interior courtyard. In keeping with the new Renaissance-inspired ideals, visual connection was established between the entrance and the patio, albeit masked by the presence of the *saleta* and the arches that usually divided this space from the *sala*.

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rehabilitated during the 1950s and for decades it was the locale of a jewelry store. At this point in its history, its cultural significance resides primarily on its association to the above-mentioned activities and to Elizaburu y Vizcarrondo, who was born and lived here.

<sup>423</sup> The *domus* was the Roman one family urban house and the *insula* was equivalent to an apartment building.

<sup>424</sup> In Cuba, lack of *zaguán* was associated to the less wealthy. Weiss also establishes that there seems to be a pattern in that houses sporting such an element are usually located in corners or related to plazas.

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The peninsular and local rejection of the Moorish domestic and its non-axial and somewhat convoluted internal spatial relationship between entrance and patio, or lack thereof, and interest in Classical sources translated into another arrangement, the Type B, which includes a *zaguán*. When used, the *zaguán* served as both the entrance and connector to the interior patio or one of its galleries. The peninsular Christian type served as direct precedent for this spatial arrangement although, in many Spanish examples, the centrally located *zaguán* is aligned with the central axis of the patio. This type of centrally-located interior patio is known in Cuba as a *patio claustral* (cloister patio). Due to the limitations in terms of width inherent to most *parcelas*, there is a limited number of houses in the district that have a central *zaguán* or interior patio. Characteristically, it is aligned with one of the galleries (when such elements exist) of the courtyard.

The houses located on Calle de San José 101 (Parcela 1, Block 25), Calle de San José 109 (Parcela 15, Block 25) and Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud 152 (Parcela 11, Block 40) included a centrally-aligned *zaguán* as part of their original design. In the first example, this space is still preserved and is aligned with the gallery located on the north side of the patio. In the Casa de los Dos Zaguanes the entry *zaguán* masterfully divides into two secondary *zaguanes* that embrace the monumental staircase leading to the second and third floors. This extraordinary house is the only one in the entire district to sport such an arrangement, a puzzling one for usually the 18<sup>th</sup> century staircase was located in a more private location closer to the patio. The third example has a *zaguán* that divides the house into two *enfilades* on both sides of the central space. This arrangement is repeated in a similar manner in the fourth example. These residences are exemplary models of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Type B vernacular floor plan developed in Old San Juan at this time. As such, they are extremely important contributing buildings in terms of the cultural significance of the district.

As mentioned, the *zaguán* gained limited prominence partly as a result of the characteristic narrow lots of the core. In spite of the chameleonic personality, the *zaguán* never played the role of its United States cousin, the hall. In the South of the nation many lived in this space most of the year protecting themselves from the cold during the winter and the heat of the summer. This is the reason most halls are decorated with rugs and furniture for they were considered apart of the interior of the house. Although located in the interior of the home, in Old San Juan the *zaguán* was never considered an inside room. This is the reason it was usually paved with *losas canarias* (stone from the Canary Islands) and similar materials. The space was considered a circulation nexus that facilitated the varied interior communications as well as a connector of the house and the street. If the Baroque house includes a staircase, it will be located close to the patio, usually at the point where the *zaguán* becomes part of the patio or gallery. This intimate relationship between the interior courtyard and staircase is dated to the early part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The defining characteristics of Type A, the *sala-saleta* type, are the following: (1) absence of a *zaguán*; (2) entrance from the street through the *sala* that also serves as foyer; (3) a *sala-saleta* spatial sequence, with the *sala* being the first space encountered from the street; and (4) the *sala*, located in the first floor, does not connect by means of a balcony to the exterior. In all cases this space is the first one encountered as one enters the residence from the street while the *saleta* is located **after** the *sala*. The *saleta* serves as a transitional area between the *sala* and *enfilade*. In turn, the defining characteristics of the Type B, the *zaguán* type, are: (1) existence of a *zaguán* located along the middle of the house; (2) physical connection between this space and the interior patio or one of its galleries; (3) entrance to the house is through the *zaguán* that also acts as foyer; and (4) absence of a *sala-saleta* organization.

In spite of its popularity, few examples of the *sala-saleta* organization (Type A) have been preserved given the fact that many interiors were transformed with time. The most common change a house of this type underwent was the insertion of a *zaguán* at a later date. As mentioned, this was a favorite late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries' solution to the high density problem experienced by the district. An example that evidences the transformation of the *sala-saleta* organization as a direct result of the inclusion of such a space is the house

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sited on Calle de la Cruz 105 (Parcela 17, Block 26), dated to the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>425</sup> Originally, the residence sported a *sala* and *saleta* that opened to the monumental staircase landing. The original enfilade was situated on the same side as the staircase. It is obvious that the two walls that form the *zaguán* in the center were added at a later time. Their width, when compared to the ones present in the rest of the structure and the irregularity of the space (the walls are not parallel resulting in a *zaguán* of irregular width) clearly evidence they are a later insertion. The whimsical proportions of this space also prove its use as a problem-solving artifact allowing non-related people to inhabit a building originally created for one family. The house located on Calle de la Cruz 103 (Parcela 19, Block 26), dated to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>426</sup> incorporates still another spatial solution. In this case, the *sala-saleta* sequence opened to a second *saleta* which, in turn, served as a gallery facing the patio. On the other side of the patio, is the enfilade formed by seven rooms that runs to the end of the lot. At a later date, a side *zaguán* with a staircase was created to provide a private entrance to the second floor. As a result, the *sala* became a smaller space while the *saleta* was fragmented into three areas: a room, the corridor to which this space opens and the staircase. This is another example in which the width and irregularity of the walls creating the whimsical *zaguán* clearly evidence its makeshift nature.

An example of a very early use of the *sala-saleta* composition is the house located in Calle de San Francisco 61 (Parcela 18, Block 40) dated to the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>427</sup> It is instructive to compare the above mentioned larger examples to this petite one in order to demonstrate that the spatial *sanjuanero* vernacular organization of the *sala-saleta* was used in large and small houses alike. In this particular case, there was no enfilade, just a *sala* followed by a *saleta* that opened to the patio that was as wide as the lot. The home constructed in Caleta de las Monjas 54 (Parcela 4, Block 31),<sup>428</sup> dated to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has preserved the simple, identical arrangement. The *sala-saleta* arrangement proved to be extremely flexible; it could adapt to different house sizes, as well as social strata. It is possible that in small houses uses were more fluid than in larger ones. Taking this into consideration the *saleta* may have been used as bedroom during the night and as working area during the day. It was customary for the district to have scant furniture and many slept in *hamacas* (hammocks) and other such light bedding artifacts.<sup>429</sup>

In both the Type A and Type B the patio is usually located on one side of the lot, framed by the *medianera* (party wall) it shares with the side neighbor and, on the other side, by the enfilade. As mentioned, this wing is known locally as the *martillo* and is perpendicularly located regarding the *sala* and *saleta*. It is here where the bedrooms, kitchen and toilet (if there was one) were located. As a result of this configuration an L-shape floor plan was obtained, a shape that can also be obtained in the Type B.

Usually, the rooms of the enfilade connect to each other although in rare instances some of the rooms only open to the interior patio. They do so directly or via a gallery. At the back of the lot in some residences, a projecting perpendicular small wing is found housing the kitchen and toilets. The spaces which formed the enfilade were usually the same size and preferably were designed as squares or rectangles. There are a few examples where the *martillo* is not subdivided into rooms.

The shotgun or enfilade composition is a very old spatial organization. By the time Madame Catherine de Briçonnet experimented with a hall between two enfilades at the Château de Chenonceau during the French

<sup>425</sup> "Estudio de Revitalización Integral Centro Histórico de San Juan Puerto Rico," Inventory Sheet, Parcela 17, Block 26.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*, Inventory Sheet, Parcela 19, Block 26.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.*, Inventory Sheet, Parcela 18, Block 40.

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*, Inventory Sheet, Parcela 4, Block 31. Thanks are extended to Mr and Mrs John Nevárez for authorizing a visit to the interior of their Type A house.

<sup>429</sup> The Casa Alegría (Parcela 1, Block 25) still preserves iron circular rings embedded to the walls that were used to hang the hammocks and coys (baby hammock-like artifacts).

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Renaissance, the organization had a long history as a major domestic organizing tool. Although the spaces in the Viejo San Juan enfilade were generic in terms of their use, usually they were used as sleeping rooms. The additional door facing the gallery and/or patio could be used once the doors between rooms were closed at night. By the same token, the interior one could be used if it was raining or when there was no desire to wonder out of the roofed parts of the house.

The *sala-saletta* arrangement guaranteed the privacy of the interior patio and the enfilade by providing an additional space, the *saleta*, which acted as a buffer between the public *sala* and the private interior of the house. Characteristically, there was no particular use attached to this space. It can be best described as semi-formal or semi-public area due to the fact that it shares a connection with the public *sala*. Even before the district became densely populated, Old San Juan houses were used by many people. In the first place, extended families were the norm. Secondly, servants and/or slaves were common and it was usual for some families to have, at least, a handful of them living in the same house. Judging by the use it received in neighboring Havana, it is probable it was associated to the women in the house. The space provided visual control of activities in the enfilade, patio and *sala* and must have been the perfect spot to supervise all domestic activities. Children could play in the interior patio while husbands read in the *sala* and servants did their duties while she embroidered or sew visually connecting to them all.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the patio underwent significant transformations. The *sanjuanero* type is different from the peninsular one in that the interior of the house does not open to it by means of the balconies and balconettes as was characteristic in Spain. In fact, even the use of patio galleries was limited in the district. With a few exceptions, the patio was always be located on the side of the lot. Two exceptions to this rule (which excludes 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings) are the Casa de los Dos Zaguanes (18<sup>th</sup> century) on the Calle de San José and the Casa del Marqués de la Esperanza (19<sup>th</sup> century) on the Calle de Tetuán (Parcela 14, Block 64). Both examples include a *patio claustral* (cloister patio).

During the Baroque Period, a transformation occurred as a result of the new interpretation of the house-street relationship. Examples demonstrate an interest in using the main façade as a projection of the distinction of the family, a kind of urban *mise-en-scène*. The street was no longer considered enemy territory and residences ceased to be interpreted as islands floating in an unknown urban ocean. The path in front – in a sense – helped define the house. Understood within this context, patios ceased to be moat-like areas and became oasis of elegance and enjoyment that, whenever possible, connected visually to the exterior of the house. In Cuba these new aspirations and theoretical underpinnings made way for an enlargement of the interior patio and the abandonment of the Moorish floor plan. In Old San Juan, the space visually connected to the street via the *zaguán* and the *sala* via the *saleta(s)*. Both Type A and Type B spatial arrangements underscored the at the time new relationship between the “sacred” interior and the “profane” exterior.

Although, characteristically, houses sported only one floor during the 18<sup>th</sup> century there were many that had two. In these cases, the staircase leading to the upper floor was located near the patio, closely repeating Havana patterns. The preferred location in the Type B was at the junction of the *zaguán* and the patio. Since there was no *zaguán*, in the Type A the staircase was found at the point where the last *saleta* met the patio. It was not unusual at this time to experiment with Baroque interpretations and create architectural drama by means of this vertical communication element. This was achieved in different manners, including the size, splendor and richness of the materials and decorations. Tapia y Rivera mentions that one of the houses inhabited by his family had a porphyry staircase. Claiming it was an old house (i.e. built before the 19<sup>th</sup> century) located on Calle de la Cruz 27 (“old number”) he described it in the following manner: *La escalera principal*,

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*que era de p[ó]rfido, amplia y con buenas luces, estaba a la izquierda del zaguán, entrando de la calle.*<sup>430</sup> At times, aesthetic decorative elements, such as pointed arches, were also used. The Alegría House (Parcela 1, Block 25) preserves the Delft tiles used in the risers that contrast handsomely with the dark and light grey marble tiles<sup>431</sup> used in the steps and the elegantly carved wooden nosing which finishes this last element. One superb Tuscan column frames the landing on the first floor while bronze balls mark the turning points of the balustrade. The position allowed for a transparent and fluid interaction with the patio while an opening in the ceiling allows light to further highlight the elegant sculptural element. In spite of its intimate relationship with the patio, these – in the manner of *tragaluces* (skylights) – provided light and ventilation to the space thus empowering its elegance. Each section of this magnificent staircase is at least six feet wide, a characteristic size for 18<sup>th</sup> century ones. There are many other examples throughout the district that evidenced an interest in elegance and decorum when designing staircases.

As mentioned, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century the balcony fully developed in both Havana and the Viejo San Juan as a response to the transformation of the street-home relationship. Another relevant change collaborated in its development, given the case that wall construction slowly abandoned *tapiería* for *cal y canto* and *mampostería ordinaria* and *concertada*. Although the present day balcony in the façade of the house located in Calle de San José 104 (Parcela 10, Block 24) is made of concrete, its central location and relative small size, in terms of width and depth, probably reflect the original wooden one constructed when the residence was built during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. These transformations are important for they evidence how buildings evolved with time, embracing new materials and aesthetic ideas while abiding by centuries-old architectural traditions. Interest in using balconies in façades does not respond solely to the availability of new construction materials and techniques and to a transformation in the relationship between the façade and the street. The existence of these elements also evidences the development of an alternative way of life that emerged during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, allowing free time to rest and an interest in urban and social events. Historic accounts mention how balconies were still used during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century for family conversation late during the evening. The “projecting balconies of the second story,” served as the stage “where, in the evenings, the family sit and chatter in the light, pleasant chit-chat of southern climes.”<sup>432</sup> Balconies also had other relevant urban responsibilities. At times, families were requested by the government to display *cortinajes* (draperies) to celebrate special occasions. While the birth of an *infante* (prince) or *infanta* (princess) of Spain or the coronation of a king merited elegant tapestries or brocades, the death of a monarch and celebration of Holy Week called for black hangings.

Although balconies may have been present in pre-18<sup>th</sup> century architectural examples they were, by necessity, small artifacts. The limitations in terms of size relate both to the cantilever distance from the wall of the main façade and to their length. Wooden cantilevered beams had to be embedded into *tapiería* walls that had negligible resistance regarding tensile forces. In addition, a long balcony was subjected to flexion forces that could cause it to sag in the middle with disastrous consequences. The new methods of constructing walls and the use of iron square rods that anchored balconies to the wall, iron consoles used as support, and iron balustrades also date to this period.<sup>433</sup>

Historic architectural drawings of the house sited at the Calle de Tetuán 153 (Parcela 8, Block 53), dated to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>434</sup> evidence the relevance given to the balcony. The set of plans includes not

<sup>430</sup> Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, *Mis memorias o Puerto Rico como lo encontré y como lo dejo*, p 8. Translation into English: “The principal staircase, made of porphyry, was quite wide and large; it was located to the left of the *zaguán*, as one entered from the street.”

<sup>431</sup> According to Cuban architectural historians, marble tiles of this kind became common during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Havana. They are known in Old San Juan as *mármol genovés* (Genoese marble) and seemed to have been used since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>432</sup> William Dinwiddie, *Puerto Rico Its Conditions and Possibilities*, pp 182-183.

<sup>433</sup> Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX*, p 197.

<sup>434</sup> “Estudio de revitalización integral del centro histórico de San Juan,” Inventory Sheet: Block 53, Parcela 9. The 1990s inventory lists Parcela 8 as Parcela 9.

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only a drawing of the façade where the proposed full-fledged new balcony is included but also a section depicting how the new element and the metal brackets supporting it were to be inserted into the façade wall. The drawings evidence that by the 19<sup>th</sup> century balconies were considered a relevant component of the public face of a building meriting official approval before construction was initiated. Naturally, there were also safety considerations for both the inhabitants of the house and people walking under it.

As mentioned, *tapiería* construction used in the district during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries was slowly abandoned during the 18<sup>th</sup> century in favor of *cal y canto*, *mampostería ordinaria* and *mampostería concertada*. In Havana, the *mampostería ordinaria* (ordinary masonry) had the following composition: *pedra sin escuadrar, con los cantos ajustados lo mejor posible los unos con los otros, rellenándose los intersticios con ripios y mortero*.<sup>435</sup> Instead of using wet, packed earth – the characteristic *tapiería* material – irregular stones were now incorporated to the wall fabric. The empty spaces between the larger pieces were filled out with smaller rocks and mortar. All walls constructed in this manner were stuccoed in order to obtain more exact profiles and to better protect the materials from the humidity. The Spanish words used for this last treatment are *encalar* (to stucco) and *repellar* (to plaster). First in Havana, then in the Viejo San Juan, by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, *tapiería* was slowly but surely abandoned.

Spanish 18<sup>th</sup> century architecture in the Viejo San Juan, with its emphasis on propriety and elegance, paradigmatically encompassed ideas of the *Antiguo Régimen*. Although architecture seems to have a life of its own political and cultural transformations mark it profoundly. The 18<sup>th</sup> century *sanjuanero* façades with their portal-like entrances and fancy decorations, especially when compared to the abstemious treatments used previously, were the product of a society in which things like lineage and family respectability were expressed by means of the insertion of architectural orders and ornamental architectural elements in the façades. Baroque architecture in Old San Juan tried to create a tradition-bound artifact that defied the dramatic social revolution experienced at the time. By the end of the century, however, society changed completely and drastically and Spain was shaken out of its traditional, complacent existence. As a result, the architecture of the colonies was absolutely transformed when the old way of doing things, the preferred manner of the *Antiguo Régimen*, was completely shattered. The fact that the Viejo San Juan's domestic architecture is capable, by means of its morphology and aesthetic preferences, to communicate these historic transformations adds another layer of cultural significance to each house individually and to the group they all belong.

### The Historicist and Enlightenment Period(1812-1898)

The aesthetic interest in architectural revivals initiated in Europe during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century hit Old San Juan like a powerful stylistic wave during the century. Admiration for historicisms echoed profoundly within the historic district, lasting well into the 1930s. During the early decades of this period the house came to play a more relevant role for society. Havana was not alone in experiencing: *La preocupación creciente por la imagen que la vivienda pudiera brindar al observador, se fue transformando en una obsesión por lo que la casa era y lo que parecía ser, que se correspondía con la noción de lo que la familia burguesa era y lo que*

<sup>435</sup> Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX*, p 201. Translation into English: "Unfinished stone, with corners adjusted as best as possible, one with the others, and with empty spaces filled in with *ripios* and mortar." The Spanish term *mampostería ordinaria* can be literally translated into ordinary masonry, a construction technique defined in Spain in the following manner: [R]ealizada con piedras irregulares y sin labra aparente, adaptadas entre ellas lo más posible para dejar el menor espacio de huecos, que pueden ser rellenados con ripios. Ripio, in turn, is described as: [P]equeño trozo de piedra encargado de calzar y completar las fábricas de mampostería. *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, words: *mampostería ordinaria* and *ripio*. In this type of construction, the *mampuestos* (stone blocks) are used in their rough state, exactly as they were extracted from the quarry. Since the size and shape of the irregular blocks vary, all empty spaces are filled with smaller rocks and mortar. The exterior of a wall constructed in this manner is usually covered with mortar.

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*aparentaba ser.*<sup>436</sup> The Viejo San Juan also developed similar bourgeois ideals, although expressed in a subtler architectural manner. Knowledge of the architectural past and the influence of the Enlightenment regarding the worth of every individual and by extension the family dramatically impacted domestic architecture.

The architecture of the period reflected the impact of historicist models. New sources – in the beginning based on Roman, Greek and Renaissance precedents, drilled by the martinet that was the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando – became the preferred precedents for the district designs. The period considered this choice not a matter of preference but of architectural correctness and decorum. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century drew to a close, more eclectic styles were incorporated mirroring interest in mid-century aesthetic currents as the *Rundbogenstil*, High Victorian Gothic, and Second Empire Baroque and cognate modes. During the first years of the period, there were transitional examples such as the house located in the Calle de la Fortaleza 107 (Parcela 10, Block 49), dated to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The proportions of the openings, stylistic archaisms, are contrasted to the Classically-inspired garland motif that crowns the central opening providing the façade with a portal-like treatment characteristic of the local Baroque. This façade exemplifies the collusion of stylistic currents. The interest in new architectural and urban ideas was empowered by better transportation and ever-growing commercial links with Europe, as well as other countries like the United States. *Losas canarias* made of stone from the Canary Islands, Genoese grey tinted marble, New Orleans filigree metal balustrades, concrete mixture for finishes and pitch pine wood (known locally as *pichipén*) were some of the new materials that were readily available at this time, dramatically transforming and enriching the architectural persona of the district. Although as mentioned, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century materials such as Delft tiles and porphyry for staircases were also available, everything seems to indicate availability of materials and options grew exponentially during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Havana introduced neoclassical ideas to the Spanish Caribbean as early as the 1770s,<sup>437</sup> although it took some time for these to reach Old San Juan. Aesthetic precedents of this particular current were the architectural examples created in the peninsula by distinguished architects, such as Francesco Sabatini, Ventura Rodríguez and Juan de Villanueva, who were profoundly influenced by Roman Classical architecture. The discovery of the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum during the 18<sup>th</sup> century empowered the fervor for all things Roman. As a result, the *patio claustral* (cloister patio) or centrally-located patio surrounded by loggias on all four sides became fashionable during the 19<sup>th</sup> century for public buildings. One example of its use in domestic architecture is the Marqués de la Esperanza house, located in the Calle de Tetuán (Parcela 14, Block 64). Although the interior patio continued to play a prominent role in all domestic artifacts, as mentioned previously, few houses centralized this element due to the constricted width of most *sanjuanero* lots. No house in the Viejo San Juan has portals (loggias) like the ones constructed in Havana at this time. The only example of such an element was erected during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in front of the Casa Alcaldía. It is possible that the hall-like entrance of the Casa del Marqués de la Esperanza that serves as prelude to the magnificent main staircase may be a parallel reflection of the Cuban concern with spatial progression. In Havana, however,

<sup>436</sup> Emma Álvarez-Tabío Albo, *Vida, mansión y muerte de la burguesía cubana* (La Habana: Letras Cubanas, 1989), p 56. Translation into English: "The growing preoccupation for the image the house could have upon the observer, slowly transformed into an obsession related to what the house was and what it appeared to be which intimately related to the notion of what the bourgeois family was and what it appeared to be."

<sup>437</sup> This tendency was evidenced in: [L]a aplicación de pilastras, cornisas y guarniciones clásicas a construcciones – especialmente casas privadas – que no habían variado sustancialmente en la distribución de la planta ni en la composición exterior . . . La segunda corresponde a la casa precedida de portal formado por una larga columnata . . . la tercera aparece en el último tercio del siglo . . . y se distingue por sus portales de arquerías . . . Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX*, p 346. Translation into English: "[T]he use of pilasters, cornices and Classical detailing in constructions – particularly in private houses – that experienced no changes in terms of the floor plan and exterior composition . . . The second one is the portal that includes a long colonnade which is added to the front of the house . . . the third one appears during the last third of the century . . . and is distinguished by its arcaded portals."

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portals are exterior structures. Since not one of these components was ever built for domestic buildings in the district, the design of the local façade basically depended on applied decoration of varied types and the dramatic use of balconies. Balustrades in metal and wood, architectural orders, and even curved cornices to finish the façade heralded the new sources of inspiration.

On the heels of the interest for Roman and Greek architecture, *Einleben* or Historicist theories further opened other creative doors. As mentioned, from the Central European *Rundbogenstil* to the Italian Cinquecento varied architectural ideals were embraced with gusto. A good example is the house sited in Calle de San Francisco 65 (Parcela 17, Block 40), dated to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>438</sup> From historic plans it can be deduced that the original house was composed of just one space as wide as the lot that opened to a patio in the back that had the same width. The five openings façade – an extremely rare arrangement in the historic district – belies the relative humbleness of the floor plan. One trend at the time favored arches in the façade and another one planar added decoration. In this particular case, Second Empire Baroque models were used to add elegance and drama to the relatively humble residence.

There was a strong reserve but medieval revivals,<sup>439</sup> particularly the Neo-Romanesque and Neo-Gothic,<sup>440</sup> made a shy and diluted appearance in Havana during the last decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>441</sup> While it took longer for these influences to make a mark in Old San Juan, they were also part of the rich and varied architectural experiences explored. All manner of revivals followed suit, interpreted as alternatives to the Classicist and academic tendencies. Interest in the Neo-Arab is seen in the house located in the Calle del Sol 285 (Parcela 16, Block 20) that includes both a pseudo-rusticated treatment of Picturesque inspiration and horseshoe arches organizing a Romantic façade interpretation. Interest in this revival continued uninterrupted into the 20<sup>th</sup> century when it was adapted to both office and apartment buildings. An example of the last type is the Neo-Arab example located in the Calle de San José 252 (Parcela 15, Block 52).

The *sanjuanero* domestic interior changed very little during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The *sala-saleta* floor organization (Type A) was so adaptable that ways of life could change and the spatial composition could still work for its residents. As evidenced by the structure located in (or planned for) the Calle del Mercado 9 (Parcela 9, Block 14) in the year 1900, the spatial arrangement could also be used in wooden structures.<sup>442</sup> The concept of dividing the home into four sectors of domestic activities – *sala*, *saleta*, interior patio, and *enfilade* – continued to serve well during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as it still does today. Nevertheless, some transformations were required in order to adapt to the overcrowding that characterized the district at this time.

<sup>438</sup> "Estudio de revitalización integral del centro histórico de San Juan," Inventory Sheet: Parcela 17, Block 40.

<sup>439</sup> An interest in theoretical medieval-inspired aesthetic variations existed in the district since the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, if not before. As mentioned, the original building of the Casa de Beneficencia had Gothick elements, an extremely early example of this British vanguard aesthetic expression. The Real Audiencia rehabilitation also included Neo-Gothic elements as part of the decorative scheme.

<sup>440</sup> Neo-Gothic presence in the historic district presents a confusing panorama. The house located in the Calle de San Sebastián 107 (Parcela 11, Block 3) includes a pointed arch in its interior. The house mentioned above is dated to 1760,<sup>440</sup> an extremely early date for even Gothick semantics to make an appearance. There are other houses and public buildings that sport pointed arcuated elements, including the building that sheltered an old people's asylum in 1921 located along the same street (Calle de San Sebastián 111 corner Calle del Mercado). It is possible to interpret the use of Gothic-inspired semantics as one of many "archaisms" favored by the district throughout its history.

<sup>441</sup> The Neo-Medieval modes, specifically the Neo-Romanesque and the Neo-Byzantine, appear in Havana by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The influence of the revivals: [C]onstituyó el comienzo de la diversificación de los estilos arquitectónicos en uso, que a principios de siglo XX habrá de culminar en el eclecticismo. Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX*, p 347. Translation into English: "[The influence of the revivals] constituted the beginning of the diversification in terms of the use of the different architectural styles that during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century would culminate in eclecticism."

<sup>442</sup> The historic plan of this structure, dated 1900, was included in the "Estudio de revitalización integral del centro histórico de San Juan," Inventory Sheet: Parcela 9, Block 14.



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A good example of late 19<sup>th</sup> century modifications is the building located in the Calle de la Cruz 152 (Parcela 6, Block 34). It is detailed in a set of historic plans that the first floor was to be occupied by two *almacenes* (storage area) while an apartment was to be sheltered by the second one.<sup>443</sup> By constructing a second floor, the structure could continue to serve a domestic use but now in a separate level from the commercial one. This physical separation – segregating commercial and residential activities to different floors – evidences a trend that became common at this time. The proposed second floor apartment is entered via a room labeled *comedor* (dining room), a space that serves as nucleus in terms of circulation. It is interesting to note that, during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Countess of Merlin explained why many palatial houses in Havana lacked such a room: *La casa de mi tío es muy grande, y está rodeada de altas galerías, que se pierden de vista, cerradas de persianas para evitar los rayos del sol. En una de estas galerías es donde comemos, porque aquí los comedores en el interior de las casas están prohibidos a causa del calor.*<sup>444</sup> In the proposed dining room of the Calle de la Cruz 152 house, the space connects to the *sala*, one of the bedrooms (specifically described as *dormitorio*), and the gallery (*galería*) that provided access to the toilet (*excusado*) and the kitchen (*cocina*). The fact that the *comedor* doubles as entrance foyer and main spatial distributor, sitting uncomfortably in the middle of the spatial sequence, evidences the novelty of this space and its lack of traditional location. The appearance during the 19<sup>th</sup> century of the dining room as a space in its own right is a reflection of the new relevance given to family rituals such as eating. In Havana, the first examples of the formal dining room also date to this period and the space is intimately associated to the patio, the source of illumination and ventilation and also greenery.<sup>445</sup> Another added advantage was that, in this location, the space was close to the kitchen where the meals were prepared. It is relevant to remember that family dining was still considered a private ritual in the higher classes. There is pictorial evidence that some who lived in tenement houses used the interior patio as kitchen and informal dining room. In any case, the formal dining room in the district can be dated to the period between the middle and the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

There are other interesting transformations dated to this time. First, historic floor plans now labeled rooms specifically as *dormitorios* and *comedor*. This specificity emphasizes the change that took place at the time in terms of house interiors. As mentioned, the traditional terms used to describe these spaces were generic and not tied to any specific function, hence the names of *aposento* (space or room) and *habitación* (room). The words *dormitorio* and *comedor* establish with clarity that the only uses of these rooms to sleep and eat. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, interior spaces abandoned their traditional generic personality and became rooms that had only one specific use. Although there was an increase in the number of formal kitchens and bathrooms, whenever present these spaces are always located at the back of the house. *La cocina presentaba un carácter más privado que social; dicho de otra manera manejaba una sociabilidad cerrada por que en ella se reunían diariamente varias personas, miembros de la familia; así, se excluía al “extranjero.”*<sup>446</sup> In the following houses – Calle de San Francisco 102 (Parcela 19A, Block 43); Calle de San Francisco 104 (Parcela 19B, Block 43) and Caleta de San Juan 55 (Parcela 12, Block 31) – the kitchens, whether located in the first or second floor apartments, are all located at the back of the house, close to the *excusado* (toilet).

The pre-Enlightenment façade is quite different from the post-Enlightenment one. The advent of progressive architectural theories and the philosophical guidelines established by the Real Academia de San Fernando de

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, Inventory Sheet: Parcela 6, Block 34.

<sup>444</sup> Countess of Merlin, *Viaje a la Habana* (Madrid: Editorial Verbum, 2006), p 74. Translation into English: “My uncle’s house is huge and it is surrounded by galleries with high ceilings so long you lose sight of them, closed with louvers to protect from the interior from the rays of the sun. In one of these galleries we eat for dining rooms inside the house are impracticable in this city due to the heat.”

<sup>445</sup> Many Cuban interior patios have green areas that include trees, such as palms, while greenery in Old San Juan courtyards was strictly limited to small plants planted in the corners or in pots.

<sup>446</sup> María Astrid Ríos Durán, “La casa santafereña, 1800-1830: en el camino hacia la intimidad, el confort y la domesticidad,” p 67. Translation into English: “The kitchen had a more private rather than social character; in other words, it managed a closed sociability due to the fact that several people met here every day, members of the family, in this manner the ‘foreigner’ was excluded.”

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Bellas Artes collided to empower a new interpretation of this element. New professions, such as engineers and older ones like the *alarifes*,<sup>447</sup> became symbols of non-Enlightened approaches to design. Of these two groups, the second one was the hardest to manage, both in Spain and the Viejo San Juan. Although house construction had been delegated to the second group for centuries, all were now required to abide not only by certain regulations (dictating aspects such as the cantilevered distance of a cornice or the design of entrances) and city ordinances but also with compositional concepts that required formal education in the field. Flights of fancy and creative innovations were frowned upon. On occasion, the Real Academia refused to comment on a particular project precisely because it was presented by a person lacking formal studies in architecture. As mentioned, one such case was the proposal for the Colegio de Párvulos. By this time the government had already forced the Real Academia to comment projects designed by engineers, something they had refused to do for some time. The organism's philosophical perspective slowly seeped into the collective consciousness. As a result, interest in Classicist and Renaissance modes, the ones considered by the Real Academia the decorous and correct styles to create proper architecture, was empowered. Rationality, precision and regularity were to control wild creativity including Baroque "deviations."

An important idea fostered by the period was the understanding of the house as an intrinsic part of the urban context. The decoration of all buildings became a public issue given the fact that each one was considered an essential part of the core, a tesserae in the grand urban mosaic. Each home formed part of the Enlightened urban organism, a holistic organism meant to serve the public in several ways. The *Laws of Indies* had requested houses to be considered adornments of the town. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this idea was underscored. The final goal, however, was different for domestic architecture was no longer expected to serve as icon of the monarch's power but as illustrated examples of a new and more rational way of living. As a result, the Enlightenment house became an important building, even if not public like the architectural typologies invented at the time (jail, hospital, hotel, library, museum, restaurant, among others), for it was within its embrace that the new generations were to be nurtured and start their education.

Preserved architectural drawings of projected floor plans and elevations dated to the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century evidence that private undertakings were understood as important because they had the potential to affect the whole city. Any such work had to be presented to the proper authorities for formal consultation and recommendations. An example is the house located in the Calle del Sol 152 (Parcela 3, Block 25). The official plans presented to the authorities for this very narrow house include both floor plans and elevations. The architectural drawings of the houses situated in Calle de la Luna 153 (Parcela 13, Block 25) and Calle de San José 103 (Parcela 18, Block 25) have also been preserved. They both present in great detail work to be carried out in their respective façades. By the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even the smallest of interventions had to be properly authorized. Detailed drawings of the balcony proposed for the house located at Calle de Tetuán 153 (Parcela 8, Block 53) evidence the rigor expected in terms of all design processes and construction activities. Not all rehabilitation plans describe grand and luxurious interventions. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century many structures within the district presented a modest appearance that some proprietors wanted to enhance in a low-keyed manner. The house located in the Calle de la Cruz 153 (Parcela 15, Block 35) was subjected to minor rehabilitation work during the year 1899. The proposed intervention is minimal and centers in varying the size and decoration of the openings. Small details, such as decorative plaques are proposed to be placed over the quasi-generic façade in an effort to improve its aesthetic appeal. It is ironic that this limited intervention was followed by a most dramatic renovation of the façade during the 1920s-1930s, when a magnificent Mediterranean Revival apartment complex was built on the site.

<sup>447</sup> The Spanish word *alarife* translates into master builder, bricklayer, and mason. *Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española*, word: *alarife*.

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The Enlightenment-inspired domestic façade is characterized by the following: (1) a strict, formal and academic approach to the design; (2) the granting of a protagonist role to the balcony highlighted by the use of modern (for the time) materials, such as metal and reinforced concrete, in order to underscore its principal role and social drama; and (3) the use of varied applied decoration in the façade, including the architectural orders. In terms of the floor plan, many houses transformed by means of the insertion of a *zaguán*. The introduction of this arrangement was the result of the population explosion suffered by the urban core during the period.

Symmetry is one of the guiding principles of domestic façade design in the Viejo San Juan. By means of this type of expression a blank plane was organized to represent order and systematization. There are but a few exceptions in the district of the absence of symmetry just as there is a total absence of a curved plane of the façade, except for a handful, the product of some experimentation during the Art Deco period. Even when a tripartite or an uneven number of openings was used, symmetry reigns supreme, as did academic semantics. While the Old San Juan 19<sup>th</sup> century façade continued to depend on its play of wall and openings, new types of door treatment emerged at the time. One such treatment transformed it into windows by means of the *reja abalaustrada*. This wooden element provided privacy in the manner of a grill possessing great decorative potential. Another one was the first floor balconette that actively integrated the exterior and interior. The use of *celosías* (louvered) doors, the third novelty of the period concerning façade openings, allowed for more transparency while protecting individual privacy.

Although there was a dramatic increase in the use of balconies in façades during this time, the first floor *sala* never received one of these elements that were exclusively reserved for the upper levels of the house.<sup>448</sup> It is probably correct to state that with the emergence of the *celosías* (louvered) balconies increased in both size and quantity. Their use also reflects the roles played by the genders.

*La celosía, también conocida como persiana en nuestro suelo, al igual que el arquetípico antepecho, resolvían esta situación. Se podía abrir las puertas, recibir la brisa y la luz del exterior, manteniendo el recato necesario desde el interior de la residencia. El uso de celosías, además de colaborar con la habitabilidad del ambiente interno, permitía a una fémica atisbar la calle sin parecer una descocada (otro vocablo utilizado por mi abuelo). La palabra celosía se deriva de palabras griegas y latinas que significan celos. Quizá las primeras surgieron como solución al "problema" de proteger a la mujer de los ojos de otros. Aunque en San Juan no se duplicaron los balcones cerrados con celosías como en Perú o Sicilia, las celosías permitían a una mujer compartir con el mundo de afuera de su hogar sin necesidad de asomarse al exterior y ser vista. En unión al antepecho, permitían auscultar la actividad de la calle desde la privacidad del hogar. Esta utilidad explica el número de antepechos que encontré durante el reciente inventario que llevé a cabo del área de intramuros sanjuanera.*<sup>449</sup>

<sup>448</sup> Even if balconies were located in the upper levels, as late as the middle of the 20th century the following was true: *No era bien visto ni "propio" (mi abuelo dixit) que una mujer estuviera asomada en el balcón. Todavía durante la quinta y sexta década del siglo pasado mi abuela conminaba a sus nietas a no asomarnos al balcón por periodos extensos de tiempo. No era de buen gusto "ventearse" en lo que ella consideraba parte de la calle. Con los años entendí la razón de esta aversión de mis abuelos. Desde tiempos inmemoriales cierto tipo de mujer utilizaba el balcón para comunicar silentemente su disposición. Se les conocía, además de mujeres de la vida, como mujeres aireadas, entre muchos otros. Arleen Pabón Charneco, "La ciudad del puerto Rico: Reinterpretando los artefactos urbanos y arquitectónicos del viejo San Juan," p 52. Translation into English: "It was not 'proper' (according to my grandfather) for ladies to be seen in a balcony. Even during the fifth and sixth decade of the past century, my grandmother insisted on limiting her granddaughters' use of the balcony. In was not in good taste 'ventearse' ("to air oneself") in an area that was – to her – equivalent to the street. As I grew older I understood their aversion to balconies. Since time immemorial certain type of women used it to silently communicate their availability. They were known as women of the street and also as *mujeres aireadas*, among other names."*

<sup>449</sup> *Idem.* Translation into English: "The louver, also known in the island as *persiana*, as the prototypical *antepechos* or balconettes, solved this situation. One could open the doors, receive the breeze and the light from the exterior while preserving the decorum expected from the interior of the house. The use of louvers, in addition to promoting a more comfortable interior environment, allowed women to look into the street without appearing to be a *descocada*. The word *celosía* derives from Greek and Latin words that mean jealousy. Maybe the first ones were a solution to the "problem" embodied by trying to keep women away from the prying eyes of other men. Even though in Old San Juan there are no closed balconies like the ones that grace Peru or Sicily, the louvers allowed

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Gender segregation within the *sanjuanero* house persisted until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. An 1899 visitor described:

The Puerto Rican home life, in fact, differs in no important particular from that of Spain and Mexico, Havana and Madrid, but it is very difficult for the stranger to obtain even a glimpse of the Hispano-American gynaceum. In the writer's experience it was primarily accomplished by engaging quarters in the family of an indigent Don who had seen better days. It was not a boarding house he kept; perish the thought! but a *casa de huéspedes*, and at his table assembled people of the highest quality – that is *solteros*, or bachelors, editors of papers, attachés at the captain general palace, and military men.<sup>450</sup>

It is most interesting the author's use of the word gynaceum, the name given to the area that sheltered women in the Greco-Roman house. His description evidences that traditional mores were still firmly in place as late as the final year of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and that the interior arrangement and layout of the house collaborated with this intention. In addition to providing unique spaces and relationships between the interior of the house and the exterior, the *celosías* and first floor balconettes empowered the feminine gender participation in urban life while abiding by the strict mores of the times. Non-movable louvers were also used as sun and ventilation control devices. A favorite place to locate them was under arches.

Old San Juan architecture is distinguished by its simple and straightforward construction strategies. The discreet modesty present in the majority of the examples is the result of existing limitations and, most importantly, of a particular manner to interpret both architecture and urban family life. The following can be considered basic characteristics: (1) use of the arcuated and trabeated structural systems, the first one usually incorporating the straight arch, in both the façade and interior; (2) lack of rich ornamentation in the manner of the *barroquismos fantasiosos* (Weiss *dixit*) (Baroque fantasy compositions) or scenographic compositions that typify other countries in America; (3) preference for non-costly and non-extravagant materials; and (4) reduced number of construction techniques and materials.

In spite of the above-mentioned traditional goals, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was an interest in incorporating contrasting colors and textures. This preference led to the use of the Second Empire Baroque and the High Victorian Gothic, as the use of metal filigree balustrades, gesso decorative plaques and roofed balconies, among others, evidences. Although limited in number, stained glass windows (Parcela 2, Block 41, Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud 250) also made their appearance at this time, as did wooden "gingerbread" finishes of Victorian extraction. In the Viejo San Juan several buildings used exposed bricks to empower the contrasts of textures and colors. Although there is a handful of historic architectural plans that evidence the treatment, only two examples have been preserved. The building located at the corner formed by Calle de la Cruz, Calle de Tetuán and Calle del Recinto Sur (Parcela 2, Block 61) is an elegant structure organized in the manner of a Cinquecento *palazzo*. Coupled to the High Renaissance architectural elements (the treatment of the first floor as a pseudo-rusticated podium that visually acts as the base for the more important second floor) and Second Empire Baroque ideas (the dramatic – if a bit bombastic – treatment of some of the elements), the exposed brickwork of the main façade is a High Victorian Gothic characteristic. Even if presently painted, the brickwork in the second floor was meant to be exposed. Although used sparingly, the *arquitectura de ladrillo* (brick architecture)<sup>451</sup>

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women to visually participate in the activities outside her home without having to come out or be seen. Its usefulness explains the vast number of these elements that were found during the inventory of the area which I carried out recently."

<sup>450</sup> Frederick Albion Ober, *Puerto Rico and Its Resources* (New York: D Appleton and Company 1899), p 171.

<sup>451</sup> In Spain this architecture has been interpreted as follows: "Los historiadores de la arquitectura española establecen que el *neoárabe* y el *neomusulmán* son estilos equivalentes aunque diferentes del *neomudéjar*. A su vez, caracterizan a este último como el único vehículo revivalista que es determinado no por aspectos estilísticos y sí por los aspectos relacionados con la técnica constructiva, en particular, la construcción en ladrillos. Se ha descrito que: '[E]l neomudéjar es inseparable del ladrillo. Este material

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had great potential for architectural drama in a city where most structures were stuccoed. The goal of the High Victorian Gothic was to create a vibrating façade by means of the introduction of varied textures and colors. Industrial brick was introduced at this time, becoming a preferred construction material. Bricks were fabricated in local *tendales* (brickyards) with better materials than the earlier ones. The new construction material made possible the reduction of the width of the walls and facilitated the use of semicircular and straight arches that used bricks as thin *voussoirs*. The bricks utilized at this time were characteristically 50 to 60 centimeters in width.

Metal was used in the district in varied manners. The most common use was in the balcony. Balustrades, impossibly thin columns, brackets and anchor pieces made of this material were used throughout the urban core liberally. Great examples are the houses located at the Calle del Santo Cristo 248 corner of Calle de la Fortaleza (Parcela 3, Block 41) and Calle del Santo Cristo de la Salud 201 (Parcela 13, Block 42). These components provided an air of novelty, luxury and elegance. The Marqués de la Esperanza house used traditional wooden balustrades in its exterior but embraced varied uses for metal in its interior. The elegant foyer leads to a helicoidally organized oval staircase that stands in its own huge niche and is crowned by a superb semispherical dome ornamented with stucco decorations and gesso symbols carrying iconographical messages about the elegance of the family it serves. No Delft tiles or porphyry were used, as was the case of some Baroque examples but each step was carved out of one single block of splendid white marble. When the elegant structure reaches its upper landing it is framed by metal works of art that were used as functional grilles covering huge windows that help ventilate and illuminate the stairway. This area opens to a unique metal door decorated with garlands of flowers created in the same material. The marquis was owner of the Fundación Abarca, the first metal ironwork in the island. He must have been proud of the work produced and cognizant of the potential of the new material. The thin door, a museum piece, has two huge doors. The work is so delicate that touch is needed in order to ascertain it is made of metal and not wood.

At a later date, metal tension cables were used in some facades to structurally stabilize them. Metal star-shaped plaques – at times incorporated as part of the façade design – usually anchor the cables on both its ends. An example of this use is the house located in the Calle del Sol 153 (Parcela 3, Block 25). Three such stars are aligned in the uppermost encadrement. Originally a one story high house, it was renovated in 1898 when the second floor was added. The historic plans that have been preserved do not depict the metal tensors or the stars.

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*constructivo se convierte, por tanto, en factor inherente al neomudéjar, lo que no sucede en ningún otro historicismo. Tan importante es el material de construcción a este revival que, aún faltando formas de inspiración morisca o árabe, la interpretación de los historiadores de la arquitectura española consideraría aún la pieza arquitectónica ejemplo del mismo, siempre y cuando el trabajo de ladrillo juegue un rol protagónico. '[C]abe preguntarse que componente es más decisivo para calificar a una obra de neomudéjar, si el empleo de ladrillos o su configuración estilística. . . [L]a cuestión no es tan clara en la mayor parte de las construcciones, debido a las mezclas estilísticas o al tratamiento libérrimo de los componentes arquitectónicos. En sentido estricto la nómina de edificios neomudéjares sería muy corta. Por eso es muy oportuna la expresión 'arquitectura de ladrillos' que ha utilizado Josep María Adell Argilés, máxime si consideramos que en el último cuarto del siglo XIX la generalización de este material fue apabullante, afectando a las tipologías más diversas; desde la arquitectura industrial hasta la vivienda obrera, desde los edificios públicos hasta la arquitectura doméstica.'*" Arleen Pabón Charneco, *La arquitectura patrimonial puertorriqueña y sus estilos*, pp 280-281. Translation into English: "It has been established that the Neo-Arab and the Neo-Islamic are similar styles although different from the Neo-Mudejar. At the same time, they characterize this last expression as the only revival vehicle that is determined by construction techniques, in particular brick related ones, and not stylistic aspects. Spanish architectural historians have stated: 'The Neo-Mudejar is inseparable from brick. This construction material transforms itself in an inherent factor to the style, something that does not happen in any other historicism.' So relevant is the material to the revival that, even in the absence of Moorish or Arab forms, Spanish architectural historians would still consider the building an example of this revival, as long as brickwork plays a prominent role. 'We could ask what is the most relevant characteristic of a Neo-Mudejar work, the use of bricks or its stylistic configuration . . . The issue is not that clear in most buildings because of the stylistic combinations and the very liberal treatment of the architectural components. In this sense, an inventory of Neo-Mudejar buildings would be quite short. This is why the expression of 'brick architecture' used by Josep María Adell Argilés is so opportune, particularly when we consider that during the last fourth of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the use of this material was phenomenal, impacting the most diverse typologies; from industrial example to domestic ones, from public buildings to domestic architecture.' "

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Historic accounts of Havana during this period mention that colors were used in the exterior of the buildings.

*Como los griegos, también, los criollos no se conformaron con los blanquísimos encalados de los muros andaluces, adoptados como protección contra el sol que el color blanco repele, sino que aplicaron sobre el revoque tintes planos de subidos matices que conjugaban con los colores que se daban a la obra de carpintería y el rojo de las tejas. El color era, en efecto, uno de los aspectos de nuestra arquitectura que más llamaban la atención a los visitantes: la condesa de Merlin, al aproximarse a La Habana, divisa un pueblo "cuyas casas, pintadas de vivos colores, se mezclan y confunden a la vista con los prados floridos, donde parecen sembradas."<sup>452</sup>*

This description made by the Countess of Merlin during the 19<sup>th</sup> century describes Havana's neighboring *arrabales* (slums). The houses of the old urban center were portrayed by the Havana-born aristocrat in the following fashion: *Las casas pintadas de blanco reposan con sus grandes ventanas y sus rejas de hierro bajo los fuegos del día . . .*<sup>453</sup> It is interesting to note that:

*Persistió la costumbre durante el siglo XIX de repellar los muros exterior e interiormente aun cuando fuesen de piedra, aplicándoles pinturas al temple de vivos colores; en cambio se atenuaron otros colores, como los aplicados a la obra de carpintería, que a menudo era blanca, y los de la herrería, que solía ser blanca o negra, a la vez que desaparecía la nota roja representada antaño por los tejados.*<sup>454</sup>

Notwithstanding poems describing the white defensive walls and houses of the urban core, archaeological research evidences that the Havana's interest in colors may have been true in Old San Juan. Descriptions dated to the 1890s mention colors such as the *verde esmeralda* (emerald green) used to cover wood work. The house on the Calle de San José 101 (Parcela 1, Block 25) still preserves the light grey paint of the interior beams. Their color is accentuated with a thin blue line at the edges. The pastel color façades in rainbow hues that enchant tourists from all corners of the world are a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century interpretation that, by now, has been embraced as a characteristic expression of the urban core. Until the development of modern paints, it is probable darker earth colors and white stucco were the preferred chromatic choices.

Although the arcuated structural system was preferred in terms of the decoration of the façade, the overwhelming preference was for the trabeated, at times organized by means of flat arches. As mentioned, *arcos adintelados* (flat arches) were used to crown the openings in the manner of lintels. Some façades of the period evidence a marked interest in underscoring the relevance of second floor vis-à-vis the first one. Many reverted to Cinquecento models in order to present the first level as a: *pedestal del piso principal de la vivienda*,<sup>455</sup> a podium or base treated with or without pseudo-rustication. This treatment explores varying textures, from simple isodomic patterns incised in the stucco to quoin-like elements. One beautiful example of this approach is the Casa del Marqués de la Esperanza. It is possible the preference for semicircular arches at

<sup>452</sup> Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX*, p 202. Translation into English: "Like the Greeks before them, the *criollos* did not conform themselves with the very white stucco finishes of the Andalusian walls, adopted as solar protection given the fact that white repels light, but colored the stucco in bright colors that matched the ones used in the carpentry work and the red of the terracotta tiles. Color truly was one of the principal characteristics that visitors noted the most. When approaching Havana, the Countess of Merlin saw a town with 'houses of bright colors that were camouflaged to the sight due to their proximity to the flowered prairies where they seemed to be planted.'" Weiss' quote is found in: Countess of Merlin, *Viaje a la Habana*, p 65.

<sup>453</sup> Countess of Merlin, *Viaje a la Habana*, p 165. Translation into English: "The painted white houses rest with their large windows and metal bars under the hot fire of the day . . ."

<sup>454</sup> Joaquín E Weiss, *La arquitectura colonial cubana Siglos XVI al XIX*, p 350. Translation into English: "The custom of stuccoing the exterior and interior walls continued during the 19<sup>th</sup> century even when made of stone, then painted in bright colors even though colors used in the wooden elements became lighter; a very common color being white while black was used in metals while the red from the terracotta *tejadros* disappeared."

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*, p 348. Translation into English: "[A]s a podium of the principal floor of the house [the *piano nobile*]."

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this time, particularly in the façades, stemmed from *Rundbogenstil* ideals and, as mentioned before, the availability of more regular bricks that could be used as *voussoirs*.

The interest in historicist revivals and fancy façades continued after 1898 in what appears to have been an uninterrupted stylistic preference. Architectural forces, however, were different by the time the 20<sup>th</sup> century started. Construction objectives and social goals changed, as did architectural typologies and morphologies, as well as construction materials. Old San Juan now included a richer and more diversified architectural landscape.

It is fair to assume that living conditions in the Viejo San Juan during the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century mirrored those of Havana for the personality of both cities was determined in great measure by the military service they provided. The martial élan was so evident that even the houses in Havana were portrayed as old fortifications. As mentioned, the same introspective air was noticed in the historic district, described in 1899 as a city located under “the frowning walls of San Cristobal.”

The streets are narrow and dark, a gloom increased by the projecting balconies of the second story . . . The sidewalks are so narrow two people may not walk abreast, and hence the streets – which, it must be said, are well paved and scrupulously clean – are used as highways for pedestrians and vehicles in common. One wonders, with the reckless driving of the *cocheros* [drivers], who race down the streets in their carriages, giving as they come a high, shrill cry of warning, that more accidents do not occur to the slow moving foot-travelers.<sup>456</sup>

Domestic interior arrangements and decor in the island were described as follows:

Marble-topped mahogany tables with carved legs occupy the centers of the rooms. On them are flowering plants, vases of artificial flowers, and the photograph album, and above the table is a hanging lamp or chandelier, usually of cut glass, with a profusion of swinging prisms, sometimes gaudily decorated with bright colored ribbons, or festooned with artificial vines and flowers.

Cane-seated furniture is used exclusively. The great rolling rocking-chairs constitute the principal furniture, with a sprinkling of straight-backed chairs and cane settees. Many of these chairs would set the lover of novel forms and finely-carved furniture wild, for numbers of them are rare antiques, handed down for generations. The woods of the carved furniture are heavy and highly polished, while the more modern is lighter, without carving, depending upon the twisted and bent frames for beauty, and it is invariably painted a rich black.

The mathematical precision with which all the furniture is placed in a well-regulated household always creates a thrill of horror in the aesthetic breast. Around the center table, equally spaced, are the great rocking-chairs; against one wall, like guarding sentries, are the straight-backed chairs, while flat against the other wall is placed a cane couch or two. Even in the Governor's summer palace, this primness in furniture arrangement was found. Out on the broad balconies encased in closed white shutters, the beautiful chairs were also ranged down the side walls, with the tables in the center, for all the world like a dairy lunch-room.

The beds, of brass and metal, are dreams in design, covered with canopies of lace, having auxiliary mosquito netting gathered up on the top during the day and let down at night. Wardrobes and not closets are used for clothes. Heavy carved dressing-tables, bureaus, and washstands are often seen, but to the majority these have been too great luxuries. Now and then one sees mirrors framed in heavy antique frames, which are delightful in their symmetry.

Historic evidence points out that dozens of well-to-do homes in the Viejo San Juan closely followed this description. The traditional status regarding home ownership continued unchanged. By the end of the

<sup>456</sup> William Dinwiddie, *Puerto Rico Its Conditions and Possibilities*, pp 182-183.

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century: "House-rent is an almost unknown factor in the country, though in the towns many people huddle into one house and live, amid dirt and disease, at an expense to each family of a few pesos a month."<sup>457</sup>

Old San Juan may have continued its uninterrupted placid and sleepy existence if the Spanish American War had not ignited in 1898. In May of that year, the forces of Admiral Sampson bombarded the district to no avail, even though the Iglesia de San José, Convento de los Dominicos, Cuartel de Ballajá, Manicomio, Real Intendencia, Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla, Casa Blanca, Seminario Conciliar, Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande, Catedral de San Juan, Palacio de Santa Catalina<sup>458</sup> and several houses received direct hits. A landing was planned, led by General Nelson A Miles, in the southern town of Guánica on 25 July 1898. In a few weeks time, in spite of spirited albeit limited defense, Spain asked for an end to the conflict the country never sought and handed the island to the United States as compensation for American war costs, as per the Treaty of Paris (10 December 1898). The armistice between both countries was signed on 13 August 1898. On 18 November 1898, the tricolored flag was lowered one last time and substituted by the Stars and Stripes. Old San Juan was the last place the Spanish ensign flew before Spanish forces formally retired on that day.

### The Post 1898 Historicist and Modern Period (1898-1939)

Uncertainty prevailed during the first years of the new political regime although the body politic known as the People of Puerto Rico was constituted on 2 March 1917 when collective US citizenship was given to all Puerto Ricans by the US Congress. Other matters remained the same as in Spanish times. Governors were not elected but continued to be appointed, now by the President of the United States, until the late 1940s when the first Puerto Rican ever to serve in the position was appointed by the US president. In 1952, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico status was declared. At this time and for the first time in their four centuries plus old history, the islanders elected their governor.

Among the many transformations that took place during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one thing remained exactly the same: the Viejo San Juan continued to serve as the fulcrum of the island. The new architectural insertions, however, differed from the traditional types. Larger and more decorated buildings, new architectural typologies, novel construction materials and systems, as well as contemporary structural morphologies were introduced one after the other in a relatively short span of time. The push towards modernity that had started formally in 1897 with the destruction of the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra and the Bastión and the Puerta de San Justo (1895), continued with the demolition of the Bastión de San Pedro, Bastión de Santiago and the Revellín El Príncipe (1897). The elimination of the older of the two urban doors facing the port and its two semi-bastions (Bastión de San Justo and Bastión de San Pastor) and a section of the southern defensive wall opened a sector that was used for expansive development. Not surprisingly, this was the area chosen for most of the new, taller structures that housed banks and office buildings, two new architectural typologies introduced at this time. The new century brought myriad urban and architectural alterations. During the first two decades, the first formal public school system was inaugurated. As mentioned, two huge Spanish buildings – the Polvorín de San Sebastián and the Convento-cum-Barracks de San Francisco – were substituted by elegant palatial educational centers. Federal buildings appeared like mushrooms magnifying with their elegance and size the more prosperous times. For the first time in its history, private commercial buildings were constructed to house all different sorts of ventures, from banking to other professional activities.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 147-149; 157; 160-161. Comically, in his detailed analysis Dinwiddie even mentions a phrase he heard from the locals: "Los americanos [the Americans] are so rude!" (p 168).

<sup>458</sup> Ángel Rivero, *Crónica de la Guerra Hispano Americana en Puerto Rico* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1977), p 94.



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Transformations regarding domestic architecture took a slightly different route. Traditions continued uninterrupted including interior layouts. The house located in Caleta de San Juan 55 (Parcela 12, Block 31) was remodeled in the year 1900. At this time, the proposed floor plan was still organized by means of a *sala* and *saleta* opening to a patio that was as wide as the lot, evidencing the adaptation of the Type A floor plan. The tripartite façade was organized with arches closely following the 19<sup>th</sup> century stylistic trends. In spite of this apparent placid state of affairs, the core underwent great transformations regarding changing domestic ideals and living conditions. These can be grouped into several trends. The first one was the conversion of one and two family residences into tenement houses. As dozens left the centuries-old urban core for the sun filled suburbs of Condado and Miramar, many more came looking for work opportunities in the city. The last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the exponential growth of coffee production and many mortgaged their properties to buy more land on which to plant. The 1899 San Ciriaco hurricane proved disastrous for these and similar plans designed for an economic milieu already experiencing the devaluation of the local currency that ceased to be official in that same year. Planters were forced to migrate to the city as were hundreds of workers. They came from all over the island, black and white, young and old, creating a dramatic population explosion. Houses that originally sheltered two families, at the most, now were occupied by many. In this fashion, dozens of tenement houses were created. The following 1898 description of Old San Juan is interesting regarding this transformation.

The buildings are, as a rule, two stories in height. They abut directly on the street, and in compliance with a municipal ordinance, about one-third to one-fourth of the ground upon which they are erected is left uncovered and is used as a courtyard. The houses are invariably of brick and cement mortar, a compulsory measure also. About four-fifths of the houses in San Juan proper are tenement houses, according to American idea of a tenement house, i e, roughly-speaking, a house in which three or four families dwell. The ground floor consists of a hallway leading to the courtyard, on each side of which, and on all sides of the courtyard, are small rooms, each occupied by one entire family of the poorer class. The wealthier people live on the upper floor or floors.

In the center of the courtyard is a cistern from which water for all purposes is obtained. Within the last year aqueduct water has been installed in probably two-fifths of the houses. On the ground floor, in the rear, is the *latrina* or cesspool, an enormous hole with brick and cement sides and a floor of earth to permit the liquid contents to pass unto the ground below. It can, therefore, be readily understood that the city is undermined with cesspool matter. The *latrina* is neither lighted nor ventilated except by the door through which one enters.

In some of the large tenement houses there is a person whose business it is to see that no one sleeps therein without paying rent, but there is no one to look after the cleanliness of the place in general. One of the first acts of the city board of health was to endeavor to obtain an approval of the city council to an ordinance compelling owners of tenement houses to appoint a janitor, whose business it would be to clean those parts of the premises used in common; but the council refused to approve.<sup>459</sup>

Houses used for generations with little or no change were transformed at this time in order to allow for more people to reside within the district. These changes are rarely evidenced in the façade but in the floor plan. Contrarily, after civil government was established in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the tobacco and sugar industries, protected by special tariffs, expanded exponentially creating an environment of wealth for some, particularly the huge American agricultural consortiums. "The war in Europe [World War I] gave new stimulus to most Island activities, the effects of which – many of them beneficial – were to be felt for almost a decade. The increase in money value of exports and imports was phenomenal. Sugar commerce, because of its unprecedented high price, experienced the greatest development."<sup>460</sup>

<sup>459</sup> Military Government of Porto Rico, *Military Government of Porto Rico From October 18, 1898, to April 30, 1900 Appendices to the Report of the Military Governor*, p 160.

<sup>460</sup> Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico A Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, p 58.

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The second trend impacting domestic architecture during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the continuation of the appreciation of historicisms or architectural revivals used to even cloak new architectural typologies. Neo-Cinquecento (Neo-Palladian), Neo-Mesopotamian and Neo-Arab vie attention with the Mediterranean Revival. Although this last expression was considered a “modern” one, the inspiration came from varied historic sources. The most powerful stylistic presence was provided by the Second Empire Baroque and rhizome modes. At times known in Spain as the Belle Époque, the aesthetic movement also receives the name of Beaux Arts in the United States. The aesthetics were so admired that even the first tall buildings constructed made ample use of the expression. Some domestic examples of this stylistic current are the buildings located in the Calle del Sol 102 (Parcela 2, Block 24), Calle del Sol 154 (Parcela 4, Block 25), Calle de la Luna Street 155 (Parcela 12, Block 25), Calle del Sol 154 (Parcela 14, Block 25) Calle del Sol Street 206 (Parcela 5, Block 26) and the Calle de la Luna 205 (Parcela 12, Block 26). These examples represent but a small sampling of the complex and varied Viejo San Juan Second Empire Baroque universe. When using the Second Empire Baroque, façades were interpreted as canvases upon which sophisticated applied decoration was assigned. This interest in décor distanced these compositions from the traditional relatively sober planes used for centuries. Consoles, archivolt, gesso flowers and garlands, pseudo-rustication, frilly balustrades, swags, curved cornices and even caryatids were used to ornament and distinguish the façade as unique. Pavilions are suggested in some cases while others introduced Colossal engaged pilasters that visually unite several floors. The goal was to establish the house as a “modern” and sophisticated one. Following the then centuries-old patterns, many included commercial areas in the first level. Creativity was used to organize separate entrances for the different uses in a manner that had never been done before.

The third trend is the erection of formal apartment buildings that substituted the older houses during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While more than one family may have inhabited one edifice before this period, the formal architectural typology of the apartment building was first introduced at this time. These new buildings were not tenement houses but elegant concoctions that sheltered one or two apartments per floor. In most cases, reinforced concrete and the trabeated structural system were used in tandem. Also relevant was the importation of such concepts as the skyscraper construction structural system. As a result, the height of these apartment edifices distinguished them as different and “modern.” There are several types, the most common one being the centrally organized building with two apartments per floor and a foyer area that serves both units in the center.

While early examples of the type mask behind traditional façades, the bolder ones discarded these limitations and introduced up to six floors of apartments. An exceptional example of the first type is the building located at the Calle de la Luna 101 (Parcela 16, Block 24) with a central entrance serving four apartments, two on each of its side. The staid façade pays homage to the local traditions even though it is used to cloak a new architectural typology. Its eastern neighbor, located at Calle de la Luna 103 (Parcela 15, Block 24), is an example of a medium size apartment complex composed of four floors. In a clear and direct manner each apartment unit receives its own distinguishing balcony, something missing in the previous example that confusingly assigns these elements in a seemingly arbitrary fashion. None of these apartment buildings have commercial areas in their first floor. It is possible their location, in front of the north side of the cathedral, precluded such pedestrian use. When apartment complexes were located in busy commercial sectors, however, the domestic units start on the second floor leaving the first one available for commercial space. In the building located in the Calle de la Luna 272 (Parcela 12, Block 36), dated to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>461</sup> the Second Empire Baroque was used to create a more ponderous version of the type. The *parcela* is sited in a privileged spot, facing the La Barandilla and the Plaza de San Francisco, as well as the Escuela

<sup>461</sup> “Estudio de revitalización integral del centro histórico de San Juan,” Inventory Sheet: Parcela 11, Block 36. The 1992 inventory of San Juan lists the building as Parcela 11 instead of Parcela 12.

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Baldorioty de Castro and Iglesia de San Francisco. The structure can be considered a transitional one in terms of the development of the apartment building architectural typology in the historic district. There is no single balcony per apartments and – following late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Spanish tradition – this element is introduced in multiple manners. The elegant look of the building is underscored by the dramatic curved concrete balconies made possible by the use of reinforced concrete as construction material. This unique building, constructed in two phases, was designed by Architect Humberto Landó. A multitude of balconies of various shapes provides exterior access to the inside spaces. In this particular case, the Second Empire Baroque was used to create a voluptuous façade that incorporates the chamfered corner created by the Calle de la Luna and Calle de la Tanca.

Another four floors high apartment building, located on the Calle de la Fortaleza 365 (Parcela 15, Block 49), includes two apartments per floor that share a central vestibule with a staircase and also a large interior patio that provided light and ventilation to all the units. Apartments at this time were relatively small. In the case mentioned above, each living unit incorporated the following spaces: a living room, a dining room, two bedrooms, a small kitchen and a bathroom.<sup>462</sup> This last area was located at the back of the house, close to two additional bedrooms and a bathroom meant to be used by the service. The centuries-old local tradition of kitchens placed at the back of the house was continued in this arrangement. A tradition abandoned was the location of the master bedroom. Not only is one room specifically meant to be used for this purpose but it faces the street. The master bedrooms (there are two per floor, one for each apartment) look towards the street and are distinguished by bow windows, the quintessential Victorian element,<sup>463</sup> that modify the traditional façade plane. Fear of the street was lost during the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the public space became a source of light, ventilation and entertainment to be enjoyed, particularly from the higher floors.

The Edificio Plaza is one of the most elegant of all examples of the apartment building type. Six floors with two units per floor are organized facing the Calle de Rafael Cordero 152 (Parcela 2, Block 45) and the paradigmatic Plaza de Armas. A tall arch frames the entrance to the central foyer that distributes residents and also serves to divide the main residential entrance from the two commercial spaces located on its sides. While this high building defied traditional domestic architecture, both in terms of its architectural typology and morphology, it again introduced residential uses to the area surrounding the plaza. The Mediterranean Revival was used to create a masterpiece that includes colored terracotta decorative elements. Another characteristic present in many of these early 20<sup>th</sup> century apartment buildings is the varied treatment of the different floors in the façade. In this particular case, two different kinds of balconies alternate emphasizing the uniqueness of each one of the apartment units. Also common, particularly to this architectural style, is the insertion of a last level or penthouse that usually includes a loggia-like area. In the Calle de San José 252 (Parcela 15, Block 52) a similar organization was used to create another apartment building four floors high in the Neo-Arab expression of the Mediterranean Revival. The splendid façade includes stilted and multi-lobed arches as well as mosaics that aspire to create a fantasy world for its inhabitants. In this particular case, the traditional balconies are substituted by deep porches; a transitional element for the balcony was now interpreted as a place to watch the world go by and also as part of the living room.

As can be inferred from the last example, the American-inspired Mediterranean Revival was interpreted liberally in the core. The four level apartment house located in the Calle del Recinto Sur 321 (Parcela 11, Block 65) uses semicircular arches to create a deep balcony that seems to hang from the façade plane. These elements collude with the terracotta tiles located in the final floor and the balconies' concrete balustrades to infuse the edifice with an exotic personality. The apartment building located in the Calle del Recinto Sur 327 (Parcela 14, Block 65) is yet another example of the style. As is the case of the previous building, the two run

<sup>462</sup> "Estudio de revitalización integral del centro histórico de San Juan," Inventory Sheet: Parcela 15, Block 49.

<sup>463</sup> Although Victorian in inspiration, bow windows were also used by some modern architects like Frank Lloyd Wright who transformed this morphology into a favorite decorative device of the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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from the Calle de Tetuán to the Calle del Recinto Sur. The flexibility in terms of the interpretation of the aesthetic expression is evidenced by the Art Deco elements that are interspersed with the Mediterranean ones, such as the terracotta tiles and mosaics. Instead of a central lobby, the entrance to the apartments was placed to the right of the commercial space in the first floor. A mosaic frame distinguishes its use and relevance.

The buildings located in Calle del Sol 270 (Parcela 11, Block 27) and Calle de la Luna 315 (Parcela 15, Block 28) have four floors of apartments erected in reinforced concrete with a Victorian bow window motif to organize the interior spaces and their façades. While it is difficult to pinpoint an architectural style for the first one, the second one incorporates Castellated motifs. They are both examples of the second type of apartment building and have only one unit per floor. Because they are located far away from the town center none includes commercial spaces in the first level. The bow windows and balconies are used to emphasize the personality of each one of the living units and are daring innovations that defy the planar historic personality of the urban context by creating a dramatic three dimensional exterior. Another example of the use of the bow windows that run the entire height of the building creating a dramatic three-dimensional plastic effect is the apartment complex located in the Calle del Recinto Sur 319 (Parcela 10, Block 65).

All these examples made use of reinforced concrete and the Victorian bow window motif to organize the interior spaces and their façades. In the first two cases, each floor includes one apartment. This is the reason why there is only one bow window running the length of the façade. Even though the third one also includes only one apartment per floor, the designer has introduced two such elements to frame the central balcony. The uniqueness of the second example is highlighted by the fact that the architectural style chosen is the Castellated. The crenellations located in the upper area of the bow windows creates a chameleonic transformation into a defensive tower of sorts.

Another fine example of the use of the bay window is seen in the building located in the Calle de la Fortaleza 305 (Parcela 15, Block 48). Art Deco geometric decorations and a symmetrical organization create a most exotic (for the context) interpretation. The three dimensional approach of the composition abandons the traditional façade plane and is used to create a tribune of sorts.<sup>464</sup> A full-fledged Art Deco example of the two apartments per floor scheme is located in the Calle del Recinto Sur 307 (Parcela 4, Block 65). Each unit is distinguished by a gracefully curved balcony following the dictates of the style. A very symmetrical arrangement organizes the five floors of the building. The lot runs from the Calle del Recinto Sur to the Calle de Tetuán. It is highly instructive to contrast and compare the two streets' façades for the "back" one (facing the Calle de Tetuán) is treated in a more streamlined manner than the frontal one which pays full homage to the 1930s style. There are no curves in the Calle de Tetuán façade; straight lines similar to the ones used in modernist examples organize the composition.

Although outside the scope of the context for this nomination, an interesting Modern example is the building housing the Apartamentos Gallardo in the Calle del Recinto Sur 301 corner of Calle de la Tanca corner of Calle de Tetuán (Parcela 1, Block 65). Straight lines and geometric elements organize the composition in a most unusual manner for the district. Of particular interest are the concrete devices used to mask the individual air conditioning units. The building was designed by distinguished architect Henry Klumb.

With the establishment of the Zona Histórica de San Juan during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the development of the district has emphasized rehabilitation of historic structures rather than new insertions. The

<sup>464</sup> A historic drawing of the building previously located in the lot has been preserved dated 9 April 1896 and signed by *maestro de obras* Bartolomé Llob. It depicts small modifications to the straightforward tripartite one floor arrangement that was drastically transformed during the 1930s in order to create the present masterpiece.

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*Reglamento Número 5* of the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña<sup>465</sup> is used to guide rehabilitation work provided there is no PRSHPO's legal intervention.

## MILITARY ARCHITECTURE

What distinguished (still does) the Viejo San Juan from other traditional "Colonial" urban centers is the stone wall that sashays its way for miles along outcrops, beaches and cliffs uniting two huge fortresses. The unique catalogue of military architecture grants the enclave its most relevant physical trait. The perception of a walled entity is the constant element of the *sanjuanero* urban culture. After the 18<sup>th</sup> century the city became an introverted core designed to manage external aggression, constantly defend its inhabitants, and serve as *cabeza de lanza* (the spear's head) of the Spanish Empire in America. This definition of the city as a military plaza was true under both the Spanish and United States regimes. The geographical location of the small islet made it central to the domination and defense of the Western Hemisphere. So unique is this vast military complex that it is considered part of humanity's cultural heritage since 1983 when it was listed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. A great portion of the defensive system, composed of artifacts principally under the supervision of the National Park Service, is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places under the name of the San Juan National Historic Site.

It took three hundred and seventy years – from 1533 to 1897, when the last important additions to the defensive system were made – to create a war machine that allowed the urban core to defend itself and the Spanish Empire from real and imagined perils. From natives' arrows to projectiles shot from warships flying the United States flag, for centuries the main goal of the urban defenses was to make possible the dream of a Spanish-controlled hemisphere. The final defensive organism consists of *cortinas* (walls) and bastions (angular elements at the junction of two curtain walls) that undulate their way along the perimeter of the city uniting two impressive fortresses, the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro and the Castillo de San Cristóbal, also known as *fortalezas* (fortresses). The iconic *garitas* (garites), a unique inventory in its own right, blindly defy to this day unforeseen perils.

This stone snake that encircles the urban core is a physical reminder that fighting aggression against the empire that, at its most powerful controlled half of the known world, was for centuries Old San Juan's most relevant duty. Using Medieval and Renaissance morphologies and military technology an impregnable state of the art organism was completed by the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As additional bonus for the present and future generations, corporeal evidence of the art of war was collected by the city in the shape of a most impressive catalogue of buildings and artifacts related to active urban defense, from barracks to hospitals, from gunpowder magazines to urban doors, from urban doors to moats. This unique collection grants the Viejo San Juan additional international and national cultural and historical significance.

Old San Juan was the jewel in Puerto Rico's crown, its most important *baluarte* (bastion). Since all efforts concentrated on the capital city, formal defense of the rest of the island was, for all practical purposes, inexistent. Until 1898, the military objective of any would-be assailant was to capture this formidable center. Sir Francis Drake; Sir John Hawkins; George Clifford, Third Earl of Cumberland; and General Boudewijn Hendriksz had very little to gain from capturing the fledging settlement of – to name just one example – Guánica in the southern coast of the island, even if it had existed at the time of their offensives. Until the Viejo San Juan was captured, the island was still under Spanish control. The strategy played out by the United States in 1898 was carried out differently, even though the final objective was still the same as that of the

<sup>465</sup> The bylaws are considered the guidelines for new insertions and rehabilitation work by the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture. When the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office has jurisdiction, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards are used to guide interventions.

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historic assailants: to conquer the capital city. Possibly, there was no serious intention to ever invade a precinct considered impregnable for centuries. It is not known how long Admiral William T Sampson would have had to bomb the city to make it surrender. That is why the Americans landed an invading army – precisely at Guánica – that inched towards Old San Juan. Until the district symbolically opened her Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra urban door (by this time it had been destroyed), the United States was unable to force Spain's hand.

According to famed military architectural historian Zapatero, *el arte de la fortificación* (the art of fortification or military architecture) is the result of *ambición* (ambition) and *maldad* (evil).<sup>466</sup> Even if these are the real motifs behind the magnificent examples of martial architecture present in Old San Juan, the design of every single one of them also merited artistic considerations. It is probably of no consequence whether the wish to create this art form stemmed from a desire to gain power or maintain peace. Traditional military architecture, whether guided by the most evil or innocent of intentions, had one simple objective: to defend. Military architecture is one of the earliest expressions of the art of construction. It has existed since the first human felt the need to be protected. Aesthetic aspirations may be secondary but they are still present as evidence by the rich cadence of arches framing the loggias of the central patio of the Castillo de San Cristóbal, the changing lines and proportions of the garites, the elegant Tuscan portal of the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro and the breathtaking enfilade of groin vaulted *casamatas* (casemates) of the first fortress, among others. In any case, the study of Spanish military architecture in the Caribbean encompasses an analysis of artifacts that can best be described as examples of the "architecture of war." "Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when soldiers attacked on foot or horseback, military construction was mainly organized into three categories: field fortification, permanent fortification, and the structures built to counter them – from scaling ladders to the movable towers of the 'siege train'."<sup>467</sup>

Once the different civilization settled in around the globe, most cities considered a defensive wall a must in order to guarantee its survival. Wooden logs, earth, mud and, at a later stage, stone were some of the materials used to obtain safety.<sup>468</sup> With the possible exception of Minoan urban enclaves, which seem to have lacked such an architectural shield, defensive walls characterized most cities until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The above-mentioned example is considered an unusual one and needs be understood within the context of the so-called Minoan Pax. This civilization's powerful navy made sure no urban walls were needed. It was, thus, an example of peace gained by military force. In this type of relationship, the frontier between the *intramuros* and the *extramuros*, the boundary between the thriving urban center and suburbia, the empty space surrounding the urban core, was obvious and quite specific for it was a mammoth wall.<sup>469</sup> Once outside the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra the contrast between the interior precinct and the *campo* (countryside) was quite notable, particularly until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During the early centuries, many considered only "savages" and "barbarians" – whether natives or foreigners – lived outside the defended perimeter. In walled precincts like the Old San Juan, life revolved around the Derridian cultural polarity established by city/suburbia in which this last place was interpreted as *tierra de nadie* (no man's land). It was not rare for some to consider

<sup>466</sup> J M Zapatero, *La fortificación abaluartada en América* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña: 1978). Quoted in Arleen Pabón Charneco, "In the Service of Ares: The United States Military Bases in Puerto Rico A Historical Context" (MS: San Juan de Puerto Rico, 1999), p 37.

<sup>467</sup> K Mallory and A Ottar, *The Architecture of War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), pp 9-10.

<sup>468</sup> The concept of "fencing" an enclave with high defensive walls gave birth to the novel idea of doing the same thing for an empire as an entity. In this manner, a civilization could defend itself against this cultural vacuum that existed outside its national borders. Hadrian's Wall is the best-known example of this architectural type invented by the Romans; the famed Wall of China the most imposing one. Both examples were used to mark the frontier between the "inside" of the empire and the "outside" world, supposedly inhabited by barbarians. While city defensive walls had doors that allowed for permeability, albeit controlled, this specialized type of wall had none.

<sup>469</sup> While some European cities, sported villa-and-mausoleum-lined roads within suburbia, the Viejo San Juan *extramuros* sector did not. Therefore, the sense of a vacuum (in terms of civilization) increased exponentially.

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the outside areas vacuums of civilization. Greek cities explored a parallel defensive concept in addition to defensive walls, locating important buildings on top of a hill or acropolis, also a favorite design idea of the Incas, as evidenced in both Cuzco and Machu Picchu. Old San Juan made use of the islet geographical variation in height to also stake a claim at a high terrain considered easier to defend.

Because of the significant role they played, defensive walls were imbued with much symbolism. They were perceived as holy boundaries that defined the “sacred” interior urban space (conceived as a *temenos* or sanctuary) from the exterior “profane” empty space surrounding them. Thus, when someone crossed that boundary in defiance and failed to respect the sacred place (embryonic Rome) he had to be killed, even if he was your brother (Romulus’ reason for killing Remus). Certain physical parts of the wall, like Troy’s Scean Gate, were imbued with mystical significance. A prophecy declared that the Gate’s lintel was sacred and that, as long as it stayed in place, the city was safe. King Priam expressly disobeyed this prophecy and allowed the lintel to be removed so that the Greeks’ gift of a wooden horse could enter the city. The rest is history. The perimeter of *sanjuanero* walls and its doors marked physical, aesthetic and spiritual boundaries. The circuit not only enclosed a universe of its own but it also served as the “façade” the settlement presented to the world. It, thus, made sense to decorate the walls and doors. The Puerta de San Juan, with its elegant and pristine use of Classicist decoration still speaks volubly, even if mutely, about the enlightened interior. Upon entering the city, the architectural semantics spelled out the visitor was entering a civilized enclave; upon leaving that he/she was departing into unchartered waters.

All the urban *puertas* (doors) served as portals opening into no man’s land, inhabited – particularly, during the early days – by non-Spanish beings. All were dedicated to saints: Puerta de San Juan, Puerta de Santiago, Puerta de San Justo, Puerta de San José and Puerta de Santa Rosa. The Puerta de San Juan faced the *fondeadero* while the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra opened to the islet. The last urban door to be constructed in the Viejo San Juan sported the name of Puerta de San Rafael, although this traditional saintly name was soon abandoned.<sup>470</sup> At that time (1874), a more prosaic approach to the sacred and profane polarity was in effect. In fact, the reason for opening this entrance was quite pedestrian: to facilitate commercial activity between the city and the port.

While in Havana military life took place on the other side of the bay, outside the city, in Old San Juan it was part of the daily routine of the city for the two most important and final defensive lines (Castillo de San Cristóbal and Castillo de San Felipe del Morro) were intrinsic and intimate parts of the urban fabric. Consequently, the defensive belt united both the military and civic spheres.

Commands and shot practices could be heard at any time from different places within the urban core. According to some historians, military maneuvers sometimes took place in the principal plaza, the Plaza de Armas, although Tapia y Rivera was adamant to establish that, at least during his lifetime, this was not the case. The *cuarteles* (military barracks like the Cuartel de Ballajá) were located inside the core and surrounded either by city blocks or, in the example provided, by public buildings such as the Asilo de Beneficencia, the Manicomio, and the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción el Grande. The whole capital was finely attuned to the fact that it was a military plaza that, until 1898, shared in the responsibility, in tandem with Havana, of preserving Spain’s dream of an empire, even if meager.<sup>471</sup>

It is not known if Spain took into consideration possible European assaults to its colony during the early days. In any case, the first one took place in 1528, when the French attacked less than ten years after the establishment in the islet. From this moment on it became imperative to systematically and scientifically repel

<sup>470</sup> According to some writers, the double name had political undertones. “[S]e le atribuyó cierta intención política.” J Pérez Losada, “Estampas del pasado Un expediente interesante” *Puerto Rico Ilustrado* (San Juan de Puerto Rico, 2 November 1935), pp 2-27; 19; 24 and 27: 2. Translation into English: “[A] certain political intention is attributed to the name [Puerta de España].”

<sup>471</sup> Arleen Pabón Charneco, “In the Service of Ares: The United States Military Bases in Puerto RicoA Historical Context,” p 133.

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the enemy and keep it as far away as possible from the urban core. The final design for the master plan that organized the defense of the islet took into consideration the three weakest points, the ones the enemy would try to gain first. A fortress on top of the *morro* (rocky outcrop) located at the entrance of the bay, the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro, became essential to the defense. Construction of this impressive complex started in 1539. At a later time, a smaller fort, San Juan de la Cruz (also known as Fortín El Cañuelo) was erected on the other side of the bay in the small islet commonly known as Isla de Cabras. The tiny *fortín* (small fort) was in charge of low shots and San Felipe of high ones creating a cross fire at the mouth of the bay<sup>472</sup> guaranteed no boat could come into the protected body of water close to the city. Even American Admiral Sampson did not dare to breach this defense in 1898. In addition to the bay's entrance another weak area was the la Puntilla de San Lázaro at the southern part of the city. Even though it was a mangrove if the enemy managed to enter the bay it easily led into the city. In addition to some defensive outpost along the north coast, the first wall sections were erected along this coastal border. The Arsenal de la Marina de la Puntilla was also located here to further strengthen the sector. The Puerta de San Justo and, at a later time, the Puerta de España provided communication between the southern port area and the interior of the city. Evidencing the concern felt for this weak point, the Puerta de San Justo was defended by two bastions – at times, considered semi-bastions – appropriately named after the Roman martyred brothers Justo and Pastor. The third weak point was the small bay with shallow water located at the easternmost point of the islet. To protect it, a first line of defense was established here styled as the Fortín de San Jerónimo as its centerpiece and assorted secondary defenses.

Other defensive lines were constructed along the main route the enemy would follow if it conquered the first line, known as the San Antonio defenses. Between the first and second line the Polvorín de San Gerónimo was located. This last line, known as Línea de la Mediana (Midway Defense Line), was protected by parapets, moats and a battery. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Escuela de Tiro (Rifle School) was located behind it. A huge trench with accompanying structures, such as the Punto de Observación de Taxamar o Bajamar, *el Zanjón*, separated this line from the next one.<sup>473</sup> The penultimate line, included the main entrance from land to the city, the fierce Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra and its accompanying fortress the Castillo de San Cristóbal. The last line of defense and citadel, the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro with its dramatic “foyer” the mined Esplanade, was sited on the other side of town. The whole of the urban core was located between these two lines.

England and Holland continued their assaults for centuries so great was their interest to conquer the island. On 22 November 1595, under the command of Sir Francis Drake, a second attempt to invade occurred. This attack was described in the following fashion:

[A]t ten o'clock at night, when it was quite dark, the enemy commenced an attack on the port with twenty-five boats, each carrying fifty or sixty men well armed, with the view of the burning frigates . . . and they all entered close up to the platform of the Rock, ranging themselves under the fire of the artillery. . . . Dark as it was, the boats were seen, and instantly the guns from the Rock and the fort of Helena began to play as briskly as possible. Most of the boats attacked the *Capitana*, the Texeda frigate, setting fire to her at the bow, and throwing into her a quantity of fire-pots and shells, while ours succeeded in extinguishing the flames before they had done any damage, the fight being carried on with cannon, musquetry, and stones.

At the same time they set fire to the *Ysabel* and *Magdalena* frigates, and to the *Clara*, which was extinguished; but the third time that the *Magdalena* frigate, of which Domingo de Ynsurraga was captain, took fire, it was impossible to extinguish the flames, as the ship took fire at the stern and burned furiously; and all that could be done to maintain a footing on board was done by the . . . captain and the people with him, until the ship was just

<sup>472</sup> Some historic sources mention boats were sunk close to the mouth of the bay on purpose to serve as further deterrent to those wishing to enter the body of water. Historic accounts mention that Havana's entrance was protected by a metal chain.

<sup>473</sup> At times, the *Zanjón* is counted as one of the lines of defense of the islet bringing the total to five.



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burnt down and twelve men were killed by the enemy's musquetry, besides as many more burnt . . . The battle lasted for an hour, the most obstinately contested that was ever seen, and the whole port was illuminated by the burning frigate in a manner favourable [*sic*] for the rest, who could thus see to point our artillery and that of the forts, with which, and with musquetry and the stones thrown from the frigates, they did such effect, that the enemy, after an hour . . . retreated with the loss of nine or ten boats and more than four hundred men, besides many more wounded; while on our side, the only loss was that of the frigate and forty men killed or burnt, besides a few wounded by the musquetry.<sup>474</sup>

At the time, England was initiating its unstoppable ascend as a naval empire having defeated the famously named Armada Invencible (Invincible Armada) of Spain. Believing the defeat of the Armada was a sign of Spanish weakness, the colonies in America became enticing objectives. In 1598, the English tried again under the command of George Clifford, Third Earl of Cumberland. On 15-16 June, he led his forces against the Viejo San Juan, still a fledging settlement. The troops landed in present day Condado area underscoring the vulnerability of the easternmost point of the islet. Arriving at a city suffering a dysentery pandemic and defended by a force that lacked ammunitions surrender came rapidly on 1 July 1598. Clifford conquered the core only to face a shortage of food, polluted water and the dying of his troops of the same dysentery that decimated the Spaniards. Three months later, he abandoned the urban center burning it as he marched out. This was the first and only time in its almost five centuries of existence that the military plaza surrendered. Notice needs to be taken that the defensive system encircling the whole city was not yet constructed at the time of Clifford's assault. After the system was finished, no enemy was able to force its way into the precinct. The immediate result of this attack was that the Fortín El Cañuelo was erected, given the fact that the entrance to the bay had to be protected at all costs. The Castillo de San Felipe del Morro was reconstructed, including the "platform of the Rock," the castle's mighty *batería flotante* (floating battery). This defense platform seems to float over the Atlantic Ocean and served as the first line of defense of the bay. The eastern defenses were also reinforced as a result of this British attack.

The next invasion is dated to the year 1625 and was led by General Boudewijn Hendriksz. Attacking from the sea, the Dutch forces were able to enter the bay and siege the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro from land. Most of the citizens fled the urban core and looked for shelter in the citadel. The siege lasted 21 days and ended with the Dutch abandoning the town after burning it completely. One boat and some cannons were left as a reminder of their unwanted visit. After this attack, it became obvious a formal defense system was needed and that walls, particularly in the south, had to be erected in order to protect the core. Construction of the stone circuit began in 1634 and was basically finished by 1678. It was at this time that the original Castillo de San Felipe del Morro tower was encased in the present structure. Its presence can still be appreciated within the interior of the fortress.

There were many precedents for the fortifications, although originally Hispanic and Dutch defense architectural theories provided the source of inspiration.<sup>475</sup> During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the designs followed the principles of Sébastien Le Prestre, among others.<sup>476</sup> Experts point out that the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra was similar to the one he designed for Besançon, France. A specialized branch of the art of construction, military architecture was considered quite different from the other artifacts of the art. In fact, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it became the sole responsibility of military engineers, a specially trained corps that competed with architects. According to this novel profession:

<sup>474</sup> Anonymous, "An Account of What Took Place at San Juan de Puerto Rico the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 1595." Quoted in National Park Service, *The Forts of Old San Juan* (Washington DC: National Park Service, 1996), pp 32-33.

<sup>475</sup> Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan ciudad murada*, p 178.

<sup>476</sup> Sébastien Le Prestre, seigneur de Vauban and later Marquis de Vauban (1633-1707), was a relevant engineer of the period.

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*La arquitectura del ingeniero, considerada como aplicación de la ciencia de la construcción, no necesita del adorno, del lenguaje de la arquitectura. Incluso la organización de la plaza fortificada no se hace atendiendo las necesidades de la sociedad civil sino, por el contrario, a las exigencias militares.*

*Por eso, en el tratado, el orden y la regularidad vienen definidos por ejes compositivos privilegiados por la presencia de edificios castrenses: cuarteles, pabellones para oficiales, arsenales, hospital militar, ect. Por eso mismo, las puertas no son, como en Vitruvio y tratadistas posteriores, dóricas, jónicas y corintias, sino que: "ordinariamente se dividen en . . . tres clases, esto es grandes, medianas y pequeñas."<sup>477</sup>*

This utilitarian approach came to the forefront when the new professionals started to act as if they could create all sorts of architectural artifacts, not just military. As mentioned, the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando constantly battled their "usurpation." Until the creation of the engineering profession, military architecture had been the preserve of architects.

## The Conquest Period

The first European-inspired defensive artifact in Puerto Rico was created in embryonic Caparra. Juan Ponce de León and Friar Bartolomé de las Casas provided written descriptions of this building, described by Ponce as a *casa de tapias* (house made of *tapias*). It was to function in a threefold manner serving as symbol of the Spanish Crown, home to the Ponce family, and small citadel capable of *mamparar en ella la xente*.<sup>478</sup> The *Adelantado* portrayed it in the following manner: [U]na casa mediana, con su tejado, e pretil, e almenas, e su barrera delante de la puerta, e toda encalada de dentro e de fuera, e de altor de siete tapias en alto con pretil e almenas.<sup>479</sup> This description belongs to the peninsular *casa-torre* or *casa-fuerte*, a medieval architectural typology inspired in the castle which peppered Spain from north to south. As mentioned, it was used in both the Castillo de Santa Catalina (a section) and the Ponce de León *casa-torre* (aka Casa Blanca) constructed in the islet after the move. The architectural typology is introverted borrowing elements, such as the crenellations and door barrier, from medieval fortifications. Friar de las Casas stated that the most relevant function of the Caparra *casa-fuerte* was to serve as defense or fortress. [É]/[Ponce de León] para sí hizo una [casa] de tapias, que bastó para Castillo, como quiera que los indios no tengan baluartes de hierro ni culebrinas, y la mayor fuerza que pueden poner para derrocar la casa hecha de tapias es cabezadas.<sup>480</sup> The priest felt the *casa-fuerte* was more than enough to defend the settlers from the fragile weapons of the natives.

A few years later, in 1537, Blasco Nuñez Vela more or less agreed with this contention. He thought the greenery was dense enough to protect from the natives, although – after supervising the defenses of the island

<sup>477</sup> Anonymous, *Arquitectura militar i civil*, c 1770 century manuscript, Biblioteca de la Fundación Lázaro Galdiano, M 31/15. Quoted in *El San Juan español 1519-1898 Mapas y planos en los archivos de España* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Oficina Estatal de Preservación de Puerto Rico, 1989). Translation into English: "The architecture generated by engineers is considered and application of the science of construction and, as such, has no need for adornment, the language of architecture. Even the organization of the fortified plaza is made following military requirements and not those of the civil society." "This is why, in the treatise, order and regularity are defined by privileged compositional axes made by the presence of military buildings: barracks, officers' pavilions, arsenals, military hospital, ect. For this same reason the doors are not Doric, Ionic and Corinthian, as explained by Vitruvius and later treatises, but ordinarily are divided into three classes: big, medium and small."

<sup>478</sup> "Informe de Ponce de León a Ovando, 1 May 1509," *Boletín Histórico de Puerto Rico* Tome 1, p121. Quoted in: Adolfo de Hostos, "Las excavaciones de Caparra," p 75. Translation into English: "[S]helter people in it."

<sup>479</sup> Relación a Ovando in *Boletín Histórico de Puerto Rico*, Tome 1, pp 119-120. Quoted in: Adolfo de Hostos, "Las excavaciones de Caparra," p 64. Translation into English: "I made a medium size house, with a roof and parapet, crenellations, and a barrier in front of the house, all stuccoed in the exterior and the interior, seven *tapias* in height including the crenellations and parapet." Judging by the height of traditional *tapias* the house was twenty-some feet in height.

<sup>480</sup> Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, *Historia de las Indias* (1857) Tome 3, p 280. Quoted in: Adolfo de Hostos, "Las excavaciones de Caparra," p 63. Translation into English: "He [Ponce de León] made for his use a house of *tapias* that was useful as fortress since the Indians do not have metal arms and armaments and the greatest force they can try is to attack the house using their heads."

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– he suggested the construction of small, simple *baluartes* (bastions) with cannons on wheels close to the water entrances. These artifacts would be located in high places in order to better control enemy movements. This kind of defense rested on the premise that a navy would do the lion's share of defense in case of an attack. It was probably assumed at this time not many foreign vessels would dare to attack an island protected by the mighty Spanish armada. Unfortunately for the Spanish Crown, by the 1580s, the Armada Invencible proved to be quite vincible. In addition, any navy needed artillery for it could not carry out all defense responsibilities on its own. As early as 1585, Francés de Alava proposed some artillery also be placed in the port area, with cannons in the areas of Casa Blanca and La Puntilla de San Lázaro.

Many aspects of the defensive wall system as know today were conceived during medieval times, including the development of the castle typology<sup>481</sup> which, according to experts, is dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> century when: “[T]he Normans developed the feudal castle, walls became higher in order to resist scaling ladders.” Other influences were the: “More complex crenellated designs . . . and round corners [that] became common in [the] effort[ ] to resist mining attacks.”<sup>482</sup> Medieval castles and their related architectural components transformed traditional Roman military systems. An almost parallel development to the castle typology was the tower-house, the Catalan and Castilian *torre*, also known as *casa-torre* and *casa-fuerte*. The type sheltered a private dwelling capable of self-defense, although it was smaller than a full-fledged fort. Examples of the type can be found in Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo, two places where Juan Ponce de León settled.

### 1533-1589

The Fortaleza de Santa Catalina, erected during the third decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was the first defensive artifact built in Old San Juan after the Casa Blanca. Its main objective was to protect the bay entrance. One of its two towers was known as the Torre del Homenaje (Homage Tower) and from its top the *castellano* (governor of the defense) could swear allegiance, hence its name. La Fortaleza followed medieval defense strategies with two towers to defend the *lienzo de la pared* (section of the wall or curtain wall). This is a very early defense system, substituted at a later time by the bastion that provided a more effective defense of the walls proper, the weakest point. The structure was rejected as useless a few years later by expert Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, who famously stated: *aunque la edificaram [sic] ciegos no la pudieron poner en parte tan sin provecho*.<sup>483</sup> The location was, at best, misguided for it could only be of use once the enemy had entered the bay, a dire situation at best.

By 1540 the main defensive artifact was moved to the top of the *morro* (rocky outcrop) located at the eastern side of the bay entrance. With time, this imposing and fierce war machine – the work of Italian and Spanish military designers, prisoners and slaves – came to be known as the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro (also known as the Fortaleza de San Felipe del Morro).<sup>484</sup> The outcrop on top of which it is built is more than 80 feet above sea level, providing a natural advantage. As mentioned, the first structure erected in this place was a round tower embraced by later additions. This morphology reflects the medieval precedents used as sources of inspiration for all defense artifacts in Old San Juan during the Conquest Period. In addition to the bay

<sup>481</sup> During the Middle Ages, as political authority, whether central or localized, declined, it was up to each clan or group to organize its defense. The castle can be defined as the architectural embodiment of a private defense nucleus. It united a precinct and a house, until then two distinct architectural entities. To this day, the term *castillo* is used for the Fortaleza de San Felipe del Morro and Fortaleza de San Cristóbal bringing to mind the historic architectural precedent of both structures. The architectural typology is known in Spanish as *castillo*, in French as *château* and in Italian as *castello*.

<sup>482</sup> K Mallory and A Ottar, *The Architecture of War*, p 13.

<sup>483</sup> Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo. Quoted in Adolfo de Hostos, *Historia de San Juan Ciudad murada*, p 180. Translation into English: “Even blind men would not have chosen as bad a location that has absolutely no positive advantage.”

<sup>484</sup> The name Felipe honors Felipe II (Emperor Philip II) and *del Morro* the placement site. In Havana, the largest and most important fortress was also built on top of a rocky outcrop. As a result, the name of the Cuban fortification is the Castillo de los Tres Reyes Magos del Morro.

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entrance, the fortification was to defend the Cerro de Santo Domingo and the Caleta de los Frailes and also to serve as *ciudadela* (citadel) of the town which, at this stage, had approximately 3,000 inhabitants.

The defense strategies at this time were complete with the Fuerte Rojo, designed to defend the eastern sector of the islet, and the Fortín El Cañuelo, located on the other side of the bay.

### 1589-1765

Continuous European attacks forced the strengthening of the defense system of the city as a totality, particularly from land. Field Marshall Juan de Tejada and Juan Bautista Antonelli were contracted during the 1580s to create a defensive master plan for the whole islet. Antonelli, of Italian origin, joined Philip II's service and authored a score of Caribbean defenses. His creative genius is responsible for the Panama, Veracruz, Havana, Cartagena and Old San Juan fortifications. His ancestry is relevant because the Italians were considered to be at the vanguard of military experimentation. Antonelli and de Tejada were instructed by the Crown to initiate their proposal which included fortified towers, garites, water batteries, and trenches. The concept of the master plan rests on three components: (i) a strong fort to be located at the *morro*; (ii) defensive walls around the city; and (iii) formal defense of the Boquerón area.

The period was impacted by Renaissance theories that superseded medieval defensive ideas. The development of the *baluarte* or *bastion* (bastion) made possible the *fortificación abaluartada* (bastioned fort). Traditional straight walls, independently of their thickness or height, presented problems in terms of defense for there was no effective way to defend their lower sections. These "blind spots" made possible for the enemy to place gunpowder at the base of the wall.<sup>485</sup> Bastions solved the problem because they sported angled walls that permitted for the whole perimeter to be seen and protected. "[T]he supreme stroke of Italian genius was the revolutionary design innovation known as the bastioned trace, which dictated a star-shaped or polygonal form for the fortress, and outworks projecting from the shielding wall that would provide artillery positions capable of flanking fire without 'dead spots'."<sup>486</sup> The bastioned fortress was to characterize the military and urban personality of many European settlements in America including Old San Juan.

The Castillo de San Felipe del Morro, which started life as a *hornabeque* (hornwork) formed by two half bastions and a wall, was by 1598 a formidable fortress. By 1625, it had four bastions: Bastión de Austria, Bastión de Tejada, Bastión del Mercado and Bastión de Mosquera although it had no walls facing the ocean and bay sides until 1639. In 1587, the Baluarte de Santa Elena, sited between the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro and La Fortaleza de Santa Catalina, was constructed. Other bastions reinforced the defense, such as the Bastión de Austria<sup>487</sup> which looked towards the bay and the aptly named Bastión de Tejada that faced the ocean. A wall connected these two elements and other components built such as a moat, bridge and *revellín* (revalin). The Esplanade actively collaborated in the defense of the fortress for the military *campo* (field) was not only to be mined but provided unobstructed view if the enemy tried to get close to the walls.

### 1765-1898

In the year 1765, Field Marshal Alejandro O'Reilly and Chief of the Royal Engineers Tomás O'Daly inspected the Old San Juan system with the objective of updating the defensive plan, restructuring existing artifacts as

<sup>485</sup> In addition to its imposing bastions, at the Castillo de San Cristóbal, dishes with liquid mercury were placed next to the walls, on the interior side. Since mercury is sensitive to movement, this was a way to make sure the enemy was not digging close to the outer base of the walls near "blind spots."

<sup>486</sup> Anne W Tennant, "Architect of a king's defense: dedicated to the service of the Spanish sovereign, Juan Bautista Antonelli designed innovative fortifications that still tower over the Caribbean today," 2003. Digital source: <http://findarticles.com>.

<sup>487</sup> The name also honors Emperor Felipe II who belonged to the House of Austria.

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needed, and improving the defense methodology, as per the new status of *Defensa de Primer Orden* (Defense of the First Order) granted by Emperor Carlos III. Renovations needed for the plan to work started the next year at the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro. It was during this period that the present configuration of this fortress was obtained. Cannons were tripled, the second level tower battery was expanded, and the Batería del Carmen was erected in order to protect the Batería de Santa Bárbara. A great wall was also constructed behind this last structure.

O'Daly believed the land side of the city needed to be defended in a more forceful manner. Just as the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro was to contain sea assaults, a fortress was needed to defend against a land invasion. This was the principal function of the Castillo de San Cristóbal and its outworks. San Cristóbal Hill was originally the location of a small platform for cannons. This structure was substituted at a later time by a small defensive structure that sported a square floor plan. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the sister fortress of the mighty Castillo de San Felipe del Morro was ready to defend from land invasions.

All structures deemed necessary during the Baroque Period were finished by the last decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The new master plan was tested with the British attack of 1797, repulsed with relative ease by the defensive system that proved its worth as an impregnable organism.

### **The existing defense artifacts**

The existing defense artifacts used in the Old San Juan Historic District are considered unique ones in the world. Their cultural significance is exceptional on many counts but particularly as examples of a system that was capable of defending the urban core for several centuries. Their inimitable personality is best understood when a summary of the artifacts, as finished, is undertaken.

#### **Castillo de San Felipe del Morro**

The Castillo de San Felipe del Morro is built in eight levels covering an area of approximately seven acres. Seated upon a rocky outcrop (the *morro*) facing the Atlantic Ocean and the entrance to San Juan Bay, its first level, the Batería Flotante (Floating Battery), is sixteen feet above the water while the highest point of the imposing edifice is approximately 140 feet above the sea level. The fortress is protected by a dry moat and a sally port that provide entrance to the complex from the Esplanade or Campo del Morro and the first interior space, an area known as the Plaza de Armas. The masonry bridge that crosses the dry moat is supported by arches. The principal entrance was designed with a Tuscan portal signifying its relevance as the main door to the last and final defense line of the city. As mentioned, the Tuscan architectural order was appropriate since for centuries it has represented the male gender.

The north side of the Plaza de Armas connects with the Bastión del Carmen by means of an arched tunnel-like area and an impressive ramp leading to the Bastión de Santa Barbara and lower levels. This dramatic entryway provides a powerful contrast between the huge structure and the sea. The view is considered an iconic one and appears in infinite number of photographs and post cards. Above the Plaza de Armas two large bastions are found: the Bastión de Austria and the Bastión de Ochoa accessed from the Bastión del Carmen by means of ramps. The Bastión de Santa Bárbara faces both the bay and the Atlantic Ocean and is suspended 48 feet above the sea.

The Castillo de San Felipe del Morro also sheltered several other functions, including barracks and jail. Administrative offices and a small chapel were also part of the complex. During the 1840s, the first lighthouse

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of the island's system was also installed here. The present brick structure dates to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, although the historic remains of the older light were incorporated to this later building<sup>488</sup>.

As mentioned, the Esplanade or Campo del Morro was an intrinsic part of this last line of defense. The unobstructed area allowed those defending to see all possible movement from the attackers. This glacis was mined and crisscrossed with tunnels that would have allowed for defense in extreme cases. Although by 1833 it was still unfinished, the idea was to allow the defenders for a clear perspective of any possible enemy as it approached the last line of defense.

All of the defenses are "constructed essentially with walls of San Juan sandstone, with vaulting and piers in brick, and sand and earth-fill between wall shelves. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century and World Wars I & II additions are made in concrete. All exposed surfaces inside and out originally were plaster."<sup>489</sup> The vast repertoire of construction techniques, military solutions and aesthetic insertions provides it with an additional layer of significance. Both arcuated and trabeated structural systems are used throughout the complex.

### North Defensive Wall

The north defensive wall uniting the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro and the Castillo de San Cristóbal is more than 3,700 yards long and has a height that varies from 24 to 50 feet with a width that measures from 15 to 30 feet. Six bastions are aligned along this curtain wall located on top of the cliff area of the islet facing the Atlantic Ocean. From west to east, they are: Bastión de San Antonio, Bastión de Santa Rosa, Bastión de Santo Domingo, Bastión de Las Ánimas, Bastión de Santo Tomás and Bastión de San Sebastián. Each one of them contains embrasures, firing steps and a garite. Some of the names make references to urban accidents evidencing the intimate relationship between the defensive and urban components. The Bastión de San Sebastián, for example, is located close to where the Ermita de San Sebastián was sited before it was substituted by the Polvorín with the same name. The Bastión de las Ánimas, in turn, refers to the 19<sup>th</sup> century cemetery under its shadow, located between the wall and the sea.

Originally, only one urban door offered connection through this wall to the exterior. This portal was located at the Bastión de Santo Tomás and is known as the Puerta de Santa Rosa. It was created to access the exterior of the wall and earlier fortifications, such as the La Perla Fort and the bastion where the famed Garita del Diablo is situated. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Puerta de San José, located between the Bastión de Santa Rosa and the Bastión de Santo Domingo direct entrance to the Cementerio de Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis.

### Castillo de San Cristóbal

As mentioned, the Castillo de San Cristóbal was constructed around an earlier smaller square fort meant to defend the city from land, although the casemates on its north side contained gun positions in order to also protect against attacks coming from the Atlantic Ocean. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was a huge fortification, connected to the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro by means of the city walls. In addition to the splendid ramp which serves as main entrance and allows access to the upper levels the fortress has a central courtyard or plaza surrounded by barracks, casemates, officers quarters, and a chapel. The structure rises 30 to 60 feet in height from sea level. World War II insertions at the El Plano and El Caballero were devised to aid in the sighting of German U-boats. This last position is 100 feet high above sea level offering a great locale from which to defend the city.

<sup>488</sup> The light is part of Puerto Rico's lighthouse system and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 22 October 1981.

<sup>489</sup> FC Gjessins and Loretta Schmidt, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form for Federal Properties," 1973, p 5.

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This land complex included the mammoth Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra, the only door connecting the urban core to the land. A traveler leaving the city had to cross the main door of Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra; then cross a small masonry bridge (which could be blown up in needed) over a dry moat that led to Revellín del Principe; then through the revellin's doors; then across a masonry bridge (over another dry moat) in order to reach the Carretera Militar. As mentioned, the complex was destroyed during the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a response to the then modern aspiration of liberating cities from old defensive artifacts that by this time were obsolete.

As part of the eastern defenses of the city the Spanish Engineers built three fortifications in the moat area of the Castillo de San Cristóbal. These structures were the Revellín de San Carlos (St Charles Ravelin), the Batería de La Trinidad (Trinity Battery) and Revellín del Principe (Principe Ravelin). The Revellín de San Carlos is a triangular (demi-lune) defense, aligned towards the south, connected to the Castillo de San Cristóbal by means of a covered passageway across the moat and a tunnel. The Batería de La Trinidad is a five-sided structure with three levels with gun decks and casemates. It has two levels peppered with casemates on the lower level supporting the upper guns' decks. In a promontory to the east of the Revellin San Carlos the Spanish engineers built additional fortifications that included the Fuerte de Santa Teresa (St Theresa Fort), Fuerte de La Princesa (Princess Fort) and Fuerte del Abanico (Fan Fort). The Fortín del Abanico was erected in 1800 and is one of the last artifacts created by the Spanish military in Old San Juan. A glacis was part of the area as well as breastwalls, covered walkways, mining tunnels, among others. All of these fortifications were built during the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as part of the Baroque defense master plan.

### South Defensive Wall

The southern defensive wall originally connected the Castillo de San Felipe del Morro and Palacio de Santa Catalina with the Puerta de Santiago/Puerta de Tierra and the Castillo de San Cristóbal. In the same manner as the North Wall, a series of bastions united all sections forming the southern curtain. Their sequence from west to east was: the Batería de San Fernando (St Ferdinand Battery), Plataforma de Santa Elena (St Helen Platform), Semibastión de San Agustín (St Augustine Semi-Bastion), Semibastión de Santa Catalina (St Catherine Semi-Bastion), Bastión de la Concepción (Conception Bastion), Bastión de la Palma (Palm Bastion), Bastión de San Justo (St Just Bastion), Bastión del Muelle (Wharf Bastion), Bastión de San Pedro (St Peter Bastion), and Bastión de Santiago (St James Bastion).

As mentioned, the Bastión de San Justo was divided into two sections known as *semibastiones* (semi-bastions), San Justo Pastor and Muelle,<sup>490</sup> in order to better defend the door framed by these elements. Inside the city there was an open space in front of the doorpart of which is presently occupied by Block 63. During the 1880s, a garden like space was created on the outside of the gate that served as one of the two *termini* of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Paseo de la Princesa. The Puerta de San Justo was the only door connecting the South Wall with the exterior of the defensive circuit until 1874 when the Puerta de España was inaugurated. This last urban portal was located at the place where the Calle de la Tanca intersected the South Wall. The place where this street initiated was organized by means of the curved steps of La Barandilla that united the two different levels of the Calle de la Luna and Calle de San Francisco.

These two southern doors and the curtain wall between them no longer exist for they were destroyed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, as the city expanded outside its restrictive defensive belt.

### Cultural Significance

<sup>490</sup> Justo and Pastor, also known as the *Santos Niños* (Sainted Children), were born in Madrid during the 4<sup>th</sup> century. They were martyred when they were 7 and 9 years of age because they refused to renounce their religion. This bastion with its double defenses in the manner of semi-bastions made the spiritual connection particularly and emotively appropriate.

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As mentioned, Old San Juan's defensive organism is considered part of the UNESCO World Heritage List, recognized as a unique complex of buildings, sites, and structures that have exceptional universal value. The system is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to an inventory of military and military-related architectural typologies, the edifices evidence the history of urban defenses from Medieval ideas to 19<sup>th</sup> century ones. European designs were adapted to the unique Viejo San Juan geographic configuration in order to serve against the new defensive techniques of the changing times. The fact that the complex includes even World War II insertions distinguishes it as a most relevant collection of inimitable artifacts, representing the continued efforts of almost five centuries of urban, architectural and engineering developments.

In addition to their architectural and urban relevance, the defenses are associated to historic figures of international and national relevance. Some of these are: Sir Francis Drake; Sir John Hawkins; George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland; General Boudewijn Hendriksz; Sir Ralph Abercromby; Architect Juan-Bautista Antonelli; Field Marshall Alejandro O'Reilly; and Chief of Engineers Tomás O'Daly.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)



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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

Primary location of additional data:

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preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
 9 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

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

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

Name of repository: **Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid, Spain**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan/Old San  
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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** 234.5740  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>19</u> Zone	<u>803690</u> Easting	<u>2044825</u> Northing	3	<u>19</u> Zone	<u>805500</u> Easting	<u>2044440</u> Northing
2	<u>19</u> Zone	<u>8044880</u> Easting	<u>2044565</u> Northing	4	<u>19</u> Zone	<u>805180</u> Easting	<u>2044330</u> Northing

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Old San Juan Historic District starts at the easternmost point of the Fortaleza de San Cristóbal outworks on the so-called Colina de los Tres Reyes Magos. From this point it borders the northern shore of the islet along the Atlantic Ocean until it reaches the westernmost point of the islet where the Fortaleza de San Felipe del Morro is located. At this point, it turns south bordered to the west by San Juan Bay. At the sector known as La Puntilla it takes an eastern direction until it reaches the Dársena bordering along the water.

At the Dársena, the boundary goes north along the eastern side of the Calle de San Justo until it intersects the Calle del Recinto Sur, where it makes a right turn. It moves along this street's southern border until it reaches Block 613. At this point, it encircles this small block and moves north until it reaches the spur of Route 25, the Avenida Muñoz Rivera. It continues along the southern border of this street until it reaches the Colina de los Reyes Magos where it moves north to encompass the outworks of the Fortaleza de San Cristóbal.

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries respond to the geographical, historical and political conditionings of the historic district. Although the city was encircled by walls, the strip of land between the stone curtain and the sea was considered part of the defensive area and, in some cases, used during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as service area. This applies to the north, south and west boundaries. The eastern boundary is the historic third line of defense, where the main entrance into the city was located.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Arleen Pabón-Charneco PhD JD  
organization PRSHPO Consultant date 2012  
street & number PO Box 10215 telephone 850-878-5984  
city or town Tallahassee State Fla zip code 32302  
e-mail arleenpabon@yahoo.com

### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

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A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

---

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**

City or Vicinity: **San Juan**

County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**

Photographer: **Dr. Arleen Pabón-Charneco**

Date Photographed: **June 2011**

Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Asilo de Locos, west façade, camera facing southeast.**  
1 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**

City or Vicinity: **San Juan**

County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**

Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**

Date Photographed: **June 2011**

Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Cuartel de Ballajá, west façade, camera facing southeast.**  
2 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**

City or Vicinity: **San Juan**

County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**

Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**

Date Photographed: **June 2011**

Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Mercado Municipal, north façade, camera facing southwest**  
3 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**

City or Vicinity: **San Juan**

County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**

Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**

Date Photographed: **June 2011**

Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Teatro Tapia, north façade, camera facing southwest.**  
4 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**

City or Vicinity: **San Juan**

County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**

Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**

Date Photographed: **June 2011**

Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Casa Alcaldía, south façade, camera facing northeast.**  
5 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**

City or Vicinity: **San Juan**



**Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan/Old San  
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Name of Property

**San Juan, Puerto Rico**  
County and State

County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Casa Alcaldía, south façade, camera facing north.**  
6 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Casa Alcaldía, south façade, camera facing north**  
7 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Cámara de Comercio, north façade, camera facing southeast.**  
8 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Real Intendencia, east façade, camera facing northwest.**  
9 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Cathedral of San Juan Bautista, west façade, camera facing east.**  
10 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed: **June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Catedral de San Juan Bautista, interior, camera facing southeast.**  
11 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Paseo de la Princesa, camera facing west.**  
12 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**

Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan/Old San  
Juan Historic District  
Name of Property

San Juan, Puerto Rico  
County and State

City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**South Wall, south façade, camera facing north.**  
13 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Presidio de la Princesa, south façade, camera facing north.**  
14 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Presidio de la Princesa, south façade, camera facing northeast.**  
15 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Diputación Provincial, west façade, camera facing east.**  
16 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Banco Territorial Agrícola, north and east façades, camera facing southwest.**  
17 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Castillo de San Cristóbal and Casino de Puerto Rico (right), camera facing northeast.**  
18 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Calle de la Tanca streetscape, camera facing south.**

Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan/Old San  
Juan Historic District  
Name of Property

San Juan, Puerto Rico  
County and State

19 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Calle de O'Donnell streetscape, camera facing south.**  
20 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Caleta de las Monjas and Convento and Iglesia de las Carmelitas Calzadas, camera facing northwest.**  
21 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**House at Calle de la Tanca streetscape, west façade, camera facing southeast.**  
22 of 72

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Calle de San Justo streetscape, camera facing northeast.**  
23 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**South Wall, camera facing north.**  
24 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Plaza de la Catedral, camera facing northeast.**  
25 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**

**Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan/Old San  
Juan Historic District**  
Name of Property

**San Juan, Puerto Rico**  
County and State

Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Escalinata de las Monjas streetscape, camera facing north.**  
26 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Plaza de la Catedral, Convento and Iglesia de las Carmelitas Calzadas, south façade, camera facing northwest.**  
27 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Sign of Calle San Francisco, camera facing south.**  
28 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Plaza de Armas, camera facing southwest.**  
29 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Caleta de San Juan, streetscape, camera facing east.**  
30 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Calle de Tetuán streetscape, camera facing northeast.**  
31 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Baños Públicos, north façade, camera facing southwest.**  
32 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**

**Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan/Old San  
Juan Historic District**  
Name of Property

**San Juan, Puerto Rico**  
County and State

City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Casino of Puerto Rico, west façade, camera facing southeast.**  
33 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Escuela Abraham Lincoln, south façade, camera facing northwest.**  
34 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Escuela José Julián Acosta, north façade, camera facing southeast.**  
35 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Pabellón de Turismo, north façade, camera facing southeast.**  
36 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Pabellón de Turismo, detail, north façade, camera facing southeast.**  
37 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Condominio Plaza, north façade, camera facing south.**  
38 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Tienda por Departamentos González Padín, north façade, camera facing southeast.**  
39 of 72.

Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan/Old San  
Juan Historic District  
Name of Property

San Juan, Puerto Rico  
County and State

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity: **San Juan**  
County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**  
Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed: **June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **La Bombonera, south façade, camera facing north.**  
40 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity: **San Juan**  
County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**  
Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed: **June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **La Bombonera, south façade, camera facing north.**  
41 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity: **San Juan**  
County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**  
Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed: **June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Correo y Tribunal Federal, north and east facades, camera facing southeast.**  
42 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity: **San Juan**  
County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**  
Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed: **June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Royal Bank of Canada, north and east facades, camera facing southwest.**  
43 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity: **San Juan**  
County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**  
Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed: **June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Banco Popular, south façade, camera facing north.**  
44 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity: **San Juan**  
County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**  
Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed: **June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Banco Popular, detail of south façade, camera facing north.**  
45 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity: **San Juan**  
County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**  
Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed: **June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **New York Bank, south and west facades, camera facing northeast.**

Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan/Old San  
Juan Historic District  
Name of Property

San Juan, Puerto Rico  
County and State

46 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity: **San Juan**  
County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**  
Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed: **June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Asilo de las Siervas de María, south façade, camera facing north.**

47 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity: **San Juan**  
County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**  
Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed: **June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **El Polo Norte, south façade, camera facing northeast.**

48 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity: **San Juan**  
County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**  
Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed: **June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Marqués de la Esperanza House, metal screen, camera facing south.**

49 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity: **San Juan**  
County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**  
Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed: **June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Marqués de la Esperanza House, stair, camera facing southeast.**

50 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity: **San Juan**  
County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**  
Photographer: **Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed: **June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Marqués de la Esperanza House, interior patio, camera facing southeast.**

51 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity: **San Juan**  
County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**  
Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed: **June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Marqués de la Esperanza House, north façade, facing southwest.**

52 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity: **San Juan**  
County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**  
Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed: **June 2011**

Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan/Old San  
Juan Historic District  
Name of Property

San Juan, Puerto Rico  
County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Marqués de la Esperanza, detail of the north façade, camera facing south.**  
53 of 72

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**

City or Vicinity: **San Juan**

County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**

Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**

Date Photographed: **June 2011**

Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Casa de los Dos Zaguanes, south and west facades, camera facing northeast**

54 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**

City or Vicinity: **San Juan**

County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**

Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**

Date Photographed: **June 2011**

Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Casa de los Dos Zaguanes, staircase, camera facing southeast.**

55 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**

City or Vicinity: **San Juan**

County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**

Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**

Date Photographed: **June 2011**

Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Casa de los Dos Zaguanes, interior patio, camera facing east.**

56 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**

City or Vicinity: **San Juan**

County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**

Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**

Date Photographed: **June 2011**

Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Casa del Cabildo, east and north facades, camera facing southwest.**

57 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**

City or Vicinity: **San Juan**

County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**

Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**

Date Photographed: **June 2011**

Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Casa de Guardía del Polvorín de San Sebastián, south and east facades, camera facing northwest.**

58 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**

City or Vicinity: **San Juan**

County: **San Juan** State: **Puerto Rico**

Photographer: **Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**

Date Photographed: **June 2011**

Description of Photograph(s) and number: **North Wall, camera facing northwest.**

59 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**

City or Vicinity: **San Juan**



**Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan/Old San  
Juan Historic District**  
Name of Property

**San Juan, Puerto Rico**  
County and State

County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **North Wall, camera facing northeast.**  
60 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Escuela de Artillería, north and west facades, camera facing southeast.**  
61 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Castillo de San Cristóbal, north facade, camera facing southeast.**  
62 of 72.

**Name of Property: Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Castillo de San Cristóbal, detail of west facade, camera facing southeast.**  
63 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**West Wall, camera facing northeast.**  
64 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**West Wall, camera facing north.**  
65 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Puerta de San Juan, west façade, camera facing northeast.**  
66 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**

Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan/Old San  
Juan Historic District  
Name of Property

San Juan, Puerto Rico  
County and State

City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Palacio de Santa Catalina and West Wall, camera facing southeast.**  
67 of 72.

Name of Property: **Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Puerta de San Juan, exterior, camera facing east.**  
68 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**June 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Puerta de San Juan, interior, camera facing west.**  
69 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**February 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:**Cementerio de Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis, Entrance Portico to the old section, camera facing west.**  
70 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**February 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Cementerio de Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis, main avenue of old section, to the left Charnel House, camera facing west.**  
71 of 72.

Name of Property:**Old San Juan Historic District**  
City or Vicinity:**San Juan**  
County:**San Juan** State:**Puerto Rico**  
Photographer:**Dr Arleen Pabón-Charneco**  
Date Photographed:**February 2011**  
Description of Photograph(s) and number: **Cementerio de Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis, Chapel, south façade, camera facing north.**  
72 of 72.

Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan/Old San  
Juan Historic District  
Name of Property

San Juan, Puerto Rico  
County and State

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**Property Owner:** Multiple owners

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

---

name Multiple Owners  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



### 1. Name of Property

historic name Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan / Old San Juan Historic District  
other names/site number Ciudad del puerto Rico; San Juan de Puerto Rico; Viejo San Juan; Ciudad Capital; Zona Histórica de San Juan; Casco Histórico de San Juan; Antiguo San Juan; San Juan Historic Zone

### 2. Location

street & number Western corner of San Juan Islet. Roughly bounded by the Avenidas Muñoz Rivera and Ponce de León, Paseo de Covadonga and Calles J A Corretejer, Nilita Vientos Gastón, Recinto Sur, de la Tanca and del Comercio.  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 Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this Xnomination   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 at the following level(s) of significance:

X national      statewide local

Carlos A Rubio  
Carlos A Rubio Cancela Architect      June 6, 2012  
Signature of certifying official/Title      Date

Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official      Date  
Title      State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register      determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register      removed from the National Register

other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_  
Jerry Salant      7/30/2012  
Signature of the Keeper      Date of Action

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Distrito Histórico del Viejo San Juan/  
Old San Juan Historic District

Name of Property

San Juan, Puerto Rico  
County and State

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation Page 1

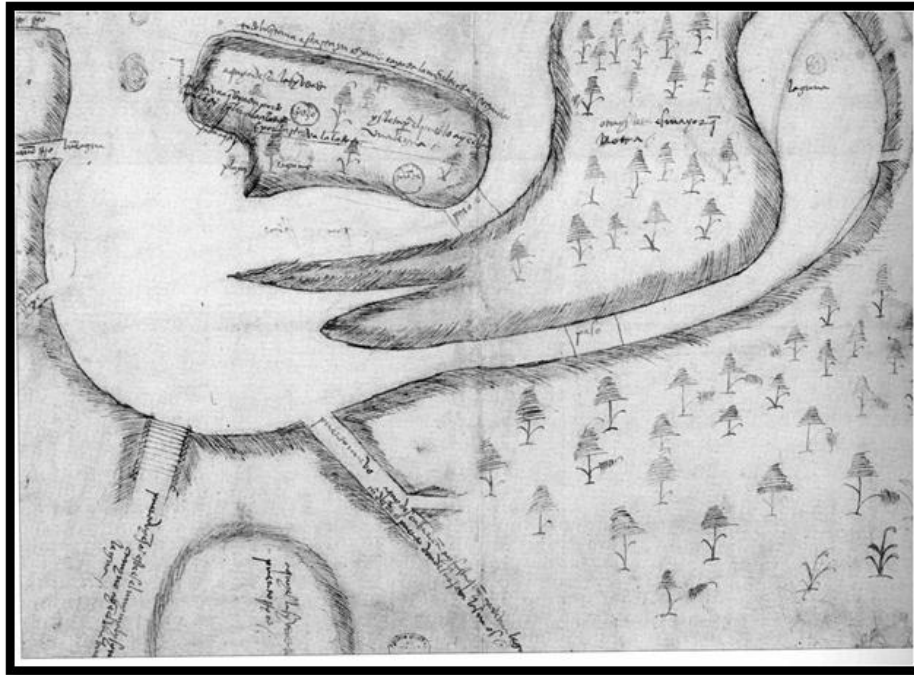


Figure 1. First map of San Juan Islet part of the 1519 report prepared by Rodrigo de Figueroa for the Padres Jerónimos. Archivo General de las Indias, Seville, Spain.

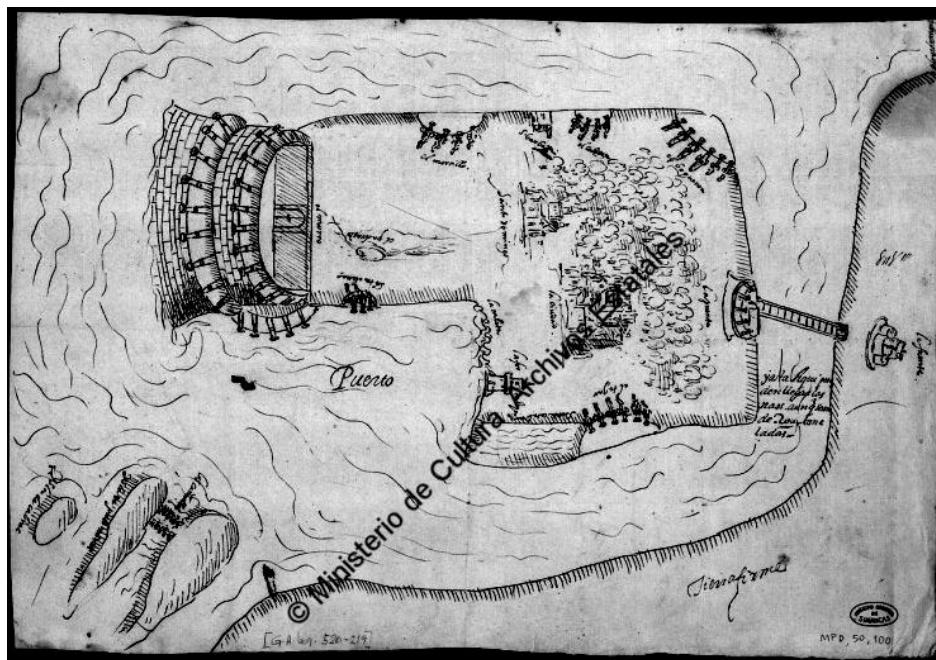


Figure 2. Drawing of San Juan Islet, 16<sup>th</sup> century. Ministerio de Cultura, Archivos Estatales, Madrid, Spain.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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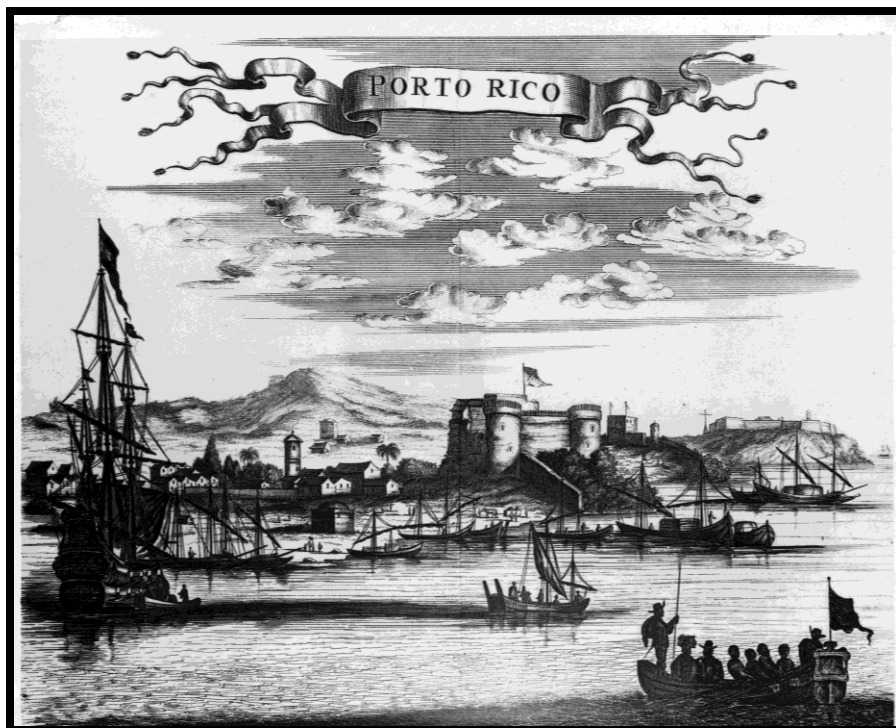


Figure 3. Engraving of western side of San Juan, first half 17<sup>th</sup> century. Engraving, Arnaldo Montanus, 1671, Amsterdam.



Figure 4. Plan of San Juan, 1776, Ramón de Villalonga. Archivo Cartográfico y Estudios Geográficos del Centro Geográfico del Ejército, Spain.

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Figure 5. Plan of San Juan, Engineer Juan Francisco Mestre, 1792. Archivo Cartográfico y Estudios Geográficos del Centro Geográfico del Ejercito, Spain.

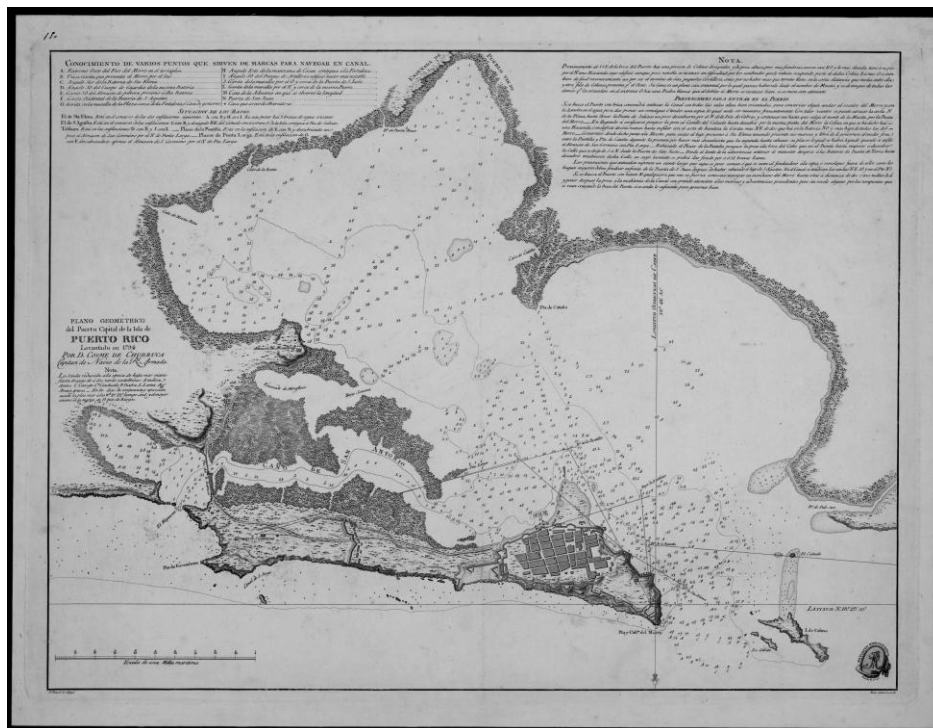


Figure 6. Plan of the puerto Rico, the port of San Juan, 1794, Captain Cosme de Churrua. Archivo Cartográfico y Estudios Geográficos del Centro Geográfico del Ejercito, Spain.

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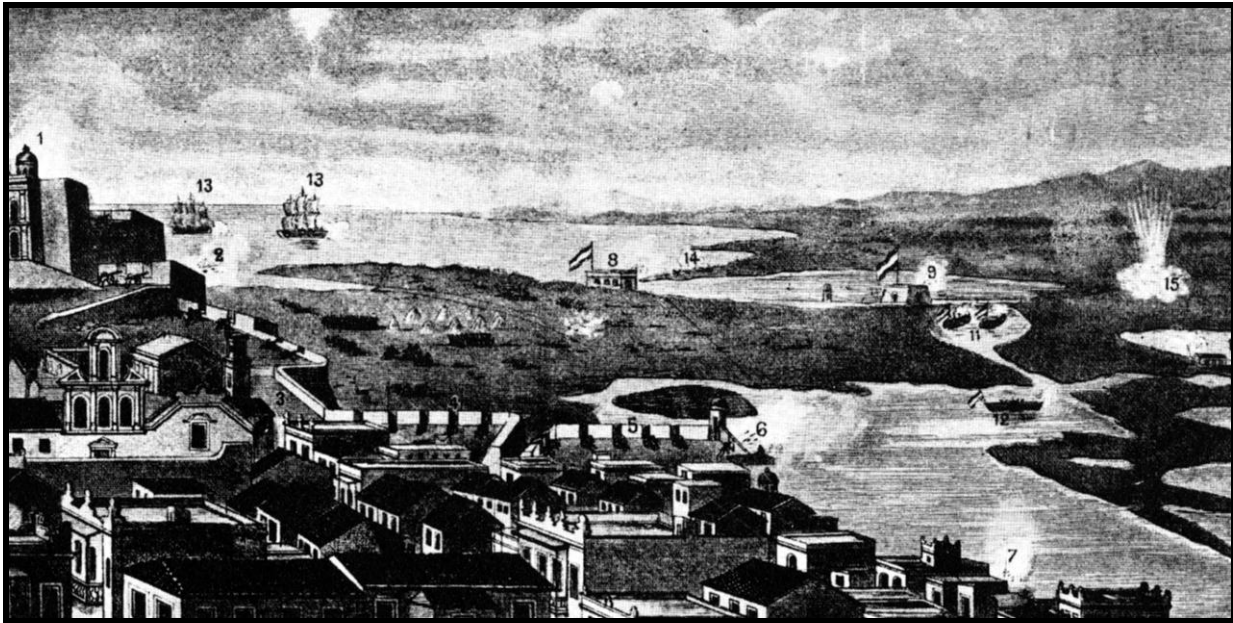


Figure 7. Engraving depicting the 1797 British siege of San Juan. From: *Los Tres Ataques Británicos a la Ciudad de San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico*, Enrique T. Blanco, 1968.

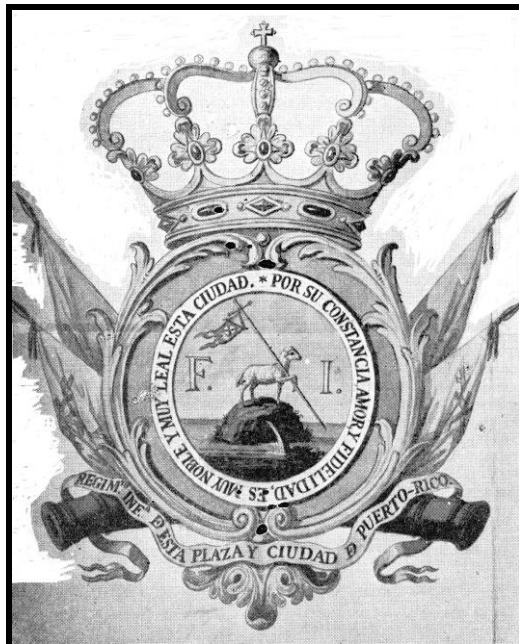


Figure 8. In recognition of the heroism of the inhabitants of San Juan during the British siege in 1799 the Spanish Crown added the words "Por su Constancia, Amor y Fidelidad es muy Noble y Leal esta Ciudad" (This city is noble and loyal for its constancy, love and fidelity) to the city's coat of arms. From: *La Guerra en el Caribe en el Siglo XVIII*, Juan Manuel Zapatero, 1964.



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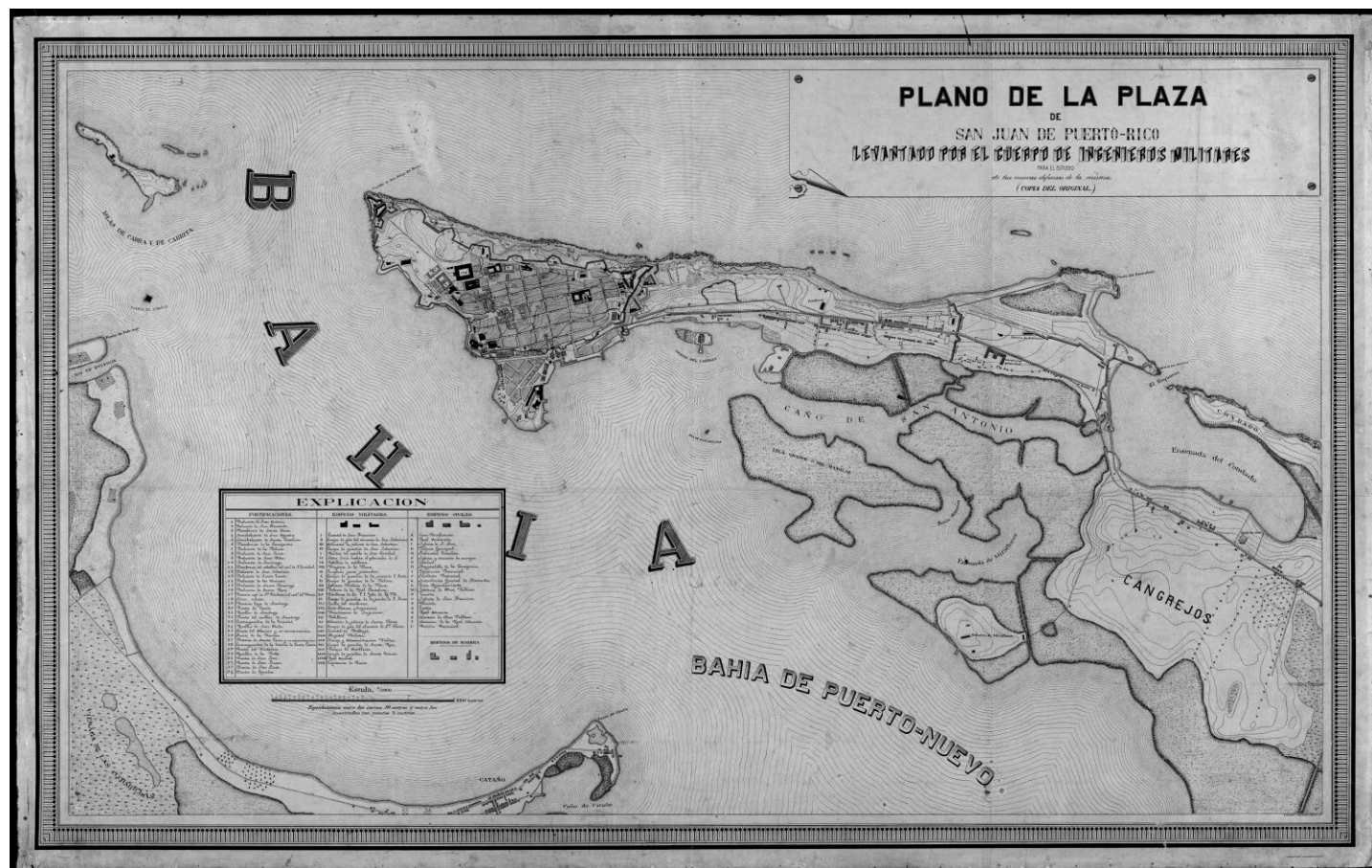


Figure 9. Plan of the Plaza de San Juan de Puerto Rico, F. Roldán y Navarro, 1867. Archivo Cartográfico y Estudios Geográficos del Centro Geográfico del Ejército, España.

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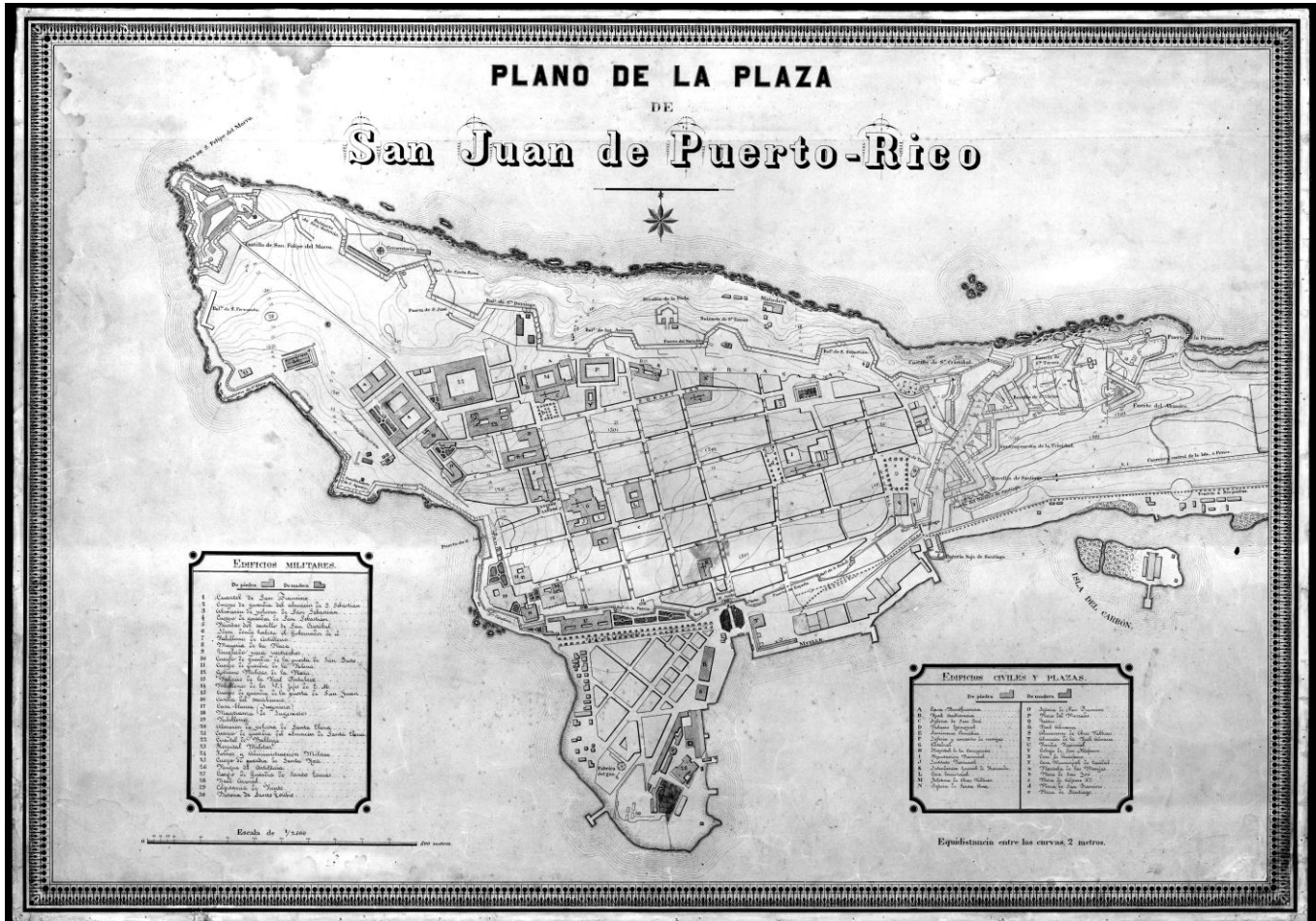


Figure 10. Map of the city of San Juan, 1887. Archivo Cartográfico y Estudios Geográficos del Centro Geográfico del Ejército, España.

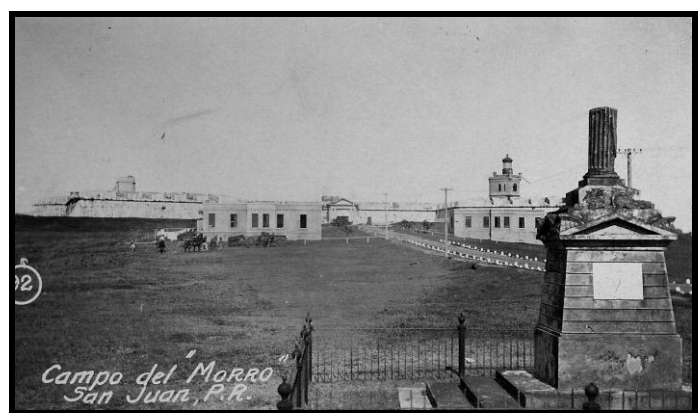
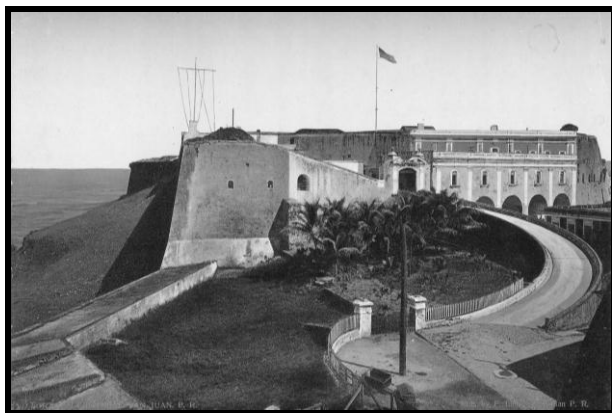


Figure 11. Castillo de San Cristóbal (right) looking east, Postcard, c 1900 and Castillo de San Felipe del Morro (left) looking west, c 1900. CP G Baynahr Collection, PRSHPO.

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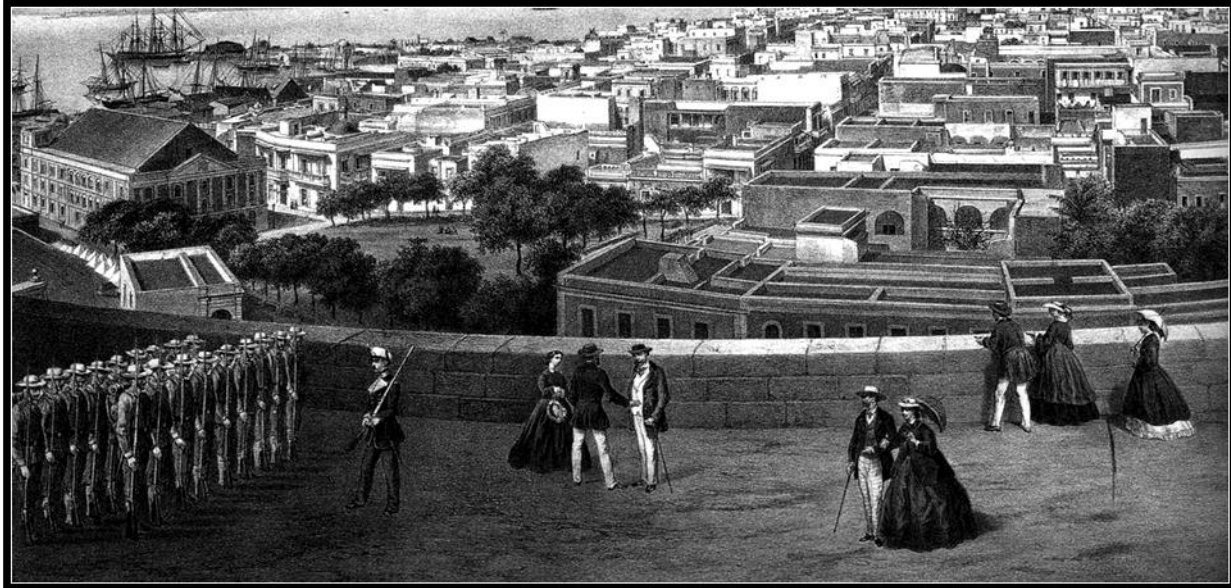


Figure 12. Litograph of San Juan, c 1860, view from Castillo de San Cristóbal looking southwest.

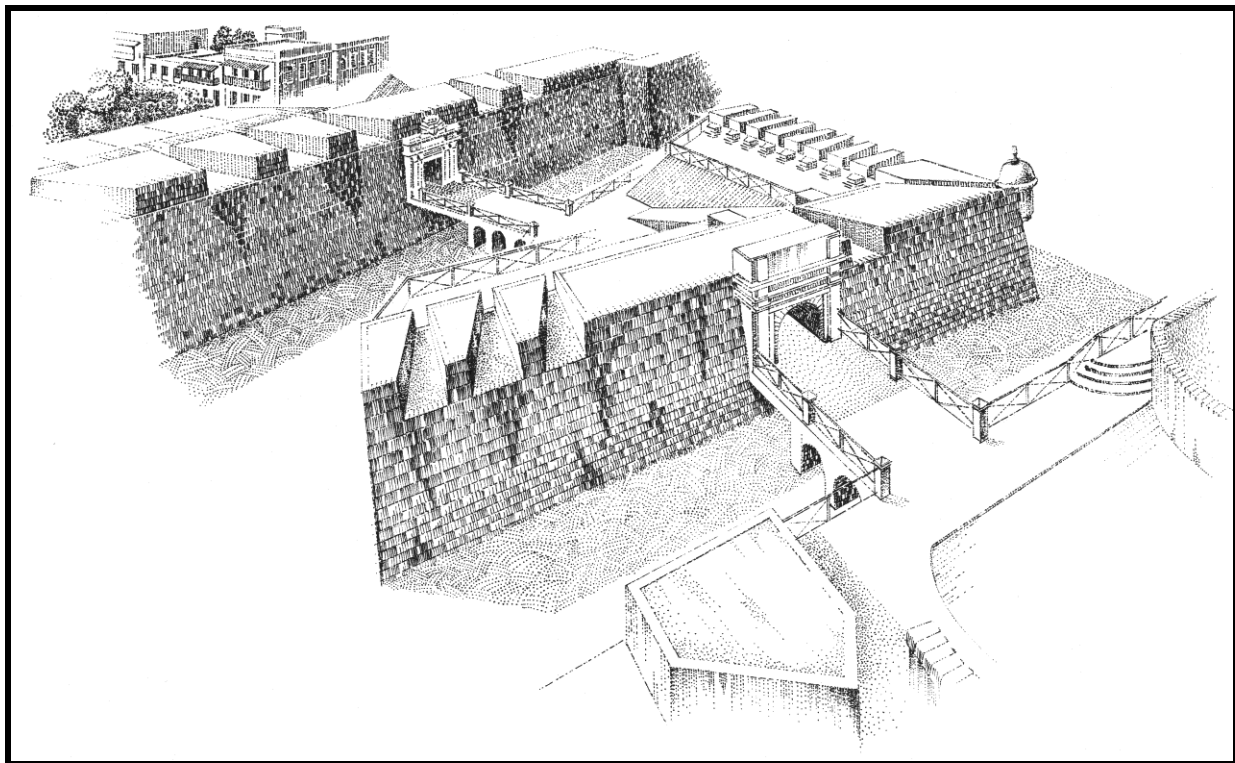


Figure 13. Recreation of the moat, Revellín del Principe and Puerta de Santiago, Erick Pérez, San Juan National Historic Site Archives, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 2005.

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Figure 14. Revellín del Príncipe viewed from the Puerta de Tierra prior to 1897.  
From: *Álbum de Puerto Rico*, Feliciano Alonso.

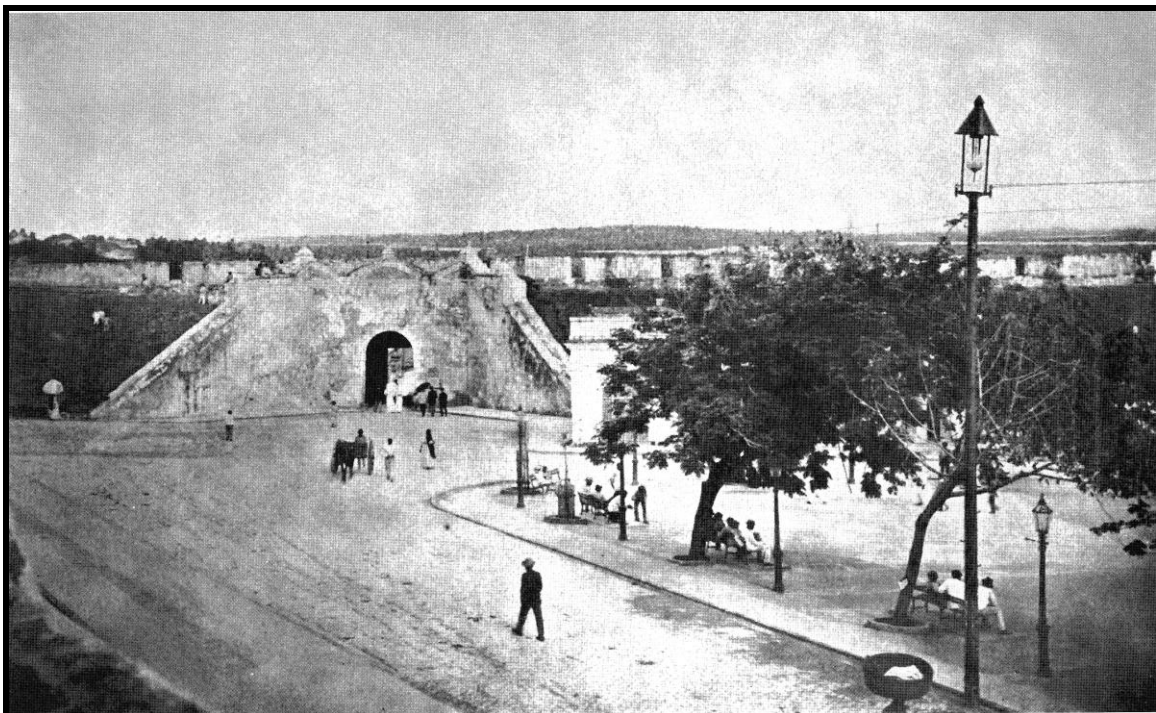


Figure 15. Puerta de Santiago as seen from the interior of the city looking east prior to 1897.  
From: *Álbum de Puerto Rico*, Feliciano Alonso.



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Figure 16. Puerta de Santiago, Plaza de Santiago and Teatro Tapia looking southwest, prior to 1897.  
From: *Álbum de Puerto Rico*, Feliciano Alonso.

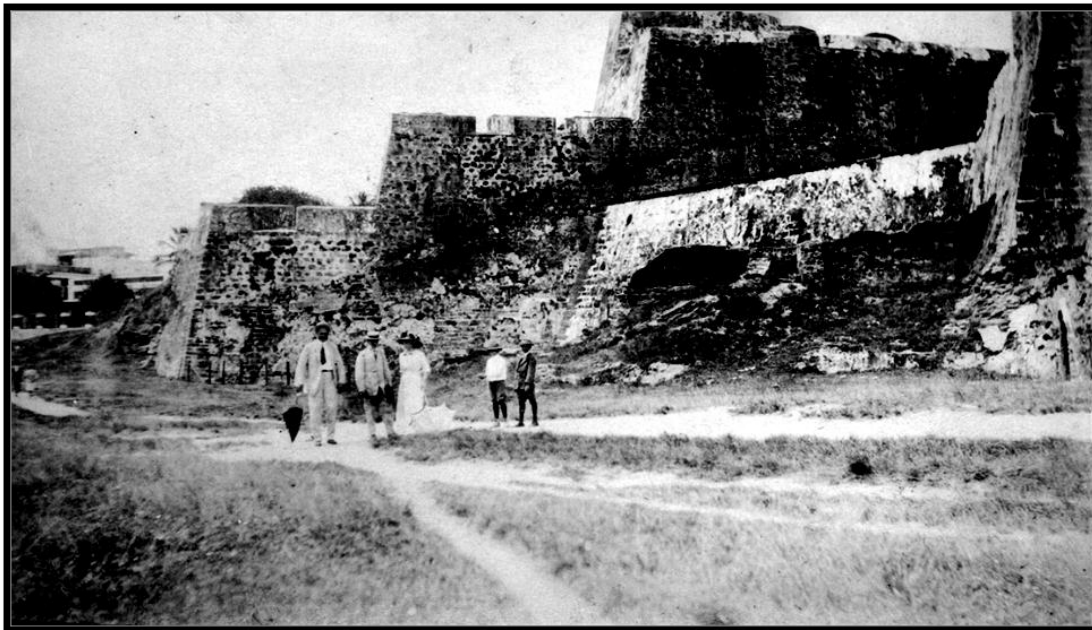


Figure 17. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century photograph of the fourth line of defense. Private Collection.

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Figure 18. Puerta de San Rafael (also known as Puerta de España), prior to 1895.  
From: *Album de Puerto Rico*, Feliciano Alonso.



Figure 19. Paseo de la Princesa looking west, c 1900. CP G. Baynahr Collection, PRSHPO.

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Figure 20. Presidio de la Princesa, c 1898. From: *Crónica de la Guerra Hispano Americana en Puerto Rico*, Ángel Rivero, 1922.



Figure 21. Bombardment of San Juan by American naval forces, May 11, 1898. CP Baynahr Collection, PRSHPO.



Figure 22. Iglesia de San José, showing damage caused by the May 11, 1898 bombardment. From: *Crónica de la Guerra Hispano Americana en Puerto Rico*, Ángel Rivero, 1922.

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Figure 23. Cuartel de Infantería de Ballajá depicting damage caused by the May 11, 1898 by the US Fleet bombardment. From: *Crónica de la Guerra Hispano Americana en Puerto Rico*, Ángel Rivero, 1922.



Figure 24. State Funeral in Calle de la Fortaleza looking west with Fortaleza de Santa Catalina in the background, c 1898-1900. From: *La Justicia en sus manos: Tribunal Supremo*, Luis Rafael Rivera, 2007.



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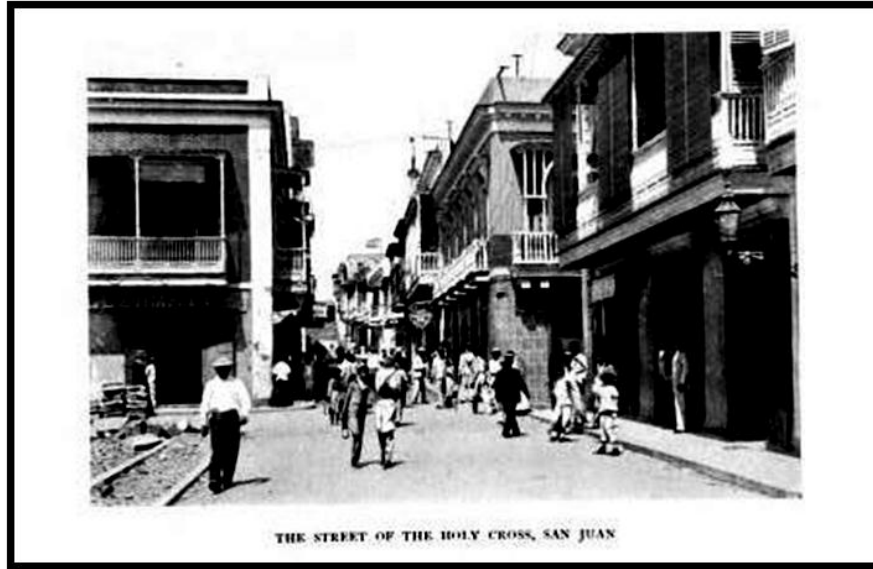


Figure 25. View of Calle de la Cruz with the Plaza de Armas on the left, c 1899.  
From: *Puerto Rico Its Conditions and Possibilities*, William Dinwiddie, 1899.



Figure 26. Calle de San Francisco looking west, c 1900. CP G Baynahr Collection, PRSHPO.

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Figure 27. Street in the Old San Juan Historic District, c 1900. CP G Baynahr, Collection, PRSHPO.



Figure 28. Old San Juan, West Wall and Puerta de San Juan, c 1900.  
CP G Baynahr Collection, PRSHPO.

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Figure 29. Western Wall, Casa Blanca and Puerta de San Juan, 1900-1910. Detroit Collection, Publishing Company, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.



Figure 30. Puerta de San Juan, early 20<sup>th</sup> century. From: *Porto Rico History and Condition*, Knowlton Mixer, 1926.

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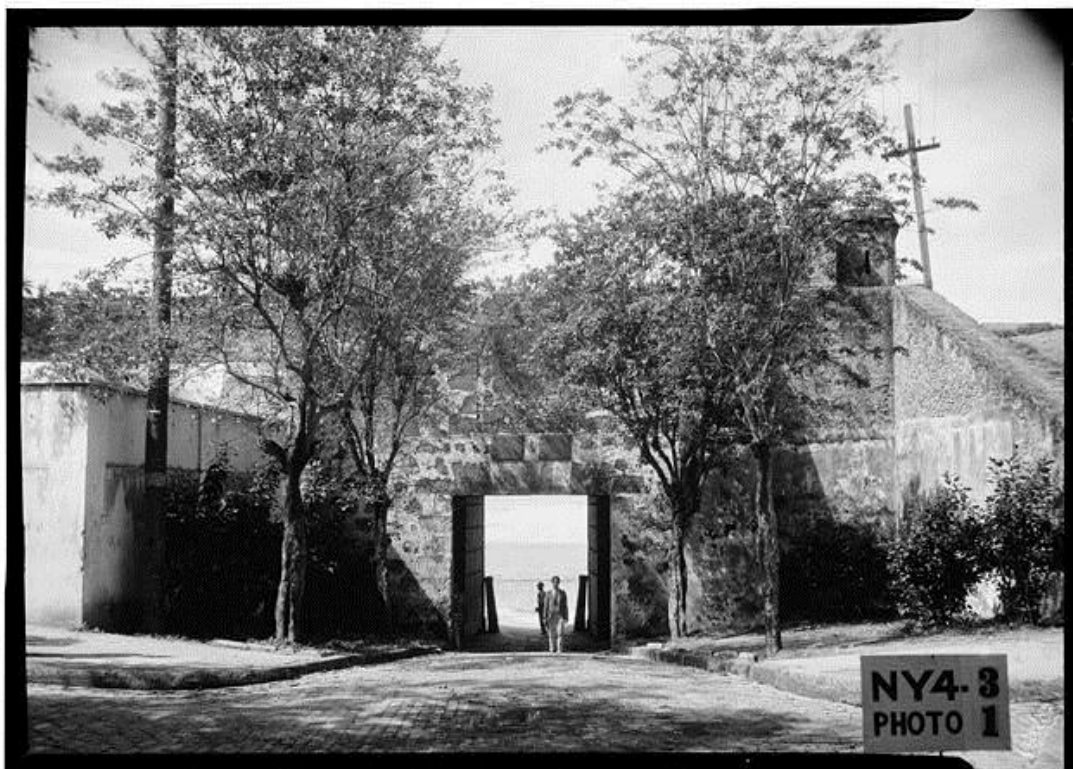


Figure 31. Puerta de San Juan as seen from Caleta de San Juan, 1900-1910, Detroit Collection, Publishing Company, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.



Figure 32. Interior patio of tenement house in Old San Juan, late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.



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Figure 33. Plaza de la Catedral with Casa del Cabildo on the left and Puerta de San Juan at the end of the street, 1900-1910. Detroit Collection, Publishing Company, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.



Figure 34. Plaza de la Darsena, 1900-1910. Detroit Collection, Publishing Company, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

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Figure 35. Plaza de Armas and the Casa Alcaldía, 1900-1910. Detroit Collection, Publishing Company, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

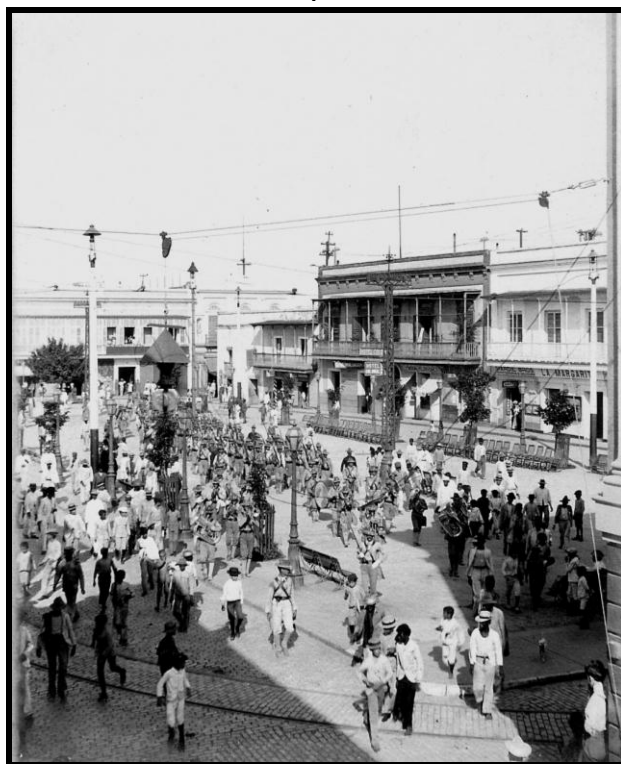


Figure 36. Plaza de Armas looking east, c 1900. CP G Baynahr Collection, PRSHPO.

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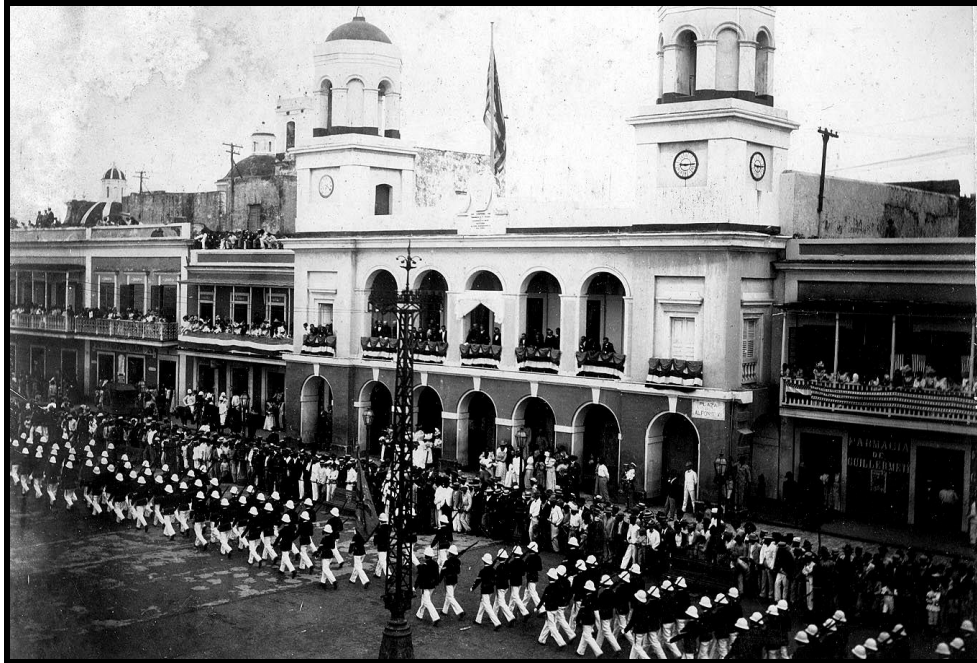


Figure 37. Troops marching in Plaza de Armas, in front of Casa Alcaldía, c 1900. Munford Collection, PRSHPO.



Figure 38. Real Intendencia and Plaza de Armas, c 1900. Munford Collection, PRSHPO.

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Figure 39. Plaza Colón, Teatro Tapia, Escuela José Julián Acosta, Casino de Puerto Rico and the Covadonga Train Station. From: *Porto Rico History and Conditions*, Knowlton Mixer, 1926.



Figure 40. Convento de los Dominicos, c 1898-1910.  
From: *La Justicia en sus manos: Tribunal Supremo*, Luis Rafael Rivera, 2007.



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Figure 41. Iglesia San José, 1900-1910. Detroit Collection, Publishing Company, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.



Figure 42. Iglesia San José, 1900-1910, Detroit Collection, Publishing Company, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

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Figure 43. Capilla del Santo Cristo de la Salud, 1900-1910. Detroit Collection, Publishing Company, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

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Figure 44. Wharf in Old San Juan, 1900-1910. Detroit Collection, Publishing Company, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.



Figure 45. Palacio de Santa Catalina, 1900-1910. Detroit Collection, Publishing Company, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

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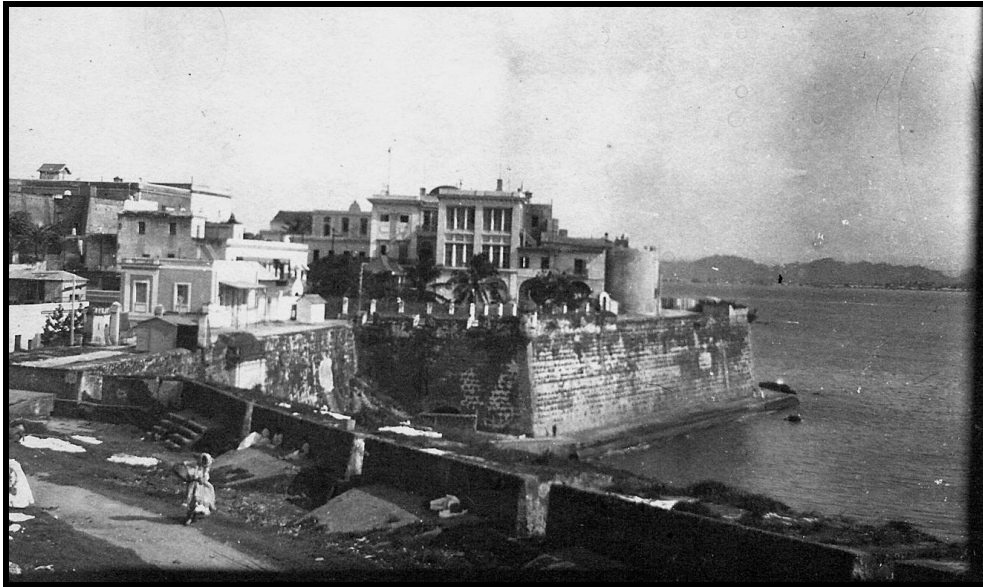


Figure 46. North façade of Palacio de Santa Catalina, c 1900. CP G Baynahr Collection, PRSHPO.



Figure 47. The Old San Juan Historic District looking towards the northeast, 1900-1910. Detroit Collection, Publishing Company, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.



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Figure 48. The Old San Juan Historic District looking west, 1900-1910. Detroit Collection, Publishing Company, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.



Figure 49. Iglesia y Plaza de San José, c 1930. Soldado Estadounidense Collection, PRSHPO.



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Figure 50. Plaza de Colón, c 1920. Soldado Estadounidense Collection, PRSHPO.



Figure 51. Casino de Puerto Rico, c 1920. Soldado Estadounidense Collection, PRSHPO.



Figure 52. View of the eastern entrance into the city, c 1925.  
Soldado Estadounidense Collection, PRSHPO.