

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only  
received **OCT 22 1985**  
date entered

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

**DEC 2 1985**

**1. Name**

historic ASILO DE POBRES

and/or common ASILO MUNICIPAL (Municipal Poor Asylum)

**2. Location**

street & number POST STREET, BLOCK 417 LOT 6 not for publication

city, town MAYAGUEZ vicinity of

state PUERTO RICO code PR 72 county MAYAGUEZ code 0650

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: POOR ASYLUM

**4. Owner of Property**

name MAYAGUEZ MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT, CITY HALL

street & number PERAL AND MC KINLEY STREETS

city, town MAYAGUEZ vicinity of state PUERTO RICO

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. REGISTRO DE LA PROPIEDAD, DEPARTAMENTO DE HACIENDA  
(RECORDER'S OFFICE)

street & number GOVERNMENT BUILDING, BARRIO MIRADERO

city, town MAYAGUEZ state PUERTO RICO

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

SURVEY AND PLANNING  
title PROJECT OF MAYAGUEZ has this property been determined eligible? yes  no

date JULY 1984 federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

city, town SAN JUAN state PUERTO RICO

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

### Check one

unaltered

altered

### Check one

original site

moved      date

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The original asylum, as built in 1895, consisted of a square plan, one story building, set back from the street, defining two courtyards, one of them a day area for the poor and mentally deranged, the other housed a small chapel. The front, east facade, consists of a central portico with a plain pediment and four Ionic columns serving as balcony for a half-round arched entrance and two blank panels on either side. This portico defines a module of some 8mts. (25') which is repeated to either side of the facade, incorporating in said cases, a single wooden casement window opening, accented by a blind rectangular panel with an inscribed circle and a small semicircular protuberance in the top. Beyond the portico, inside the patio, exhibits a pediment over a triumphal arch arrangement (large center arch, smaller ones on either side, used as niches for religious figures, articulated all by flat Doric pilasters). Other inside arrangements are more austere. For example, the inside gallery was covered with lean-to roofs on plain wooden pillars.

After an 1918 earthquake, remodeling architect Manuel V. Domenech proposed four additions: two to fill in the front yard, for relocating there the Sisters of Charity and (separated) chronic patients; and two extensions to the front to provide additional bedspace. Only the latter were built under the direction of Contractor Luis Perocier (1920-1921). These extensions, drawn out to the street limit, reproduced the mouldings and articulation of the main facade, albeit in a more crowded, busy way, and utilizing closely spaced, arched windows. To keep these extensions up to the level of the main corpus of the building, they had to be "lifted" up on bases. These were made of bricks salvaged from the ruins of the earthquake-destroyed 19th century City Hall and city jail. An ornate fence was constructed on the front yard, with posts adorned with rosettes, geometric figures and vases.

Between the years 1972 and 1979, the Asylum was radically altered by gutting virtually all of the inner masonry and wood, tin-roofed structure, and building modern concrete partitions. The chapel was demolished, save for its facade; and the inner yards were consolidated into one. A pseudo-Spanish gallery of oval concrete arches and contemporary landscaping in commonplace ornamental shrubs characterizes said yard.

-See Continuation sheet-

## 8. Significance

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

**Specific dates** 1895 and 1919-21 **Builder/Architect** Manuel Domenech, architect  
Luis Perocier (1919 remodelling)  
contractor

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Asylum is a landmark in Mayaguez.

The Asylum's history reveals the growing pains of transition in Mayaguez's process of urban growth. By the late 1880's, the problem of loose poor or mentally deranged people in the city was of sufficient stature as to merit consideration the development of a specialized institution for their isolation and treatment.

Only in late 1893 was action finally taken, by proclaiming an architectural competition for the design of said asylum. There were, though, no takers. Two years later, apparently on direct commission, plans for the Asylum appeared on records, and building was commenced forthwith. (Plans are on Mayaguez and San Juan General Archives). Though more enlightened approaches have been since taken for the treatment and control of the poor and the mentally ill, the Asylum still stands, retaining largely its original (but updated and cleaned up) functions, fulfilling a major humanitarian function in an increasingly depersonalized and alienated society for those unable to help themselves.

As an architectural achievement, its facade shows one of the most well-proportioned examples of late neoclassical elements in the Mayaguez area.

It represents late 19th century Puerto Rican institutional architecture. The architects who are known to have worked on this building are especially noteworthy: Domenech, a Ponce native, was responsible, for example, for the well known "Caryatid House" which faces Ponce Cathedral (ca. 1910), Perocier was a well known Mayaguez architect and contractor whose significant works can be seen elsewhere in the city and adjoining towns. Other works of his design have been nominated in this survey.<sup>1</sup> The former is considered one of the most capable early 20th century eclectic architects of Puerto Rico.

<sup>1</sup> Luis Perocier's vast number of buildings include structures built in San Juan, Sabana Grande and Mayaguez, among others. His house for Dr. Enrique Lassise at Sabana Grande is one of the best examples of residential architecture on the Island. At Mayaguez he was responsible for the Bages building, José De Diego bldg. at the UPR Campus, the Bravo house, additions to the Grau residence, the Balboa Theatre and others. Born in Mayaguez, he was one of the city's most prolific and respected architects.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Gaudier y Cabassa, Martín. El Mayaguez de Ayer y de Hoy. Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, 1959.

Historia de Mayaguez 1760-1960. Published by the Bicentennial Committee. Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, 1960.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 6,796 sq.mts.

Quadrangle name USGS MAYAGUEZ 1964

Quadrangle scale 1: 20,000

UTM References LAMBERT: 18°11'53"  
67°08'25"

A 

Zone	Easting			Northing			

B 

Zone	Easting			Northing			

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

\* SEE CONTINUATION SHEET (SITE PLAN)

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Architects Jorge Ortiz and Jorge Rigau

organization Colegio de Arquitectos de P.R. date September, 1984

street & number Box 2299 telephone (809) 724-1213

city or town Hato Rey state Puerto Rico

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

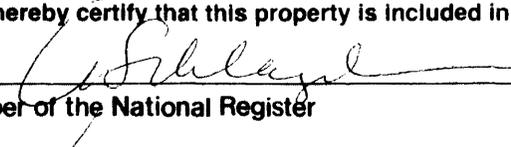
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date OCTOBER 15, 1985

For NPS use only

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

 date 10/2/85  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation sheet POOR ASYLUM

Item number 7

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Health and sanitary facilities have been updated and are now at a level comparable to the better public hospitals in Puerto Rico, though at the expense of the Asylum's original architectural aspect. The front facade, however, is the same as that rebuilt in 1921, except for the windows: the old casement, louvered units have been substituted for modern wood jalousies, crank operated ones, and the decorative ornaments on the half round portion of the arches are now coloured acrylic and wood fanlights.

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Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 1

NOMBRE COMUN		ASILO MUNICIPAL
NOMBRE HISTORICO		ASILO DE POBRES
ARQUITECTO		1919-21 L.PEROCIFER
DIRECCION		POST Parcela 417 Solar 6

INFORMACION GRAFICA		

Scale: 1:1000