

1164 Ponce de Leon Avenue (House)
Town of Rio Piedras
Municipality of San Juan
Puerto Rico

HABS No. PR-131

HABS
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7-RIOPI,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Building Survey
National Park Service
Southeast Region
Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

1164 PONCE DE LEON AVENUE (HOUSE)

HABS No. PR-131

HABS
PR
7-R16P1
2-

Location: 1164 Ponce de León Avenue (House)
Town of Río Piedras, Municipality of San Juan, Puerto Rico

USGS San Juan Quadrangle (7.5')
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates
N18° 23' 50.22" W066° 03' 09.90"

Present Owner: Puerto Rico Highway & Transportation Authority
P.O. Box 41269
San Juan, PR 00940-1269

Present Use: Vacant
The structures will be demolished in August, 1997
Last owner: Puerto Rico Highway & Transportation Authority
Last occupant: Metro College, Inc.
Last use: Private Educational Institution

Significance: The building individually does not constitute a significant historical nor architectural feature, nevertheless, it can be considered potentially significant to the volumetric matrix within a denominated commercial part of the greater urban fabric. As such, its presence constitutes a visible link to the urban fabric.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. **Date(s) of erection:** circa 1940-50. Source: Adams, Virginia H., Catherine de Jarnette Vieth, *Reconnaissance and Intensive Historic and Architectural Resources Survey, Tren Urbano, San Juan Metropolitan Area, Puerto Rico*. The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc., Report No. 655, October 1995.
2. **Architect:** Not Known
3. **Original and subsequent owners:** (1st) Carmen Maritza & Maria Estrella Fernández Rodríguez; (2nd) Luis E. Vázquez
4. **Builder, contractor, suppliers:** Not known
5. **Original plans and construction:** Not known/not available
6. **Alterations and additions:** Extent and dates unknown

B. Historical Context

Avenida Ponce de León at Río Piedras (formerly "Calle del Comercio") was the vital line of communication between the Capital city and the rest of the Island. Most buildings were used for dwelling, and were built of wood. During the period circa 1920-50 the majority of the 19th and early 20th century buildings were replaced with substantial multiple-story buildings along Avenida Ponce de León and around the Plaza. 1164 Ponce de León was built during the period circa 1940-50 as a residential building.

Information on events and persons connected with the building remains unknown. The original names of the building and its occupants, are unknown. The building's use was residential from its date of construction to 1990, and was adaptively used as an educational facility from 1990 to 1996.

Additional sources of information for researchers include:

Ocasio Meléndez, Marcial E., *Estudio e Inventario de los Recursos Históricos y Arquitectónicos de Río Piedras Pueblo, 1823-1951*. 1995. Consejo de Seguridad Vecinal de Río Piedras Pueblo, Oficina Estatal de Preservación Histórica, Universidad de Puerto Rico, y Municipio de San Juan.

Sáez, Florencio, *Río Piedras; Estampas de mi Pueblo, 1898-1945*. 1988. Editorial Palma Real. San Juan.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. **Architectural character:** The building shares a common scale with the context of Ponce de León Avenue. In addition, it exhibits details common to the context, including proportions of openings, texture, and Spanish clay tile details on overhangs.
2. **Condition of fabric:** There are no visible exterior signs of deterioration.

B. Description of Exterior

1. **Overall dimensions:** The building is a perfect rectangle measuring 38' 1" x 81' 0". The front has three bays which coincide with the interior bays. The building has three stories, including a basement accessed through a side alley.
2. **Foundations:** Foundations are made of reinforced concrete spread footings of unknown thickness. The water table level is unknown.
3. **Walls:** Typical finish materials are Portland cement plaster, Spanish clay tiles on overhangs and parapets on the front and side facades; the central bay contains a triangular pediment with three adjoining thin vertical openings. The building contains a wider base. Texture is smooth, with pink and burgundy colors. Source of materials is unknown.
4. **Structural system, framing:** All exterior walls are load-bearing, made of reinforced concrete. Some interior walls are load-bearing. All load-bearing walls are positioned generally along an east-west axis perpendicular to the street. Internal partitions are of concrete block units (CMU) and/or gypsum or plycem panels. Floors and roofs are of reinforced concrete. The basement level contains square columns coinciding with the top levels.
5. **Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads:** The first (street) level has a porch of reinforced concrete on the front of the building, and a reinforced concrete porch on the back. The upper level has balconies in the front.
6. **Chimneys:** The buildings were designed without chimneys.
7. **Openings**
 - a. **Doorways and doors:** The front's exterior doorway is of the "storefront type" with aluminum-framed glass doors and galvanized steel fences. Interior doors and frames are made of wood. Due to frequent, undocumented alterations, there

are several doorways that have been boarded up, as well as several openings without doors. The basement is accessed through three metal horizontally sliding doors.

- b. **Windows and shutters:** Basement level exterior doors are made of metal sliding gates and the interior contains one "storefront type" with aluminum-framed glass door. First and second-level windows have fixed glass panels with aluminum frames. All other windows are made of operable aluminum жалюзи with aluminum frames. The exterior of major openings on the front have fixed galvanized steel fences.

8. Roof

- a. **Shape, covering:** The roof is flat, made of reinforced concrete.
- b. **Cornice, eaves:** There are no cornices. Overhangs are integral to the structural walls, and are covered with curved red tiles clay tiles. Overhangs are located in all windows, with the exception of the balconies. Gutters are made of exposed tubes attached to the building's exterior.
- c. **Dormers, cupolas, towers:** The building was designed without dormers, cupolas, and/or towers.

C. Description of Interior

- 1. **Floor plans:** Sketch plans of each level are included as part of this documentation. The building contains a basement that is reached thru an alleyway shared with the adjoining building (1166). The basement's internal spatial division is basically a large space with several gypsum board partitions. This change in the basement's spatial configuration occurred during the period 1990-1996, when the original residential use was changed to an educational institution.
- 2. **Stairways:** There is a single internal stairway located behind the center of the front (east) facade. The stairway is reached from street level via a small steel gate. It is made of reinforced concrete with wood handrails.
- 3. **Flooring:** Typical flooring material of the building is hydraulic cement tiles with geometrical patterns and glossy finish, of burgundy, cream and green colors. Stairway flooring surfaces are made of rough, exposed reinforced concrete.
- 4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** Typical wall and ceiling finish is a Portland cement plaster with high gloss paint. Several office spaces have hung-ceiling system of 2' x 4' acoustical panel. There are no notable decorative details.

5. **Openings**

- a. **Doorways and doors:** Typical doorways are rectangular openings with wood frame and solid-panel wood doors. There are no notable doorways.
- b. **Windows:** There are no notable interior window trim. There are no natural lighting sources.

6. **Decorative features and trim:** There are no woodworks, built-in features, fireplaces, or ornamental features.

7. **Hardware:** There is no original or notable hardware.

8. **Mechanical equipment**

- a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** The original system was natural ventilation using doorways and windows. Subsequent system comprised ceiling fans and window-mounted air conditioning units. There are no devices of interest.
- b. **Lighting:** The original lighting fixtures were of the common ceramic type for incandescent bulbs. Subsequent systems included commercial-type hanging fixtures for fluorescent bulbs. There are no fixtures of interest.
- c. **Plumbing:** The original plumbing system is conventional lead and/or iron pipe imbedded into concrete floors and walls, and extensively altered throughout years of repairs.

9. **Original furnishings:** The location and arrangement of pieces of historical interest, if any, original to the structure, is unknown.

D. **Site**

- 1. **General setting and orientation:** The building is located on the western street wall of Ponce de León Avenue, with its front facade facing east. It is located on the southern slope of a terrain elevation upon which the town of Río Piedras lays. The river denominated "Río Piedras" flows northward a short distance to the west of the building. There is dense vegetation surrounding the north and west sides of the property.
- 2. **Historic landscape design:** Research efforts have not disclosed evidence of the existence of historic landscape design within, or adjacent to, the properties.
- 3. **Outbuildings:** Research efforts have not disclosed evidence of the existence of outbuildings.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings

Research efforts have not disclosed any original and/or alteration drawings.

B. Early Views

Research efforts have not disclosed any early photographs, engravings, or other early views.

C. Interviews

Person associated with the buildings during the 1940-50 period have not been identified.

D. Bibliography

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Adams, Virginia H., Catherine de Jarnette Vieth, *Reconnaissance and Intensive Historic and Architectural Resources Survey, Tren Urbano, San Juan Metropolitan Area, Puerto Rico*. The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc., Report No. 655, October 1995.

Marín-Roman, Hector R. *Historical Background of the Urban Development of Río Piedras*. Ms. San Juan: Tren Urbano Office. 1995. Document located at the Tren Urbano Office and at the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office.

Ocasio-Meléndez, Marcial E. *Estudio e Inventario de los Recursos Históricos y Arquitectónicos de Río Piedras Pueblo, 1823-1921*. Ms. San Juan: Consejo de Seguridad Vecinal de Río Piedras Pueblo, Oficina Estatal de Preservación Histórica, Universidad de Puerto Rico, y Municipio de San Juan. 1995. Document located at the Tren Urbano Office and at the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office.

_____. *El Desarrollo Urbano de Río Piedras (1868-1898)*. Master's Thesis, University of Puerto Rico. 1977. Document located at the Puerto Rican Collection, University of Puerto Rico Library System, Río Piedras.

2. Secondary and published sources

Comité de Maestros de Río Piedras. *La Comunidad de Río Piedras, Año Escolar 1949-50*. Río Piedras: Comité de Maestros de Río Piedras. 1950. Document located at the Puerto Rican Collection, University of Puerto Rico Library System, Río Piedras.

Ocasio Meléndez, Marcial E. *Río Piedras (Ciudad Universitaria); Notas para su Historia*. San Juan: Comité Historia de los Pueblos. 1985. Puerto Rican Collection, University of Puerto Rico Library System. Book located at the Puerto Rican Collection, University of Puerto Rico Library System, Río Piedras.

Sáez, Florencio. *Río Piedras; Estampas de mi Pueblo, 1898-1945*. San Juan: Editorial Palma. 1988. Book located at the Puerto Rican Collection, University of Puerto Rico Library System, Río Piedras.

Ubarri Acosta, Rafael (Ed.). *Río Piedras; un Boceto Histórico*. Río Piedras: Cámara de Comercio de Río Piedras. 1981. Book located at the Puerto Rican Collection, University of Puerto Rico Library System, Río Piedras.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated

Research efforts have not disclosed any additional likely sources of information.

F. Supplemental Material

Research efforts have not disclosed the existence of supplemental materials.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

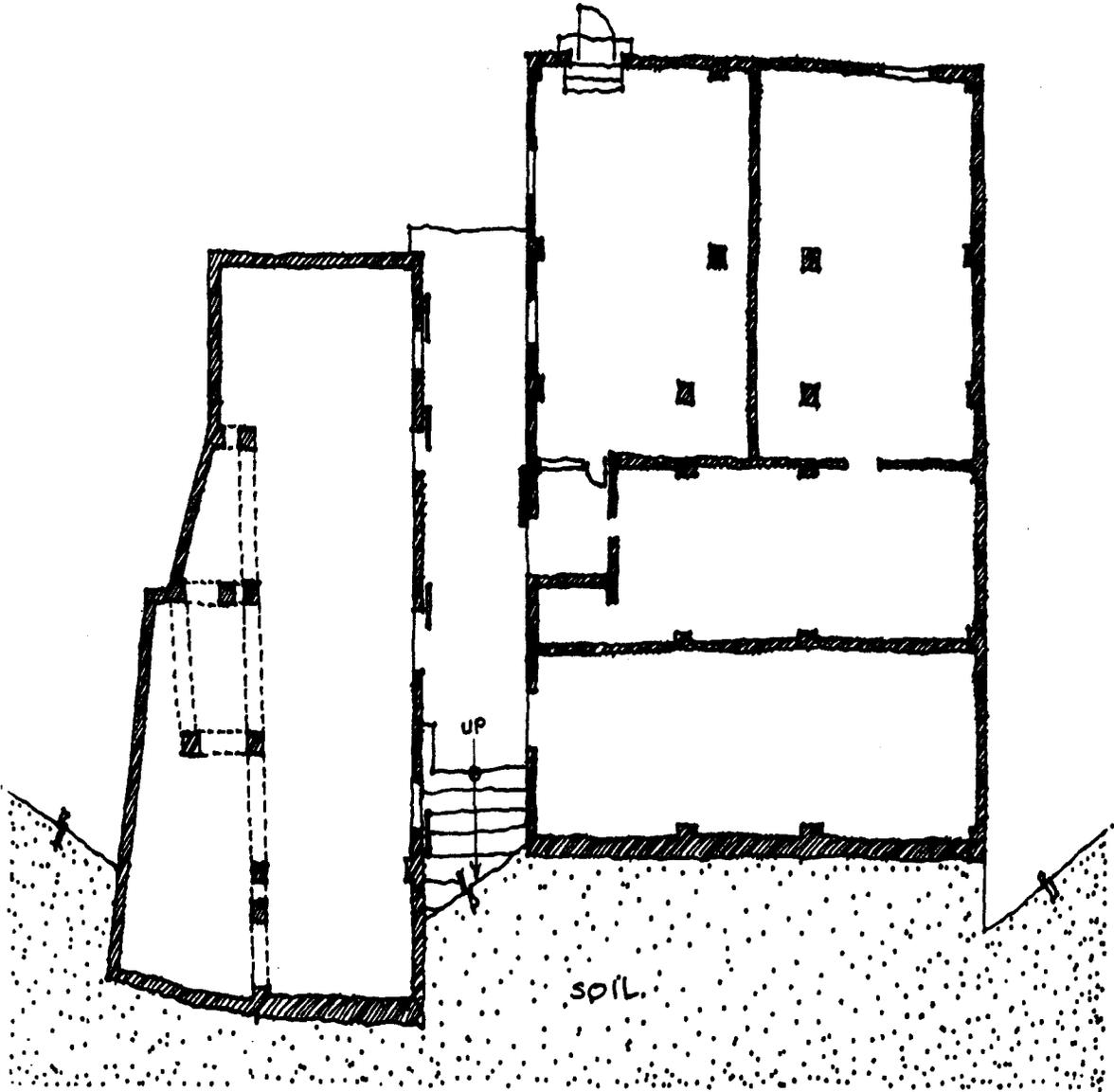
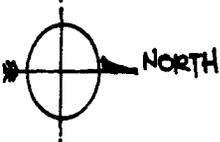
This documentation is a mitigative recording required by a Memorandum of Agreement for the Tren Urbano Project, dated February 6, 1996, between the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Federal Transit Administration, the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Officer, the Puerto Rico Highway and Transportation Authority, and the Puerto Rico Department of Transportation and Public Works.

Documentation was completed and/or supervised by Pantel, Del Cueto & Associates, Historic Preservation Consultants, Urb. Torrimar, 11 Valencia, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico 00966-3011. Project personnel were:

Agamemnon Gus Pantel, Ph.D.	-	Project Director
Beatriz del Cueto de Pantel, A.I.A.	-	Architect
Alexander Fernández, M.A.	-	Architect/Graphics
Hector R. Marín, M.M.S.	-	Historian
Héctor Méndez Caratini	-	Photographer

Records were prepared during the period May to August 1997, inclusive.

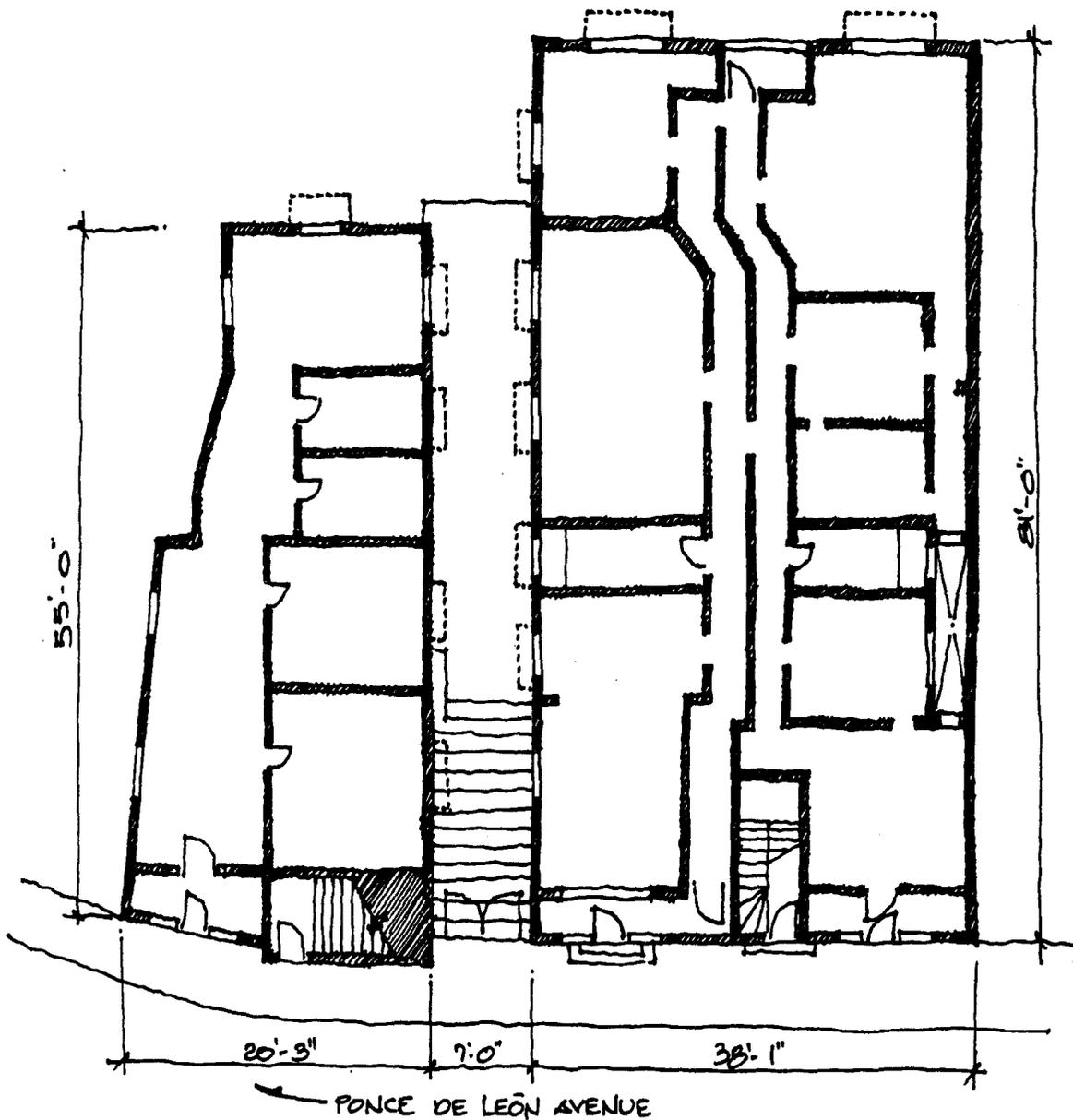
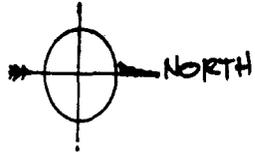
BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN
DRAWING: ALEXANDER FERNANDEZ
JULY 2, 1997



#1166

#1164

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
DRAWING: ALEXANDER FERNANDEZ
JULY 2, 1999

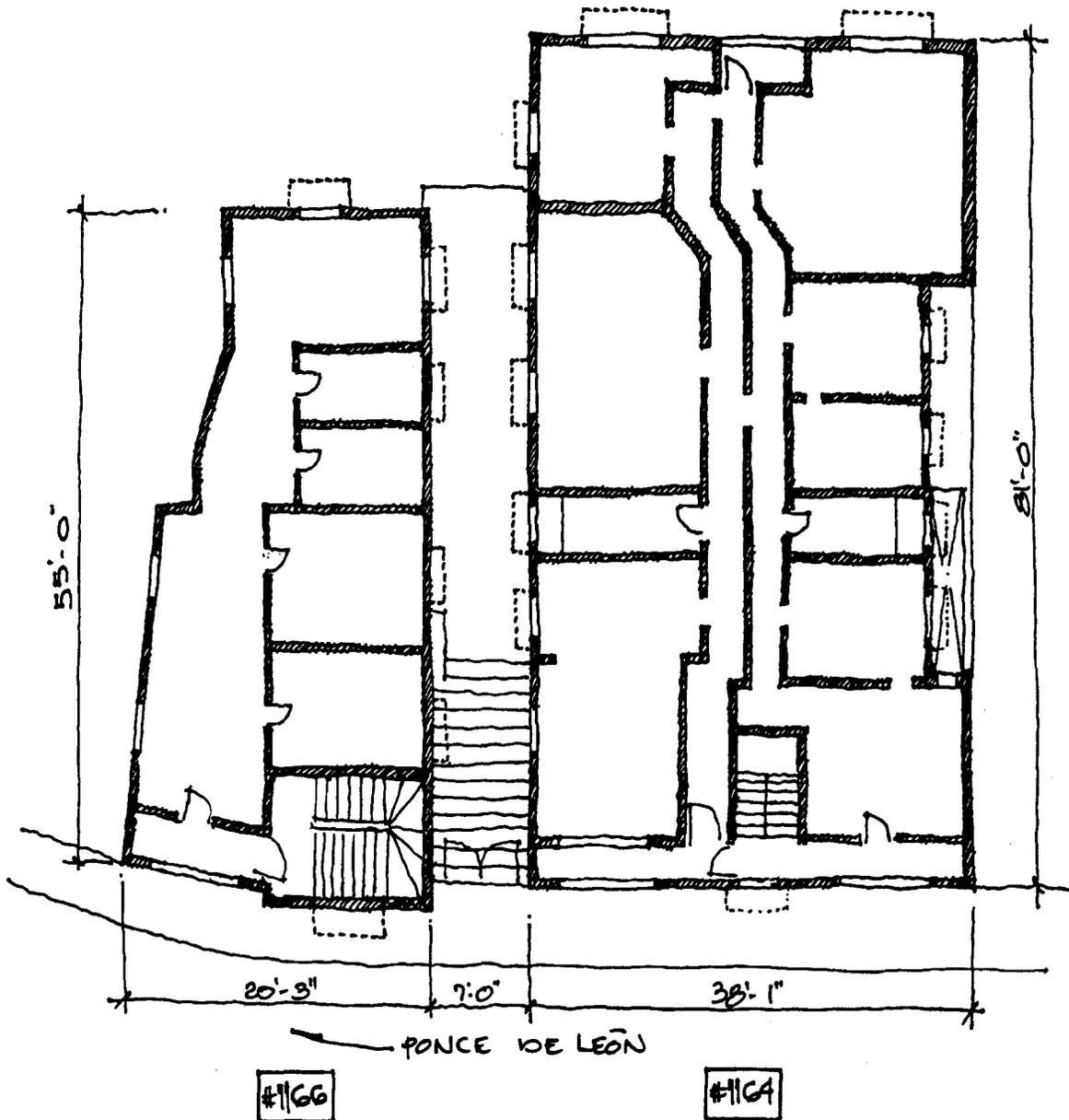
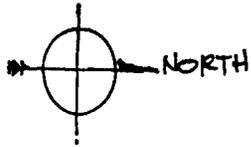


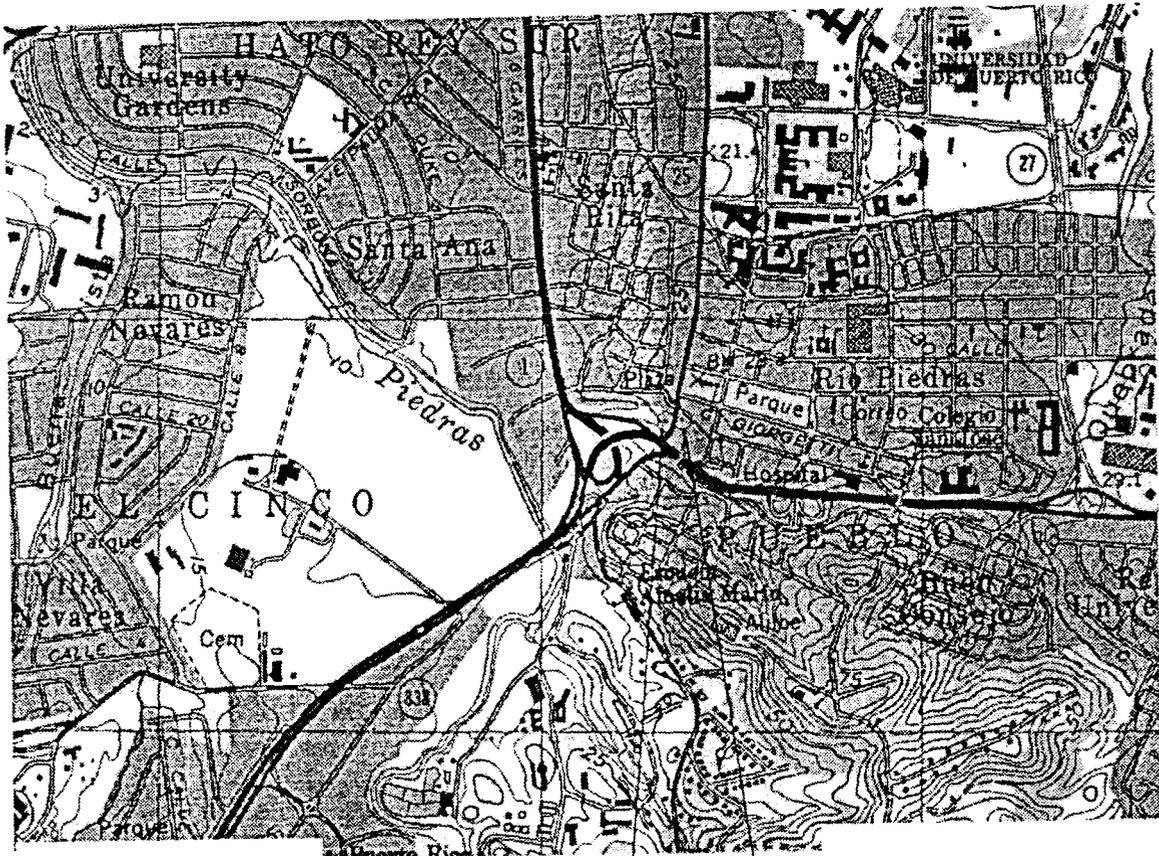
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#1164

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

DRAWING: ALEXANDER PERNANDEZ
JULY 2, 1997





#1164 & #1166

#1157

