



TESIS O PROYECTO DE CREACIÓN

APROBADO COMO REQUISITO PARCIAL DEL
PROGRAMA DE ESTUDIOS DE HONOR

COMITÉ DE TESIS O
PROYECTO DE CREACIÓN

NOMBRE

Mentor

Regner Ramos Ramírez, Ph.D.

Director de Estudios

Gladys Capella Noya, Ed.D.

Lector

María D. Carmen Baerga Santini, Ph.D

Lector

Carmen A. Pérez Herranz, Ph.D.

Lector

Visto Bueno

Elaine Alfonso Cabiya, Ed.D.
Director PREH o su Representante

6 de mayo de 2021

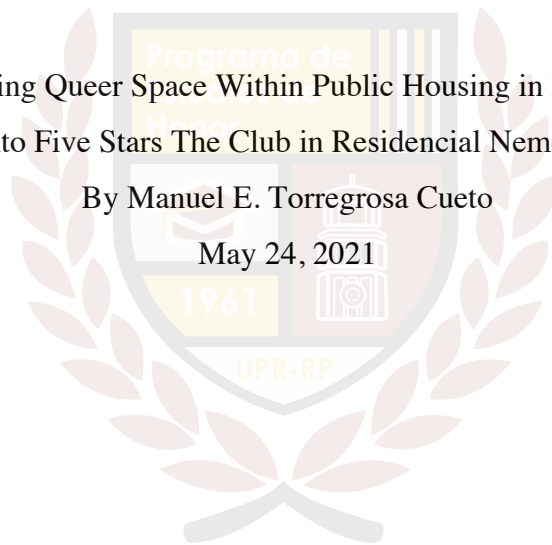
Fecha

Universidad de Puerto Rico
Recinto de Río Piedras
PREH 4900:
Arquitectura de San Juan Queer

Documenting Queer Space Within Public Housing in Puerto Rico:
A Study into Five Stars The Club in Residencial Nemesio Canales

By Manuel E. Torregrosa Cueto

May 24, 2021



Committee:

Regner Ramos, Ph.D.

Carmen Angélica Pérez-Herranz, Ph.D.

María del Carmen Baerga, Ph.D.

Gladys R. Capella Noya, Ed.D.

INDEX

Introduction.....	3
Justification.....	6
Theoretical Framework.....	7
Queer Space.....	7
Public Housing.....	10
Literature Review.....	14
Queer Space in Puerto Rico.....	14
Homophobia and Persecution.....	15
Influence and Culture.....	16
Queer Space Documentation.....	17
Public Housing in Puerto Rico.....	18
Arrabales and The New Deal.....	20
The Housing Ideology.....	21
Displacement and Development of Public Housing.....	22
Methodology.....	24
Case Study: Residencial Nemesio Canales.....	25
Case Study: Five Stars The Club.....	29
Five Stars's Background Story.....	31
A Minority Within a Minority.....	34
From Nemesio Canales to Jesus T. Pinero and back again.....	35
A Queer Space Within Public housing.....	37
Conclusion.....	40
References.....	45
Visual Documentation.....	48

Researcher's Note #1

Growing up in a “traditional” Catholic family in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and going to an all-boys prep-school—Colegio San Ignacio in Guaynabo—themes and questions of sexuality weren’t exactly promoted for discussion. I was aware that there was a non-normative community in San Juan and that different sexualities existed—and some even, where significant people to me—but still I didn’t develop the critical thinking to question or react to these social issues. (Perhaps this was a result of lacking a critical pedagogy in my academic development, or maybe a mere lack of interest at the time to tackle such questions). It wasn’t until I began college, studying architecture at the UPR Rio Piedras campus, where the figurative “bubble” I was raised in suddenly burst. My entire life has been surrounded by queer identities: family members, friends, and loved ones. I never questioned their influence on my life and how, in some way, I was molded by them.

INTRODUCTION

Architectural documentation has been an important tool to record the island's spaces and how people inhabit them, by preserving the memory of the place. It requires a historical background study and information of a specific site, usually through the production of a set of graphic and written material that provides an in-depth understanding on a space's design, function, and typology,¹ as well as its cultural influence (Amorim 2011). This method has often been used for conservation and restoration projects, but also for research purposes to record and analyze a site. Architectural monuments and landmarks have been documented this way to ensure their history is recorded, however, not all spaces are viewed as important to document.

This research deals with 'queerness' in terms of architectural space, and physically understanding the multiplicity of the term 'queer'. Here, it is used as an adjective that describes a site or building is characterized by an LGBTQ+ community that inhabits it. The term 'queer' will be furthermore discussed in theory and definition on the methodology.

Social stigmas have depicted queer spaces as belonging to a lower economic class, precarious, and were not seen as important places to document (Laureano 2011). However, in a society that marginalizes and discriminates against minority groups, queer spaces allow the LGBTQ community to find each other and detach themselves from unwanted persecution. According to environmental planner and designer Gordon Brent Ingram:

For most people whose sexualities have been “marginalized” through some experience of same-sex desire, who therefore feel or are made to feel “queer”, we

¹ “Type” defines the elementary form, structure and character which makes the creatures or objects of a certain group definable. Typology in architecture has been defined as creating archive of the certain types related to architecture styles reduced to their elementary geometrical nature or the search effort of the combination possibilities of the architectural elements to classify the types which are the architectural forms. (Ayyıldız et al. 2020)

travel great distances in order to live in the ways that enhance fuller contact with one another. The spaces that we cross and in which we live—have great bearing on how we come to express ourselves. (Ingram 1997, 27)

These spaces have always existed and continue to exist in the urban fabric of San Juan, but efforts to document the urban and architectural components in critical writing, discussion, and archival documentation have only recently been practiced. Works by historian Javier E. Laureano and architectural and queer theorist Regner Ramos, are some of the first to address the need of documenting Puerto Rico's queer spaces, to prevent them from fading into obscurity.

According to Ramos, ephemerality and mobility are key qualities of queer spaces in San Juan today: in recent years they open, close, move from, and move to new places (Ramos 2019). This *fragmentation*, as Ramos calls it, of a queer, urban circuit puts queer spaces in a state of instability—meaning that their physical permanence is subject to change—that is crucial to recognize. Following Laureano and Ramos, this thesis argues that documenting and researching these sites contributes to building a collective memory of the Puerto Rican LGBTQ community. These spaces and architectures contain cultural events, experiences, and connections between individuals that define queerness in Puerto Rico, but their ephemerality and fragmentation also makes them vulnerable to being forgotten. As architectural theorist Aldo Rossi expresses, the city is defined by the collective memory of the people who inhabit it: “One can say that the city itself is the collective memory of its people, and like memory it is associated with objects and places” (Rossi 1982). In Puerto Rico, saunas, dance clubs, book shops, sex shops, and bars are all architectural typologies that embody physical, material, social, and communal needs of the local LGBTQ community, and are very much a part of its history.

Laureano is one of the first to write a thorough documentation of gay culture in the urban context San Juan. In his research he describes how the community finds itself in a continuous

negotiation between *visibility* and *invisibility* (Laureano 2011). Through this negotiation, queer spaces come forth—appearing and reappearing in different moments and places. *El Site* is an online platform by Regner Ramos containing interviews, essays, and events—as well as his students’ work—dedicated, to documenting these ephemeral sites and the people who inhabit them. His research also centers around queer cartography, architectural models, and writing as methods of locating and thinking through queer sites in San Juan (Ramos 2019). In this way, the recent production of spatial theory and documentation of Puerto Rico’s queer spaces, has focused primarily on those located within public and urban spaces; the current documentation does not account for bars located within Puerto Rican private spaces, suburban contexts, residential developments, or public housing.

Parting from this premise, this research project seeks to contribute to architectural documentation and theory on queer spaces in San Juan within a particular spatial context—public housing—through a case study: Five Stars the Club, originally located in the Residencial Nemesio Canales, San Juan 00920, since 2014. In this way, this project discusses the typological duality between a gay bar and a public housing project for the first time in Puerto Rico. It is important to document a space like this as it represents a particular sector of the LGBTQ community, especially since its original location is now closed and risks being forgotten. This research project seeks to answer: How was Five Stars the Club founded in Residencial Nemesio Canales? What spatial and social impact did it have in the residential community? And how can this locale be architecturally documented to preserve its memory? Furthermore, Five Stars is discussed as a space where issues of ephemerality, class, segregation, othering, and abandonment by the state all converge.

JUSTIFICATION

This project is rooted in the history and relationship between a queer space (Five Stars) and its site (Nemesio Canales). Parting from the premise that architectural documentation is an important part of understanding, analyzing, and preserving knowledge of buildings, spaces, and the people who inhabit them, this project contributes to expanding the history of queer spaces in Puerto Rico—particularly within a housing project, for the first time. Housing developments became one of the Island’s major infrastructure investments transforming the city of San Juan, in the course of half a century, into the urban metropolitan area that is known today (Marrero et al. 2012).²

The University of Puerto Rico School of Architecture contains one of the country’s most extensive archives of drawings, literature, models, and conservation documents of Puerto Rican architecture history—Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción de la Universidad de Puerto Rico [ACCUPR]. However, to this date, ACCUPR’s records exclude LGBTQ spaces. The School has produced works like architectural historian Enrique Vivoni Farange’s *San Juan Siempre Nuevo: arquitectura y modernización en el siglo XX* (2000) and Jorge Lizardi-Pollock’s, along with Martin Schwegmann, *Espacios Ambivalentes: Historia y olvidos en la arquitectura social moderna* (2012) that study the urban development of San Juan throughout the twentieth century. These are some of the few resources have helped create consciousness of the importance of public housing in Puerto Rico.

This project aims to gather historical information through texts and interviews to produce graphical (photographs, technical drawings, and three-dimensional models) and written material to document Five Stars The Club in its original locale in Residencial Nemesio Canales. Through

² See literature review on page 18

this method, the memory of the bar can be preserved, while also expanding on the knowledge and history of queer spaces in San Juan. Ultimately this research project's architectural documentation will be submitted and annexed to the existing archive of Nemesio Canales in ACCUPR, thus inserting queer spatial history into the architectural documentation of public housing.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research project is based on two primary architectural topics: queer spaces and public housing. These two subjects guide my theoretical framework to understand the site of study and its surrounding context.

QUEER SPACE

My work is informed by queer theoretical frameworks and queer modes of researching architecture. Queer theory in particular constitutes an amalgam of perspectives and views that continue to be defined and redefined. It involves a process of untethering and resewing—a redefining of identities, politics, social interaction, and community. The term does not stem from a particular definition, nor does it define a particular identity, but it embodies all that is non-normative. Queerness is not necessarily limited to gender and sexuality; as conceptual and visual artist Jean-Ulrick Désert explains: “queerness is something that is ultimately beyond gender—it is an attitude, a way of responding, that begins in a place not concerned with or limited by notions of binary opposition: the male and female or homo versus hetero” (Désert 1997, 20). Ultimately it evokes to the sense of othering and works to problematize, destructuralize, and transform

heteronormativity. Queer spaces also question normative social structures and serve as places of gathering where queer identities can share their common interest in the same place. There is no one particular definition for *queer space*, so for this reason various definitions will be presented.

Queers in Space—edited by Gordon Brent Ingram, human geographer Anne-Marie Bouthillette, and librarian and feminist activist Yolanda Retter—is a compilation of essays from different researchers and artists that present various perspectives concerning queer identities, aesthetics, sexuality, politics, communities, activism, and how they relate to space. The book attempts to break away from conventional views on queer theory which, they argue, are usually produced mainly by white gay men and less by women: “Gay men have been writing about outdoor spaces of cruising, and pleasure; now is the time for women to more fully deconstruct the phallocentric and gendered generalizations about public sex” (Ingram et al. 1997, 12). In this way, it opens up a new conversation regarding race, gender, and social inequality for queer space theory. In it, the authors define queer space as “an expanding set of queer sites that function to destabilize heteronormative relations and thus provide more opportunities for homoerotic expression and related communality” (Ingram et al. 1997, 449). Queer spaces, according to Désert, are “occupied cognitively or physically” (Désert 1997, 20) and activated by queer identities, in such creating a dichotomy from the heteronormative social standards that enclose them. This definition accentuates the inherent opposition between queer and heteronormative—hence queer culture exists within an environment that asserts it as “different from”. Désert extends this perception: “queer culture would not be queer if there were no other culture from which to establish its difference” (1997, 19). However, he further argues that maintaining this notion predisposes the community to isolation and a sense othering that can be “detrimental”. But this seclusion is not without reason—privacy and secrecy also protect from the adversities of homophobic prejudice

and persecution. As Laureano explains, invisibility can be used as a “strategy” to protect the community from revealing and being targeted and repressed (Laureano 2011, 371).

Queer communities are a “network” of queer identities that “enhance interdependence, mutual support, and protection” (Ingram et al. 1997, 449). But, as much as it is to bring people together, it also establishes a line between who is “part of” and who “is not”. Geographers Lynda Johnston and Robyn Longhurst in their book *Space, Place, and Sex* state: “Communities are about being on the inside, which means they are also ultimately about being on the outside. They are about belonging, which means they are also ultimately about being excluded” (Johnston et al. 2009, 61). This outside/inside relationship also relates in how a particular queer location—a site—is written about, how it is documented, and by whom.

My position as an architecture student conducting research is as an outside critical voice to the source. However, I am also interested in writing from a personal point of view through the use of anecdotal notes, to create a relation with the subject of study. This personal position of writing theory is evident in art critic and feminist theorist Jane Rendell’s book *Site-Writing* (2010). Both feminist and queer theory share a similar inclination towards social and political reformation through gender equality. For instance, philosopher and feminist theorist Judith Butler, in *Feminist Theorize the Political*, argues how feminism becomes “a process which is self-critical about the processes that produce and destabilize identity categories...to deconstruct...to call to question” (1992, 14–15). In her work, Jane Rendell centers on art and *site-writing*, providing what she refers as different *configurations* of fragments that relate to each other, but their order is inconsequential.

If criticism can be defined by the purpose of providing a commentary on a cultural work—art, literature, film and architecture—then criticism always has an ‘other’ in mind. The central task of criticism might then be considered as addressing the question: how does one relate to an ‘other’? (Rendell 2010, 7)

In his text, “San Juan Queer”, Ramos borrows these ideas from Rendell and proposes them as methods for queering architectural research. He argues that writing in fragments relates to the way queer spaces in San Juan and their habitants also find themselves—on an ephemeral plane that is subject to opening, closing, appearing, reappearing, moving to and from the site. In my work, ‘notes’ are included as fragments throughout the research, aiming to add an autoethnographic³ style of writing. These theories and definitions guide my research’s discussions on queer space, to understand the concepts of a gay bar and its significance to the community, as well as establishing my position as a researcher.

PUBLIC HOUSING

As queer space theory covers the broader concepts that define a gay bar, the historical and theoretical discussions that underpin public housing is also important to consider and understand the context of Five Stars’s original site in Nemesio Canales. Therefore, this segment discusses texts that theorize on *public housing* in Puerto Rico.

Housing usually refers to suburban houses, townhouses, and apartment condominiums that function a domestic program. *Housing, Culture and Design*, by anthropologists Setha M. Low and Erve Chambers, explores the relationship between culture, housing, and design and analyzed how they are integrated. An interdisciplinary work that discusses subjects of psychology, anthropology, sociology, geography and planning, it addresses the term *housing* in three ways: the physical structure that provides shelter and privacy; the sense on meaning that is attached to the house and

³ *Ethnography* means writing about or describing people and culture, using firsthand observation and participation in a setting or situation. The term refers both to the process of doing a study and to the written product. *Autoethnography* refers to writing about the personal and its relationship to culture. It is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness. (Ellis 2004, 26, 37)

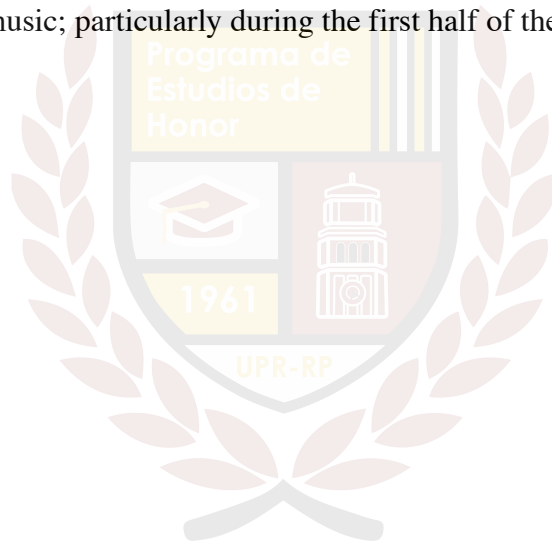
its community, defined by its cultural background; and thirdly, the evaluation between the “housing quality” and the “cultural impulses and constraints that influence our perception of shelter and design variables” (Low et al. 1989, 5).

Housing is also undeniably tied to social class and accessibility—as populations grow in cities, so does the need for housing. Public housing projects in particular are government funded developments to provide affordable housing for citizens with economic limitations. Countries like Germany and England started developing these projects at the beginning of the twentieth century for the growing number of working-class citizens. *A Brief History of Public Housing*, by housing and urban researcher Jennifer A. Stoloff, studies the history of low-cost housing projects in New York City. She addresses how public housing was targeted towards a particular population as a means to improve the city’s quality of life:

Public housing was thought of as a solution for inner-city poverty and isolation, and as a basic human necessity for less well-off people. The view of many planners, architects and social workers was that good housing was humane and necessary to the well-being of all people and would greatly improve life chances for slum dwellers. (Stoloff 2004, 2)

Public housing models in Europe and the US were proving to be efficient and were eventually implemented in Puerto Rico; slum communities in the Island (also known as *arrabales*) were the main sector targeted for public housing developments. *Planet of Slums*, by urban theorist and historian, Mike Davis, explores the history of slums around the world and the social dynamics in their urban context. In his work, Davis defines slums as “amalgam of dilapidated housing, overcrowding, disease, poverty, and vice” (Davis 2006, 22). Architectural historian Luz Marie Rodríguez follows this idea in her work, *¡Atajar el arrabal! Arquitectura y cambio social en la vivienda pública de San Juan*, characterizing *arrabales* by their urban and suburban settings, as well as their “dangerous and insalubrious condition” (Rodríguez 2000, 78).

Lastly, *Social Structure and the Political Process* (1973), by anthropologist and social researcher, Rafael Luis Ramírez, provides a scope on the development of poverty in the Island in the first half of the twentieth century. He defines slums as “urban neighborhoods characterized by low income, overcrowding, substandard housing conditions, low education, limited skill levels, health problems, and inadequate public services” as well as being generally classified by “areas of physical deterioration and social disorganization” (Ramírez 1973, 10). Slums were not in abundance in Puerto Rico—generally located in the San Juan, Cataño, Bayamón, Guaynabo, and Carolina municipalities—nevertheless their cultural and historical presence is notable in Puerto Rican literature, art, and music; particularly during the first half of the 20th century.



Researcher's Note #2

I'd never actually been in a queer bar per se. My circle of friends and I usually hang out in Rio Piedras Monday nights at El Refugio or Thursday nights at El Boricua where there's not an active use of queer space or events. However, I was determined to go to Five Stars The Club to better understand the research case and have a physical experience to relate to.

It was 11:25pm on February 28, 2020, when two of my friends from architecture school and I arrived at the bar. We parked at the opposite side of the block. All of the businesses in Avenida Jesús T. Piñero were closed except for Five Stars—its façade aglow by lamps illuminating the outside—a few of people were sitting at a table outside glancing as we approached the door. Though the music could be heard from the street, we couldn't see anything through the glass doors, which were covered with a parasol window film. A security guard stopped us before we could enter to run a security pat down—we had no idea what to expect as none of us has ever been to the bar or knew someone that did. Once inside the music was booming, there was a live band playing salsa, the space dimly light by blue and red lights. People quickly started staring at us; it was clear that we were not usual clients. I also noticed we were probably the youngest people there, which made our presence more obvious. As we made our way inside, the space was narrow and deep, divided by two structural walls that traveled the length of the space. To the left were the VIP booths, arranged in a row against the party wall facing the dance floor, and the stage at the end. To the right is the bar with an “L” shaped countertop and stools lit by white and green lights. The walls were all painted black with comic book speech bubbles with action words are pasted thought the place. The space was completely closed, and the loud music created difficulty for talking with others. There were about 20 to 30 people that night.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Similar to my theoretical framework, my literature review is also based on queer spaces and public housing in Puerto Rico. These texts guide my historical research from the broader concepts to the specific subjects of study, Five Stars and Nemesio Canales, in the following three segments.

QUEER SPACES IN PUERTO RICO

Architecture and site documentation of queer spaces in Puerto Rico has only begun to be practiced in recent years. The first doctoral thesis on gay urban history in Puerto Rico was written by Laureano, *Negociaciones especulares: creación de una cultura gay urbana en San Juan a partir de la segunda guerra mundial hasta principios de los 1990* (2011)—he later develops this work into his book, *San Juan Gay: conquista de un espacio urbano de 1948–1991* (2016). Laureano's texts provides a comprehensive historical background into gay culture in Puerto Rico and the social and political context that it was embedded to throughout the mid-twentieth century. Laureano characterizes the 1970s as the decade of “sexual liberation” for the LGBTQ community in Puerto Rico. His research focuses on four sectors, where the gay urban context was most noted during this period: Old San Juan, Santurce, Condado, and Hato Rey. These four neighborhoods served host to the gay urban circuit of San Juan. The number of bars opening during the this time resulted from a combination of simultaneous historical events through the 1960s up until the 1980s, that helped define queer identities in Puerto Rico. He explains three main factors of this period: the “coming out of the closet” or “*salir del closet*” expression being increasingly used across the United States, as a term for openly identifying as gay or lesbian (Laureano 2011, 160); the criminal persecution and laws targeting gays under the government of Rafael Hernández Colón—who

approved the infamous conservative 1974 Penal Code that criminalized consensual sodomy (Laureano 2011, 160); and the AIDS epidemic outbreak during the 1970s and 1980s that killed countless lives from the lack of action from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and government to treat LGBTQ patients (Laureano 2011, 151). These events led to a need to raise awareness of discrimination towards homosexuals, resulting in activist movements such as the Gay Pride Coalition (COG) being formed to protect and educate in gay rights. Furthermore, COG created a publication titled *Pa' Fuera!* that promoted bars and other meeting places for the LGBTQ community, published in a series of volumes. The publications became a highly important cartographic record for tourists and locals, as well as one of the main sources that Laureano uses to document and analyze gay bars San Juan.

Homophobia and Persecution

San Juan Gay also addresses the social challenges faced by the queer community in Puerto Rico from homophobic newspaper articles, targeted police investigations, raids, and anti-gay laws throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Newspapers like *El Mundo*—the newspaper with the highest circulation at the time—and famous columnist Ángela Luisa Torregrosa, were responsible for driving the homophobic sentiment and attesting to the “degrading” moral condition of San Juan by gay individuals (Laureano 2016, 106). Police investigations and raids were common in gay bars as the *Pa' Fuera!* publications were used to target gay business. Publication and promotion of queer spaces has always been a gray area as the material can be used to exploit the sites and its users: “El surgimiento de publicaciones para un público gay se convierte en un arma de doble filo: un instrumento de orientación tanto para el homosexual como para la policía” (Laureano 2016,

162). New approved laws such as Article 103 of the Penal Code, under the Rafael Hernández Colón (PPD) administration in April 22, 1974 stirred controversy and sparked gay activism:

Toda persona que sostuviere relaciones sexuales con una persona de su mismo sexo o cometiere el crimen contra natura con un ser humano será sancionada con pena de reclusión por un termino fijo de diez (10) años. (Laureano 2016, 173)

This was the first law directed towards the LGBTQ community in Puerto Rico—as well as a clear violation of the separation between church and state—sparking mayor resentment towards the government. The article was repealed in 2004 following the repealing of all anti-sodomy laws in the United States by the Supreme Court the year before—unfortunately, the article was replaced with Article 156 that prohibited “obscene spectacles” or any type of public display of sexuality in any type of public artistic medium (Laureano 2016, 175). This was particularly damaging when we consider that queer spaces have significantly been involved in Puerto Rican art, performance and culture.

Influence and Culture:

Queer anthropologist, Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes documents theater, performance, and culture of the Puerto Rican LGBTQ identities. His recent book, *Escenas transcaribeñas: ensayos sobre teatro, performance y cultura* (2018), provides a collection of essays about the gay, lesbian, and transgender diaspora in theater and performance in Puerto Rico. His writing also documents on the community’s migration from the Island to the States. La Fountain attributes the community’s fragmentation as a result of “historical discrimination and intolerance...generating diverse forms of resistance and provoking migration” (La Fountain 2018, 55). People who leave the Island also take a part of their story and their influence on queer culture with them.

Furthermore, the communities formed outside and the culture they produce are as important as the local diaspora—as La Fountain explains:

Todas las producciones culturales que he mencionado son valiosas aportaciones para la cultura puertorriqueña y norteamericana. Estos artistas muestran cómo Puerto Rico (y tantos otros países) no existen sólo en el espacio concreto de su soberano territorio nacional, sino también en otros lugares, donde se desarrollan sus artes queer. (2018, 59)

Keeping track of this fleeting information helps structure queer history both on the mainland and the Puerto Rican diaspora. Their experiences are part of the ephemeral nature of queer culture in Puerto Rico that and their stories are fragmented across different places, some never even being noticed.

Queer Space Documentation

Regner Ramos has continued documenting queer spaces, focusing on topics of mapping, urbanism, architecture, and digital technologies. According to Ramos, as internet connection has become a crucial form of communicating in the current century, the Puerto Rican queer community has found a voice within social media as a way of interacting, finding each other, and coming together. Despite the closure of gay bars in recent years, queer events have increasingly been organized in normally heterosexual locations for a particular moment, being organized and promoted within the LGBTQ community through social media. In Ramos's paper, "Back-and-Forth: Between Krash Klub and Grindr" (2020), he considered the relationship between Krash Klub, a well-known gay nightclub during the 1990s and 2000s (closed in 2012), and Grindr, a mobile dating application for gay, bisexual, and transgender people first released in 2009. He discusses how queer culture in the island is transforming from the practice of "cruising"—the act of searching about a public place in pursuit of a partner for sex—, to social media outlets like

Grindr where people connect and meet each other without the need for going out to public locations. Ramos expresses how these new trends are also necessary to write about as it is “culturally important to attempt to trace, discuss, document, and speculate on the queer architectures and urban spaces...while taking into account the role digital technologies have played in the way we practice our queer identities within the built environment” (Ramos 2020, 6). Online digital information can come and go in an instant—posted images, webpages, and promotions that help queer culture connect and communicate—this transitory information is part of the growing conversation on documenting Puerto Rican queer history. La Fountain elaborates on the subject in an interview Ramos conducted and published in *El Site*:

Hay que reconocer la inestabilidad de las plataformas, porque Facebook está ahí hoy, pero tú no sabes si va a estar mañana, al igual que tu computadora la tienes hoy pero tal vez no la tengas mañana. Entonces, de la misma manera que tú tienes que hacer un back-up de tu computadora, ya sea en la nube o en un hard-drive, yo bajo imágenes, las organizo, las catalogo. (Ramos interview with La Fountain 2018)

The LGBTQ community in the Island has a recognizable voice in social media, as many business and events are promoted through online outlets like Facebook and Instagram. At the time of writing this thesis, Five Stars also engages in the use of social media—mainly in Facebook—posting promotions for their Drag Show nights and musical events. These online media networks help the community to stay connected while allowing a certain level of anonymity.

PUBLIC HOUSING IN PUERTO RICO

Five Stars was original located in Residencial Nemesio Canales, for which it is pertinent to also understand the social, historical, and planning concepts that define public housing in Puerto Rico.

For this segment, my work is informed by historical texts that help document the context of the site and its connection the bar.

San Juan Siempre Nuevo: arquitectura y modernización en el siglo XX (2000), edited by Enrique Vivoni Farange, is a collection of texts from different urban researchers and architecture historians. Presented in order from private to public spaces, they provide a comprehensive writing on the architectural and urban novelties of the century. *Espacios Ambivalentes: Historia y olvidos en la arquitectura social moderna* (2012), edited by Jorge Lizardi-Pollock and Martin Schwegmann is also a compilation of historical essays by different authors, but its documentation is centered on the modernist architecture movement and the housing projects that it influenced, drawing comparisons between Puerto Rico and other countries such as Germany, Istanbul, and the Dominican Republic. The book's chapters help inform the background of public housing in the Island. Particularly, works by Luz Marie Rodríguez, in both books, study the social and infrastructure issues of slums and the solutions applied by the government to provide “better” housing opportunities.

Two factors are mainly attributed to this massive and costly government investment project. The Great Depression from 1929 to 1939—directly affecting the Puerto Rican economy, prompting for recuperation plans like the New Deal signed in 1933 to determine the new course for industrialization and an increase of workforce immigrating from the countryside to the city (Mignucci 2012). Secondly, the moral pursuit for modernity and industry driven by the “American dream”—serving as a model for construction and way of life (Pérez-Herranz 2012). These factors led to the displacement of slums communities and the development of public housing in Puerto Rico.

Arrabales and The New Deal

Puerto Rico began a social and economic transformation following the turn of the twentieth century. Farmers started moving from their rural towns to the capital of San Juan looking for new jobs in the city. Lacking places to settle within the city, people cluttered in slum communities on the outskirts of the urban setting. As Rodríguez explains in the following:

En las décadas de 1930 y 1940, el aumento poblacional en San Juan, causado en gran medida por la inmigración de los sectores rurales a la urbe, redundó en el crecimiento de las zonas de arrabal; principalmente de los ubicados a lo largo del Caño Martín Peña y la Laguna San José. (2012, 157)

As *arrabales* grew in population, the Great Depression hit the US from 1929 to 1939 consequently affecting the Puerto Rican economy. Conditions aggravated in squatter communities as unemployment rose, insular economy stopped producing income, and the already diminishing agriculture industry was further downplayed (Scarano 2008, 541–542). Two other hurricanes added to the decrepit situation the following years, San Nicolás in 1931 and San Ciprián in 1932. The situation prompted for recuperation plans like the New Deal in 1933 to determine the new course for industrialization and an increase of workforce immigrating from the countryside to the city.

Architect and urbanist Andres Mignucci accounts how this relief effort played a mayor roll in kickstarting Puerto Rico's path towards modernization and industrialization in his essay *Modern Urbanism in Puerto Rico* (2012, 128). He credits First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's efforts in bringing attention on the slum's conditions in the Island when she came to visit by invitation of senator Luis Muñoz Marín in 1934. Shortly after, President Roosevelt included Puerto Rico in the New Deal relief plan the reconstruct the economy and improve living conditions for slum communities. Two important new programs were also formed in 1935: the Resettlement Administration (RA), dedicated the relocation of poor families to planed government sectors—directed by Rexford Guy

Tugwell; and the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration (PRRA), assigned specifically to oversee infrastructure recuperation—as Mignucci (2012, 135) describes: “the diversification of agricultural production, the production of cheap and available electric power, better roads, reforestation, and adequate housing as essential goals”.

The Housing Ideology

Housing was also a factor in the wider narrative of modernization in of Puerto Rico. Operation Bootstrap incentivized the Island’s economy from 1960 to 1980 towards industrialization to create new jobs—this, however, did not resulted as promised. Industrialization was not prepared to provide jobs to the excess labor work force impeding wage growth and resulting in increasing emigration number to the US mainland. Helen Safa’s *The Transformation of Puerto Rico: The Impact of Modernization Ideology* (2011) draws a comparison with Cuba to explain how modernization was always conditioned to the colonialist state of the county.

Puerto Rico has become a prime example of welfare colonialism, which makes it totally economically dependent on the colonial power of the United States. I would argue that the modernization ideology embodied in Operation Bootstrap was a major contributor to this dependence, not only in its insistence on capitalist development from external resources, but in its implicit reshaping of Puerto Rican tradition into U.S. cultural norms.

Ideology was a key driver in the urban development of Puerto Rico in the twentieth century. People wanted to live the “American Dream” and what favored that model was suburban housing (Marrero et al. 2012). Urbanizations where extensively constructed where middle-class families could each own their ideal individual house, with a driveway for the automobile and a front patio, casting in the shade public housing projects for the poor. Urban historian, Carmen A. Pérez-Herranz, continues expressing this phenomenon in her research essays: “Tener la casita: sueño de un hogar

a las trampas de la especulación” (2012) and “Ya tengo la casita: historia y transformación de un deseo” (2008). In them, she explains consumerist ideology and how it connected to the sense of *puertorriqueñidad* (the Puerto Rican identity) analyzing the famous song “Ahora Seremos Felices (La Casita)”, by Rafael Hernández in 1938. It became a sensation and evoked to that romantic desire of owning your very own house with your family symbolizing prosperity. Media outlets played a primary role in this process, promoting the new trend and ‘American’ way of living.

Displacement and Development of Public Housing

Rodríguez’s essays “¡Atajar el arrabal! Arquitectura y cambio social en la vivienda pública de San Juan” (2000) and “[Re]visión de la vivienda social en San Juan: notas sobre la arquitectura para el obrero (1930s-1950s)” (2012) study the historical factors in the process of displacing slums and the development of public housing projects. Following the assignment of the PRRA and the PRERA—Puerto Rico Emergency Relief Administration, appointed mainly for the distribution of food, supplies and medical goods—the first housing units were constructed in San Juan: Caserío Mirapalmeras, El Falansterio, and Urbanización Eleanor Roosevelt all inaugurated by 1937. Rodríguez (2000, 86–101) analyzed all three as they each featured unique architectural designs to provide affordable housing for the working class and were recognized for their effectiveness and planning. Their success is also attributed on being some of the few public housing projects which their tenants were actually “felt content and where proud to live in”. She differs from this statement arguing that in reality they were above the living cost for families of labor workers, only high salaried workers from San Juan’s low-income sector were able to pay rent (Rodríguez 2000, 101).

Arrabales not only continued to be an economical issue but also a moral one. The Island was on route towards developing and modernizing its infrastructure. Slums resulted an impediment for promoting tourism and foreign investment, on which the economic development at the time depended on. New government plans were created starting in 1938 with the Autoridad de Hogares de Puerto Rico to overlook the federal program for public housing. Model configurations were designed to be repeatedly produced at a low construction cost. The housing developments were first originally built to be integrated with urban planning but were ultimately located in the grounds of same community that now inhabited the units to preserve the “territorial sentiment that prevailed in the zone”. Rodríguez describes the three model types used to be repeated in different sites, unfortunately, the building designs were overused. As she expresses, by 1950 the models were obsolete and where failing in social aspects and maintenance (Rodríguez 2000, 110). Nevertheless, projects continued being constructed over the mid twentieth century including the largest public housing developments ever constructed in the Island. Most notably, Residencial Luis Llorens Torres is the largest ever developed housing up to 25,000 residents by 1980 within 2,610 apartments. Residencial Nemesio Canales was one of them, constructed with a failing and overused design for residential buildings.

METHODOLOGY

This project produces formal architectural documentation of Five Stars The Club, to be submitted as an annex to the existing archive of Residencial Nemesio Canales in ACCUPR. The methodology is designed in two ways: data gathering and documentational material production. Data gathering consists of collecting information of Five Stars's original location in Nemesio Canales. This is achieved by textual resources as well as interviews with the bar's managers and performers. These interviews and textual resources provide a thorough historical background to understand the context of the bar located in the public housing. The information is analyzed to provide a retelling of Five Stars's background story and how it relates to queer space and public housing theory.

The second part consists of analyzing and translating this information to generate visual material that depicts how the bar is situated in Nemesio Canales. This documentation is made up of photographs and technical drawings (plans, sections, and elevations) of the venue as part of the historiographical and analytical side of the documentation.

Ultimately the formal architectural documentation produced will help preserve the memory of this bar and its relationship with Nemesio Canales. This information will contribute to queer space documentation and expand on public housing research in Puerto Rico for the first time. It will also serve as a trojan horse, introducing queer documentation through traditional research and technical drawings to be annexed to the archive at ACCUPR.

RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANELES

Inaugurated in 1956, Nemesio Canales is currently one of the largest housing projects in the Island, second to Residencial Luis Lloréns Torres. Construction of the project took about three years, developing 88 buildings providing 1,150 units (currently 1,126 according to Administration of Public Housing) on 42 acres of land (Rodríguez 2012, 174). Eleven years later, architect and urban planner, Frank Molther and his associates conducted a historical research for the renewal of public spaces and other essential operation buildings in an effort to improve living conditions and provide “better economic and social integration both within the community as well as within the neighboring communities” (Molther 1967, 4). The proposal—titled “A plan and recommended program for the transformation of the Nemesio Canales public housing project, San Juan Metropolitan Area, Puerto Rico”—was conducted by the Urban Renewal and Housing Administration for the Puerto Rico Urban Renewal and Housing Corporation (1967). The plan was never materialized, but a copy of the document is preserved at ACCUPR, and its historical resume on the housing project provides ample information on background and social living conditions of its residents at the time.

The first residents to move into the complex came voluntarily in 1956 from El Fanguito, Los Corozos, Minillas and Buen Consejo communities. The second wave of residents to move was organized involuntarily due to a fire in the Buenos Aires neighborhood and a flood in La Perla forcing many families to relocate. The study found that the social problems facing the residence were caused by rivalry and resentment from the abrupt insertion of different community sectors. The lack of a personal connection with the place and communal relations caused the families to separate in subcommunities: those originally settled in the residences and the new families brought

in. According to Molther, segregation further worsened when the neighboring Puerto Nuevo urbanization started generating social stigma against residents from Nemesio Canales (Molther 1967, 7). Families from the suburban housings (generally occupied by middle class citizens) avoided creating communal relations between them and people from the public housing development, as they were deemed low class citizens and associated with criminality.

At a macro level, Nemesio Canales has never been integrated with its neighboring sectors, causing considerable segregation between the residents and the rest of the metropolitan area. The site sits between Puerto Nuevo—developed a few years before the construction of Nemesio Canales—and Plaza las Americas shopping mall—developed after the residence’s construction in 1956. The architectural design of the complex itself is inward-looking: its buildings are arranged forming a row that completely circles the main public space of the complex, reminiscent of a panopticon design. This concentric desing gives Nemesio Calanes an ample public space accessible to all 88 buildings, however, it also creates an isolation condition were a clear boundary around the residential area is outlined in the urban fabric. Plans for its renewal in 1967 were also undermined by this design flaw as urban detachment was still a continuing problem. Rodríguez, addresses this issue in her essay *[Re]visión de la vivienda social en San Juan: notas sobre la arquitectura para el obrero (1930s-1950s)*:

Por el evidente deterioro social registrado en el 1966 la transformación del Residencial Nemesio Canales no se materializó exitosamente. Su exclusión de la ciudad era evidente y a la vez prescindía de elementos paisajistas. No obstante, se mantuvo el carácter de aislamiento por que la propuesta no dejó de fomentar la separación del resto de la ciudad. (Rodríguez, 2012, 174)

The complex is secluded in its own urban design and is detached from its surroundings. This factor is due to a social stigma being developed before major public housing projects were constructed in the island. One of the objectives driving the construction of new public housing projects was

the displacement of slum communities mainly from el Caño Martín Peña sector as part of the new modernism movement to transform San Juan into an ideal city. Families from these *arrabales* where moved, as Pérez-Herranz explains, under “diverse considerations criteria and social indicators” (2008, 44). However, tensions developed as relocation of communities led to social circles being broken causing resentment, as some were forced to move into these new facilities. The government’s effort was to remove slums and create housing for the poor, however the plan was only pushing away the real issue of social inequality and substituting their settled homes for government planned sectors:

Estas agencias gubernamentales organizarán a los inquilinos a partir del concepto de familia nuclear, sin tomar en consideración lazos de parentesco que pudieran haber existido previamente...El residencial, irónicamente, a pesar de haber sido creado por el gobierno, es objeto de desprecio de la cultura dominante y sus residentes enfrentan múltiples prejuicios. (Pérez-Herranz 2008, 44)

The social unevenness between the slums and the rest of urban San Juan was not solved by providing new modern housing complexes. These communities were still alienated and displaced in residences—the social stigma of poverty and degradation was now transferred to them. Nemesio Canales was no exception, inadvertently developed as an isolated complex. Conditions on the residence worsened throughout the years—like many other developments across the Island—further increasing the social gap between those who live inside and those who live outside:

Su exclusión de la ciudad era evidente, hecho reforzado por los servicios comunitarios y la escuela, que se localizaban en edificios temporeros, mientras las áreas de recreación quedaron en zonas inundables, carentes de cualquier protección contra la lluvia o el sol, a la vez que prescindían de elementos paisajistas. (Rodríguez 2012, 174)

This social gap has an effect that is mirrored to Five Stars. The concept of being *part of* or being an *outsider* is important to recognize as queer spaces and the community are seen as “different”

and “separate” from the normative society. This creates a condition of a minority group living within a minority sector.



Perspective drawing of the proposed plan by *Frank A. Molther*. “A plan and recommended program for the transformation of the Nemesio Canales public housing project, San Juan Metropolitan Area, Puerto Rico.” Urban Renewal and Housing Administration for the Puerto Rico Urban Renewal and Housing Corporation. February 1967, AACUP.

Researcher's Note 3

At the time I started this research in January 2020, I was still pondering on what exactly my research was going to be focused on. I knew I wanted to study queer spaces in San Juan, specifically queer bars, but my thoughts were scattered on what my end result would be. On Friday morning, January 31, 2020, I met Regner in his office at the UPR School of Architecture, to discuss my research, develop a work calendar, assign books to start reading, and, mainly, what my case study was going to be—for which I still had no idea.

We talked about different bars located across San Juan to decide which was an appropriate case study to focus on. He mentioned this bar he recently heard of from a friend called Five Stars, which was located in Residencial Nemesio Canales. He gave me the rest of the day to decide between the places we discussed, but my mind was already hooked on the idea of a queer bar within a public housing project, a phrase I had never heard of due to the negative social stigmas surrounding public housing projects in Puerto Rico. I was puzzled and intrigued by how these two communities (the LGBTQ+ and the Nemesio Canales residents) coexisted in the same space. Furthermore, I learned that just a few days before, Five Stars opened a new venue in Jesús T. Piñero Avenue, but, other than its location and a few promos of events on Facebook, I didn't know anything else about this place. As such, my mind was made: I wanted to learn more about this particular case, how it came to be, and what it means to have a queer space within public housing in Puerto Rico, so I started right away.

Little did I know that an epidemic virus would reach our Island and become a worldwide pandemic in less than four months, even less so that, even now at the time of writing, a year later, the pandemic hasn't subsided. I was able to continue my research throughout the semester to conduct my proposal—most of the information I was able to find was on Residencial Nemesio

Canales thanks to the existing documentation, contrary to Five Stars which was limited to Facebook posts. I was only able to attend one night at the bar in February, the one located in Ave. Jesus T. Piñero, before COVID-19 paralyzed everything. It wasn't until May, 2020, that I could see the business again. I suspected it was closed, due to the pandemic, since I had stopped seeing promos on their Facebook page, but I was on my way to pick up my belongings left the School of Architecture before cleaning day, so I decided to stop by the bar on the way there. As I approached while driving, I could see it from the distance and it became clear, the black shutters were down and the front banner with the big red type font reading Five Stars The Club was gone.

FIVE STARS THE CLUB

Five Stars was contacted by direct message to their Facebook account on Wednesday afternoon, September 30, 2020. The note gave a brief description of the research and asked about the possibility of having an interview with the managers—they wrote back in 10 minutes. The person who answered was Alfredo Barreiro Peña, one of the owners. He shared his phone number and asked to call him on Friday afternoon. The phone call was brief, after describing the purpose of the project, he was very interested in participating so a date was set for the interview on Friday morning, October 9, 2020. It was held via Google Meets for about an hour and he was very eager to share Five Stars' story.

Five Stars's Background Story

Alfredo narrated the particular story of how he and David, his partner, came up with the name “Five Stars” during a bingo night at their neighbor's house. The idea of opening a community

bar came from David; he grew up in Nemesio Canales and would occasionally host parties at his mother's apartment up on a third floor. It is safe to say that he was the life of the party and deliberated with the idea of later having his own place to entertain people. They talked about the idea of opening a pub and their neighbor commented that their business should be as perfect and well managed as *they*⁴ were: "tenía que ser un negocio de cinco estrellas", Alfredo recalled. Although he liked the phrase "cinco estrellas", it did not sound quite right, therefore they changed it to "five stars" (Barreiro, personal communication, October 9, 2020).

The opportunity to open the venue arose when the tenant of a commercial property, located on building 19 in Nemesio Canales, closed his business and the locale became available for rent. Alfredo and David were at first dubious about renting the space but ultimately decided to proceed and opened the pub on November 1, 2014. Alfredo stated:

Pues mira, la idea surge de mi pareja, él es una persona que le gusta mucho las fiestas y hacía fiestas en su casa de su mamá en el tercer piso, y se da esta oportunidad cuando este negocio pues la persona que lo tenía lo estaba alquilando, y nosotros con la duda de que sí y que no y que sí y que no pues finalmente decidimos cogerlo, lo arreglamos, lo estructuramos, y poquito a poco lo hicimos en un "pub". Un pubcito pequeño con la gente de aquí, entonces con el pasar del tiempo le hicimos expandiendo y le hicimos remodelaciones hasta convertirlo en una discoteca dentro del residencial. Somos el único residencial que tiene una discoteca adentro, Llorens Torres no lo tiene, Manuel Pérez no lo tiene. (Barreiro, personal communication, October 9, 2020)

Acquiring the permits for the bar proved to be a challenge, mainly because it was located near the public school in Nemesio Canales. To avoid the school's hours coinciding with the pubs' business hours, they established their opening time at 6 PM during weekdays. On weekends they can open at 4–5 PM; closing time varies depending on how many customers they have and when they leave, sometimes closing as early as midnight or as late as sunrise.

⁴ She was referring to them and the people of the LGBTQ community

Five Stars started as a pub, mainly serving drinks, but was later expanded into a night club, catering to different services like food, hooka, pool table drag shows, live music, and a VIP section. To accommodate their growing business, they rented the neighboring space—previously a local supermarket—and merged them by removing certain walls. They then decided to change the name to Five Stars The Club to promote their businesses as a nightclub. After four years of rent they bought the building and further expanded it into what it is now, and they are currently in plans of making more renovations.

The interior design was David's idea, and he has also overseen the recent remodeling works at the bar. He wanted something colorful and playful, so he drew inspiration from comic books and pop art. They hired two graphic designers to develop the business aesthetic around this idea. Presently, the interior walls are decorated with comic book illustrations and bright colors over a black background, even adding speech bubbles with exclamation words and phrases like in comic books. This aesthetic continues to their online marketing on their Facebook account, with some Drag Show promos or other posts published with this particular style.

Getting to Five Stars at Nemesio Canales will usually be on motor vehicle since sidewalks and crosswalks are noticeably rundown or plainly inaccessible. The main entrance of the public housing is located at the end of Nemesio R. Canales Street—intersecting street with Delano Roosevelt Avenue—past the Central Police Headquarters (El Cuartel General) to the right and the United States Postal Service (El Correo General) to the left. Once inside the complex, the bar is located on a neighboring lot to the right of building 19—the main street is two-way traffic so either direction will lead to the other side. The building consists of a single-story structure painted gray and purple with a front porch. There is no clear banner with the name Five Stars that identifies the business, however its color pallet singles it out from the repeating “cookie cut” residential

buildings painted orange and beige. Parking can be found on the sidewalk as there is not a designated parking space for the bar.

When entering the bar, the space is noticeably dark, all of the outside windows are blocked preventing sunlight from peeking in and the walls are painted black giving the impression of a wider space. To the right is the kitchen and storage area—hidden behind varied angled walls where the original supermarket used to be—and a designated pool table area. To the right is the dance floor, a long space marked by two structural walls to one side and three VIP booths to the other. At the end of the venue are two bathrooms that are separated by a wall where the bar counter starts and extends to the other side where the drag show room is located, where most of the shows take place. The floor is lined by black 12” x 12” vinyl tiles and the ceiling is covered by a checkered pattern of black & white 12” x 24” foam panels. There are pop art posters and frames covering the walls with a spray-painted slime design in purple, green and red appearing as if it is dripping from ceiling.

The busiest days at Nemesio Canales are usually Fridays, Saturdays, and some Sundays; weekdays from Wednesday to Thursday receive less clientele, Mondays and Tuesdays are closed for cleaning. Their clientele mainly comes from low to middle-class economic backgrounds. Ages vary from 18 to over 70 years; Alfredo spoke of a usual customer that never misses a Saturday night at the bar—she is 77 years old. Since being located in Nemesio Calanes, most of the people who attend are residents there. This condition has created a large number of recurring clients where the term "community"—both of residents and the LGBTQ—is important to recognize.

A Minority Within a Minority

A community can be based not only on the geographical sense of the word, as belonging or originating from a shared location, but also by shared ideas, desires, and needs. Lynda Johns and Robyn Longhurst describe it very clearly in their book *Space, Place, and Sex*, as "communities based on common interests or beliefs rather than on graphical proximity" (2009, 61). Five Stars has the particular condition of serving two communities based on this principle: residents and queers. The residents of Nemesio Canales carry a shared background, a history of displacement and segregation that has constricted them to a space that is both physically and socially disconnected from its surrounding context. Subsequently, there is a sense of otherness, defined by who "is" or "is not" a part of this community. For years, public housing in Puerto Rico has become synonymous with criminality and low social class—resulting from the decrepit conditions they have been conditioned into (Rodríguez 2012, 72). As urban theorist Sidney Brower explains:

Our perceptions are also influenced by our interest; people who are strangers in a place see it differently from those who are thoroughly familiar with it and call it home. Residents and outsiders may look at the same environment, but, in effect what they "see" is something different. (Brower 1989, 189)

This perception is present with the case of Nemesio Canales. People from outside impose a negative social stigma on to the residents of public housing projects in Puerto Rico. One of the clear disadvantages of having a business within a public housing is the limited accessibility of new clientele from outside due to this prejudice as explained by Alfredo. However, he argues his business has positively altered this perception:

Desventaja es la localización, que causa a mucha gente de afuera tenerle miedo venir por ser un residencial, por que creen que vincula con todo lo que es asesinatos y droga. Nosotros hemos cambiado poco a poco ese estigma, ofreciéndole a la gente un buen servicio, un buen trato, donde la misma gente del residencial pues ya conoce a muchos de los clientes que vienen y velan por ellos. La misma gente de

aquí ayuda con la seguridad, están bien pendientes y el trato que se les da es totalmente diferente. (Barreiro, personal communication, October 9, 2020)

This in fact is a thought shared by the Drag Performers interviewed and will again be discussed further on. In a way, this strong sense of community reflects the queer community that inhabits Five Stars's space. Alfredo has been working for almost a decade in Canales and his partner David is born and raised there. As members of the queer community and the Canales community, their experience when opening the bar was one of acceptance and support. Alfredo describes it as a family environment, where people know each other, they know where they are from, their life stories, and, in turn, they respect each other. However, there was a moment when Five Stars expanded beyond Residencial Nemesio Canales, looking for more business exposure.

From Nemesio Canales to Jesus T. Piñero and Back Again

After five years operating in Canales, Alfredo and David decided to expand their business elsewhere. While having a strong community of recurring clients meant that they would always find economic security in Canales, bringing new clients became a challenge. There was a low turnout of new customers due to Canales' negative social stigma, "por ser un residencial le tienen miedo por que creen que vincula con todo lo que es asesinatos y droga...". So, when they noticed an available space in the Jesus T Piñero Avenue, one of the principal avenues in the metropolitan area, they rented it.

When gathering information about the bar at the beginning of the research, mainly through social media, the Drag Show promotions were posted with the address at the Piñero venue, which gave the impression that they had moved from their previous establishment at Canales. Alfredo clarified in the interview that the first venue at Canales was never closed and would function simultaneously with the new one. The establishment at 262 Av. Jesús T. Piñero, San Juan 00927,

was on the first floor of a two-floor duplex apartment building, from January to March 2020. Located on the right side of the building in what previously was a business called Biento, whose façade displayed its name in large, bold, cursive italics colored red over the main entrance. Its neighboring store used to be a windows and frames shop called Cortinas Puerto Rico. Presently, the Cortinas Puerto Rico property is owned by Gomera Piñero, a local tire shop.

The space at Piñero was not only larger, but it provided private parking in front of the building, in addition to neighboring parking since most businesses were closed at night. Parking at Canales was not designated, so customers would have to park in the street near the business. However, being a larger space in the main avenue with private parking, rent was considerably higher. At Canales, Alfredo and David rented the space to the Public Housing Administration (or Autoridad de Vivienda Pública), paying only a fee of just five dollars. Contrary to Piñero, where the building was private property, the rent was 350 times that amount. In terms of employment, Alfredo and David have managed and worked at the bar since its inception. They have two more employees working at Canales on weekends or any day with a high number of clients. Sometimes clients and residents from the very public housing would help clean after a long night. However, at Piñero, they hired more employees to divide the workload between the two places. Business security was ensured by the same employees or by Alfredo and David.

Alcohol prices at both venues were the same and modest: beers ranged from \$1–3, shots ranged from \$5–8. However, income was different, Alfredo explained that in the short time they worked at Piñero they generated higher earnings due to its accessibility and higher clientele turnout. They also started presenting more drag shows and live music events at Piñero, posting promos on social media through Facebook and Instagram with the new location. Birthday parties featuring drag shows were also among events thrown at the bar by client reservations. However,

queer events like Drag Shows, at both venues, alternated nights with heterosexual events, meaning some nights were aimed more for the queer community and some are not—this will be further discussed.

Unfortunately, after only two months, Five Stars at Pinero closed its doors. When evidence of COVID-19 cases started to appear on the Island, Former Governor Wanda Vázquez issued a strict pandemic protocol on March 12, 2020, ordering all non-essential businesses to close indefinitely, and adding curfews from 7 PM to 5 AM. Alfredo explained that the situation became extremely difficult when both of his jobs were at risk, his primary income came from his day-time job as a teacher, at a public elementary school, and managing Five Stars at night. He temporarily closed the bar in March, however—a month later—the landlord sold the building, and they had to close permanently and move everything out. However, the venue at Canales remained, reopening in May when curfew time was changed to 9 PM to 5 AM, and non-essential businesses were allowed to open.

A Queer Space Within Public Housing

When talking with Alfredo about queer events at Five Stars at Nemesio Canales and whether he considered it as queer space, he clarified it was not exactly a gay bar and defined it more “as a bar for everyone”.

Sabes la barra no es una barra gay, es una barra para todo el mundo. Que la comunidad la ha adoptado y que le hemos dado el espacio a la comunidad para que participe es otra cosa, pero la barra no tiene un logotipo gay, es para todo el mundo. (Barreiro, personal communication, October 9, 2020)

Alfredo does not label Five Stars as a queer space, instead choosing to define it as a place for all, open to diversity. Drag shows are designated to specific nights for the queer community, alternating with more heterosexual nights where they play live music like salsa. Furthermore, Five

Stars does not provide inclusive bathrooms opting for the more traditional binary separation between a woman's bathroom and a men's bathroom. These observations lead to an essential question: is Five Stars a queer bar that also serves heterosexual events, or is it a heterosexual space that occasionally serves the queer community? To further understand this case, three drag queens who perform at Five Stars were interviewed via a group video call. On November 30, 2020, through Google Meets, performers Nia Lizz de Martinez, Katiushka Martinez, and Jakie Christie were interviewed.

All three first heard about Five Stars from friends and fellow drag queens but started performing at the bar at different times—they are now frequent performers there. Each had a very positive experience their first time performing, describing it as a safe and friendly environment for the LGBTQ community; Jakie, specifically, described it as a “gender-friendly space”⁵. Nia Lizz and Katiushka have been performing at Five Stars for more than three years, while Jakie started about a year ago. All three started as invited performers at drag show contests and are now under contract and paid by the hour. Drag shows at Five Stars are usually organized around a theme chosen by the bars' managers. The performers would then prepare their number and outfit around that theme. In preparation for the events, they have a designated space backstage where they can safely change and prepare for their performances. In terms of payment, drag queens—both under contract and invited performers—are paid for each event plus tips. They also explained how the managers and employees look after them and are attentive to provide a pleasant experience for them and the clients. They have not had any inconvenient experience or unpleasant moments of harassment or homophobia/transphobia.

⁵ They used the term “gender-friendly” to describe a place that is safe for the LGBTQ community.

After talking about their experiences working at Five Stars, they were asked how they would identify the bar—as being queer, gay, or other. Katiushka was the first to answer, explaining that it is a place for all people. Nia Lizz followed, adding that it is not a place just for the queer community, it is a place for everyone based on the value of respect. Jakie answered with a similar description, and she does not believe Five Stars is labeled as a queer or gay bar. As such, it became clear, both they and Alfredo shared the same view on how they identified the bar. Both parties do not use the term queer bar or gay bar to describe Five Stars and instead opt to identify it as "a place for all".



CONCLUSION

As an outsider—from both the Canales community and the queer community—my goal is to approach this documentation without positioning myself as a distant critical voice. Therefore, I follow Rendell's work of *Site-Writing*; on how one can relate to the subject of study:

I suggest that criticism involves such a double movement to and from between inside and outside: works can take critics outside themselves, offering new geographies, new possibilities, but they can also return critics to their own interiors, their own biographies. (Rendell 2010, 14)

This work traverses along this movement between inside and outside by the form of notes as an autoethnographic viewpoint. Furthermore, the purpose of this research is to document and theorize on what this particular queer space within a public housing *is*. However, one cannot draw a definitive conclusion and impose the queer label to a community like Five Stars. Queerness is relative to the individual and their sociohistorical context—therefore, there are different ways of understanding queerness and identifying, or not, with it. Alfredo, Nia Lizz, Katiushka, and Jakie don't use the term queer to identify Five Stars because they feel it excludes other people who are not part of the LGBTQ community. In a way, they normalize queerness by not using it—meaning for them, a queer bar does not fit the proper description of an all-inclusive space (Baerga, 1). This generates questions like: ¿Does this interpretation relate to economic and academic differences? ¿Is the term 'queer' associated with an elitist condition drawn from its academic redefinitions?

Five Stars prefers to be identified as "a place for everyone" more than a queer space, since describing it as such is feared to create the perception of a space that serves the queer community exclusively. This can also be seen from a marketing standpoint, as Five Stars is promoted as a bar that features occasional drag shows. This understanding ties to Jean-Ulrick Désert's definition of queer space: recognized by the queer identities that inhabit it and a space defined by the opposition

of the heteronormative. However, he also adds that having "an isolationist stance rather than engage in an evolution of perpetual differences would be detrimental... isolationism would be the death of such fertile ground" for the queer community. Perhaps Five Stars may try to avoid this "isolationist stance" by not identifying it as a queer bar.

Nemesio Canales in fact does not have an organized queer community. Alfredo and David's business is at first intended to be a local bar for the Canales community. Being members of the LGBTQ community themselves, it is an openly inclusive space—although it does not have inclusive bathrooms—and is used as a queer space hosting drag show events. In a way, they find themselves in an in-between, where the phrase "a place for all" seems to be a compromise for both queer and non-queer clients.

Five Stars The Club finds itself in a unique place, uncommon to many queer spaces in San Juan, as it is isolated from the urban context of the city. This particular condition exempts Five Stars from the “traditional” forms of renting space. Where most queer business in San Juan are tied to a monthly rental fee, Alfredo and David’s business is located on public land and are only required to pay a monthly five-dollar fee to the Public Housing Administration. This has allowed them to maintain their bar through the COVID-19 pandemic crisis—which has caused many businesses, queer and non-queer, to close. I use the term isolated because Residencial Nemesio Canales can be view as a micro-universe, where the proper conditions are presented for such a case like Five Stars The Club to thrive in. As Ingram explains in his essay, “Marginality and the Landscapes of Erotic Alien(n)ations”:

Queerscapes embody processes that counter those that directly harm, discount, isolate, ghettoize, and assimilate. A queerscape is, therefore, a cumulative kind of spatial unit, a set of places, a plane of subjectivities constituting a collectivity, which involve multiple alliances of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transsexuals and which support a variety of activities, transactions, and functions.

(Ingram 1997, 41)

The following premise is true, but in this case, there is not a state of threat and defensiveness from detractors, as empathy between these two communities is created by their common experience in social and urban segregation, constituting then a shared sense of community based on affinity. Different to so many other places in Puerto Rico, the people from Canales have embraced the queer community through this bar, a place where respect and acceptance are indispensable forms of co-habitation.

It is important to note that this research was conducted during a global pandemic, where conditions like Five Stars's presentational accessibility was limited. Its regular operation hours were altered depending on executive orders issued by the governor enforcing curfew. Furthermore, the images and drawings presented at the end of this project portray a certain emptiness—an absence of people—caused by social distancing and other pandemic protocols.

Queer space theory, as Brent Ingram, Bouthullette, and Retter discuss, is still "undertheorized and underdocumented" (Ingram et al. 1997, 7). Stories like Five Stars's usually go unnoticed in the academia of architecture and history. They are deemed "unworthy" cases of study by heteronormative preconceptions of what should and should not be studied. However, their social and cultural impact is ingrained in these spaces. This research project opens the conversation and creates new questions to further research this particular case and others like it.

Researcher's Note 4

*This project has certainly been a journey. It has been a year and a half, from January 2020 to May 2021, since I started my thesis. A year marked by an unprecedented number of circumstances from earthquakes in the southwest of the Island, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a historically controversial election year, and protests against police brutality. I believe—now more than ever—that taking the time to hear people's stories is the most fulfilling and necessary action one can have to create **awareness**.*

*When I started this project, I genuinely had no idea how it would conclude, and far less how it would change me. My whole life has been accommodated by **privilege**—and I say this in the sense that I am a white heterosexual man and born to a middle-class catholic family. I have never had to face any discrimination or serious economic hardship, however, my life isn't disconnected from people who are discriminated against. I can't—in good conscience—remain complacent with my prerogative status when I have friends and family, members of the queer community, who are persecuted, criticized, and systematically stripped from their rights. As a student, and human being, my personal inclination for this thesis was to understand more about the people who have been an integral part of my life and contribute my training as an architect to help study queer spaces. These spaces are faced with constant adversities, and their social, cultural, and economic influence is at risk of being forgotten if they are not documented.*

At the begging of my research, reading history books and theoretical essays on public housing and queerness, helped me broaden my academic spectrum. I learned the definitions and facts that guided my work, but it's beyond comparison of the experience of actually talking to the people I was writing about. Hearing Five Stars's story through interviews with the owner and working drag queens revealed the personal aspect of how these people in Residencial Nemesisio

*Canales shared this common space. Their relationship **inside** this public housing project created a unique condition unlike any other queer bar or club located **outside** in the urban context of San Juan. This research has shown me that the term ‘queer’ by definition is ever-changing and that there is more than one way to perceive it. It is important to hear the people who inhabit these places as it is they who experience and define what queer **is** or **isn’t** for them.*

*In a way, this study has queered my identity—breaking from my past heteronormative understanding of architecture and overall view of society—as I now open a chapter of my life **aware** of Five Stars’s story and eager to continue understanding queer spaces.*



REFERENCES

Ayyıldız, Sonay; Ertürk, Filiz; Durak, Şahin; Dülger, Alper. *Importance of Typological Analysis in Architecture for Cultural Continuity: An Example from Kocaeli (Turkey)*. Kocaeli University, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Department of Architecture, Turkey: IOP Conference Series, Materials Science and Engineering. 2020.

Amorim, Arivaldo. *Methodological Aspects of Architectural Documentation*. Salvador Bahia, Brasil: Universidade Federal da Bahia, Faculdade de Arquitetura. 2011.

Barreiro Peña, Alfredo. (2020, October 9). Personal interview.

Brent Ingram, Bouthillette, and Retter. *Queers in Space: Communities | Public Places | Sites of Resistance*. Washington: Bay Press. 1997.

Brower, Sidney. *Residents' and Outsiders' Perception on the Environment. Housing, Culture, and Design: A Comparative Perspective*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1989.

Davis, Mike. *Planet of Slums*. London: Verso, 2006.

Désert, Jean Ulrick. *Queer Space. Queers in Space: Communities | Public Places | Sites of Resistance*. Washington: Bay Press. 1997.

Ellis, Carolyn. *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography*. Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press. 2004.

Baerga, María del Carmen. *El complicado terreno de las sexualidades alternativas: Sodomitas en el Palacio de Santa Catalina, 1670-16781*. San Juan: Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras

Brent Ingram, Gordon. *Marginality and the Landscapes of Erotic Alien(n)ations. Queers in Space: Communities | Public Places | Sites of Resistance*. Washington: Bay Press. 1997.

Butler, Judith. *Feminist theorize the political*. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc. 1992.

Johnston, Lynda, and Longhurst, Robyn. *Space, Place, and Sex: Geographies of Sexualities*. Phymouth: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2009.

La Fountain-Stokes, Lawrence. *Escenas Transcaribeñas: Ensayos sobre teatro, performance y cultura*. San Juan: Editorial Isla Negra, 2018.

Laureano, Javier E. *Negociaciones Especulares: Creacion De Una Cultura Gay Urbana En San Juan a Partir De La Segunda Guerra Mundial Hasta Principios De Los 1990*. Dissertation Publishing, 2011.

Laureano, Javier E. *San Juan gay: conquista de un espacio urbano de 1948–1991*. San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña. 2016.

Low, Setha M. & Chambers, Erve. *Housing, Culture, and Design: A Comparative Perspective*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1989.

Luis Ramírez, Rafael. *Social Structure and the Political Process: A Study of Squatter Settlements and Public Housing in a Puerto Rican Urban Area*. Thesis Dissertation, Brandeis University Department of Anthropology, Michigan: University Microfilms. 1973.

Marrero, D. & Rodríguez, F. J. (2012). *Nostalgias y Obesidades: ensayo gráfico sobre la historia de la vivienda en San Juan*. In J. Lizardi & M. Schwegmann (Eds.), *Espacios Ambivalentes: Historias y olvidos en la arquitectura social moderna* (pp. 246-259). San Juan, PR: Ediciones Callejón: Proyecto CIUDAD.

Mignucci, Andrés. *Modern Urbanism in Puerto Rico: From abstract doctrines to concrete landscapes*. in: *Espacios Ambivalentes: historia y olvidos en la arquitectura social moderna*. Ediciones Callejón, Escuela de Arquitectura-UPR, 2012.

Molther, Frank. *A Plan and Recommended Program for the Transformation of the Nemesis Canales Public Housing Project, San Juan Metropolitan Area, Puerto Rico*. Urban Renewal and Housing Administration for the Puerto Rico Urban Renewal and Housing Corporation. February 1967, ACCUPR.

Ramos, Regner. “Back-and-Forth: Between Krash Klub and Grindr” in CENTRO Journal Volume 23, # 11 (Summer 2020).

Ramos, Regner. *El Site*. <http://www.elsite.xyz>. 2008.

Ramos, Regner. *Larry*. *El Site*. <http://www.elsite.xyz/essages/larry>. personal interview with Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes. San Juan: 2020, August 28.

Ramos, Regner. *Los Sites: Spacial Speculations of Queer San Juan*. [Site Models Exhibition] Exhibited at José Torres-Martinó Gallery, School of Architecture, University of Puerto Rico February 7–27, 2019.

Ramos, Regner. *San Juan Queer: Mobile Apps, Urban Spaces, and LGBTQ Identities*. San Juan.

Rendell, Jane. *Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd. 2010.

Rodríguez Luz, Marie. *¡Atajar el arrabal! Arquitectura y cambio social en la vivienda pública de San Juan. San Juan siempre nuevo: arquitectura y modernización en el siglo XX*. San Juan: AACUPR, Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2000.

Rodríguez Luz, Marie. *[Re]visión de la vivienda social en San Juan: notas sobre la arquitectura para el obrero (1930s-1950s)*. *Espacios Ambivalentes: historia y olvidos en la arquitectura social moderna*. Ediciones Callejón, Escuela de Arquitectura-UPR, 2012.

Pérez-Herranz, Carmen. (2012). *Tener la casita: del sueño de un hogar a las trampas de la especulación*. in: *Espacios Ambivalentes: historia y olvidos en la arquitectura social moderna*. Ediciones Callejón, Escuela de Arquitectura-UPR, 2012.

Pérez-Herranz, Carmen. *Ya tengo la casita: historia y transformación de un deseo*. San Juan: Informa, Vol #3, UPR. 2008.

Pérez-Hicks, Ryan. 2013. *Agua mala*. San Juan: Producción de Cine Documental del programa de Producción de Cine Digital de la Universidad del Sagrado Corazón.

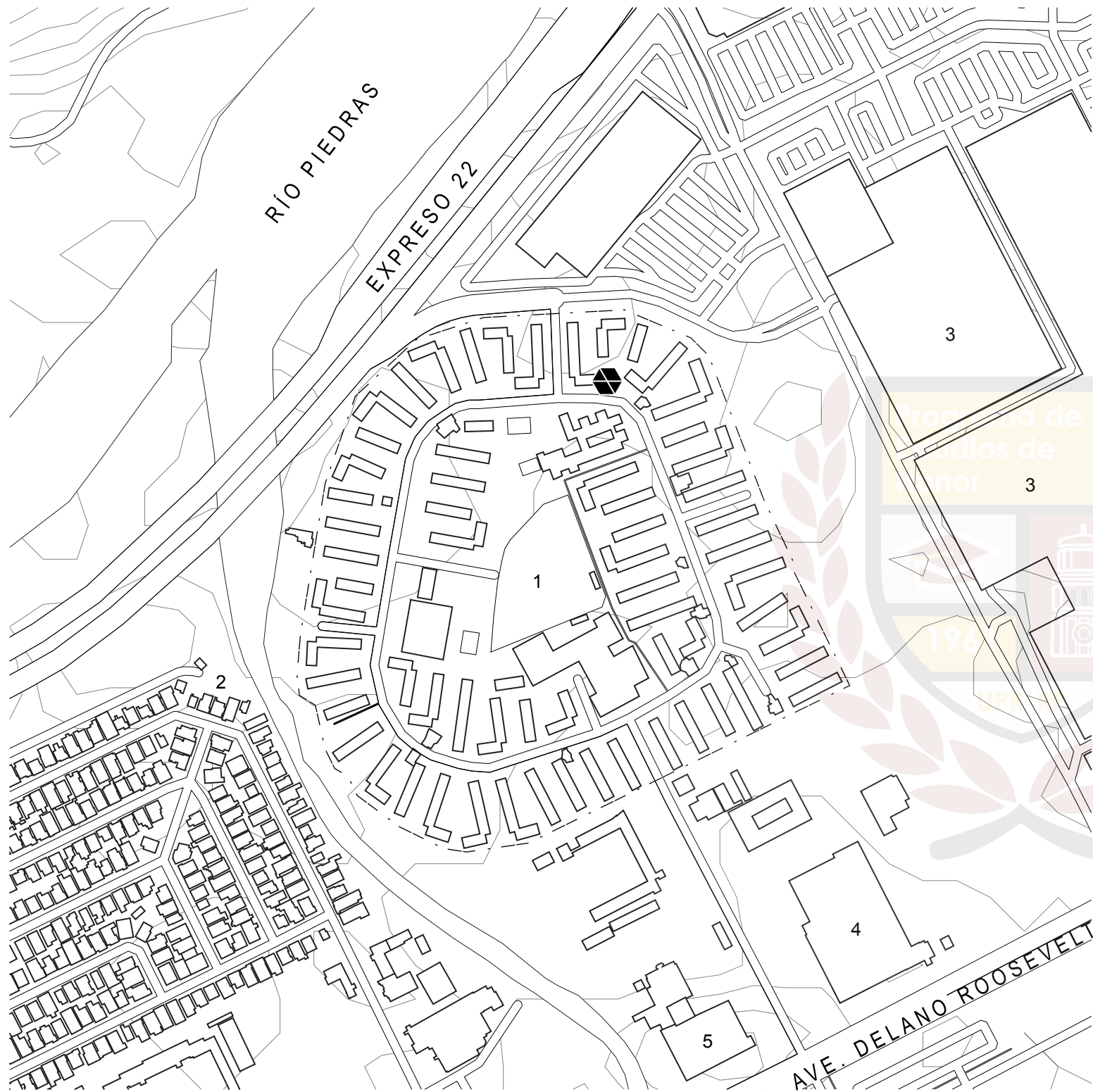
Secada Cartaya, Gisela. *Espacios comunales y de recreación en residenciales públicos*. Master's Thesis, University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras campus, School of Architecture, May 1979.

Safa, Helen. *The Transformation of Puerto Rico: The Impact of Modernization Ideology*. TRAA Transforming Anthropology. 2011.


Stoloff, Jennifer. *A Brief History of Public Housing*. 2004.

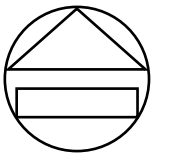
Scarano, Francisco A. *Puerto Rico: cinco siglos de historia*. San Juan: McGraw Hill Interamericana Editores. 2008.

Vázquez Valencia, Raquel. *La vivienda pública en la era de Luis Muñoz Marín desde la perspectiva del determinismo arquitectónico*. Master's Thesis, University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras campus, School of Architecture, June 2011.



LEGEND

-  FIVE STARS THE CLUB
- 1- RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES
- 2- URB. PUERTO NUEVO
- 3- PLAZA LAS AMÉRICAS
- 4- SAN JUAN UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
- 5- PUERTO RICO POLICE GENERAL HEADQUARTERS



LOCATION PLAN

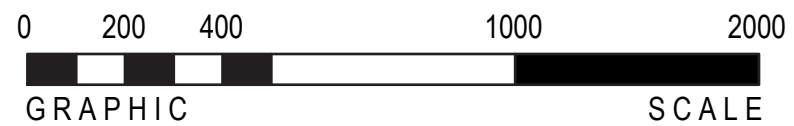
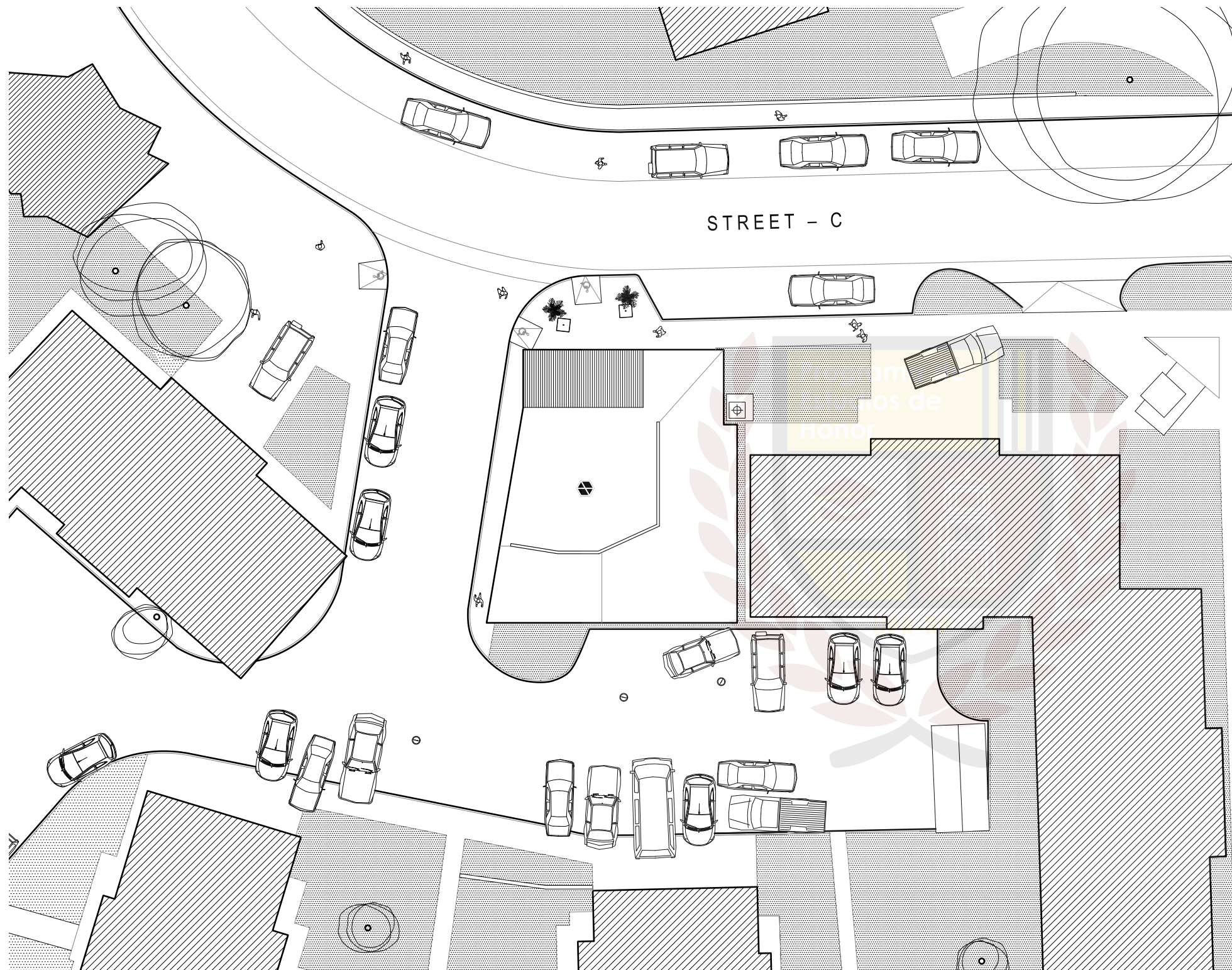









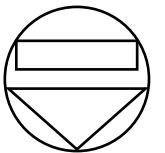
EXHIBIT 1

FIVE STARS THE CLUB
RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES,
SAN JUAN, PR 00920
PRODUCED BY: MANUEL E. TORREGROSA CUETO



LEGEND

-  LAWN
-  RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS
-  ZINC ROOF PANEL
-  ELECTRICAL TRANSFORMER
-  HANDICAP RAMP ACCESS
-  TREES
-  FIVE STARS THE CLUB



SITE PLAN

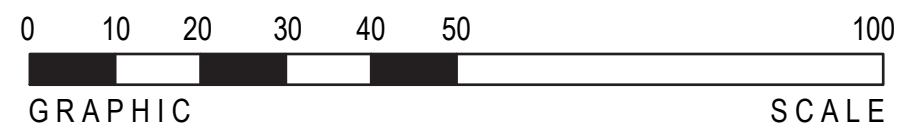
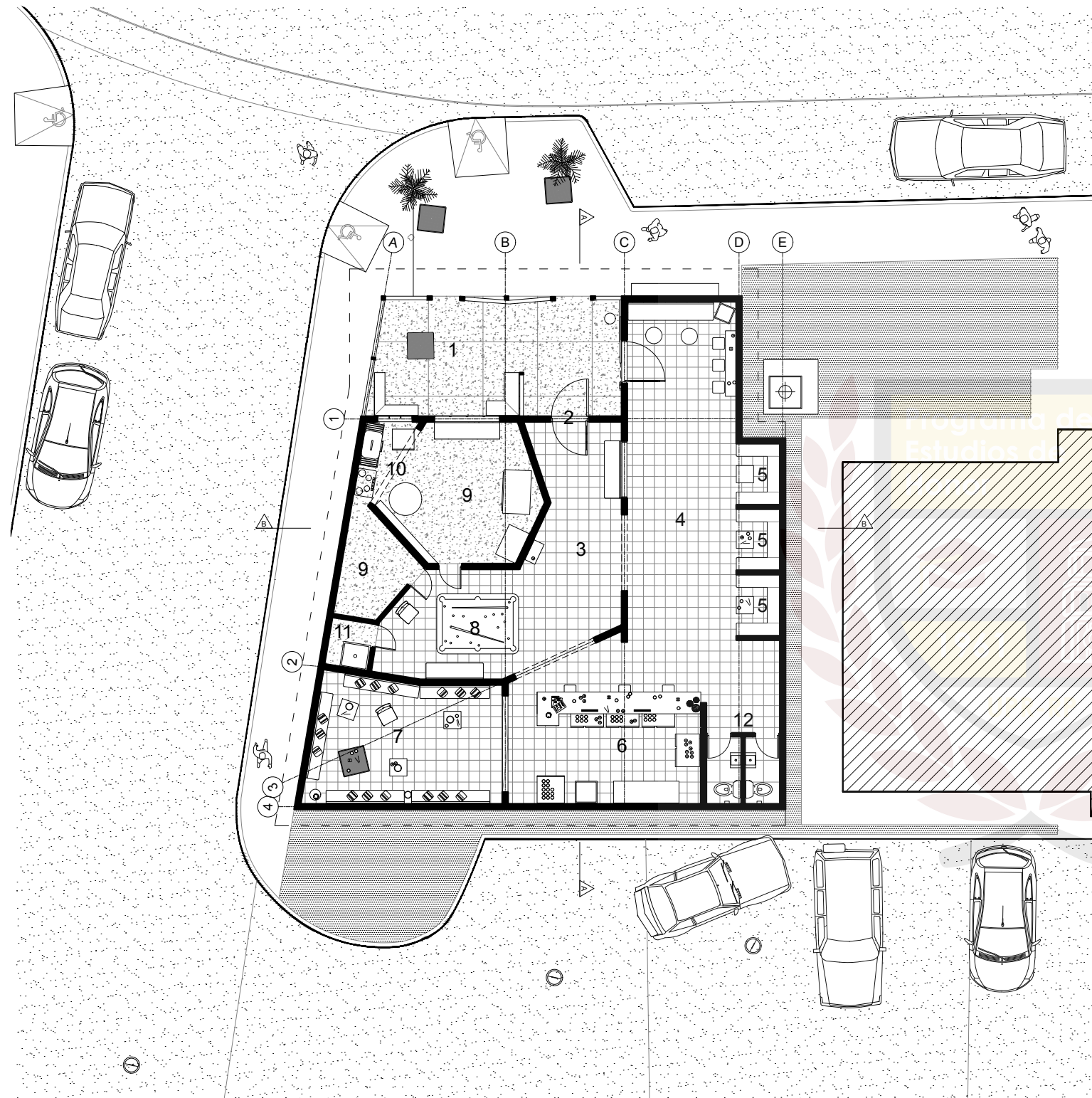
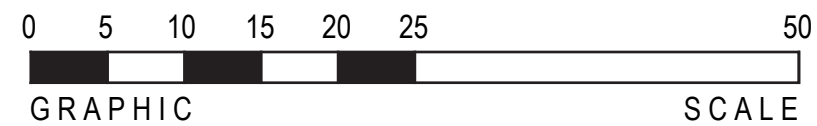


EXHIBIT 2











FIVE STARS THE CLUB
 RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES,
 SAN JUAN, PR 00920
 PRODUCED BY: MANUEL E. TORREGROSA CUETO



FLOOR PLAN



LEGEND

-  LAWN
-  RESIDENTIAL BUILDING #19
-  SIDE WALK
-  STREET PAVEMENT
-  CONCRETE FLOOR
-  VINYL TILE
-  ELECTRICAL TRANSFORMER
-  HANDICAP RAMP ACCESS
-  SECTION AXIS
-  STRUCTURAL AXIS
- 1- EXTERIOR SEATING AREA
- 2- MAIN ENTRANCE
- 3- RECEIVING AREA
- 4- DANCE FLOOR
- 5- VIP BOOTH
- 6- BAR
- 7- DRAG SHOW ROOM
- 8- BILLIARD AREA
- 9- STORAGE ROOM
- 10- KITCHEN
- 11- SERVICE ROOM
- 12- RESTROOMS

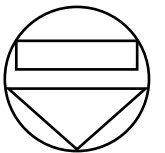


EXHIBIT 3

FIVE STARS THE CLUB
RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES,
SAN JUAN, PR 00920
PRODUCED BY: MANUEL E. TORREGROSA CUETO

LEGEND

- SECTION CUT
- CONCRETE
- INTERIOR WALL
- RESIDENTIAL BUILDING #19



SECTIONS (A)

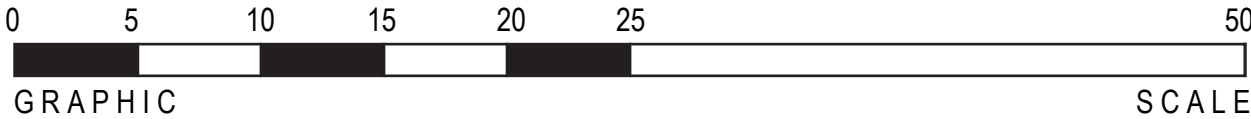


EXHIBIT 4

FIVE STARS THE CLUB
RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES,
SAN JUAN, PR 00920
PRODUCED BY: MANUEL E. TORREGROSA CUETO

LEGEND

- SECTION CUT
- CONCRETE
- INTERIOR WALL
- RESIDENTIAL BUILDING #19



SECTION (B)

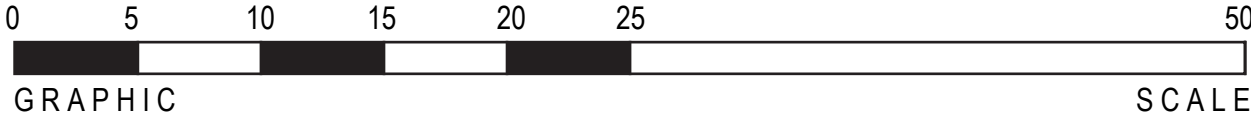
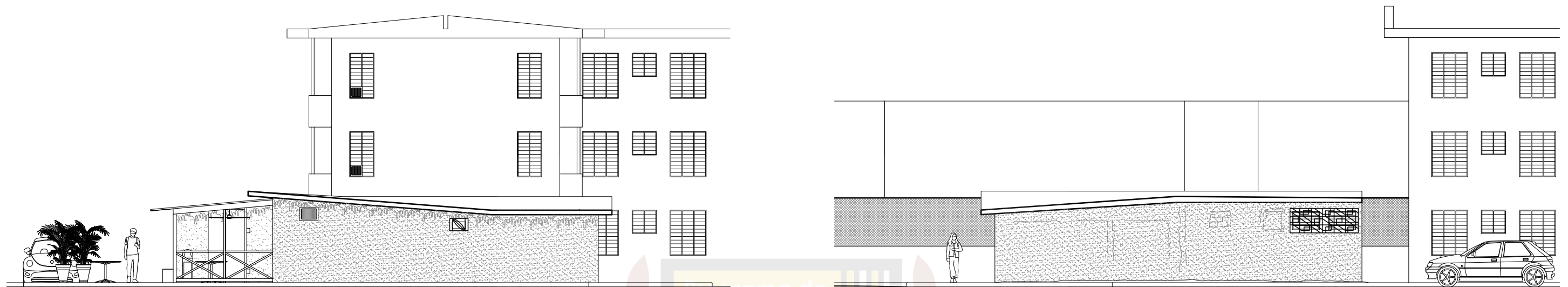


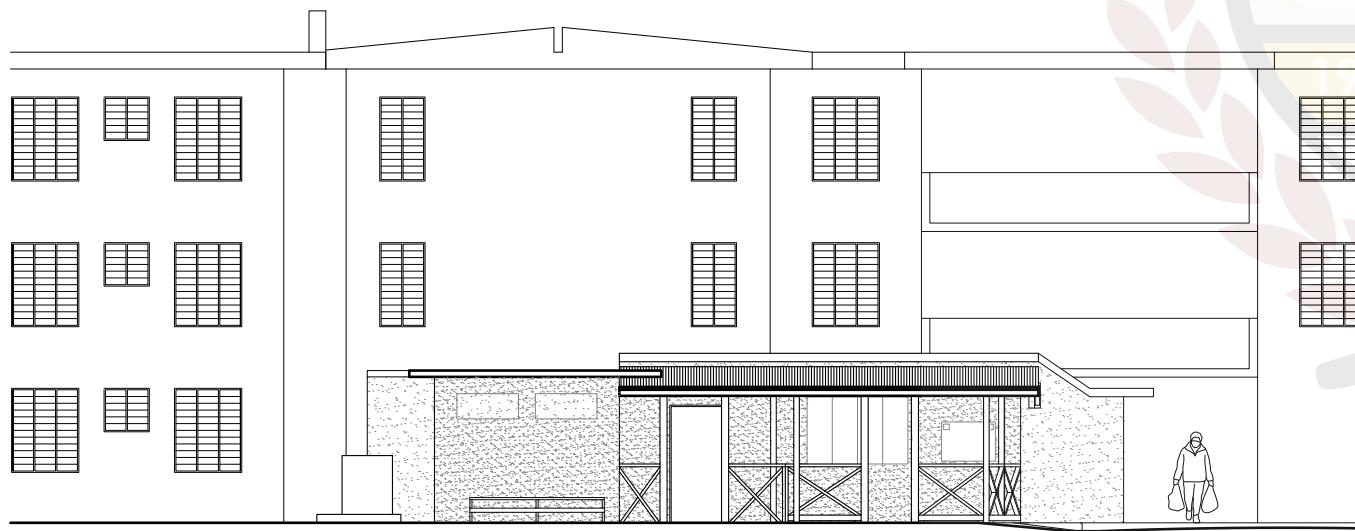
EXHIBIT 5

FIVE STARS THE CLUB
RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES,
SAN JUAN, PR 00920
PRODUCED BY: MANUEL E. TORREGROSA CUETO



EAST ELEVATION

NORTH ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION

ELEVATIONS

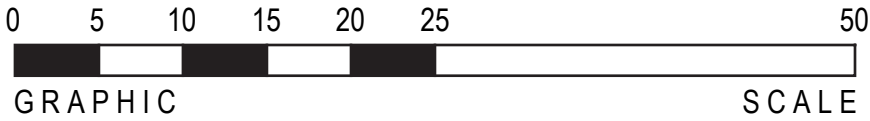


EXHIBIT 6

FIVE STARS THE CLUB
 RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES,
 SAN JUAN, PR 00920
 PRODUCED BY: MANUEL E. TORREGROSA CUETO



FRONTAL FACADE

EXTERIOR IMAGES

EXHIBIT 7

FIVE STARS THE CLUB
RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES,
SAN JUAN, PR 00920
PRODUCED BY: MANUEL E. TORREGROSA CUETO



FRONTAL FACADE

EXTERIOR IMAGES

EXHIBIT 8

FIVE STARS THE CLUB
RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES,
SAN JUAN, PR 00920
PRODUCED BY: MANUEL E. TORREGROSA CUETO



FRONT PORCH

EXTERIOR IMAGES

EXHIBIT 9

FIVE STARS THE CLUB
RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES,
SAN JUAN, PR 00920
PRODUCED BY: MANUEL E. TORREGROSA CUETO



NEIGHBORING BUILDING #18



Neighboring building #19

EXTERIOR IMAGES

EXHIBIT 10

FIVE STARS THE CLUB
RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES,
SAN JUAN, PR 00920
PRODUCED BY: MANUEL E. TORREGROSA CUETO



WEST FACADE

EXTERIOR IMAGES

EXHIBIT 11

FIVE STARS THE CLUB
RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES,
SAN JUAN, PR 00920
PRODUCED BY: MANUEL E. TORREGROSA CUETO



NORTH FACADE

EXTERIOR IMAGES

EXHIBIT 12

FIVE STARS THE CLUB
RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES,
SAN JUAN, PR 00920
PRODUCED BY: MANUEL E. TORREGROSA CUETO



RECEIVING AREA

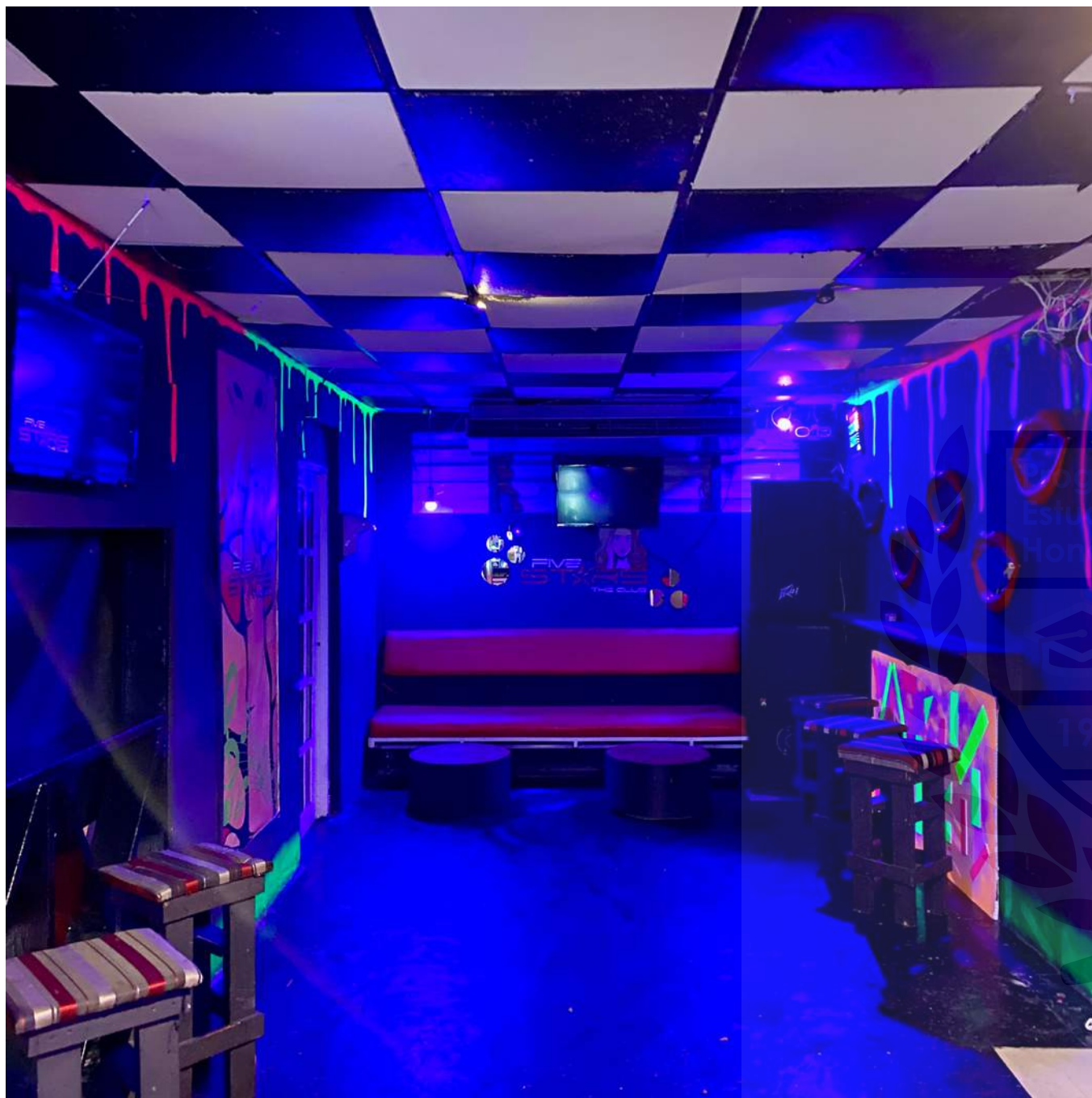


BAR

INTERIOR IMAGES

EXHIBIT 13

FIVE STARS THE CLUB
RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES,
SAN JUAN, PR 00920
PRODUCED BY: MANUEL E. TORREGROSA CUETO



DANCE FLOOR



DRAW SHOW ROOM

INTERIOR IMAGES

EXHIBIT 14

FIVE STARS THE CLUB
RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES,
SAN JUAN, PR 00920
PRODUCED BY: MANUEL E. TORREGROSA CUETO



VIP BOOTHS



RESTROOMS

INTERIOR IMAGES

EXHIBIT 15

FIVE STARS THE CLUB
RESIDENCIAL NEMESIO CANALES,
SAN JUAN, PR 00920
PRODUCED BY: MANUEL E. TORREGROSA CUETO