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# La Fortaleza and San Juan National Historic Site in Puerto Rico (United States of America)

## No 266 Bis

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### 1 Basic data

#### State Party

United States of America

#### Name of property

La Fortaleza and San Juan National Historic Site in Puerto Rico

#### Location

Bay of San Juan, Puerto Rico, United States of America

#### Inscription

1983

#### Brief description

Between the 15th and 19th centuries, a series of defensive structures was built at this strategic point in the Caribbean Sea to protect the city and the Bay of San Juan. They represent a fine display of European military architecture adapted to harbour sites on the American continent.

#### Date of ICOMOS approval of report

11 March 2016

### 2 Issues raised

#### Background

La Fortaleza and San Juan National Historic Site were granted protected status in 1949 under the terms of the Historic Sites Act of 1935, and the boundaries of the current National Historic Site (for which the land was acquired between 1955 and 1973) were recognised in 1976. The adjacent old town of San Juan was furthermore designated a National Historic Landmark in February 2013. The property itself was inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (vi). It is a serial property whose area in hectares was not however clearly established at the time of inscription. Following the Retrospective Inventory, the clarification of the property's boundaries showed that the property consists of three distinct topographical components: 1. Fort San Juan de la Cruz (El Cañuelo) which marked the western limit of the bay (2.07 ha); 2. The fortifications of the old town, forming the main defence against access from the Atlantic Ocean, and including the Fort San Felipe del Morro, at the northern tip, and Castillo San Cristóbal, on the eastern bank (31.17 ha); 3. Bastión de las Palmas, at the southern end, which is a short distance from the wall that protects

La Fortaleza and is thus independent (0,15 ha). The total area today amounts to 33.39 ha, compared with the area estimated in the original documents at 32.43 ha, representing a difference of approximately 1 hectare. The reasons for this discrepancy are analysed below.

#### Modification

The proposed modification consists of correcting the substantial inaccuracies of the map drawn up when the property was inscribed in 1983. 1. The ruins (devoid of interest in terms of World Heritage List inscription) at the north-eastern end of Isla de Cabras were included and were wrongly identified as El Cañuelo. The latter, a structure that was crucial for the site's military defence, was located in a more southerly position, enabling it to protect the entrance to the bay effectively with cannon fire. Furthermore, this parcel of land has never been owned by the National Park Service (NPS), which administers the serial property; 2. The map of 1983 also wrongly included two fragments of the southern wall – one known as the San Catalina Bastion (near La Fortaleza, which is itself unaffected by this correction), and the other located between La Concepcion Bastion and Bastión de las Palmas, which are not owned by the NPS; 3. To the east of Castillo San Cristóbal, a parcel of land not owned by NHS was included on the map, while to the north-west of Castillo San Cristóbal, another parcel of land owned by NHS was not included; 4. Finally, the Esplanade of El Morro (adjoining the Fort of El Morro to the south-east, and leading towards the old town) – a huge parcel that is useful in terms of understanding the general layout of the site – was not included on the map of 1983.

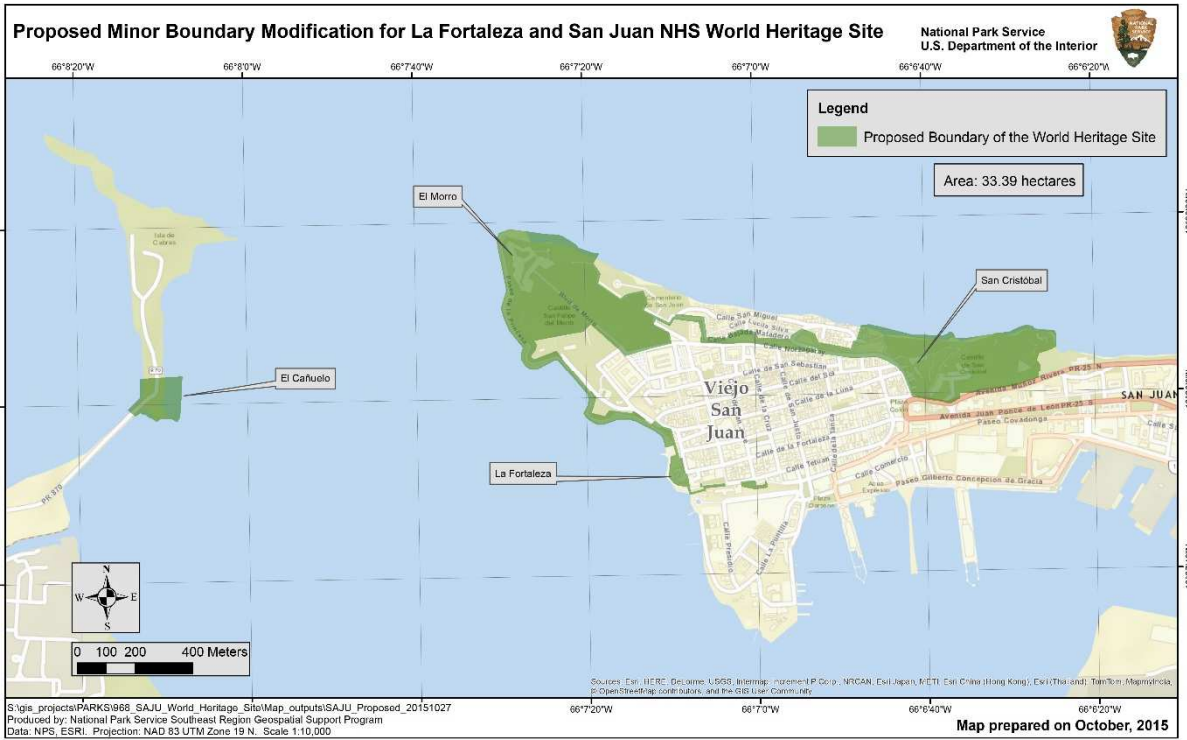
The original map was made by hand, which may explain its imperfections. The revised map has been created using updated digitised maps from the National Park Service, and is a fully accurate reflection of the boundaries of the site at the time of inscription on the World Heritage List in 1983.

The correction of the boundaries clarifies a series of confusions, without affecting the structure or features of the sites as approved by the World Heritage List inscription. It has no impact on the legal protection or management arrangements of the property, which thus fully retains its Outstanding Universal Value.

### 3 ICOMOS recommendations

#### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification of the boundaries of La Fortaleza and San Juan National Historic Site in Puerto Rico, United States of America, be **approved**.



Map showing the revised boundaries of the property