



NHL Executive Summary



Name of Property:	Latte Quarry at As Nieves
City, State:	Rota Municipality, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)
Period of Significance:	Latte Period (approximately AD 1000 – late AD 1600s)
NHL Criteria:	4 and 6
NHL Themes:	III. Expressing Cultural Values 5. architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design 6. popular and traditional culture IV. Shaping the Political Landscape 2. governmental institutions 4. political ideas, cultures, and theories VII. Transforming the Environment 1. manipulating the environment and its resources
Previous Recognition:	1974 National Register of Historic Places



National Historic Context: *Finding a Path Forward: Asian American Pacific Islander National Historic Landmarks Theme Study* (Odo 2017)

NHL Significance:

- The Latte Quarry at As Nieves is an exceptional architectural, archeological, and cultural resource in the Mariana Islands. It has been identified as the location of the largest and most well-defined latte elements (structural stone shafts and capstones) that remain in place in or near their quarry pits. The site is easily the most recognizable quarry in the Marianas, renowned for the size and condition of its elements.
- The Latte Quarry at As Nieves is nationally significant under National Historic Landmark (NHL) Criteria 4 as an outstanding example of latte elements and quarries in the Marianas, exhibiting uniquely massive elements that are the largest recorded to date. Latte sets are the archetypal archeological remains representing the Latte Period of the Mariana archipelago. A latte set consists of two parallel rows of pillars formed by placing semi-hemispherical capstones on top of upright shafts, ranging in size from six to fourteen pillars (i.e., three to seven pairs) and from less than 50 cm to 5 m in height. Latte sets likely formed the foundation for a thatched, wood superstructure used for a variety of residential activities or as community men's houses, canoe storage, or shelters for outdoor activities like food preparation.
- The Latte Quarry at As Nieves is nationally significant under Criterion 6 for its potential to contribute to a better understanding of the archeological and cultural history of the Latte Period of the Mariana Archipelago through the ability to address substantive and methodological questions related to the structure and use of quarries. Further study may illuminate the Latte Quarry at As Nieves' association with the mytho-historical figure, Chief Taga, as well as with historic place names and cultural identification of traditional places.

Integrity:

- The Latte Quarry at As Nieves retains a high level of integrity. The component site features, latte shafts and capstones in excavated depressions, are in excellent condition in their original locations from when the latte elements were being worked. Although some elements exhibit large fractures, these are the possible result of original attempts to remove the elements from the quarry pits or natural post-abandonment processes (e.g., earthquakes) and are therefore part of the historic and archeological character of the site.
- The general landscape of the site area is maintained as a park, so there have been minimal historic and modern alterations affecting the archeological subsurface contexts. Some dirt mounds surrounding the quarry pits may be the result of modern activity, possibly cleaning out of the quarry pits as part of park maintenance.
- The openness of the park provides unobstructed view of the latte elements, and no modern uses or development detract from integrity of feeling. An imposing statue of Chief Taga, built before 2005, stands just outside the proposed NHL boundary; however, it is strongly representative of contemporary Chamorro culture, which places high value on latte and the story of Chief Taga. Therefore, the site retains a strong sense of place in its integrity of feeling and association.



Owner of Property: Municipality of Rota

Acreage of Property: 0.41 acre

Origins of Nomination: The NPS Preservation Partnerships Program in the legacy Pacific West Regional Office (Interior Regions 8, 9, 10, & 12), working in cooperation with the Historic Preservation Office of the CNMI, sought to prepare a nomination for the Latte Quarry at As Nieves based on preliminary analysis as part of a legislatively authorized Special Resource Study (SRS). The SRS preliminary findings suggested the quarry warranted consideration for NHL designation.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: The property will highlight the exceptional cultural and architectural values of latte monuments and their unique cultural symbolism in the CNMI while recognizing the potential to better understand the archeological and cultural history of the Latte Period of the Mariana Archipelago.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of December 20, 2023):

- Crispin M. Ogo, Resident Department Head, Department of Community & Cultural Affairs, Municipality of Rota

Landmarks Committee Comments:

- Suggest brief explanation to alert reader to various spellings of the identifier Chamorro.
- Address use of architecture as an expression of national significance through discussion of engineering, given that the balance of extant features relate to building foundations. Contextualize given the unique nature of the property type.

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: The Committee recommends that the National Park System Advisory Board recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the designation of the Latte Quarry at As Nieves in Rota Municipality, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, as a National Historic Landmark, with any additions and corrections as noted by the Committee being made prior to the nomination being forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior for action.

Advisory Board Recommendation: The National Park System Advisory Board recommends to the Secretary of the Interior the designation of the Latte Quarry at As Nieves in Rota Municipality, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, as a National Historic Landmark.