

10-23  
(May 1929)

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PROPOSED..... NATIONAL ~~PARK~~ MONUMENTS

MARTELLO TOWER RESERVATIONS

FILE NO. 0-35

PART I.

PROPOSED NATIONAL MONUMENTS

MARTELLO TOWER RESERVATIONS

(GENERAL)

-0-

LAST DATE ON TOP

IMPORTANT

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ARNO B. CAMMERER,  
*Director.*

WILLARD M. ALBURY  
MAYOR

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
MAYOR'S OFFICE  
KEY WEST, FLORIDA

January 25, 1938

Hon. Harold I. Ickes  
Secretary of the Interior  
Washington, D.C.

My dear Secretary Ickes:

I wish to call your attention to two abandoned fortifications located in Key West, Florida. These forts are known as the East and West Martello Towers. They are said to have been constructed by the War Department in 1861 as an additional coast defense for this area.

The East Martello Tower was built on the southern shore of the Island of Key West and the West Martello Tower a few miles nearer town.

The forts long ago were abandoned as far as their value in defense goes, but their beauty and architectural design has come down through the years. The East Martello Tower is possibly the most beautiful and imposing of Key West's old forts. Some of the old Irish brick layers who constructed its handsome arches settled down in Key West and reared families. The forts are likewise of interest because of their unique design and construction. They are constructed of handmade brick and consist of a tower of the Martello type surrounded by casemates and a parapet reinforced with sand embankments. The main structures likewise contain dungeons and cells which are found in most fortifications of their period.

A roadway, Roosevelt Boulevard, passes by the East Martello Tower. The West Martello Tower, however, is so close to the water's edge that the entire structure is in danger of being demolished by the erosion which has taken place since the storm of 1919.

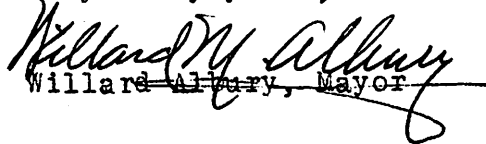
It is in the interest of the preservation of these old land marks that we respectfully request the consideration of these sites as national monuments. These structures could readily be handled and supervised by the same personnel that are located in Key West for the purpose of supervising the Fort Jefferson National Monument. This would be another link in the chain of historical sites which the National Park Service has made available to thousands of Florida's winter visitors. This chain extends from Fort Marion, at St. Augustine, Florida, to Fort Jefferson, which is 60 miles from Key West.

Under the supervision of the above mentioned National Park Service personnel, now located here, it may be possible to carry on the restoration work with CCC workers. Bricks could be salvaged from the ruins and used in restoring certain units of the structures to their original condition.

I enclose a Key West Booklet which contains an illustration of an artist's conception of East Martello Tower when it is restored.

I trust this request may receive your earnest consideration and thereby save for posterity two of America's finest examples of military architecture of the Civil War period.

Very truly yours,

  
~~Willard Albury, Mayor~~



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

*Mr. [unclear]*  
*Mr. [unclear] 3/3*  
*[unclear]*  
*[unclear]*

OFFICE OF  
COORDINATING SUPERINTENDENT

March 1, 1938

FORT MARION NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT MATANZAS NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT PULASKI NATIONAL MONUMENT  
CASTLE PINCKNEY NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT FREDERICA NATIONAL MONUMENT  
OCMULGEE NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT JEFFERSON NATIONAL MONUMENT

The Director,  
National Park Service,  
Washington, D. C.

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MAR 4 1938

*File*

Dear Mr. Director:

The Martello Towers at Key West which have been suggested as historic sites were inspected February 20. Associate Director Demaray, Dr. Ronalds, Engineer Olinus Smith, Phil Puderer, Dan Beard, and Mrs. Demaray being present. On February 22 a meeting was held at which Mayor Albury, Dr. Ronalds and the writer were present. On February 23 Dr. Ronalds had conference with Major McMullen.

The War Department is using Martello Towers as range finders and, therefore, refuses to transfer them to the Department of the Interior.

Sincerely yours,

*Herbert E. Kahler*  
Herbert E. Kahler,

Coordinating Superintendent

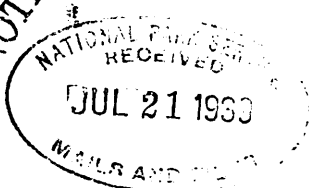
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THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

JUL 21 1939

*R. F. Lee*  
*Kittredge*  
*White*  
*Dunsmuir*

FINLLOWS NOTED



**The President,**

**The White House,**

**My dear Mr. President:**

Reference is made to your memorandum to the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting a copy of a letter of June 24 from Hayer Willard H. Albany of Key West, Florida, concerning the Martello Towers which you saw on the occasion of your last visit to Key West.

In accordance with your request, the National Park Service of this Department took up the subject with the office of the Secretary of War. It was informed that, due to its historic interest, the National Park Service would like to acquire the West Martello Tower. It is understood that the War Department has informed you that, in the interest of national defense, it is necessary for that Department to retain control of the Martello Towers.

**Sincerely yours,**

(Sgd.) E. K. BURLEW

**Acting Secretary of the Interior.**

cc: Mr. R.F.Lee

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON

August 21, 1939.

Memorandum for the Acting Director:

In accordance with your instructions, I have contacted the War Department regarding possible cooperative use of West Martello Tower at Key West between the War Department and the Interior Department. Major Duff is handling the matter for the War Department, and advised me that he had radioed to the Commanding General of the Fourth Corps area to secure his recommendations on how the cooperation may be worked out. As soon as the reply comes in, Major Duff will contact me and we will discuss possible arrangements.

In the meantime, I have wired to Superintendent Edward D. Freeland asking for his recommendations, and have received the following:

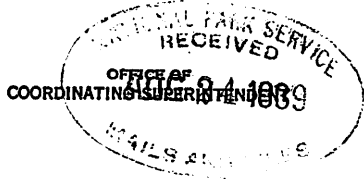
"Retel Lee today. West Martello Towers Keywest. Suggest repair for safety of public and work may be done by side camp from CCC Camp at Summerland Key. Regular personnel necessary only for protection as story may be told by pictures and dioramas. Its history is not spectacular and most important function will be its preservation and relation to Fort Jefferson. Suggest Park Service assume the administration, maintenance and protection and War Department to retain right of use for defense and annual training for coast defense. This arrangement will not permit any conflict between departments. Letter follows."

I am not sure that Freeland has the full picture. I believe that Mr. Demaray, when this matter was previously considered, had in mind the possibility of a National Park Service headquarters at Key West, probably at the West Martello Tower, which headquarters would serve not only for Fort Jefferson and Key West but, to some extent, the parkway features of the new highway from Miami to Key West. I am looking into the status of our relations to that highway development and will discuss the whole program with you before conferring with Major Duff.

*Arnold F. Lee*  
Supervisor of Historic Sites.

*File*

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA



August 22, 1939

*0-36  
Florida*

FORT MARION NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT MATANZAS NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT PULASKI NATIONAL MONUMENT  
CASTLE PINCKNEY NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT FREDERICA NATIONAL MONUMENT  
OCMULGEE NATIONAL MONUMENT  
FORT JEFFERSON NATIONAL MONUMENT

Memorandum for the Director:

Reference is made to Mr. Ronald F. Lee's telegram of August 19, regarding the possible acquisition and joint use of the West Martello Tower at Key West since the War Department is opposed to full establishment as a national monument.

Both Martello Towers at Key West were built by the Federals following 1861 for defense of the South shore of the island which was accessible to landing parties and which was not sufficiently covered by the defense of Fort Taylor. The towers were in no important engagements and simply played a general part in helping the Union forces to retain Key West, one of the few points in the South held by the Federals throughout the course of the Civil War. It is doubtful whether they were ever completed entirely or mounted a full complement of guns.

The West Martello towers, unlike the East tower, is in a fair state of preservation. The brick work is similar to that in Fort Taylor and Jefferson, an excellent example of early masonry. The first floor of the tower has partly fallen but otherwise little construction work needs to be done in making the fortification safe for the public.

As a fortification, East Martello tower seems mainly important because of its design which is a carry-over from early fortifications (11th century) in Europe. As far as is known, the Martello towers are not extant elsewhere in the United States. Interpretation of the fort may be very simple and handled by the use of interpretative signs and dioramas, calling attention to the origin, the type, purpose of fortification in Key West and its part in reduction of the Confederacy by aiding the Federals to hold Key West, thereby occupying a strategic position for blockading the gulf trade.

The most important reason for establishing the West Martello tower as a national monument seems to be its preservation and interpretation which could be done jointly by the War Department and Interior Department. In this regard, it is recommended that the Park

Service assume full responsibility for the administration, protection and maintenance of the fort while the War Department would retain the right to use the tower during the summer training period of the National Guard Coast Artillery, and in the event of a national emergency, would be permitted full use if deemed necessary by the military authorities. It seems that in modern warfare, the West tower would be of little value since it is located in a position not so important as the East Martello tower for range finding and fire control, the most important use of either of the two towers.

From the Park Service viewpoint, the West Martello tower will not play an important part other than its interpretative relation to Fort Jefferson. If declared a national monument, it will be necessary to maintain a caretaker or ranger there for its protection. The West tower is possibly two miles from the yacht basin. This is the only location to be considered for establishing a shore base for operations at Fort Jefferson. It is recommended that steps be taken to contact the Navy Department and request the transfer of that portion of the navy yard outside of the present wire fence area which should include their South pier, the entrance to the yacht basin and the old concrete gun emplacement facing the gulf.

This location may be used for the erection of a store room, employees' quarters, the radio station, and will serve as the shore base for the park operator. At the present time, it is understood that this area has been leased to the WPA. The acquisition of the shore base is of greater importance than the acquisition of the West Martello tower.

The development of both areas could be undertaken by the establishment of a side camp from the Summerland CCC camp. During storm season, it is necessary for the entire camp to be removed to Key West as a matter of protection and it is believed that the proper solution would be to transfer the main camp to Key West and establish a side camp on Summerland Key.

The entire program at Fort Jefferson will depend largely upon the establishment of shore bases.

The recent Service request for a survey of anticipated revenues for all areas of the National Park Service should be given full consideration in regard to the acquisition of West Martello tower. If it were to be established as a national monument, an entrance fee of 10¢ should be charged to defray the cost of administration, protection and maintenance.



The opening of the Overseas Highway has materially increased the number of visitors to Key West and it is believed that the charge of a nominal fee would cover the cost of its operation.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Edward D. Freeland".

Edward D. Freeland  
Coordinating Superintendent

CC: Inspector Vinten  
Region 1

COPY

WAR DEPARTMENT

September 19, 1939.

The President,

The White House.

Dear Mr. President:

Reference is made to recent telephone conversation between Mr. Rowe and a representative of the War Department concerning the desire of the Administration that a compromise arrangement be worked out between the Interior Department and the War Department, which would on one hand make the Martello Towers at Key West, Florida, available as a historic point of interest to visitors and on the other hand make them available to the War Department for fire control purposes.

These reservations, as you probably know, contain fire control installations essential to fire direction of the primary and secondary batteries included in the harbor defenses of Key West. As these installations are in both cases in the towers themselves, it is considered essential that full control and exclusive jurisdiction thereover be retained by the War Department.

I am advised that the West Martello Tower is in an advanced state of disintegration and practically a mass of ruins, as the major portion of this structure was torn down many years ago to get brick for use in the more modern fortifications at Fort Taylor. Visitors are being admitted to this tower only under supervision to prevent the taking of photographs.

The East Martello Tower, however, is practically intact and is undoubtedly a point of interest. This tower, less present fire control elements, is open to the public during daylight hours. A considerable amount of beautification work, grading, and filling has been done in order to make the tower and grounds neat and attractive to visitors. Plans have been made for the further restoration of this structure and for the compilation and posting of historical data pertaining to it. As this tower is now open to visitors and is being maintained as a point of historic interest by the Army, it is believed no useful purpose would be served by any transfer of partial responsibility.

The National Park Service has informally advised that any cooperative arrangement which would permit them to supervise and assist in the restoration of the East Martello Tower would be acceptable, and I have, accordingly, issued instructions which will insure that local military authorities cooperate with the National Park Service, who have been authorized to supervise and assist in this restoration. It is hoped that the foregoing arrangements will meet with your approval.

Respectfully yours,  
(SGD) HARRY H WOODRING  
Secretary of War.  
Secret

HEADQUARTERS HARBOR DEFENSES OF KEY WEST  
Office of the Commanding Officer  
Key West Barracks  
Florida

680.2

October 13, 1939

The Coordinating Superintendent  
National Park Service  
Fort Marion  
St. Augustine, Florida.



Dear Sir:-

I have been informed by the War Department that a restoration and maintenance project at the East Martello Tower, Key West, which you have been authorized to supervise and assist in, is being considered.

No plans or description of this tower are available here; I am writing to the War Department, requesting anything available there; have received some information from Colonel George E. Brown, U. S. Engineer Superintendent, Miami Beach; and will endeavor to obtain any other information available locally.

Having some knowledge of, and experience in, this sort of work, the practicability of a restoration project interested me very much on my arrival here about three years ago, but I was deterred by the cost of the work and the necessity for concentrating all available energies and facilities on work of a military nature. A partial replacement of brickwork was undertaken, using the best "bricklayer" available on the W.P.A. rolls, with rather disconcerting results (this work should be torn out and done properly when skilled labor is available). Subsequent operations here have been limited to improving the grounds and making the structure accessible, safe, and a point of interest for visitors.

A complete restoration, as I see it, would involve replacement of the second "floor" in the tower (brick and structural iron or steel), repair of the covered passage leading to the gallery, possibly the bricking up of the present entrance, construction of a bridge permitting access to the tower by the original entrance, and a considerable amount of fill at the sides and rear of the structure. Sanitary facilities, a cistern, and a small power plant should be provided.

The brick in the structure was made in New York State, and the granite and flagstones came, I understand, from New England. A very limited amount of brick is available from the ruins of the West Martello Tower, but as military reasons forbid the razing of this structure, any additional brick required will have to be procured elsewhere.

The men engaged on the restoration should be highly skilled; a W.P.A. project might take care of the filling, grading, and unskilled labor requirements.

On a very rough estimate, a complete restoration would probably cost about \$30,000.00; is it your understanding that any cost over and above W.P.A. funds which may be made available is to be borne by the Department of the Interior, by the War Department, or jointly? I have no present information available on this point, but am writing to the War Department to find out, and to ascertain whether a complete restoration is desired.

It appears to me that the first thing that should be done is to send an expert on restoration work here, to make a detailed survey and complete cost estimates; I assume that you have such a man available, and, if you concur, would be most appreciative if this could be arranged.

Subsequently, I would be most happy to go over the project with you, on the ground if practicable, and will be glad to cooperate in the furthering of this project in any way possible.

Cordially and sincerely,

/s/ J. D. MacMullen  
Lt. Col. 13th Coast Arty.  
Commanding

*Washington*

June 18, 1940

Technical Review, History.

Restoration Project for East and West Martello Towers, Civil War fortifications at Key West, Florida.

Reference is made to the June 15, 1940, letter of Lt. Col. J. D. MacMullen to Coordinating Superintendent E. D. Freeland, enclosing project data and requesting a review of the project proposed for the Martello Towers in Key West, Florida.

Lt. Col. MacMullen is faced with the problem of adapting these structures for utilitarian military purposes, while at the same time he is desirous of conserving their historical characteristics.

From the historian's viewpoint, it is believed that these fortifications, which are said to be of unique design in the system of 19th century U. S. coastal forts, are of great importance as examples of military architecture, and their historical significance will undoubtedly increase with the years. Therefore it is important to insure their preservation, and so far as possible the preservation work should not modify their plan or appearance. Any modifications considered necessary should be based upon adequate historical archeological, architectural and visitor safety studies. Unless Visitor safety demands it, no demolition work should be done without serious consideration of the prerequisite technical studies mentioned above. In any case, measured drawings and photographs should be made to record completely the sections subject to demolition. Features casually destroyed in the name of esthetics may prove to be of inestimable value to later interpretation of the structures.

While Lt. Col. MacMullen has evidently done considerable research in the history of these fortifications, and has compiled a concise and very informative distribution sheet concerning them, it is not indicated that a detailed, documented, constructional history of the buildings has been prepared. Standard procedure calls for compilation of the constructional history report as the minimum basis for restoration work. As stated above, it should be followed by

archaeological and architectural investigation before any construction work is started.

Consequently it appears that it is premature to call the proposed Key East project a restoration project.

From the strictly historical interpretation point of view, and from the standpoint of visitor interest, the treatment of the Martello Towers (prior to preparation of the above-mentioned technical studies), should be mainly a matter of preservation and clean-up, with special consideration of visitor safety and convenience. The present antique and even ruined appearance of these structures induces visitor interest, and it is desirable to retain this atmosphere of dignified age. And, since the East Tower is in a fair state of preservation and can be used for explaining the function of the ruined West Tower, it is obvious that the major historical problem at the present time is simply one of stabilization. Again from the purely historical point of view, it is not justifiable to attempt any unnecessary new construction prior to preparation of technical historical reports.

It is realized, however, that Lt. Col. MacSullivan's problem is not solved by stating these precepts, and in the following paragraphs an attempt is made to deal with specific phases of his proposals.

#### East Martello Tower.

The proposal to construct floors in the citadel is justifiable especially from the standpoint of visitor safety and convenience. Wooden flooring is desirable, since that is the type more in keeping with 19th century repairs. Linoleum covering is anachronistic.

Construction of partitions and installation of electric lights, toilets, etc., are not historically justifiable and would greatly interfere with interpretation of the structure as a Civil War fortification. If nevertheless they are to be installed, it would be desirable to design and construct them apart from the original construction in order that they might be removed without damage to the original if and when the building is used only for historical purposes. Careful record of the original structural features should be made before new work is introduced. All new work should have its date marked upon it in accessible locations.

The storm shelter over the citadel staircase should be constructed though perhaps not as a permanent fixture. Almost certainly there was some sort of shelter over this opening.

Railings, at least on the citadel platform, are necessary for visitor safety. It is questionable whether there would be any advantage in allowing visitor access to the top of the crenate arches, and stairs and walkways at these points must be considered historically unjustified, since they did not formerly exist.

The same is true of the projected drawbridge. Undoubtedly the drawbridge would be of great visitor interest, but since it apparently was never constructed, there is no historical justification for introducing it.

Restoration of masonry should be held in abeyance until technical studies have been prepared, especially since Lt. Col. Macmillan indicates that master masons are virtually unavailable for the work. Repointing is likewise inadvisable except in unusual cases, since an antique and ruinous appearance generally adds to the appeal of historic structures. Where repointing is considered necessary for conservation, the original masonry work should be carefully duplicated, as Lt. Col. Macmillan points out.

#### West Martello Tower.

The plan proposed to compensate stresses at this fortification appears to be a logical solution, and one generally in character with the architecture. While it will render functional interpretation of the structure more difficult, there is no reason for disapproving it as long as it will solve the preservation problem.

The ruins of the citadel, as long as they are not dangerous for visitors, should not be demolished. This is a case where historical conservation transcends esthetics. A cleanup of the ruins by removing debris will contribute to the appearance of the citadel feature. The same is true of other ruined masonry in the West Tower. Demolition, except for visitor safety, or for removal of anachronistic structures, is not historically justifiable. In the order of their importance, education in relation to presentation of historic structures calls for 1) preservation 2) repair 3) restoration; and if the first is properly done, there is less ground for later misinterpretation through invading use of the others.

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Careful consideration should be given to the desirability of "fairing up" the brickwork in this building. After all, the Tower is a ruin, and there is not much point in making it a "stream-lined" ruin.

As in the case of the East Tower, adaptation for military purposes preferably would involve no change in plan or appearance of the structure, and installations should be so designed as to require a minimum disturbance of old construction, with subsequent removal without damage to original construction.

In conclusion, it is seen that the two aims to be achieved by the project do not appear wholly compatible, and that is unfortunate. But Lt. Col. Magellan's evident interest in preservation and presentation of these interesting structures to the public will certainly do much to reconcile the two. Summarizing: 1) Preservation by stabilizing the present condition of the structures is the primary consideration, and is provided for in the proposed project. Proposed demolition work, however, should be kept to the minimum consistent with visitor safety. 2) Restoration work as such is premature at this time. 3) New construction adapting the structures for military use, if it must go in, should preferably be designed to be an integral part of the original fortification.

*Albert C. Manney*

Albert C. Manney  
Junior Historical Technician.



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON

ADDRESS ONLY  
THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

July 12, 1940.

MEMORANDUM for the Acting Director. *RM*

The studies, blueprints and other data compiled by Lt. Col. J. D. MacMullen in connection with the restoration of the Martello Towers at Key West, transmitted by Acting Regional Director Roberts' memorandum of June 28 have been reviewed by the Branch of Plans and Design.

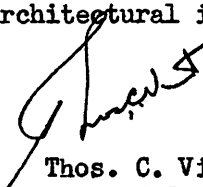
The qualifications of Lt. Col. MacMullen for restoration work of military nature are extraordinarily impressive. It is noted that he is a licensed architect, a member of the American Institute of Architects, has had training in classic archaeology and has a knowledge of military architecture. With apparent thoroughness he has studied the projected restoration over a period of three years. He recognizes two objectives in the undertaking - "to meet certain military requirements, and to restore the structures to such an extent as to indicate the original purpose of the structures and to prevent further deterioration."

The foregoing evidences to me that the restoration is in capable and sympathetic hands and I am willing to assume that the results to be expected will be as thorough a restoration as is consistent with the circumstance that the structures are, or are to be made, elements of active fortifications, a "going concern", as Lt. Col. MacMullen aptly states it.

The primacy of the claims of the current defense program can scarcely be denied. The climate is definitely unsuitable for proposing cooperation between this Service and the Army for authentic restoration, as was lately unhappily demonstrated at La Forteleza, Puerto Rico.

However interesting the Martello Towers may be to students of military fortification, their historic and structural significance is scarcely of primary rank, and I am reluctant to recommend that the Service inject itself into the restoration undertaking.

It is possible that by getting into a position where it might be charged with obstructing the defense program on a project of secondary importance to it, the Service might injure its chances to influence later restorations of Army holdings of far more historical and architectural importance.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Thos. C. Vint', written in a cursive style.

Thos. C. Vint,  
Chief of Planning.

cc: Architectural Division