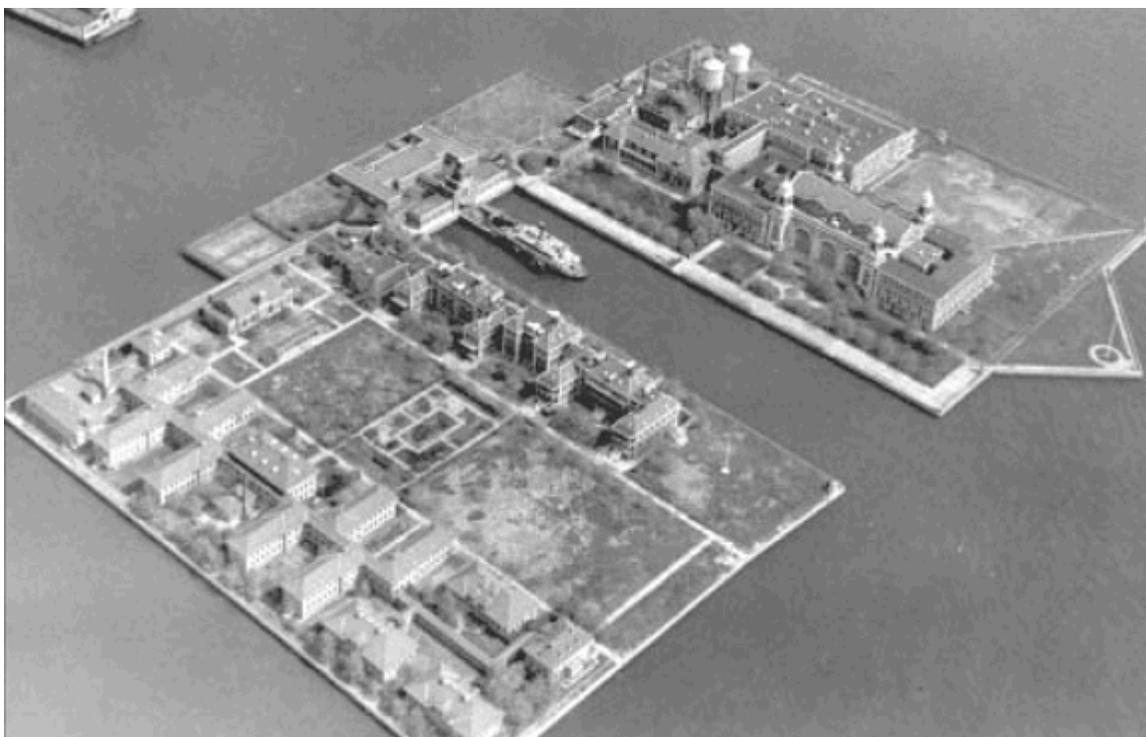

National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory
1998

Revised 2004



Ellis Island
Statue of Liberty NM - Ellis Island National Monument

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Inventory Summary

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:

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Cultural Landscapes Inventory – General Information

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) is a database containing information on the historically significant landscapes within the National Park System. This evaluated inventory identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, condition, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, as well as other valuable information useful to park management. Cultural landscapes become approved inventory records when all required data fields are entered, the park superintendent concurs with the information, and the landscape is determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places through a consultation process or is otherwise managed as a cultural resource through a public planning process.

The CLI, like the List of Classified Structures (LCS), assists the National Park Service (NPS) in its efforts to fulfill the identification and management requirements associated with Section 110(a) of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Park Service Management Policies (2001), and Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management. Since launching the CLI nationwide, the NPS, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), is required to report information that respond to NPS strategic plan accomplishments. Two goals are associated with the CLI: 1) increasing the number of certified cultural landscapes (1b2B); and 2) bringing certified cultural landscapes into good condition (1a7). The CLI maintained by Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program, WASO, is the official source of cultural landscape information.

Implementation of the CLI is coordinated and approved at the regional level. Each region annually updates a strategic plan that prioritizes work based on a variety of park and regional needs that include planning and construction projects or associated compliance requirements that lack cultural landscape documentation. When the inventory unit record is complete and concurrence with the findings is obtained from the superintendent and the State Historic Preservation Office, the regional CLI coordinator certifies the record and transmits it to the national CLI Coordinator for approval. Only records approved by the national CLI coordinator are included on the CLI for official reporting purposes.

Relationship between the CLI and a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR)

The CLI and the CLR are related efforts in the sense that both document the history,

significance, and integrity of park cultural landscapes. However, the scope of the CLI is limited by the need to achieve concurrence with the park superintendent resolve eligibility questions when a National Register nomination does not exist or the nomination inadequately addresses the eligibility of the landscape characteristics. Ideally, a park's CLI work (which many include multiple inventory units) precedes a CLR because the baseline information in the CLI not only assists with priority setting when more than one CLR is needed it also assists with determining more accurate scopes of work.

In contrast, the CLR is the primary treatment document for significant park landscapes. It, therefore, requires an additional level of research and documentation both to evaluate the historic and the existing condition of the landscape in order to recommend preservation treatment that meets the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the treatment of historic properties.

The scope of work for a CLR, when the CLI has not been done, should include production of the CLI record. Depending on its age and scope, existing CLR's are considered the primary source for the history, statement of significance, and descriptions of contributing resources that are necessary to complete a CLI record.

Inventory Unit Description:

Ellis Island, a part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument, is nationally significant for its role in U.S. immigration, serving as the entry point for twelve million immigrants between 1892 and 1954. Situated in New York Harbor's Upper Bay on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River, the island lies approximately one and one-half miles southwest of Manhattan Island and three-quarters of a mile north of Liberty Island. Originally only three and one-half acres in size, today Ellis Island covers nearly twenty-seven and one-half acres as a result of numerous landfill operations between 1830 and 1935. This pattern of development created a landscape divided into three distinct parcels that are identified by the names Island One, Island Two, and Island Three.

Island One is the northernmost area and was the location of the original island. Island One contains the primary immigration facilities, including the renovated main immigration building, and houses all the park's operations: Administration, Concessions, Interpretation, Maintenance, Management, Museum Services, and Park Police. Islands Two and Three are constructed entirely of landfill and contain hospital facilities formerly occupied by the U.S. Public Health Service and the U. S. Coast Guard. Some areas of Island One and all of Islands Two and Three have been virtually unused and unmaintained since the immigration station closed in 1954. As a result of a multiyear preservation effort, buildings on Islands Two and Three have been stabilized.

HISTORY OVERVIEW

During the period from prehistory to 1890, Ellis Island grew from a small islet in New York Harbor with relatively few distinguishing characteristics to a highly developed island dramatically influenced by human intervention. Ownership of the site passed from Native Americans to early colonists and eventually to the state and federal governments. Land use patterns evolved from occasional Native American subsistence gathering, to small-scale recreational and residential usage by colonists, to a fully

functional military fortification protecting an increasingly prosperous and developed urban harbor. Throughout this period the island's permanent inhabitants altered the natural landscape by adding landfill and constructing numerous buildings, fortifications, and small-scale features like wells, docks, and seawalls. Through the years this continued construction greatly affected the island's native vegetation, replacing it with a new palette of low growing grasses that accommodated the increased human activity and a few trees and garden plots planted by island residents. By the end of the period, Ellis Island was no longer recognizable as the small glacial deposit from which it was born, but was a fully developed island ready to move into a new era of use as the location of the country's premier immigration station.

Between 1890 and 1897, the Ellis Island landscape changed dramatically. Immigration became the island's primary land use, and the federal government constructed a new facility to process the thousands of immigrants passing through the port of New York each year. To accommodate this expansion, the Department of the Treasury removed many of the existing naval magazine structures, added cribwork and landfill to increase the island's footprint, and constructed numerous wooden buildings to accommodate immigrants' processing, medical care, and temporary housing. They added small-scale features to the island like fences, walks, and lighting, and in the process removed nearly all of the extant vegetation, except for a few trees around existing buildings. By 1897 the island was more than fourteen acres in size and had twelve major buildings extant. The new Ellis Island Immigration Station was ready to greet the flood of immigrants expected to arrive at the dawn of the new century.

The decade from 1897 to 1907 was one of the most significant time periods in the development of the Ellis Island that exists today. It was during these years the federal government constructed the second immigration station and began enlarging the island to accommodate the increasing influx of immigrants. Supervised by the Department of the Treasury, contractors added landfill to the original island and created two additional islands for facility enlargement. They constructed eight masonry buildings, several smaller wooden structures, and numerous small-scale features to support the immigration operation. Rising immigration rates resulted in increased wear on the facilities. Responding to criticism of the conditions, Ellis Island's Commissioner of Immigration William Williams pushed for continued improvements. He stressed the importance of the station's appearance as a symbol of the United States to incoming aliens and established the island's aesthetic with his desire to improve the landscape. By the end of this era, a decade of work on the island increased its size to just over twenty acres and established a pattern of development that would be followed for the next several decades.

During the period from circa 1907 to circa 1920, a general increase in immigration and other activity on the island led to continued expansion of the Ellis Island facilities. Construction of several buildings occurred, existing structures received continued maintenance and renovation, and landscape changes accommodated more people on the island. During the early part of this era, the ornamental landscape remained consistent in its appearance and condition, reflecting the improvements made under Commissioner Williams during 1902 and 1903. The landscape evolved with the approach of the 1920s and the ensuing changes to the station's use during and immediately after World War I. Throughout these years the overall size of the island increased only slightly with the addition of landfill on Island One created by the construction of a new seawall.

During the next three decades, Ellis Island's landscape consistently changed in response to modified patterns of use on the island. Reduced immigration activity in the 1920s and the accompanying reduction in station staff resulted in some deterioration of structures and the landscape. However, routine maintenance preserved most landscape features. Changes during the 1930s emphasized the facility's new role as a detention center by providing increased areas and facilities for detainee recreation. This period saw the addition or rehabilitation of numerous features, including security fencing to confine detainees, guardhouses, and new sections of concrete and granite seawall. Implementation of a comprehensive planting plan began in the early 1940s and continued until the onset of World War II. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, island activity slowed considerably and little change took place on the island. By the time the station officially closed in 1954, the facilities and landscape were once again neglected and deteriorating.

The postimmigration period from 1954 to the present brought another dramatic change to the island's land use and its landscape. In 1965, Ellis Island became part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument. This stimulated National Park Service (NPS) planners to develop numerous rehabilitation options for the island. However, most of these plans called for the loss of historic fabric, including buildings and landscape features. The NPS delayed island development several years for numerous reasons, including limited funding and public support for any of the proposed actions. When the NPS finally began work on the island in the 1970s, the primary focus was rehabilitation of the main immigration building and its surrounding landscape for visitor use. With the opening of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum in 1990, the NPS added interpretation and commemoration as new land uses for the island. The focus since then has been to develop and maintain the buildings and landscape in a manner that preserves the site's significance while providing the services required and expected by the visiting public. Continued planning into the twenty-first century emphasizes this direction by exploring adaptive reuse of the stabilized buildings and landscape features in a manner that is compatible with the island's historic integrity and character.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Ellis Island was proclaimed an addition to the Statue of Liberty National Monument on April 15, 1965 and listed on the National Register in 1966. A nomination form, specific to Ellis Island as part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument Documentation was completed in 1975 and submitted to the Keeper on April 15, 1976. (Separate documentation was prepared in 1981 for Liberty Island, entitled, Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World.) In this documentation, the island's association with immigration was identified as the primary area of significance under Criterion A, with the architectural elements of the facility providing support to this theme. However, the cultural landscape was not mentioned.

AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE OVERVIEW

Ellis Island's significance as documented under Criterion A in the site's current National Register nomination recognizes the island's direct contribution to the broad pattern of United States history through its use as the country's premier federal immigration station. The period of significance for the

island is 1892-1954, covering the immigration period and extending to the date of the facility's closure.

In addition, the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office in their concurrence with the findings of this CLI, dated September 15, 2004, found "the buildings and landscapes of Ellis Island are eligible under Criterion C." (letter from Dorothy P. Guzzo to Marie Rust, 9/15/04)

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OVERVIEW

Land Use

Historically, the island's land use was primarily related to immigration, with occasional periods of residential and military usage. With the close of the facility at the end of the period of significance, active land use ceased. Currently, land use is focused on commemoration, interpretation, and preservation. Implementation of these new uses has resulted in numerous landscape additions like the Wall of Honor, concessions areas, crowd-control features, and signage. However, since these contemporary uses do not have integrity to the historic period, the current land use is classified as noncontributing to the island's significance.

Spatial Organization

The initial construction of the first immigration facilities at the beginning of the immigration period began the establishment of the island's dominant spatial organization by clustering new buildings in a linear fashion along the ferry landing. As additional buildings were constructed on Island One and the landfill of Islands Two and Three, the linear pattern of development was retained and open spaces developed between the structures, including small courtyards, lawns, and larger recreation areas. This development pattern continued throughout the island's history. The rectilinear layout of exterior walkways, connecting corridors between the buildings, and the planting of a formally influenced landscape, including tree rows along the walks and lawns, reinforced the island's spatial organization.

Currently, the spatial organization remains consistent with its historic pattern and is one of the most important contributing characteristics to the island's historic significance. Extant buildings and structures are arranged in a linear pattern, running generally north/south along all three islands. Defined open spaces include individual courtyards between buildings, former recreation areas on all three islands, and the formal lawn panels on Island One. Despite years of concealment by overgrown vegetation, historic open spaces are revealed once again, thanks to several recent vegetation clearing projects on Islands Two and Three.

Topography

In 1898 Boring and Tilton recommended raising the elevation of Ellis Island for the main immigration building two feet above the original level and sloping the grade slightly away from the new buildings. This height and landform has been maintained ever since. The topography of the island and surrounding bay floor was altered with the addition of landfill to create Islands Two and Three. However, these

new additions maintained essentially the same elevation as Island One, reinforcing the predominant low, flat topography of the island. These conditions have not changed from the historic condition. The existing topography remains relatively flat and stable, with only a few small sinkholes along the seawall on Islands Two and Three. The continuity of Ellis Island's overall topography makes it a contributing characteristic to the island's significance.

Circulation

Throughout the period of significance, several different features accommodated pedestrian circulation. Primary pedestrian circulation was originally achieved with boardwalks along the ferry basin on Island One. These were later replaced with concrete walkways along the new seawall and in a rectilinear pattern adjacent to the main immigration building, providing definition to outdoor spaces and access to all buildings. The specific pattern changed slightly over the years, especially with the removal of the entry portico and construction of subsequent flower beds, but the overall rectilinear form of the walkways remained consistent. Ferry ramps were also extant at various times both in the boardwalk and the later concrete walkways along the ferry basin. On Islands Two and Three, initial circulation routes included cinder paths, concrete aprons directly adjacent to the buildings (on Island Two), concrete walks, and eventually covered corridors between all three islands. The last major addition during the historic period occurred during the 1930s with the construction of the rectilinear walk system in the recreation area between Islands Two and Three.

Currently, the pedestrian circulation is relatively consistent with the island's historic condition. Concrete walkways provide the major pedestrian access routes through the public areas on Island One. Although these walks replaced original ones during the early NPS rehabilitation of Island One, their rectilinear pattern is consistent with the historic precedent. Ferry ramps are still extant and are located in the same general area as they were historically, with one contemporary addition on the southeast end of the ferry basin. Additional walkways, steps, and ramps have been added, primarily with the construction of the Wall of Honor, the entry portico, and the concessions area on the southeast end of the island. The covered corridors still provide pedestrian access to all three islands. Sections on Island One have been rehabilitated, but sections on Islands Two and Three remain in a state of disrepair. The historic rectilinear walkways on Islands Two and Three remain intact but are also in extremely poor condition. After nearly fifty years of complete neglect, vegetation, weather, and erosion have damaged the concrete, and all these walkways are in need of repair.

Circulation to and from the island was historically accomplished by water transportation. Arriving boats came directly to the ferry basin between Islands One and Two, with most landing along the edge of the ferry basin and some docking at the ferry slip and dock at the basin's end. Additional boats arrived at the coal wharf northeast of the powerhouse, primarily for deliveries and other operational needs.

Island access has changed slightly from the historic condition. Boats still provide the primary transportation for visitors, arriving in the ferry basin as they did historically. However, the only landing access for the public is located along the ferry basin edge in front of the main immigration building. The historic ferry slip and dock, where the sunken ferryboat Ellis Island is located, are in a deteriorated state

and are no longer in use. Boat traffic also continues to arrive at the location of the old coal wharf, primarily serving maintenance facility needs. There is also a small floating dock located on the northwest end of the ferry basin that is used for smaller boats operated by the U. S. Park Police. Additionally, vehicular access has been added to the island with the construction of the temporary bridge to New Jersey and the adjoining parking lots.

Despite having portions in relatively poor condition, the existing pedestrian walkways and corridors on all three islands are contributing features to the significance of Ellis Island. The pattern of water transportation to the island is also contributing, but since there was historically no vehicular access to the island, the temporary bridge and parking lots are noncontributing features.

Buildings and Structures

Ellis Island's buildings and structures are perhaps the most prominent elements in the cultural landscape, and nearly all that remain are contributing features to the island's significance. Approximately forty buildings were constructed on the island during the period of significance throughout several phases of development and rehabilitation. Historic development of the extant buildings of the second immigration station began in 1901 with the construction of the main immigration building and main hospital building. Building construction ceased in the late 1930s when the last major phase of development added the new ferry building, new immigration building, recreation building, and recreation shelters. Various other structures were also a vital part of the facility historically, including water towers, coal hoisting equipment, trash storage facilities, tennis courts, small docks, and the ferry slip and dock. Some historic buildings and structures were lost during the period of significance, including the surgeon's house, original ferry building, tennis courts, coal hoisting equipment, and wooden seawall. The NPS removed others from the island during rehabilitation work in the 1980s and 1990s including the greenhouse, incinerator, and original water towers.

Currently, thirty-two historic buildings and four historic structures are extant on the island in varying states of rehabilitation, stabilization, or abandonment. They include all the major immigration and hospital buildings, the concrete and granite seawall, remnants of the ferry slip and dock, the sunken remains of the ferry boat Ellis Island, and an exposed portion of the archeological remains of Fort Gibson. A contemporary water tower is present on Island One that is an in-kind reconstruction of a missing historic feature. There are also several nonhistoric buildings and structures present including the Wall of Honor, NPS guardhouse, concession kiosk, and maintenance building. These features are noncontributing, and their presence is less critical to maintaining the island's significance and integrity.

Vegetation

During the historic period, numerous changes to the island landscape altered the overall vegetation character. During the station's initial establishment and development, there was a limited amount of preexisting vegetation combined with newly planted trees, shrubs, and lawns concentrated primarily on Islands One and Two around the ferry basin. Subsequent improvements under Commissioners Williams and Corsi added more ornamental vegetation like flower beds, climbing vines, ornamental planters, and

Ellis Island
Statue of Liberty NM - Ellis Island National Monument

formal lawns with hedges. Implementation of the 1939 planting plan increased the overall amount of vegetation on the island, but there were relatively few species present. *Platanus acerifolia* (London planetree) was the predominant tree planted along the ferry basin and around the recreation yard between Islands Two and Three. Established lawns remained in front of the main immigration building, in open spaces between other buildings, and in the large recreation spaces. Plantings of *Juniperus* spp. (juniper), *Ligustrum* spp. (privet), *Spiraea* spp. (spirea), and *Viburnum* spp. (viburnum) existed in smaller numbers in a few locations between buildings and along walkways. By the end of the historic period, the amount of ornamental vegetation had decreased substantially. Mature trees and open lawns dominated the island and there were few, if any, flower beds or other ornamental plantings.

After the station's closure in 1954, vegetation growth was rampant and unchecked. The historic landscape became overgrown and many invasive and volunteer species began to take over the island. By the mid-1960s a wide variety of species were present including vines like *Euonymus* spp. (euonymus), *Hedera helix* (English ivy), *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* (Virginia creeper), and *Toxicodendron radicans* (poison ivy); shrubs such as *Forsythia intermedia* (forsythia), *Ligustrum* spp. (privet), *Rhus* spp. (sumac), *Syringa vulgaris* (common lilac), *Taxus* spp. (yew); and numerous trees including, *Ailanthus altissima* (tree-of-heaven), *Betula* spp. (birch), *Malus* spp. (crabapple), *Platanus acerifolia* (London planetree), *Prunus* spp. (wild cherry), *Quercus* spp. (oak), and *Ulmus* spp. (elm). Subsequent island rehabilitation and preservation efforts in the 1970s through the 1990s cleared much of the rampant vegetation, leaving many historic trees and remnant shrubs in place.

Currently, extant vegetation on Island One includes a mix of historic trees and newly planted trees, shrubs, lawn, and flowers. The mature *Platanus acerifolia* are still present along the ferry basin where they were originally planted and are in reasonably good condition. There is also one *malus* southeast of the main immigration building dating to the historic period, but it was likely a volunteer tree that sprang up along an earlier fence line. All other trees on Island One, whether planted or volunteers, postdate the historic period. On Islands Two and Three, most existing mature trees date from the historic period; however, many were volunteers and were not part of the island's planting plan. Many mature *Platanus acerifolia* and *Quercus palustris* remain in their original planting pattern along the walkways and are in good condition. Recent vegetation clearing projects removed many volunteer species, but continual maintenance is required to prevent the landscape from becoming completely overgrown again.

Historic specimen trees and shrubs, including the mature *Platanus acerifolia*, *Quercus palustris*, and surviving shrubs from the 1940s, are considered contributing features to the island's historic significance. All other vegetation, including recently planted trees, shrubs, and flowers on Island One and volunteer trees, shrubs, or vines on Islands Two and Three, is noncontributing.

However, the vegetation planting patterns surviving from the 1939 planting plan are the more significant contributing features to the cultural landscape. The linear tree rows along the ferry basin and walkways, formal lawn panels on Island One, lawn recreation spaces on all three islands, and small courtyard spaces between buildings have been defining elements of the cultural landscape since the historic period.

Views and Vistas

There is no indication that early planners considered view sheds to, from, or within Ellis Island to be significant. However, the island's development pattern and the spatial organization of its features did establish view sheds that became character-defining elements of the cultural landscape. Prior to the period of significance, island views were expansive. Facility development and extant vegetation were minimal, providing important open site lines for the early military installation. View sheds changed with the start of the immigration period and the subsequent development of the immigration station. Views across the harbor became blocked from the island's interior by the numerous buildings, structures, and eventually by maturing vegetation; however, they remained open if viewed from the island's edges. These expansive views could be seen at the seawall, where dominant view sheds included the Manhattan skyline to the northeast, the Statue of Liberty to the south, and the New Jersey shore to the north and west. The construction of various small courtyards, recreation spaces, and open lawns created more intimate views within the individual islands. Additionally, the sight of the island and the immigration station from the surrounding harbor was an important view for the thousands of immigrants processed at the facility. For many, this view of the grand buildings and formally influenced landscape was their first glimpse of America and emphasized the stature and importance of this governmental facility. These views became less impressive at the end of the historic period, due to the increased fencing around the island for detention areas and the general wear and tear of the facilities and landscape. Upon the closure of the station in 1954, most views within and toward the islands became obscured with the subsequent vegetation growth.

The rehabilitation of many facilities and removal of overgrown vegetation has reestablished important island views. Views from the seawall across the harbor are more varied with the growth of the surrounding urban environment, particularly the development of Manhattan and the New Jersey coastline, including Liberty State Park to the northwest of the island. Interior island views continue to be small in scale, with emphasis on views across the islands' open lawns and into small courtyard spaces. Views of the island and former immigration station from the harbor are also extant and with the exception of the inclusion of mature trees, are similar to the views experienced by arriving immigrants. All views are considered contributing features to the island's historic significance.

Small-scale Features

The immigration station contained a variety of small-scale features throughout the period of significance. Cycles of construction, deterioration, and rehabilitation brought about continuous changes in the style and placement of a number of these elements. Many features provided a utilitarian function, including wooden docks and pilings, several different styles of outdoor lighting, a water collection and supply system, flagstaffs, a fog bell and wooden tower, pilot light, and various types of signage. Ornamental features accompanied subsequent phases of landscape improvements, including twisted-wire fencing around lawn areas, movable picket fencing for crowd control, benches for immigrant and employee use, planters for ornamental vegetation, and at least two birdbaths in the Island Two and Three courtyard spaces. Seawall improvements brought the addition of iron mooring cleats along the ferry basin for docking ships. Features like the children's playground equipment, chain link

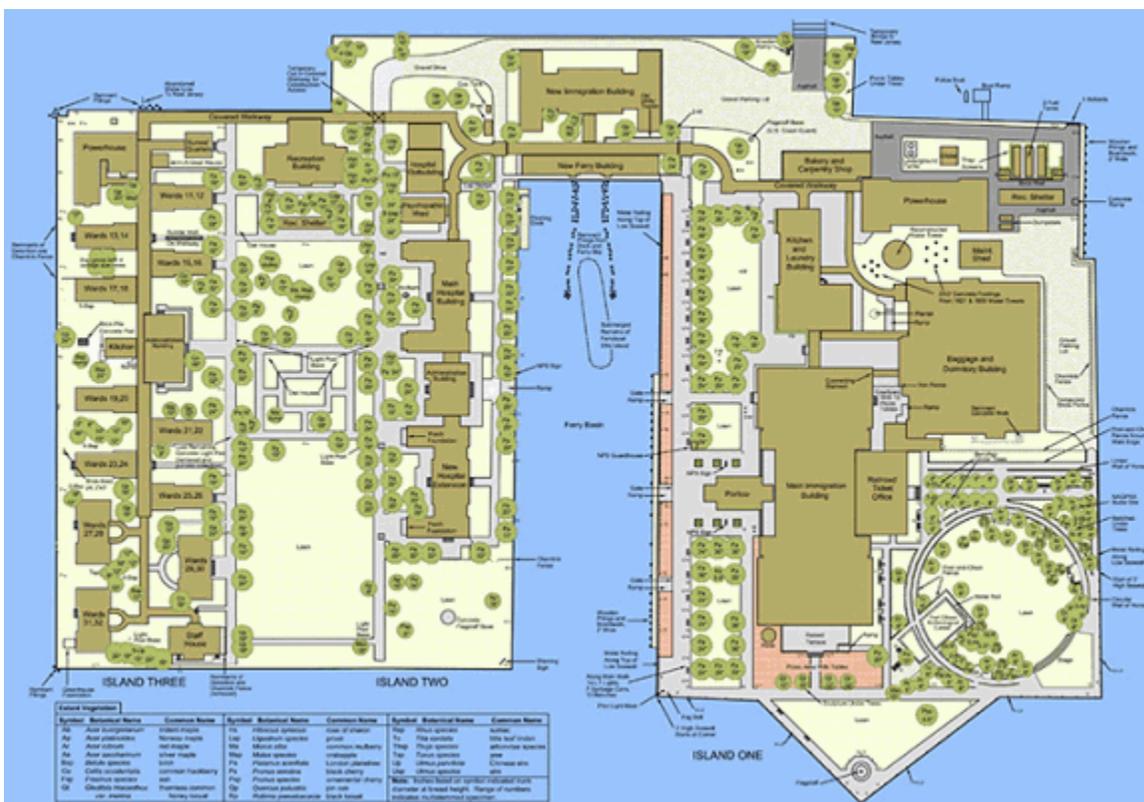
fencing, and baseball backstop served the increased recreation and detention facility needs. By the end of the historic period, many of the oldest small-scale features were no longer extant, or had been replaced with new feature types. During the time the island was abandoned, substantial loss or damage occurred with many remaining features. However, some historic features did survive intact.

Small-scale features on the island are currently a combination of historic and contemporary. Contemporary items like benches, fencing, lighting, and trash receptacles are generally in good condition; however, they do not contribute to the island's historic significance. Most historic features such as the iron mooring cleats, manhole covers, water tower foundations, a concrete birdbath, and fire hydrants are in relatively good condition. However, other historic small-scale features are in much worse shape and are in danger of loss from vandalism or neglect, including remnant chain link fencing and the last existing concrete light post on Island Two. Despite their condition, all extant historic small-scale features contribute to the island's significance.

INTEGRITY OVERVIEW

The Ellis Island landscape retains high integrity in location, design, setting, and association. It retains moderate integrity in materials, workmanship, and feeling. According to National Register guidelines, a property either does or does not retain its overall historic integrity, indicating that it does or does not convey its significance. Even though there have been incremental changes subsequent to the historic period, the Ellis Island cultural landscape does retain integrity to its 1892-1954 period of significance.

Site Plan



Ellis Island Site Plan, updated in 2004, based on existing conditions plan from the Cultural Landscape Report, see appendix for enlargement.

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name: Ellis Island
Property Level: Landscape
CLI Identification Number: 650004
Parent Landscape: 650004

Park Information

Park Name and Alpha Code: Statue of Liberty NM - Ellis Island National Monument -ELIS
Park Organization Code: 1945
Subunit/District Name Alpha Code: Statue of Liberty NM - Ellis Island National Monument - ELIS

Park Administrative Unit:

Statue of Liberty National Monument

CLI Hierarchy Description

The Statue of Liberty National Monument consists of two islands, Ellis Island and Liberty Island, located in Upper New York Bay, 0.1 miles off the New Jersey shore. This Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) documents and evaluates the historical development and existing conditions of the Ellis Island landscape. It also explores Ellis Island's documented historical significance and evaluates other areas of significance to which the site's landscape may contribute, based on Section 110(a)(1) of the National Historic Preservation Act and the National Register of Historic Places guidelines.

Ellis Island is an identifiable and distinct property within the boundaries of the Statue of Liberty National Monument. Its significance is unrelated to that of Liberty Island. Presidential Proclamation specifically dictates that Ellis Island be operated by the Statue of Liberty National Monument. However, each island has a distinctly different history and significance. In addition, Ellis Island, inventoried here, is physically separate from Liberty Island, making each landscape an easily identifiable unit of its own. For purposes of the CLI, Ellis Island will be inventoried as an individual landscape within Statue of Liberty National Monument.



Ellis Island located in Upper New York Bay, due north of Liberty Island and west/northwest of Governor's Island (map printed from TOPO! Wildflower Productions, 1998).

Concurrence Status

Inventory Status: Complete

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence: Yes
Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence: 08/09/2004
National Register Concurrence: Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination
Date of Concurrence Determination: 09/15/2004

National Register Concurrence Narrative:

As a result of this CLI the landscape of Ellis Island is found to be eligible and contributes to the national significance of the island. A letter of concurrence, dated 9/15/04, was received from the New Jersey SHPO. In addition to concurring with our findings for significance under Criterion A, the New Jersey SHPO also states "that the contributing buildings and landscapes of Ellis Island are eligible under Criterion C."

Revisions Impacting Change in Concurrence:

Revision Date: 05/30/2004

Revision Narrative:

Major revisions to select sections were completed to this Cultural Landscapes Inventory in 2004 using updated information and analysis contained within the Cultural Landscape Report for Ellis Island written by J. Tracy Stakely, Historical Landscape Architect, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, in May 2003. Sections of the CLI which were revised include the Statement of Significance, Physical History, Chronology, Analysis and Evaluation, and National Register Information.

Data Collection Date: 02/01/2001 **Recorder:** Patrick L. Eeey
Data Entry Date: 02/01/2001 **Recorder:** Patrick L. Eeey

Geographic Information & Location Map

Inventory Unit Boundary Description:

The cultural landscape of Ellis Island includes three contiguous parcels known as Island One, Island Two and Island Three. Since the landscape consists entirely of an island, the boundaries are easily defined: a man-made seawall and the waters of Upper Bay in between New York and New Jersey at the mouth of the Hudson River.

State and County:

State: NJ

County: Hudson County

State: NY

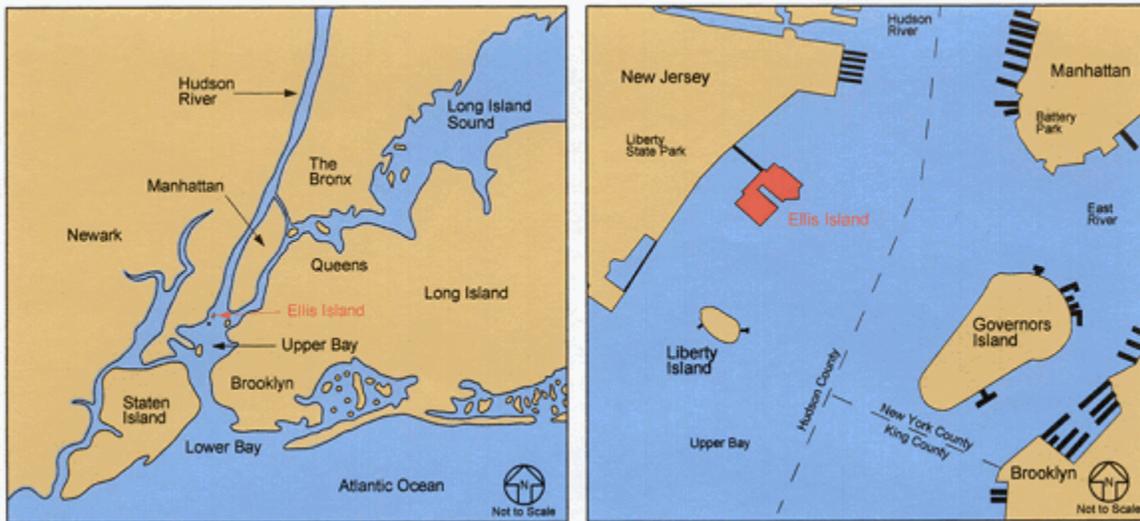
County: New York County

Size (Acres): 27.50

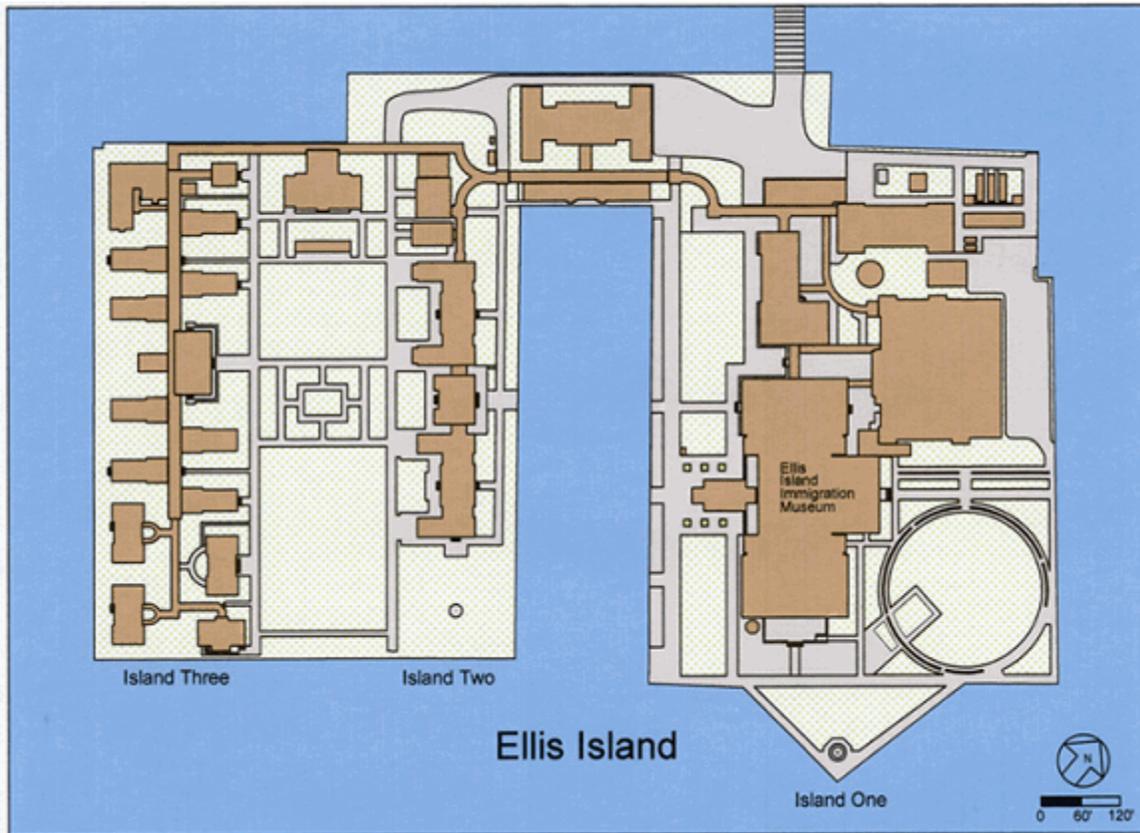
Boundary UTMS:

<u>Source</u>	<u>Type of Point</u>	<u>Datum</u>	<u>UTM Zone</u>	<u>UTM Easting</u>	<u>UTM Northing</u>
USGS Map 1:24,000	Point	NAD 83	18	581,061	4,505,738

Location Map:



Ellis Island located in relation to New Jersey, New York, islands of the Upper Bay, Hudson River and East River (ELIS CLR).



Islands One, Two and Three of Ellis Island (ELIS CLR).

Regional Context:

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

Ellis Island is located north of the Statue of Liberty, southwest of the lower tip of Manhattan, and northwest of Governors Island. The island's current development reflects its historic use as an immigration station. Designated and administered as a public park that interprets the history of American immigration through the port of New York, Ellis Island also contains a museum and archive for researchers and citizens.

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

At .34 miles long and .21 miles wide at its widest point, Ellis Island is 27.5 acres in size, an increase of more than 800% its original 3.3 acres. The island, which is located in Upper Bay at the mouth of the Hudson River, .1 miles east of New Jersey's Liberty State Park, and 1.3 miles west of Manhattan's South Ferry, is flat and maintains an elevation of 5 feet above sea level.

Type of Context: Political

Description:

Ellis Island is owned by the federal government, is managed by the National Park Service and falls within the jurisdiction of both New York and New Jersey. The original island, a 3.3-acre remnant of glacial till known as Oyster Island, is within New York and the surrounding 24.5-acre landfill within New Jersey. Jurisdiction originally rested with New York State, however, the United States Supreme Court ruled in the 1990s that all accreted lands were to be under the jurisdiction of New Jersey.

Management Unit: Ellis Island

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must Be Preserved And Maintained

Management Category Date: 04/07/1998

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

As directed in the LCS and noted in the 1982 GMP, "...spaces most closely associated with the immigrant's experiences on Ellis Island will be preserved..." The landscape provides the overall setting for the immigration station. The character-defining features of the landscape must be preserved under this management category.

Agreements, Legal Interest, and Access

Management Agreement:

Type of Agreement: Concession Contract/Permit

Expiration Date: 3/31/2007

Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative:

The contract for ferry service is with Circle Line Ferry.

Type of Agreement: Concession Contract/Permit

Expiration Date: 9/30/2005

Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative:

A concession contract is in place with Aramark to provide a gift shop and snack bar. An extension to the concession contract has been requested to 9/30/2008.

NPS Legal Interest:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Explanatory Narrative:

The National Park Service owns Ellis Island in fee with part of the island legally within New York State and part within New Jersey.

Public Access:

Type of Access:	No Access Currently
Type of Access:	Other Restrictions
Type of Access:	With Permission

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? Yes

Adjacent Lands Description:

The immigration station of Ellis Island has always been located within the highly developed confines of New York Harbor. Today, its location and the character of the surroundings remain the same. New York Harbor continues to characterize the same busy port with developed shorelines surrounding the harbor. The view to the Statue of Liberty still persists.

National Register Information

Existing National Register Status

National Register Landscape Documentation:

Entered Inadequately Documented

National Register Explanatory Narrative:

Ellis Island was proclaimed an addition to the Statue of Liberty National Monument on April 15, 1965 and listed in the National Register in 1966. A nomination form, specific to Ellis Island as part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument Documentation was completed in 1975 and submitted to the Keeper on April 15, 1976. (Separate documentation was prepared in 1981 for Liberty Island, entitled, Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World.) In this documentation, the island's association with immigration was identified as the primary area of significance under Criterion A, with the architectural elements of the facility providing support to this theme. However, the cultural landscape was not mentioned.

Existing NRIS Information:

NRIS Number:	66000058
Primary Certification:	Listed In The National Register
Primary Certification Date:	10/15/1966
Name in National Register:	Statue of Liberty National Monument, Ellis Island and Liberty Island
Other Names:	Ellis Island;Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World;Ellis Island;Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World

National Register Eligibility

National Register Concurrence:	Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination
Contributing/Individual:	Individual
National Register Classification:	District
Significance Level:	National
Significance Criteria:	C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

Period of Significance:

Time Period:	AD 1892 - 1954
Historic Context Theme:	Changing Role of the U.S. in the World
Subtheme:	Immigration and Emigration Policies
Facet:	Immigration And Emigration Policies
Other Facet:	None

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category	Area of Significance Subcategory
Ethnic Heritage	European
Social History	European
Architecture	None
Landscape Architecture	None
Military	None

Statement of Significance:

Ellis Island was proclaimed an addition to the Statue of Liberty National Monument on April 15, 1965 and listed on the National Register in 1966. A nomination form, specific to Ellis Island as part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument Documentation was completed in 1975 and submitted to the Keeper on April 15, 1976. (Separate documentation was prepared in 1981 for Liberty Island, entitled, Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World.) In this documentation, the island's association with immigration was identified as the primary area of significance under Criterion A, with the architectural elements of the facility providing support to this theme. However, the cultural landscape was not mentioned.

Area of Significance

Ellis Island's significance as documented under Criterion A in the site's current National Register nomination recognizes the island's direct contribution to the broad pattern of United States history through its use as the country's premier federal immigration station. The period of significance for the island is 1892-1954, covering the immigration period and extending to the date of the facility's closure.

In addition, the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office in concurring with the findings of this CLI found "the buildings and landscapes of Ellis Island are eligible under Criterion C." (letter from Dorothy P. Guzzo to Marie Rust, 9/15/04)

The following discussion illustrates how the development of the cultural landscape on Ellis Island supports the identified area of significance. During the sixty-two-year historic period, planning and development for immigration needs resulted in major landscape changes, most of which contributed directly to the immigrant experience. The pattern of landscape rehabilitation and neglect parallels the

cyclic rise and fall of overall immigration activity as it occurred on Ellis Island. Consequently, the cultural landscape is a supporting contributor to the island's primary significance. Ideally, the official National Register nomination should be updated to document this; nevertheless, the discussion presented here is preliminary and is not intended to act as a formal nomination.

During the immigration period, the Ellis Island landscape was extensively altered from its early history as a Native American seasonal hunting and fishing ground, colonial commercial and residential site, and military fortification. Construction of the first immigration station between 1890 and 1897 shifted the island's primary land use to immigration and changed its spatial organization by establishing a group of interrelated buildings to support immigration operations. The organizational pattern of the facilities, with buildings clustered in close proximity to one another, provided order and efficiency in the landscape and in the immigration station's operation.

Construction of the second immigration station beginning in 1898 and the subsequent addition of landfill to create Island Two and Island Three altered many landscape characteristics, including spatial organization, circulation, topography, and vegetation. The new buildings were set further back from the water's edge than the original immigration station's structures, creating additional open space and providing a more impressive setting for the public buildings. Alteration of the island's topography and size through landfill projects accommodated building development, and the establishment of direct circulation routes from ferry docks to buildings encouraged the orderly processing of immigrants.

With the substantial rise in immigration during the first decades of the twentieth century, the island's landscape became many immigrants' initial introduction to America and played a vital role in their immigration experience. Recognizing this, Commissioner of Immigration William Williams implemented changes to enhance the station's aesthetics and improve perceptions of the facility. He initiated the creation of a more formalized landscape with defined walkways, expansive lawns, and ornamental plantings. Later, he advocated for increased interaction with the landscape by providing designated outdoor spaces and adding benches for immigrant use. The Williams period was likely the most eventful with respect to the frequency and significance of landscape change.

During World War I, a decrease in immigration and introduction of military use left the island's landscape relatively unaltered but also unmaintained. The landscape showed evidence of neglect when the island reopened for immigration after the war; however, postwar priorities centered on reestablishing functional operations and maintaining deteriorated buildings, leaving limited resources available for the ornamental landscape.

Despite these limitations, some landscape improvements did occur throughout the ensuing decades, once again enhancing the immigration experience. Landfill projects during the 1920s and 1930s, including filling the basin between Islands Two and Three, increased Ellis Island's size to twenty-seven and one-half acres, allowed the construction of new hospital facilities and recreation space, and created better circulation between Islands Two and Three. Development and partial implementation of a comprehensive planting plan in the late 1930s and early 1940s provided a sense of overall order and continuity to the landscape and enhanced the island's appearance as a well-run, orderly governmental

facility. Most of the extant circulation patterns, open spaces, and tree rows were established during this period.

Subsequent changes in immigration policy and patterns directly influenced how the landscape evolved and was maintained throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s. The shift from immigrant processing to detention led to the creation of more fenced outdoor spaces for detainee and employee recreation and less emphasis on maintaining a formal landscape. Although some of the island grounds were well-maintained by the U. S. Coast Guard during their second tenure on the island in the 1950s, the highly manicured landscape from earlier years was no longer present. When the facilities closed at the end of the immigration period in 1954, the landscape once again became neglected, completing another cycle of rehabilitation and decline.

Throughout the period of significance, Ellis Island's acreage increased from just three acres to twenty-seven and one-half acres, construction occurred on more than forty buildings, and the landscape underwent a series of changes including the development and partial implementation of a comprehensive landscape plan. These alterations to the island's landscape supported and enhanced the island's primary role as the premier United States immigration facility. Throughout the period of significance, the island's cultural landscape continued to evolve in support of changing federal immigration policy and practice as it was implemented on Ellis Island.

National Historic Landmark Information

National Historic Landmark Status: No

World Heritage Site Information

World Heritage Site Status: No

Chronology & Physical History

Cultural Landscape Type and Use

Cultural Landscape Type: Historic Site

Current and Historic Use/Function:

Primary Historic Function: Clinic (Dispensary)

Primary Current Use: Interpretive Landscape

Other Use/Function **Other Type of Use or Function**

Customhouse Historic

Military Facility (Post) Historic

Museum (Exhibition Hall)-Other Current

Current and Historic Names:

Name	Type of Name
Anderson's Island	Historic
Bucking Island	Historic
Dyre's Island	Historic
Ellis Island	Both Current And Historic
Gibbet Island	Historic
Gull Island	Historic
Oyster Island	Historic
Paauw Island	Historic

Ethnographic Study Conducted: No Survey Conducted

Ethnographic Significance Description:

Refer to the Resource Management Plan, p. 18 for information regarding oral histories recorded in the early 1970s, 1985 and 1991. The program is ongoing, with over 2000 interviews conducted to date.

Chronology:

Year	Event	Annotation
AD 1630	Land Transfer	Dutch colonists contract purchase agreement with the local Native Americans, then granted to Mynher Michael Paw (or Paauw) for his contributions to the establishment of the Dutch colonies in the New World.
AD 1674 - 1680	Land Transfer	Sometime between these years Governor Edmond Andross of the Royal Colony of New York granted Little Oyster Island to Captain William Dyre.
AD 1686	Land Transfer	William and Mary Dyre sell island to Thomas Lloyd, who subsequently conveyed the island to Enoch and Mary Story
AD 1766 - 1767	Built	Map shows several structures that may have accommodated both fishing and increased recreational activities on the island
AD 1774	Purchased/Sold	Samuel Ellis purchases Little Oyster Island which becomes known as Ellis Island.
AD 1794	Land Transfer	Samuel Ellis dies, will stipulates that Island should pass to grandson Samuel. Alternate source states the Island passed to Samuel Ellis' daughters Elizabeth Ellis Ryerson and Rachel Ellis Cooder" (Pike 1963).
AD 1794	Land Transfer	Corporation of the City of New York cedes "soil from high to low waters mark around Ellis's Island" to the citizens of New York State to install fortifications on the island.
AD 1806	Land Transfer	John A. Berry acquires deed to the island.
AD 1795	Built	New York State Legislature appropriates \$100,000 to construct fortifications on Governors, Bedloe's, and Ellis Islands.
AD 1798	Built	Report to Secretary of War indicates "barracks on Ellis Island had been completed, that twelve 24 pounders had been mounted there, and that the island could accommodate one company of soldiers"

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AD 1800	Land Transfer	State acquires total jurisdiction over the fortifications on Governors, Bedloe's, and Ellis Islands.
AD 1800	Built	Earthwork fortifications built on the southeast end of Ellis Island, and a jetty is added to the island's southwest side.
AD 1805	Neglected	Lack of military use leaves the fort in disrepair again.
AD 1808	Land Transfer	New York purchases Ellis Island from the Ellis heirs through condemnation proceedings and cedes it to the federal government to institute federal plan for harbor defense needs.
AD 1813	Restored	War Department upgrades earthworks to a stone parapet with thirteen embrasures.
AD 1814	Established	Site officially named Fort Gibson by the Secretary of War.
AD 1820	Built	Around 1820 War Department modifies parapet with brick facing and backing, constructs cookhouse near jetty, places crane on jetty, removes furnace & commercial buildings. Only one tree shown on earlier maps remained & is identified as apple.
AD 1834	Established	Interstate agreement between New York and New Jersey declares Ellis Island and Bedloe's Island to be part of New York, even though the islands were on the New Jersey side of the main ship channel.
AD 1841	Built	U. S. Army resumes complete administration of Fort Gibson and makes extensive repairs during the next year, including construction of a new hot shot furnace.
AD 1861	Altered	Fort's primary role shifts from defense to ammunitions storage when the U. S. Navy partially dismantles the parapet and upgrades the magazine to a more extensive facility.
AD 1861 - 1865	Altered	During Civil War defenses are temporarily upgraded when U. S. Army fortifies island, U. S. Navy constructs shell house number 1 N of existing barracks and converts former officers' quarters into shell house number 2.

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AD 1870	Altered	Military converts existing barracks, officers' quarters into additional magazines & tank house; adds new structures incl. docks, boathouse, loaded shell house, powder house, steam fire engine house, kitchen, woodshed, carpenter shop, icehouse, & pigpen.
AD 1881	Expanded	The federal government's jurisdiction is extended to include waters surrounding the island when New York executes a deed granting the federal government "title and jurisdiction of lands covered with water at Bedloe's Island, Ellis Island and elsewhere."
AD 1890	Established	Ellis Island is chosen as the site of the new immigration station.
AD 1890	Land Transfer	Federal government formally transfers Ellis Island from War Department to Department of the Treasury.
AD 1890	Planned	Planning for the new immigration facilities began immediately under the supervision of John W. Marshall, Superintendent of Repairs of the U. S. Public Buildings Service in New York.
AD 1890	Built	Construction begins and the island is expanded with additional landfill with the new elevation being 2-3 feet above high water mark. Docking and landing facilities constructed.
AD 1891	Built	Ferry slip, rack, and landing area are added to the basin's northwest side.
AD 1891	Built	Rainwater reservoir system installed to supply fresh water to the new facilities.
AD 1892	Built	An artesian well added to supplement the island's water supply.
AD 1892	Established	The Department of the Treasury approves the completed facilities and site is officially opened on January 1.
AD 1894 - 1896	Built	New cribwork bulkheads and fill are added to the east and northeast edges of the island, extending the island's size to some fourteen acres at a cost of \$19,882.

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AD 1896	Rehabilitated	Contractors remodel the detention building from a single-story to a two-story structure, creating a recreation area on the roof, and installing a temporary detention pen on the grounds for similar use.
AD 1897	Built	New disinfecting house on eastern side of detention building, a covered passageway with a baggage run between main building & ferry landing, and the addition of a landing dock on south end of island are built.
AD 1897	Built	Underwater cables installed from island to New York City for telegraph and telephone service via Governors Island.
AD 1897	Destroyed	A few days after construction is completed, a fire destroys most of the new immigration facility.
AD 1897	Planned	Preliminary plan submitted for enlargement of island by 3 acres and construction of 3 brick & steel buildings – main immigration building, hospital, & kitchen and restaurant. President McKinley approves plan & Congress appropriates funds on July 19.
AD 1897	Planned	An architectural competition with design guidelines is issued by the Department of the Treasury’s supervising architect with the commission choosing Boring and Tilton.
AD 1898	Built	Six-inch water main installed from Jersey City, New Jersey, to Ellis Island.
AD 1900	Established	New immigration station opens.
AD 1901 - 1902	Built	Snare & Triest, Inc., of New York City, constructs a glazed porch and portico at the main entrance on the building’s southwest façade, and install a baggage conveyor adjacent to the portico.
AD 1904	Built	Railroad ticket office added to the northeast side of the building.
AD 1901	Built	Kitchen, laundry building, and powerhouse are built and coal hoisting and delivering equipment are added to the dock on the northeast side of the powerhouse.

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AD 1902	Built	Refuse incinerator built on the northwest edge of the island.
AD 1901	Built	Sometime after 1901, bakery & carpentry shop, waiting room for immigrants, & waiting room for immigrants' friends constructed.
AD 1898	Built	Construction of Island Two begins with new crib work and bulkheads, dredging, and deposition of fill.
AD 1898	Built	Construction begins on Main Hospital Building on Island Two, but is delayed due to funding.
AD 1901	Built	The Main Hospital Building is completed.
AD 1901	Built	Surgeon's house and hospital outbuilding are constructed.
AD 1907	Built	Hospital addition completed in February.
AD 1907	Built	Psychopathic ward between the main hospital building and the hospital outbuilding on Island Two completed.
AD 1901	Built	A ferry house and covered walkway are constructed in conjunction with the hospital on Island Two.
AD 1905	Rehabilitated	The ferry house is widened.
AD 1903	Built	By 1903, dramatic changes have occurred in the landscape under William William's direction which reflected plans Boring and Tilton had drawn up during their planning work.
AD 1903	Expanded	Congress appropriates \$150,500 for construction of Island Three but did not immediately provide funds for construction of necessary new hospital facilities.
AD 1904	Land Transfer	Federal government begins negotiations with New Jersey to purchase submerged lands around Ellis Island. New Jersey challenges the government's legal rights to the existing Ellis Island, but loses.

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AD 1905 - 1906	Built	Island Three is built with fill dredged from large trench.
AD 1907 - 1909	Built	Baggage and dormitory building built.
AD 1910	Altered	Baggage and dormitory building altered with improvements to outdoor courtyard space, including a concrete surface.
AD 1914	Altered	A third story is added to the baggage and dormitory building.
AD 1910	Built	Island employees erect a greenhouse on the NE side of the main immigration building.
AD 1902 - 1903	Planted	Several flower beds are scattered throughout the island.
AD 1908 - 1910	Altered	Dormitory and third-story on the north wing are added to the main immigration building. The upper floor of the kitchen and laundry building is renovated to add a dining room.
AD 1913 - 1915	Built	Third-story added to south wing of main immigration building.
AD 1911	Built	Existing incinerator is replaced with new facility.
AD 1913	Built	By 1913 four privies existed, but only one remained on Island One by 1916.
AD 1915	Built	New bakery and carpentry shop completed.
AD 1912	Maintained	Ornamental landscape well-maintained including lawn and privet hedges.
AD 1915	Built	By 1915 landscape improvements include recreational spaces for adults and children, benches, and wire fence along NE seawall.
AD 1909	Altered	Existing circulation upgraded when existing boardwalk replaced with new wood.

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AD 1915	Altered	Around 1915 wooden boardwalk replaced with concrete.
AD 1908	Planned	Congress appropriates funding for new hospital extension on Island Two.
AD 1909	Built	New hospital extension on Island Two complete by May.
AD 1915	Built	By 1915, American Red Cross recreation building constructed on Island Two.
AD 1913	Built	By 1913, following construction of buildings on Island Two, concrete aprons installed around buildings, lawn fills remainder of space. Tennis court exists. Connecting walkway with pergola constructed between new hospital extension & surgeon's house.
AD 1905	Planned	Congress appropriates funding for contagious-disease hospital on Island Three.
AD 1907	Built	Contagious disease hospital structures - administration building, the kitchen, the powerhouse and laundry, and measles wards A, B, and E - completed.
AD 1909	Built	Remaining structures for contagious disease hospital - measles wards C, D, and G, isolation ward L, the staff house, the mortuary, and corridors from the powerhouse to measles ward E, completed.
AD 1908	Built	Fill added around first set of buildings completed on Island Three, then graded and planted with lawn.
AD 1909	Planned	Concrete walks called for on drawings, but not implemented. Cinder used instead by 1913.
AD 1914	Built	Two-story central corridor, connecting all buildings on Island Three except isolation wards and office buildings, enclosed with glass.
AD 1918	Built	Wooden gangway connecting Islands Two and Three replaced with covered walk.
AD 1913	Planned	Existing wooden crib to be replaced by granite faced seawall.

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AD 1921	Built	By 1921 the concrete and granite seawall enclosed most of Island One, excluding SE point of island (completed in 1930s).
AD 1934	Built	Granite seawall improvements completed by this time on Islands Two and Three.
AD 1924	Planned	Congress appropriates funding for landscape improvements including additional recreation space, and filling in area between Islands Two and Three (begun in 1920s, but not completed until 1930s).
AD 1924	Built	Steel staircase on the northeast side of the baggage and dormitory building installed.
AD 1924	Altered	Pergola repaired on Island Two.
AD 1926	Altered	Porches, steps, railings, & ladders at rear of wards 3, 4, 7, and 8 on Island Three repaired, & concrete sidewalk between building lines around courtyard replaced.
AD 1921	Built	75,000-gallon water tank and accompanying service pumps built.
AD 1930	Built	2 additional 250,000-gallon water towers adjacent to the original 75,000 gallon water tank.
AD 1931	Built	Recreation space on the northeast side of Island One increased & enclosed with eight-foot-tall galvanized chainlink fence.
AD 1932	Altered	Entry portico around main immigration building's entry removed, & paved plaza and a forty-foot diameter circular flower bed installed.
AD 1932	Altered	New steam heating system added to greenhouse.
AD 1933	Altered	Generators in the powerhouse converted from coal to oil burners. Coal hoist and conveyor equipment removed soon after.
AD 1932	Altered	Additional incinerator added to same building as existing incinerator.

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AD 1930	Built	New pump house and pumps built near the psychopathic ward and covered walkway.
AD 1932	Altered	Drains, sewers replaced on Island Two - including leader stacks, alterations to house drains on main hospital & house sewers, repairs to sewer mains, construction of catch basins, manholes, replacement of lines, & patching of concrete, masonry, & plaster.
AD 1936	Built	New ferry building & covered walkways, including a new covered masonry walk replacing the 1918 covered wooden walk between Islands Two and Three, built.
AD 1936	Built	New immigration building, with focus on residents' recreational needs, built. Two tennis courts take the place of the proposed garden on the south end of the building.
AD 1939 - 1946	Inhabited	U. S. Coast Guard occupies new immigration building and several other island facilities, staying for the duration of World War II.
AD 1946 - 1954	Neglected	U. S. Coast Guard leaves the island and new immigration building remains unused until Ellis Island's abandonment in 1954.
AD 1935	Built	New greenhouse built on Island One, near the powerhouse and incinerator.
AD 1940	Altered	During the 1940s, the greenhouse on Island One, built in 1935 is repaired.
AD 1937	Altered	American Red Cross recreation building razed for construction of new recreation building and recreation shelter.
AD 1937	Built	Recreation shelter on Island One northeast of the powerhouse built.
AD 1936 - 1937	Altered	Contractors replace existing concrete walks around the island.
AD 1936	Built	System of walkways on Islands Two and Three constructed following rectilinear grid pattern with lawn filling areas between walks.

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AD 1936 - 1939	Built	Sun porches on wards 13-14, 17-18, 19-20, and 23-24 were built for patients.
AD 1939	Planned	Comprehensive planting plan for Ellis Island, addressing all three islands, drafted with emphasis on large-scale approach of trees and shrub massings.
AD 1940	Built	1939 Planting Plan installed using <i>Platanus acerifolia</i> (London planetree), <i>Quercus palustris</i> (pin oak) as the dominant tree species.
AD 1940	Built	U.S. Coast Guard installs a flagstaff with a concrete base.
AD 1940	Built	INS increases security on Island One with installation of double row of chainlink fencing in front of main immigration building, and single fence at rear of the building and on east side of baggage & dormitory building.
AD 1950	Maintained	During the early 1950s, the INS and U. S. Coast Guard focused on maintaining the existing facilities and landscape, making minimal changes.
AD 1952	Altered	Fire protection system with hydrants on all 3 islands, additional guardhouses on Island One, additional reserve fuel oil tank on Island One, and small greenhouse on Island Three added.
AD 1954	Abandoned	By 1954 both the INS and U. S. Coast Guard operations on Ellis Island were shut down and the island was abandoned.
AD 1954 - 1965	Neglected	Vegetation matures and becomes overgrown. Island plundered for anything that is portable. Buildings fall into disrepair.
AD 1965	Established	On May 11, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Proclamation 3656 adding Ellis Island to the national park system and securing the island's future as a historic property.
AD 1966	Planned	Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall appointed New York architect Philip Johnson to oversee redevelopment of the island. His plan was never implemented.

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AD 1968	Planned	NPS planning team develops master plan, retains some components from Johnson's plan, including removal of several buildings, but focuses on limiting visitor access to Island One for initial stage. Funding not immediately available for implementation.
AD 1968	Eroded	The ferryboat Ellis Island sinks in her berth in the ferry basin between Islands One and Two.
AD 1975	Restored	By the mid-1970s NPS crews cleared invasive trees, shrubs, and vines from the area immediately surrounding the main immigration building and the ferry landing.
AD 1975	Built	By mid 1970s a wooden post and pipe rail fence installed along the ferry slip to assist with crowd control.
AD 1976	Built	Contractors dredge ferry basin, construct new dock, and stabilize deteriorating sections of the seawall.
AD 1976	Removed	40,000 bags of debris removed from Island One as part of a general cleanup of the grounds and buildings.
AD 1976	Restored	Main water lines between island and Jersey City improved and sewage treatment system is upgraded with construction of new septic tanks and leach field.
AD 1980 - 1990	Rehabilitated	Comprehensive rehabilitation completed of the interior and exterior of the main immigration building, which soon became the costliest renovation of a historic structure in United States' history.
AD 1980 - 1990	Rehabilitated	Powerhouse on Island One renovated and park offices established in the hospital administration building on Island Two.
AD 1984	Built	Temporary bridge constructed between the New Jersey shore and the island to facilitate the extensive renovations and provide easy access for construction crews and equipment
AD 1985	Removed	Deteriorated structures on Island One, the incinerator, greenhouse, and two original water towers, are documented and razed.

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AD 1986	Built	New water tower reconstructed in same vicinity as the originals and various sections of the seawall repaired.
AD 1990	Established	Ellis Island Immigration Museum opened to the public.
AD 1989 - 1990	Built	A memorial space designated to erect a Wall of Honor. Initial wall of honor consisted of engraved copper panels attached to the top of the stone seawall on the north side of the island.
AD 1993	Built	New Wall of Honor constructed with circular wall of stainless-steel panels.
AD 1998 - 2001	Built	Phase two of the Wall of Honor adds row of linear panels nearby.
AD 1994 - 2004	Removed	In preparation for building stabilization on Islands Two and Three, NPS supervises removal of nonhistoric vegetation by prisoners from NJ prison system. Most overgrown vegetation cleared by fall 2002 with minor work continuing through 2004.
AD 2000 - 2004	Stabilized	Stabilization of buildings on Islands Two and Three in three phases.

Physical History:

Preimmigration Period (prehistory - 1890)

PREHISTORY

During the late Wisconsin Period, approximately fifteen thousand years ago, retreating glaciers deposited a small landmass in what is now called New York Harbor, creating a “hummock along a plain fronting the west side of the Hudson River estuary” (Pousson 1986). With the melting of the icecaps and rise in sea level approximately fifteen hundred years ago, this hummock eventually became a small island surrounded by shallow tidal waters.

As the young island’s ecology developed, the site became vegetated with species similar to other coastal barrier islands. Typical plant life would have included salt-spray tolerant grasses and shrubs that could survive with limited fresh water. Along the intertidal zone, brackish marsh grasses like salt marsh cordgrass, salt grass, and salt meadow hay, would have thrived. It is unlikely there were any heavily wooded areas on the island, as the predominant oak-chestnut forests grew on more upland sites, including the mainland piedmont and Manhattan Island. Given the lack of substantial vegetation and fresh water, there was minimal support for a large animal community. Prevalent species were migratory and permanent bird populations, amphibians, and small mammals. However, the shallows around the island supported a productive marine environment, with a variety of fish and mollusks like the American oyster, hard clams, blue mussels, striped bass, bluefish, weakfish, flounder, and sturgeon. It is likely that Native Americans subsisted on these resources, although “the fish and shellfish of the Hudson River estuary were of equal if not greater importance locally in this regard” (Pousson 1986).

The particular abundance of shellfish in the surrounding tidal flats gave rise to the use of “Oyster Islands” as an early name for Ellis Island and other nearby islands and shoals. Great Oyster Island was the largest of these and eventually became known as Bedloe’s Island. Ellis Island was initially called Little Oyster Island even though it was the second largest in size, and the smallest island was a shoal or group of shoals located south of Great Oyster. An early description by European settlers described Little Oyster and the surrounding shoals as “three small islands of a mere acre each, which were barely visible above the tide between Bedloe’s Island...and the New York – New Jersey shore” (U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service 1952).

EARLY NATIVE AMERICAN USE

Prior to European contact and colonization, Ellis Island may have been permanently settled by native peoples. However, given the abundance of natural resources in the area around the island and more suitable locations for settlement, it is more likely that they used the island primarily for the “exploitation of food resources” (Pousson 1986). The island’s topography as the high ground on a relatively flat plain provided an ideal spot for hunters to observe “migratory herd animals, starting as soon as the last Wisconsin glacial melt had passed” (Kardas and Larrabee 1976). Native Americans may have found the island to be a suitable location for temporary hunting and fishing camps. But as the sea level rose, access to the island became

more difficult and fresh water became harder to obtain, further restricting the possibility of permanent settlement. It became far more likely that seasonal harvesting of the oyster beds and animal populations became the primary focus of human activities on the island.

Limited use by the Native Americans kept the island in a relatively natural state. Since it is unlikely that there were permanent settlements during this era, there would have been minimal long-lasting human impacts upon the island. Shelters or other constructed structures were temporary in nature and few if any remnants of these features would have survived longer than a season or two. This pattern of seasonal occupation would have allowed some regeneration of the plant and animal life during times the island was unoccupied.

DUTCH COLONIZATION OF OYSTER ISLAND

Even though the Oyster Islands were probably not used as permanent settlements by Native Americans, the islands were still considered native lands. So in 1630, when Dutch colonists wanted to obtain the rights to Little Oyster Island, they contracted a purchase agreement with the local Native Americans. After the Dutch purchased the island, it was granted to Mynher Michael Paw (or Paauw) for his contributions to the establishment of the Dutch colonies in the New World. Little is known about Paw's usage of the island. Records indicate that sometime between 1674 and 1680, Governor Edmond Andross of the Royal Colony of New York granted Little Oyster Island to Captain William Dyre. On April 23, 1686, William and Mary Dyre sold the island to Thomas Lloyd, who subsequently conveyed the island to Enoch and Mary Story (U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service 1952).

Under colonial ownership, Little Oyster Island continued to be a profitable location for gathering fish and shellfish, although it was eventually used for other activities as well. The site served as a temporary retreat for Dutch and English settlers from their permanent mainland homes, becoming a convenient place for picnicking and relaxation. An early map of the island drawn from a 1766-1767 survey and published in 1776 shows several structures that may have accommodated both the fishing and increased recreational activities on the island (Figure 1.1).

By the mid-1700s other, less savory uses were also recorded for Little Oyster Island. It became a convenient public execution site for criminals, especially pirates such as "Pirate Anderson," who was put to death by public hanging in 1765. The island continued to be a highly visible execution site until at least the 1830s. Often the body of an executed pirate was left hanging from the gallows tree, called a "Gibbet Tree," as a deterrent for other would-be criminals. This tree, or group of trees, was identified on several island maps from the period and as a result the island was often called Gibbet Island (U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service 1952; Pousson 1986).

Although some of the executed may have been buried on the island, it is unlikely that this was a common practice. An 1831 account indicates the bodies were "sent to the College of Surgeons and Physicians for dissection" (Berengarten 1934). That may have been the prevailing method of disposing of the bodies as no evidence has been found that any part of the original island was used consistently as a graveyard by island inhabitants.

The arrival of European colonists during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries resulted in new land use patterns and incremental changes to the landscape. They added features to accommodate increasingly permanent human occupancy, including buildings for residential and commercial use, freshwater wells, subsistence gardens, and structures needed for resource gathering like docking and staging areas for fishing activities. The colonists changed the island's landscape by adding more permanent circulation patterns and seasonally harvesting available resources. During this period, views from the island toward the harbor and mainland were an important feature for island visitors.

SAMUEL ELLIS PURCHASE

In 1774 Samuel Ellis purchased Little Oyster Island and it became known as Ellis Island. Among other activities Ellis operated a tavern on the island. He made some improvements to the site, possibly including the addition of buildings shown on the 1776 map, although the exact locations and configuration of these structures may or may not be accurate. Additional maps drawn around the turn of the nineteenth century show brick buildings arranged in a different layout. Ellis placed advertisements on at least two separate occasions for the sale of barrels of shad and herring, indicating the island's resources continued to be exploited during his ownership. By 1785 Samuel Ellis attempted to sell the island for unknown reasons, but was unsuccessful (Berengarten 1934).

In 1794 Samuel Ellis died, leaving a will stipulating that Ellis Island should pass to the unborn child of his daughter Catherine Westervelt, but only if she had a son. A male child was born, also named Samuel Ellis. However, the child died within a few years, and letters of administration for the child's estate were granted to his mother. On December 24, 1806, John A. Berry acquired deed to the island. According to this deed, after the child Samuel Ellis had died, "the Island passed into the hands of the two remaining daughters of the original Samuel Ellis, namely Elizabeth Ellis Ryerson and Rachel Ellis Cooder" (Pike 1963).

FORT GIBSON

In the mid-1790s, during a time of increased tensions between the United States and Great Britain, New York State prepared for the installation of defenses around New York Harbor. Ellis Island was one of the chosen sites. On April 21, 1794, the Corporation of the City of New York ceded "the soil from high to low waters mark around Ellis's Island" to the citizens of New York State to install fortifications on the island (Pike 1963). The majority of the island, however, still remained in the ownership of the heirs of Samuel Ellis (Unrau 1981).

In 1795 the New York State Legislature appropriated \$100,000 to construct fortifications on Governors, Bedloe's, and Ellis Islands. The state acquired total jurisdiction over the fortifications on the three islands on February 15, 1800, and soon constructed earthwork fortifications on the southeast end of Ellis Island. A jetty was also added to the island's southwest side. An inlet on the northeast side of the island may have been dug as a source of earth for the fortifications or the jetty. The preexisting commercial facilities remained

concentrated on the northwest side of the island (Figure 1.2) (Pike 1963; Pousson 1986).

The tensions with Great Britain eased and the fort was never used in battle. However, by the late 1790s, there was a similar threat of war with France, and in response the state upgraded and strengthened the harbor fortifications. A 1798 report to the Secretary of War indicated “the barracks on Ellis Island had been completed, that twelve 24 pounders had been mounted there, and that the island could accommodate one company of soldiers” (Pousson 1986).

By circa 1800 incremental addition of the harbor fortifications changed the island’s landscape drastically. Land use became less residential and commercial and more military. Construction of the jetty, earthworks, and the small inlet to provide the fill for these additions altered the island’s topography. Extant buildings at the fort, including a magazine, barracks, store, and “hot-shot” furnace changed the spatial organization and circulation patterns of the island by concentrating the majority of island activities to the south shore, away from the earlier commercial center in the north. Although little is known about the vegetation at this time, it is likely trees and scrub that might obscure views of the harbor from the fort were continually cleared.

The anticipated conflict with France did not materialize, and by 1805, the fort was in disrepair again. Nevertheless, after inspection of the facilities for the War Department by Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Williams, the federal government initiated plans to erect a “casemated Battery” on the island in anticipation of future harbor defense needs (Pousson 1986).

This plan was approved in 1807, and in 1808 the state of New York purchased Ellis Island from the Ellis heirs through condemnation proceedings and ceded it to the federal government. (Pousson 1986; Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984) During the legal process, it was found that those with a claim to Ellis Island included “John A. Berry, Samuel E. Ryerson, Nancy Ryerson, William Kingsland and Rachel, his wife, and others, to the Jurors foresaid unknown” (Pike 1963). In estimating what would be fair compensation for the owners, it was determined:

“The quality and appearance of the land is no criterion to judge its value to the owners. It is found to be one of the most lucrative situations for shad fishing by set nets [sic] within some distance of this place, yielding annually from 450 to 500 Dollars to the occupant from this single circumstance. The Oyster Banks being in its vicinity affords an income in the loan of oyster boats, rakes, etc. of which before I had no idea; besides this a considerable advantage results to the occupant from a tavern in the only possible place of communication for people engaged there between the oyster banks and this city” (Tompkins 1808).

The Sheriff of the City and County of New York, under direction of the Chancellor of New York State, determined that damages sustained by the interested parties if the state took the island would equal \$10,000. The governor approved the expenditure and granted title to the people of New York State on June 18, 1808. On June 30, 1808, the state transferred ownership of the island to the United States government when Governor Daniel D. Tompkins executed a deed for “all the right, title and interest of the state of New York in and to the lands, tenements

and appurtenances above mentioned and described [Ellis Island]” to the United States Secretary of War (Pike 1963).

During the War of 1812, Ellis Island defenses were improved again. No battles were fought on the island during the war, but the U. S. Eleventh Regiment stationed up to one hundred eighty-two artillerists on the island, along with British prisoners of war. There was no substantial change to the island’s topography, land use, or circulation patterns. By 1813 the War Department had upgraded the earthworks to a stone parapet with thirteen embrasures. Extant buildings dating to circa 1800 included the furnace, store, barracks, and magazine, while the state and federal governments had added two-story officers’ quarters, flagstaff, pump, and sentry box at later dates. On the northwest end of the island, structures from the island’s earlier commercial use remained clustered around a well. Additionally, the inlet had been filled, and a low stone or brick wall encircled the entire island. A map from this period shows three large trees present near the commercial buildings, but none were identified and no other vegetation is depicted on the island (Figure 1.3).

After the war, the facilities were used primarily as a recruiting depot, and in 1814 the site was officially named Fort Gibson by the Secretary of War (Pousson 1986; Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984). Activity on the island decreased over the next several years and the fort was nearly abandoned for a short time. There are few known details about island usage during the 1820s. However, historic maps indicate that by circa 1820 the War Department had modified the parapet with a brick facing and backing, constructed a cookhouse near the jetty, placed a crane on the jetty, and removed the furnace and commercial buildings. Only one of the trees shown on earlier maps remained and it was identified as an apple tree (Figure 1.4).

In 1834 an interstate agreement between New York and New Jersey declared Ellis Island and Bedloe’s Island to be part of New York, even though the islands were on the New Jersey side of the main ship channel. By 1835 the United States Army and Navy jointly administered Fort Gibson, which was primarily used as a naval powder magazine (Pousson 1986; Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984).

In 1841 the U. S. Army resumed complete administration of Fort Gibson and made extensive repairs during the next year, including construction of a new hot shot furnace. The primary land use remained military and the U. S. Navy maintained its magazine on the island. However, the Army downgraded the site from Fort Gibson to Battery Gibson, the facility was not garrisoned, and only a small navy guard was left to protect the magazine (Pousson 1986).

By 1854 the fort consisted of an eleven-gun battery and three naval magazines. Other additions included a railroad line from the jetty to the magazines and a kitchen and oven next to the officers’ quarters. The military removed the cookhouse and extended the jetty with the addition of a boathouse and boat slip (Pousson 1986). The military also constructed a new group of structures in the location of the former commercial and residential buildings on the island’s north end, including a gun carriage house, a barn, gunners’ house, and privy. These changes altered the spatial organization and circulation patterns of the island slightly by adding residential

facilities away from the main fort area (Figure 1.4).

In 1861 the fort's primary role shifted from defense to ammunitions storage when the U. S. Navy partially dismantled the parapet and upgraded the magazine to a more extensive facility. During the Civil War, defenses were temporarily upgraded again when the U. S. Army fortified the island with ten rifled 32-pounders and two smoothbore eight-inch seacoast howitzers, mounted in position to fire over the top of the dismantled parapet. The U. S. Navy continued to control the fort during and after the war, overseeing the six masonry magazines and two shell houses. During the war, the Navy constructed shell house number one north of the existing barracks and converted the former officers' quarters into shell house number two (Pousson 1986).

As was the established pattern, deterioration of the fort set in after the war ended (Pousson 1986). Eventually, the neglect was so bad that the wooden gun carriages rotted in place and the guns were unable to fire. By the late 1860s public concern rose about the dangers of storing powder and shells on an island so close to a heavily populated area and the "imminent peril" to the New York City vicinity if the magazines were to explode (Harper's Weekly 1886). However, this concern did not dissuade the U. S. Navy from keeping the magazine on the island.

By 1870 the U. S. Navy utilized the entire island for support of its magazine. The military converted existing barracks and officers' quarters into additional magazines and a tank house, and added new structures including a loaded shell house, powder house, steam fire engine house, kitchen, woodshed, carpenter shop, icehouse, and pigpen. It also constructed two new docks, one on the northeast side of the island near the new kitchen, and another with a small boathouse on the western side of the island in front of the gunners' quarters. Other improvements made by the U. S. Navy included the addition of railway lines between the main jetty/dock and the various magazines, the construction of several small guardhouses, and the installation of at least two more flagstaffs. Maps from this period also show a large garden area between the magazines and loaded shell house. Although it is likely there were gardens on the island for food production for some time, this circa 1870 documentation gave the first indication where these features were actually located in the landscape (Figure 1.4).

Some change occurred on Ellis Island between the end of the Civil War and 1890, primarily in the number of structures on the island and the increased U. S. Navy activity associated with operations of the magazine. In 1881 the federal government's jurisdiction was extended to include waters surrounding the island when New York executed a deed granting the federal government "title and jurisdiction of lands covered with water at Bedloe's Island, Ellis Island and elsewhere" (Pousson 1986; Pike 1963).

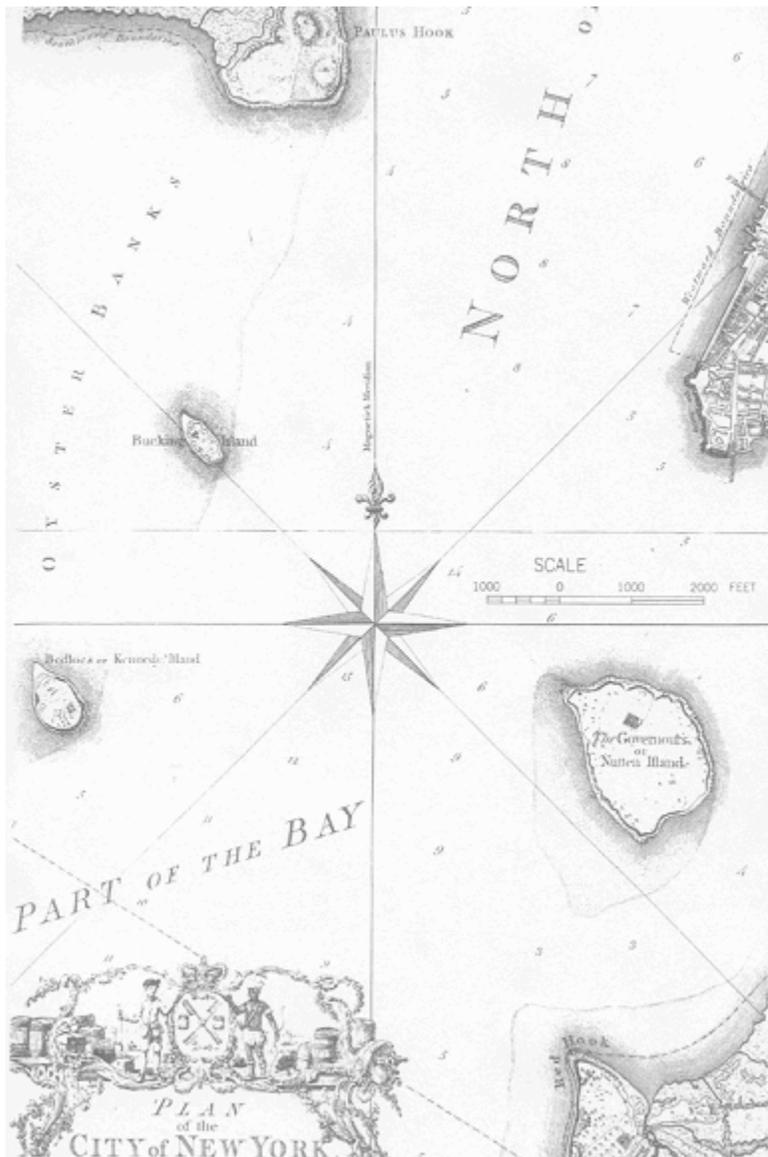


Fig 1.1 - Map of NY Harbor from 1776, including Governors Island Bedloe's Island, and Ellis Island (labeled Bucking Island). (Cultural Landscape Report for Ellis Island, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 2003 (ELIS CLR))

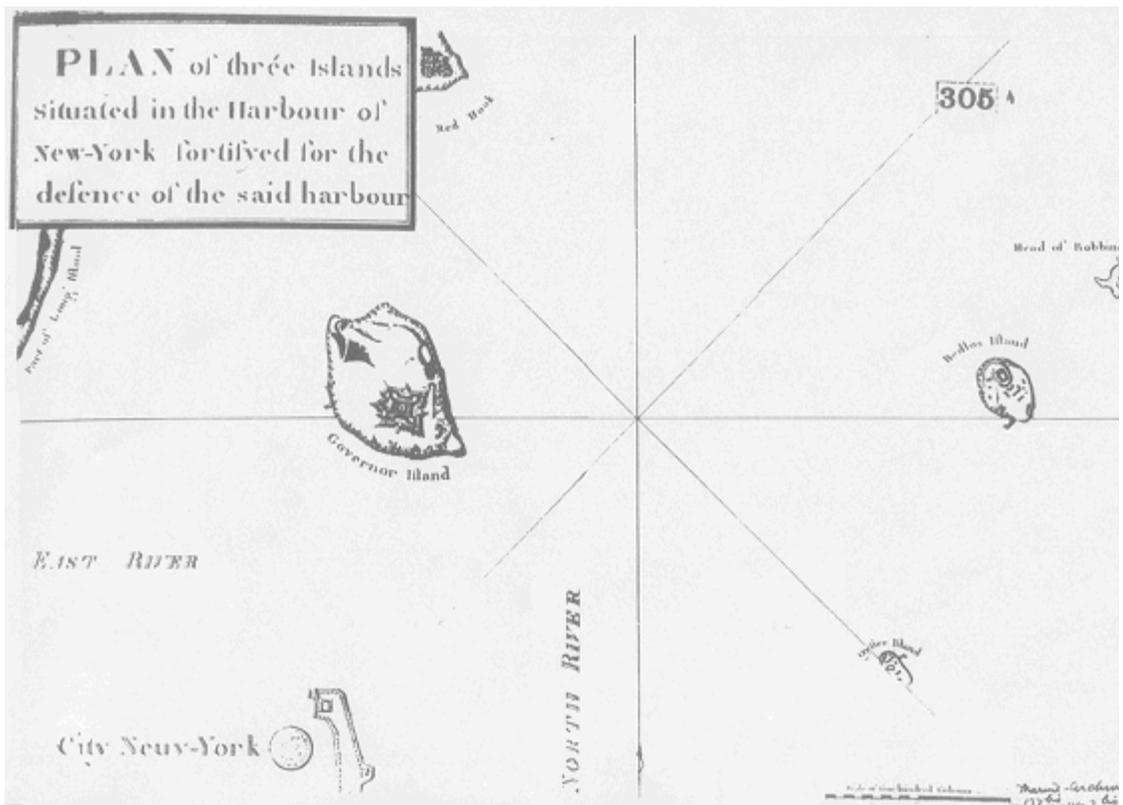


Fig 1.2 - Circa 1800 map of NY Harbor, showing fortifications & structures on Governors, Bedloe's and Ellis Islands (Ellis Island labeled Oyster Island). (ELIS CLR)

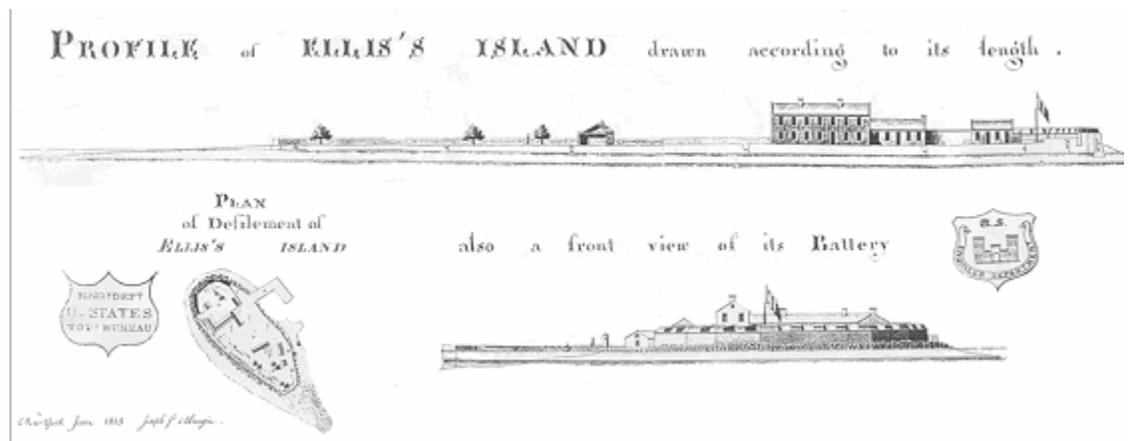


Fig 1.3 - An 1813 map of Ellis Island with profile of buildings of Fort Gibson. (ELIS CLR)

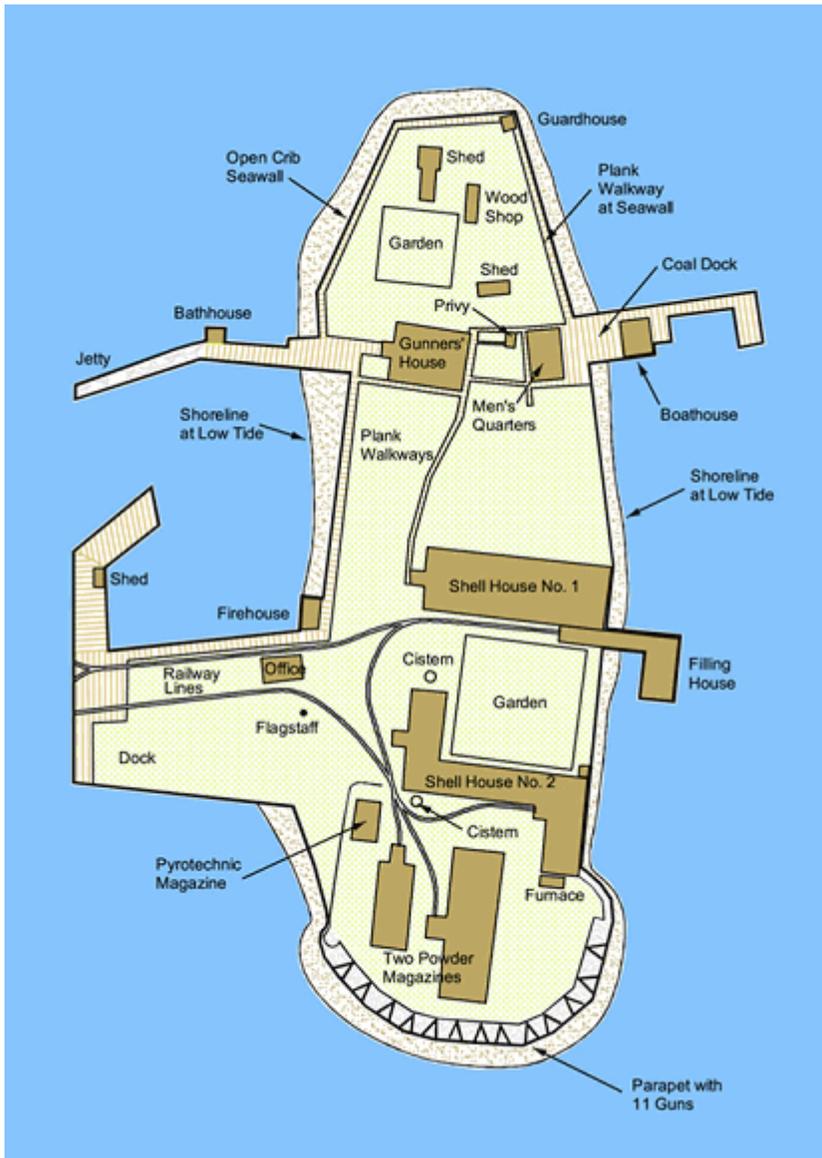


Fig 1.5 - Ellis Island 1890 Period Plan, see appendix for enlargement. (ELIS CLR)

First Immigration Station (1890 – 1897)

SELECTION OF ELLIS ISLAND FOR FEDERAL IMMIGRATION STATION

Up until 1875, immigration matters were generally handled by individual states, except for some minor limitations placed in immigrant numbers by the federal government. In that year a new era in immigration began with initiation of federal exclusion laws to curtail the immigration of “unacceptable” individuals. The first law excluded criminals and prostitutes. By 1882 an additional law prevented immigration of “any convict, lunatic, idiot, or any person unable to take care of himself or herself without becoming a public charge.” (Pitkin 1975) A similar restriction

applied specifically to Chinese laborers. In 1885 the Alien Contract Labor Law made it “unlawful to import aliens for labor under contract.” (Pitkin 1975) These restrictions, the inability of New York and other states to care for sick or indigent immigrants adequately, and unsuccessful attempts to manage immigration through a mixed federal-state system, led to the eventual removal of immigration control from the states and the establishment of centralized immigration oversight within the United States Department of the Treasury.

In New York, the state immigration facilities had been located at Castle Garden on the southern tip of Manhattan since 1855. At the time immigration processing was transferred to the federal government, the operations at Castle Garden were plagued with “varied charges of mismanagement, abuse of immigrants, and evasion of the laws.” (Pitkin 1975) As a result, Secretary of the Treasury William Windom wanted to make a complete break from the existing facilities and establish a new immigration station in New York that would be “isolated and completely under federal control.” (Pitkin 1975) An island in New York Harbor was the ideal setting for the new station, and the Department of the Treasury undertook a study to locate the most appropriate choice. On February 13, 1890, Secretary Windom, Solicitor Hepburn, and Collector Erhardt took a tour of the various proposed sites. According to a New York Times article,

“The three gentlemen went first to Castle Garden, which they inspected thoroughly. Then they boarded the Government tug, W. E. Chandler, at the Barge Office, and crossed over to Governors Island. Gen. O. O. Howard showed them all over the island. It was about a three-mile walk altogether. From there they went to Bedloe’s Island, where they spent a few moments. Then they steamed around Ellis Island. There is a quantity of gunpowder stored there, and the officials would have been compelled to throw away some freshly-lighted, special-brand cigars.” (New York Times 1890)

Over the next several weeks there was much speculation about which island would be chosen. Secretary Windom did not want Ellis Island because the island was too small and so low that it barely rose above water during high tide. (Pitkin 1975) Governors Island was a likely candidate since there was already a federal military presence on the island, and even though there was “considerable opposition from the Army, Secretary Windom believed that there was plenty of room for both military and civil purposes.” (New York Times 1890) Despite this reasoning, in the end Windom preferred Bedloe’s Island. On March 1, 1890, the New York Times reported that Windom “issued orders for the establishment of an immigrant landing depot on Bedloe’s Island, New York Harbor, and arrangements will at once be made for the construction of the necessary buildings.” (New York Times 1890)

However, there was intense local opposition to using Bedloe’s Island because of the presence of the Statue of Liberty. The statue’s creator, Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, even contested the decision, calling it a “monstrous plan” and “downright desecration.” (Hugins 1958) The sensitive issue of the federal government taking over immigration from New York State fueled public sentiment. Local politician Big Alderman Flynn “introduced a resolution which protested against the Government taking the island for a landing place for immigrants as a ‘wanton act of vandalism’.” (New York Times 1890) He called on New York State’s congressional

representatives to “do all in their power to prevent the taking of the island.” (New York Times 1890) The board of aldermen passed the resolution unanimously, although it was not binding on the federal decision-makers.

After the temporary congressional committee on immigration examined the options on Governors Island, Bedloe’s Island, and Ellis Island, and took into consideration the military and public opinion, they recommended Ellis Island for the facility. Of the three islands, Ellis was the only site with “no powerful sentiment to be overridden” since the removal of the naval magazine for safety reasons was still a very popular issue. (Pitkin 1975) Once the choice was made, Congress proceeded quickly with funding. On April 11, 1890, it appropriated \$75,000 to remove the powder magazines at Fort Gibson and make improvements on the island to accommodate its anticipated new use as New York Harbor’s primary immigration facility. (Unrau 1981)

CONSTRUCTION OF FIRST IMMIGRATION STATION

On May 24, 1890, the federal government formally transferred Ellis Island from the War Department to the Department of the Treasury. Planning for the new immigration facilities began immediately under the supervision of John W. Marshall, Superintendent of Repairs of the U. S. Public Buildings Service in New York. Marshall’s assistant, J. Bachmeyer, prepared the plans, proposing “a main building, which would be perhaps 200 x 245 feet, a baggage station on the pier, which would be about 80 x 450 feet...The structures might be made principally of iron.” (New York Tribune 1890) In addition, the plan called for a boiler and engine house, three hospital buildings, kitchen and dining room for the hospital, and restaurant. (Pousson 1986) Upon further revision, published accounts of the plan described a wooden, two-story main building with a slate roof and towers on each end, an “insane hospital” in the renovated shell house number one, a wooden kitchen and dining room addition to shell house number one, a brick hospital, and doctor’s cottage in one of the existing gunners’ houses. (New York World, 1890)

In preparation for construction of the new facilities, the Department of the Treasury removed the ammunition stored at Fort Gibson’s naval magazine along with the remaining guns, parapet, and gun platform. It also razed some existing structures including the office building, pyrotechnic magazine, fire engine house, and various outbuildings, while other buildings were to be reused. (Pousson 1986)

Construction of the new buildings necessitated major site work, including the expansion of the island with the addition of landfill and the construction of docking and landing facilities. To fund this work, Congress appropriated an additional \$75,000 on August 30, 1890, in addition to the initial \$75,000 appropriation. (Unrau 1981) The Department of the Treasury contracted various phases of the work to the W. H. Beard Company and Warren Rosevelt, both of New York City. (Unrau 1981) The contractors soon began adding landfill around the island, except on the east and northeast sides. The fill material was a mixture of mud, clayey sand, and gravel and probably came from a dredging operation in the ship channel. The newly established elevation for these filled areas was approximately two to three feet above the high-water mark. (Pousson

1986) In conjunction with the landfill, the contractors added more than seventeen hundred feet of docks and cribwork to the island. In 1890 they installed a breakwater on the southeast side of the island, creating a protected ferry basin. In 1891 a ferry slip, rack, and landing area were added to the basin's northwest side. The work on the ferry racks included the addition of "bridges, flows, gallow frames, hoisting chains, sheaves, wenchers, platform connections, receiving platforms, backing logs, a hauling shed over the bridge at the bulkhead, a fence and gates across the ferry slip, and a shed over the side exit." (Pousson 1986; Unrau 1981) By 1892, with the completion of the landfill, breakwater, and docks, the island was approximately eleven acres in size.

The Department of the Treasury contracted construction of the main building and boiler house to the firm of Sheridan & Byrne. It also secured additional contractors for the renovation and reuse of other existing structures as previously planned by Bachmeyer. As Bachmeyer specified, shell house number one became the insane hospital, the gunners' house functioned as a temporary construction office and then became the surgeon's quarters, the large powder magazine was used as the main kitchen for the station, the small powder magazine first became a temporary coal house and then stored records, and shell house number two became a detention building. (Pousson 1986)

To supply fresh water to the new facilities, MacKnight Flintic Stone Company designed and installed a rainwater reservoir system in the summer of 1891. The firm placed twelve-foot-deep concrete cisterns northwest of the insane hospital, approximately five feet above sea level. It also located an additional circular saltwater cistern southeast of the boiler house. The freshwater cisterns connected to roof drains to collect and store rainwater. In September 1891 contractor Thomas J. Kelly installed additional cast-iron pipes from the downspouts of the boiler house to the cisterns. However, even with increased supply lines, the system of downspouts and cisterns did not provide a reliable source of water. In 1892 a subsequent contractor installed an artesian well to supplement the island's water supply. Even that did not improve the situation, and eventually "the whole supply of water, which amounted to nearly 20,000 gallons per day (was) brought from Manhattan by steamers and pumped into storage tanks on Ellis Island." (Pousson 1986; Unrau 1981)

On October 34, 1891, an article about the nearly completed facilities in Harper's Weekly described the island and the new immigration building as, "two and a quarter acres in extent...long used as the naval magazine....By necessity the island has been about doubled in size....a latter-day watering place hotel, presenting to the view a great many-windowed expanse of buff-painted wooden walls, of blue-slate roofing, and of light and picturesque towers. It is 400 feet long, two stories high, and 150 feet wide....It is designed to permit the handling of at least 10,000 immigrants in a day, and the first story, which is 13 feet in height, is sufficiently capacious for the storage and handling of the baggage of 12,000 newcomers. Elsewhere on the island...there were, either finished or under construction, hospital buildings, bathhouse, powerhouse, kitchen and restaurant, and doctor's quarters." (Julian 1891)

The Department of the Treasury approved the completed facilities and the site was officially opened on January 1, 1892. Approximately seven hundred immigrants landed on the island

during its first day of operation. Critics of the new facilities complained about the excessive construction costs, running nearly double the original budget, and the lack of architectural distinction of the main building, described by some as having “no particular style of architecture.” (Unrau 1981) Victor Safford, a medical officer serving at Ellis Island at the time, published the following reminiscences of the station:

“...There were several substantial stone and brick buildings on the island besides the half burned thick stone and mortar structures once used for the storage of explosives. These latter were converted into vaults for the keeping of immigration records. The other old buildings were utilized for various purposes. Some of them, enlarged and extended, formed a part of an extensive two story dormitory for detained immigrants. The hospital and the main immigration building were, however, new wooden structures. The hospital consisted of a group of one and two story buildings with sheltered verandas, arranged on the quadrangular plan. In some part of the central court, protected from the wind, rain or sun, as the need might be, a convalescent patient could almost always find comfort out-of-doors in winter or summer. The location of the main building at Ellis Island at the time when I first made its acquaintance was parallel to the present structure, but nearer the water, in fact directly alongside the ferry slip. It was a two story wooden building about six hundred feet long and perhaps one hundred feet wide with towers at each corner...” (Safford 1925)

The Department of the Treasury completed all major building construction and remodeling of existing buildings by 1893, although additional construction projects continued at the station until 1897. Between 1894 and 1896, new cribwork bulkheads and fill were added to the east and northeast edges of the island, extending the island’s size to some fourteen acres at a cost of \$19,882. The fill material consisted of cinder waste from the island’s new coal-fired power plant, clayey sand, and loam, and was graded at around two and a half and four feet above the high-water mark. In 1896 contractors remodeled the detention building from a single-story to a two-story structure, created a recreation area on the roof, and installed a temporary detention pen on the grounds for similar use. Other additions completed under Department of the Treasury contracts included the construction in 1897 of a new disinfecting house on the eastern side of the detention building, the installation of a covered passageway with a baggage run between the main building and ferry landing, and the addition of a landing dock on the south end of the island. In June 1897 construction on the facility ceased with the installation of underwater cables to New York City for telegraph and telephone service via Governors Island (Figures 2.1). (Pousson 1986; Unrau 1981)

DESTRUCTION OF FACILITIES BY FIRE

On June 15, 1897, just a few days after construction was completed, a fire destroyed most of the new immigration facility. The fire broke out during the early morning in the restaurant and kitchen building, and the flames soon engulfed the main building and other structures. The structures’ wooden walls provided ample fuel for the fire. All immigrants evacuated the island within twenty minutes of the first alarm, with no loss of life. After two and a half hours, the fire consumed three to four acres of the fourteen-acre island, and by morning, only three buildings remained standing – the boiler house, the tank and coal house, and the surgeon’s

quarters. Some walls of the records storage office and restaurant and kitchen building also remained, and the boardwalk along the ferry basin was intact, but everything else was “a tangle of charcoal, battered and rusted iron, and ashes.” (Pousson 1986; Unrau 1981; Pitkin 1975)

Surprisingly, Ellis Island’s Commissioner of Immigration Joseph H. Senner was relieved that the facilities had been consumed by fire. Since the main buildings had been constructed of wood, and not masonry or iron, Senner had feared that sooner or later such an accident would overtake the structures and many lives would be lost. Although he was greatly relieved that there were no casualties, he remarked, “A row of unsightly, ramshackle tinderboxes has been removed, and when the Government rebuilds, it will be forced to put up decent fireproof structures.” (New York Tribune 1897) Newspaper and magazine accounts reported many citizens were equally relieved that the structures were gone, primarily because of the structures’ questionable aesthetic or architectural value. (Unrau 1981) With the devastation on the island, the Bureau of Immigration temporarily transferred operations to the Barge Office, at the southeast corner of Battery Park on lower Manhattan. (Unrau 1981; Pitkin 1975)



Fig 2.1 - First immigration station on Ellis Island. Buildings include (from left to right) tank & coal house, boiler house, surgeon's quarters, & main building, 1892. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 2.2 - Ellis Island 1897 Period Plan. (ELIS CLR)

Second Immigration Station – Initial Construction (1897 – Circa 1907)

PLANNING

Within three days after the fire, the Department of the Treasury began preparations to rebuild the immigration facilities on Ellis Island. On June 25, John L. Smithmeyer, inspector of public buildings for the U. S. Public Buildings Service, submitted a preliminary plan to Secretary of the Treasury Lyman J. Gage calling for enlargement of the island by three acres and construction of three brick and steel buildings – a main immigration building, a hospital, and a kitchen and restaurant. The estimated cost of these improvements was \$600,000. President William F. McKinley approved the plan and Congress appropriated funds for construction on July 19, 1897. (Unrau 1981)

In September 1897 the Department of the Treasury initiated an architectural competition with design guidelines issued by its supervising architect. The American Institute of Architects recommended several prominent architectural firms to participate in the competition with the approval of Secretary Gage. The firms included Alfred E. Barlow; Boring and Tilton; Carrere and Hastings; McKim, Mead and White; and Bruce Price, all from New York City; and John L. Smithmeyer of Washington, DC. Secretary Gage appointed a commission to judge the competition, including John K. Taylor, supervising architect; T. P. Chandler, FAIA, of Philadelphia; and R. S. Peabody, FAIA, of Boston.

By December the commission had reviewed all entrants and chose Boring and Tilton as the firm “who has best shown...the ability to grasp his subject rather than the selection of a final plan.” The firm was to participate in “further study in conjunction with the authorities,” which would likely “produce a very successful final result.” The commission was further impressed that the winning scheme did not consist of a building too costly to construct, but included a facility “built of simple materials” that would likely be constructed “more cheaply than any of the designs offered of similar size.” (Peabody, Chandler and Taylor 1897; Taylor 1897)

Boring and Tilton’s final plan included three structures on the site of the original immigration facilities – the main immigration building, “an impressive French Renaissance-style structure,” the kitchen and laundry building, and the powerhouse. (Unrau 1981) Additionally, the plan called for the creation of a new island south of the original island, with a ferry slip in between the two. The firm proposed a hospital building for this location.

The firm also addressed the island’s landscape, proposing “an ample ornamental landscape designed in a Beaux Arts style of symmetrical walks lined with allees of trees,” which would underscore the importance of the immigration facilities as a governmental institution and leave a lasting impression on the newly arrived immigrant. (Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984) Public response to this proposal was positive. Memories of the previous facilities often referred to as “architectural rubbish heaps,” were still fresh in the public’s mind. (Harper’s Weekly 1898) Critics from Harper’s Weekly praised the Boring and Tilton plan for its addition of “much green space on the island” and the creation of a facility that would appear “comely to passing ships” (Figure 3.1). (Harper’s Weekly 1898)

ISLAND ONE

Main Immigration Building

In February 1898 the supervising architect approved initial drawings for the new immigration buildings, including a block plan for the island and detailed plans for the hospital and main immigration building. By mid-June Boring and Tilton completed nearly all of the drawings, plans, and specifications for the new Ellis Island facilities. (Unrau 1981)

An article in the New York Times Magazine on August 7, 1898, provided a detailed description of the new building based on the architect's plans and a scale model that had been constructed.

“The immigrant station on Ellis Island, exclusive of hospital and powerhouse, will be a palace 386 feet in length by 162 in width, with towers rising to the height of 120 feet at their apexes of gilded copper, and entrance arches 40 feet to the keystone. Owing to the tides, the first floor will be eight feet above the present level of the island; so that on calm days the structure will mirror itself in the smooth waters of the bay. A sloping greensward will rise from the top of the cribwork on the water's edge to the granite foundations. ...the fact that the building stands detached and encircled by water was an advantage in some ways...it affords some of the chances for effect presented by the water court and canals at the World's Fair in showing off the buildings of the White City. The architects seem to have had those buildings in mind, at least so far as proportions are concerned. ...the effect will be that the country beckons the immigrant into the harbor with the torch brandished by [the Statue of] Liberty and then offers him the largest and finest edifice in the panorama for his landing place.” (New York Times Magazine 1898)

Prior to construction of the main immigration building, the Department of the Treasury contracted with the firm of Holmes & Logan to install a new six-inch water main from Jersey City, New Jersey, to Ellis Island. The contractor completed the installation in early November 1898, installing the line from Communipaw Avenue and Phillips Street in Jersey City to the existing boiler house on the island. The artesian well, dug in 1892, had not worked as expected, resulting in a constant problem with obtaining fresh water for the island. Attempted solutions included collecting rainwater in cisterns and later, shipping nearly twenty thousand gallons of water per day from Manhattan to be stored in tanks on the island. The new water line was a much more reliable alternative. (Unrau 1981)

On August 8, 1898, the Department of the Treasury awarded the contract for construction of the main immigration building to the R. H. Hood Company of New York City, at an estimated cost of \$419,298. Construction on the building began later in the year. The surgeon's quarters, which had survived the 1897 fire, functioned as a temporary construction office. (Unrau 1981; Pousson 1986)

There were numerous delays in construction of the building, caused by both contractor and governmental actions. For example, the preferred location for the new building overlapped part of the foundations of the old main building. When digging for the new foundations, the Hood Company uncovered old cisterns and underground utility corridors from both the naval magazine and first immigration station, causing unanticipated delays. To remedy the situation, Boring and Tilton prepared specifications to fill the cisterns and corridors so construction of the

new foundations could proceed. (Unrau 1981; Pousson 1986)

The new immigration station began operations on December 17, 1900, with no official dedication or opening ceremony, leaving the immigration staff to move quietly from the Barge Office to the new facilities. However, accounts of the opening were published in local newspapers including a New York Tribune article with Secretary Gage remarking the main immigration building along “with its companion buildings will form what the Department of the Treasury set out to make it, the model immigration station of the world.” (New York Tribune 1900) The first immigrants processed on the island included 654 Italian steerage passengers from the Kaiser Wilhelm II, with a total of 2,251 immigrants passing through the facilities on opening day. (Unrau 1981)

After the completion of the main immigration building, the Department of the Treasury contracted for alterations to the structure on a fairly regular basis. In June 1901 Snare & Triest, Inc., of New York City, constructed a glazed porch and portico at the main entrance on the building’s southwest facade. This structure protected immigrants from the elements as they proceeded from the ferry landing to the building. The porch floor was cut granite and the copper roof contained glass skylights (Figure 3.2). Approximately six months later, Snare & Triest installed a baggage conveyor adjacent to the portico “in a chamber forming a cellar between the dock and the main building.” (Unrau 1981) The portico and the conveyor were separated by granite coping with a railing on top and were both completed by April 1, 1902. In 1904 a railroad ticket office was added to the northeast side of the building to accommodate the increasing numbers of immigrants needing railway transportation after processing. (Unrau 1981)

Additional Structures

Between 1901 and 1903, the addition of several structures to the island completed the Boring and Tilton design for the immigration station. On May 4, 1900, a contract was let to Louis Wechsler of New York City to construct the kitchen and laundry building, powerhouse, and several covered, connecting walkways. By April 1901 Wechsler had substantially completed work on the kitchen and laundry building, however, the powerhouse was not finished until November of that year. (Unrau 1981) By the end of 1901, contractor A. J. Hemphill of New York City added coal hoisting and delivering equipment to the dock on the northeast side of the powerhouse. This equipment unloaded coal from the barges and transferred it to the powerhouse. (Unrau 1981) In January 1902 Benjamin Boulger of New York City constructed a sixteen-foot wide by twenty-eight feet long refuse incinerator on the northwest edge of the island. (Unrau 1981; Pousson 1986)

The Department of the Treasury contracted for the construction of several temporary wooden structures to alleviate overcrowding, created by the increase in immigration and the numbers of detainees and visitors on the island. Sometime after 1901, the bakery and the carpentry shop were constructed northwest of the kitchen and laundry building. A waiting room for immigrants destined for New York was constructed on the north side of the connecting corridor between the kitchen and laundry building and the main immigration building. A waiting room for

immigrants' friends was built on the west side of the covered walkway between the ferry house and the kitchen and laundry building. The fenced yard north of the waiting room contained a small privy on the nearby seawall. A single-story barracks with seven hundred beds on the northeast side of the main immigration building became the largest temporary structure built on the island upon its completion in 1903. (Unrau 1981; Pousson 1986)

ISLAND TWO

Creation of Island Two

In order to complete the plan envisioned by Boring and Tilton, Ellis Island had to be enlarged with the construction of an additional island (Island Two) to the south and west of the existing island (Island One). Since the War Department maintained jurisdiction over the waters surrounding Ellis Island at this time, Secretary Gage submitted plans for the proposed creation of Island Two to the Secretary of War for approval. The proposal was to extend the existing island "one hundred and sixty feet (160') on the Southwest side of the breakwater – i.e. sixty-eight feet (68') from the West and eighty-five feet (85') from the South corner of original line of square 800 to 800 Boundary 1890, retained – running eight hundred feet (800') from the West to the South." (Gage 1897) By late August 1897, the Secretary of War approved Gage's plan and Alfred Brooks Fry, Chief Engineer and Superintendent of Repairs for the U. S. Public Buildings Service, began preparing construction documents for the new bulkheads and landfill. The final dimensions of Island Two were enlarged slightly from the original proposal, with approval of the Secretary of War.

In January 1898 contractor Warren Roosevelt began construction on the new crib work and bulkheads, dredging, and deposition of fill. Fry described the fill for Island Two (and later Island Three) as "earth and stone – no soft mud, garbage, ashes, or other matter unsuited to give solid body." (Unrau 1981; Pousson 1986) In addition, Roosevelt used some of the rubble remaining on the main island from the fire, particularly building walls that had not been removed with other debris, in "crib-work, ballast, or filling, in the enlargement of the island." (Kemper 1897) A major problem occurred when the new fill on the southwest side of Island Two began to exert pressure on the existing crib along the northeast side of the ferry basin, causing the crib to bulge toward the basin. There were no funds to reconstruct the old crib, so some of the fill along the northeast side of Island Two was left out and the fill that was put in place was sloped toward the foot of the crib. The remainder of the island was graded to the same general elevation as Island One. The completion of Island Two in December 1898 added three and one-third acres of landfill to the site, increasing the Ellis Island's total size to approximately fifteen and one-half acres. (Pousson 1986)

Island Two Structures

In early February 1898, the Department of the Treasury approved initial plans for the main hospital building on Island Two and work began on installing the pilings. However, construction was soon suspended due to a funding delay by Congress. Complete funding was not acquired until March 1899 when Congress appropriated \$150,000 for the main hospital building, \$9,500

for the surgeon's house, and \$33,340 for the hospital outbuilding. Boring and Tilton developed plans for the main hospital building, while the office of the supervising architect designed the surgeon's house and hospital outbuilding. The plans specified the use of piers on the ground and the avoidance of pilings. A small pump house was also included. After initial bids for the main hospital building came in over budget, Boring and Tilton redesigned the structure for cost savings, and Daniel A. Garber of New York City was awarded the contract on February 20, 1900. Garber finished the contract in April 1901, but only after much conflict between Garber and the authorities, culminating in the contractor having to address a number of construction inadequacies (Figure 3.3). (Unrau 1981)

On September 5, 1900, the Department of the Treasury awarded a contract for the construction of the surgeon's house and hospital outbuilding on Island Two, both two-story brick structures, to Attilio Pasquini of New York City. As with the main hospital building, initial bids for the projects came in over budget, and the office of the supervising architect altered the designs with cost-saving changes. The hospital outbuilding included a laundry, linen room, and autopsy room. The surgeon's house was designed and constructed with a basement; a parlor, kitchen, pantry, dining room, library, and hall on the first floor; and five bedrooms, hall, and bath on the second floor. Pasquini proceeded with construction, and after numerous minor change-orders, completed both buildings by late November 1901. (Unrau 1981)

The main hospital building accommodated one hundred twenty-five patients along with office and staff space. However, due to the budget constraints and redesign of the original plan, the completed building was not adequate to meet the needs of the immigration facility. According to Terence V. Powderly, United States Commissioner-General of Immigration at the time, "The new immigrant hospital on Ellis Island... will not afford sufficient ward space for the service. Another pavilion is necessary for the accommodation of the patients, exclusive of those suffering from acute contagious diseases and cared for in the hospitals of the city health department under annual contract." (Unrau 1981) Powderly also suggested adding more space for officers' quarters, since the rooms allocated for this use in the new building would have to be used for wards.

To alleviate some of the overcrowding, the Bureau of Immigration proposed an addition on the southeast end of the building. In October 1905 the Northeastern Construction Company of New York City began construction on the new facility, completing the hospital addition by February 1907. The new space brought the total number of beds to two hundred fifty; however, the facility was still consistently overcrowded due to high immigration levels. (Unrau 1981)

Along with regular hospital patients, there was also an increase in the number of "insane aliens" requiring housing prior to deportation. This led to the construction of the psychopathic ward between the main hospital building and the hospital outbuilding on Island Two. William F. Holding of New York City completed the facility in November 1907. The two-story brick structure could house about twenty-five patients, and contained a small enclosed porch on the south side of the building. (Unrau 1981)

Other structures built in conjunction with the hospital on Island Two included a ferry house at the northeast end of the ferry basin and a covered walkway connecting the ferry house with the hospital buildings. These two items were covered under Pasquini's contract for the hospital outbuilding and surgeon's house and the firm completed them in October 1901. The construction included a new ferry slip, centered in the ferry basin directly in front of the ferry house. In 1905 the ferry house was widened, possibly as a result of the increase in immigration during this period. (Unrau 1981)

Landscape Improvements under Commissioner Williams

After the completion of the main immigration building and other principle structures on both islands, Boring and Tilton developed a revised master plan for the landscape (Figure 3.4). A series of formally designed walks and open spaces enhanced the existing buildings. The plan was similar in style to the architects' initial design, but contained a more intricate circulation pattern with connecting passageways between the two islands and incorporated changes to the buildings' footprints and placement that had occurred during construction. However, the immediate need to enlarge the facilities due to increasing immigration and the inevitable funding shortfalls left landscape improvements far down the list of priorities. The main immigration building and other structures received generally favorable reviews for their architectural qualities by the public, but the lack of an aesthetically pleasing landscape was a blight on the facility. Criticism appearing in the local press called the island a "treeless strip of land" with some "grayish-looking buildings" – not exactly the most flattering description for the nation's premier immigration station. (Outlook 1902) Despite this criticism, the Department of the Treasury failed to implement the Boring and Tilton design for the landscape.

With the arrival of Commissioner of Immigration William Williams in 1902, the barren island landscape received much-needed attention. (New York Times 1913) Williams was determined to improve the facilities and establish a more prestigious setting on the island. He soon implemented many changes. It is not known if Williams actually designed plans for the landscape, but it is likely he used the Boring and Tilton design as a reference. Although the Williams landscape did not strictly follow the formalized structure of the earlier design, it was a similar approach both "ceremonial and decorative in its concept." (Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984) Williams established an orderly combination of lawns and walkways laid out in a rectilinear pattern to complement the buildings. In comparison to the Boring and Tilton design, total paved area specified by Williams decreased and there was less overall ornamentation in the design.

Landscape improvements began with the removal of construction debris and the addition of approximately seven thousand cubic yards of loam. Work crews graded the island and planted lawns. They installed scored concrete walks in front of the main immigration building and the kitchen and laundry building, extending along the southwest side of the main immigration building and connecting with rear doors. They added concrete around the powerhouse, the main hospital building, and the existing flagstaff, and installed a wider boardwalk along the edge of the ferry basin. They constructed small post and wire fences around the blocks of lawn in front of the main immigration building, placed benches under the portico and south of the main

immigration building, and added ornamental light fixtures along the boardwalk. Gardeners added greenery and color to the island by planting *Ligustrum* hedges and filling beds and containers with flowers (Figures 3.5 – 3.7). (Unrau 1981; Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984)

The design as it was implemented enhanced the island and established an appropriate setting for the buildings. However, the purpose of the station was to move people through as quickly as possible and it is unlikely immigrants were able to enjoy much of the landscape beyond the area immediately around the main immigration building. They saw little of the island other than what was visible from the ferry basin or the entry plaza, as they were moved quickly from the ferry slip either to the plaza or directly into the building itself and then on to the ferries for New York or the trains for New Jersey and beyond. The immigrants did not regularly use other parts of the landscape for casual relaxation or recreation. The “neat clipped hedges and lawns, without trees for shade and few benches for sitting” created a setting for the island that emphasized “efficiency and official business rather than a human scale place to linger.” (Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984)

The drastic change in the appearance of the island under Williams’s direction was described in a July 12, 1903, New York Times article:

“Ellis Island, which a year ago, was with the exception of the imposing Government structures occupied by the Immigration Bureau, about the dreariest looking spot in the harbor of New York, has undergone a great change in appearance since William Williams became Commissioner. When Mr. Fitchie relinquished the Commissionership there was not a flower or a bush of any kind on the island, and the walks were not graded. To-day [sic] all is changed. The island has been divided into neat squares and crescents, in which grow blue grass, and around which a hedging of California privet is rapidly assuming substantial dimensions. Then again in the squares and crescents geraniums, nasturtiums, palms, pansies, and ferns, arranged in neat figures, have been planted, and as they are beginning to bloom, the front of the island as seen from passing ferryboats and other craft makes a very pleasing sight, and one that is sure to cause comment by people who are familiar with the way the place looked before the Williams era. Then again, on either side of the main entrances to the various buildings big iron vases of granite have been placed, and palms and various flowers planted in them. But the great attraction is the beautiful entrance [of the main immigration building] from the barge landing. This entrance is constructed entirely of iron, the pillars being fancy in shape, while the roof is of glass. Within this arcade, which extends almost clear to the waterfront, have been placed a lot of neat park benches for the use of visitors, where, seated in the shade, and where they are almost sure to get the benefit at any time of the day of a good sea breeze, the view of the city beyond and the harbor is an ideal one. The whole island is as a result of Mr. Williams’s energy now what may be appropriately termed a well-regulated and unusually prettily decorated park.” (New York Times 1903)

As Commissioner Williams continued to pursue funding for maintenance and improvements to the island, his ideas about the landscape began to change slightly. (Office of the Commissioner of Immigration 1903) A rise in immigration resulted in an increase in the number of detainees.

The administration realized a need to provide an opportunity for outdoor recreation and relaxation as an alternative to indoor confinement. To accommodate this, Williams approved the addition of a roof garden with a retractable canvas awning on the southern wing of the main immigration building. (Unrau 1981; Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984) Additionally, the staff encouraged immigrants to linger in the outdoor areas adjacent to the main immigration building while waiting to be processed.

Implementation of these small changes was apparently successful and well-received by the immigrant detainees. Commissioner Williams's 1904 report mentioned that during warm weather the detainees were "out of doors as much as possible, a portion of them on the westerly roof garden fitted with awnings and benches, and another portion on the broad granolithic sidewalk on the northerly side of the building where they can move about in the shade." This commitment to provide outdoor recreation space for detainees was reinforced later in the year when "at the Commissioner-General's [of Immigration for the United States] suggestion special provision [was] made for the amusement of detained children by converting a portion of the roof garden into a playground, where they may enjoy fresh air and various kinds of amusements". (Unrau 1981)

ISLAND THREE

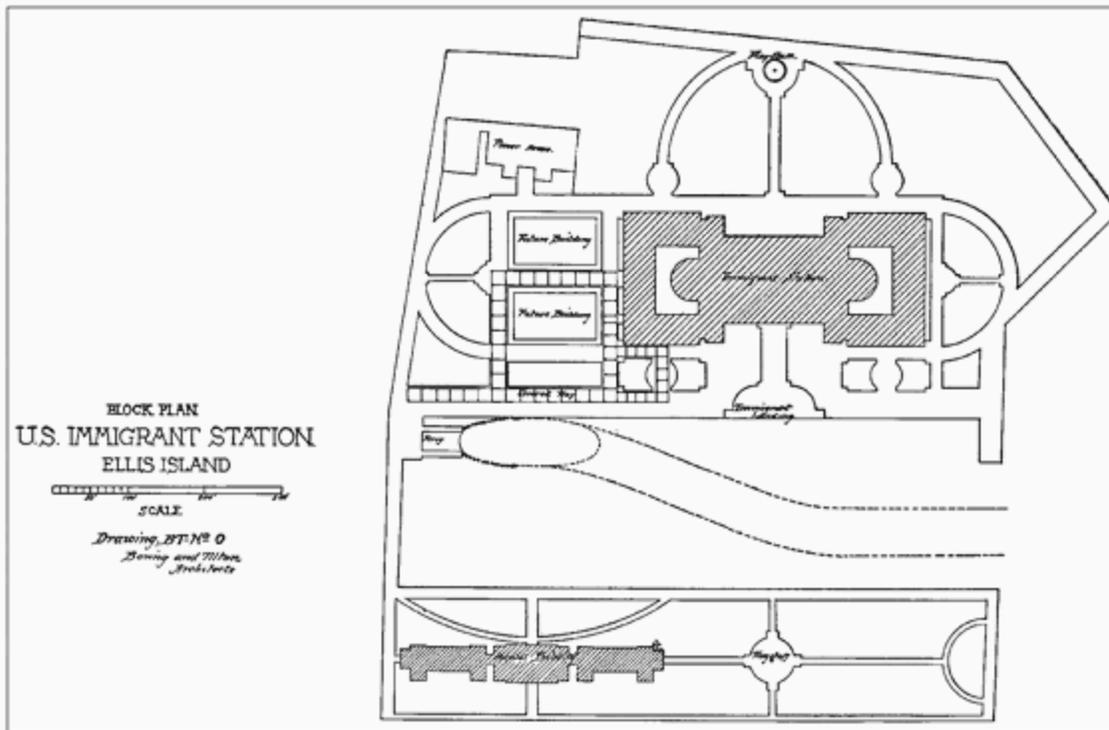
When the hospital on Island Two was constructed, consideration was not given to housing patients with contagious diseases. Since the 1890s, these patients had been sent to hospitals in the area under a contract with the New York City Health Department. In June 1902 surgeon George W. Stoner, who was in charge of the medical division on Ellis Island, voiced the need for a contagious-disease hospital to complement the existing hospital. In September of that year, the issue became more urgent when the New York City Health Department decided to terminate its contract for receiving immigrants with contagious disease. As a result, the Department of the Treasury soon implemented plans to construct a third island southwest of Island Two and add the needed facilities. (Unrau 1981) According to Commissioner Williams, the addition of the new island and hospital was "a matter of the greatest urgency, for we sometimes have 400 and even 500 sick people to care for, and as we know that the city hospitals are overcrowded, we do not like to ask them to take the non-quarantinable [sic] contagious cases; a great many of these patients are eventually deported." (New York Times 1904) Other reports said that in one year "over fifteen hundred children had come in at the station afflicted with Scarlet Fever and Measles, and that many of these diseases had been contracted on the trip...two hundred and five had died on the passage...[many] on account of the insanitary [sic] conditions of these steamships." (Burnett 1912)

In 1903 Congress appropriated \$150,500 for construction of Island Three but did not immediately provide funds for construction of the hospital itself. The federal government also began negotiations with New Jersey to purchase submerged lands around Ellis Island, including an area approximately four hundred to five hundred feet south of Island Two for the construction of Island Three. New Jersey challenged the government's legal rights to the existing Ellis Island, but on November 30, 1904, the case was settled. New Jersey executed a deed to the federal government "granting all the right, title and interest of the State of New

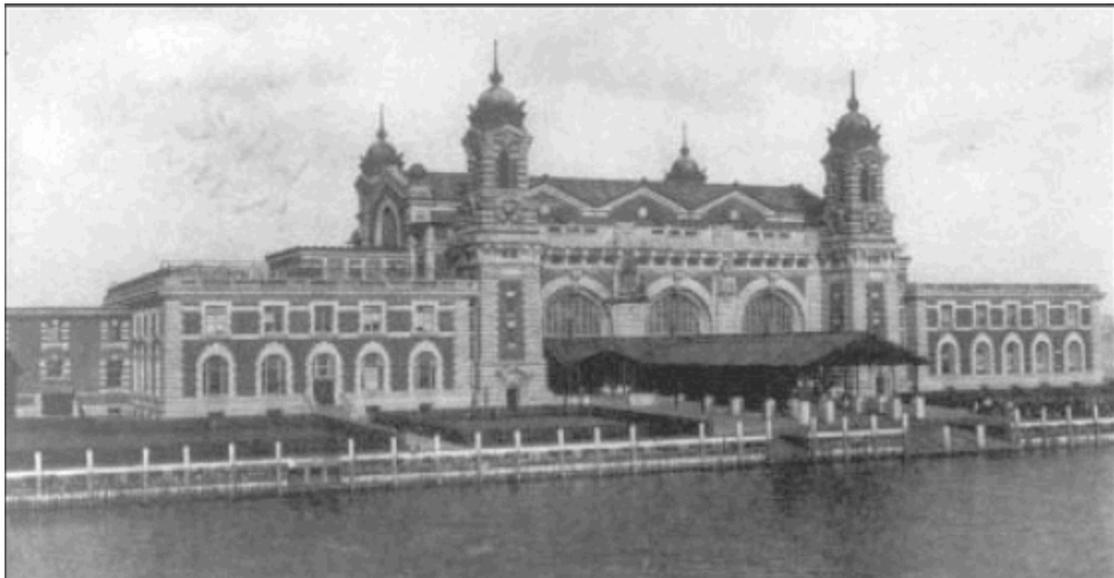
Jersey in and to land under water surrounding Ellis Island” for the sum of \$1,000. The deed recorded the United States as the owner of Ellis Island and stipulated, “The United States of America does not waive any rights or privileges which it would possess had not the [deed] been accepted, and that no rights of the grantee [New Jersey] of any kind whatsoever shall be prejudiced by such acceptance.” (Pike 1963)

Alfred Brooks Fry developed specifications for construction of the new island approximately eight hundred feet from Island Two. The Department of the Treasury had previously acquired permission from the War Department to construct the new island within five hundred feet of Ellis Island, and it was feared that to gain approval for the proposed eight hundred feet distance would delay the project. Commissioner Williams sought the advice of the Surgeon General to determine an appropriate distance from Island Two and how best to lay out the facilities to minimize contamination between patients on Island Two and contagious-disease patients on Island Three. In response, the Surgeon General indicated that an island “with an outside limit of 410 feet from the present island and with 200 feet of clear water space between the two islands, would be amply sufficient to insure freedom from danger of contagion according to modern ideas of hospital construction.” (Wyman 1902; White, Pettus, Vaughn, Geddings and Rosenau 1902) Also, contemporary opinion indicated that a single building was less desirable than a series of several small pavilions, where various diseases could be treated in isolation from other wards. (Unrau 1981)

In April 1905 the Department of Commerce and Labor let to New Jersey Dock and Bridge Company for construction of the island. (Unrau 1981) The contractor laid boundaries for the construction of an island eight hundred feet in length by two hundred fifty feet in width with two hundred feet of open water between it and Island Two. The company dredged a fifteen-foot-deep by thirty-foot-wide trench and filled it with more than 1.2 million cubic feet of cribwork and stones. The island was formed by filling behind the cribwork with approximately sixty thousand cubic yards of dredged material including “cellar dirt, stones, clay, old masonry, etc.,” and seventy thousand cubic yards of earth and “a very excellent grade of sand obtained by dredging” near the island. (Unrau 1981; Pousson 1986) New Jersey Dock and Bridge completed Island Three in early 1906 and connected it to Island Two with a fifty-foot-long wooden gangway. The four and three-quarters acre island increased Ellis Island’s total acreage to approximately twenty and one-quarter acres (Figure 3.8).



*Fig 3.1 - Boring & Tilton's early design for landscape of Ellis Island, October 1898.
(ELIS CLR)*



*Fig 3.2 - Main immigration building with glazed porch and portico, view from south, c.
1905. (ELIS CLR)*



Fig 3.3 - Main hospital building on Island 2, viewed from south, c. 1903. (ELIS CLR)

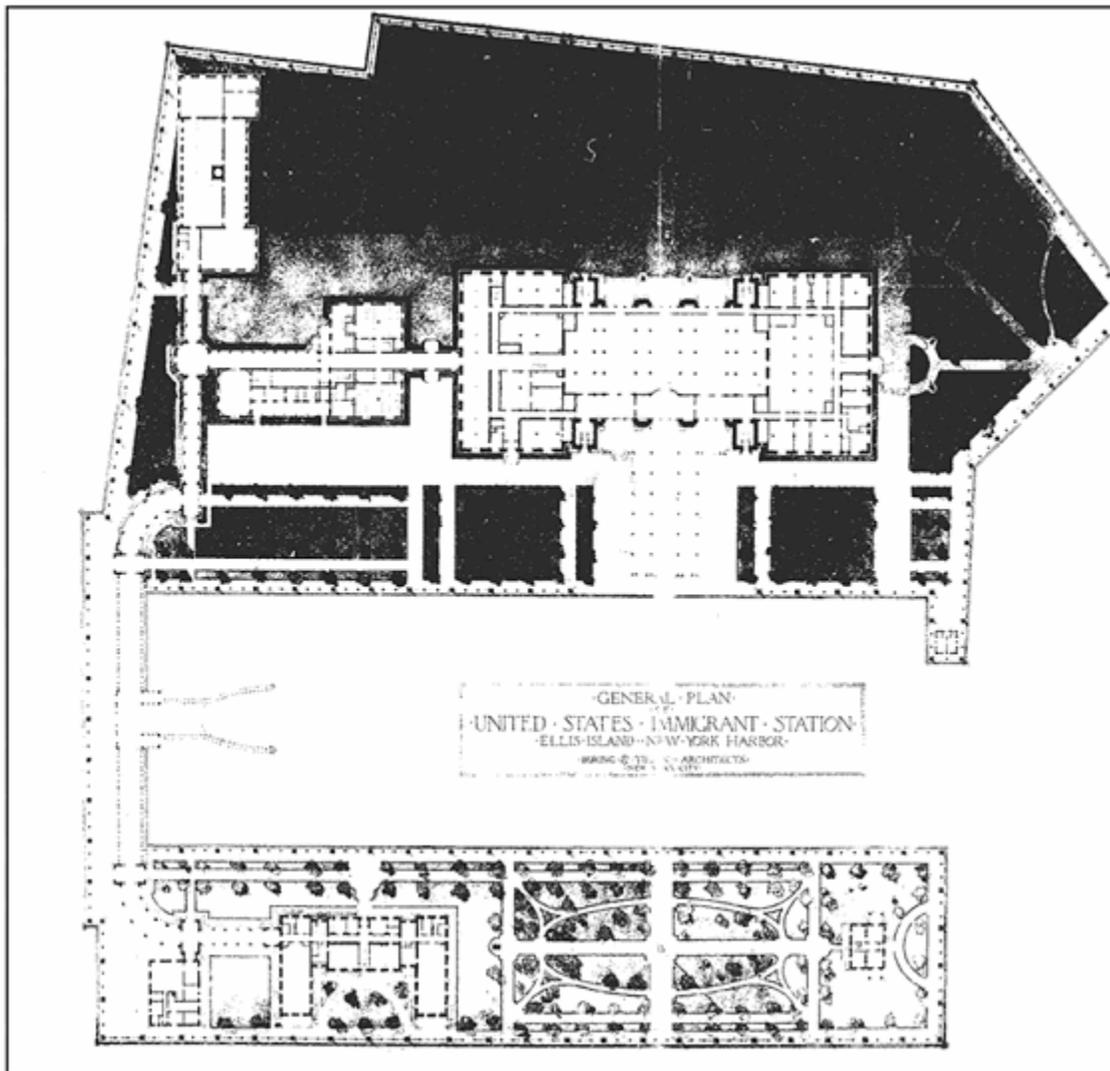


Fig 3.4 - Boring & Tilton's revised design for landscape, c. 1902. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 3.5 - Post & wire fences & newly planted hedges surround lawn in front of main immigration building, c. 1903. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 3.6 - Landscape features on southeast end of Island 1, including small flower bed, benches, flagstaff, & ornate lamp posts, 1903. (ELIS CLR)



*Fig 3.7 - Privet (*Ligustrum sp.*) hedges & lawn in front of main immigration building and kitchen & laundry building show 2 years growth, c. 1905. (ELIS CLR)*

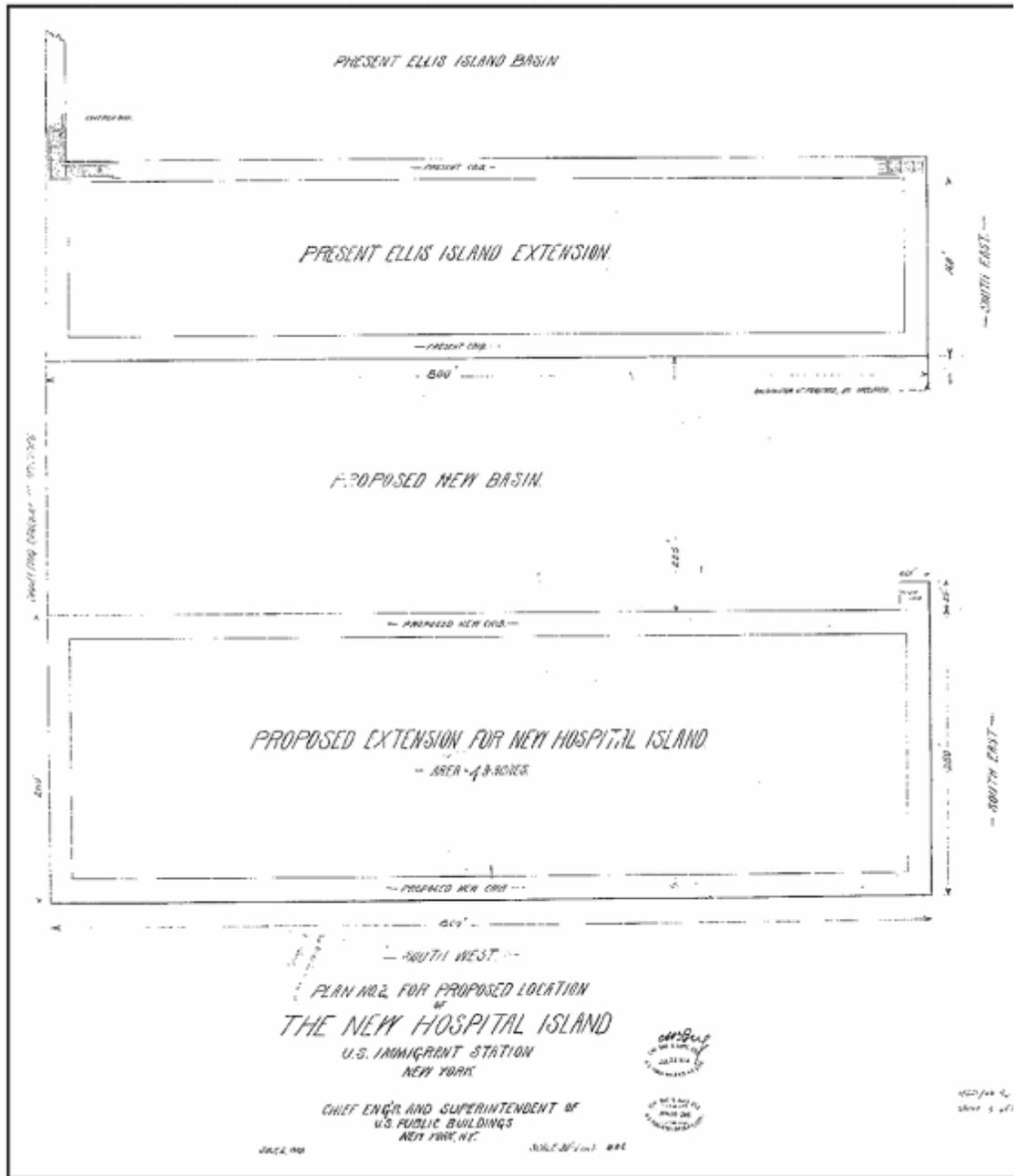


Fig 3.8 - Layout plan for creation of Island 3, July 1903. (ELIS CLR)

architect developed plans for the two-story brick building, including a rooftop deck and pergola to provide outdoor space for detained immigrants. Officials from the Department of Commerce and Labor let a contract to the New York State Construction Company in January 1908, and construction on the building began in March of that year. The company sited the building near the northeast corner of the main immigration building, proceeded with construction, and completed the facility by February 1909. (Unrau 1981)

Within a year of completion, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization proposed alterations and additions to improve the building's usefulness. By 1910 the courtyard between the structure and the main immigration building had a concrete surface, providing additional outdoor space for immigrants. The most significant alteration was the construction of a third story in 1914. This addition increased the amount of dormitory space and baggage storage. Although the existing roof deck and pergola were removed, the third-floor addition incorporated "open-air porches," providing new outdoor space on the roof for detainees' use. (Unrau 1981)

Greenhouse

In September 1910 island employees erected a greenhouse on the northeast side of the main immigration building. The gardener requested this facility to "decrease the amount of the annual flower bill by providing space for keeping flowers during the winter." (Unrau 1981) The forty-foot-long structure was finished by early November, constructed entirely of materials recycled from other buildings on the island, and cost approximately \$250. This addition was an essential element in maintaining the island's ornamental landscape. According to the Commissioner's 1913 Annual Report, "Continued effort has been made to add to the attractive appearance of the grounds by setting out additional privet hedges and hardy plants. A small greenhouse has been erected by our own mechanics from old material, so that the Government is now able to propagate nearly all of the flowering plants needed for beds..." (Office of the Commissioner of Immigration 1913) (Figure 4.1)

There were several of these beds scattered throughout the island, some dating to the initial 1902-1903 landscape improvements and others installed at later dates. Gardeners planted flowers and shrub roses along the entry path to the greenhouse, along with several climbing roses on five freestanding trellises. They used shrub roses between the baggage and dormitory building and the greenhouse in a small semicircular bed. They filled the existing star-shaped flower bed near the ferry house with begonias and protected the bed with a border of small wire hoops. Workers also installed a small pool, fountain, and flower bed in the lawn between the baggage and dormitory building and the powerhouse. Other ornamental vegetation present during this period included vines on the exterior walls of the kitchen and laundry building and the adjacent covered walkway, and numerous flower boxes and planters at several island locations (Figures 4.2 – 4.3). (Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984)

Additions and Renovations

Immigration officials continued to make recommendations for renovations to the extant buildings on Island One to accommodate changing needs and improve the facilities. Upgrades

to the main immigration building included a 1908 dormitory addition, a 1910 third-story addition on the north wing for administrative use and day quarters for detainees, and a third-story addition on the south wing between 1913 and 1915 for medical inspection facilities. (Unrau 1981) This addition necessitated the removal of the rooftop garden, encouraging officials to allow immigrants increased access to the landscape around the buildings for recreation. In 1908 contractor George Sykes of New York City added a one-thousand-seat dining room to the kitchen and laundry building on the renovated upper floor.

Several additional structures were added to the island during this period. By March 1910 the existing incinerator was in “imminent danger of collapse” and Commissioner Williams requested \$15,000 for the construction of a new facility. (Unrau 1981) Congress approved the appropriation and the Morse-Boulger Destructor Company constructed a new incinerator on a concrete platform outside the seawall adjacent to the former incinerator location. The company completed the structure by November 1911. (Pousson 1986) The landscape contained four privies at various sites by 1913. Island One locations included the dock east of the baggage and dormitory building behind the greenhouse, the bulkhead on the western side of the bakery and carpentry shop, and yard on the northern corner of the main immigration building. Island Two had one privy on the north corner of the island. However, by 1916 only the privy located in the yard near the main immigration building on Island One remained. (Unrau 1981; Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984; Pousson 1986) Congress appropriated \$50,000 for the construction of a new bakery and carpentry shop in 1913. A contractor completed the new building by June 1915, replacing the old wooden structures on Island One with a new masonry building in the same location. (Unrau 1981; Pousson 1986) Additions to the ferry house included a coal hoist and a series of coal bins located behind the building. These numerous alterations and efforts to improve facilities indicate activity at the immigration station remained high.

Documentation reveals the ornamental landscape was well-maintained throughout this period. A 1912 article described the pleasing island aesthetic: “Ellis Island usually is pictured in the minds of those who never have been on it as a desolate sort of place whereon misery and ugliness stand side by side. Nothing is further from the truth. In the spring and summer there is no place in or near New York which has greener grass or more beautiful privet hedges. Those hedges, in fact, would do credit to the private estate of any millionaire, so dense and uniform is their growth and so well are they kept by the gardener on the island. In fact, at this great clearing house for homesick but hopeful humanity most of the immigrants have more inviting surroundings than ever they had at home, with a view of one of the most magnificent and interesting harbors in the world added to them.” (Unidentified press article 1912)

By 1915 Commissioner of Immigration Frederic C. Howe implemented additional landscape improvements. These changes increased the recreational space for detainees and increased their access to the outdoors. The Bureau of Immigration installed a wire fence along the cinder walk at the northeast seawall, added swings and other playground equipment, and created recreation spaces for both adult and children detainees. They added benches to the lawns, constructed handball courts, and encouraged outdoor activity with a series of regular Sunday band concerts on the lawn. Increased flower plantings in beds and pots enhanced the more

“user friendly” landscape. (Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984) The circulation system, upgraded in 1909 when the existing boardwalk was replaced with new wood, was improved again circa 1915 when concrete replaced the boardwalk on a newly rehabilitated section of seawall. (Pousson 1986; Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984)

The approach of World War I and the resulting shift in focus from immigration to military use on the island led to a general decrease in landscape improvements and maintenance. Many of the existing ornamental plantings were probably not as highly maintained during the war years. Some of the flower beds may have been abandoned altogether. However, officials still encouraged military detainees to use the landscape for recreation and the area east and north of the main immigration building remained fenced for this purpose. The weekly band concerts on the lawn were suspended, but after the war Commissioner of Immigration Frederick A. Wallis reinstated the shows for returning immigration staff and aliens. On August 1, 1920, during the first concert after the war, “about 800 aliens were entertained on the lawn by a band, which played all the national anthems of countries represented on Ellis Island, opening with The Star-Spangled Banner.” (New York Times 1920) Even immigrants remaining aboard ships in the harbor enjoyed the entertainment. One report mentioned that twelve hundred passengers from the Holland American liner Rotterdam watched the show from the decks of the ship. However, officials did not allow all immigrants to participate. Some aliens remained detained inside the buildings and fenced yards. (New York Times 1920)

ISLAND TWO

By June 1907 United States Commissioner-General of Immigration Frank P. Sargent determined that the hospital on Island Two, even with the newly completed extension, still did not provide adequate facilities for the increasing numbers of patients treated at the site. Officials proposed construction of an additional wing southeast of the recently completed addition (administration building). Called the new hospital extension, this building was similar to the main hospital building in size and appearance. Congress concurred with the recommendation and appropriated \$250,000 for the project in February 1908. George W. Stoner, chief medical officer for the hospital, submitted initial sketches for the building to architects with the U. S. Public Buildings Service, but a controversy soon arose over the design. The medical staff and Commissioner of Immigration Watchorn wanted the building floors to be on the same level as the existing hospital addition, which were higher than the main hospital building, allowing room for a full-size basement in the new building. Architects wanted to maintain consistency between the facades of the main hospital building and the new structure, which would allow room for only a service basement. The issue was eventually resolved in favor of the former alternative, and the architects completed drawings for the building. The New York State Construction Company began construction in June 1908, and work was nearly complete by the spring of 1909. Cold weather delayed the pouring of concrete sidewalks and stoops until late April, but by May all construction was finished (Figure 4.4). (Unrau 1981)

Another addition to Island Two was the American Red Cross recreation building constructed

around 1915. The small masonry structure was located on the northeast corner of the island near the ferry house and the hospital outbuilding. There is little documentation on the construction of this building; however, photographs show the installation of ornamental landscaping along the building's foundation. (Pousson 1986)

As the new buildings were constructed on Island Two, immigration officials oversaw various landscape improvement projects. Concrete aprons installed around the perimeter of the buildings served as walkways and provided circulation routes. A cinder path provided circulation around the perimeter of the island. Lawns filled the remainder of the open space. A tennis court near the surgeon's house provided recreation space for island residents and employees. Sometime after the completion of the new hospital extension in 1909, a connecting walkway covered with a wooden pergola was constructed between this building and the surgeon's house. Details of the installation and exact date of these features is unknown, however, they first appear on 1913 maps and photographs. Vines and flowers enhanced both the pergola and a circular flower bed between the pergola and ferry basin.

ISLAND THREE

In March 1905 a \$250,000 appropriation from Congress initiated construction of the contagious-disease hospital on Island Three. In planning the hospital's layout, much debate arose between immigration officials, hospital officials, and U. S. Public Buildings Service architects concerning the design, specifications for construction, and need for additional funding. Given the history of increasing immigration and the continuous need to update buildings on Islands One and Two, Commissioner-General Sargent wanted to ensure the new hospital would fulfill future needs. In his 1906 annual report, Sargent argued for an additional \$250,000 to ensure the hospital on Island Three would be "large enough and sufficiently commodious and complete in its arrangement and equipment to obviate any possibility of additions or extensions being required in the near future." (Unrau 1981)

In December 1906 the Department of Commerce and Labor awarded a contract to Northeastern Construction Company for the construction of several of the buildings in the Island Three hospital complex, including the administration building, the kitchen, the powerhouse and laundry, and measles wards A, B, and E. Northeastern completed these structures by November 1907. It won an additional contract for construction of the second phase of buildings including measles wards C, D, and G, isolation ward L, the staff house, the mortuary, and corridors from the powerhouse to measles ward E. Northeastern and other contractors fulfilled subsequent contracts to complete measles wards F and H, isolation wards I and K, and the office building. By the spring of 1909, the entire contagious-disease hospital was finished, although several problems with last-minute details delayed its opening until June 1911. (Unrau 1981)

As building construction concluded, the landscape surrounding the newly completed hospital was gradually improved. It is unknown whether this work was contracted out or performed by immigration employees. In 1908 workers filled around the first set of completed buildings on Island Three with soil taken from the excavations of the new hospital extension on Island Two.

They graded the fill, added loam, and planted a lawn. Work crews completed additional grading and lawn renovations on Island Three in 1912. However, they did not install any trees or shrubs, nor did officials develop a comprehensive plan for the island's landscape. By 1913 an established lawn existed on the north side of the island, but areas on the south side remained rough and barren.

A central concrete walkway was integral to the building's layout and design and provided circulation between the buildings. Although initial 1909 drawings specified additional concrete walks between the buildings and around the island's perimeter, these were not installed. By 1913 cinder walkways existed in these locations instead. In 1914 Congress appropriated funds to enclose the two-story central corridor, which connected all buildings on Island Three except the isolation wards and office buildings. The glass enclosure allowed use of the corridor during inclement weather. Contractors completed the work by June 1914. (Unrau 1981) Additionally, in 1918 the U. S. Army replaced the wooden gangway connecting Islands Two and Three with a covered walk while they occupied the hospital complex. Commissioner Williams requested this upgrade as early as 1911, since the open walkway did not provide adequate protection for transferring patients between buildings and the existing piles were deteriorating quickly. He requested a fireproof masonry structure, but the walkway added by the U. S. Army was constructed of wood. (Unrau 1981)

The facilities on Island Three were certainly adequate to meet the needs of the immigration station at the time of their completion, but Commissioner of Immigration Daniel J. Keefe continued to push for upgrades in his annual reports. For example, in 1909 he stressed the need for space to house aliens with "mental defects": "Our hospital facilities, thanks to the recent construction of a contagious disease hospital on the new island, will probably now be adequate, except that there is no proper ward for holding for observation cases in which it is suspected that the alien may be affected mentally. Certain wooden barracks are now used for this purpose. They were never intended to stand permanently, and furthermore are dangerous by reason of their inflammability." (Office of the Commissioner of Immigration 1909)

It is unclear where these barracks were located, but they were eventually removed and additional structures were not constructed to house the mental patients. (Office of the Commissioner of Immigration 1911) These patients received treatment in isolation wards within the hospital complex on Island Three.

Granite-faced Seawall

In Commissioner Williams's 1910 funding request to Congress, he included \$150,000 for replacement of the cribwork seawall. In justifying this expenditure, Williams noted that the cribwork surrounding the island varied from two to fifteen years in age, and the reasonable life span for this type of structure was only seven years. The cribwork around Island One already showed signs of decay above the water line and according to engineers; the entire structure needed replacement with a concrete and granite seawall within the next five years. (Williams 1910) The station did not immediately receive approval for the expenditure and Williams repeatedly requested funding during the following years, with justification noting it was

“desirable in the interest of economy...to encase the three islands, the life of the existing crib work above high water being very limited.” (Office of the Commissioner of Immigration 1913)

Congress eventually approved funding, and in 1913 the Department of Labor began initiating a series of contracts to replace the existing wooden crib, rock-filled bulkheads with a new concrete seawall with granite facing. The work covered several phases of construction. The Chief Engineer for the Bureau of Immigration recommended starting Contract #1 on the north side of the ferry basin. (Williams 1910) This section cost approximately \$115,000 to complete. Contract #2 began soon after the completion of Contract #1, and covered the portion of wall directly opposite the ferry basin on the northeast side of Island Two. Placed on the water side of the existing bulkhead, the new seawall installed under Contracts #1 and #2 reduced the width of the ferry basin by approximately thirty feet. Contract #3 extended the wall around the southeast and southwest sides of Islands Two and Three, bridging the basin between the two islands. Contract #4 consisted of the section of wall on the northeast side of the baggage and dormitory building on Island One, northeast of the existing bulkhead. Upon completion of Contract #4, a wooden ramp spanned the space between the existing bulkhead and the new seawall, and the area was eventually filled. A new section of thirty-four fender piles along the face of the seawall allowed boats to moor alongside the building in this area. (Unrau 1981) Contract #5 extended the seawall from northeast of the baggage and dormitory building to the north side of the powerhouse on Island One, and included additional landfill between the existing bulkhead and the new seawall (see Appendix A). By 1921 the concrete and granite seawall enclosed most of Island One. However, the southeast point of the island did not receive the new wall until the 1930s, and the seawall was not completed on the northwest sides of Islands Two and Three until 1934, when landfill was added for the construction of the new immigration building (see Chapter 5). (Pousson 1986; Unrau 1981; Office of the Commissioner of Immigration 1913)



Fig 4.1 - View of greenhouse showing adjacent rose & shrub beds and trellises over path. Rooftop pergola is visible on nearby baggage & dormitory building, c. 1913. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 4.2 - Ornamental vines, shrubs & window boxes embellish the front façade of kitchen & laundry building, c. 1913. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 4.3 - Small flower bed on northwest corner of ferry basin on Island 2 with ornamental summer bulbs, 1913. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 4.4 - Island 2 viewed from Island 1 showing (left to right) new hospital extension, administration building, & original main hospital building. Boardwalk, wooden cribwork seawall, & fender pilings on Island 1 in foreground, c. 1913. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 4.5 - Aerial photo of Ellis Island, c. 1920. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 4.6 - Immigrants disembarking the ferry proceeded down dock extension, along ferry basin on Island 1 to reach main immigration building, c. 1913. (ELIS CLR)

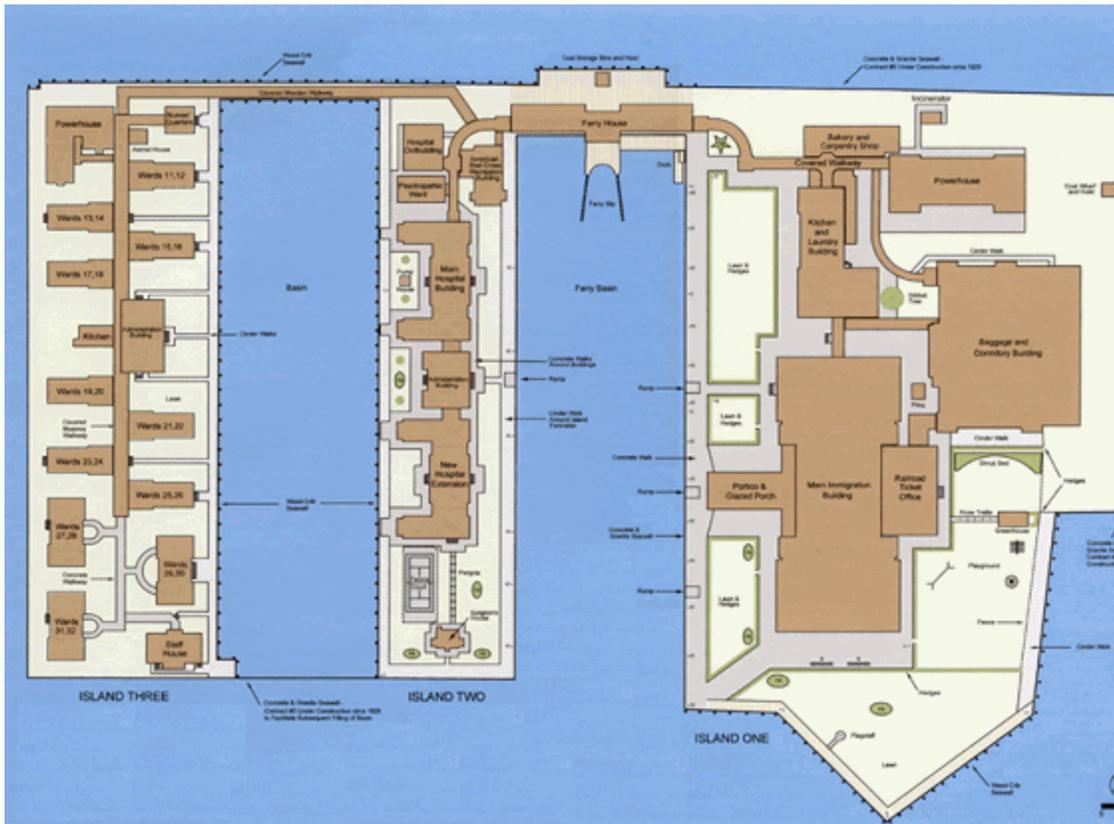


Fig 4.7 - Ellis Island Circa 1920 Period Plan, see appendix for enlargement. (ELIS CLR)

Second Immigration Station – Detention Facilities (Circa 1920 – 1954)

LANDSCAPE CHANGES DURING THE 1920s

Throughout the 1920s, various immigration commissioners sought funding to maintain the facilities and to provide for growing numbers of detainees. Once again, the provision of recreation space for immigrants and detainees was a landscape priority. In 1923 the Bureau of Immigration requested more than \$2.5 million for “a commodious, sanitary, attractive Ellis Island” including a new sea wall “and more land acquired by filling in, so that the immigrants should have space for exercise outside the buildings,” including a “pavilion for shelter and a children’s house with kindergarten and nursery.” (New York Times 1923) In anticipation of receiving the funding, immigration officials developed preliminary plans for these structures. President Calvin Coolidge supported the work, and in 1924 he asked Congress to appropriate \$300,000 to improve conditions on the island. (New York Times 1924) Congress appropriated partial funding and work began in the mid- to late 1920s on both the buildings and landscape, addressing some of the inadequacies of the facilities first mentioned as early as 1903.

A major project completed during this time was filling the area between Islands Two and Three to create additional recreation space, which began in the early 1920s but was not completed

until the early 1930s. Fill consisted primarily of cinders from the coal-fired island ferry (Figure 5.1). William Bean, who lived on Island Three as a child during the 1920s, recalled, “After every trip or two they [ferryboat crewmen] would clean out the ashes and clinkers, and load them into these two-wheeled carts...the kind they used to push concrete in....And they’d wheel those over on the bridge from the ferry slip between the first and second island, and dump them into the slightly diminishing lagoon there. And the ashes would be hot. And they would...bring forth deposits of sulfur and whatnot....There’d be beautiful growths of crystals and steam coming up.” (Bean and Bean 1994; Pousson 1986)

Various landscape and structural renovations, completed during the 1920s, improved both the flow through the buildings and the immigrant’s experience on the island. In the main immigration building, individual beds with supplied bedding replaced old bunks in wire cages, improving the situation for overnight detainees. Rearrangement of the reception and examining rooms eliminated “unnecessary climbing of stairs and needless going to and fro,” and allowed the “transfer station [to] be more businesslike.” (New York Times 1924) In late 1924 the Hamilton & Chambers Company of New York City installed a steel staircase on the northeast side of the baggage and dormitory building. This provided access for the detainees from the open porch on the second story of the building to the recreation area below. (Unrau 1981) In the fall of 1924 the Fireproof Products Company of New York City repaired the pergola on Island Two, and in 1926 Neptune B. Smyth, Inc., repaired porches, steps, railings, and ladders on the rear of wards 3, 4, 7, and 8 on Island Three. This contractor also installed a concrete sidewalk “from the end wall of wards 3 and 4 to the curb line, and the old concrete sidewalk between the building lines around the courtyard was to be replaced.” (Unrau 1981)

The installation of a new 75,000-gallon water tank and accompanying service pumps in 1920-1921 was the only structural addition during the 1920s. Bureau of Immigration engineers designed the tank, and its installation upgraded the entire island’s freshwater service. The tank was located at the western corner of the baggage and dormitory building near the powerhouse. With continued expansion of the island’s facilities, the need for freshwater storage increased, and in 1929-1930 the Bureau added two additional 250,000-gallon water towers adjacent to the original tank. (Unrau 1981; Pousson 1986)

LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS UNDER COMMISSIONER CORSI

In 1931 Edward Corsi began serving as Ellis Island’s Commissioner of Immigration, remaining in the position until January 31, 1934. Corsi, an immigrant himself, had passed through Ellis Island as a child. His consistent support for improving the island’s facilities and grounds led to the implementation of numerous changes to the landscape throughout the 1930s. Much of the work was funded and/or constructed through the Public Works Administration (PWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA) programs. (Schlesinger 1983)

In his memoir, *In the Shadow of Liberty*, Corsi described the importance of the appearance of the island and how immigrants perceived the facility. “I had advocated from the very beginning of my office the need of publicizing and humanizing the Island in the eyes of the entire world. As it is the port of entry to the largest city in the largest country of the Western World, it

seemed in keeping that the physical appearance of that port should bear witness to the importance of the city and country whose door it opened. That Ellis Island should be to the immigrant, as well as to the American, an inspiration – a tribute to our physical development as exemplified in adequate buildings, well-planned grounds, satisfactory sanitary and housing conditions – was to my mind the first, but by no means the only or the most important, consideration.” (Corsi 1935)

Changes implemented under Commissioner Corsi focused on improving the immigrant experience by updating facilities. In one of his earliest projects, the recreation space on the northeast side of Island One was increased and enclosed with a new eight-foot-tall galvanized chainlink fence. The Atlas Fence Company of Newark, New Jersey, completed the project in October 1931. The new fence extended from the southern corner of the main immigration building, around the point of the island, to the eastern corner of the baggage and dormitory building. (Unrau 1981) In 1932 removal of the entry portico altered the main immigration building’s entry, and installation of a paved plaza and a forty-foot diameter circular flower bed renovated the surrounding landscape. In that same year, the Quintine Realty Company of New York City installed a new steam heating system in the greenhouse to improve its operation. (Unrau 1981) As early as 1920, immigration officials proposed converting the generators in the powerhouse from coal to oil burners to save fuel and manpower costs. After the third proposal in 1931, Congress appropriated \$40,000 to complete the work. The R. H. Baker Company of New York City completed the changes by January 1933. Part of this contract included converting the original 75,000-gallon water tank into a standby oil storage tank, leaving the two large water towers to serve the island’s freshwater needs. (Unrau 1981) The coal hoist and conveyor equipment near the powerhouse were removed soon after. (“Remodeling of Immigration Station” 1935) Another alteration occurred in October 1932 when contractors installed an additional incinerator in the same building as the existing incinerator, increasing the capacity of the facility. (Unrau 1981)

On Island Two, minor alterations were made to landscape features. With the initial construction of the main hospital building, vacuum pumps for the heating system had been installed in a pump house on the southwest side of the structure. Seawater often flooded the basement-level pumps during particularly high tides, causing them to malfunction. To remedy this, contractors C. F. Malanka and the David E. Goggin Company installed a new pump house and pumps near the psychopathic ward and covered walkway in 1930. The structures had a concrete foundation, brick walls, and steel frame windows. (Unrau 1981) In 1932 the Quintine Realty Company renovated drains and sewers on Island Two, including the replacement of leader stacks, alterations to house drains on the main hospital building, alterations to house sewers, repairs to sewer mains, construction of catch basins and manholes, replacement of lines, and patching of concrete, masonry, and plaster. (Unrau 1981)

ELLIS ISLAND COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

In 1933 Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins established “a nonpartisan committee of prominent citizens” to complete a thorough analysis of the operation and facilities at Ellis Island. The objective of the Ellis Island Committee, as defined by Perkins, was “not to find fault with the

administration at Ellis Island, but to assist in effecting greater economy in operation and to improve the general amenities in the administration of the immigration law.” (Pitkin 1975) Commissioner Corsi worked closely with the committee and many of his suggested improvements were considered for inclusion as the committee prepared its report to the Secretary.

By the end of 1933, the Ellis Island Committee’s Subcommittee on Buildings, Grounds, and Physical Equipment issued a preliminary appraisal of the condition of the island landscape. This evaluation focused on increasing recreation potential for the detainees and specifically recommended adding more recreation areas, improving fencing, adding shelters and comfort stations, installing turfgrass on the newly filled recreation area between Islands Two and Three, and improving landscaping on Island Two and near the new water tanks on Island One. In 1934 the Ellis Island Committee issued its final report on the island’s administration and facilities. Included were the subcommittee’s landscape evaluation and several additional recommendations addressing the deteriorating conditions present since the late 1920s (Figure 5.2). (“Report of the Subcommittee on Buildings, Grounds and Physical Equipment for Ellis Island” 1933)

Some of the committee’s recommendations were subsequently implemented, while others were not. By the time the committee issued the final report and recommendations, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had already been considering numerous construction projects for the island, and several were under way or proposed for funding and implementation through the PWA and WPA. The resulting new additions, building upgrades, and landscape rehabilitation performed during the 1930s would be the last major phase of construction completed on Ellis Island while it was still in use as an immigration facility.

One addition proposed by the committee was a new ferry terminal building. By 1934, the existing ferry house was “old and somewhat dilapidated” and, along with the wooden connecting passageways, needed replacement. The committee recommended replacing the structure with “a new fireproof ferry house and connecting passages.” In October 1934 the Department of Labor awarded a \$133,000 contract to George F. Driscoll of Brooklyn for building construction. The building, consisting “of a high central pavilion surmounted by a copper-covered cupola and two one-story wings,” was a fireproof masonry and steel construction designed with art deco influences. Driscoll constructed the building at the head of the ferry basin between Islands One and Two. The contractor finished both the new ferry building and covered walkways, including a new covered masonry walk replacing the 1918 covered wooden walk between Islands Two and Three, by January 1936. (Unrau 1981)

George F. Driscoll also constructed a new immigration building under contract with the Department of Labor. This structure, intended to aid in segregating the different classes of immigrants and detainees, was located on the northwest side of the new ferry building. Construction required the addition of a new section of seawall and landfill north of the new ferry building. Installation of the support pilings began in 1934, and Driscoll completed the structure in 1935-1936. The building’s original plans reflected continued emphasis on immigrants’ recreation needs. Chester H. Aldrich, consulting architect for the project, specified

sun porches on the north and south ends of the building as well as a playground and gardens in the surrounding landscape. Even though these initial plans were never implemented, the newly filled ground around the building was used for recreation. Two tennis courts took the place of the proposed garden on the south end of the building (Figure 5.3). (Unrau 1981; Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984))

By the time the new immigration building was funded and constructed, the extra space it provided for immigrant processing was no longer needed. Immigration had slowed and the island's focus had changed from immigrant processing to detention, reducing the numbers of immigrants passing through the facilities. This shift was caused primarily by the earlier implementation of the Immigration Act of 1924, which restricted immigrant numbers and effectively ended mass immigration. This allowed the Bureau of Immigration to replace island-based processing with shipboard inspection. Only those immigrants who did not pass inspection, those needing medical attention, or those being detained for deportation were brought directly to the island. The reduction in use of island facilities, compounded by a general decrease in immigration during the Depression and the lack of funding for the building's upkeep, left the new structure unused for several years after its completion.

In 1939 the U. S. Coast Guard occupied the new immigration building and several other island facilities, staying for the duration of World War II. Other wartime changes included the use of the existing hospital for wounded veterans and the addition of a large number of enemy aliens to the existing population of detained immigrants, strengthening the island's primary use as a detention facility. In 1946 the U. S. Coast Guard left the island and the new immigration building remained unused until Ellis Island's abandonment in 1954. (Unrau 1981)

In August 1934 the Department of Labor awarded a contract to B & Z Contracting Company to construct a new greenhouse. The Ellis Island Committee recommended locating the new structure on the northeast corner of Island One, near the powerhouse and incinerator. Razing the old greenhouse and removing the adjacent shrub beds and walk created more recreation space for detainees east of the main immigration building. The new greenhouse was approximately twenty-five by fifty feet in size and consisted of a structural steel frame, typical ridge roofline, and "B" quality double-strength window glass. The contractor installed a low-pressure, steam-heating system and the building was in use by the summer of 1935. During a subsequent renovation in the 1940s, contractors replaced the glass, reworked the ridge caps, and painted the superstructure. ("Remodeling of the Immigration Station" 1935)

Federal Project No. 61 was one of the landscape projects already under way when the committee issued its recommendations. This project included adding "2397 linear feet of granite facing concrete seawall to complete the enclosing of Ellis Island, as authorized by Congress 1911," installing "required fill and soil for the eastward extension of Island No. 1 if new sea wall is built," and removing "2 feet of present cinder fill between buildings of Is. No. 2 and replace with 18 inches of sub soil and 6 inches of top soil and plant with grass and shrubs. Also similar treatment for north side of Is. No. 1 and south side of Is. No. 3." (Ickes 1933) The proposed cost was \$549,000. In 1934 an updated cost estimate added repairs of the existing seawall, dredging in the ferry slip, and various landscaping for Islands Two and Three.

("Sea Wall Grading, Etc." 1934) It is not clear whether Federal Project No. 61 was fully implemented as proposed, but numerous projects on all three islands throughout the mid- to late 1930s addressed items included in this proposal.

Due to the increased emphasis on projects with landscape components, the INS began developing a more comprehensive planning strategy for the entire island. Officials proceeded with the early development of an island-wide master plan, which would evolve during the remainder of the decade. A 1935 memo between the Department of the Treasury and the WPA district office identified several items a master plan should address. The memo described an accompanying 1935 drawing titled "Drawing T-L," however; this plan has not been located. The work described in the memo is consistent with subsequent changes made in the landscape, indicating landscape projects completed in the late 1930s were the direct result of this early planning. Recommendations from the 1935 memo are listed in Table 5.2.

In August 1935 the INS applied to the WPA for funding to complete renovations on the island, including some of the work described in the 1935 memo. The Commissioner of Immigration requested "an allotment of \$84,340.00 for renovation of station buildings and equipment and for landscaping grounds." (Wagner 1935) It is unclear from the record whether this funding was received in full, but subsequent alterations to the facilities and landscape on Ellis Island during the late 1930s and early 1940s followed the direction of the 1935 planning efforts and indicate at least partial funding was obtained for this work.

In response to the Ellis Island Committee's recommendation to provide more recreation amenities for the detainees, as well as for the staff of the various organizations working on the island, the INS developed plans to construct a new recreation building and two recreation shelters. In February 1936 the Department of Labor awarded a contract for the construction of these facilities to the Albert Development Corporation of New York City. The contract included razing the existing American Red Cross recreation building on the northeast side of Island Two, constructing the new recreation building and one recreation shelter on the landfill between Islands Two and Three, and constructing another recreation shelter on Island One northeast of the powerhouse. The contractor completed these structures in early 1937. (Unrau 1981; Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984) The recreation building and shelters retained their intended functions from 1937 until the island closed in 1954. They allowed "ailing immigrants, merchant seamen, and members of the U. S. Coast Guard who received treatment at the hospitals on islands 2 and 3...to participate in athletic and social activities in the recreation building and nearby shelter while the shelter on island 1 was used exclusively by those detained on island 1." (Unrau 1981) When the U. S. Public Health Service closed the hospital facilities in 1951, the U. S. Coast Guard continued using the recreation facilities until the entire island was shut down in 1954.

Work performed as a result of the committee's recommendations improved walkways on Island One and added a small amount of vegetation to the landscape. In 1936 and 1937 contractors replaced existing concrete walks around the island. New walks on the ferry basin side of the kitchen and laundry building and west wing of the main immigration building replicated the 1902 walk layout. Directly in front of the main immigration building, a rectilinear

layout of lawns and walks with four quadrants and a small circular planting bed replaced the larger circa 1932 circular planting bed. One walkway adjacent to the south side of the main immigration building was removed. A decrease in the width of the walkway/apron on the north and east sides of the building provided a space for planting between the path and the building. Existing hedges and a row of poplar trees parallel to the ferry basin remained intact, while new shrubs filled the space between the front of the building and the new walkway. Some plant species specified for various locations on the island included *Juniperus sabina tamariscifolia* (savin juniper), *Ligustrum ibota* (ibota privet), *Viburnum cassinoides* (witherod viburnum), *Spiraea latifolia* (meadowsweet), *Ampelopsis veitchi* (ampelopsis), and *Ligustrum ovalifolium* (California privet). (“Invitation, Bid, and Acceptance, U.S. Standard Form 33” 1937) The relocated flagstaff on Island One, at the “point” of the landfill southeast of the main immigration building, was enhanced with a new concrete walk circling the base. Contractors installed larger areas of concrete following specifications calling for reinforced concrete, five inches thick, scored in four foot squares, with three-eighths-inch expansion joints set twenty feet apart. Smaller walks provided circulation between the new greenhouse, incinerator, and recreation shelter. (Unrau 1981; Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984)

A new system of walkways also defined the recreation space between Islands Two and Three. Constructed in 1936, the walks followed the rectilinear grid pattern first shown in the committee’s 1934 report. Lawn filled the areas between the walks, leaving plenty of open space between the islands for the recreation activities of hospital patients and employees. Beatrice Conan, a hospital attendant on Ellis Island in the late 1930s, recalled the grounds in this area were not elaborately landscaped, but there “were places outside where we could stay, like a bench and...like a garden, but not a garden...just paths with greenery along side of it.” (Conan 1995)

Following the committee’s recommendation to provide separation for detainee classes, the Department of Labor awarded several contracts to remodel the interior of the baggage and dormitory building for this purpose. (Unrau 1981) Work to fulfill this recommendation also extended to the island’s landscape. By the mid-1930s, adjustments to existing recreation areas on Island One provided segregated spaces for detainees. Fenced recreation areas existed near the new immigration building and north and east of the main immigration building. The latter area included a new baseball field and backstop. Fences between the baggage and dormitory building and the powerhouse defined a third recreation area on Island One. (Unrau 1981) Additionally, some fenced areas between wards on Island Three provided recreation space for detained patients.

Structural additions and alterations in the mid- to late 1930s also followed committee recommendations and had impacts on the landscape. The committee proposal to raze the surgeon’s house and the adjacent pergola on Island Two and construct “a new pavilion for housing hospital staff” was partially implemented. (Unrau 1981) The Department of Labor approved removal of the structures sometime between 1936 and 1940; however, a new facility was not built. It is unknown if the adjacent tennis courts were removed with the house, but they were no longer extant by 1940. The addition of sun porches on wards 13-14, 17-18, 19-20, and 23-24 increased available outdoor space for Island Three tubercular patients. WPA

contractors completed this work between 1936 and 1939. Although the committee recommended locating porches on both the first and second floors, it is unclear if they were constructed as specified. (Unrau 1981) Contractors also added a covered masonry walkway between the powerhouse on Island One and the powerhouse on Island Three, replacing the previous wooden structure. This renovation established a permanent covered masonry circulation route between all three islands. (Unrau 1981)

Landscape projects remained a priority to the end of the decade. In 1938 the INS budgeted \$6,500 for installation or maintenance of “topsoil, hedges, trees, fertilizer, materials for walks.” (Miscellaneous Note 1938) By May 1939 WPA designers developed a detailed landscape plan for the areas surrounding the hospital buildings on Island Two. This plan called for a highly ornamental landscape of shrub and flower beds, reminiscent of the extensive flowers installed on Island One during Commissioner William Williams’s tenure. Some of the specified shrubs included *Ilex crenata* (Japanese holly), *Pyracantha coccinea* (scarlet firethorn), *Rosa rugosa* (rugosa rose), and *Myrica carolinensis* (bayberry), with annual color provided by blue *Petunia x hybrida* (petunia) and mixed colors of *Portulaca grandiflora* (moss rose). The plan marked existing two- to three-inch caliper *Populus* (poplar trees) along the ferry basin for relocation. A row of *Platanus orientalis* (Oriental plane tree) was proposed for the edge of the ferry basin and groupings of *Pinus nigra* (Austrian pine) were to be added in the lawn at the island’s southern end on the former location of the surgeon’s house. Despite the detail of the design, there is no documentary evidence it was ever implemented (see Appendix B).

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1939 PLANTING PLAN

In October 1939 the Office of the Supervising Architect for the Federal Works Agency’s Public Buildings Administration developed a comprehensive planting plan for Ellis Island addressing all three islands in detail (Figure 5.4). This plan focused on a large-scale approach, emphasizing placement of trees and shrub groupings over the detailed design of small-scale flower beds. It built upon the various landscape projects implemented during the previous decade and reflected the changing use of the facilities, particularly on Island One. Since the mid-1920s, the primary function of the main immigration building had been as a detention station with immigration activities taking a secondary role. The addition of the new immigration building was intended to shift immigration activities to the northwest corner of the ferry basin. The main immigration building would no longer be the focal point of the island. Its main entrance shifted from the central doors to the building’s southwest corner. The 1939 plan, with symmetrical rows of *Platanus occidentalis* (American plane tree) along both sides of the ferry basin’s edge and reduced size of the large gathering space adjacent to the main immigration building, enhanced this change by focusing attention toward the end of the ferry basin and the new immigration building. Even though the new immigration building was never used for its intended purpose and immigration activities continued to be housed in the main immigration building, the planting plan did not change. As work on the landscape continued in 1940, implementation generally followed the 1939 plan as originally designed, although not all elements of the plan were installed. (Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984)

The most significant element of the 1939 planting plan was the use of two tree species in large

numbers. The design specified *Platanus occidentalis* for rows along the lawns on the south and east sides of the main immigration building, along the north side of the hospital complex on Island Two, and along both sides of the recreation space between Islands Two and Three. The majority of the trees located on the plan were installed over the next few years, however, *Platanus acerifolia* (London planetree) was used as a substitute in the field. The design specified *Quercus palustris* (pin oak) for use around the northwest end of Island One, around the new immigration building, and in a regular pattern between the buildings on Island Three. Many of these trees were planted on Island Three, but not all of them were installed around the new immigration building. The design also specified two shrub species, *Ligustrum amurense* (amur privet) and *Ligustrum ibota regelianum* (ibota privet), however, it is not clear if these were installed in the landscape.

By December 1939 at least six major projects with landscape components had been completed on the island with funding and/or labor provided by the PWA and WPA. The work included “grading on some of the grounds, removal of old wooden bulkheads... grading down and filling up sections of the grounds...distribution of topsoil... making new lawns,” and work on “yards and grounds.” (Memo 1939) From 1937 to 1939 completion of various landscape projects added more than seven hundred cubic yards of topsoil to the island and seeded more than eight thousand total square yards of lawn. (Memo 1939)

Maintenance of recreation space for both immigrant detainees and island workers continued to be an issue during the early 1940s. In 1940 the U. S. Coast Guard began using the recreation area northeast of the baggage and dormitory building and the area northwest of the new immigration building. The guardsmen intended to construct a softball diamond, tennis courts, and boxing ring for recreation. They eventually installed the tennis courts northwest of the new immigration building, but not the other facilities. However, they did install a flagstaff with a concrete base, inscribed “United States Coast Guard Oct 1940,” east of the new immigration building. This suggests the space may have been used for assembly rather than as a recreation field. (Pousson 1986)

In 1940 the INS increased security on Island One with the installation of a double row of chainlink fencing in front of the main immigration building. The INS also added a single fence at the rear of the building and on the east side of the baggage and dormitory building. A new chainlink baseball backstop complemented the existing baseball field in the detention area. (Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984)

Throughout the 1940’s war years, detention remained the primary focus of the immigration station. The number of detainees on the island peaked at approximately eight hundred. Landscape maintenance was not the priority it had been during past eras, although the INS and U. S. Coast Guard put some effort into maintaining trees and other vegetation installed according to the 1939 plan. The detention areas on Island One were the least aesthetically pleasing locations on all three islands and even the inclusion of the baseball field did not help the desolate appearance of the main yard adjacent to the main immigration building. A 1942 New York Times article described the condition as, “bleak and treeless...a pretty dreary place. It is fenced on the two sides that lie open to the bay....The other two sides are shut in by the red

brick walls of the administration building. The corral thus enclosed is a large rectangle of made land, as flat as a floor, with a dust-gray surface and not a spot of green anywhere....” (New York Times Magazine 1942) Unfortunately, this assessment remained accurate throughout the remainder of the decade.

LANDSCAPE CHANGES DURING THE 1950s

On March 1, 1951, the U. S. Public Health Service closed the hospitals on Islands Two and Three due to a steady decrease in patient numbers. However, it maintained a small infirmary on the island for the detainee population. That same year, the U. S. Coast Guard returned to the island and established the Ellis Island Port Security Unit. It occupied the hospital on Island Two as offices and crew quarters, altered the administration building to accommodate a galley and mess hall, and used a few of the buildings on Island Three for file storage.

During the early 1950s, the INS and U. S. Coast Guard focused on maintaining the existing facilities and landscape, making minimal changes. There were a few additions added by both groups, including a 1952 fire protection system with hydrants on all three islands, additional guardhouses on Island One, an additional reserve fuel oil tank on Island One northeast of the powerhouse, and a small greenhouse on the southwest side of ward 32 on Island Three. (Pousson 1986) The most noticeable change to the landscape was the maturation of many trees and shrubs planted during the previous decade (Figure 5.5).

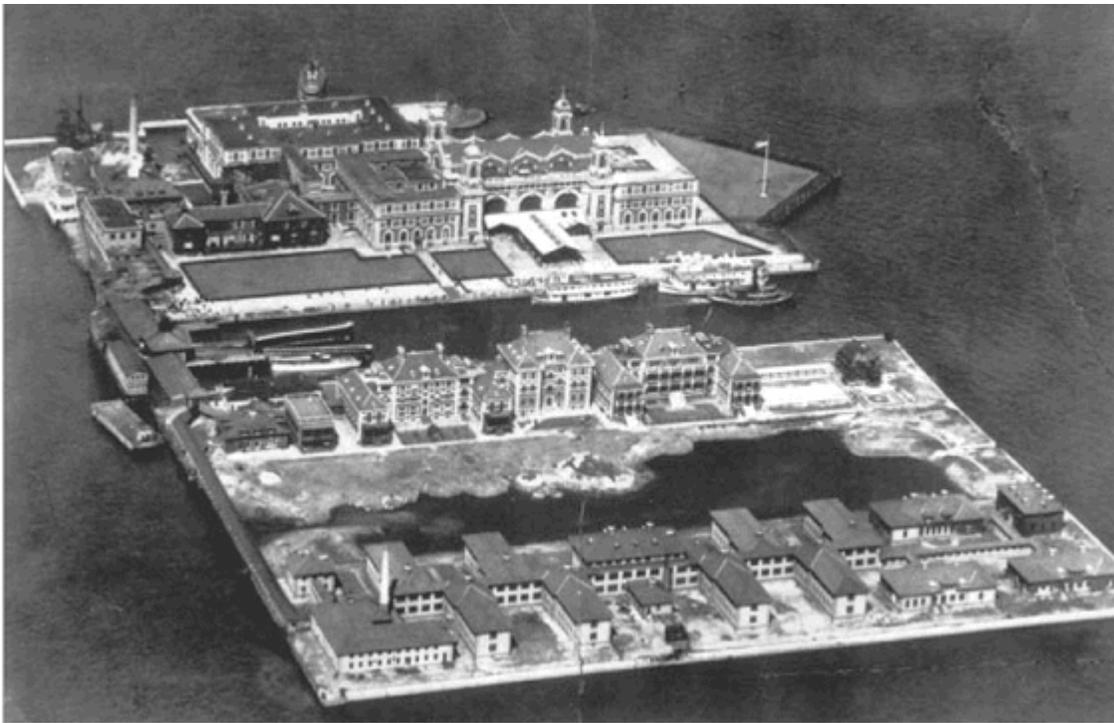
The main recreation yard on Island One remained enclosed with a chainlink fence topped with barbed wire and was for detainee use, weather permitting. Immigration employees used the same facilities during their off hours and lunchtimes. While the aliens were having lunch indoors, some of the staff would participate in a game of ball. (Kaye 1973) The various activities the detainees participated in “under the direction of the security officer in charge [gave] the alien his first introduction to America.” Popular U. S. team sports such as softball and baseball were “old friends to most aliens from the other countries in this Hemisphere,” but they were considered strange by European or Asian immigrants who favored soccer and volleyball. (U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service 1952) Since the late 1940s, an immigration staff softball team played in a league with the other government agencies, like the U. S. Post Office, the U. S. Attorney’s Office, and the Internal Revenue Service, and other immigration offices. According to INS employee Joseph Gallo, a few immigrant detainees maintained the baseball diamond, keeping it in “tip-top shape.” The detainees were not allowed to play in the league; however, they often watched the ball games for entertainment. (Gallo 1993)

The U. S. Coast Guard maintained the landscape surrounding the buildings it occupied since there was no civilian crew to do the work. Each guardsman had a specific job on the island such as delivering the mail, doing the laundry, working in the operations room, monitoring communications, or maintaining the grounds. (Hornberger 1991) Additionally, some of the guardsmen who were prisoners in the brig often maintained the lawns on the island. (Miller and Iles 1991) According to Charles M. Allmond, III, who was a U. S. Coast guardsman stationed at Ellis Island in 1953-1954, the island’s landscape, was well-maintained during this period. On

Ellis Island
Statue of Liberty NM - Ellis Island National Monument

Island Two there was a lawn bordered with “rows of sycamore trees...and a large parade ground behind the U. S. Coast Guard buildings, which was used for reviews and musters.” Park benches along the seawall allowed off-duty guardsmen to “sit and watch the harbor traffic and get a beautiful view of the New York skyline.” (Allmond 1983) Purchasing records indicate consistent expenditures made by the U. S. Coast Guard throughout the 1940s and 1950s supported landscape improvements and maintenance. There are numerous entries for purchases of grass seed, flower bulbs, bedding plants, shrubs, fertilizers, insecticides, and grounds maintenance equipment, indicating maintenance of the landscape continued to be an important consideration on the island (see Appendix C). The U. S. Coast Guard also continued to use the tennis courts near the new immigration building. (Hornberger 1991)

By 1954 both the INS and U. S. Coast Guard operations on Ellis Island were shut down and the island was abandoned. The previously well-maintained landscape quickly became overgrown with vegetation. Invasive trees like *Betula* (birch) and *Ailanthus altissima* (tree of heaven) were introduced to the island by birds or other methods of seed dispersal and spread rapidly. This was especially true for Islands Two and Three and between the baggage and dormitory building and powerhouse on Island One. (Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984)



*Fig 5.1 - Aerial photo showing area between Islands 2 & 3 partially filled, early 1920s.
(ELIS CLR)*

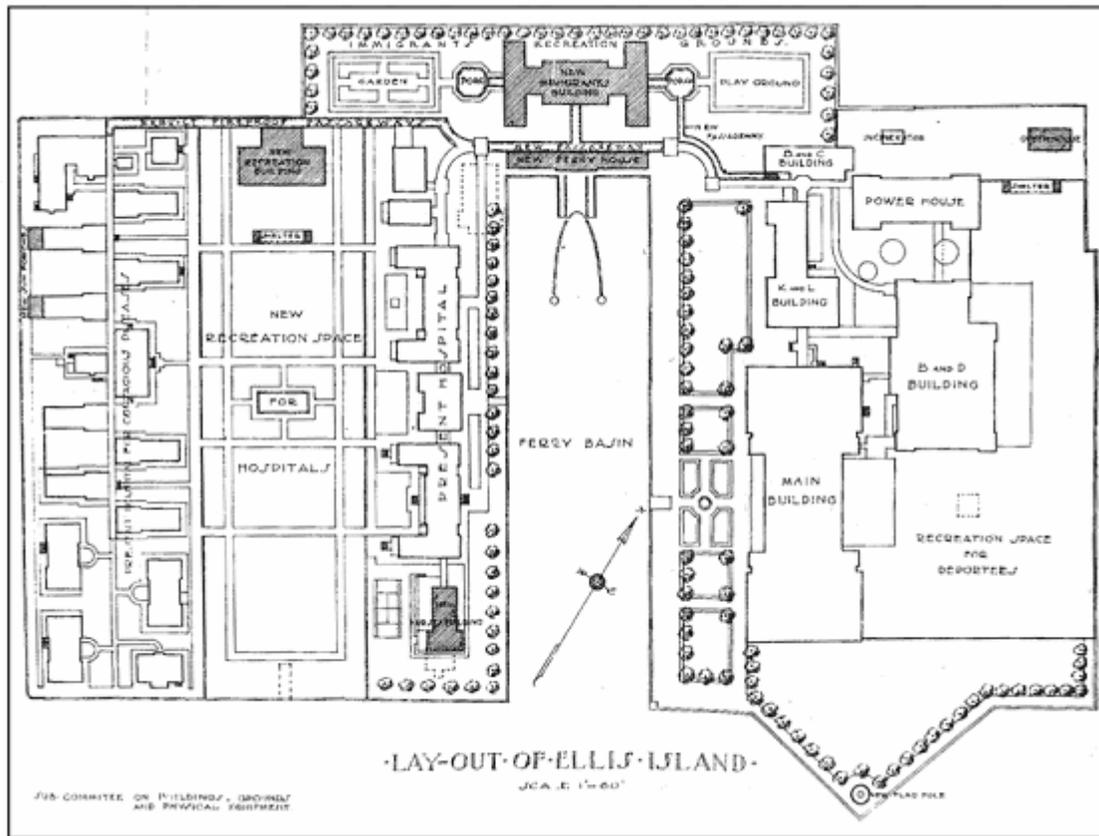


Fig 5.2 - Plan of Ellis Island accompanying 1934 Ellis Island Committee final report, see appendix for enlargement. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 5.3 - Aerial photo showing completed new ferry building and new immigration building on northwest side of island, February 1936. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 5.5 - Maturing trees along ferry basin on Island 1, c. 1950s. (ELIS CLR)

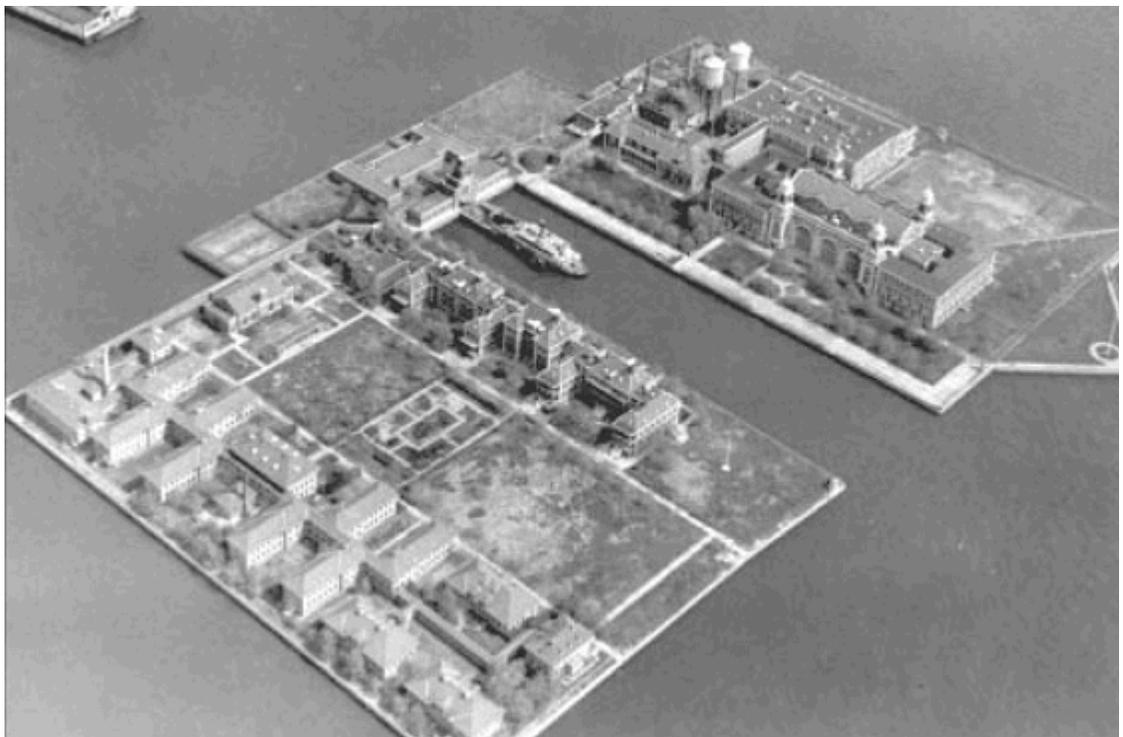


Fig 5.6 - Aerial photo of Ellis Island, 1954. (ELIS CLR)

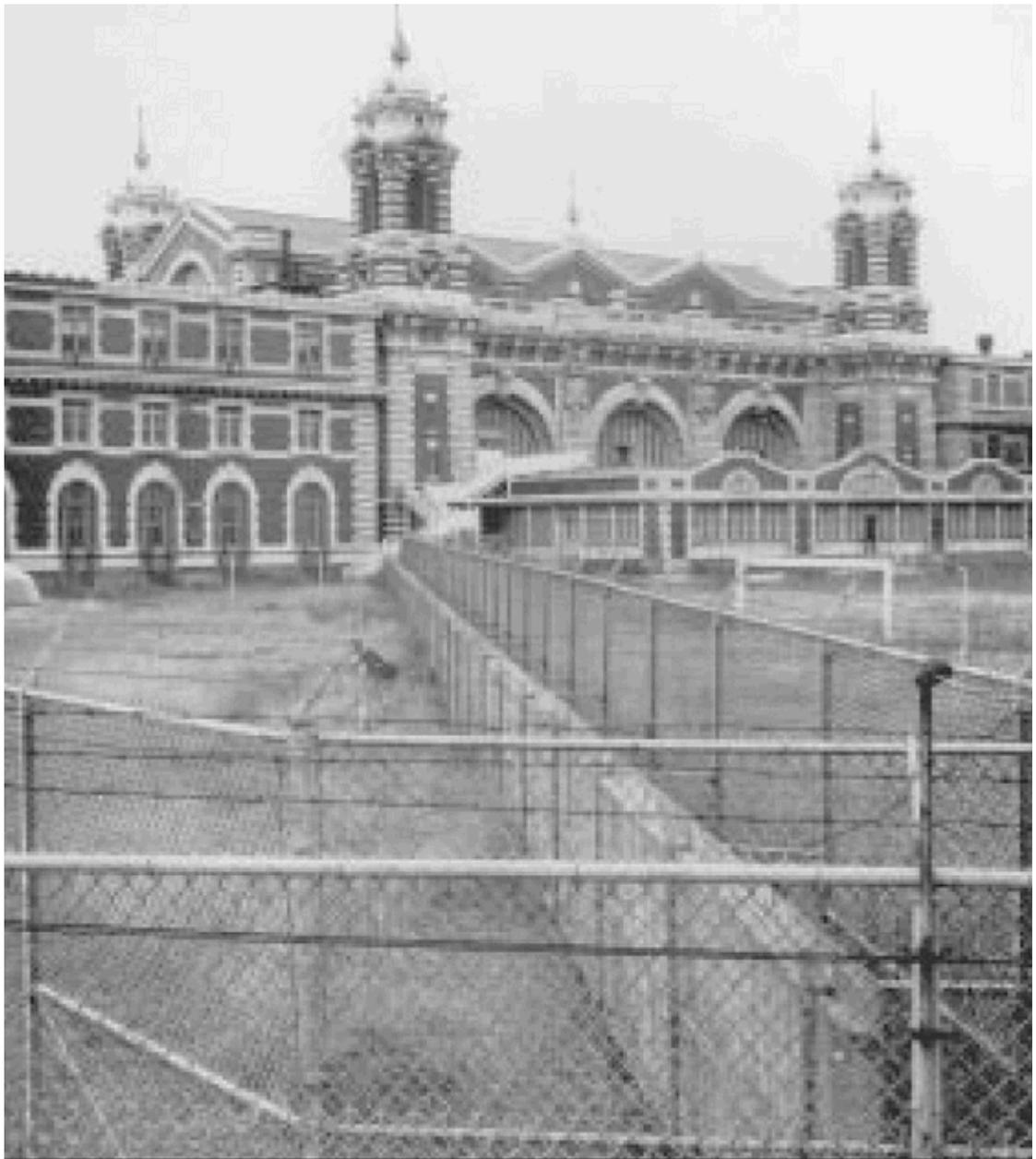


Fig 5.7 - Detainee recreation yard on Island 1 approx. 4 years after closure. Wooden & chainlink fencing restricted island access and changed circulation patterns during 1950s, c. 1958. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 5. 8 - Detail of guardhouse in Island 1 recreation area, c. 1958. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 5.9 - Open lawn between Islands 2 & 3, became filled with mature grasses and shrubby growth due to lack of maintenance after island's closure, c. 1958. (ELIS CLR)

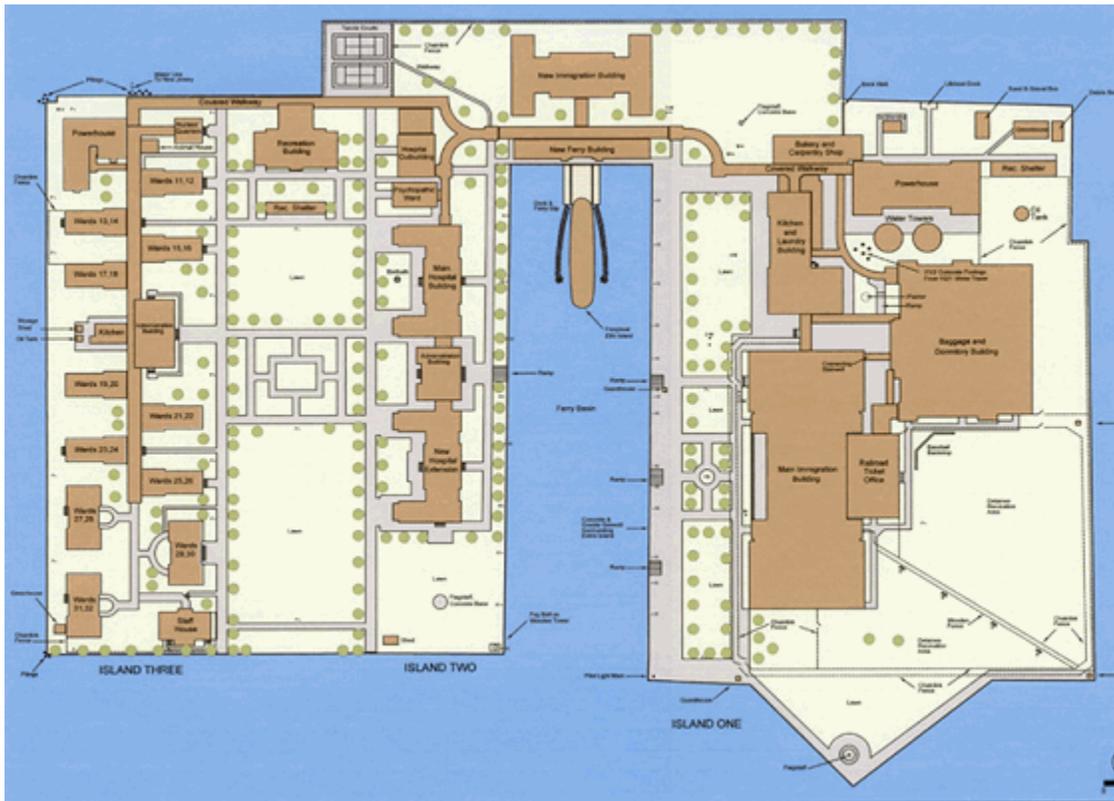


Fig 5.10 - Ellis Island 1954 Period Plan, see appendix for enlargement. (ELIS CLR)

Postimmigration Period (1954 – Present)

EARLY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PLANNING

Throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, the General Services Administration (GSA) tried unsuccessfully to dispose of Ellis Island by soliciting proposals for reuse and/or redevelopment of the site. Finally, on May 11, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Proclamation 3656 adding Ellis Island to the national park system and securing the island’s future as a historic property. The NPS began planning to address the complex issues involved in the preservation and/or rehabilitation of the island’s facilities. Several plans emerged over the ensuing years addressing pertinent issues such as whether to preserve or demolish existing structures, what amenities should be provided for the anticipated visiting public, and the overall vision for the future use and development of the island.

In 1966 Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall appointed New York architect Philip Johnson to oversee redevelopment of the island. Since the site had been essentially abandoned for a decade, a lack of maintenance had taken its toll on the facilities. With heat and utilities shut down for some time, leaky roofs and damp conditions led to quick deterioration of the buildings’ interiors. The island was plundered by “harbor pirates” who managed “to sneak ashore and carry off chairs, desks, metal piling and anything else that was portable,” while

vandals defaced or destroyed features that could not be easily removed. (Pitkin 1975) The seawall cracked and failed in various locations, and vegetation continued to grow unchecked throughout the island. Johnson took the decaying state of the facilities into account and developed a proposal in which the main immigration building, kitchen and laundry building, and hospital complex on Island Two were preserved as ruins and “vines would be encouraged to grow around and through the buildings...creating a sense of nostalgia.” (Pitkin 1975) All other facilities, including the hospital wards on Island Three, the extant landscape features, and historic vegetation, were to be removed. Johnson recommended extensive new tree plantings for the areas surrounding the remaining buildings in an effort to create a more traditional parklike setting. Proposed new facilities included a pavilion, restaurant, and large memorial to immigrants tentatively called “The Wall of the Sixteen Million.” The plan received mixed reviews from the public and the NPS determined its completion would likely exceed the funds appropriated for the island’s rehabilitation. As a result, Johnson’s plan was never implemented (Figures 6.1 – 6.2).

The facilities continued to deteriorate, however, and something had to be done if any of the island’s important features were to be saved. Consequently, a NPS planning team of architects, landscape architects, museum technicians, and historians convened in 1968 to develop a master plan. Although NPS management stressed the Johnson plan should not influence the study, the resulting 1968 Master Plan retained some of the same components as the earlier plan (Figure 6.3). The 1968 Master Plan emphasized the rehabilitation of the main immigration building at the expense of other resources on the island. It expanded on the earlier ideas of enhancing the island’s parklike appearance by calling for the removal of nearly all extant buildings and landscape features to allow for the creation of numerous public use areas, including a memorial plaza, picnic areas, and an open space for “immigrant celebrations.” (“A Master Plan for Ellis Island” 1968) The plan provided for rehabilitation of previously landscaped areas in front of the main immigration building to create an appropriate setting for the structure. Proposed additions to the landscape included a greenhouse, maintenance facility, and residential structures on the northwestern corner of Island One, all “well screened from visitor use areas.” (“A Master Plan for Ellis Island” 1968) The changes to Islands Two and Three were more substantial, since all existing buildings and features were slated for removal. Proposed additions included a promenade around the islands, “a raised, informally landscaped area” providing space for “viewing the harbor, lunching, and strolling,” and “a central open space” for folk dancing and other activities. (“A Master Plan for Ellis Island” 1968) Other suggested additions included a pavilion, portable stage, band shell, and concession area. The area adjacent to the new immigration building was to be a transition zone between the contemplative area on Island One and the active areas on Islands Two and Three. This zone included the rehabilitated ferryboat Ellis Island; a sculpture garden, plaza, and reflecting pool highlighting immigrants’ contributions to the country; and a transportation hub for connections to Liberty State Park and Manhattan.

Realizing that full implementation of the 1968 Master Plan would take several years, and believing Ellis Island was “too important historically to continue to lie unused,” the planners developed an interim plan for “controlled use by limited numbers of visitors.” (“A Master Plan for Ellis Island” 1968) This plan provided visitor access to Island One by ferry and participation

in a short interpretive program in the examination room of the main immigration building, including interpretive displays, a film, and a chance to “stroll to the northeast corner of the island and enjoy the spectacular view of the Manhattan skyline.” (“A Master Plan for Ellis Island” 1968) Access to the rest of the island would be restricted. The requirements to implement the interim plan were minimal and included rehabilitation of the ferry basin seawall, a structural inspection and cleanup of the main immigration building to ensure visitor safety, negotiation of a concession contract for ferry service, and the installation of temporary restrooms. Planners intended to proceed with implementation of the 1968 Master Plan after the interim public access and interpretation program were in place.

However, funding and public support for implementing the 1968 Master Plan were scarce. Consequently, the plan was shelved and implementation of the access and interpretation program was placed on indefinite hold. With no visitation and little agency support, the condition of the facilities continued to decline. Facilities continued to deteriorate and unchecked vegetation engulfed the buildings and features. Some plant specimens remained from the implementation of the 1939 planting plan while new invasive species arrived on the island from seeds dispersed by birds and/or other means. One of the most blatant examples of the site’s deterioration occurred in 1968 when the ferryboat *Ellis Island* sank at her berth in the ferry basin between Islands One and Two (Figures 6.4 – 6.5).

OPENING THE ISLAND TO THE PUBLIC

It was not until the mid-1970s, when the NPS put parts of the interim plan into place and made preparations to open the main immigration building for visitation on a limited basis, that any work or maintenance on the landscape occurred. During this time NPS crews cleared invasive trees, shrubs, and vines from the area immediately surrounding the main immigration building and the ferry landing and maintained these sites to allow visitor access. A wooden post and pipe rail fence installed along the ferry slip assisted with crowd control.

In 1976 the NPS continued making improvements and completed several projects. Contractors dredged the ferry basin, constructed a new dock, and began stabilizing deteriorating sections of the seawall. Workers removed forty thousand bags of debris from Island One as part of a general cleanup of the grounds and buildings. The main water lines between the island and Jersey City were improved and the sewage treatment system was upgraded with construction of new septic tanks and a leach field on the northwest edge of Island One, between the bakery and carpentry shop and the new immigration building. (Pousson 1986) Visitors began coming to Island One in 1976, but Islands Two and Three remained closed. Although many of the original plantings from the 1940s remained, including the original *Platanus acerifolia*, the NPS undertook minimal vegetation management on these islands. (Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984) A limit of one hundred thirty persons per tour capped yearly visitation to Ellis Island to less than seventy-five thousand (Figure 6.6).

In 1980 the NPS let a contract to begin extensive masonry repairs to the main immigration building, which would continue throughout the decade. In 1984 it awarded a contract to the Ehrenkrantz Group for the completion of a comprehensive rehabilitation of the interior and

exterior of the building. This project soon became the costliest renovation of a historic structure in United States' history. Rehabilitation plans included proposed alterations to the landscape, so in 1983, the architectural firm of Beyer Blinder Belle initiated a field survey of existing landscape conditions for inclusion in a historic structure report for the main immigration building (see Appendix C). Subsequent landscape alteration included the creation of a terraced outdoor concession area on the southeast end of the building. Contractors raised the existing grade to allow universal access to this terrace from within the building. They also added a new entry portico on the south facade of the building, which was reminiscent of the style of the original 1901 glazed porch and portico. The construction of this feature necessitated additional landscape changes including alteration of the walkway, installation of planting areas in the walks on either side of the portico, and the reestablishment of lawn under the extant trees between the building and ferry basin. (Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984)

Additional contractors completed work on various other island structures during the 1980s and early 1990s. The powerhouse on Island One was renovated and park offices were established in the hospital administration building on Island Two. In 1984 the NPS contracted for the construction of a temporary bridge between the New Jersey shore and the island to facilitate the extensive renovations and provide easy access for construction crews and equipment. In 1985 the incinerator, greenhouse, and two original water towers remained on Island One, although all had deteriorated beyond repair. The NPS documented these structures and razed them. Soon after, contractors reconstructed a new water tower in the same vicinity as the originals and repaired various sections of the seawall. By 1990 most of the renovations were complete, and the main immigration building opened to the public as the Ellis Island Immigration Museum (Figure 6.7).

In 1989-1990, the NPS designated an area north and east of the main immigration building, the location of the former detainee recreation yard, as a memorial space to erect a Wall of Honor. The initial memorial consisted of copper panels engraved with the names of donors to the Statue of Liberty / Ellis Island Foundation attached to the top of the seawall. However, the horizontal panels became routinely covered with sea bird guano, making them hard to read and requiring frequent cleaning. In 1993 contractors removed these panels and began construction of a new Wall of Honor. They constructed phase one of this project as a circular wall of stainless-steel panels, located east of the outdoor concession area and main immigration building. Phase two added a row of linear panels nearby in 1998-2001. During the construction of the Wall of Honor, NPS archeologists excavated in the area, uncovering some of the original Fort Gibson walls. Upon completion of the excavation, a section of the fort's wall remained exposed for interpretive purposes (Figures 6.8).

The landscape on Islands Two and Three remained overgrown and was not consistently maintained throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, especially in areas not easily viewed by the visiting public. In preparation for building stabilization on Islands Two and Three, the NPS supervised removal of nonhistoric vegetation during an extensive project completed by prisoners from the New Jersey prison system. The park sponsored additional clearing projects during the next two summers, and most overgrown vegetation was cleared from Islands Two and Three by fall 2002. On going building stabilization on islands Two and Three began in 2000.

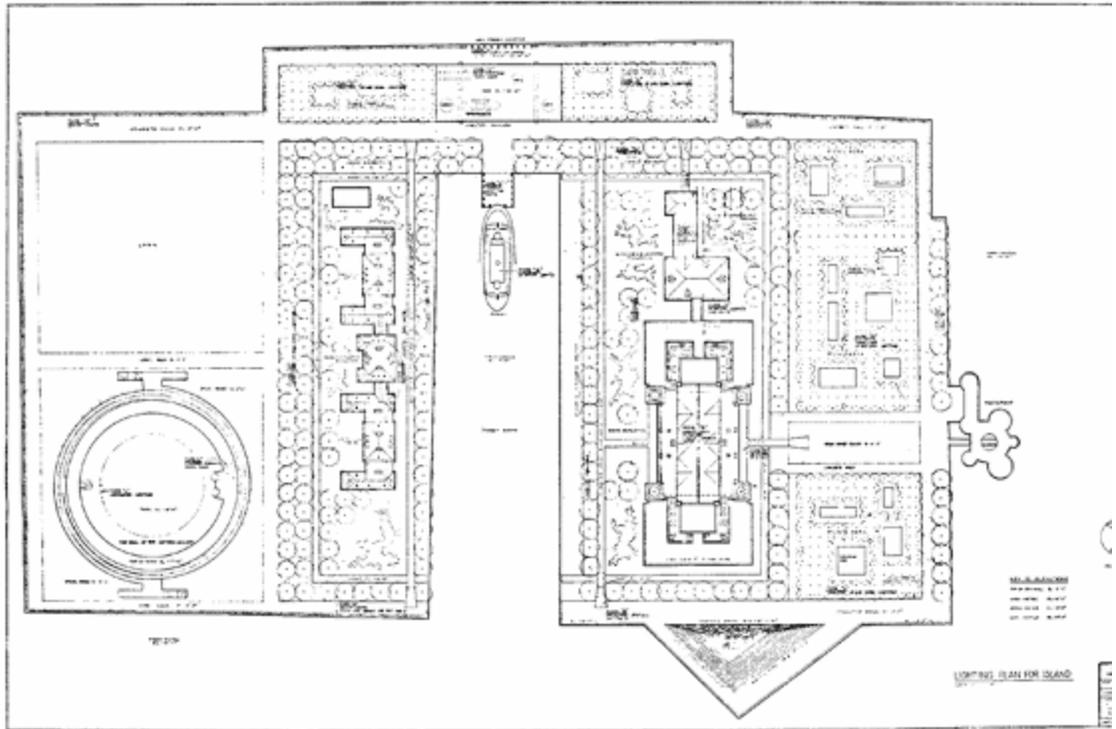


Fig 6.1 - Philip Johnson plan developed for rehabilitation of Ellis Island, 1966. (ELIS CLR)

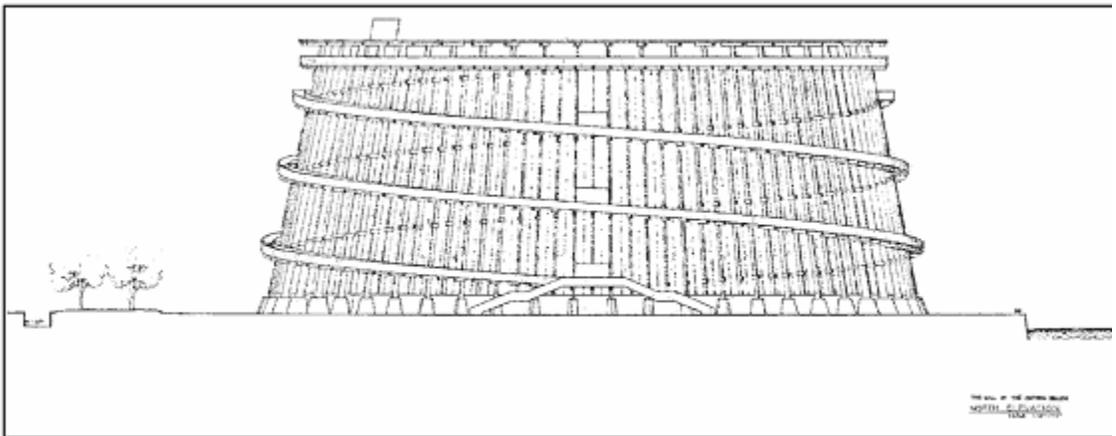


Fig 6.2 - Elevation of Philip Johnson's proposed "Wall of the Sixteen Million" which was planned for southern end of Island 3, 1966. (ELIS CLR)

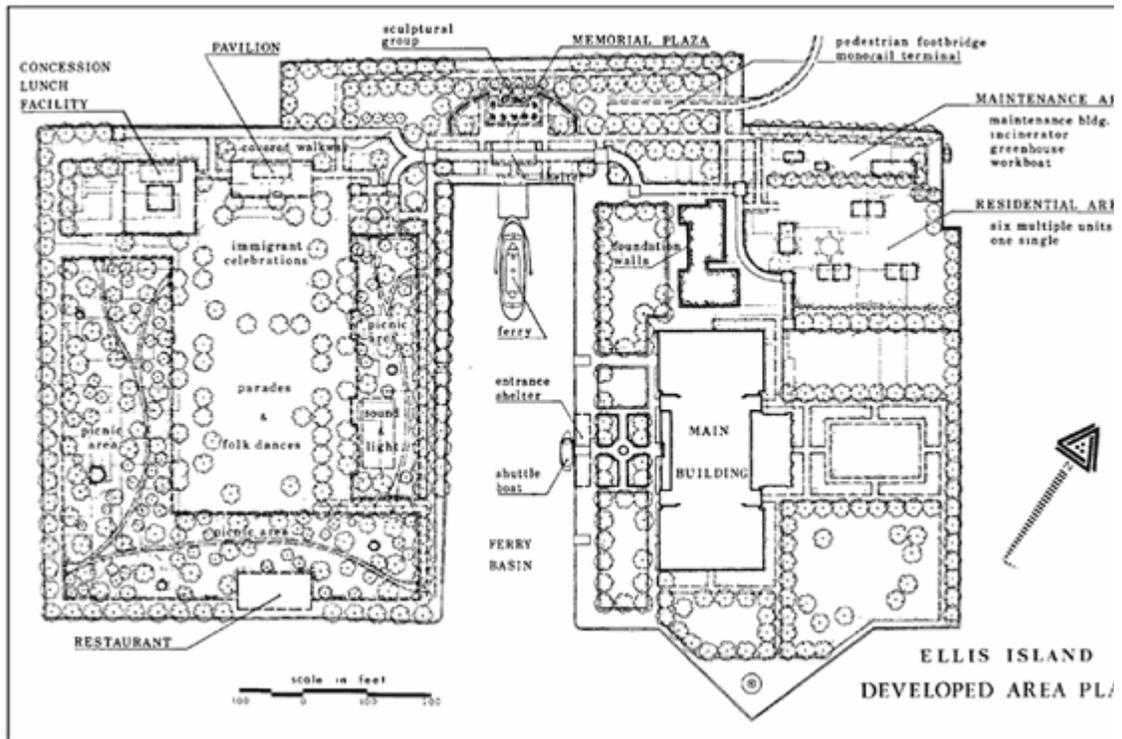


Fig 6.3 - NPS 1968 Master Plan for Ellis Island, similar to Johnson's plan since called for removal of many historic structures and landscape features to develop park-like setting favoring interp & recreation, see appendix for enlargement. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 6.4 - Deteriorated section of seawall and walkway along north side of ferry basin on Island 1, early 1970s. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 6.5 - Overgrown vegetation nearly obscures main immigration building on Island 1, mid-1970s. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 6.6 - Overgrown vegetation had been cleared on Island 1 and initial facility improvements provided limited visitation. Islands 2 and 3 in abandoned state and off-limits to visitors, April 1978. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 6.7 - Visitors arrive at Ellis Island Immigration Museum in renovated main immigration building, 1990. (ELIS CLR)



Fig 6.8 - Linear addition to Wall of Honor completed in 2001, August 2002. (ELIS CLR)

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

This section provides an evaluation of the landscape's physical integrity by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (1892 – 1954) with current conditions. Each characteristic or feature is classified as either contributing or noncontributing to the site's overall historic significance. Contributing characteristics or features were either present during the period of significance or are in-kind replacements of such historic elements. Landscape characteristics identified for Ellis Island are spatial organization, land use, topography, circulation, buildings and structures, vegetation, views, and small-scale features. Of the identified characteristics, four categories stand out as most significant for the preservation of Ellis Island's cultural landscape: spatial organization, circulation, buildings and structures, and vegetation. Additionally, preservation of some of the island's small-scale features would also assist in maintaining the cultural landscape's integrity, but to a lesser extent.

The section also includes an evaluation of the property's integrity in accordance with National Register criteria. Historic integrity, as defined in National Register Bulletin 30, is the authenticity of a site's identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the site's historic period. Often a subjective judgment, the evaluation of integrity must be grounded in an understanding of a site's physical characteristics and features and how they relate to its significance. The National Register recognizes seven aspects that define integrity. They include location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

INTEGRITY OF THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

The National Register has identified seven aspects, or qualities, that define integrity. These include location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Several or all of these aspects must be present for a site to retain its historic integrity. (National Register Bulletin 15 1997) Analysis of the aspects of integrity is a subjective measure that varies from site to site, but the determination is always based on a thorough knowledge of the historical significance of the property and how well its current features convey that significance. To be listed on the National Register, a property not only must be shown to have significance under one of the four criteria, but it must also retain a degree of its historic integrity.

Location

This aspect of integrity refers to the place where the landscape was constructed. Although the size of Ellis Island has increased throughout its history as an immigration station, the location of the island, the immigration station, and the landscape in New York Harbor have remained unchanged. Therefore, the site retains high integrity of location.

Design

Ellis Island
Statue of Liberty NM - Ellis Island National Monument

The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a cultural landscape or historic property fall under this category. Ellis Island maintains high integrity of design for both the structures and the landscape. Extant buildings retain their original design schemes and features including materials, proportion, scale, site placement, and ornamentation. Although buildings were added to the island over several decades, each structure has remained relatively true to the original design for the immigration station, even though there were also numerous alterations and additions to some individual structures. The linear placement of the buildings, and the numerous open spaces and small courtyards, particularly between the hospital structures on Islands Two and Three, remained consistent throughout the island's development and still dominates the island today. The predominant landscape design dates to a period of renewed emphasis in improving island aesthetics under Commissioner of Immigration Corsi in the 1930s. Originally developed in the 1939 planting plan and implemented during the 1940s, much of this landscape is extant including mature trees, a formal circulation system, and designed open lawn spaces. Although some changes have occurred in the landscape during subsequent site rehabilitation, overall these primary landscape characteristics have remained unaltered. That is especially true for Islands Two and Three, where little rehabilitation work has been undertaken to date.

Setting

Since the setting, or physical environment, for the immigration station has remained consistent with its condition during the period of significance, the island's landscape retains high integrity of setting. From the period of initial construction of the buildings and subsequent landscape, the island's topography has remained a flat, level landform, even with various landfill additions. The relative isolation of the immigration station on a harbor island provides a certain level of separation from the urbanity of nearby New York City and sets the facility apart as a place of importance. This setting fulfilled the conditions of the congressional committee who first chose the island for the immigration facility in 1890, and it remains evident today. The arrangement of buildings and open spaces is consistent with early facility layout, and the mature tree rows and extant walkways reinforce the slightly formal setting established by the island's landscape design.

Materials

All types of construction materials, including paving, plants, and other landscape features, as well as the materials' placement in the landscape, are included under this aspect of integrity. The quality, condition, and placement of the materials found on Ellis Island is mixed, resulting in a moderate integrity of materials. In areas of the island that have not been rehabilitated, original construction materials remain, including the brick and granite building facades, concrete walks, small-scale landscape features, and a concrete and granite seawall. However, many of these materials are in a deteriorated state or are no longer present in their historic location, and may soon be lost. In areas that have already been rehabilitated, some of these original materials remain, but many original features were replaced during renovations. Numerous concrete walks are extant from the historic period, particularly on Islands Two and Three, but new sections of walk replaced some of the originals on Island One during the rehabilitation of the main immigration building. Nearly all sections of galvanized chainlink fencing dating

to the historic period have been removed. Plant materials dating to the 1940s, including mature trees and some shrubs, are still extant in their original locations on all three islands. The concrete and granite remains intact on the seawall around the island, with only a few sections repaired or replaced since its construction.

Workmanship

This aspect of integrity refers to the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular period. Ellis Island currently maintains moderate integrity of workmanship. There is still evidence on the island of the fine quality of historic workmanship exhibited in both the buildings and the landscape. The detailed masonry and concrete work installed by local artisans and craftsmen remains visible in the extant buildings, walks, and seawall that date to the historic period. However, since many of the constructed features exhibiting this workmanship are in a state of deterioration, there is a reasonable expectation that the integrity of the historic workmanship may continue to diminish.

Feeling

A property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular time period is evaluated under this aspect of integrity. The Ellis Island landscape has moderate integrity of feeling to the immigration period. At the height of the station's operations, the island was generally well-maintained and orderly. The physical plant was in a good state of repair, and the landscape was designed and maintained to reinforce the island's status as an important governmental facility. Currently, the island landscape is only highly maintained at locations where visitors are likely to gather or view it, specifically portions of Island One around the renovated structures and areas on Islands One and Two bordering the ferry basin. Other parts of the island, especially around the abandoned structures on Islands Two and Three, remain in a derelict state, although work is currently under way in many of these areas to stabilize historic features. The deteriorated portions of the landscape do not provide the same feeling of orderliness and control exhibited by the relatively well-maintained facility that was present during the historic period. However, additional integrity of feeling has been maintained on Island One by the continued influx of visitors into the landscape, re-creating the feeling of the busy, crowded island that existed historically during peak immigration periods.

Association

This aspect refers to the direct link between the significant historic event or person and the cultural landscape. The Ellis Island landscape maintains high integrity of association. The remaining landscape design, characteristics, and features primarily date to the historic immigration period, with minor alterations to the landscape resulting from various stabilization and rehabilitation projects.

Integrity of the Property as a Whole

As stated above, the Ellis Island landscape retains high integrity in location, design, setting, and association. It retains moderate integrity in materials, workmanship, and feeling. According to National

Register guidelines, a property either does or does not retain its overall historic integrity, indicating that it does or does not convey its significance. Even though there have been incremental changes subsequent to the historic period, the above analysis indicates the Ellis Island cultural landscape does retain integrity to its 1892-1954 period of significance.

Landscape Characteristic:

Buildings And Structures

Historic Development

Upon completion of the immigration station in 1897, there were twelve major buildings on the island. Five of these were preexisting and remodeled for new uses. These included the record storage office (former magazine, originally built circa 1854-1886), restaurant and kitchen building (former magazine, originally built circa 1844), detention building (former shell house number two, originally built prior to 1813), insane hospital (originally built circa 1854-1868), and surgeon's quarters (former gunners' house, originally built prior to 1886). Seven buildings were newly constructed, including the main building, disinfection house, two hospital buildings, hospital office, boiler house, and tank and coal house. (Pousson 1986) Another significant structure on the island was the wooden crib seawall surrounding most of the island and the breakwater.

By circa 1907 there were eight masonry buildings constructed on Islands One and Two – the main immigration building (1900), kitchen and laundry building (1901), powerhouse (1901), main hospital building (1901), hospital outbuilding (1901), surgeon's house (1901), hospital addition (1907), and psychopathic ward (1907). There were five significant wooden structures – the ferry house (1901), immigrants' waiting room (circa 1901), carpentry shop (circa 1901), bakery (circa 1901), and temporary barracks (1903). Other extant structures included a coal hoist at the powerhouse (1901), privy, immigrants' friends waiting room (circa 1901), covered walkways, pump house (1901), two floating docks, new ferry slip in the ferry basin (1901), and incinerator (1902). A wooden crib seawall surrounded most of the island.

By circa 1920 there were five primary buildings on Island One including the main immigration building (1900), kitchen and laundry building (1901), powerhouse (1901), baggage and dormitory building (1909), and bakery and carpentry shop (1915). The ferry house (1901) stood between Islands One and Two. Island Two contained the main hospital building (1900), hospital outbuilding (1901), surgeon's house (1901), psychopathic ward (1907), administration building (1907), new hospital extension (1909), and the American Red Cross recreation building (circa 1915). Seventeen buildings were located on Island Three, including an administration building (1907), powerhouse (1907), kitchen (1907), staff house (1908), animal house (1908), nurses' quarters (1909), and eleven hospital buildings housing twenty-two wards (1907-1909). Miscellaneous structures included a coal hoist (1901), incinerator (1902), and greenhouse (1910) on Island One, a coal hoist and coal bins behind the ferry house, a pump house (1901) on Island Two, and several covered walkways on all three islands. The ferry slip (1901) and one floating dock remained in the ferry basin. The new concrete and granite seawall completely surrounded Island One, while a wooden crib seawall enclosed the other two. Most of the structures remained in good condition since the island was fully occupied and in use.

Thirty-four major buildings remained on Ellis Island in 1954, many in a state of disrepair. Located on Island One were the main immigration building (1900), kitchen and laundry building (1901), powerhouse (1901), baggage and dormitory building (1909), bakery and carpentry shop (1915), incinerator (1911), new greenhouse (1934), and recreation shelter (1937). The original greenhouse had been removed. A new ferry building (1936) and new immigration building

(1936) constructed on landfill between Islands One and Two replaced the old ferry house. On Island Two, the main hospital building (1901), hospital outbuilding (1901), psychopathic ward (1907), administration building (1907), and new hospital extension (1909) remained. The surgeon's house and American Red Cross recreation building had been removed. A new recreation building (1937) and recreation shelter (1937) stood between Islands Two and Three. Extant buildings on Island Three included an administration building (1907), powerhouse (1907), kitchen (1907), staff house (1908), animal house (1908), nurses' quarters (1909), and eleven hospital ward buildings (1907-1909).

Other extant structures included four guardhouses around the detainee recreation yard (Figure 5.27), a sand and gravel box and debris box adjacent to the greenhouse, and two water tanks and one oil tank southeast of the powerhouse on Island One. The ferry slip, along with the moored ferryboat Ellis Island, remained in the ferry basin. On Island Three a small greenhouse (circa 1950) was adjacent to wards 31-32, and storage shed and small oil tank stood near the kitchen. The concrete and granite seawall, completed during this era, enclosed the entire island.

Existing Conditions

Thirty-two historic buildings remain on Ellis Island in varying states of rehabilitation, stabilization, or abandonment. On Island One, four of the six historic buildings are rehabilitated completely or partially – the main immigration building (1900), kitchen and laundry building (1901), powerhouse (1901), and bakery and carpentry shop (1915). The baggage and dormitory building (1909) and recreation shelter (1937) have not been renovated. Between Islands One and Two, the new ferry building (1936) has had exterior restoration and internal stabilization, but the new immigration building (1936) remains abandoned and untouched. On Island Two, all extant buildings are stabilized, including the main hospital building (1901), psychopathic ward (1907), administration building (1907), new hospital extension (1909), and recreation shelter (1937). Additionally, the hospital outbuilding (1901) has had exterior restoration and interior stabilization. The recreation building (1937) is stabilized and currently serves as a museum storage facility for NPS collections. On Island Three, all buildings have been stabilized, including the administration building (1907), powerhouse (1907), kitchen (1907), animal house (1908), staff house (1908), nurses' quarters (1909), and eleven hospital ward buildings (1907-1909). The small greenhouse (circa 1950) on Island Three is no longer present, although remnants of this structure include foundations, plumbing, and stacks of clay flowerpots under a layer of rubble (Figure 6.22).

Several other structures are also extant on the island, many of them nonhistoric additions. A reconstructed water tower is present between the baggage and dormitory building and the powerhouse (Figure 6.23). A small NPS guardhouse is located at the ferry landing near the main immigration building's portico (Figure 6.24), and a concession kiosk is located on the terrace at the south corner of the building. The Wall of Honor (1993, 2001), including both the circular and linear portions, occupies the entire southeastern corner of Island One. A metal

maintenance building is located south of the recreation shelter and a utility area containing fuel tanks and HVAC units is located north of the powerhouse on Island One (Figure 6.25). Additionally, the historic ferry slip and the sunken ferryboat Ellis Island remain in the ferry basin, and a mostly rehabilitated granite seawall surrounds the island (Figure 6.26).

Summary

Ellis Island’s buildings and structures are perhaps the most prominent elements in the cultural landscape, and nearly all that remain are contributing features to the island’s significance. Approximately forty buildings were constructed on the island during the period of significance throughout several phases of development and rehabilitation. Historic development of the extant buildings of the second immigration station began in 1901 with the construction of the main immigration building and main hospital building. Building construction ceased in the late 1930s when the last major phase of development added the new ferry building, new immigration building, recreation building, and recreation shelters. Various other structures were also a vital part of the facility historically, including water towers, coal hoisting equipment, trash storage facilities, tennis courts, small docks, and the ferry slip and dock. Some historic buildings and structures were lost during the period of significance, including the surgeon’s house, original ferry building, tennis courts, coal hoisting equipment, and wooden seawall. The NPS removed others from the island during rehabilitation work in the 1980s and 1990s including the greenhouse, incinerator, and original water towers.

Currently, thirty-two historic buildings and four historic structures are extant on the island in varying states of rehabilitation, stabilization, or abandonment. They include all the major immigration and hospital buildings, the concrete and granite seawall, remnants of the ferry slip and dock, the sunken remains of the ferry boat Ellis Island, and an exposed portion of the archeological remains of Fort Gibson. A contemporary water tower is present on Island One that is an in-kind reconstruction of a missing historic feature. There are also several nonhistoric buildings and structures present including the Wall of Honor, NPS guardhouse, concession kiosk, and maintenance building. These features are noncontributing, and their presence is less critical to maintaining the island's significance and integrity. Despite the addition of noncontributing features, the extant historic buildings and historic structures are contributing features to the island's significance and integrity.

Character-defining Features:

Feature:	Administration Building - Island Two
Feature Identification Number:	97559
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
IDLCS Number:	22664
LCS Structure Name:	ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
LCS Structure Number:	HS20

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Feature: Animal house
Feature Identification Number: 97560
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22669
LCS Structure Name: ANIMAL HOUSE
LCS Structure Number: HS25

Feature: Baggage and Dormitory Building
Feature Identification Number: 97561
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22570
LCS Structure Name: BAGGAGE & DORMITORY BUILDING
LCS Structure Number: HS03

Feature: Bakery and Carpenter Building
Feature Identification Number: 97562
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22576
LCS Structure Name: BAKERY & CARPENTRY BUILDING
LCS Structure Number: HS10

Feature: Bluestone Curb/Retaining Wall
Feature Identification Number: 97563
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 40473
LCS Structure Name: BLUESTONE CURB/ RETAINING WALL
LCS Structure Number: HS45

Feature: Remnant Pilings
Feature Identification Number: 98780
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 40470
LCS Structure Name: CLUSTER PILES
LCS Structure Number: HS42

Feature: Connecting Wing
Feature Identification Number: 97566
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22569
LCS Structure Name: CONNECTING WING
LCS Structure Number: HS02

Feature: Wards 11/12
Feature Identification Number: 98785
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22671
LCS Structure Name: CONTAGIOUS DISEASE WARDS 11/12
LCS Structure Number: HS28

Feature: Wards 13/14
Feature Identification Number: 98786
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22672
LCS Structure Name: CONTAGIOUS DISEASE WARDS 13/14
LCS Structure Number: HS29

Feature: Wards 15/16
Feature Identification Number: 98787
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22673
LCS Structure Name: CONTAGIOUS DISEASE WARDS 15/16
LCS Structure Number: HS30

Feature: Wards 17/18
Feature Identification Number: 98788
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22674
LCS Structure Name: CONTAGIOUS DISEASE WARDS 17/18

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LCS Structure Number: HS31

Feature: Wards 19/20

Feature Identification Number: 98789

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 22677

LCS Structure Name: CONTAGIOUS DISEASE WARDS 19/20

LCS Structure Number: HS34

Feature: Wards 21/22

Feature Identification Number: 98790

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 22678

LCS Structure Name: CONTAGIOUS DISEASE WARDS 21/22

LCS Structure Number: HS35

Feature: Wards 23/24

Feature Identification Number: 92067

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 22679

LCS Structure Name: CONTAGIOUS DISEASE WARDS 23/24

LCS Structure Number: HS36

Feature: Wards 25/26

Feature Identification Number: 92068

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 22680

LCS Structure Name: CONTAGIOUS DISEASE WARDS 25/26

LCS Structure Number: HS37

Feature: Fort Gibson Walls

Feature Identification Number: 98759

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40490

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LCS Structure Name: FORT GIBSON STABILIZED RUINS

LCS Structure Number: HS56

Feature: Concrete and Granite Seawall

Feature Identification Number: 97565

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40472

LCS Structure Name: GRANITE SEAWALL

LCS Structure Number: HS44

Feature: Main Hospital Building

Feature Identification Number: 98765

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 22663

LCS Structure Name: HOSPITAL #1

LCS Structure Number: HS19

Feature: New Hospital Extension

Feature Identification Number: 98769

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 22665

LCS Structure Name: HOSPITAL #2

LCS Structure Number: HS21

Feature: New Immigration Building

Feature Identification Number: 98770

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 22660

LCS Structure Name: IMMIGRANT BUILDING

LCS Structure Number: HS15

Feature: Wards 27/28

Feature Identification Number: 92028

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

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IDLCS Number: 22681
LCS Structure Name: ISOLATION WARDS 27/28
LCS Structure Number: HS38

Feature: Wards 29/30
Feature Identification Number: 93550
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22682
LCS Structure Name: ISOLATION WARDS 29/30
LCS Structure Number: HS39

Feature: Wards 31/32
Feature Identification Number: 93551
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22683
LCS Structure Name: ISOLATION WARDS 31/32
LCS Structure Number: HS40

Feature: Kitchen and Laundry Building
Feature Identification Number: 98764
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22571
LCS Structure Name: KITCHEN & LAUNDRY BUILDING
LCS Structure Number: HS04

Feature: Administration Building - Island Three
Feature Identification Number: 97558
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22703
LCS Structure Name: LABORATORY
LCS Structure Number: HS26

Feature: Hospital Outbuilding
Feature Identification Number: 98762

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Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22702
LCS Structure Name: LAUNDRY BUILDING
LCS Structure Number: HS17

Feature: Main Immigration Building

Feature Identification Number: 98766
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22568
LCS Structure Name: MAIN BUILDING
LCS Structure Number: HS01

Feature: Powerhouse - Island One

Feature Identification Number: 98773
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22572
LCS Structure Name: MAIN POWERHOUSE
LCS Structure Number: HS05

Feature: New Ferry Building

Feature Identification Number: 98768
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22580
LCS Structure Name: NEW FERRY BUILDING
LCS Structure Number: HS14

Feature: Utility Corridors and pits, concrete and brick - Islands Two and Three

Feature Identification Number: 98783
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 40501
LCS Structure Name: OIL PIPE TRENCH
LCS Structure Number: HS61

Feature: Powerhouse - Island Three

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Feature Identification Number: 98774
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22668
LCS Structure Name: POWERHOUSE
LCS Structure Number: HS24

Feature: Psychopathic Ward
Feature Identification Number: 98775
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22662
LCS Structure Name: PSYCHOPATHIC WARD
LCS Structure Number: HS18

Feature: Recreation Building
Feature Identification Number: 98776
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22666
LCS Structure Name: RECREATION HALL
LCS Structure Number: HS22

Feature: Recreation Shelter - Between Islands Two and Three
Feature Identification Number: 98777
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22667
LCS Structure Name: RECREATION SHELTER
LCS Structure Number: HS23

Feature: Refrigerating Plant
Feature Identification Number: 98779
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 40487
LCS Structure Name: REFRIGERATING PLANT
LCS Structure Number: HS53

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Feature: Recreation Shelter - Island One
Feature Identification Number: 98778
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22574
LCS Structure Name: SHELTER
LCS Structure Number: HS07

Feature: Staff House
Feature Identification Number: 98781
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 22684
LCS Structure Name: STAFF HOUSE
LCS Structure Number: HS41

Feature: Wall of Honor
Feature Identification Number: 98784
Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Water Tower
Feature Identification Number: 93552
Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing
IDLCS Number: 040491
LCS Structure Name: Water Tower
LCS Structure Number: HS57

Feature: Kitchen
Feature Identification Number: 98763
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 022676
LCS Structure Name: Kitchen
LCS Structure Number: HS33

Feature: Nurses' Quarters
Feature Identification Number: 98772

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Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 022675
LCS Structure Name: Nurses' Quarters
LCS Structure Number: HS32

Feature: Sunken ferry boat 'Ellis Island'
Feature Identification Number: 98782
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Entry portico, main immigration building
Feature Identification Number: 97567
Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Fuel tanks and HVAC units
Feature Identification Number: 98760
Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Maintenance Shed
Feature Identification Number: 98767
Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Concession Kiosk
Feature Identification Number: 97564
Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: NPS Guardhouse - Island One
Feature Identification Number: 98771
Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Fire hydrants, historic - Islands Two and Three
Feature Identification Number: 97569
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 040476
LCS Structure Name: Fire Hydrants
LCS Structure Number: HS63

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Feature: Fire hydrants, non-historic - Island One

Feature Identification Number: 97831

Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Greenhouse ruins - Island Three

Feature Identification Number: 98761

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Ferry Slip Pilings

Feature Identification Number: 97568

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 040488

LCS Structure Name: Ferry Slip

LCS Structure Number: HS54

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



North side of Island One, viewed from Liberty State Park, NJ (OCLP, 1999).



Main Hospital, Island Two (OCLP, 1999).



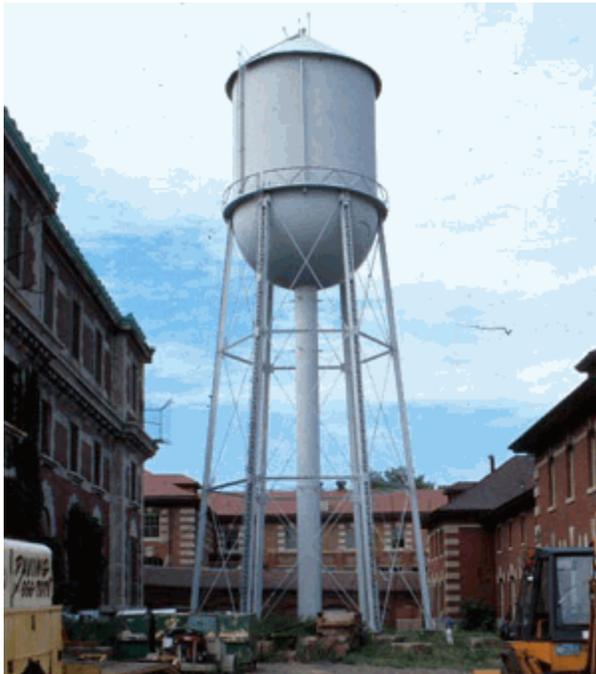
Main Immigration Building, now the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, Island One (OCLP, 1999).



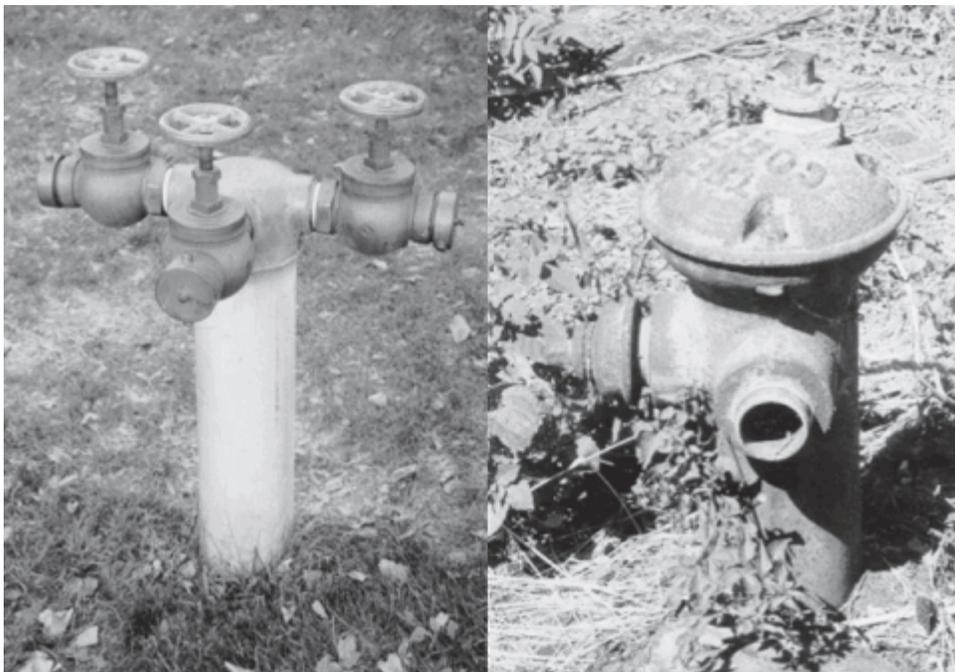
Wall of Honor and remnants of Fort Gibson, Island One (OCLP, 1999).



Administration building, main entrance, Island Three (OCLP, 1999).



Water tower, Island One (OCLP, 1999).



Contemporary (L) and historic (R) hydrants, Island One (L) and Islands Two/Three (R) (OCLP, 1999).



Detail of Wall of Honor, circular portion, Island One (OCLP, 1999).



Granite seawall surrounding Islands One, Two and Three (OCLP, 1999).

Circulation

Historic Development

The changes between 1890-1897 necessitated a need for new circulation patterns, with emphasis on basic circulation routes between the docking facilities and the buildings. Newly installed walkways, including a boardwalk along the front of the main building, connected the facilities and directed the flow of immigrants from one destination to another. Boats continued to provide access to the island, landing at the ferry slip at the north corner of the ferry basin. A minor water circulation route was also established to the coal wharf at the boiler house.

Circulation patterns changed with the construction of new buildings and walkways by 1907. Boardwalks continued to be used along the ferry basin edge and new concrete walks were added to the island. The placement of walks served to direct immigrants on their primary route from the ferry landing, through the ferry house, and into the primary buildings on Island One. Formal walks were not yet established on Island Two or Three, although a concrete apron surrounded the main hospital building and a wooden gangway connected these two islands. The most significant change was the construction of the first segments of the covered walkway system on Islands One and Two. This feature would eventually be expanded to connect major buildings on all three islands. The placement of the new ferry slip in the center of the ferry basin, rather than at the north corner, altered boat traffic slightly. Barge traffic continued its established route to the coal wharf at the powerhouse.

The circa 1915 replacement of the ferry basin boardwalk with a new concrete walk improved circulation on Island One. On Island Two, concrete aprons around the buildings and a perimeter cinder walk created new circulation routes. An enclosed central corridor and outside perimeter walks connecting all buildings provided circulation on Island Three. The addition of a dock extension on the northeast corner of the ferry basin, adjacent to the ferry ramp and extending out over the bulkhead, slightly altered the circulation pattern of incoming immigrants at the ferry house. This addition allowed immigrants to access the ferryboat directly from the basin-side walk on Island One without having to enter the ferry house. Water circulation routes remained consistent. Immigrant ferries arrived at the main ferry slip, while barge traffic landed at the powerhouse coal wharf and the coal wharf behind the ferry house (Figures 4.19 – 4.21).

By 1954 a system of exterior and interior walkways provided circulation routes between all three islands. The landfill between Islands Two and Three improved circulation between the two islands by connecting them with a continuous landmass. Prior to the landfill, the only connection between the two islands was the connecting walkway at the northern end of the islands. Additionally, the creation of a formally designed walkway system enhanced this newly created recreation space. The installation of fencing around the main immigration building to enclose detainee recreation yards and other locations altered circulation on the island by restricting access (Figure 5.26). After the island was abandoned, circulation by boat traffic was eliminated.

Existing Conditions

Ellis Island's circulation systems are altered from their 1954 conditions. Island One has many elements of the historic walkway system with an overlay of contemporary improvements and upgrades. The area in front of the main immigration building retains a geometric pattern of concrete walkways emphasized by formal plantings. The construction of the new portico created six small planting areas within the walkways, three on each side, and added an accessible entry into the main immigration building (Figure 6.19). Construction of the Wall of Honor and concession terrace added new walkways and an accessible entry to the southeast end of the main immigration building. Walkways on Islands Two and Three remain intact but are in extremely poor condition from nearly fifty years of neglect. Parts of the covered walkway system on Island One are rehabilitated, but covered walkways on Islands Two and Three continue to deteriorate. Access to the island by boat has resumed, however, the historic ferry slip is no longer used. Visitors arrive by boat, landing at the seawall directly in front of the main immigration building and disembark onto one of the ferry ramps built into the sidewalk. Staff boats land in this location as well as at the old coal wharf adjacent to the powerhouse, and a small floating dock on the northwest corner of the ferry basin accommodates U. S. Park Police boats (Figures 6.20 - 6.21). The addition of the bridge to Liberty State Park and a gravel parking area between the new immigration building and the powerhouse added vehicular circulation to the island.

Summary

Throughout the period of significance, several different features accommodated pedestrian circulation. Primary pedestrian circulation was originally achieved with boardwalks along the ferry basin on Island One. These were later replaced with concrete walkways along the new seawall and in a rectilinear pattern adjacent to the main immigration building, providing definition to outdoor spaces and access to all buildings. The specific pattern changed slightly over the years, especially with the removal of the entry portico and construction of subsequent flower beds, but the overall rectilinear form of the walkways remained consistent. Ferry ramps were also extant at various times both in the boardwalk and the later concrete walkways along the ferry basin. On Islands Two and Three, initial circulation routes included cinder paths, concrete aprons directly adjacent to the buildings (on Island Two), concrete walks, and eventually covered corridors between all three islands. The last major addition during the historic period occurred during the 1930s with the construction of the rectilinear walk system in the recreation area between Islands Two and Three.

Currently, the pedestrian circulation is relatively consistent with the island's historic condition. Concrete walkways provide the major pedestrian access routes through the public areas on Island One. Although these walks replaced original ones during the early NPS rehabilitation of Island One, their rectilinear pattern is consistent with the historic precedent. Ferry ramps are still extant and are located in the same general area as they were historically, with one contemporary addition on the southeast end of the ferry basin. Additional walkways, steps, and ramps have been added, primarily with the construction of the Wall of Honor, the entry

portico, and the concessions area on the southeast end of the island. The covered corridors still provide pedestrian access to all three islands. Sections on Island One have been rehabilitated, but sections on Islands Two and Three remain in a state of disrepair. The historic rectilinear walkways on Islands Two and Three remain intact but are also in extremely poor condition. After nearly fifty years of complete neglect, vegetation, weather, and erosion have damaged the concrete, and all these walkways are in need of repair.

Circulation to and from the island was historically accomplished by water transportation. Arriving boats came directly to the ferry basin between Islands One and Two, with most landing along the edge of the ferry basin and some docking at the ferry slip and dock at the basin's end. Additional boats arrived at the coal wharf northeast of the powerhouse, primarily for deliveries and other operational needs.

Island access has changed slightly from the historic condition. Boats still provide the primary transportation for visitors, arriving in the ferry basin as they did historically. However, the only landing access for the public is located along the ferry basin edge in front of the main immigration building. The historic ferry slip and dock, where the sunken ferryboat Ellis Island is located, are in a deteriorated state and are no longer in use. Boat traffic also continues to arrive at the location of the old coal wharf, primarily serving maintenance facility needs. There is also a small floating dock located on the northwest end of the ferry basin that is used for smaller boats operated by the U. S. Park Police. Additionally, vehicular access has been added to the island with the construction of the temporary bridge to New Jersey and the adjoining parking lots.

Despite having portions in relatively poor condition, the existing pedestrian walkways and corridors on all three islands are contributing features to the significance of Ellis Island. The pattern of water transportation to the island is also contributing, but since there was historically no vehicular access to the island, the temporary bridge and parking lots are noncontributing features.

Character-defining Features:

- Feature: Ferry Basin Ramps
- Feature Identification Number: 93564
- Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
- IDLCS Number: 40471
- LCS Structure Name: FERRY RAMPS
- LCS Structure Number: HS43

- Feature: Temporary Bridge
- Feature Identification Number: 93566
- Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Parking Lots

Feature Identification Number: 93565

Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Concrete walkways, historic

Feature Identification Number: 93553

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Concrete walkways, steps and accessible ramps - contemporary

Feature Identification Number: 93554

Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Water Transportation Access Routes

Feature Identification Number: 93567

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Covered corridors (C-1)

Feature Identification Number: 93555

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 040481

LCS Structure Name: Corridor 1 (C-1)

LCS Structure Number: HS12-1

Feature: Covered corridors (C-2)

Feature Identification Number: 93556

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 040482

LCS Structure Name: Corridor 2 (C-2)

LCS Structure Number: HS12-2

Feature: Covered corridors (C-3)

Feature Identification Number: 93557

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 040483

LCS Structure Name: Covered Way 3 (C-3)

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LCS Structure Number: HS12-3

Feature: Covered corridors (C-4)

Feature Identification Number: 93558

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 040484

LCS Structure Name: Covered Way 4 (C-4)

LCS Structure Number: HS12-4

Feature: Covered corridors (Extension)

Feature Identification Number: 93560

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 040485

LCS Structure Name: Covered Way 4 Extension

LCS Structure Number: HS12-4A

Feature: Covered corridors (C-5)

Feature Identification Number: 93559

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 040486

LCS Structure Name: Covered Way 5 (C-5)

LCS Structure Number: HS12-5

Feature: Covered corridors (Passage)

Feature Identification Number: 93561

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 022579

LCS Structure Name: Passage

LCS Structure Number: HS13

Feature: Covered corridors (Passageway)

Feature Identification Number: 93562

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 022670

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LCS Structure Name: Passageway
LCS Structure Number: HS27
Feature: Covered corridors (Passageways)
Feature Identification Number: 93563
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 022661
LCS Structure Name: Passageways
LCS Structure Number: HS16

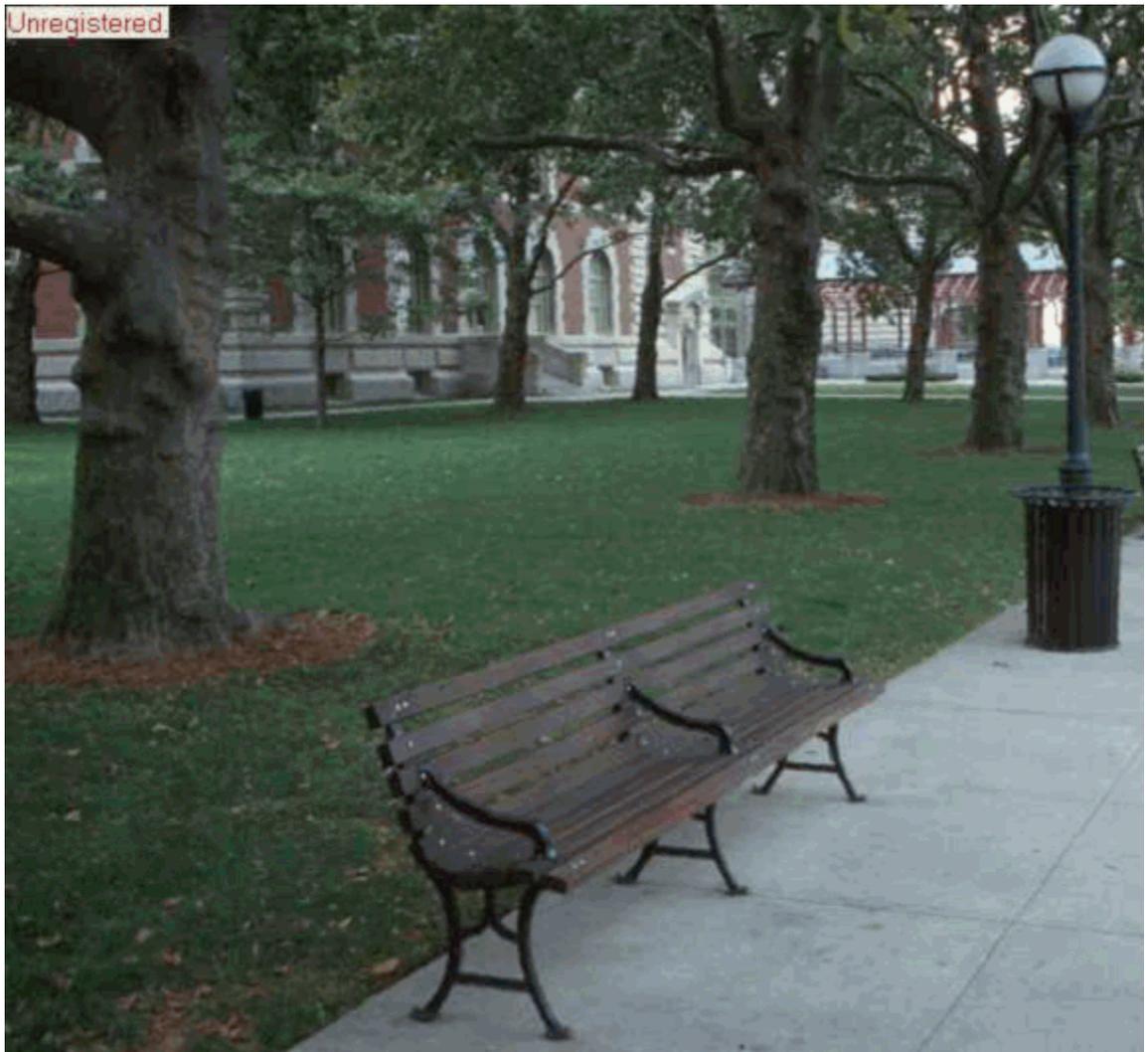
Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



View east of bridge and Island One from Liberty State Park, NJ (OCLP, 1999).



Non-public landing for staff boat, north side, Island One (OCLP, 1999).



Main walk and passenger loading area for ferry service, Island One (OCLP, 1999).



Plaza and main entrance to Immigration Museum, Island One (OCLP, 1999).



View southeast of geometric paths laid out in open space between Islands Two and Three (OCLP, 1999).



Cesspools in main path on Island Two covered by metal plates (OCLP, 1999).

Land Use

Historic Development

The landscape underwent a dramatic transformation during the short period between 1890 and 1897. Shifting the island's primary land use from a naval magazine and military post to a bustling immigration station completely altered the landscape.

Between the initial planning and construction of the second immigration station circa 1897 and the completion of Island Three in 1906, the landscape underwent significant change. The Department of the Treasury oversaw the completion of an entirely new immigration station, increasing the number of immigrants who used the landscape, and the island's total acreage increased to just over twenty acres with the additions of Islands Two and Three. This period was likely the most significant and eventful in the frequency and significance of change to the landscape. The primary land use remained the same with the institutional processing of immigrants. The completion of the surgeon's house and hospital addition on Island Two brought a limited amount of residential use for employees of the station.

The landscape of Ellis Island underwent many improvements during facility expansion from circa 1907 until the midteens. During the war years, from 1917 to 1919, it is unlikely that the landscape was improved upon or highly maintained. When the island reopened for immigration after the war, the landscape showed evidence of neglect. Postwar priorities for the Bureau of Immigration centered on reestablishing the immigration operations and maintaining the deteriorated facilities, leaving limited resources available for maintaining the ornamental landscape. (Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold 1984) Overall, institutional land use dominated Ellis Island by 1920, with minor residential use continuing in the hospital buildings and surgeon's house on Island Two, and the staff house on Island Three. At a more detailed level, Island One focused on immigration operations, Island Two offered general hospital care, and Island Three provided a distant area for quarantining patients with contagious diseases.

Throughout the decades between 1920 and 1954, Ellis Island's landscape changed dramatically. Landfill projects during the 1920s and 1930s increased the island's size to twenty-seven and one-half acres while partial implementation of a comprehensive plan in later years finally provided a sense of overall order and continuity in the landscape. Changes in immigration patterns and island operations directly influenced how the landscape evolved and was maintained. Its appearance at the end of this period began to reflect the island's slow decline. Just prior to abandonment in 1954, officials expressed less concern for the landscape than they had previously shown. This landscape, installed and maintained by the INS and the U.S. Coast Guard over many years, would soon have no caretaker and become overgrown and nearly unrecognizable as a designed landscape. An aerial photograph of the island in 1954 is shown in Figure 5.25, while Figure 5.37 provides a 1954 period plan. Military land use returned during World War II and later U.S. Coast Guard occupation of parts of the island. Upon closure of the immigration station, active island land use ceased. All prior uses, including institutional, residential, and military, ended when the island was abandoned.

Existing Conditions

From 1954 to the present, the Ellis Island landscape continued to evolve as it had throughout the preceding historic periods. The island's vegetation became wild and overgrown when the station was abandoned, but other features like walkways on Islands Two and Three remained relatively unchanged. With interest in island preservation and subsequent construction projects in the 1970s and 1980s, portions of the landscape on Island One were modified for new uses while Islands Two and Three remained untouched. During the past decade, the NPS has recognized the importance of landscape resources in overall island rehabilitation, and their planning efforts are more comprehensively addressing the island's cultural landscape. The landscape's current condition reflects this change in approach.

Summary

Historically, the island's land use was primarily related to immigration, with occasional periods of residential and military usage. With the close of the facility at the end of the period of significance, active land use ceased. Currently, land use is focused on commemoration, interpretation, and preservation. Implementation of these new uses has resulted in numerous landscape additions like the Wall of Honor, concessions areas, crowd-control features, and signage. However, since these contemporary uses do not have integrity to the historic period, the current land use is classified as noncontributing to the island's significance.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Commemoration, interpretation and preservation
Feature Identification Number: 93568
Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Natural Systems And Features

Historic Development

Diverse and abundant fauna prevailed in the vicinity of Ellis Island at the time of European colonization. Invertebrate populations, occupying shoreline marshes and shrubs, supplied food for migratory and resident birds as well as for amphibians and small mammals. The historic floral community can be described as being similar to that of a coastal barrier island with grasses and shrubs adapted to the limited availability of fresh water and the adverse effects of salt spray. Brackish marsh vegetation dominated by saltmarsh cordgrass, salt grass and saltmeadow hay, were common on the island.

Existing Conditions

Today, geese, gulls and pigeons currently inhabit many areas of the island. These birds are considered pests; goose guano stains many public surfaces, creating an annoyance for visitors. Gull and pigeon guano stains many of the buildings and contributes to their deterioration. Additionally, layers of pigeon guano in the neglected buildings of Islands Two and Three pose a health hazard. Goose habitation is discouraged via the use of a dog patrol throughout the island. Other methods of mitigation are used to discourage nesting on Island One buildings. Buildings on Islands Two and Three are left unprotected. Ducks, in smaller numbers, are also found on Ellis Island. In addition, barn owls have been found nesting in the attic of one of the buildings, as a result, owl boxes on the southside have been installed to encourage nesting in the boxes rather than the buildings.

Summary

As the island was developed, first for military use and later as an immigration station, all traces of natural systems and features were erased. They were supplanted directly by cultural development that supported the use of non-native vegetation. The loss of the island's shoreline developed with the deposition of fill and the subsequent need for seawalls. This caused the loss of estuarine zones that supported native flora and fauna populations. The changing island landscape created new zones that encouraged upland plant species at the expense of the estuarine ones. The existing natural systems and features do not contribute to the historic character of the site.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Geese on the lawn between Islands Two and Three (OCLP, 1999).

Small Scale Features

Historic Development

Various contractors added small-scale features to the landscape during the construction of the facilities between 1890 - 1897. Docks and wooden pilings lined the ferry slip. A covered walkway and adjacent baggage run connected the ferry landing to the main building. Lighting illuminated the front of the main building and scattered locations around the island. A system of downspouts, water pipes, and concrete cisterns collected fresh water and three water hydrants near the hospital buildings distributed it throughout the island.

The addition of various small-scale features also enhanced the island by 1907. Circa 1902 Bishop's-crook lamp posts lined the boardwalk on Island One and at least one was located on Island Two, west of the main hospital building. Fencing, constructed of wooden posts and twisted wire, surrounded all newly planted hedges and most lawn areas. Gates provided access to each of the lawn panels in front of the main immigration building. Ornamental features included benches, planters, and flower beds, while other, more utilitarian features included a fog bell and flagstaff on the southern end of Island One and several fire hydrants on Islands One and Two, likely dating to a circa 1903 fire protection project.

Many of the small-scale features present in earlier periods remained on the island, including the circa 1902 lamp posts, benches, planters, a fog bell, and the flagstaff. The post and wire fencing around the lawn on Island One had been removed by circa 1913. Some wooden picket fence sections assisted with crowd control on the main sidewalks. At several points along the seawall, including the edge of the ferry basin, large iron mooring cleats served as docking points for ferryboats and other vessels. Playground equipment occupied a small area in the recreation grounds on the northeast side of Island One (Figures 4.23 - 4.25).

Numerous small-scale features were extant in 1954. There were several circa 1945 crook-neck lights attached to the chain link fence near the main immigration building (Figure 5.29). In the recreation area between Islands Two and Three, circa 1935 Beaux Arts lamps with eight-foot octagonal posts were present (Figure 5.30). All circa 1902 lamp posts had been removed from the island. The fog bell occupied the eastern corner of Island Two, housed in a wooden tower constructed circa 1940, and a pilot light was located directly across the ferry basin on the corner of Island One (Figures 5.31 - 5.32). Several 1952 fire hydrants remained on Islands One and between Islands Two and Three. The circa 1920 iron mooring cleats lined both sides of the ferry basin and several other docking locations on the island. Several manhole covers were present. Some of these may have dated to construction of the original immigration station. Cast concrete downspout splash guards remained from the 1940s around several of the buildings on Islands Two and Three (Figure 5.33). Three flagstaffs remained – on the southeast point of Island One, on the southeast end of Island Two, and east of the new ferry building.

Four bench styles were extant on the island. The first style, near the railroad ticket office in the recreation yard, was cast iron with one-inch-by-four-inch wooden slats and dated to circa 1904

(Figure 5.34). The second style, used on the north side of the baggage and dormitory building, had bent-steel supports on seven-foot centers and wooden slats. The third, west of the new immigration building, had perforated cast-iron supports and wooden slats. An example of the fourth bench style was located on the northwest corner of Island Two and consisted of simple steel supports and wooden slats. Wooden picnic tables were also scattered around the recreation yard on Island One (Figure 5.35).

Sections of chain link fencing from the late 1940s stood at various island locations, including near the main immigration building, baggage and dormitory building, powerhouse, new immigration building, and around detainee recreation yards on Islands One and Three (Figure 5.36). A wooden fence and the chain link baseball backstop were also present in the recreation yard on Island One. An eight-foot-high brick wall, present between the bakery and carpentry shop and the seawall, was a circa 1937 feature used to separate detainee classes.

Existing Conditions

Both historic and contemporary small-scale features are present on all three islands. Historic features include iron mooring cleats along the seawall edge, fire hydrants, manhole covers, flagstaff bases, the fog bell, birdbath, utility trenches and pits, and remnant lighting and fencing. Contemporary features added to the landscape during island renovation include new lighting, seating, trash receptacles, fencing, railings, and signage. Selected extant small-scale features are shown in Figures 6.34 to 6.39.

Summary

The immigration station contained a variety of small-scale features throughout the period of significance. Cycles of construction, deterioration, and rehabilitation brought about continuous changes in the style and placement of a number of these elements. Many features provided a utilitarian function, including wooden docks and pilings, several different styles of outdoor lighting, a water collection and supply system, flagstaffs, a fog bell and wooden tower, pilot light, and various types of signage. Ornamental features accompanied subsequent phases of landscape improvements, including twisted-wire fencing around lawn areas, movable picket fencing for crowd control, benches for immigrant and employee use, planters for ornamental vegetation, and at least two birdbaths in the Island Two and Three courtyard spaces. Examples of different bench styles are on display in the museum collection. Seawall improvements brought the addition of iron mooring cleats along the ferry basin for docking ships. Features like the children's playground equipment, chain link fencing, and baseball backstop served the increased recreation and detention facility needs. By the end of the historic period, many of the oldest small-scale features were no longer extant, or had been replaced with new feature types. During the time the island was abandoned, substantial loss or damage occurred with many remaining features. However, some historic features did survive intact.

Small-scale features on the island are currently a combination of historic and contemporary.

Contemporary items like benches, fencing, lighting, and trash receptacles are generally in good condition; however, they do not contribute to the island's historic significance. Most historic features such as the iron mooring cleats, manhole covers, water tower foundations, a concrete birdbath, and fire hydrants are in relatively good condition. However, other historic small-scale features are in much worse shape and are in danger of loss from vandalism or neglect, including remnant chain link fencing and the last existing concrete light post on Island Two. Despite their condition, all extant historic small-scale features contribute to the island's significance.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Bird Bath - Island Two

Feature Identification Number: 93570

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Fencing, historic chain link - Island Three

Feature Identification Number: 93573

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40474

LCS Structure Name: CHAIN-LINK FENCES

LCS Structure Number: HS62

Feature: Rubble Wall - Island Three

Feature Identification Number: 95021

Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Flagstaff base - Island Two

Feature Identification Number: 93576

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40492

LCS Structure Name: CONCRETE FLAG POLE BASE

LCS Structure Number: HS58

Feature: Pilot light mast with small bell - Island One

Feature Identification Number: 93585

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40489

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LCS Structure Name: FIRE BELL

LCS Structure Number: HS55

Feature: Flagstaff and base - Island One

Feature Identification Number: 93575

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40497

LCS Structure Name: FLAG POLE

LCS Structure Number: HS48

Feature: Flag Staff Base, U.S. Coast Guard - Island One

Feature Identification Number: 93574

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40475

LCS Structure Name: COAST GUARD FLAG POLE BASE

LCS Structure Number: HS46

Feature: Lighting, historic concrete remnant bases - Island Two

Feature Identification Number: 93581

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Manhole covers, historic

Feature Identification Number: 93583

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40477

LCS Structure Name: MANHOLE COVERS

LCS Structure Number: HS49

Feature: Iron Mooring Cleats

Feature Identification Number: 93580

Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40478

LCS Structure Name: MOORING BOLLARDS

LCS Structure Number: HS50

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Feature: Trash receptacles
Feature Identification Number: 97785
Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Footings, concrete for old water tower - Island One
Feature Identification Number: 93578
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Manhole covers and drain inlets, contemporary
Feature Identification Number: 93582
Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Fencing, contemporary styles including iron railing along seawall, chain link,
post and chain, temporary crowd control
Feature Identification Number: 93572
Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Benches
Feature Identification Number: 93569
Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Coin-operated viewfinders
Feature Identification Number: 93571
Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Fogbell - Island One
Feature Identification Number: 93577
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Gutter splash guards - Island Three
Feature Identification Number: 93579
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Picnic tables
Feature Identification Number: 93584
Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

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Feature: Sculptures, abstracts of immigrant figures - Island One

Feature Identification Number: 97257

Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Signage

Feature Identification Number: 97784

Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Waterline, abandoned - Island Three

Feature Identification Number: 97786

Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Contemporary sign and plinth at main entrance to Ellis Island, Island One (OCLP, 1999)



Wall of cinder rubble, Island Three (OCLP, 1999).



Contemporary bench, Island One. This bench is a reproduction of an historic bench in the museum collection (OCLP, 1999).



Contemporary handicap accessible viewer near concession area and Wall of Honor, Island One (OCLP, 1999).



Contemporary sign on Island One seawall (OCLP, 1999).



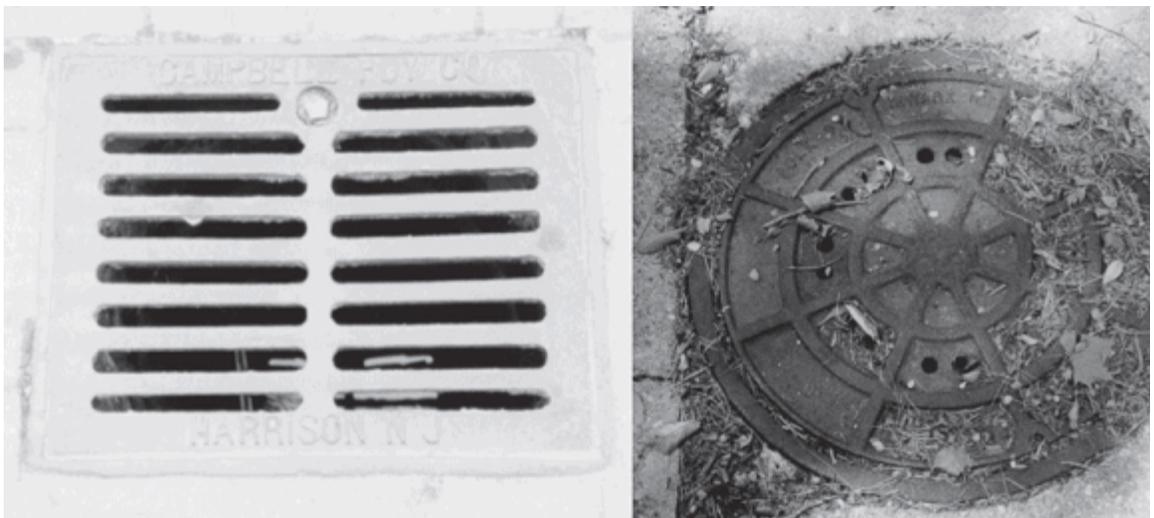
Contemporary outdoor table, concession area, Island One (OCLP, 1999).



Historic birdbath, west side of Main Hospital, Island Two (OCLP, 1999).



Historic deteriorated lamp bases, Island Two (L) and Island Three (R) (OCLP, 1999).



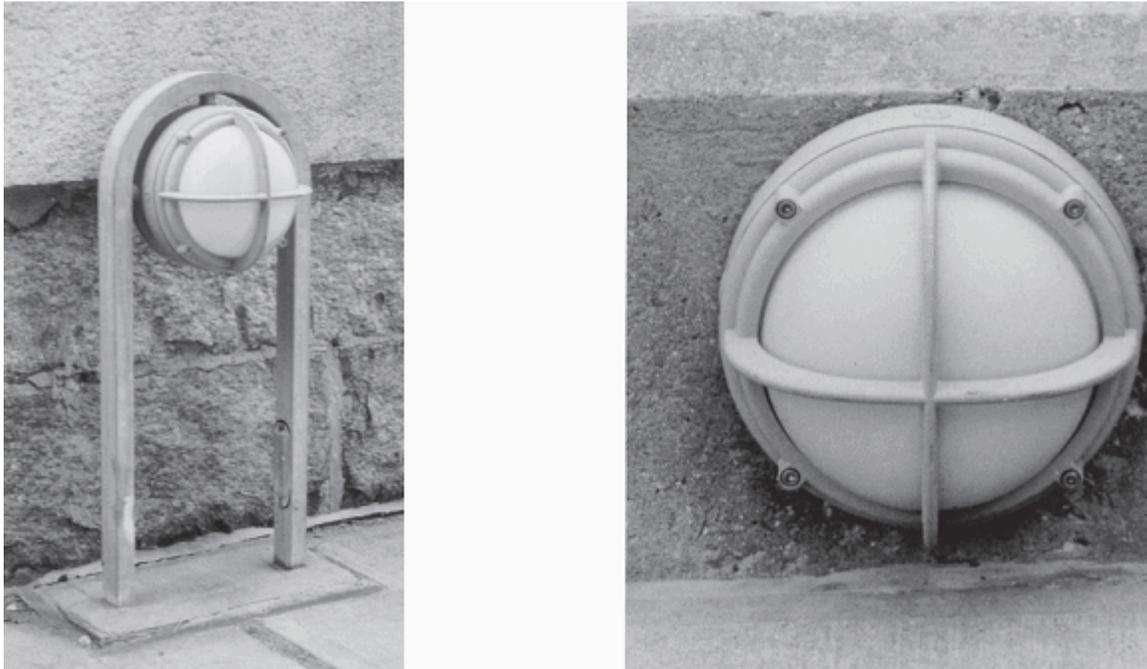
Contemporary drain, Island One (L) and historic manhole covers, Islands Two/Three (R) (OCLP, 1999).



Contemporary (L) and historic (R) lighting, Islands One (L) and Three (R). Detail of medallion found at base of historic lamppost (far R) (OCLP, 1999). Only base of historic fixture remains in landscape. Post has been transferred to collection.



Contemporary crowd control fencing at ferry loading area (OCLP, 1999).



Contemporary seawall lighting fixtures, Island One (OCLP, 1999).



Contemporary trash receptacles, concession area (L) and visitor loading area (R), Island One (OCLP, 1999).



Contemporary chain fence near Wall of Honor, Island One (OCLP, 1999).



Contemporary floodlights at base of flagpole, Island One (OCLP, 1999).



Pilot light mast and bell - Island One (L) and fog bell (R). Although the fog bell pictured here is on Island Two, it has since been moved to Island One near Pilot light mast. (OCLP, 1999).



Historic flagpole foundation, northeast Island Two (OCLP, 1999).



Remnant footing from old water tower, Island One (OCLP, 1999).

Spatial Organization

Historic Development

The removal of much of the former military facility by 1897, the addition of seven new structures, and the renovation of five existing buildings changed the facility's spatial organization. Oriented on a north/south axis, the new main building sat relatively close to the ferry basin edge. Enclosed courtyard spaces separated smaller structures east of the main building, with additional open space extending to the shoreline.

Construction of the new immigration facilities by 1907 altered the island's spatial organization. Structures on the first immigration station were all clustered on one island, aligned on a north/south axis, and included a large central building with numerous small structures separated by enclosed courtyard spaces. Although the second immigration station facilities maintained the same general north/south orientation, they occupied two islands, enclosing the ferry basin on three sides. There were fewer, generally larger, buildings, leaving less opportunity for intimate courtyards but providing more open space extending to the shore. The new main immigration building sat farther back from the water's edge, establishing an added sense of presence and defining a more formal entry sequence into the new immigration station.

Changes in Ellis Island's spatial organization between 1907 and 1920 built on previously established development patterns. The addition of numerous buildings on Islands Two and Three decentralized activity from Island One, spreading active land use among the islands. As new structures were added, their placement reflected locations specified on early plans for the second immigration station, and reinforced the established linear organization along the north/south axis of the island. Open space remained an important organizational feature. On Island One, additional landfill replaced existing open space that was used for the construction of the baggage and dormitory building, and on Island Three, building placement along a central axis created numerous small courtyard spaces. The basins between the islands provided both a physical and a visual separation between building groups and land uses associated with each island.

The island's spatial organization was changed slightly by 1954. Although building additions during the 1930s complemented the spatial organization of the existing structures, maturing trees created minor changes. They established an overhead plane that was not present during earlier periods. Removal of the surgeon's house and American Red Cross recreation building created additional open space on Island Two. Landfill added to Islands Two and Three established two large land masses, and landfill added with the construction of the new immigration building provided additional open space to the island's north side.

Existing Conditions

The spatial organization developed over the immigration station's one hundred year history still remains, even though the patterns of land use have changed. No longer are immigration, military, or residential uses present on the island. Commemoration and interpretation are now

the primary uses for Island One, where the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, NPS administrative offices, and maintenance facilities are located. The spatial organization of Island One was not altered during structural and landscape rehabilitation in the 1980s. On Islands Two and Three, the current primary land use is preservation. The on-going stabilization and limited rehabilitation of the facilities and landscape on these islands reinforces this use and continues to preserve the established spatial organization as well. Defining spatial characteristics on all three islands include linear building placement, open lawn areas, small courtyards between the various buildings, linear tree plantings, and geometric circulation patterns.

Summary

The initial construction of the first immigration facilities at the beginning of the immigration period began the establishment of the island's dominant spatial organization by clustering new buildings in a linear fashion along the ferry landing. As additional buildings were constructed on Island One and the landfill of Islands Two and Three, the linear pattern of development was retained and open spaces developed between the structures, including small courtyards, lawns, and larger recreation areas. This development pattern continued throughout the island's history. The rectilinear layout of exterior walkways, connecting corridors between the buildings, and the planting of a formally influenced landscape, including tree rows along the walks and lawns, reinforced the island's spatial organization.

Currently, the spatial organization remains consistent with its historic pattern and is one of the most important contributing characteristics to the island's historic significance. Extant buildings and structures are arranged in a linear pattern, running generally north/south along all three islands. Defined open spaces include individual courtyards between buildings, former recreation areas on all three islands, and the formal lawn panels on Island One. Despite years of concealment by overgrown vegetation, historic open spaces are revealed once again, thanks to several recent vegetation clearing projects on Islands Two and Three.

Character-defining Features:

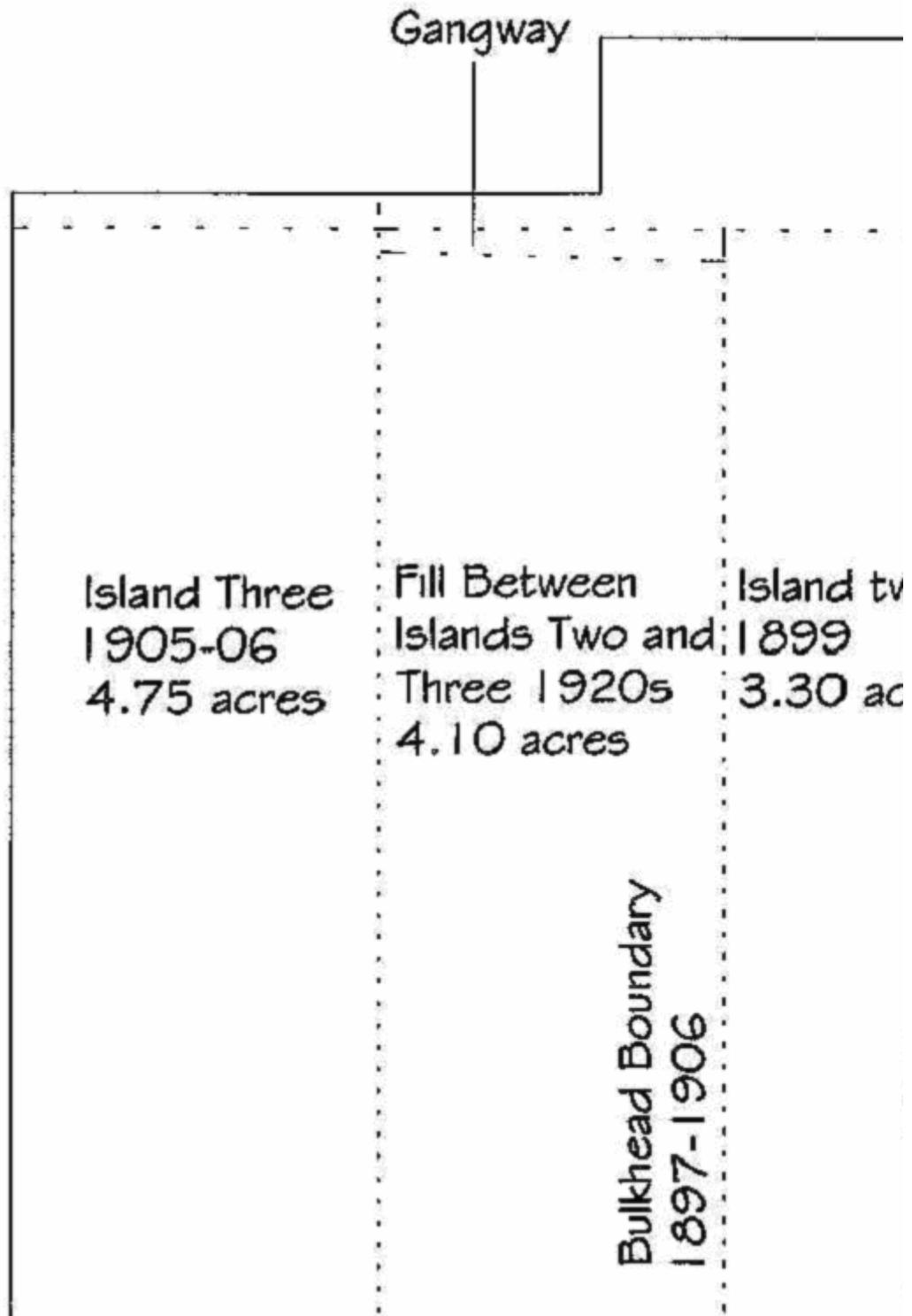
- Feature: Building placement and open space
- Feature Identification Number: 97787
- Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

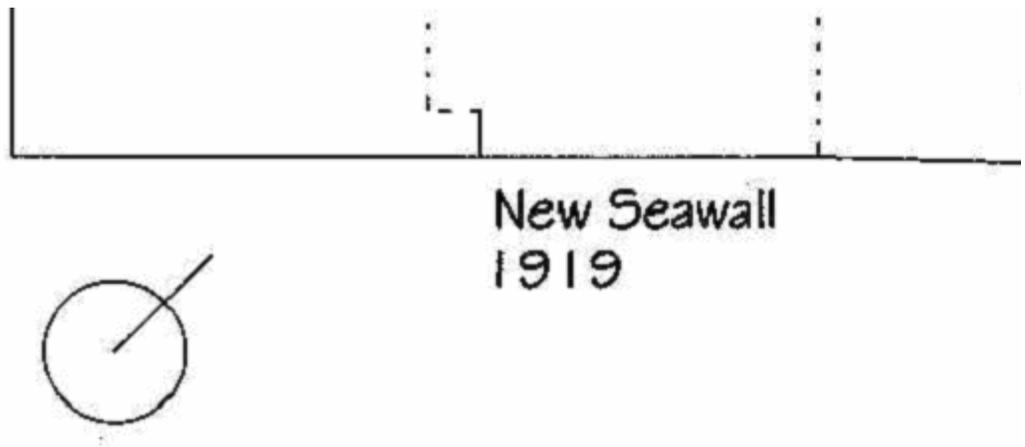
- Feature: Historic circulation system
- Feature Identification Number: 97788
- Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

- Feature: Rectilinear Form and Island Perimeter
- Feature Identification Number: 97789
- Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

Unregistered.





Historical development of Islands One, Two and Three. See Selected Graphics section in Appendix for larger scale plan (Map redrawn by OCLP from Historic Structure Report, Ellis Island, 1981).

Topography

Historic Development

By 1897 the addition of cribwork and landfill changed the topography of the island, increasing its size from just less than three and a third acres to fourteen and one-fifth acres and raising the elevation to approximately two feet above the high-water mark.

Some alterations to Ellis Island's topography occurred by 1907. The addition of landfill to Island One and the creation of Islands Two and Three increased the total size of the island and altered the topography of the existing harbor floor where the landfill was added. The completed additions conformed to the same general elevation above sea level and level landform previously established on Island One.

Construction projects necessitated only minor topographical changes between 1907 and 1920. Completion of the hospital on Island Three required minor regrading and the addition of topsoil. Landfill was also added to Island One with the completion of the seawall. In all cases, the relatively flat landforms present after these additions were consistent with the topography already extant on all three islands.

The existing topography on all three islands remained consistently flat between 1920 and 1954. The addition of landfill between Islands Two and Three, and at other locations on Island One, increased the island's overall size and altered the topography of the bay floor where fill was added. The elevation of the original island averaged sea level at the shoreline to a high point of five feet. Upon completion of the seawall and the addition of the final landfill, the elevation averaged seven feet at the seawall to a high point of eleven feet. (Pousson 1986) Thus, the average change in the island's elevation remained relatively consistent at approximately four to five feet.

Existing Conditions

The island's topographic characteristics remain relatively unchanged. The deterioration of the seawall throughout the early years of the island's abandonment led to the development of sinkholes in the landscape adjacent to the shoreline. However, most of these were repaired during various seawall rehabilitation projects. Some sinkholes still exist on Islands Two and Three, where rehabilitation efforts are not as advanced (Figure 6.18). Minor changes in the topography of Island One occurred with the construction of a grassy knoll within the circular Wall of Honor, and the creation of a depressed area when parts of Fort Gibson were excavated and preserved as ruins for archeological interpretation. However, the predominant topographic quality of all three islands is the flat and level ground plane, much as it has been throughout the island's history.

Summary

In 1898 Boring and Tilton recommended raising the elevation of Ellis Island for the main

immigration building two feet above the original level and sloping the grade slightly away from the new buildings. This height and landform has been maintained ever since. The topography of the island and surrounding bay floor was altered with the addition of landfill to create Islands Two and Three. However, these new additions maintained essentially the same elevation as Island One, reinforcing the predominant low, flat topography of the island. These conditions have not changed from the historic condition. The existing topography remains relatively flat and stable, with only a few small sinkholes along the seawall on Islands Two and Three. The continuity of Ellis Island's overall topography makes it a contributing characteristic to the island's significance.

Character-defining Features:

Feature:	Flat, level landform
Feature Identification Number:	97790
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing

Vegetation

Historic Development

The addition of landfill by 1897 eliminated most extant vegetation. Only a few large trees on the north of the island, including one labeled the Gibbet Tree on a historic map, were preserved from the island's earlier periods. Since the facilities were complete for such a short time before their destruction by fire, it is unlikely that any effort was put into improving the landscape. There was not adequate time to plan for the installation of ornamental vegetation like trees, shrubs, and flowers.

The only vegetation remaining on the island by 1907 from earlier periods was a tree, or group of trees, on the northeast corner of the main immigration building, and identified as Gibbet Tree on historic maps. New vegetation included rectangular lawns in front of the main immigration building, lawns in other open space areas on Islands One and Two, and Ligustrum hedges around the lawn panels. No new trees were added. Other ornamental plantings included two annual flower beds on Island One, some flowers and plants in pots and boxes near the entry portico and on roof decks, and ivy (possibly *Hedera helix*) covering the facades of several of the primary buildings (Figures 3.19 - 3.20).

By 1920 vegetation on the island consisted primarily of large areas of lawn accented by a few scattered flower beds and hedgerows. These features were remnants of the pre-World War I landscape when there was more focus on maintaining the site. None of the three islands had any substantial tree cover. However, the tree identified earlier as the Gibbet Tree remained on Island One northeast of the kitchen and laundry building, and a few small trees grew behind the hospital buildings on Island Two (Figure 4.22).

When the island was abandoned in 1954, a large amount of vegetation covered all three islands, most of it dating to the 1939 planting plan. Rows of *Platanus acerifolia* remained along both sides of the ferry basin and along the recreation grounds between Islands Two and Three. A row of these trees also grew along the southwest edge of Island Three with additional tree species scattered between the hospital wards. The Gibbet Tree was no longer extant on Island One. The extensive flower beds from earlier periods were gone, and turf grass covered the majority of the island. With the absence of maintenance, lawns soon became unkempt and overgrown and volunteer trees took root along fence lines, especially southeast of the main immigration building (Figure 5.28). The main greenhouse on Island One remained, but the reduction in ornamental plantings left it infrequently used. The presence of the small greenhouse on Island Three, along with purchase records for seeds, fertilizer, bulbs, and other gardening supplies from 1943 to 1952, indicate that at least parts of the landscape were maintained until the island was abandoned in 1954. ("Ellis Island Records, Supplies: Materials Received, 1943-45; 1946-48; 1948-50; 1950-52")

Existing Conditions

Trees are the predominant vegetation on the island, primarily the numerous historic *Platanus*

acerifolia lining the ferry basin, which date to the 1939 planting plan. Nineteen of these trees are extant along the basin's north side, while fourteen trees are present on the basin's south side. The turfgrass on Island One was renovated during the island's rehabilitation phase during the 1980s and follows the 1939 layout, with slight modification for the new entry portico (Figure 6.27). Installation of the Wall of Honor created an additional circular lawn on the southeast corner of the island. A few trees are extant near the Wall of Honor dating to the historic period, including one large crabapple (Figure 6.28). These are probably volunteer species that grew along fence lines in the former detainee recreation yard. Contemporary additions include flower beds adjacent to the entry portico and in front of the kitchen and laundry building, approximately seventy-five new trees located in the Wall of Honor area, and evergreen screening used around the utility yard north of the powerhouse on Island One (Figures 6.29 - 6.30).

Much of the invasive and overgrown vegetation on Islands Two and Three was removed during recent clearing projects. However, as the tree canopy is thinned and more light is available to the understory, the vegetation reestablishes itself at a vigorous pace and must be kept in check by annual clearing. Historic trees dating to the 1939 planting plan have been identified, and most of these remain on both islands. The large recreation space between Islands Two and Three remains, and is now maintained as a lawn.

Summary

During the historic period, numerous changes to the island landscape altered the overall vegetation character. During the station's initial establishment and development, there was a limited amount of preexisting vegetation combined with newly planted trees, shrubs, and lawns concentrated primarily on Islands One and Two around the ferry basin. Subsequent improvements under Commissioners Williams and Corsi added more ornamental vegetation like flower beds, climbing vines, ornamental planters, and formal lawns with hedges. Implementation of the 1939 planting plan increased the overall amount of vegetation on the island, but there were relatively few species present. *Plantanus acerifolia* (London planetree) was the predominant tree planted along the ferry basin and around the recreation yard between Islands Two and Three. Established lawns remained in front of the main immigration building, in open spaces between other buildings, and in the large recreation spaces. Plantings of *Juniperus* spp. (juniper), *Ligustrum* spp. (privet), *Spiraea* spp. (spirea), and *Viburnum* spp. (viburnum) existed in smaller numbers in a few locations between buildings and along walkways. By the end of the historic period, the amount of ornamental vegetation had decreased substantially. Mature trees and open lawns dominated the island and there were few, if any, flower beds or other ornamental plantings.

After the station's closure in 1954, vegetation growth was rampant and unchecked. The historic landscape became overgrown and many invasive and volunteer species began to take over the island. By the mid-1960s a wide variety of species were present including vines like *Euonymus* spp. (euonymus), *Hedera helix* (English ivy), *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* (Virginia

creeper), and *Toxicodendron radicans* (poison ivy); shrubs such as *Forsythia intermedia* (forsythia), *Ligustrum* spp. (privet), *Rhus* spp. (sumac), *Syringa vulgaris* (common lilac), *Taxus* spp. (yew); and numerous trees including, *Ailanthus altissima* (tree-of-heaven), *Betula* spp. (birch), *Malus* spp. (crabapple), *Platanus acerifolia* (London planetree), *Prunus* spp. (wild cherry), *Quercus* spp. (oak), and *Ulmus* spp. (elm). Subsequent island rehabilitation and preservation efforts in the 1970s through the 1990s cleared much of the rampant vegetation, leaving many historic trees and remnant shrubs in place.

Currently, extant vegetation on Island One includes a mix of historic trees and newly planted trees, shrubs, lawn, and flowers. The mature *Platanus acerifolia* are still present along the ferry basin where they were originally planted and are in reasonably good condition. There is also one *malus* southeast of the main immigration building dating to the historic period, but it was likely a volunteer tree that sprang up along an earlier fence line. All other trees on Island One, whether planted or volunteers, postdate the historic period. On Islands Two and Three, most existing mature trees date from the historic period; however, many were volunteers and were not part of the island's planting plan. Many mature *Platanus acerifolia* and *Quercus palustris* remain in their original planting pattern along the walkways and are in good condition. Recent vegetation clearing projects removed many volunteer species, but continual maintenance is required to prevent the landscape from becoming completely overgrown again.

Historic specimen trees and shrubs, including the mature *Platanus acerifolia*, *Quercus palustris*, and surviving shrubs from the 1940s, are considered contributing features to the island's historic significance. All other vegetation, including recently planted trees, shrubs, and flowers on Island One and volunteer trees, shrubs, or vines on Islands Two and Three, is noncontributing.

However, the vegetation planting patterns surviving from the 1939 planting plan are the more significant contributing features to the cultural landscape. The linear tree rows along the ferry basin and walkways, formal lawn panels on Island One, lawn recreation spaces on all three islands, and small courtyard spaces between buildings have been defining elements of the cultural landscape since the historic period.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Extant *Platanus acerifolia* or other historic trees and remnant shrubs associated with 1939 planting plan

Feature Identification Number: 97792

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: In-kind replacement for historic vegetation

Feature Identification Number: 97793

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Planting pattern for tree rows, lawns, courtyards

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Feature Identification Number: 97794

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: All other vegetation

Feature Identification Number: 97791

Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



*Allee of *Platanus acerifolia* (London plane trees), Island One (OCLP, 1999).*



Historic crabapple tree, near Wall of Honor, Island One (OCLP, 1999).





Remnant allee on Island Two, south side (OCLP, 1999).



Landscape fabric used to control invasive plant material, Island Three (OCLP, 1999).



Overgrown, mostly volunteer, plant material in enclosed courtyard, Island Three, some of which has been removed since this photograph was taken (OCLP, 1999).



Overgrown historic privet hedge, Island Three (OCLP, 1999).



Planting beds at main entrance to Museum, Island One, (OCLP, 1999).



Vegetation used to screen utilities, north side Island One (OCLP, 1999).



Lawn between Islands Two and Three, minimally maintained (OCLP, 1999).

Views And Vistas

Historic Development

By 1897 views from the edges of Ellis Island to the harbor and beyond remained consistent with earlier periods. However, views within or across the island were less expansive than they had been previously. Although the new immigration facilities actually contained fewer buildings than had been present in 1890, the new structures were generally larger in scale, thereby blocking more of the views across the island.

The addition of numerous large-scale structures by 1907 changed views and vistas within the island from earlier periods, but the views from the island's edges across the harbor to Manhattan, the Statue of Liberty, and other sites remained relatively unchanged. The construction of the main immigration building further from the edge of the ferry basin enhanced the view of the island's primary building from arriving vessels. The forecourt created by the lawns and walks in front of the building gave the facility an increased sense of importance. Views from the main immigration building were slightly different from views observed from the original main building. The removal of structures on the eastern side of Island One opened up views toward Manhattan, and the construction of the ferry house and hospital buildings on Island Two blocked some of the previously open views toward New Jersey.

The addition of more buildings to the island by 1920 altered views and vistas slightly. The structures blocked some existing view sheds, but also created new and more intimate views within the island. Views from the island's edges remained relatively consistent, with only slight alteration caused by the changing Manhattan skyline and the increasing development on the New Jersey wharves.

The addition of buildings and the maturation of vegetation continued to alter views and vistas slightly between 1920 and 1954. Views from the island edges across the harbor remained relatively consistent with earlier periods, with Manhattan providing the predominant view shed to the northeast, the Statue of Liberty to the south, and the New Jersey coastline to the northwest.

Existing Conditions

Both views within the island and across the harbor have changed since 1954. On-island views improved with the removal of vegetation and the continuing renovation of the island's facilities. Views from the edges of the island are more varied with the growth of the surrounding urban environment. They are dominated by the Manhattan skyline to the east, the Statue of Liberty to the south, and Jersey City and Liberty State Park to the north (Figures 6.31 - 6.33). Also included in these view sheds are the Verrazano Narrows Bridge connecting Staten Island and Brooklyn, the Newark skyline, Governors Island, and various New Jersey harbors north and west of the island. The view toward the island from the water, with its imposing and impressive building facades, was restored with the resumption of regular passenger service to the island.

Summary

There is no indication that early planners considered view sheds to, from, or within Ellis Island to be significant. However, the island's development pattern and the spatial organization of its features did establish view sheds that became character-defining elements of the cultural landscape. Prior to the period of significance, island views were expansive. Facility development and extant vegetation were minimal, providing important open site lines for the early military installation. View sheds changed with the start of the immigration period and the subsequent development of the immigration station. Views across the harbor became blocked from the island's interior by the numerous buildings, structures, and eventually by maturing vegetation; however, they remained open if viewed from the island's edges. These expansive views could be seen at the seawall, where dominant view sheds included the Manhattan skyline to the northeast, the Statue of Liberty to the south, and the New Jersey shore to the north and west. The construction of various small courtyards, recreation spaces, and open lawns created more intimate views within the individual islands. Additionally, the sight of the island and the immigration station from the surrounding harbor was an important view for the thousands of immigrants processed at the facility. For many, this view of the grand buildings and formally influenced landscape was their first glimpse of America and emphasized the stature and importance of this governmental facility. These views became less impressive at the end of the historic period, due to the increased fencing around the island for detention areas and the general wear and tear of the facilities and landscape. Upon the closure of the station in 1954, most views within and toward the islands became obscured with the subsequent vegetation growth.

The rehabilitation of many facilities and removal of overgrown vegetation has reestablished important island views. Views from the seawall across the harbor are more varied with the growth of the surrounding urban environment, particularly the development of Manhattan and the New Jersey coastline, including Liberty State Park to the northwest of the island. Interior island views continue to be small in scale, with emphasis on views across the islands' open lawns and into small courtyard spaces. Views of the island and former immigration station from the harbor are also extant and with the exception of the inclusion of mature trees, are similar to the views experienced by arriving immigrants. All views are considered contributing features to the island's historic significance.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Historic views, across harbor, within site, and harbor to island.

Feature Identification Number: 97795

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



View from Island One, across ferry slip and eastern portion of Island Two, to the Statue of Liberty (OCLP, 1999).



View of lower Manhattan from eastern side of Island One, Two and Three (OCLP, 1999).



View along remnant alley from 1939 planting plan found on Island Two (OCLP, 1999).

Condition

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Poor
Assessment Date: 09/30/1998
Condition Assessment: Fair
Assessment Date: 05/05/2004

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Stabilization efforts including the removal of invasive and non-historic vegetation on Islands Two and Three has been completed and is ongoing.

Impacts

Type of Impact: Neglect
External or Internal: Both Internal and External
Impact Description: Since Ellis Island was abandoned in 1954, Island One was the focus of a major rehabilitation effort in the 1980s and portions of it continue to receive various treatments. Islands Two and Three have languished over the years; the landscape and buildings are in very poor condition. Invasive vegetation threatens remnant plant material from the 1939 Master Plan and also contributes to the deterioration of most buildings. Without continuing stabilization efforts, the character-defining aspects of the island will be lost.

Currently, buildings on Islands Two and Three are being stabilized. This requires the use of heavy equipment that may threaten the vegetation by crushing it, compacting the soil or damaging limbs through the use of overhead equipment. Landscape features need to be monitored during this process (e.g. hidden small-scale features may become trampled, masonry circulation paths may be broken). Scaffolding must be erected to aid stabilization and requires that vegetation within 10-15 feet of the buildings be removed in order to do so. It is urgent that the landscape resource be understood and protected during this effort.

Stabilization Costs

Ellis Island
Statue of Liberty NM - Ellis Island National Monument

Landscape Stabilization Cost: 10,088,627.00
Cost Date: 01/23/2004
Level of Estimate: C - Similar Facilities
Cost Estimator: Park/FMSS

Landscape Stabilization Cost Explanatory Description:

The total costs for unfunded projects is \$10,088, 627. This amount includes the following PMIS projects:

PMIS # 16509 Complete Ellis Island Historic Seawall Rehabilitation

PMIS# 74084 Prune Hazardous Trees on Liberty and Ellis Islands (Includes removal of hazardous trees on both Liberty and Ellis Islands)

PMIS# 62215 Repair Sidewalks and Related Areas at Ellis Island

PMIS# 60169 Repair Pedestrian Surfaces at Ellis and Liberty Islands (Includes repair of degraded unsafe pedestrian surfaces on both Ellis and Liberty Islands)

Treatment

Treatment

Approved Treatment: Undetermined

Approved Treatment Document Explanatory Narrative:

No formal treatment document for Ellis Island has been completed. Though current treatment for the landscape is undetermined, the LCS indicates preservation as an authorized treatment for landscape features.

Approved Treatment Costs

Landscape Treatment Cost: 0.00

Bibliography and Supplemental Information

Bibliography

- Citation Author:** Staff
- Citation Title:** A Study Report on Ellis Island
- Year of Publication:** 1964
- Source Name:** CRBIB
- Citation Number:** 010517
- Citation Type:** Both Graphic And Narrative
- Citation Location:** U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service
-
- Citation Author:** Pousson, John F
- Citation Title:** An Overview and Assessment of Archeological Resources on Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty National Monument, New York
- Year of Publication:** 1986
- Source Name:** CRBIB
- Citation Number:** 013628
- Citation Type:** Both Graphic And Narrative
- Citation Location:** U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service
-
- Citation Author:** Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold
- Citation Title:** Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty National Monument, Historic Structure Report, The Main Building, Volume 1
- Year of Publication:** 1988
- Source Name:** CRBIB
- Citation Number:** 015193
- Citation Type:** Both Graphic And Narrative
- Citation Location:** U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Citation Author: J. Tracy Stakely
Citation Title: Cultural Landscape Report for Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty National Monument, Site History, Existing Conditions and Analysis
Year of Publication: 2003
Citation Publisher: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
Source Name: Other
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation Library

Citation Author: Edward Corsi
Citation Title: In the Shadow of Liberty
Year of Publication: 1935
Citation Publisher: New York: Macmillan Company
Source Name: Other

Citation Author: National Park Service
Citation Title: A Master Plan for Ellis Island Island, New York, A Preliminary Plan.
Year of Publication: 1968
Citation Publisher: United States Department of the Interior
Source Name: Other

Citation Author: Various
Citation Title: Ellis Island Articles, Volumes 1 to 9
Year of Publication: 1924
Citation Publisher: New York Times
Source Name: Other
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Library

Citation Title: Report of the Ellis Island Committee (reprint of 1934 report)
Year of Publication: 1971
Citation Publisher: New York: Jerome S. Ozer
Source Name: Other
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Library

Citation Author: Unrau, Harlan D
Citation Title: Historic Structure Report, Ellis Island, Historical Data, Statue of Liberty National Monument, New York/New Jersey
Year of Publication: 1981
Source Name: CRBIB
Citation Number: 010530

Citation Author: Staff
Citation Title: Ellis Island Study
Year of Publication: 1978
Source Name: CRBIB
Citation Number: 010518

Citation Author: MetaForm/Rathe/D&P
Citation Title: Ellis Island: A Conceptual Program
Year of Publication: 1984
Source Name: Other

Citation Author: Pike, Henry H.
Citation Title: Ellis Island: Its Legal Study
Year of Publication: 1963
Source Name: CRBIB
Citation Number: 012859

Citation Author: U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Division of Research and Education

Citation Title: History of Ellis Island, New York

Year of Publication: 1964

Source Name: Other

Citation Number: 010517

Citation Author: U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service

Citation Title: History of Ellis Island, New York (1952)

Year of Publication: 1952

Source Name: Other

Citation Author: Dorothy P. Guzzo

Citation Title: Letter from Dorothy P. Guzzo, New Jersey Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, to Marie Rust, Northeast Region Regional Director dated 9/15/04

Year of Publication: 2004

Source Name: Other

Citation Type: Narrative

Citation Location: Olmsted Center files

Supplemental Information

Title: Vegetation Survey for Ellis Island, Islands Two and Three - 1999

Description: In 1998, funds were appropriated to begin stabilization of the structures on Islands Two and Three initiating a massive multi-year effort. The stabilization process required that vegetation within 10-15 feet of all buildings be removed to allow for the erection of scaffolding. It was required that any overhanging limbs be removed as well. Prior to this, the surrounding existing vegetation was inventoried and assessed, since some of it would need to be removed.

Using existing condition plans (1994) as a base, the assessment identified plants as being Probable Historic, Possible Historic, or Volunteer in nature. An Access database organized the information gathered and AutoCad R14 maps were used to illustrate it. Additional information on the maps includes pruning instructions for individual trees, and location of small-scale features. This record of what existed in 1999, regardless of its significance, can be an important reference for future research.

Documentation Assessment

Documentation Assessment: Fair

Documentation Checklist

Documentation

Document: General Management Plan
Year of Document: 1982
Amplifying Details: Statue of Liberty National Monument/New York-New Jersey. Includes 'The Plan for Ellis Island.'
Adequate Documentation: No

Explanatory Narrative:

No information is offered for Islands Two and Three; little, if any, useful information in regard to the landscape of Island One.

Document: Other
Year of Document: 1988
Amplifying Details: Historic Structure Report, Volumes 1 - 14
Adequate Documentation: Yes

Explanatory Narrative:

The Structural information is thorough, and includes historical overviews for various areas of the island. Limited landscape information is included.

Document: Resource Management Plan
Year of Document: 1992
Amplifying Details: Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island
Adequate Documentation: No

Explanatory Narrative:

Contains information regarding high visitation, environmental effects, ethnographic resources and makes recommendations for future research. Preservation and documentation of park's cultural resources are primary cultural resource management objectives.