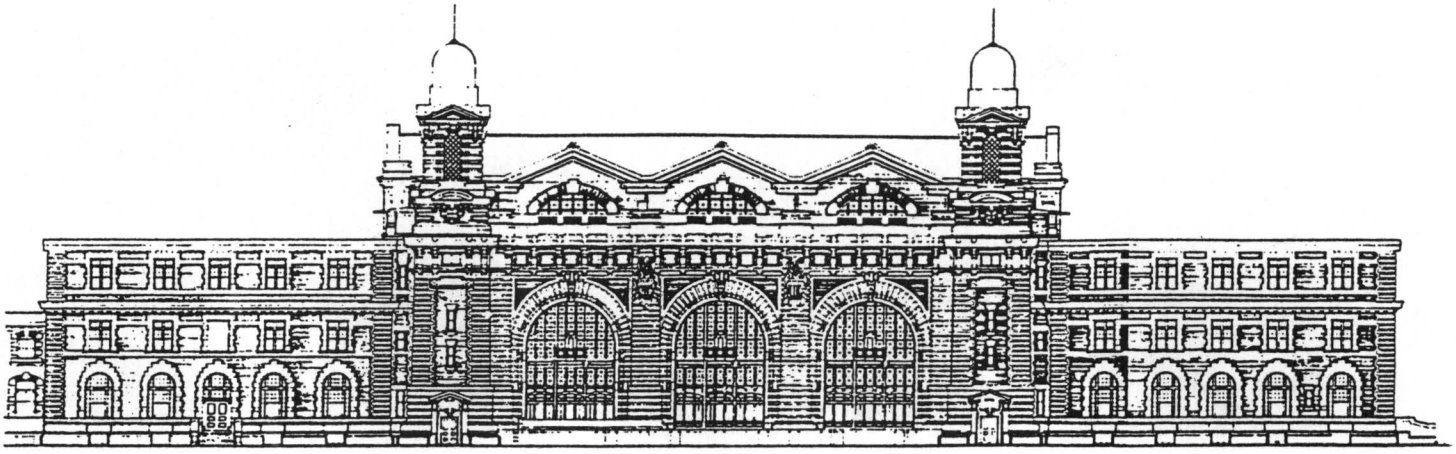
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

Ellis Island
Historic District



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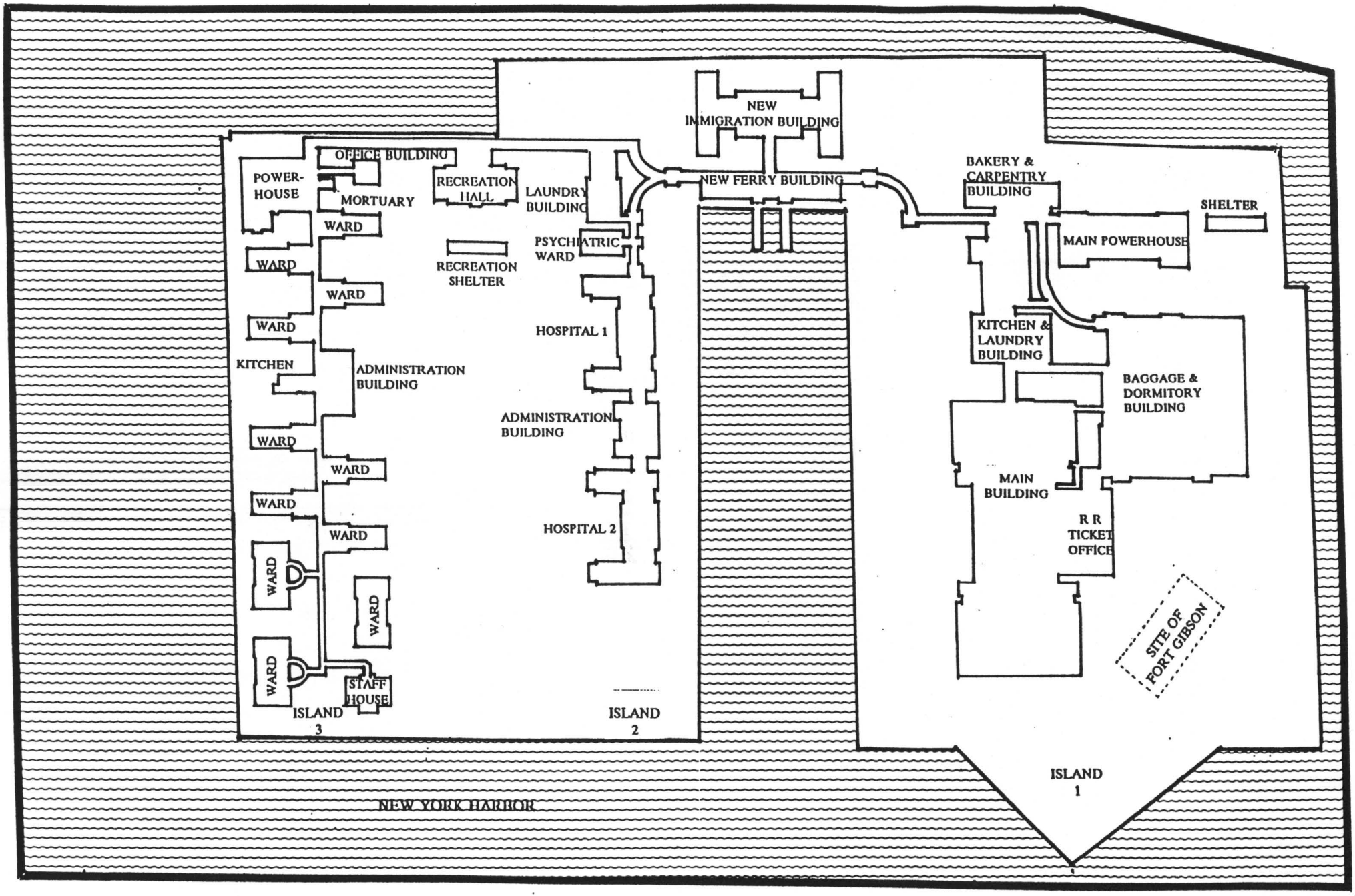

CORRESPONDS TO
MANHATTAN TAX MAP
BLOCK 1 LOT 201

NO SCALE

ELLIS ISLAND HISTORIC DISTRICT
MANHATTAN

Designated: November 16, 1993 Landmarks Preservation Commission

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

Ellis Island Historic District

Prepared by: Anthony Robins, Director of Special Projects
Elisa Urbanelli, Research Department Editor

Editor: Marjorie Pearson, Director of Research

Map: Kate Frankel

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TESTIMONY AT THE PUBLIC HEARING

On November 10, 1992, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of this historic district (Item No. 1). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Twenty people spoke in favor of designation; there were no speakers in opposition to the designation of the district in whole or in part. The Commission has received fifteen letters expressing support for the designation of the historic district, and none in opposition.

ELLIS ISLAND HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

The Ellis Island Historic District consists of the property bounded by a line beginning at the southeast corner of Block 1, Lot 201, extending westerly along the southern lot line to the southwest corner of Block 1, Lot 201, northerly along the western lot line to the northwest corner of Block 1, Lot 201, easterly along the northern lot line to the northeast corner of Block 1, Lot 201, southerly along the eastern lot line to the point of beginning.

INTRODUCTION

Ellis Island, like the Statue of Liberty on neighboring Liberty Island, is a national monument whose significance in the country's history is difficult to overstate. While the Statue of Liberty is the formal monument symbolizing the welcome extended to "the huddled masses yearning to breathe free," Ellis Island is the place where over twelve million immigrants from countries all over the world officially entered the United States.

The Ellis Island Historic District, situated in New York Harbor, encompasses the Ellis Island federal immigration station, which includes some thirty interconnected structures, built between the 1890s and 1930s on a largely artificial twenty-seven-and-a-half-acre island created solely for that purpose. As a planned complex occupying an entire island, Ellis Island represents the American government's historic response, for good or ill, to the challenge of the massive forces of immigration. That response was two-fold: on the one hand of welcome; on the other of control, inspection, and rejection.

The massive immigration of peoples from all corners of the world is of enormous significance to the history of the United States, often called a "nation of immigrants." Though Ellis Island was only one of many ports of entry for immigrants and was active for only a few decades, approximately twelve million people passed through the immigration station, some seventy percent of all immigrants coming to this country during those years, or roughly one fifth of the estimated sixty million people who have migrated to what is now the United States since the seventeenth century. Today an estimated one hundred million Americans can trace their family origins in this country to Ellis Island.

Ellis Island is particularly significant for the history of New York City, which received some half of the immigrants coming through the island. From its beginnings New York has had a population drawn from diverse peoples, and the city owes an enormous part of its history and identity to immigration.

Because of its strategic location in New York harbor, Ellis Island has been in governmental hands almost from the nation's beginnings. During the late 1790s, New York State built fortifications on there. In 1808, the State condemned the island and turned it over to the federal Government, which shortly thereafter built Fort Gibson as part of an East Coast fortification program (the foundations of Fort Gibson have recently been excavated, and are now visible to the public). By the time the government moved to convert Ellis Island for use as an immigrant processing center in 1890, the island had been in federal ownership for over eighty years.

Until 1890, immigrants coming into the Port of New York had been received by the State of New York at an immigration station located in Castle Garden on the Battery. In that year, Congress appropriated $75,000 to build a federally administered immigration station on Ellis Island. The size of the island was doubled by landfill, and the new station opened in 1892 in wooden structures which subsequently burned.

In 1897 Congress authorized funds for new fireproof facilities. The new complex was planned to combine the needs of general administration on the one hand and medical examination on the other. The island itself was increased by landfill during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to a rectangular E-shaped form of three arms, also called "islands," connected at their western ends by a narrow strip of land, and then in the 1930s landfill was added between the southern islands as well as in areas around the perimeter.

The complex of interconnected buildings includes major portions designed in a monumental Beaux-Arts classic style by the firm of Boring & Tilton, under the supervision of James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, who invoked the provisions of the recently enacted Tarsney Act as part of his mission to improve the quality of federally commissioned architecture.

The new immigration station centered on the grand Beaux-Arts main building, which was faced in brick laid in Flemish bond and adorned with limestone trim. Here the immigrants were received, registered, examined, and the sent onward to the waiting New World, held in the island hospital, or returned to the Old. By far the largest room was the two-story registry room, or examination hall. Elsewhere in the building were telegraph and railroad offices, a baggage room, a railroad waiting area, and dormitories for detainees. It was estimated that the main building was large enough to process 5000 immigrants a day. The main building was linked to a kitchen and laundry building, a powerhouse, and eventually a baggage and dormitory building, all on what is now called Island No. 1. The new station opened on December 17, 1900, and on that day processed 2,251 immigrants. The hospital buildings, facing the main building across the ferry slip on Island No. 2 and complementing its design, were carried out between 1901 and 1909 from initial plans by Boring & Tilton under the supervision of Taylor.

Within a few years, immigration soared to unanticipated new levels, fostered by a period of rapid economic growth in this country that had begun in the late 1890s and coincided with difficult economic and social problems elsewhere in the world. By 1905, the number of immigrants arriving at Ellis Island had reached 800,000 annually. In the peak year of 1907, over one million immigrants were processed, including the highest daily total ever of 11,747 who passed through the immigration station on April 17 of that year.

To accommodate the growing needs of the station, several new building projects were undertaken, all designed by Taylor in his capacity as Supervising Architect. In 1908, the hospital complex on Island No. 2 was doubled in size. The contagious disease complex, completed in 1909, was opened in 1911 on the newly created Island No. 3. Measles wards, isolation wards, and related facilities were designed as a series of small pavilions linked only by a narrow corridor. While their design reflects some of the architectural character of the administrative buildings on Islands No. 2 and No. 1, their presence indicates both the seriousness of infectious diseases in the early twentieth century and federal concern with protecting the country from potential epidemics.

The nature of operations at Ellis Island was greatly changed by the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924. This act not only imposed major restrictions on immigration, but it provided that immigrants be examined in their countries of origin by the staffs of local United States consulates rather than in immigration stations such as Ellis Island. As a result, Ellis Island changed from being the country's primary immigrant examination center to being a center for the assembly, detention, and deportation of aliens, usually illegal immigrants.

Ellis Island continued in active use, however, and during the 1930s a number of additions were made to the facilities under the supervision of Louis A. Simon, one of Taylor's successors as Supervising Architect, with Chester H. Aldrich of the prominent New York firm of Delano & Aldrich as consulting architect. In 1934, the ferry slip between Islands No. 2 and No. 3 was filled in and landscaped. New buildings from that year include the recreation hall and shelter between Islands No. 2 and No. 3, a replacement ferry house at the west end of the ferry slip between Islands No. 1 and No. 2, and, behind the ferry house, another immigration building. These additions in the WPA Moderne style visually and physically tied together existing elements of the complex, thus completing the circulation system connecting the buildings, making it possible to go from the Main Building on Island No. 1 to the isolation wards on Island No. 3 without going out-of-doors.

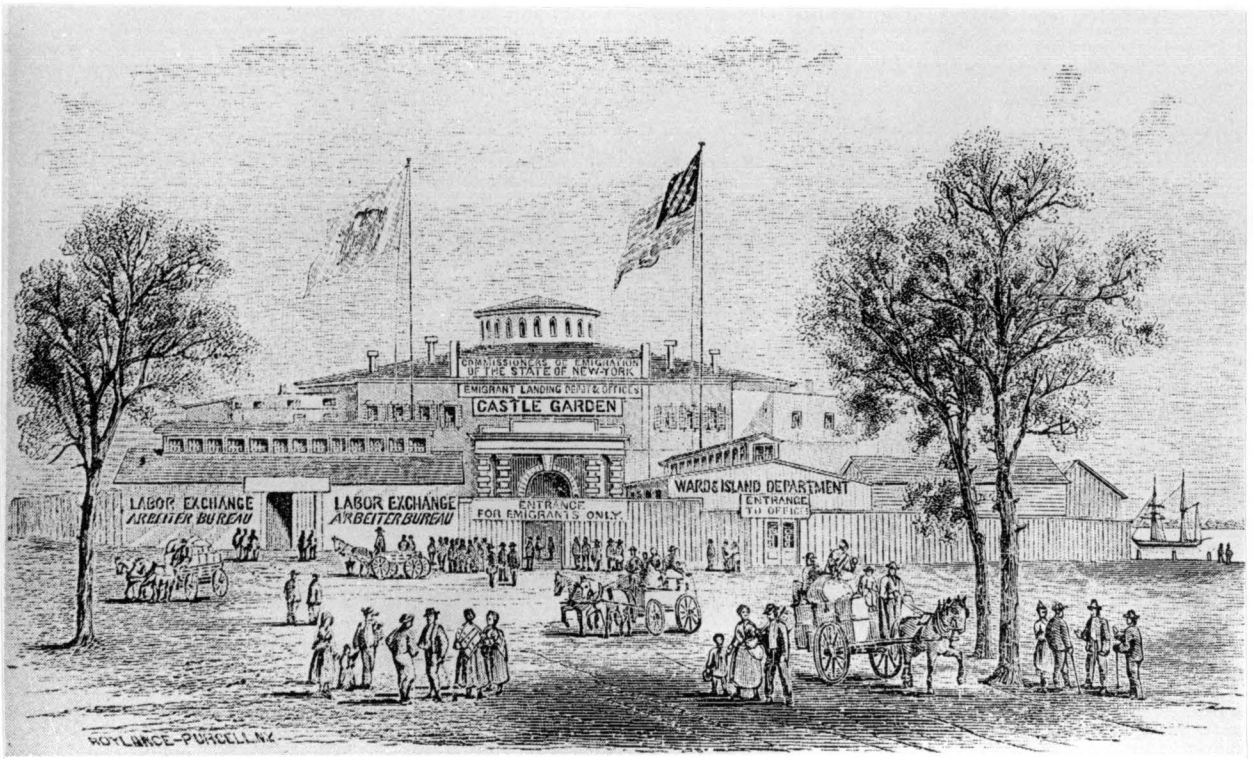
In 1954, Ellis Island closed. Eleven years later, President Lyndon B. Johnson issued a proclamation making Ellis Island part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument and placing it under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. In the late 1980s, the National Park Service began to restore portions of the island. The main building has been refurbished and opened to the public in 1990 as a museum of immigration history.

Today, in its entirety, Ellis Island forms one of the most impressive federally built architectural complexes in New York City and the surrounding region. By virtue of its location in the harbor, just north of Liberty Island, Ellis Island is a highly visible part of New York City. In all its varied components, from the grand Beaux-Arts main building to the hospital administration buildings to the isolation wards for infectious diseases, Ellis Island reflects all aspects of the experience of immigration to the United States: the imposing and intimidating magnificence of the

new country's official architecture, the administration of a massive flow of immigrants, the poverty and disease it was feared immigrants might bring with them from foreign lands, and the deportation of immigrants considered undesirable.

Ellis Island has become a symbol of the identity of both New York City and the United States, specifically for that portion of the population descended from voluntary immigrants, but in general for almost all Americans, who one way or another have origins in other parts of the world.

Today Ellis Island takes its place among the handful of national monuments of supreme importance to the history of the United States. Despite the varied condition of its buildings, Ellis Island survives as a remarkable historic site which because of its overall design, planning, architectural cohesion, and singleness of purpose, has a strongly defined sense of place.



Castle Garden, c. 1870.

Source: Chermayeff, *Ellis Island,* 47.

Immigrants waiting to enter Main Building, (undated).

Source: Chermayeff, *Ellis Island,* 11.

Immigrants on the Hamburg-American Line's *S.S. Patricia*, arriving in New York, 1906.

Source: Chermayeff, *Ellis Island,* 43.

IMMIGRATION[1]

The role of immigration in the history of the United States

The role of immigration in populating the United States can scarcely be exaggerated. It is estimated that from 1600 until the present some 60 million people have migrated to what is now the United States. Many Americans descend from native tribes, from European colonists, and from enslaved Africans, all of whom had established a presence here long before 1776, but an enormous number descend from immigrants, people of other countries who came voluntarily to the already established United States to find the proverbial "better life" -- whether political freedom, religious tolerance, or economic opportunity. In many ways, the national identity of Americans is defined by immigration, and the country often is called "a nation of immigrants."

At the end of the sixteenth century, a handful of European colonists and explorers joined an estimated five million Native Americans, and shortly thereafter brought enslaved Africans. By the time of the American Revolution, the population of the what became the new country was roughly twenty percent African and eighty percent Northern European (mostly English but also German and Scots-Irish) in origin. Immigration to the newly established United States was heavily English and Irish in the 1820s and '30s. Potato famines in Ireland led to a major increase in Irish immigration in the 1840s, and the failure of the 1848 revolutions in Europe led to major immigration from Germany. The 1860s and '70s saw immigration from French Canada (to New England), Scandinavia (to the Midwest), and China (to the West Coast). Starting in the 1880s, major streams of immigrants came from southern and eastern Europe, especially Russia and Italy. Many immigrants were fleeing poverty, others political and religious oppression, and many both.

With such large numbers of immigrants entering the country essentially without restrictions, anti-immigrant sentiment regularly arose in political discussions. In the early 1890s the federal government took its first step to control the flow of immigrants by taking authority for immigration processing away from the states. Finally, in 1924, the government imposed restrictions and quotas on immigration, and these have remained in place in various forms ever since. Nonetheless, immigration to the United States has continued, and it still plays an important role in defining the country's national identity. As a result of ongoing immigration, Americans today can trace their roots to every corner of the world.

Immigration into New York City

Immigrants have entered through ports on three coasts as well as across land borders. Beginning early in the nineteenth century, the most important port of immigration has been New York City, which was entered by some seventy percent of all immigrants through the 1920s. About half of those immigrants continued on to other parts of the country, but the others stayed in New York, making the city an immigrant center for much of its history.

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[1]The summary in the following two sections is based on Ivan Chermayeff, Fred Wasserman, and Mary J. Shapiro, *Ellis Island: An Illustrated History of the Immigrant Experience* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991).

New York has been home to diverse peoples since its earliest colonial days. In the seventeenth century, reportedly some eighteen different languages were heard on the streets of the small Dutch trading outpost of Nieuw Amsterdam, at the foot of Manhattan Island. Throughout much of its history, New York City has had a higher percentage of foreign-born residents than most other parts of the country. An extraordinary diversity of peoples continues to characterize the city to this day. Thus, the importance of Ellis Island to New York City as a symbol of immigration and ethnic diversity can scarcely be overstated.

From 1855 to 1892, immigrants to New York were received and processed directly by New York State at Castle Garden (built as Castle Clinton) in the Battery. In 1891, Congress passed the Immigration Act, creating a new Bureau of Immigration within the Treasury Department, and authorized funding for a new federal immigration station on Ellis Island. This opened at the beginning of 1892.[2]

During its use as an immigration station, from 1892 until the 1930s, some twelve million immigrants came through Ellis Island. Today an estimated one hundred million Americans can trace their family's history in this country to Ellis Island.[3]

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[2]Harlan D. Unrau, *Statue of Liberty Ellis Island National Monument/New York-New Jersey: Historic Resource Study (historical component)*, (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1984), vol. 1, 3-4.

[3]Chermayeff, 17.

ELLIS ISLAND: FAMOUS ISLAND IN A CITY OF ISLANDS

Early history of Ellis Island

Ellis Island is one of some fifty islands that together make up most of the City of New York. All but one of the city's five boroughs are either islands or on islands: Manhattan Island and Staten Island are islands in their own right, while Brooklyn and Queens are located on the western tip of Long Island -- only the Bronx is located on the mainland of the United States.[4] The smaller islands of New York City include such well-known ones as Ellis Island, Governors Island, Liberty (formerly Bedloe's) Island, Roosevelt (formerly Welfare) Island, Wards and Randalls Islands (now joined), Rikers Island, and City Island, and many smaller island in Long Island Sound and Jamaica Bay.

Ellis Island in Colonial times was one of several small islands in upper New York Bay, just off the shore of New Jersey, known as the Oyster Islands. Originally about three acres in area, the island was bought from the Indians by the Dutch in 1630. Known as Gull Island by the Indians, Dyre's Island and Bucking Island by the colonists in the late 1600s and early 1700s, and then Anderson's Island and Gibbet's Island later in the century, it was eventually renamed for Samuel Ellis who came into its possession no later than 1785.[5]

The island's strategic position in the Upper Bay brought it to governmental attention as early as 1794, when New York State fortified Ellis's island as part of a harbor defense system. Though the island was on the New Jersey side of the main shipping channel, New York maintained claims to both Ellis and Bedloe's (now Liberty) islands, and both were established as part of New York State in an 1834 compact.[6] In 1808, New York State bought the island from Ellis's heirs and then sold it to the federal government, which now has owned and operated Ellis Island for the better part of two centuries.

The federal government, following New York's lead, used Ellis Island for military purposes throughout the nineteenth century. Within a few years of the island's acquisition, the government built Fort Gibson, including a battery, magazine, and barracks, in anticipation of the War of 1812. Fort Gibson joined a series of fortifications in New York Harbor, including Castle Clinton (originally an island itself, later linked by landfill to the Battery), Castle Williams and Fort Jay on Governors Island, Fort Hamilton on the Brooklyn shore, and Fort Richmond in Staten Island, the last two

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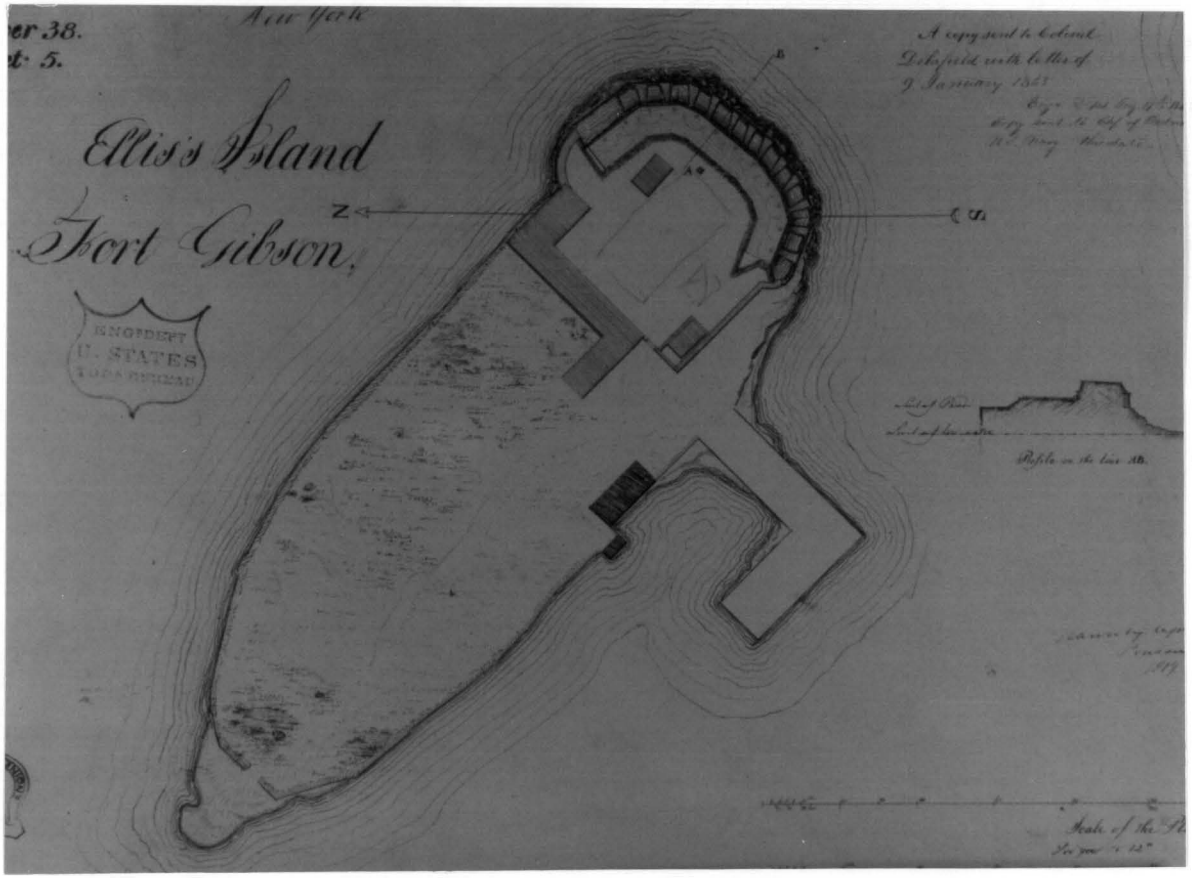
[4]The exception is Marble Hill, a neighborhood once part of Manhattan Island that was separated from it by the construction of the Harlem River Ship Canal, and connected to the Bronx by the filling in of the Spuyten Duyvil. Though now physically attached to the Bronx, Marble Hill remains part of the Borough of Manhattan. Many of the islands in New York Harbor, including Ellis Island, are classified as part of the Borough of Manhattan.

[5]Unrau, 2.

[6]Commissioners representing both states entered into a compact in 1833 defining their territorial limits in the harbor; this was ratified by the legislatures of both states and approved by Congress on June 28, 1834. Laws of New York 1834, Ch. 8; Laws of New Jersey 1833-34, p. 118; 4 Stat. 728, Ch. 126 ("1834 Compact"). Cited in State of New Jersey v. State of New York: Brief in Opposition to Motion for Leave to File Complaint, U.S. Supreme Court, June 17, 1993, p.5. In this lawsuit the State of New Jersey is claiming jurisdiction over portions of Ellis Island.

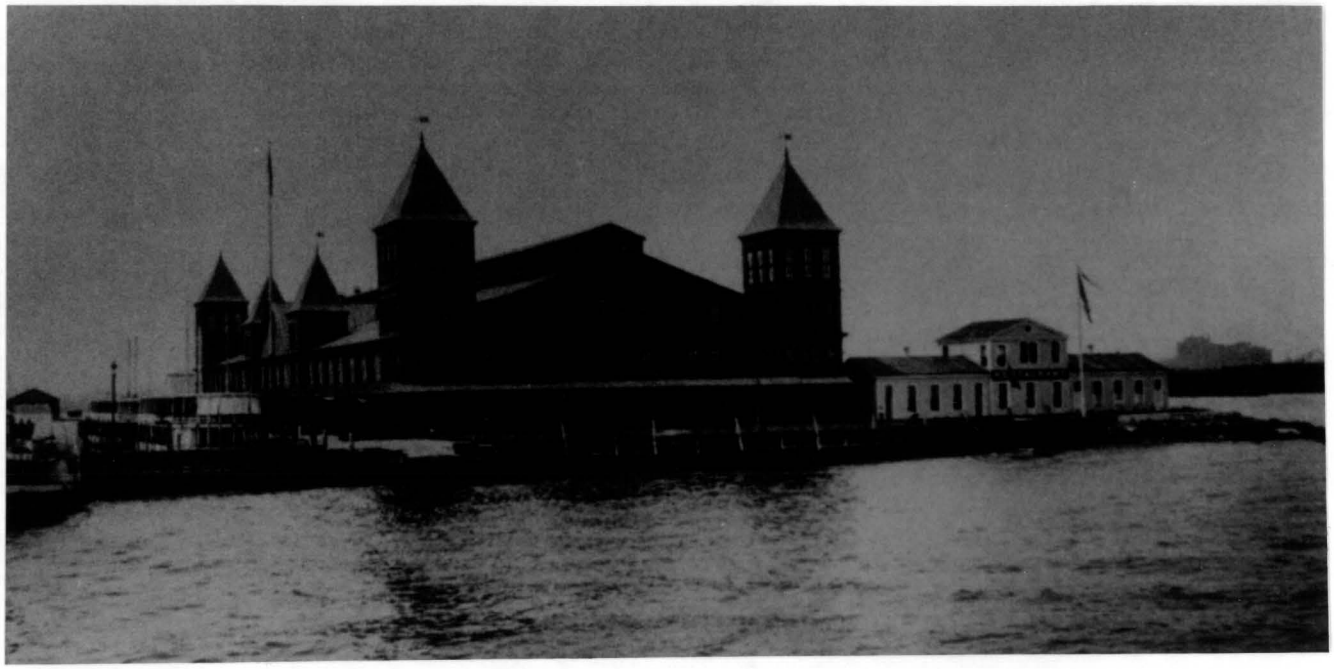
overlooking the Narrows. All were part of an East Coast fortification system which continued well into the nineteenth century.

Fort Gibson was active until 1861; later in the century Ellis Island became the site of a naval powder magazine. The island had continued in federal use when, at the end of the century, the federal government assumed responsibility for the acceptance and processing of immigrants in New York, and needed new facilities for that purpose.



Military plan of Fort Gibson on Ellis Island, 1819.

Source: Chermayeff, *Ellis Island,* 243.



Ellis Island, first immigration station, c. 1897.

Source: Chermayeff, *Ellis Island,* 245.

THE FEDERAL PRESENCE

The first United States immigration station on Ellis Island

In the first of several expansions by landfill, the federal government doubled the island's size to roughly six acres, and built a group of wooden structures including a two-story building for immigration processing, and separate hospital, laundry and utility buildings, for a cost of half a million dollars.[7] The main building was a large structure with picturesque gables and towers and a long skylight along the ridge of the roof. During the half-dozen years from 1892 to 1897 approximately one and a half million immigrants passed through this first Ellis Island immigration station.[8] In June of 1897, the wooden structures were destroyed by fire.

The second United States immigration station on Ellis Island: The Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department and the Tarsney Act[9]

The second United States immigration station on Ellis Island, which forms the nucleus of the current complex, was built in the years following 1897 by the Treasury Department, under the supervision of the newly appointed Supervising Architect of the department, James Knox Taylor. Taylor's tenure, one of the longer ones for an architect in that position, coincided with an enormous increase in government building. Taylor used his position to bring U.S. government architecture into the mainstream of architectural trends, and implemented a pre-existing but unused act of Congress to hold competitions for the design of major federal buildings.

The United States Treasury Department presided over the construction of government buildings throughout the country. The Construction Branch of the Treasury Department was formed in 1853 to oversee the erection of customs houses, marine hospitals, and other governmental offices, and the position of Supervising Architect was created to oversee the department's work. Among the architects who have held the position were such prominent figures as Isaiah Rogers (from 1862 to 1865), and his successor A.B. Mullett (from 1865 to 1875).

As early as 1875, the American architectural profession began urging the government to utilize private architects through architectural competitions. With an enormous load of design and construction facing the Treasury Department, the Supervising Architect came to agree with the position of the architectural profession, and in 1893 the Tarsney Act was passed, which permitted architectural competitions for Treasury Department construction projects.

The act provided that "not less than five architects shall be invited" to any competition, and, more importantly, that "the general supervision of the work shall continue in the office of the Supervising Architect," and that the drawings and specifications should be "subject at all times to

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[7]Unrau, 4.

[8]Ibid., 4.

[9]The following discussion is based largely on Darrell Hevenor Smith, *The Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury: Its History, Activities, and Organization* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1923).

modification and change...as may be directed by the Secretary of the Treasury."[10] In other words, though outside architects might supply the initial plans for a project, the Supervising Architect was to handle all subsequent work, including revisions and additions.

Though the Tarsney Act permitted competitions for Treasury Department projects, it did not make them mandatory. Secretary of the Treasury Carlisle, the first to have the Tarsney Act available to him, declined to make use of it, leading to a series of letters between Carlisle and Daniel H. Burnham, then president of the American Institute of Architects.[11] The passage of the Tarsney Act coincided with the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The Exposition's monumental Beaux-Arts architecture subsequently inspired the "City Beautiful" movement. The sentiment of the architectural profession was that the quality of government building was unsatisfactory, and that only the use of the Tarsney Act could improve federal architecture in accordance with "City Beautiful" principles.[12] In 1897, when James Knox Taylor became the Supervising Architect, he implemented the Tarsney Act with a competition for the new Ellis Island project, making it the first major government complex to be planned under the act's provisions.

James Knox Taylor[13]

The ascendance of classical architectural forms as espoused by the graduates of the Ecôle des Beaux-Arts in Paris and of American schools modeled on its methods, had been heralded by the triumph of the style at the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The so-called "White City" in turn gave birth to the "City Beautiful" movement, from which sprang numerous civic projects involving classically designed buildings organized on axial plans. By 1901, Taylor, as the chief architect for federal buildings, was able to announce in his annual report that the United States government had officially turned to the classical architectural style:

> *The Department...decided to adopt the classical style of architecture for all buildings...this style is best suited for government buildings. The experience of centuries has demonstrated that no form of architecture is so pleasing to the great mass of mankind as the classsic, or some modified form of the classic.*[14]

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[10]Smith, 17.

[11]Smith, 17.

[12]Smith, 17.

[13]For further information and biographical sources on Taylor, see Henry F. and Elsie R. Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1970), 592. Taylor is believed to have died in 1929, but the standard biographical sources do not give a precise death date.

[14]*Annual Report of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury* (Washington, D.C., 1901). Cited in National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form, "Significant U.S. Post Offices in California -- 1900-1941 -- Thematic Resources," (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, c.1986), item number 8, page 13.

Five years later, in the words of one architectural journal:

> *A review of the work done by James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the United States Treasury Department, discloses in the designing and planning of the vast number of government buildings erected during his incumbency a splendid success in keeping abreast with the spirit of the times.*[15]

In 1912, towards the end of his tenure, Taylor explained his belief in the importance of good federal architecture:

> *It [the federal government] cannot avoid affecting in a pronounced degree the architectural taste, knowledge, and enjoyment of the nation.... The government, therefore, enjoys in its building operations a tremendous opportunity for good in the judgment of all who regard architecture as one of the important factors of the higher civilization.*[16]

The competition for the new Ellis Island station

Following the fire at Ellis Island, a competition for the new station was held under Taylor's supervision according to the terms of the Tarsney Act, and the architects for the new buildings selected -- making the Ellis Island station the first important federal commission to be awarded as the result of such a competition.[17]

Much of the character of the new buildings was determined by the competition requirements. The program called for two buildings, a "main building with annexes" and a "hospital building," located on what was intended to be an island of twenty acres. After the destruction of the previous structures, making the buildings fireproof had become of paramount importance. Congress specifically required, in the requisite act authorizing the new station, that the replacement buildings be "of fireproof materials" and have "such openings from the main floor, so many doors swinging outward, and to be surrounded by spacious outside balconies made of iron with iron staircases leading therefrom, as to afford speedy exit in case of fire," and these requirements were quoted in the competition program. The buildings had "to be of brick with stone trimmings," and "the finish

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[15]"Work of Supervising Architect Taylor," *The Brickbuilder*, 16 (1907), 79.

[16]*Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the State of the Finances* (Washington, D.C., 1912). Cited in the National Register Inventory/Nomination Form, item number 8, page 13.

[17]Unrau, 4.

is to exhibit as small amount of combustible material as possible, and it is to be plain but substantial and durable."[18]

The competing architects were told that the buildings would need to accommodate a daily average of 1000 immigrants, and a maximum of 4000, as well as 150 government employees and 200 "railroad officials, missionaries, agents, etc." The main building and its annexes were expected "to contain accommodations for the reception, registration, examination, and sleeping quarters of immigrants."

The buildings were to be oriented facing southwest. Passengers were expected to disembark onto the island and "entering the building, near the centre of the front, passengers pass up stairs which are to be located near that point...." On the second floor, "immigrants then proceed through the various screened divisions of the hall where they are examined as to their fitness to land." The competition program included a number of sketches showing placement of staircases, executive offices, information bureau, railroad annex and ticket booth, even the cloak rooms for registry clerks.[19]

Among the architects who responded to the competition were such prominent firms as McKim, Mead & White and Carrère & Hastings. The commission, however, was awarded to the young and relatively unknown New York firm of Boring & Tilton.

Boring & Tilton[20]

William Alciphron Boring (1859-1937) and Edward Lippincott Tilton (1861-1933) were young architects at the time they won the commission, which was their first important work. Boring, a native of Illinois, had studied architecture at the University of Illinois (1881-83) and worked for several years in Los Angeles in the firm of Ripley & Boring, designing schools, hotels, and the first Los Angeles Times Building. Moving to New York in 1886, he studied further at Columbia University, graduating in 1887, and then found a position in the office of McKim, Mead & White. There he met Edward Tilton, who had been born and educated in New York and was apprenticing in the office. Later that same year the two men went to Paris to study at the Ecôle des Beaux-Arts. They studied in Paris for three years, and traveled together throughout France, Spain, Italy, Greece and England.

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[18]Treasury Department, Office of the Supervising Architect, "Programme of a competition for the selection of a design for buildings for the United States Immigrant Station, Ellis Island, New York Harbor, in compliance with the Act approved February 20, 1893," Washington, D.C., September 9, 1897.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Biographical information on Boring and Tilton is based on two typescripts held at the rare books and drawings collection of Avery Architectural Library at Columbia University: William Alciphron Boring, "Memories of the Life of William Alciphron Boring" [n.d.]; and "Biographical Sketch," in Gordon W. Fulton and Henry V. Traves, "The William Alciphron Boring Collection Catalog" [n.d.].

Returning to New York and the McKim, Mead & White office in 1890, Boring and Tilton left the following year to form their own partnership. Their practice included country houses, a hotel in Colorado, the Stamford High School in Connecticut, and various schools in New York. They did not always have enough work in the office, however, and as a result "went into every possible competition and began to win some of them."[21] After winning the Ellis Island competition, which was considered a major coup, they expanded their office to handle the work.

Following their work at Ellis Island, Boring & Tilton designed houses, casinos (including the Brooklyn Heights Casino), and the town of Bogalusa, Louisiana, for the Mill Company. Their formal partnership ended in 1904, though they continued to share offices. Boring left his full-time practice in 1914 to become the director of the Columbia School of Architecture, where he spent the rest of his working life. He continued in association with Tilton, however, and later wrote that he had practiced with Tilton "for 30 years."[22] Tilton became a specialist in library design.

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[21]Boring, "Memories," 17.

[22]Ibid., "Memories," 16.

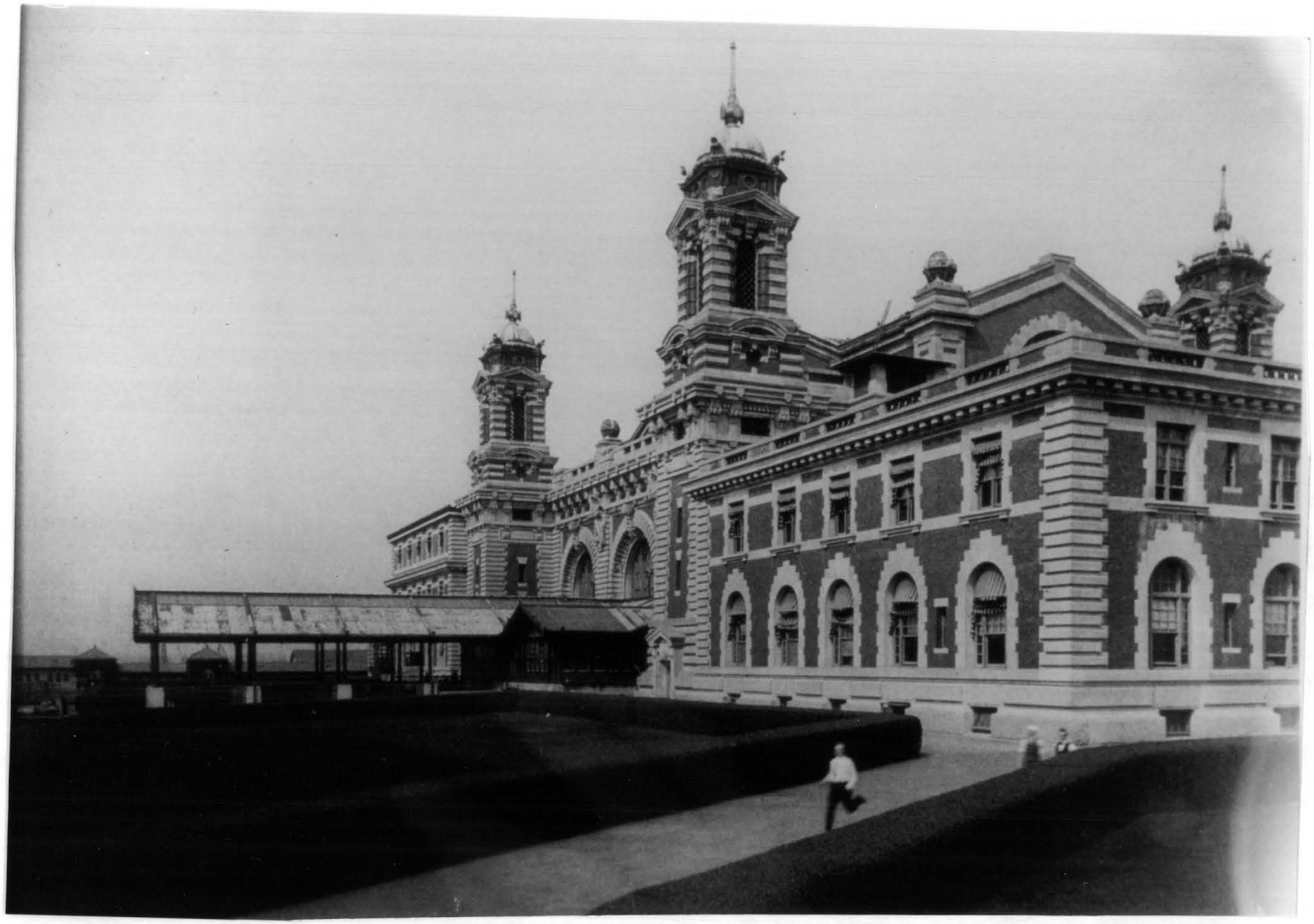
THE ARCHITECTURAL COMPLEX

The immigrants who arrived at Ellis Island found themselves in the presence of an officialdom housed in a series of buildings on an island devoted solely to immigration processing. The immigration station went through several phases.

The first phase of building during 1898-1901 saw the creation of Islands No. 1 and No. 2 by landfill, and the construction of the main reception and examination building and related structures on Island No. 1 and the main hospital building on Island No. 2, built at a cost of one and a half million dollars. These Beaux-Art style structures were designed by Boring & Tilton and built under the supervision of Taylor, who himself designed additional buildings on Island No. 2 as part of the group.

A second phase, necessitated by the enormous growth of immigration, saw two series of buildings erected between 1905 and 1914, all to Taylor's designs. These followed the Beaux-Arts precedents set by the original Boring & Tilton plan. The first series included such ancillary buildings on Islands No. 1 and No. 2 as dormitories and additional hospital buildings. The second addition was the creation with landfill of a third island, devoted to isolation wards for immigrants suffering from contagious diseases. Built between 1906 and 1909, these included wards for measles and such diseases as scarlet fever and diphtheria, as well as a mortuary. With the creation of Island No. 3, Ellis Island assumed a configuration of a rectangular E-shaped form of three arms, connected at their western ends by a narrow strip of land.

A third phase in the mid-1930s completed the island's buildings. By this time, Ellis Island was in use as a detention and deportation center for illegal aliens. The new buildings included an additional immigration building, a replacement ferry building, and a recreation hall and recreational shelters. Some of the structures were very simple in design, while others, especially the ferry building, reflected the prevailing Moderne style widely used by the Works Progress Administration. All were carried out under the direction of Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect of the Treasury, in consultation with Chester H. Aldrich of the prominent New York firm of Delano & Aldrich.



Ellis Island, Main Building, 1912.

Source: Chermayeff, *Ellis Island,* 249.

The first buildings: 1897-1901[23]

In the words of a contemporary architectural critic, the initial problem facing the designers of Ellis Island was

> *...quite without precedent. The closest analogue to it, in familiar buildings, is doubtless the railway station, although "Les Concours Publiques," in reproducing the competitive drawings, classified the work under "Hospices et Hospitaux," with which also it has some affinity.... The scheme comprises, indeed, both a "hospice" and a hospital, but the requirement which characterizes its main and central features is the same as that of a railway station, the requirements of "landing," collecting and distributing great and sudden crowds with a minimum of confusion or delay.... The primary problem is one of "circulation," like that of the railway station, only even more urgent.*[24]

Both the "landing" and the medical examination of the immigrants were an integral part of the program. In addition, the complex also had to meet the federal government's unspoken but clear mandate for control -- hence the isolated island location. These two functions were separated by the creation of a two-pronged island flanking a ferry slip and connected only at one end by a narrow strip of land; the main building and related structures were placed on Island No. 1, and the hospital structures were placed on Island No. 2. From the beginning, the buildings were connected by what was to become a series of covered or enclosed walkways, making it possible to walk from any building in the complex to any other without going outside.[25]

The first buildings, based largely on the 1897 designs of Boring & Tilton, were begun in 1898 and completed in 1901. They included both reception buildings and hospital buildings: the main building, kitchen and laundry building, main powerhouse, corridor No. 1 and covered way No. 5, and an incinerator (replaced in 1911), all on Island No. 1, and the main hospital building (later hospital building No. 1), hospital outbuilding (later laundry building) and surgeon's house (demolished) on Island No. 2. Boring & Tilton designed all but the hospital outbuilding and the surgeon's house; instead both were designed by Taylor.[26] This group set the architectural precedent for Ellis Island for the next two decades: grandly conceived Beaux-Arts inspired monumental

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[23]For detailed descriptions of the buildings, as well as plans and other supporting documentation, please refer to *Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty National Monument: Historic Structure Report*, prepared by Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold for the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service (Washington, D.C., 1988), 4 vols. Referred to in the following notes as "HSR."

[24]"Architectural Appreciations -- No. III," *Architectural Record*, 12 (Dec. 1902), 729.

[25]The Historic Structure Report divides them into two categories: corridors and covered ways. Their numbering in that report is repeated here.

[26]HSR, vol. 4, part 1, p. 212.

architecture, reflecting Taylor's aspirations for an official national architecture, as seen in the major buildings with complementary service buildings.

The plans of the brick and stone-faced buildings and some of their architectural character clearly reflect the program of the competition, drawn up under Taylor's supervision. Their design reflects the strong influence of Boring & Tilton's Beaux-Arts training and Taylor's official support of the Beaux-Arts approach for official government architecture. Although the Beaux-Arts structures at Ellis Island may have looked like monuments to the power of the government in the immigrants' new home, their grand character seem to reflects the general trends of federal architecture.

The original complex on Islands No. 1 and No. 2, based on Boring & Tilton's designs but carried out and amplified by Taylor, opened in 1900-01. The design won a Gold Medal from the 1900 Paris Exposition,[27] as well as various other awards and was praised in the architectural press.

The *Architectural Record* thoroughly approved of the new station, writing of the main building:

> *...the general composition of this central building, the distribution of its masses and the treatment of them, strikes us as thoroughly admirable. The piers between the arches are duly massive, and their massiveness is accentuated by the treatment of their masonry, while the flanking and projecting belfried pavilions are extremely effective. Observe the unusual breadth and massiveness of the quoining, and especially, what is much more observable in the fact than in the photograph, the effectiveness of the pronounced "batter" of the walls of the towered pavilions. The great arches of the clerestory, withdrawn behind the balustrade, not only have their practical uses for the illumination of the interiors, but the low gables that surmount them their architectural uses on the exterior in relieving and animating the skyline without disturbing it.*[28]

The writer was particularly taken with the use of color on the building:

> *The employment of color in these towers, and, indeed, throughout the central mass, is admirable and exemplary, the manner in which the light limestone and the red brick are used together, from the monochromatic masonry of the base up to the equal striping of the belvideres [sic]. The contrast is even carried into the cornice, in which the red brick is introduced into the uprights with excellent effect.*[29]

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[27]"Boring, William A.," *Who Was Who in America* (Chicago: Marquis-Who's Who, 1967) vol. 1, 119.

[28]*Architectural Record*, 730.

[29]Ibid.

The island's very visible presence in the harbor was believed to have affected the design of the buildings:

> *It is always to be borne in mind that nine-tenths and more of the spectators of this building see it from a distance only, and so that the effectiveness of a "distant prospect" is more important than that of a nearer view. For the distant view, the collocation and contrast of color the architect has employed are particularly well adapted, as is indeed the general disposition. The immigrant or tourist or returning voyager can scarcely fail to apprehend, from the Narrows, or from any point of view from which he can see the group at all, the huge arches and their flanking towers, or their bichromatic material. Nor do the concessions made to him do any harm in a nearer view. It is different, however, with the scale of the detail. It is so inflated and the fronts so "scaled up" for the benefit of the distant spectator that, close at hand, the detail undoubtedly takes on a forced and almost a bloated aspect. You cannot have everything.*[30]

Turning to the other buildings of the complex, the writer had additional praise:

> *One must pay a passing tribute, also, to the subordinate buildings, including the Administrative offices, which form one wing of the principal building, the prison and offices which form the other and the outlying hospital and power house ....the hospital, which is as plain as a charity hospital ought to be, and the power house, which is as plain as a power house ought to be, but both which, partly in virtue of their very simplicity, have the fitness, which is really as well as etymologically the "dignity," that should attach to their ownership.*[31]

In sum:

> *The new immigrant station is a very distinct architectural success. The immigrant who gets his first notion of the New World from it will not get an unfair one, and the architects and our Uncle, their client, are alike to be congratulated.*[32]

Ellis Island....., c. 1925 postcard

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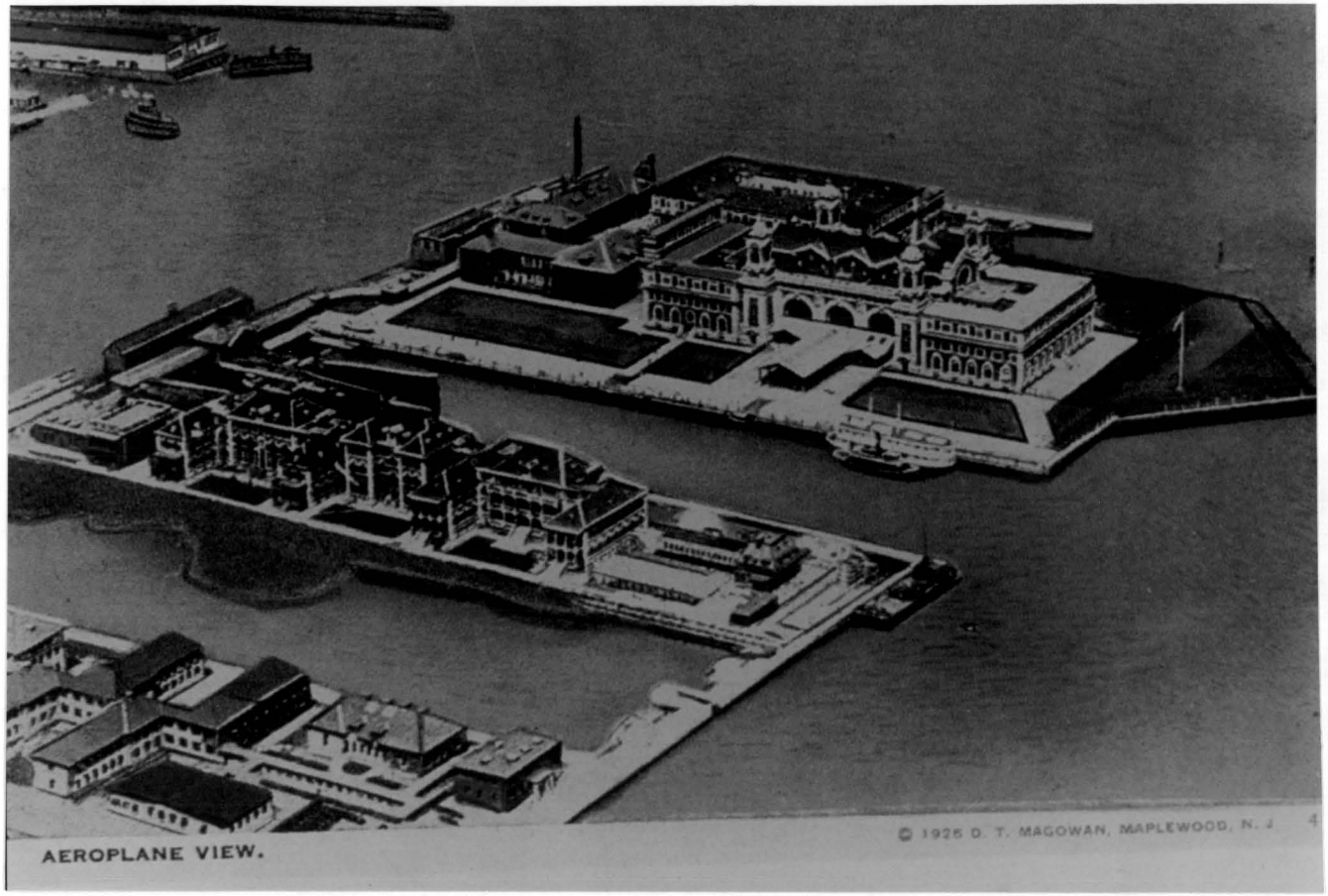
[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid.



Ellis Island, aerial view looking north, c. 1925 postcard. Source: Chermayeff, *Ellis Island,* 251.

The second phase: additions and new construction, 1905-1914

From the opening of Ellis Island until 1914, immigration grew enormously, reaching a peak in 1907 when over one million immigrants were processed. It was during these years that the Statue of Liberty in the harbor began to achieve its associations as a figure of welcome for immigrants, an association strengthened by the placement of Emma Lazurus's poem on the base in 1903. The increase in immigration necessitated major additions to the island's facilities. The additions to the earlier buildings and the new structures were all designed and carried out by the office of Supervising Architect Taylor.

On Island No. 1, the baggage and dormitory building was constructed in 1907-08 and expanded in 1913-14. It was connected to others via a series of covered ways and corridors: corridor No. 2 (1909) connecting to the kitchen and laundry building; covered way No. 4 (1909) connecting to covered way No. 5; and covered way No. 6 (1909) connecting to the main building. A new incinerator was built in 1911. The partial third stories on the wings of the main building were expanded to full stories, the west wing in 1911, the east wing in 1913-14.[33]

Major new construction expanded the island's hospital facilities. Island No. 2 saw construction of the psychopathic ward (later psychiatric ward) of 1906-07; an administration building of 1905-07; and a hospital extension (later hospital building No. 2) of 1908-09, completing an imposing row of buildings along the ferry slip opposite the main building.

By far the biggest addition, however, was the entire third island, created by landfill in 1906, and its contagious disease complex, which opened in 1911.[34] Prior to that date, immigrants with contagious diseases had been treated by the New York City Health Department.[35] The complex included an office building (also containing the pharmacist's quarters and laboratory), 1908-09; a mortuary (later animal house), 1908-09; a powerhouse and laundry (which also included staff quarters and later a morgue) 1906-08; eight measles wards, 1906-09; a kitchen, 1907; an administration building, 1907; three isolation wards for serious contagious diseases, 1907-08; and a staff house, 1907-09.

The additional structures on Islands No. 1 and No. 2 continued the materials and designs of the existing structures. Taylor's baggage and dormitory building on Island No. 1, faced in red brick with limestone trim, complemented the design of the Main Building. Corridor No. 2 and covered ways No. 4 and No. 6 likewise continued the materials, brick with limestone trim, and design elements of the earlier buildings. On Island No. 2, the psychopathic ward, the adminstration building, and the hospital extension all continued the style of the first hospital buildings.

The contagious disease complex, however, on newly constructed Island No. 3, followed a different plan. Because of the requirements for isolation, the complex was designed as a series of

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[33]HSR vol 1, p. 16, 108.

[34]HSR, vol. 4, part 2, pp. 220, 334.

[35]HSR, vol. 4, part 2, p. 219.

wards and buildings both linked to and separated from each other by a long narrow corridor. Although they are located far away from the main complex and were meant to be seen only by a small number of immigrants and the island's staff, the buildings echo the architectural character of the other buildings by repeating such elements as quoins, keystones, and red tiled hipped roofs, though distinguished by stucco facing.

The third phase: 1920s and 1930s additions

Covered way No. 3, an exterior stairway crossing a courtyard on Island No. 1, was added in 1924. The 1930s saw major construction on the island, reflecting the facilities' change in use. All the new structures were designed under the supervision of the Supervising Architect for the Public Building branch of the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department, Louis A. Simon, in consultation with Chester Aldrich of the firm of Delano & Aldrich.

Louis A. Simon, formerly chief of design in the Supervising Architect's office, was appointed Supervising Architect in 1934, replacing James A. Wetmore. The office had become very large (as indicated by Simon's full title); Simon's staff included his replacement as chief of Architectural Design, George W. Stone, who in turn supervised a temporary staff of twenty-one salaried architects and 300 draftsmen.[36] Specific credit for the design of the Ellis Island buildings cannot be determined; much may belong to the consultant architect, Chester H. Aldrich.

Chester H. Aldrich was a partner in the firm of Delano & Aldrich. A native of Providence, Rhode Island, he studied at M.I.T. and later at the Ecôle des Beaux-Arts. Delano and Aldrich met in 1895 while working in the firm of Carrère & Hastings. Though best known for their residential work for wealthy clients in New York City and suburbs, they also handled commissions for public works, notably the Marine Air Terminal (1939), a Moderne style building at LaGuardia Airport.[37]

The ferry building of 1901 between Islands No. 1 and No. 2 was replaced in 1934-36 with a larger structure. The WPA Moderne style building, with a stepped profile leading to a tower, dramatically closed the view at the foot of the ferry slip. Behind it, an additional immigration building was constructed during the same years; only one story of the brick structure was built with the expectation, never fulfilled, that a second story with octagonal sunporches would be added later.

The other ferry slip, separating Islands No. 2 and No. 3, was filled in during this period, and a new recreation hall and open recreation shelter built in 1936-37. The hall is a two-story brick building with a gable roof and limestone and terra-cotta trim; the shelter is a one-story building, also of brick, with terra-cotta trim. A similar shelter was built in 1937 on Island No. 1. Also added during this period were the last of the covered ways: covered ways No. 7A and No. 7B connecting

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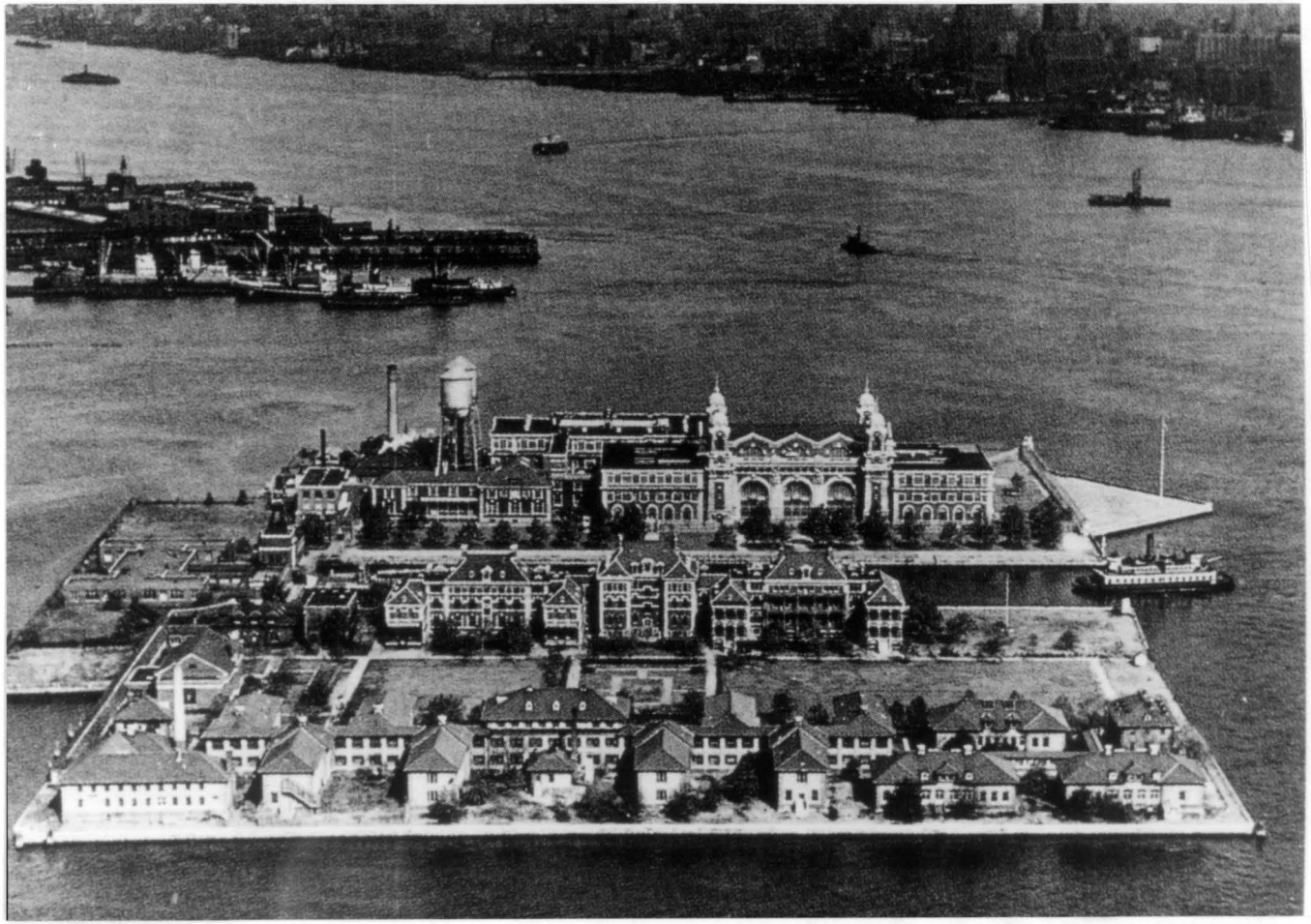
[36]For a fuller description of the Supervising Architect's office under Louis A. Simon, see "Washington Concentration Camp," *Architectural Forum*, 62 (Feb. 1935), 148-155.

[37]For more on Aldrich, see *Dictionary of American Biography*, Supp.2, and *New York Times*, Dec. 27, 1940. The Marine Air Terminal is a designated New York City Landmark; portions of its interior are designated an Interior Landmark.

the ferry building and recreation building, built in 1934-36, and covered ways No. 8B and No. 8C, built in 1934. Also built during this period on Island No. 1 but later demolished were a greenhouse (1935, demolished 1985) and water tanks (1929, demolished 1984). Additional landfill extended the perimeter of the island, and the seawall was completed.



Ellis Island, aerial view looking north, c. 1945.

Source: Chermayeff, *Ellis Island,* 253.

RECENT HISTORY

Though massive immigration ceased being channeled through Ellis Island in the 1920s, the island's facilities remained in use until 1954, when the island's operations closed down. In subsequent years, the buildings of the immigration station gradually deteriorated.[38] By this time, however, Ellis Island had already entered the national consciousness as a mythic place intimately connected to the country's history. In 1965 President Lyndon B. Johnson issued a proclamation by which Ellis Island was made part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument and placed under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. Various proposals were put forward for the restoration or reuse of Ellis Island, but not until 1986, the hundredth anniversary of the Statue of Liberty, did plans finally move forward for the restoration of Ellis Island.[39] The architectural firm of Beyer Blinder Belle undertook a massive restoration of the main building, which has been converted into the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, opened to the public in 1990.[40] The powerhouse on Island No. 1 also has been restored, and the plant equipment completely modernized. As part of the rehabilitation of Ellis Island, the ruins of Fort Gibson were partially uncovered, and a monument listing names of immigrants has been installed along the seawall. The monument subsequently has been enlarged and reinstalled around the Fort Gibson excavation. Several structures on Islands No. 1 and No. 2 are partially occupied for administrative and service functions. Many of the vacant buildings on Ellis Island are in very poor condition.

Ellis Island survives today as one of the best-known of the approximately fifty islands comprising most of the territory of the City of New York. A largely artificial island with some thirty interrelated structures, all created to serve a single task, it is also one of the most impressive federally built architectural complexes in New York City and the surrounding region. In all its components, including the grand Beaux-Arts main hall, the hospital administration buildings, and the isolation wards for infectious diseases, it reflects the varied aspects of the experience of immigration to the United States: the imposing and intimidating magnificence of the new country's official architecture, the administration of a massive flow of immigrants, the poverty and disease it was feared immigrants might bring with them from foreign lands, and the deportation of immigrants considered undesirable. By virtue of its location in the harbor, just north of Liberty Island, Ellis Island is highly visible. Because of its history, it is famous nationwide: some one hundred million Americans today can trace their family origins in this country to Ellis Island. Today Ellis Island is a major tourist attraction for visitors from all over the country and the world.

Ellis Island has become a symbol of identity of both New York City and the United States, specifically for that portion of the population descended from voluntary immigrants, but in general for almost all Americans, who one way or another have origins elsewhere. Today Ellis Island takes its place among the handful of national monuments of supreme importance to the history of this country and offers testimony, both awesome and humbling, to the millions of immigrants who have come here from all corners of the world. Despite the varied condition of its buildings, Ellis Island

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[38]Chermayeff, 254.

[39]Ibid., 263.

[40]Ibid., 267.

survives as a remarkable historic site which because of its overall design, planning, architectural cohesion, and singleness of purpose, has a strongly defined sense of place.

Ellis Island, Main Building, 1992.

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC.

Baggage and Dormitory Building, north facade.

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC, 1992.

Island No. 1
Powerhouse on left, Bakery and Carpentry Building on right.

Photo: Anthony W. Robins, 1992.

Section of Corridor No. 5.

Photo: Anthony W. Robins, 1992.

ISLAND NO. 1

1. **Main Building**

Date:
1897: funds authorized; building opened Dec. 17, 1900
1905-06: railroad ticket office added
1911: third story added to west wing
1913-14: third story added to east wing
Architect: Boring & Tilton
Style: Beaux-Arts
Use: Processing, examination, and registration of immigrants

The largest and most imposing structure on Ellis Island, the main building was designed to welcome, process, and move out thousands of immigrants daily. From the vast registry room in the main building, new arrivals were either led to the New York and New Jersey ferries, sent to one of the island's hospital facilities for treatment, or directed to a detention area prior to deportation. The picturesque building is the most visible component of the Ellis Island complex when seen from afar. Its towered silhouette recalls that of the large wood-frame building it replaced (it was built in 1892 and destroyed by fire in 1897).

The three-story steel-frame building has an exterior of red brick laid in Flemish bond, ornamented with limestone and granite trim. In its original configuration, the structure had a three-story central section flanked by two-story wings, each with a small penthouse surrounded by roof gardens. The penthouses were later replaced by full third stories as the building was expanded, the west wing in 1911 and the east wing in 1913-14. In 1905-06 a one-story addition was made to the north to accommodate a railroad ticket office as specified in the original program.

The grand Beaux-Arts classical design recalls that of a nineteenth-century train station. The north and south facades of the central pavilion each have three monumental arches containing metal and glass infill, capped by a gabled clerestory of arched windows on all four sides of the pavilion. The roof above the clerestory is covered with terra-cotta tile and trimmed with a copper cheneau. The whole central ensemble is framed by four tall corner towers rising to copper-clad cupolas. The flat-roofed wings have round-arched windows at the first story and flat-headed windows above, all set in keyed limestone window surrounds, and they are topped by bracketed limestone cornices. In addition, the building's elaborate classically-inspired limestone trim takes the form of quoins, banding, pediments, modillions, and figurative carving. Decorative copper elements include the cheneau, cornice crestings, and tower domes. Decorative ironwork includes parapet railings and window grilles at attic-story windows of the central section.

The arches at the south side of the building are double-height (the arched openings on the north side were altered at the lower story when the railroad ticket office was added). The main entrance to the building faces the ferry slip to the south; originally, the approach from the slip was protected by a canopy of cast-iron and glass, removed in 1932. At that time, the entrance doors were replaced with windows. The arch infill includes tripartite sash at the bottom section, pedimented doors opening onto second-story balconies (added 1932), and pivoting metal sash in a

diamond configuration. Each arch is framed with limestone quoins and accented by a scrolled keystone bearing a carved winged head. Rusticated piers between the arches are topped by carved eagles and shields.

The railroad ticket office has brick walls trimmed in stone and cast-iron Tuscan columns framing bays of tripled windows with molded metal panels below and multi-pane transoms above. The north facade of the extension has three gables containing clerestory windows. The metal roof contains glass block skylights.

In conjunction with the restoration of the building in the late 1980s, a plate glass canopy with a metal armature on granite piers was installed at the front, recalling the original canopy; new doors were inserted at the ground level; a raised granite patio was added to the east side of the building; flights of stairs were added to the north and east sides of the railroad ticket office extension; and many of the building's decorative elements were restored or replicated, including the roof tiles and copper coverings.

The main building is connected to the kitchen and laundry building on the west by an enclosed two-story passageway **(C-1)** and to the baggage and dormitory building on the north by a three-story wing **(C-6)** and an exterior metal staircase **(C-3)**.

Site and ruins of Fort Gibson

Date: c. 1812

Following the opening of Ellis Island in 1892, the old brick and stone Fort Gibson structures were converted for use as detainees' dormitories and other uses. At that time, added landfill approximately doubled the size of the island, and landfilling continued over a period of years. Following the allocation of funds in 1934 under the Public Works Administration for improvements to Ellis Island, additional landfill was added that eventually covered the ruins of Fort Gibson to create a recreation area on the Manhattan side of the main building (at the same time, fill was added between Islands No. 2 and No. 3 and the concrete and granite sea wall was completed, among other physical changes). Eventually, the whole land mass grew to cover 27.5 acres.

As part of the rehabilitation of Ellis Island in the late 1980s, the ruins of Fort Gibson were excavated. Today, two portions of the site are exposed, surrounded by concrete walkways and metal railings. The remains of the lower part of the 5.5-foot thick walls surrounding the fort are visible. The remainder of the area is occupied by a raised landscaped berm which is encircled by concrete walkways and the wedge-shaped arcs of the names monument.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 1. [entire volume devoted to Main Building]

2. **Kitchen and Laundry Building**

Date: planned 1898; revised plan 1900; built 1900-01
Architect: Boring & Tilton
Style: Beaux-Arts
Use: Laundry and bathing facility; kitchen and dining rooms

Situated to the west of the main building, the kitchen and laundry building was drawn in the original 1898 plan as two separate structures: a "bath and disinfecting building" and a "restaurant"; revised plans in 1900 led to the consolidation of the various functions into one building, completed in 1901. The bath house and laundry had a daily capacity for 1,000 bathers and for the disinfection of 20,000 pieces of clothing. The kitchen and dining rooms served immigrants as well as the employees of Ellis Island and were partially staffed by detained illegal aliens. A one-and-one-half-story ice plant was added at the north side in 1903-08; it was converted into a ticket office in 1935.

Boring & Tilton's Beaux-Arts design for the building, which is one of the earliest components of the Ellis Island complex, complements that of the adjacent main building. The two-and-one-half-story building is a steel-frame and terra-cotta block structure with facades of red brick laid in Flemish bond above a granite base. It has a narrow gable-roofed central section, corresponding to the location of the original kitchen, which is recessed at the front (south) and flanked by hip-roofed pavilions at the east and west ends. The eastern pavilion, where the laundry and bathing facilities were located, is the larger of the two and has hipped dormers on all four sides. The brick facades are pierced by segmentally-arched window and door openings with limestone keys, imposts, and lintels, and the corners are accented by limestone quoins. The windows have a variety of double-hung sash types, including multi-pane transoms. A modillioned copper cornice caps the facades. The roofs, originally slate, are now covered in terra-cotta tiles. Vent stacks are located on the roofs. A two-story cast-iron porch (with a steel and concrete base) originally spanned the central section of the south facade; it has been removed.

The ice plant, located at the north, has brick facades laid in a combination of English bond and stretcher bond. The base, lintels, sills, and coping are of concrete. Piers flank paired windows with two-over-two wood sash, surmounted by clerestory windows. In 1901 a connecting two-story wing **(C-1)** was built between the kitchen and laundry building and the main building. A similar three-story wing **(C-2)**, built in 1908-09, linked this building to the new baggage and dormitory building to the north. In addition, a stuccoed second-story corridor on the north side linking the kitchen to the new bakery and carpentry building to the west was completed in 1914. Finally, an enclosed masonry ramp at the north, adjacent to the former ice plant, was built in 1937; it links the building to covered way No. 4 **(C-4)**.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 2, part 1, pp. 23-29.

3. **Baggage & Dormitory Building**

Date: plans drawn 1907; built 1908-09
third story and north extension planned 1911; built 1913-14

Architect: James Knox Taylor
Style: Beaux-Arts
Use: Baggage and waiting areas; detention rooms and dormitory

The baggage and dormitory building, located to the north of the west wing of the main building, was designed in 1907 and built in 1908-09 to provide additional detention areas and dormitories for detained immigrants. The need for temporary sleeping quarters on Ellis Island had become critical in the peak years of immigration. The structure replaced one-story wood barracks accommodating 700 beds which were erected in 1903 and soon became inadequate; the barracks were demolished in 1911.

The building was originally constructed with two stories and had a tiled roof garden with a brick and wood pergola. A third-story addition, in the style of the original building, and a two-story masonry and metal extension to the north, containing enclosed porches and topped by a veranda, were planned in 1911 and built in 1913-14.

Designed by James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department, the building complements the earlier main building. The three-story steel-frame and terra-cotta block structure is roughly rectangular in plan, with an interior lightcourt (roofed and skylit at the ground story), and has a two-story extension along most of the northern elevation. Above a limestone base, the facades of red brick laid in Flemish bond are pierced by arched window openings at the first story and flat-headed openings above, all with keyed limestone surrounds; the slightly projecting end bays are trimmed with limestone quoins. A modillioned limestone cornice surmounts the second story and the third story is topped by a terra-cotta cornice and copper cheneaux. The windows have a variety of multi-pane double-hung wood sash types, as well as multi-pane sidelights and pivoting transoms.

The two-story extension features narrow brick piers framing broad window openings, creating the effect of porches. At the first story are tripled multi-pane double-hung metal sash windows with pivoting transoms, and at the second story tripled four-over-four metal sash windows are set in openings with exposed riveted lintels. Above the cornice the extension is edged by a brick and stone parapet with metal railings. An exterior fire stair was added in the 1920s.

There is a one-story addition to the roof at the northwest corner of the building. At the south, a three-story wing **(C-2)** connects the building to the kitchen and laundry building, a one-story wing **(C-6)** links the building to the original railroad ticket office, and a covered exterior metal staircase **(C-3)**, built in 1924-26, joins the second story of this building with the first story of the main building, spanning the courtyard between them. A curved one-story passageway **(C-4)**, with a gabled roof and brick walls pierced by segmentally-arched openings, connects the southwest corner of the building to the powerhouse. The juncture is marked by a one-and-one-half-story portico with large arches on the east and west sides (the western arch is filled in with brick).

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 2, part 1, pp. 64-69.

4. **Main Powerhouse**

Date: 1900-01
Architect: Boring & Tilton
Style: Beaux-Arts
Use: Power station and mechanicals

Designed as part of Boring & Tilton's overall scheme for a new immigration station on Ellis Island, this powerhouse replaced the first powerhouse of 1892. The earlier powerhouse, a frame building sheathed in slate and metal, escaped the fire of 1897 that destroyed the other buildings in the Island's earlier complex, but it was decided that all buildings on the Island should be fireproof, and thus the power station was rebuilt. The new powerhouse incorporated portions of the old building and equipment.

Built in 1900-01 to Boring & Tilton's design, the powerhouse is a two-story building clad in red brick laid in Flemish bond, with stone ornamentation that includes a quarry-faced granite base, a bluestone sill course, and decorative limestone quoins and window trim. Its facades display a simplified version of the Beaux-Arts design of the other early buildings on Island No. 1. The roughly rectangular building is situated with its long sides on the north-south axis. It has a broad gabled section flanked by slightly projecting end pavilions with hipped roofs that have flared eaves and dormers. The roofs have flat terra-cotta tiles. Surmounting the roof of the building are air vents, skylights, and a buff brick chimney stack 111 feet in height. Segmentally-arched window openings have splayed brick lintels and stone keystones and imposts. Some of the openings are filled with louvered vents.

In conjunction with the restoration project of the late 1980s, the powerhouse was rehabilitated as the central power-generating source and utilities center for the Island. The plant equipment on the interior was modernized. The exterior of the building was restored and deteriorated elements were replaced.

Covered way No. 5 **(C-5)** adjoins the southwest corner of the building, as does a passageway at the second story linking the building to the bakery and carpentry building. A coal hoisting and delivering mechanism was installed at the northwest end of the building in 1901. The system was used to transfer coal from barges on the docks to the powerhouse. In 1920 when the sea wall was extended fifty feet, the coal trestle was extended and the apparatus moved to the new wall. The system became obsolete in 1932 when the power plant was converted from coal to fuel oil. An old coal storage tank was replaced by a new steel storage tank thirty-two feet in diameter and twenty feet in height, located to the north and east of the building.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 3. [entire volume devoted to powerhouse]

5. **Bakery & Carpentry Building**

Date: 1914-15
Architect: Alfred Brooks Fry, Chief Engineer and Superintendent of U.S. Public Buildings of New York City
Style: Utilitarian
Use: bakery, carpentry shop, machine shop, storage

This building was constructed as a fireproof replacement for the temporary wooden carpentry shop and separate bakery, and also replaced two sheds and a frame building which was used as a waiting room for friends of immigrants.

The two-story building is a steel-frame structure with exterior brick bearing walls laid in Flemish bond. Rectangular in plan, the building is situated with its longer sides on the north-south axis. The flat-roofed building has a granite base, a copper cornice, and limestone trim, including lintels, sills, and coping. The windows are set into double-height bay enframements of header brick courses and are separated vertically by inset brick spandrels. The industrial multi-pane metal sash have pivoting panels. A one-story shed-roofed brick oven room is located at the south side of the building.

The building has no exterior entrances; rather, it is entered at the second floor via the kitchen and laundry building and the powerhouse, or at the first floor via covered way No. 5 **(C-5).** The stair along the east wall, connecting covered way No. 5 and the second floor, was built in 1934 for the use of immigrants en route from the new ferry and immigration buildings to the dining rooms in the kitchen and laundry building.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 2, part 2, pp. 95-97.

6. **Shelter**

Architect: Louis A. Simon
Date: 1937; later altered

This structure was built as a recreation shelter, like that built a few years earlier in conjunction with the recreation hall between Islands No. 2 and No. 3. This building was used by detainees on Island No. 1 from 1937 until 1954. As originally built, the one-story brick shelter had a central pavilion open on the east side and a solid west wall. Decorative elements include Flemish brick bond with dark headers, pilasters with terra-cotta caps and bases, bull's eye windows, and a terra-cotta entablature. At a later date, the openings at the east side were bricked in and hopper windows were inserted, as was a door in the center. Metal grilles cover the windows. The building is in deteriorated condition.

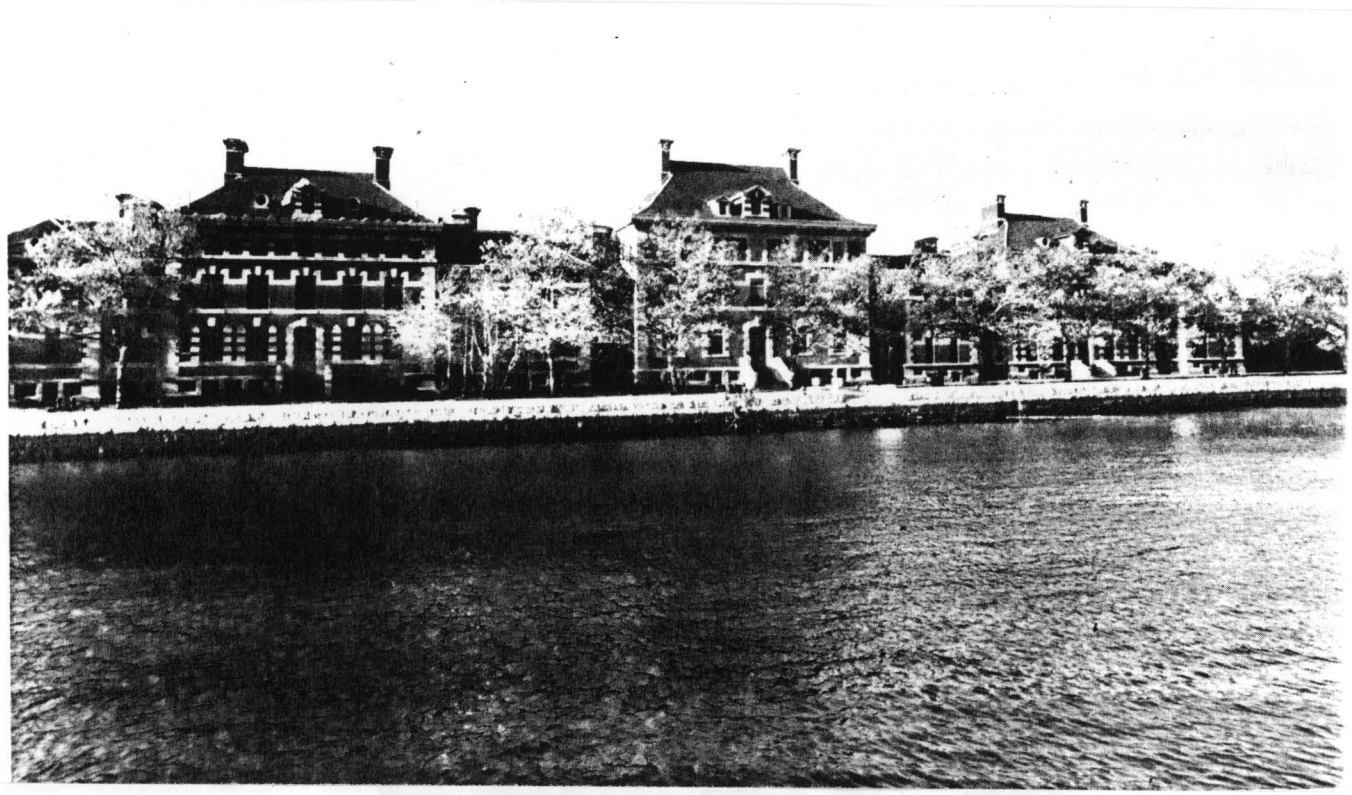
Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 2, part 2, pp. 140-141.

Ferry Building.

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC, 1992.

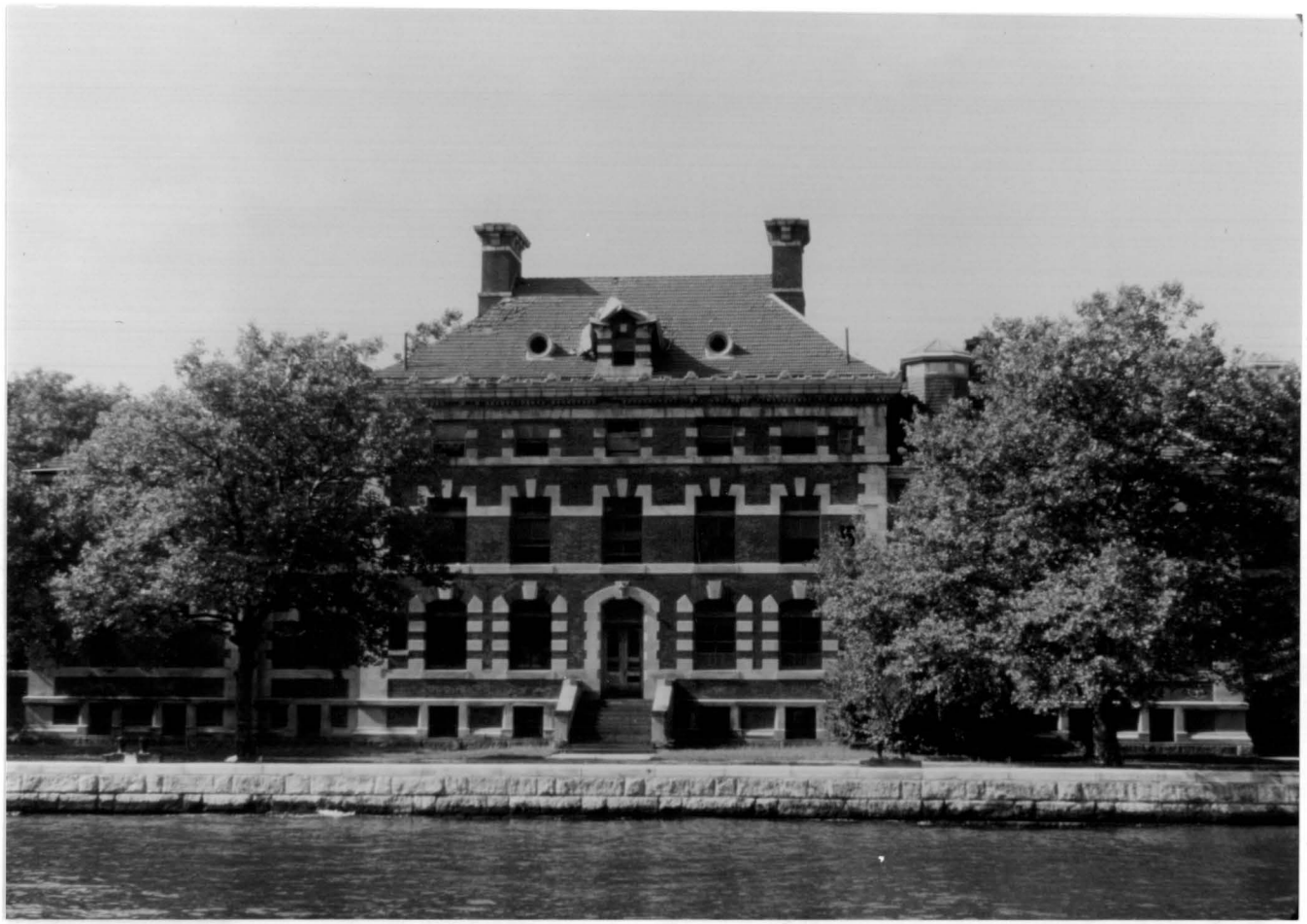
Ferry Slip, view southwest
Hospital Buildings on Island No. 2 and Ferry Building.

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC, 1992.



Island No. 2, Hospital Buildings, view from north:
Hospital No. 2, Administration Building, Hospital No. 1

Source: *Historic Structure Report* (1988) vol. 4, part 1.

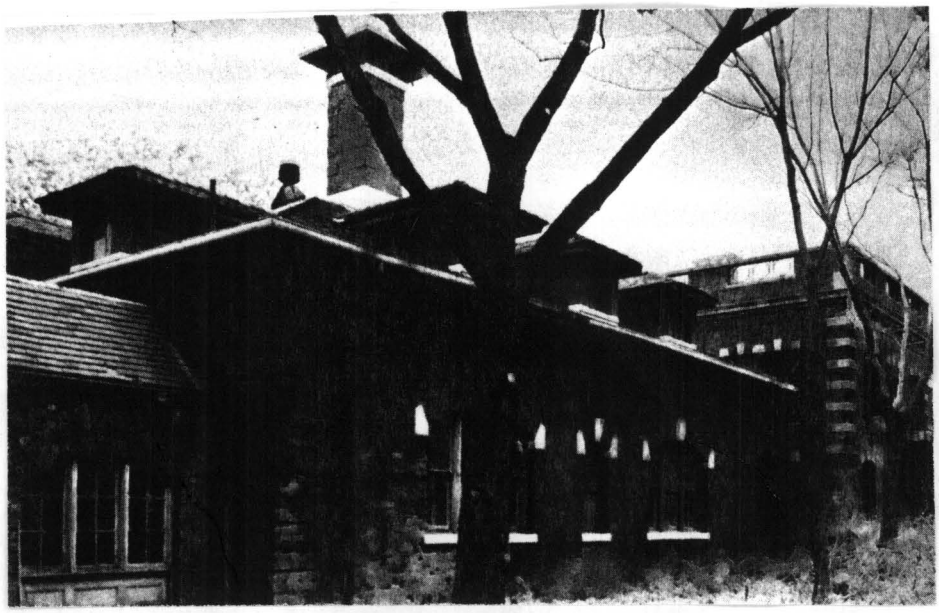


Island No. 2, Hospital No. 2, north facade.

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC, 1992.

Island No. 2, Hospital No. 2, sun porch on south facade.

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC, 1992.



Island No. 2, Hospital Outbuilding

Island No. 2, Psychopathic Ward

Source: *Historic Structure Report* (1988) vol. 4, part 1.

ISLAND NO. 2

8. Immigration Building

Date: 1934-36
Architect: Louis A. Simon, supervising architect for the Public Buildings branch of the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department; and Chester Aldrich, consulting architect
Style: WPA Moderne
Use: Processing of immigrants and deportees

The construction of the immigration building to the west of the ferry building between Islands No. 1 and No. 2 coincided with the last major construction campaign on Ellis Island, undertaken in the mid-1930s with funds allocated by the Public Works Administration. Among the physical improvements were additional landfill (including the land on which this immigration building is situated), the completion of the sea wall, a replacement ferry building, a recreation hall and shelter on fill between Islands No. 2 and No. 3, the enclosure with large windows of the open corridors linking the contagious disease wards on Island No. 3, and new covered passageways. The immigration building had fenced-in recreation space on both sides, which was intended to segregate the immigrants from the deportees.

The original design of the building called for a two-story structure; however, as built it has only one story. (The second story, staircases, and octagonal sunporches shown on the original plan were omitted, with the idea that they could later be included, although those elements were never built.) The building is "I"-shaped in plan, with the long sides oriented on the north-south axis. The simply articulated facades are red brick laid in Flemish bond over a common bond foundation. The water table is of soldier brick and the window sills and roof coping are of light buff terra cotta. The large window openings are filled with multi-pane industrial steel sash. A passageway **(C-7B)** links the building to the ferry building.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 3, pp. 385-388.

9. **Ferry Building**

Date: 1934-36
Architect: Louis A. Simon, supervising architect for the Public Buildings branch of the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department; Chester Aldrich, consulting architect
Style: WPA Moderne
Use: Ferry terminal and waiting rooms

The construction of the new ferry building at the west end of the ferry slip between Islands No. 1 and No. 2 coincided with the last major construction campaign on Ellis Island, undertaken in the mid-1930s with funds allocated by the Public Works Administration. Among the physical improvements were additional landfill, the completion of the sea wall, an additional immigration building, a recreation hall and shelter on fill between Islands No. 2 and No. 3, the enclosure with large windows of the open corridors linking the contagious disease wards on Island No. 3, and new covered passageways.

The Moderne ferry building of 1934-36 occupies the site of the metal-clad ferry terminal built 1900-01 to replace the first ferry landing destroyed in the 1897 fire. This building had a open central pavilion with a hipped roof topped by a cupola and gabled wings at the sides which contained waiting rooms. The wings connected to covered brick passageways to the buildings on Islands No. 1 and No. 2.

The steel and concrete-frame building with masonry bearing walls is a long building sited at the west end of the ferry slip. The building has a stepped central pavilion with a tower and two one-story flanking side wings. The facades are of red brick laid in Flemish bond and ornamented with limestone at the base and window sills and with glazed buff terra cotta at the window surround of the central pavilion, the lintel course of the wings, and the roof copings. Above the central window is a terra-cotta plaque bearing a winged disk. The central metal and glass doors with transoms are sheltered by a wood marquee with a cast-iron fascia, suspended from the facade on chains. The stepped portions above have copings with foliate plaques and key patterns. The two-tiered tower is sheathed in lead on wood block over a steel and wood frame. The sheathing has a geometric design at the first tier, which is surmounted by cast lead eagles, one at each of its four corners. The large, vertical window openings are filled with multi-pane industrial steel sash with pivoting and casement elements.

A covered brick passageway with a gabled roof **(C-7A)** was constructed at the rear of the ferry building to link the preexisting corridor pavilions at the end of each wing. Another corridor at the rear **(C-7B)** links the terminal to the immigration building at the west.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 33-37.

10. **Hospital Outbuilding/(later) Laundry Building**

Date: planned 1898; built 1900-01
Architect: James Knox Taylor
Style: Beaux-Arts
Use: auxiliary structure to main hospital building

As the firm of Boring & Tilton developed the plans for the main hospital on Island No. 2, it was recommended that the building be augmented by three ancillary structures: an outbuilding, an additional wing, and a surgeon's house (demolished). While Boring & Tilton provided the design of the hospital, the office of James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, assumed responsibility for the outbuilding. The building was designed to contain a disinfecting plant, a laundry, an autopsy room, and a mortuary.

The simplified Beaux-Arts design of the 1900-01 outbuilding, which is one of the earliest components of the Ellis Island complex, complements that of the main hospital building on Island No. 2. The one-and-one-half-story rectangular building is a brick bearing wall structure with steel framing at the upper story. The exterior is clad in red brick laid in Flemish bond and trimmed with brick quoins and limestone ornamentation. The segmentally-arched window and door openings have splayed brick lintels and stone sills, imposts, and keystones. The hipped roof has wood eaves and prominent hipped dormers. The roof and dormers are covered in flat terra-cotta tiles. Surmounting the center of the roof of the building is a square brick chimney with brick quoins, limestone base and coping, and a copper cap. There are skylights on the north and south faces of the roof. The windows have two-over-two double-hung wood sash in single, double, and tripartite configurations.

A covered way **(C-8A)** was built in 1900-01 to join the hospital outbuilding and the main hospital building on Island No. 2. A single-story gable-roofed addition to the outbuilding, built to accommodate a linen exchange area, is located at the west where it connects to the covered brick passageway **(C-8B)** leading to Island No. 3. The addition has brick walls pierced by segmentally-arched windows with header brick lintels.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 69-80.

11. **Psychopathic Ward/(later) Psychiatric Ward**

Date: 1906-07
Architect: James Knox Taylor
Style: Beaux-Arts
Use: Temporary psychiatric facility

The psychopathic ward, built 1906-07, was intended for the "temporary treatment" of immigrants suspected of being insane or having mental disorders, pending their deportation, hospitalization, or commitment to sanatoria. Segregated quarters for mentally ill patients had not been provided in Boring & Tilton's initial plans for the hospital complex on Island No. 2. Until this ward was constructed, mental patients were placed in detention in the main building, first in rooms with the rest of the detainees, and later in specially designated rooms segregated by sex.

Beginning in 1905 several proposals were made to provide separate facilities for psychiatric cases. It was finally decided to construct a pavilion connected to the corridor **(C-8A)** between the main hospital building and the hospital outbuilding on Island No. 2. The first plans drawn in 1906 delineate a two-story building with a hipped roof; the plans were later modified to show a flat roof on the relatively small two-story building. It was intended to be occupied by twenty-five patients, in wards and isolation rooms, with male and female facilities separated by floor. Iron bars enclosed the windows. The building was used for its original purpose until 1949; beginning in 1951 the Coast Guard used it as a sick bay and later as a brig.

The simplified Beaux-Arts design of the psychopathic ward, which is among the early components of the Ellis Island complex, complements that of the main hospital building on Island No. 2. The rectangular structure has a combination of steel framing, cast-iron columns, and masonry bearing walls. The exterior is clad in red brick laid in Flemish bond and trimmed with limestone ornamentation, including quoins. (The base has been parged with concrete.) The segmentally-arched window openings at the first story and flat-headed openings above have splayed brick lintels and stone sills, imposts, and keystones. The dentiled terra-cotta cornice is surmounted by a brick and limestone parapet with inset wrought-iron railings. Wrought-iron grilles span the window openings which are filled with double-hung sash. The southern facade of the building was originally spanned by a two-story metal porch (later enclosed) which is no longer extant. An exterior metal stair runs from the second-story door to the southeast corner of the building. The northern facade of the building is linked at the ground story to the one-story gabled passageway **(C-8A)** which joins the main hospital building to the east.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 94-113.

12. **Hospital Building No. 1 (Main Hospital Building)**

Date: planned 1897; revised plans, 1899; built 1900-01
Architect: Boring & Tilton
Style: Beaux-Arts
Use: Hospital facility

The 1897 plan for the Immigration Station at Ellis Island proposed a forty-five bed hospital on Island No. 2, which was yet to be created by landfill. As the firm of Boring & Tilton developed the architectural plans, it was recommended that the hospital be augmented by three ancillary structures: an outbuilding, an additional wing, and a surgeon's house (now demolished). Boring & Tilton provided revised drawings for an enlarged main hospital in 1899, and it was constructed in 1900-01. With the completion of critically needed additions -- the adjoining administration building in 1905-07 and the hospital extension to the east in 1908-09 -- the buildings on Island No. 2 served as the only hospital facilities on Ellis Island during the peak years of immigration.

One of the earliest components of the Ellis Island complex, the main hospital building was given a French Renaissance design which complements the Beaux-Arts character of the imposing main building across the ferry slip on Island No. 1. The hospital served as a model for the later structures in the Island No. 2 group, the whole creating an integrated architectural ensemble in keeping with the grandeur and formality of the main building.

The reverse "C"-shaped building is composed of a three-and-one-half-story central pavilion flanked by two two-and-one-half-story rectangular wings which extend to the south (where wards were originally located) and frame a courtyard. The structure is a combination of steel framing and brick bearing walls. The exterior is faced in red brick laid in Flemish bond above a rusticated granite base and has limestone detail including quoins, stringcourses, sill courses, keyed enframements, and modillioned cornices. The main entrance at the center of the north facade is reached by a stone stoop with stone cheek walls. The windows have two-over-two double-hung wood sash with transoms. The steeply pitched, hipped roofs are covered with terra-cotta tiles and trimmed with copper cheneaux. The central pavilion has gabled and bull's eye dormers, while the wings have only the latter. The roof is also punctuated by chimneys and copper-trimmed stairhall skylights above the recessed bays connecting the central pavilion to the end wings. The facades on the south side of the building are articulated in a manner similar to the north facade. Two-story iron and steel porches are attached to the southern ends of the wings.

A covered way **(C-8A)** was built in 1900-01 to join the main hospital building to the contemporary hospital outbuilding to the west.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 114-124.

13. **Administration Building**

Date: 1905-07
Architect: James Knox Taylor
Style: Beaux-Arts
Use: Hospital extension

While the firm of Boring & Tilton was preparing plans for the main hospital (built in 1900-01) on Island No. 2, it was recommended that the building be augmented by three ancillary structures: an additional wing, an outbuilding, and a surgeon's house (now demolished). Subsequently, the office of James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, undertook the design of two critically needed hospital additions: the administration building in 1905-07 and the hospital extension to the east in 1908-09. The administration building initially accommodated the overflow of patients from the small hospital, and it was then turned over to administrative functions after the 1908-09 wing was added. These buildings on Island No. 2 served as the only hospital facilities on Ellis Island during the peak years of immigration.

One of the earliest components of the Ellis Island complex, the administration building continues the French Renaissance design of the first hospital building and complements the Beaux-Arts character of the imposing main building across the ferry slip on Island No. 1. As a group, the buildings on Island No. 2 create an integrated architectural ensemble in keeping with the grandeur and formality of the main building.

The administration building is a three-and-one-half-story structure with steel framing and brick bearing walls. It is joined to the main hospital to the west and the extension to the east by recessed corridor wings capped with skylights. The overall design of the building is similar to the of the central pavilions of the adjoining buildings. The exterior is faced in red brick laid in Flemish bond above a rusticated granite base and has limestone and buff terra-cotta ornamentation. The limestone detail includes quoins, stringcourses, sill courses, and the keyed enframements of the segmentally-arched and flat-headed windows. (Many of the double-hung wood windows survive behind plexiglass panels.) The main entrance at the center of the north facade is reached by a granite stoop with limestone cheek walls. Above a terra-cotta cornice, the steep hipped roof is covered with terra-cotta tiles and trimmed with copper cheneaux at the edges of the slightly flaring eaves. The roof is punctuated by gabled dormers on the north and south faces and and bull's eye dormers with copper surrounds at the side faces. Two prominent chimneys rise from the ridge of the roof. At the south side of the building are two projecting wings framing a shallow courtyard. The facades on the south side of the building are articulated in a manner similar to the north facade.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 144-153.

14. **Hospital Building No. 2 (Hospital Extension)**

Date: 1908-09
Architect: James Knox Taylor
Style: Beaux-Arts
Use: Hospital extension

While the firm of Boring & Tilton was preparing plans for the main hospital (built in 1900-01) on Island No. 2, it was recommended that the building be augmented by three ancillary structures: an additional wing, an outbuilding, and a surgeon's house. Subsequently, the office of James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, undertook the design of two critically needed hospital additions: the administration building in 1905-07 and the hospital extension to the east in 1908-09. The administration building initially was intended to accommodate the overflow of patients from the small hospital; that building, in turn, was also found to be insufficient to handle the volume of patients detained for treatment. Therefore, funds were appropriated to construct the larger hospital wing. The buildings on Island No. 2 served as the only hospital facilities on Ellis Island during the peak years of immigration.

One of the earliest components of the Ellis Island complex, the hospital extension echoes the French Renaissance design of the main hospital building and complements the Beaux-Arts character of the imposing main building across the ferry slip on Island No. 1. As a group, the buildings on Island No. 2 create an integrated architectural ensemble in keeping with the grandeur and formality of the main building.

The reverse "C"-shaped building is composed of a three-and-one-half-story central pavilion flanked by two two-and-one-half-story rectangular wings which extend to the south (where wards were originally located) and frame a courtyard. The structure is a combination of steel framing and brick bearing walls. The exterior is faced in red brick laid in Flemish bond above a rusticated granite base and has limestone detail including quoins, stringcourses, sill courses, and keyed enframements. The modillioned cornices, dormer trim, and chimney copings are buff-colored terra cotta. The main entrance at the center of the north facade is reached by a granite stoop with limestone cheek walls. The windows have one-over-one and two-over-two double-hung wood sash with transoms. The steeply pitched, hipped roofs are covered with terra-cotta tiles and trimmed with copper cheneaux. The central pavilion has gabled and bull's eye dormers, while the wings have only the latter. The roof is also punctuated by chimneys and copper-trimmed stairhall skylights above the recessed bays connecting the central pavilion to the end wings. The facades on the south side of the building are articulated in a manner similar to the north facade. A three-story porch spans the rear of the central pavilion and two-story porches are attached to the southern ends of the wings. The porches have brick piers, terra-cotta cladding, and balustrades of open brickwork.

A recessed corridor bay topped by a skylight connects the building to the administration building to the west. At the east side of the building is a flight of brick and stone stairs which once joined a pergola that led to the now-demolished surgeon's house (later nurses' quarters) at the eastern end of Island No. 2.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 168-177.

15. **Recreation Hall and Recreation Shelter**

Date: 1936-37
Architect: Louis A. Simon, supervising architect for the Public Buildings branch of the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department; Chester Aldrich, consulting architect
Style: Neo-Colonial/Moderne
Use: Recreational facility for Islands No. 2 and No. 3

The construction of the recreation hall and shelter pavilion on landfill between Islands No. 2 and No. 3 coincided with the last major construction campaign on Ellis Island, undertaken in the mid-1930s with funds allocated by the Public Works Administration. Among the other physical improvements, in addition to landfill, were the completion of the sea wall, the new ferry and immigration buildings, the enclosure with large windows of the open corridors linking the contagious disease wards on Island No. 3, and new covered passageways.

The rectangular two-story steel-frame recreation building is clad in brick laid Flemish bond and has a tiled gabled roof; shallow flat-roofed wings extend to the north and south, as well as to the west where the building joins the enclosed brick passageway linking Islands No. 2 and No. 3 **(C-8B, C-8C)**. The base of the building is limestone. The large double-height window openings are filled with multi-pane metal sash. Buff-colored terra-cotta ornamentation includes the lintel courses, the roof coping, the entablature and cornice, and the stylized consoles at the central chimney.

Located to the east of the recreation hall is a brick recreation shelter which faces the green on the area created by landfill between Islands No. 2 and No. 3. This one-story pavilion contains open colonnades at the east and west sides with walled areas at the north and south ends. The whole is crowned by brick parapet walls. Decorative elements include Flemish brick bond with dark headers, square piers with terra-cotta caps, bull's eye windows, and terra-cotta entablatures and copings.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 3, pp. 410-414.

Island No. 3, Office Building

Island No. 3, Staff House

Source: *Historic Structure Report* (1988) vol. 4, part 2.

Island No. 3, Measles Wards

Island No. 3, Isolation Ward L

Source: *Historic Structure Report* (1988) vol. 4, part 2.

ISLAND NO. 3

General Introduction

The buildings on Island No. 3 were intended to provide self-contained hospital facilities for immigrants with contagious diseases. The need for quarantine facilities on the island became critical as the volume of immigration grew; prior to the completion of Island No. 3 aliens suffering from contagious diseases were treated by the New York City Health Department. As early as the summer of 1902, George W. Stoner, surgeon in charge of the medical division on Ellis Island, made a plea for the construction of a separate pavilion containing isolation wards. In mid-December, 1902, an appropriation to build Island No. 3 and hospital complex was first requested.

In 1905 James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect for the Treasury Department, drew up plans for the buildings on Island No. 3. Taylor conceived of a system of interconnected pavilions, all joined by a central corridor, so that the functions within the complex could be segregated; in addition to eight various ward wings and three isolaton wards, Taylor provided a powerhouse with attached dormitory quarters for staff, office and laboratory structure, a mortuary, an administrative headquarters, a kitchen wing, and a staff house. The whole network of structures, including the connecting corridor, was unified by its architectural treatment. Taylor used an economical and practical design solution which gives the buildings an Italian Renaissance-inspired character: blocky massing, pebble dash stucco walls, simple brick and limestone trim, and red tile hipped roofs, similar to those found atop buildings on the other two islands, carried on broad wood eaves.

The landfill creating Island No. 3 was completed in 1906 and the buildings were constructed in phases, as funding became available, over the next several years. Alfred B. Fry, Chief Engineer and Superintendent of U.S. Public Buildings of New York City, was hired to supervise the construction. Due to delays in funding and in the letting of contracts, it would be 1909 before construction was completed; however, even then the buildings could not be occupied because of the lack of medical and surgical and hospital equipment and an incomplete electrical system. Finally, in 1911, the hospital became fully operational.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 219-224.

17. **Office Building and Laboratory**

Date: 1908-09; opened 1911
Architect: James Knox Taylor
Style: Neo-Renaissance
Use: Offices, dispensary, pharmacist's quarters, and laboratory

Located at the west end of Island No. 3 and linked to the north side of the central corridor **(C-9)**, the roughly square, two-and-one-half-story office building is constructed with brick bearing walls, reinforced concrete floors, and structural tile infill. The exterior is finished with pebble dash stucco and red brick quoins above a brick base. The window openings are flat-headed at the first story and segmentally-arched above, with recessed spandrel panels between them, and have limestone sills and brick keystones. The remaining original windows are two-over-two double-hung wood sash. The northern facade has a central doorway with a limestone portico of banded Doric columns supporting an entablature, fronted by granite steps. The window above the door has a limestone surround with volutes at the bottom. Broad wood eaves support a tiled hipped roof punctuated by copper-trimmed bull's-eye dormers. A chimney rises from the west side.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 228-229.

18. **Mortuary/(later) Animal House**

Date: 1908-09; opened 1911
Architect: James Knox Taylor
Style: Neo-Renaissance
Use: Mortuary; (later) quarters for laboratory animals

The mortuary is a small one-story brick bearing wall structure. It is located to the east of the office building and is linked to the north side of the central corridor **(C-9).** The exterior is finished with pebble dash stucco above a brick base and trimmed with brick quoins and keystones and limestone window sills. The hipped roof is covered with red tiles.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, p. 229.

19. **Powerhouse and Laundry Building**

Date: 1906-08
Architect: James Knox Taylor
Style: Neo-Renaissance
Use: Boiler room and mechanicals; laundry facilities; dormitory

Built in 1906-08 in the first phase of construction on Island No. 3, this two-story "L"-shaped building is located at the west end of the island and its north side it is linked to the central corridor **(C-9)** by a one-story connector. The roughly square north wing accommodated a steel-trussed boiler room, coal storage, and pumps. The rectangular south wing originally contained laundry and disinfecting facilities at the first floor, as well as a staff dining room and kitchen, and sleeping quarters for staff at the second floor. A portion of the interior of the south wing was later converted for use as a morgue and an autopsy theater.

The building is constructed with a combination of steel and concrete framing, and brick bearing walls. The exterior is finished with pebble dash stucco and red brick quoins above a brick base. The window openings are flat-headed at the first story and segmentally-arched above, with recessed spandrel panels between them. The surviving window sash are two-over-two double-hung wood. The boiler room is differentiated at the exterior by circular windows with metal sash at the second story. The window openings are trimmed with brick springers and keystones and limestone sills. Wood eaves support a tiled hipped roof. A chimney stack rises 100 feet from the eastern face of the boiler room roof.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 244, 255-56.

20-27. **Measles Wards (8 wings)**

Date: Three phases, 1906-09; opened 1911
Architect: James Knox Taylor
Style: Neo-Renaissance
Use: Medical wards for patients with contagious diseases

The eight measles wards, joined to each other and to the rest of the buildings in the contagious disease complex by a long two-story corridor **(C-9)**, were built in three phases between 1906 and 1909. The wards were intended for the quarantine of immigrant patients suffering from measles and a variety of other contagious diseases including scarlet fever, diptheria, whooping cough, mumps, and tuberculosis. The separate pavilions allowed for the isolation of certain diseases so as to prevent their spread through contagion. By the mid-1920s the hospital was largely used as a marine hospital to confine alien seamen with diseases while in port in New York.

The eight wings are situated along the east-west axis of the central corridor, four to the west of the administration building and four to the east, and alternate in their placement to the north or south of the corridor. The identical wings are rectangular in plan, each with nurses' quarters and service functions located at the inner (corridor) end and long, open wards at the outer end.

The wards are constructed with a combination of steel and concrete framing, and brick bearing walls. The exterior of each structure is finished with pebble dash stucco and red brick quoins above a brick base. The window openings are flat-headed at the first story and segmentally-arched above, with recessed spandrel panels between them. Most windows have two-over-two double-hung sash (wood and metal). The openings are trimmed with limestone sills and brick springers and keystones (at the second story). Wood eaves support tiled hipped roofs. Most wards have copper ventilators near the corridor end. Entrances to the wards are located within the two-story corridor; exterior doors reached by concrete steps are located at the the outermost elevation of some wards. The Ellis Island Committee Report published in 1934 recommended that two-story sun porches be added to the southern elevations of the four southern wards for the treatment of tuberculosis patients; however, the porches were never built.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 272-282.

28. **Administration Building**

Date: 1907
Architect: James Knox Taylor
Style: Neo-Renaissance
Use: Offices, operating facility, staff quarters

The administration building is situated in the middle of the Island No. 3 hospital complex and is linked to the north side of the two-story central corridor **(C-9)**. The three-and-one-half-story building has masonry load bearing walls and a concrete frame. The exterior is finished with pebble dash stucco and red brick quoins above a brick base. The window openings are flat-headed at the first story and segmentally-arched at the second story, with recessed spandrel panels between them; above a brick beltcourse square attic-story windows are flanked by concrete panels. The windows have two-over-two double-hung sash. The openings are trimmed with limestone sills and brick springers and keystones (at the second story). At the center of the north facade is a doorway with a limestone portico reached by granite steps. The portico has banded Doric columns supporting and entablature and an arched pediment. Simple doorways with granite stoops are located at the east and west elevations. Broad wood eaves support the hipped roof, which is covered in red tiles and punctuated by bull's-eye dormers. Two copper ventilator caps rise from the ridge of the roof.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 302, 310-311.

29. **Kitchen**

Date: 1907
Architect: James Knox Taylor
Style: Neo-Renaissance
Use: Kitchen

The one-story kitchen on Island No. 3 is located to the south of the administration building, on the opposite side of the two-story central corridor **(C-9)**. The masonry load bearing structure is finished at the exterior with pebble dash stucco and red brick quoins above a brick base. The segmentally-arched windows have limestone sills and brick springers and keystones. The windows have two-over-two double-hung wood sash. At the south elevation is a doorway reached by a granite and brick stair. The tiled hipped roof is surmounted by a ventilator. A tall brick chimney is attached to the east elevation.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 302, 311.

30-32. **Isolation Wards (3 buildings)**

Date: Ward L: 1907-08; Wards I, K: 1909-09
Architect: James Knox Taylor
Style: Neo-Renaissance
Use: Medical wards for patients with contagious diseases

The isolation wards on Island No. 3 were independent from the measles wards and were built to accommodate patients with contagious diseases of a more serious nature or those suffering from one than one disease. These included scarlet fever, diphtheria, measles with scarlet fever, measles with diphtheria, scarlet fever with diphtheria, and measles with whooping cough.

The three isolation wards on Island No. 3 were built according to the same design. Each one-and-one-half-story building has a rectangular plan with slightly projecting end pavilions and is oriented with its long sides on the east-west axis. Wards I and K are located to the south of the central corridor **(C-9)**, which is one story in height at this end, and are linked to the corridor by semi-circular connectors. Ward L is freestanding at the north side of the corridor. Each building was planned to house two wards, one at each end and each with its own kitchen and staff facilities at the central core; access to the buildings (semi-circular corridors at Wards I and K) and circulation within the interior allowed each half of the building to be closed off if strict quarantine procedures were necessary. Nurses' quarters were located at the central portion of the attic story.

The buildings are steel-framed structures with masonry bearing walls. The exterior walls are finished with pebble dash stucco and red brick quoins above a brick base. The segmentally-arched window openings have brick keystones and springers and limestone sills. The windows have two-over-two double-hung sash (some openings have been filled in). Doors to the exterior have granite stoops. Broad wood eaves support hipped roofs which are covered in red tiles and punctuated by dormers on the east and west faces and by skylights at whichever is the front face (corridor side). Ventilator caps rise from the ridges of the roofs of Wards K and I.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 331, 338-339, 343.

33. **Staff House**

Date: 1907-09
Architect: James Knox Taylor
Style: Neo-Renaissance
Use: Living quarters for hospital staff

Located at the east end of the contagious disease hospital complex on Island No. 3, the staff house was built to provide comfortable living quarters for high-ranking hospital staff whose responsibilities necessitated that they live on the island. It was designed with a kitchen, library, living room, and dining room at the first floor and nine bedrooms and two bathrooms above. By the 1920s the second floor had been partitioned into smaller spaces, and bathrooms were added, suggesting a change in use.

The two-and-one-half-story building has masonry load bearing walls finished at the exterior with pebble dash stucco and red brick quoins above a brick base. The window openings are flat-headed at the first story and segmentally-arched above, and have limestone sills and brick keystones and springers. The west facade has a central doorway with a limestone portico of banded Doric columns supporting an entablature; the entry is connected to the one-story covered passage that leads to the central corridor **(C-9)** on Island No. 3. The window above the door has a limestone surround and is fronted by an iron balustrade. Iron balcony railings are also located at the first-story windows. At the central bay of the east facade is a porch which has limestone Doric columns and a copper hipped roof with overhanging eaves and long rafters. The porch was enclosed sometime after 1934 with stucco-covered brick infill containing windows at the east and north and a door at the south. Surmounting the building are broad wood eaves which support a tiled hipped roof punctuated by copper-trimmed arched dormers. Chimneys rise from the north and south faces of the roof.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 356, 360-363, 369.

CORRIDORS AND COVERED WAYS

The Ellis Island buildings have always been connected by a series of covered or enclosed walkways. This ingenious system of corridors and covered passages enables circulation from any one point in the complex to virtually any other without exposure to the elements.

Corridor No. 1 (C-1): Shown in Boring and Tilton's 1901 plans, this two-story wing connects the kitchen and laundry building to the ferry waiting room in the main building. The steel-frame and terra-cotta block structure, faced in red brick laid in Flemish bond, continues the design elements of the two buildings it joins. The facades are trimmed with granite, bluestone, and limestone trim and topped by a copper cornice and brick parapet. The southern facade has segmentally-arched window enframements and a central door reached by a stoop with granite steps and limestone handrails.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 2, part 2, pp. 111-112.

Corridor No. 2 (C-2): Completed in 1909, this corridor wing was constructed concurrently with the baggage and dormitory building and connects it to the the kitchen and laundry building. Originally two stories in height, the wing received a third story in 1914. It is a steel-frame and terra-cotta block structure, clad in red brick laid in Flemish bond, and is given an architectural treatment similar to that of the building with which it was constructed. The facades have arched windows (two with door openings cut into them) at the ground story and flat-headed windows above, all with limestone trimmed enframements, and are surmounted by terra-cotta cornices.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 2, part 2, pp. 115-117.

Covered No. Way 3 (C-3): Constructed in 1924, this exterior stairway links the first floor of the main building and a second-floor room in the baggage and dormitory building, spanning the courtyard between them. The second-floor room was used for interviewing friends of detained immigrants. The steel stairway was originally enclosed by corrugated copper sheathing on the gable roof and at the sides. The stairs had two concrete landings, above which were wire glass skylights. The stairs survive in very deterioriated condition.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 2, part 2, pp. 120-121.

Covered Way No. 4 (C-4): Completed in 1909, the arc-shaped covered way No. 4 connects the baggage and dormitory building to covered way No. 5, which in turn connects the ferry building and the powerhouse. Although window sash were originally planned for the segmentally-arched openings of the passageway, like covered way No. 5, it was built instead as an open arcade composed of header brick arches with a gabled tile roof and a concrete floor. Its design relates to the architectural treatment of the other early structures on Island No. 1. Some of the arches are filled in with brick.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 2, part 2, pp. 122-123.

Covered Way No. 5 (C-5): Designed by Boring & Tilton as part of the 1901 plan, this passageway was built concurrently with the powerhouse and links it to the ferry building. The design of the passageway relates to the architectural treatment of the other early structures on Island No. 1. Faced in red brick, the passageway is punctuated with broad, segmentally-arched window openings with header brick lintels. It has a straight section and a curved section, both with gabled roofs; steam pipes and electrical wires were carried under the roof from the powerhouse to other buildings on the island. At the juncture of the sections, and at the juncture of the straight section with the ferry building, are square hip-roofed pavilions with arched door openings (the arches in the northern pavilion have been filled with wood, brick, stucco, and windows and corner windows have been inserted). The roofs have terra-cotta tiles.

In 1935, several courses of brick were added to the tops of the original passageway walls. The arches on the west side of the passageway were bricked in, forming a party wall between the existing passage and a new covered passage, built to match the existing structure. At about the same time, a gabled projection was added to the west side of the southern pavilion, intended to link the existing passage to a proposed sun porch at the north side of the new immigration building (the porch was never built and the link never completed). The windows on the east side of the passageway survive in better condition than those on the west side.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 2, part 2, pp. 124-125.

Covered Way No. 6 (C-6): Built in 1909, this one-story L-shaped corridor was built to connect the main building with the baggage and dormitory building. The steel-frame and terra-cotta block structure, faced in red brick laid in Flemish bond, continues the design elements of the two buildings it joins. Above a limestone base, the brick facades have arched windows with limestone trim and limestone cornices and coping.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 2, part 2, p. 129.

Covered Ways No. 7A (C-7A) and No. 7B (C-7B): Constructed in 1934-36, these one-story passageways link the immigration building and ferry building to Islands No. 1 and No. 2. No. 7A joined the existing corridor pavilions at north and south ends of the ferry building, which date from the construction of the 1900-01 ferry building. No. 7B is the connector between the ferry building and the immigration building. The corridors have Flemish bond brick walls with segmentally-arched window openings, and tiled gabled roofs.

Covered Way No. 8A (C-8A): Constructed in 1900-01, covered way No. 8A curves eastward from the southern corridor pavilion at the end of covered way No. 7A and connects the hospital outbuilding to the main hospital building; the psychopathic ward was connected to it when built in 1906-07. The structure has brick walls laid in Flemish bond, segmentally-arched window openings, and a tiled gabled roof.

Covered Ways No. 8B (C-8B) and No. 8C (C-8C): These covered ways are two sections of the corridor constructed in 1934 to join Island No. 2 to Island No. 3; the recreation building between the two islands is linked to the corridor as well. The brick corridor, which replaced a wooden passage built in 1918-19, has a gabled roof and rectangular windows.

Corridor No. 9 (C-9): The east-west corridor which links all of the buildings in the contagious disease hospital complex on Island No. 3, corridor No. 9 was completed in 1909 as an open passage of stuccoed brick piers spanned by metal balustrades, surmounted by tiled gabled roofs. The openings were later filled in with large multi-pane metal sash windows. Corridor No. 9 is one story at the west end, where it joins the powerhouse, office building, and mortuary; two stories in the midsection where it connects the eight measles wards, the administration building, and the kitchen; and one story with curving arms at the east end where it links up with the isolation wards and the staff house.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 3, pp. 436-440.

DEMOLISHED STRUCTURES

Surgeon's House: The Surgeon's House, built in 1900-01 to designs by James Knox Taylor, originally stood near the eastern end of Island No. 2, near the ferry slip. The house was a two-story brick structure with limestone trim and a slate mansard roof. It was joined to the east end of the hospital extension by a pergola. In 1913 the house became living quarters for nurses. It was demolished in 1934. Plans to replace the house with a larger nurses' residence never materialized.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 212-216.

Red Cross Building: Constructed between 1913 and 1916, the Red Cross building was located on Island No. 2, to the north of the pyschopathic ward and the hospital outbuilding and adjacent to the ferry slip. It was linked to a square pavilion in the brick passagway **(C-8A)**. The building served as a center for recreation, education, religious, and social service activities established on Ellis Island by the American Red Cross and later taken over by the Public Health Service. It was also a place where hospital patients who were well enough could receive visitors. The one-story "T"-shaped building had stucco walls with brick quoins and a hipped roof. It was demolished in 1934-36.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 4, part 1, pp. 206-209.

Greenhouse: The first greenhouse was built in 1910 and was located to the north of the main building. A second greenhouse was built in 1935 at the extreme northwest corner of the island. It was demolished in March of 1985.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 2, part 2, pp. 144, 146.

Incinerator: An incinerator for burning garbage was built on the west side of Island No. 1 in 1901 as part of Boring & Tilton's initial project. A second incinerator replaced the first, on the same site, in 1911. It was demolished in March of 1985.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 2, part 2, pp. 135, 139.

Water Tanks: Two water tank towers were erected in 1929 on Island No. 1 between the powerhouse and the baggage and dormitory building. They were demolished in March of 1985. One new tower has been erected.

Source: *Historic Structure Report* vol. 2, part 2, pp. 147, 149.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this area, the Ellis Island Historic District contains buildings and other improvements which have a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value and which represent one or more eras in the history of New York City and which cause this area, by reason of these factors, to constitute a distinct section of the city.

The Commission further finds, that, among its important qualities, the Ellis Island Historic District encompasses the Ellis Island federal immigration station, which includes some thirty interconnected structures, built between the 1890s and 1930s on a largely artificial island created solely for that purpose; that as a planned complex occupying an entire island, Ellis Island represents the American government's historic response, for good or ill, to the challenge of the massive forces of immigration; that of the approximately twelve million immigrants to the United States have passed through Ellis Island, some half of that number were received by New York City making it particularly significant for the city's history; that the complex was planned to combine the needs of general administration on one hand and medical examination on the other; that major portions were designed in a monumental Beaux-Arts classic style by the firm of Boring & Tilton, under the supervision of James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, who invoked the provisions of the recently enacted Tarsney Act as part of his mission to improve the quality of federally commissioned architecture; that the immigration station, which opened on December 17, 1900, was centered on the grand Beaux-Arts main building, linked to a kitchen and laundry building, a powerhouse, and a baggage and dormitory building, all on what is now called Island No. 1; that the hospital buildings, facing the main building across the ferry slip and complementing its design, were carried out between 1901 and 1909 from initial plans by Boring & Tilton under the supervision of Taylor; that succeeding additions, all planned under the supervision of Taylor or his successors, expanded the immigration station to meet the needs of processing the unanticipated numbers of immigrants; that the contagious disease complex, completed in 1909 and opened in 1911 on the newly created Island No. 3, was of particular importance as its presence indicates both the seriousness of infectious diseases in the early twentieth century and federal concern with protecting the country from potential epidemics; that in the 1930s, following changes in the administration of immigration inspection, Ellis Island received further additions designed in the WPA Moderne style under the supervision of Louis A. Simon, which visually and physically tied together existing elements of the complex; that these additions completed the circulation system connecting the Ellis Island buildings, which allowed one to go from the main building on Island No. 1 to the isolation wards on Island No. 3 without going out-of-doors; that today, in its entirety, Ellis Island forms one of the most impressive federally built architectural complexes in New York City and the surrounding region; that in all its varied components, from the grand Beaux-Arts main building to the hospital administration buildings to the isolation wards for infectious diseases, Ellis Island reflects all aspects of the experience of immigration to the United States; that Ellis Island has become a symbol of identity of both New York City and the United States, specifically for that portion of the population descended from voluntary immigrants, but in general for almost all Americans, who one way or another have origins in other parts of the world; that Ellis Island takes its place among the handful of national monuments of supreme importance to the history of the United States; and that Ellis Island survives as a remarkable historic site which because of its overall design, planning, architectural cohesion, and singleness of purpose, has a strongly defined sense of place.

Accordingly, pursuant to Chapter 21, Section 534 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Historic District the Ellis Island Historic District consisting of the property bounded by a line beginning at the southeast corner of Block 1, Lot 201, extending westerly along the southern lot line to the southwest corner of Block 1, Lot 201, northerly along the western lot line to the northwest corner of Block 1, Lot 201, easterly along the northern lot line to the northeast corner of Block 1, Lot 201, southerly along the eastern lot line to the point of beginning, Borough of Manhattan.