

ELLIS ISLAND, MAIN BUILDING (INTERIOR), second and third story interiors consisting of the two-story Registry Room (Great Hall); and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall surfaces; ceiling surfaces, including the Guastavino tile vaults; floor surfaces; piers; windows; chandeliers and lighting fixtures; balcony railings; and attached furnishings; Ellis Island, Borough of Manhattan.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1, Lot 201 in part.

On November 10, 1992, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as an Interior Landmark of the Ellis Island Main Building, second and third story interiors consisting of the two-story Registry Room (Great Hall); and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall surfaces; ceiling surfaces, including the Guastavino tile vaults; floor surfaces; piers; windows; chandeliers and lighting fixtures; balcony railings; and attached furnishings; Ellis Island, Borough of Manhattan, and the designation of the related landmark site (Item No. 2). 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. The Commission has received fifteen letters expressing support for the designation.

Summary

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 interior of the main building of Ellis Island consisting of the two-story Registry Room, also known as the Great Hall, was built in 1898-1900 to the designs of Boring & Tilton as the centerpiece of the federal immigration station. Here the immigrants were received, registered, examined, and then sent onward to the waiting New World, or returned to the Old. By far the largest room in the main building, the largest and most imposing of the structures on Ellis Island, the Registry Room could accommodate the processing of 5000 immigrants a day. In this role, it represents the American government's historic response, for good or ill, to the challenge of the massive forces of immigration.

The monumental Boring & Tilton design, the first major federal commission awarded under the provisions of the Tarsney Act, was carried out under the supervision of James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, as a major component in his mission to improve the quality of federally commissioned architecture. Designed in the Beaux-Arts classic style, the main building displays the principles of Beaux-Arts planning which are apparent in the Registry Room.

The Registry Room is approximately two hundred feet long by one hundred feet wide and fifty-six feet high, with a perimeter balcony surrounding the entire space. Originally divided by iron railings into narrow alleys to hold the lines of immigrants, the room was entered by a staircase from the first floor through a large opening in its center. The staircase was closed and the railings were removed in 1911. Following damage caused in 1916 by explosions set off by German saboteurs on nearby Black Tom Wharf in New Jersey, further changes were made. The Guastavino tile arched ceiling -- one of the most impressive in New York City -- and the red Ludowici tile floor were installed. The soaring vaulted ceiling and the large arched window openings at the clerestory accentuate the enormity of the space.

In the late 1980s the National Park Service restored the Registry Room to reflect its appearance in the years between 1918 and 1924, and today it functions as an exhibition space in the Ellis Island immigration museum. This room, in which the fate of millions of immigrants was determined, serves as a vivid reminder of and monument to the immigrants who have come to this country from all corners of the world.

The role of immigration in the history of the United States¹

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 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 the United States through ports on three coasts as well as across land borders. Beginning early in the nineteenth century, the most important port of immigration was 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.

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

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,

Governor's 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 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.

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 Act⁹

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 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 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 Taylor¹²

James Knox Taylor was among the most influential of the Supervising Architects of the Treasury Department, in part because of his long tenure (1897 to 1912) and in part because of the great increase in federal building during the same period. Taylor (1857-c.1929), born in Knoxville, Ill., studied architecture at M.I.T. and then worked in the office of another Midwestern architect, Cass Gilbert. Taylor is credited with the adoption of Beaux-Arts classicism as the official architectural style of the federal government in over 800 projects built during his tenure, effectively changing the face of the federal presence in towns and cities across the country.

The ascendance of classical architectural forms as espoused by the graduates of the *École 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 classic, or some modified form of the classic.*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.*¹⁴

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.*¹⁵

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.¹⁶

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 is to exhibit as small amount of combustible material as possible, and it is to be plain but substantial and durable."¹⁷

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.¹⁸

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 & Tilton¹⁹

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 *École des Beaux-Arts*. They studied in Paris for three years, and traveled together throughout France, Spain, Italy, Greece and England.

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."²⁰ 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."²¹ Tilton became a specialist in library design.

The Main Building and the Registry Room

The main building has always been the centerpiece of Ellis Island, both the largest and most visible of the complex's structures, and the one through which all immigrants had to pass for processing and admission to the country. In the Registry Room, also known as the Great Hall, which occupies the second and third stories of the central portion of the main building, immigrants waited in line for hours to pass through a battery of clerks and various inspections before the determination of their status.

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

...quite without precedent. The closest analogue to it, in familiar buildings, is doubtless the railway station... 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.²²

The main building, designed by Boring & Tilton in 1897, was built under Taylor's supervision in 1898-1900. The whole complex was grandly conceived Beaux-Arts inspired monumental architecture, reflecting Taylor's aspirations for an official national architecture. Although the grand structures at Ellis Island may have looked like monuments to the power of the government in the immigrants' new home, the grandeur and magnificence seem to reflect the general trends of federal architecture. Inside, the main building displays the principles of Beaux-Arts planning as applied to the task of organizing large masses of people moving in and out.

The Registry Room is approximately two hundred feet long by one hundred feet wide and fifty-six feet high, with a perimeter balcony surrounding the entire space. As originally built, the room was divided by iron railings into narrow alleys to hold the lines of immigrants, and entered by a staircase from the first floor through a large opening in its center. The room had an asphalt floor, unpainted cement and plaster walls, and a plaster ceiling. These materials were inexpensive and easy to clean and maintain. This enormous room was lit by natural light, admitted by huge arched windows at the clerestory level. It was planned to accommodate the processing of 5000 immigrants a day (a figure which was occasionally surpassed).

All immigrants arriving at Ellis Island had to pass through this enormous room, snaking through the narrow alleys formed by the railings. In the words of the *Architectural Record*:

The apartment in which this clearance [of immigrants] takes place is necessarily the chief and central object of design. It is a 'waiting room' on a scale almost, if not quite, without precedent, and it requires to be emphasized as such.²³

Its success had to be measured in the practical terms of the movement of people:

...the successful competitor provided for an uninterrupted circulation for a continuous human flow, distributed according to the respective designations of its constituent drops, but not subject anywhere to stoppage or congestion. [The hall is] ... so successful that, in the new examination hall, the astounding record has been made of 6,500 immigrants, each one of whom received some individual attention, entered, passed and 'cleared' in nine hours.²⁴

The main building and the Registry Room opened in 1900. The design won a Gold Medal from the 1900 Paris Exposition,²⁵ as well as various other awards and was praised in the architectural press.

The *Architectural Record* thoroughly approved of the new station:

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.²⁶

Additions and alterations

From the opening of Ellis Island until 1914, immigration grew enormously, reaching a peak in 1907 when over one million immigrants were processed. The increase necessitated major additions to the island's facilities, which were all designed and carried out by the office of Supervising Architect Taylor.

Various changes were made to the Registry Room over the years. The main staircase was closed, and the railings were removed in 1911, to be replaced by benches. Following damage caused in 1916 by explosions set off by German saboteurs on nearby Black Tom Wharf in New Jersey,²⁷ further changes were made, including the installation in 1918 of a Guastavino tile arched ceiling -- one of the most impressive in New York City -- and a red Ludowici tile floor.

In the late 1980s the Registry Room was restored by the National Park Service to reflect its appearance in the years between 1918 and 1924. Partitions and balcony stairs added in 1924 and in subsequent years were removed during the restoration. Today it functions as an exhibition space in the Ellis Island

immigration museum, which opened to the public in 1990.²⁸

Description

The Registry Room on the interior of the main building has undergone various modifications over the years, with the most significant changes taking place in the first two decades of the century. In the following description the physical chronology of the room, as it is apparent today, will be noted by dates in parentheses which refer to the year in which the particular feature mentioned was first introduced into the space.

The Registry Room is a two-story barrel-vaulted interior space with intersecting groins at the clerestory level of the north and south walls. Its overall design recalls the Roman *thermae* (bath) prototype that was popular in Beaux-Arts architecture as a model for enormous public spaces, such as train stations. The room is approximately 200 feet in length, 100 feet in width, and fifty-six feet in height.

The double-height space is surrounded by a perimeter balcony, carried on square piers, at the level of the third floor. Large arched openings, three at the south side and three at the north, rise from the floor level at the lower story of the room; they are filled with multi-pane metal-framed sash, and each has a central door at the bottom. At the clerestory, openings at the north and south walls are stilted, while the single openings at each end wall are semi-circular; all are filled with multi-pane metal sash. The natural illumination provided by these large openings is a significant element in how one experiences the space.

The materials of the floor, wall, and ceiling surfaces were changed from the original, notably in 1908 and particularly in 1918, following the damage caused by a bomb explosion on the nearby Black Tom Wharf in New Jersey. Although the new surfaces were more decorative in appearance, the materials were selected nonetheless for their practicality.

The soaring ceiling is covered with Guastavino tile (1918) from the springline of the barrel vault. Suspended from the ceiling are three brass chandeliers with sectional white globes (1917-18). At the lower level, the floor is paved with red quarry tile, also known as "Ludowici" tile (1918), laid in a herringbone pattern to match ceiling. The lower portions of the columns, as well as the dado of the southwest corner of the room, are covered with white glazed tiles (1918).

The balcony floor is paved with white hexagonal ceramic tiles (1908). The walls have a white glazed tile dado (1908) and an upper portion of "Artificial Caen Stone" stucco (1918) which has a rough texture and is scored and filled with white pointing mortar to imitate stone. The north and south walls of the balcony are punctuated by rectangular transoms and doors (1900) which originally led to dormitory rooms. The original varnished wood doors were replaced by sheet-metal doors and several new door openings were inserted (1908). The iron balcony railing (1900) has unadorned balusters and a wood handrail. The sheet-metal fascia below the railing is studded with electric lights (1911). Other lighting fixtures in the space are based on historic prototypes.

The stairwell between the first and second floors located at the east end of the room is a recent installation and is not included within the designated space. The historic stairway beyond the western wall of the Registry Room also is not included within the designated space.

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.²⁹ 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.³⁰ 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 1990.³¹ The Registry Room in the main building, restored to reflect the period when it was last used to process large numbers of immigrants, is now a major component of the museum.

This interior space survives today as a remarkable space, based on Beaux-Arts planning principles, with one of the city's most impressive Guastavino tile ceilings. By virtue of their history, Ellis Island and the Registry Room are famous

nationwide: some one hundred million Americans today can trace their family origins in this country to the twelve million immigrants who stood in line in the Registry Room.

Report written by

Anthony Robins, Director of Special Projects

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. Today the Registry Room of the main building is one of the most impressive components of Ellis Island, among the handful of national monuments of supreme importance to the history of this country. This room, in which the fate of millions of immigrants was determined, serves as a vivid reminder of and monument to the immigrants who have come to this country.

Notes

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).
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.
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.
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).
10. Smith, 17.
11. Ibid., 17.

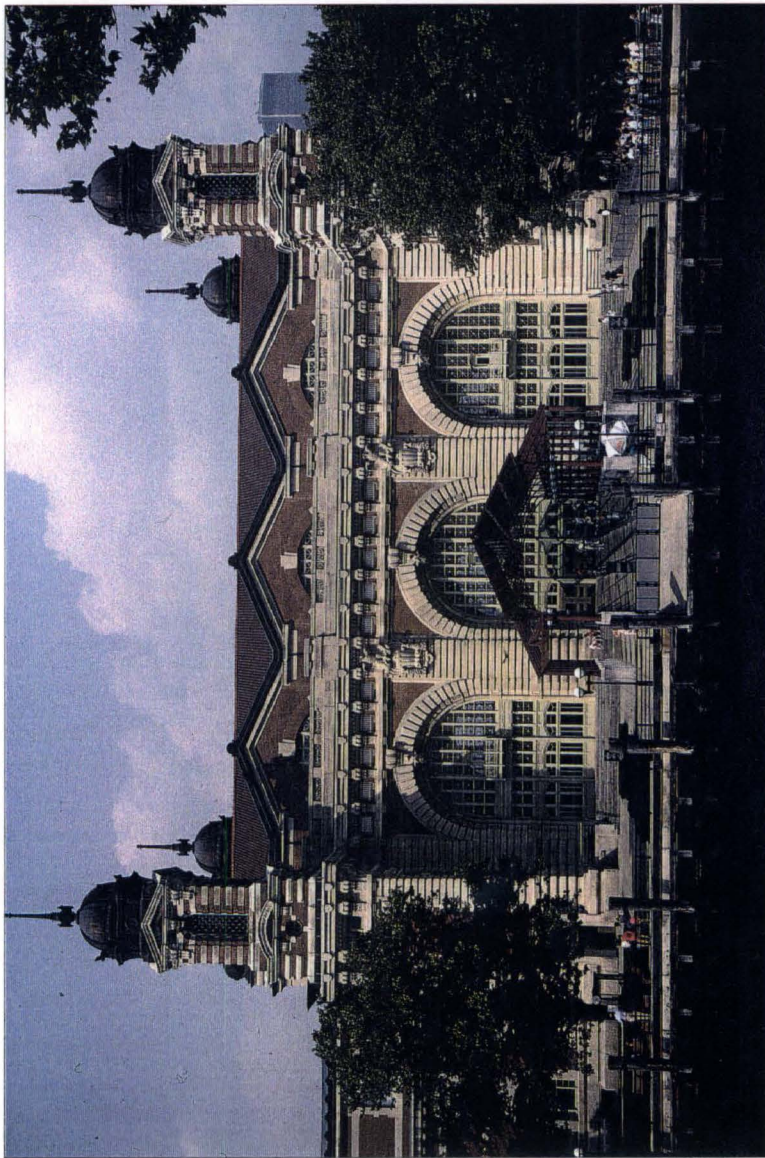
12. For further information and biographical sources on Taylor, see Henry F. and Elsie R. Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1970), 592. Taylor is believed to have died in 1929, but the standard biographical sources do not give a precise death date.
13. *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.
14. "Work of Supervising Architect Taylor," *The Brickbuilder*, 16 (1907), 79.
15. *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.
16. Unrau, 4.
17. 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.
18. Ibid.
19. 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.].
20. Boring, "Memories," 17.
21. Ibid., "Memories," 16.
22. "Architectural Appreciations -- No. III," *Architectural Record*, 12 (Dec. 1902), 729.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., 730.
25. "Boring, William A.," *Who Was Who in America* (Chicago: Marquis-Who's Who, 1967) vol. 1, 119.
26. Ibid.
27. Unrau, vol. 3, 767-773.
28. For a complete history of alterations to the Main Building Registry Room see *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), vol. 1, p. 169 ff.
29. Chermayeff, 254.
30. Ibid., 263.
31. Ibid., 267.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this Interior the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that Ellis Island, Main Building (Interior), second and third story interiors consisting of the two-story Registry Room (Great Hall); and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall surfaces; ceiling surfaces, including the Guastavino tile vaults; floor surfaces; piers; windows; chandeliers and lighting fixtures; balcony railings; and attached furnishings; has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City, and that the interior or parts thereof are thirty years old or more, and that the interior is one which is customarily open and accessible to the public and to which the public is customarily invited.

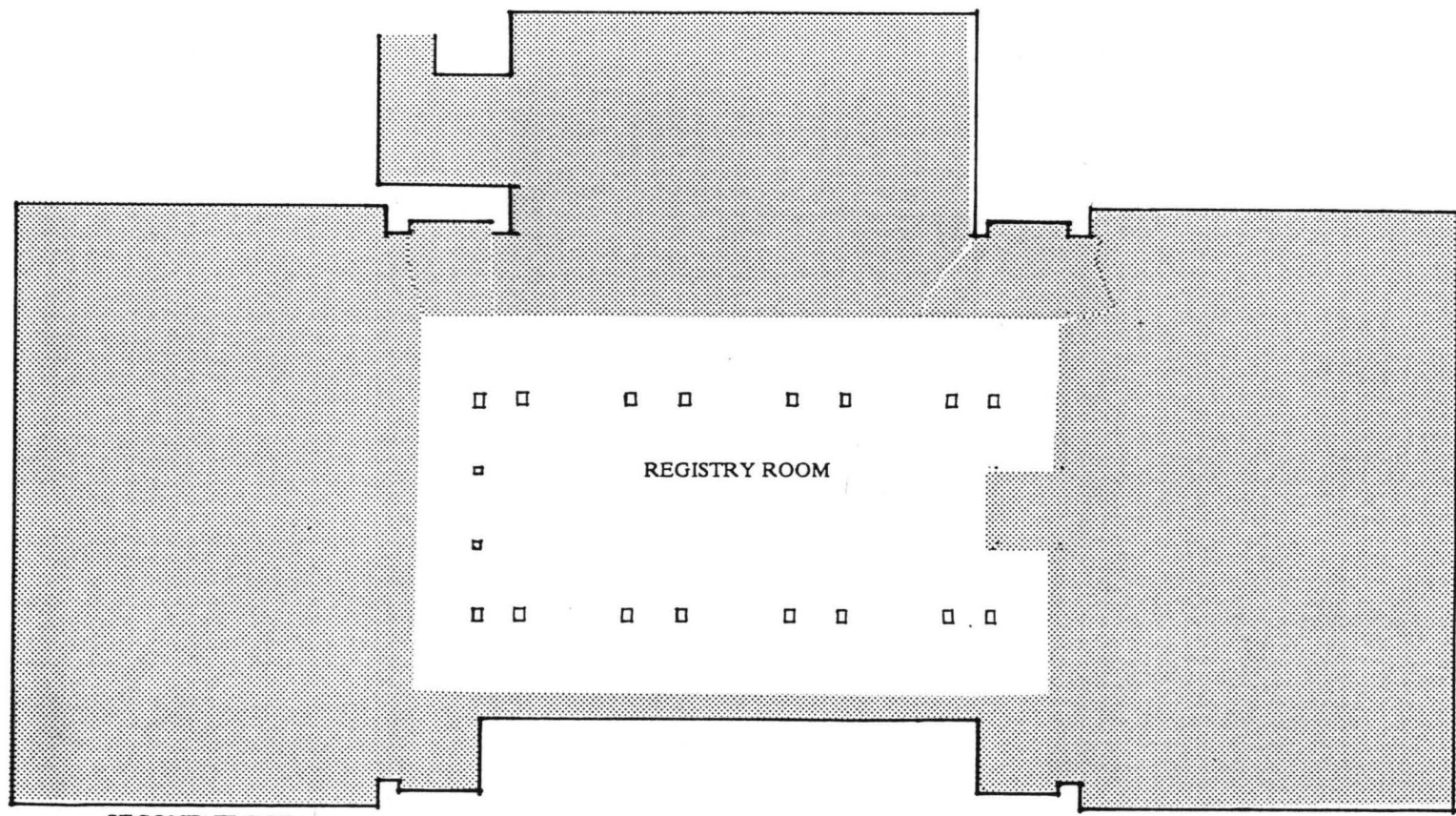
The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the interior of the main building of Ellis Island consisting of the two-story Registry Room, also known as the Great Hall, was built in 1898-1900 to the designs of Boring & Tilton as the centerpiece of the federal immigration station; that as the largest room in the main building, the largest and most imposing of the structures on Ellis Island, the Registry Room, the main entry point, could accommodate the processing of 5000 immigrants a day; that the monumental Boring & Tilton design, the first major federal commission awarded under the provisions of the Tarsney Act, was carried out under the supervision of James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, as part of his effort to improve the quality of government architecture; that the main building which was designed in the Beaux-Arts classic style, also displays the principles of Beaux-Arts planning which are apparent in the Registry Room; that the installation in 1918 of the Guastavino tile arched ceiling -- one of the most impressive in New York City -- and the red Ludowici tile floor have enhanced the architectural quality of the space; that the soaring vaulted ceiling and the large arched window openings at the clerestory accentuate the enormity of the space; that the room has been restored by the National Park Service to reflect its appearance in the years between 1918 and 1924 and today functions as an exhibition space in the Ellis Island immigration museum; and that the Registry Room, in which the fate of millions of immigrants was determined, serves as a vivid reminder of and monument to the immigrants who have come to this country from all corners of the world.

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 an Interior Landmark Ellis Island, Main Building (Interior), second and third story interiors consisting of the two-story Registry Room (Great Hall); and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall surfaces; ceiling surfaces, including the Guastavino tile vaults; floor surfaces; piers; windows; chandeliers and lighting fixtures; balcony railings; and attached furnishings; Ellis Island, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1, Lot 201 in part as its Landmark Site.

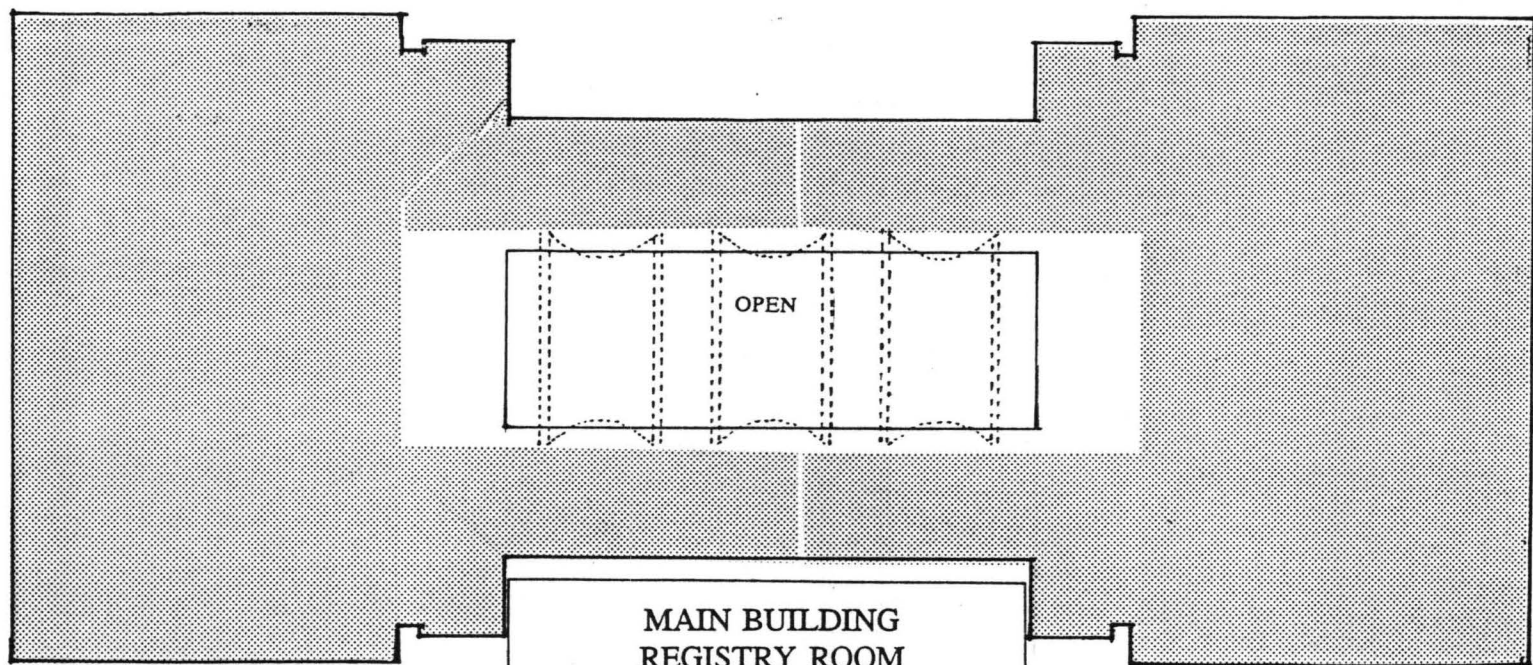


Main Building, south facade with entrance.

Photo: Anthony W. Robins, 1992.



SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR

NO SCALE



MAIN BUILDING
REGISTRY ROOM
(GREAT HALL)
INTERIOR

ELLIS ISLAND

Designated November 16, 1993
Landmarks Preservation Commission

□ = DESIGNATED
■ = NOT DESIGNATED



Ellis Island, Main Building, Registry Room
view west, c. 1912

Source: Chermayeff, *Ellis Island*, 121.P



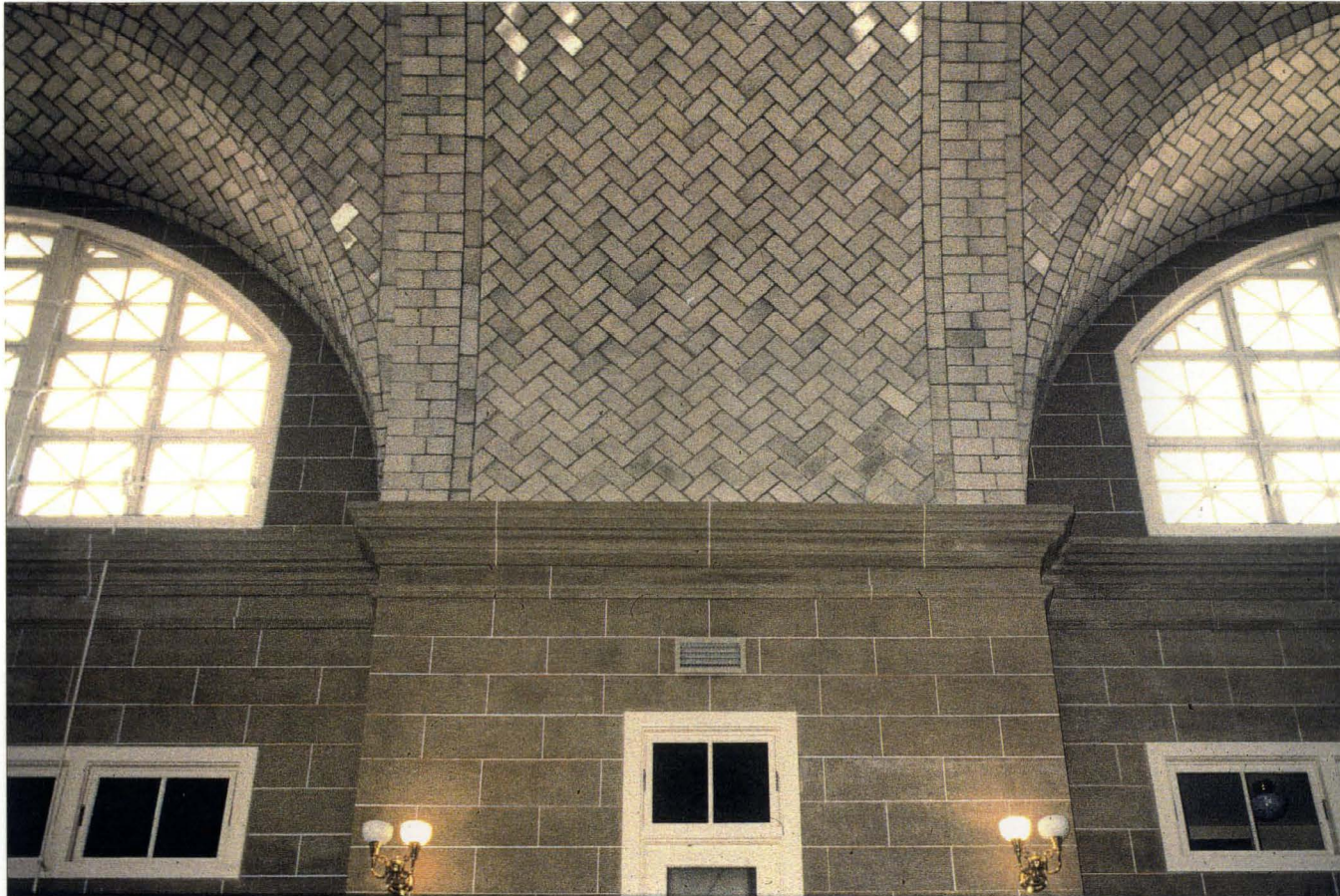
Ellis Island, Main Building, Registry Room
view west

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC, 1992



Ellis Island, Main Building, Registry Room
view east

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC, 1992



Ellis Island, Main Building, Registry Room
detail, balcony

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC, 1992