National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2004

Revised: 9/2025



Ellis Island

Ellis Island National Monument

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Introduction

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the National Park System. Landscapes that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources and in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire, legal interest are included in the inventory. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, and condition. Cultural landscapes have approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into the Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS-CL) database. In addition, for landscapes not currently listed on the National Register and/or without adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or the Keeper of the National Register.

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is compiled from primary and secondary sources and through on-site surveys of the landscape. The level of investigation is dependent upon scoping the need for information. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's integrity and an assessment of the landscape's condition. The CLI also includes historic maps, drawings, and images; photographs of existing conditions; and a site plan that indicates major features. The CLI documents the existing condition of park landscape resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to stabilize condition. This information can be used to develop strategies for improved stewardship. Unlike a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), the CLI does not provide management recommendations or treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape, but it may identify stabilization measures.

The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) replaces three legacy inventory systems: ASMIS (archeology), CLI (cultural landscapes), and LCS (historic structures); and it reinstates the former ERI (ethnographic resources). This Cultural Landscape Inventory document reflects the information in a corresponding CRIS Cultural Landscape record.

Statutory and Regulatory Foundation

The legislative, regulatory, and policy directives for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are:

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)) Sec. 110
- Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3 (a and c)
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs
- Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Std. 2
- Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22; issued pursuant to Director's Order #28 (DO-28)

The NHPA requires the identification, evaluation, and nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the maintenance and expansion of an inventory of cultural resources. DO-28 requires a cyclic assessment of the current condition of cultural landscapes based on an assessment interval, with a default of six years.

Use

Beyond fulfilling legal and policy requirements, park staff can use the Cultural Landscape Inventory in the following ways:

- To learn about park cultural landscapes (all staff)
- To inform management decisions (park managers)
- To inform project planning and development (park managers, facility managers, project managers, compliance specialists)
- To monitor the condition of the cultural landscape and take measures to protect its significance and integrity (cultural resource managers, facility managers)
- To recognize the stabilization and treatment needs of landscape features and plan work within cultural landscapes to address the needs (facility managers, cultural resource managers)
- To understand the cultural value of natural systems in a cultural landscape (natural resource managers)
- To create programming and educational materials based on site history (interpretation and education specialists)
- To recognize impacts within cultural landscapes and enforce protection measures (visitor and resources protection staff)

General Information

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name: Ellis Island

Resource Classification: Cultural Landscape

CLI Identification Number: 650004

Parent Landscape: 650004

Inventory Status: Complete

Park Information

Park Name: Ellis Island National Monument

Alpha Code: ELIS

Park Organization Code: 1945

Park District: ELIS

Region: Northeast

Restricted: Yes

Landscape Description:

Ellis Island, a part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument, is located in New York Harbor's Upper Bay on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River. The island lies approximately one and one-half miles southwest of Manhattan Island, three-quarters of a mile north of Liberty Island, and a quarter mile east of Liberty State Park. Ellis Island is the preeminent example of a government immigration and public health operation, the busiest and largest of its time. The "island of hope, island of tears" now symbolizes the American story of immigration, the cultural richness of the United States, the contribution of immigrants to U.S. society. Ellis Island became a part of the national park system in 1965.

Originally only 3.5 acres in size, today Ellis Island covers nearly 27.5 acres as a result of numerous landfill operations between 1830 and 1935. This pattern of development created a landscape divided into three distinct parcels that are identified by the names Island One, Island Two, and Island Three. Island One is the northernmost area and was the location of the original island. It contains the primary immigration facilities, including the renovated main immigration building that houses the National Museum of Immigration, exhibit space, research libraries, and a café. Other rehabilitated buildings are used for administrative and maintenance functions by the National Park Service and by its partners, concessioners, and contractors. The massive baggage and dormitory building is stabilized but closed to the public. Islands Two and Three are
constructed entirely of landfill and contain hospital facilities formerly occupied by the U.S. Public Health Service and the U.S. Coast Guard. Some areas of Island One and all of Islands Two and Three have been virtually unused and unmaintained since the immigration station closed in 1954. However, through multiyear preservation effort, buildings on Islands Two and Three have been stabilized.

Like the immigrants before, today's island visitors arrive by boats that dock at the basin separating Islands One and Two. Alongside the ferry basin are bench-lined sidewalks shaded with mature London planetrees set in maintained lawns, which front the elegant French Renaissance-style main immigration building. Behind this building are the stainless-steel panels of the American Immigrant Wall of Honor and the excavated ruins of the 1794 Fort Gibson. Island One offers panoramic views of the harbor and surrounding mainland, as well as a framed views of the masonry and wood buildings and treed lawns of Islands Two and Three, which remain closed to the public.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Ellis Island is significant at the national and state levels under National Register of Historic Places Criteria A, C, and D. The island is nationally significant in the area of Politics/Government for its association with the implementation of federal immigration policy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; in the area of Social History as the primary inspection station of the U.S. immigration system from 1892 to 1954; in the area of Health/Medicine as one of the most important immigration stations for health screenings and testing in United States history; in the area of Conservation for the events that led to its incorporation into Statue of Liberty National Monument in 1965; in the area of Architecture as the first major federal complex commissioned under the provisions of the Tarsney Act of February 1893, which heralded a new era of public architecture; in the area of Landscape Architecture for the landscape's evolution in support of changing federal immigration policy and practice as implemented on Ellis Island; and in the areas of Historic–Non-Aboriginal Archeology and Military for its demonstrated and potential ability to provide substantive information about the structural transition of Ellis Island from an active defensive military installation to a passive munitions storage facility between 1835 and 1890, as well as the structural and infrastructural development of the island as an immigration facility between 1898 and 1954. Lastly, Ellis Island is state-level significant in the area of Prehistoric Archeology for its demonstrated and potential ability to contribute substantive information about the paleo-environmental conditions and human use of the island.

The historic period of significance is 1794–1965, which spans the evolution of the island's structural and functional role from a military installation to an iconic immigration facility to a national park. The overall period of significance for above ground resources extends from 1892, when the first federal immigration station began operations on Ellis Island, to 1965, when Ellis Island was incorporated into Statue of Liberty National Monument. The period of significance for historic archeological resources begins in 1794, the construction year of the first coastal fortification system on Ellis Island. The period of significance for prehistoric archeological resources encompasses the pre-contact occupation of the landform from 5000 to 450 (Before Present (B.P.).

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

The historic integrity of Ellis Island is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance, 1794-1965 with the existing conditions as assessed in 2005. Many landscape characteristics and features from the period of significance remain today. Landscape characteristics identified for Ellis Island are spatial organization, land use, topography, circulation, buildings and structures, vegetation, views, and small-scale features. Of the identified characteristics, four categories stand out as most significant for the preservation of Ellis Island's cultural landscape: spatial organization, circulation, buildings and structures, and vegetation.

Historic integrity, as defined in National Register, is the authenticity of a site's identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the site's historic period. Often a subjective judgment, the evaluation of integrity must be grounded in an understanding of a site's physical characteristics and features and how they relate to its significance. The National Register recognizes seven aspects that define integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Overall, Ellis Island retains integrity in location, design, setting, and association. It retains moderate integrity in materials, workmanship, and feeling. According to National Register guidelines, a property either does or does not retain its overall historic integrity, indicating that it does or does not convey its significance. Even though there have been incremental changes subsequent to the historic period, the Ellis Island cultural landscape does retain integrity to its period of significance.

Condition:
The overall condition of the Ellis Island landscape is "Fair." Of the three islands, Island One is in the best condition with its well-maintained buildings, structures, walkways, trees, lawns, and flower beds. This is not the case on Islands Two and Three where several buildings continue to deteriorate. The lawns and trees in between Islands Two and Three are maintained, but vegetation in the numerous building courtyard areas is generally overgrown, with some non-native species present. Walkways are still present, but some surfaces are severely cracked or have deteriorated to their gravel subbases. Other walkways are bordered by ruts created by vehicular uses. Remnants of historic small-scale features such as fire hydrants and lightposts continue to deteriorate or are hidden by vegetation.

Landscape Hierarchy Description:

Ellis Island is part of Statue of Liberty National Monument. The island is administratively managed as part of the National Monument.

Landscape Type:

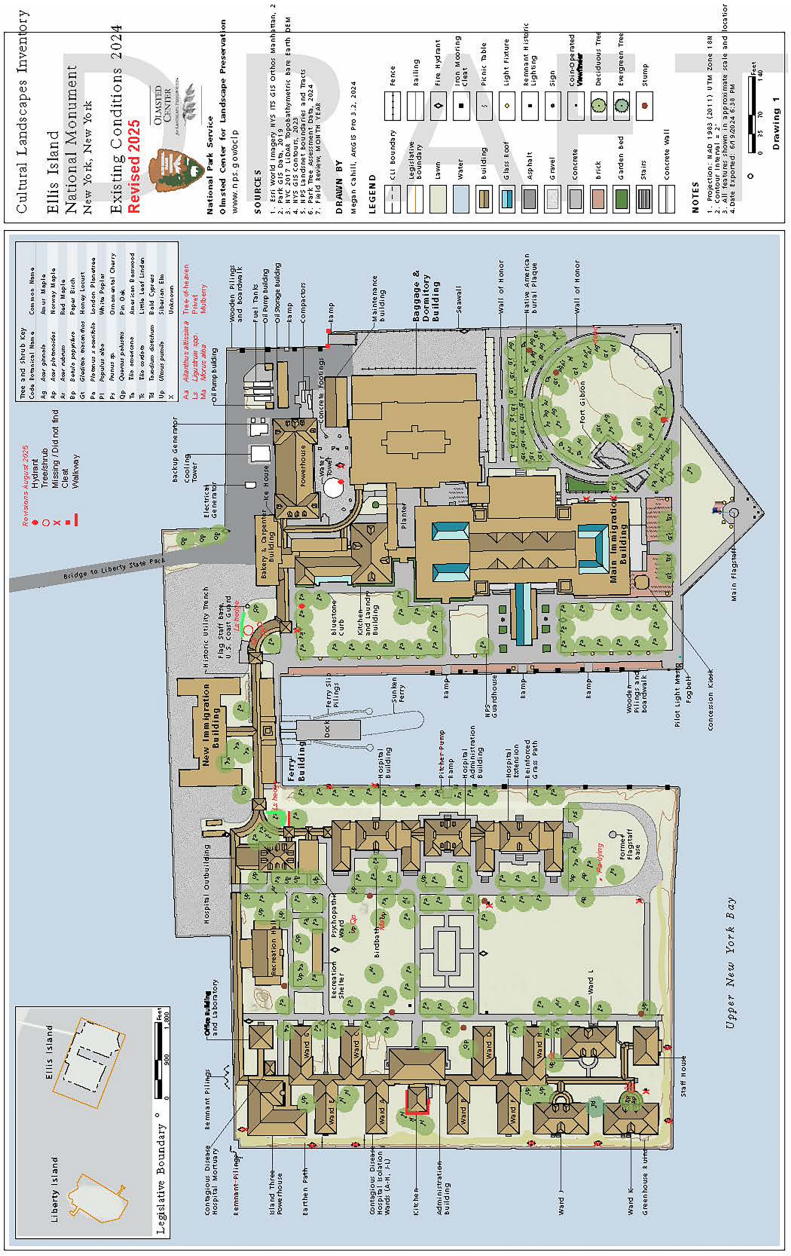
Historic Site

Historic Designed Landscape

Other Names:

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

Site Plan



Site map, 1 of 1.

Concurrence Information

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence: Yes

Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence: 08/09/2004

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

The original CLI for Ellis Island was approved by the Superintendent on August 9, 2004. A condition reassessment for the Ellis Island landscape was approved by the Superintendent on August 31, 2010. The original CLI was based on the 2003 “Cultural Landscape Report for Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty National Monument” by J. Tracy Stakely, Historical Landscape Architect at the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, Boston. Field work and production of this CLI Update was completed in 2025 by Jeff Killion, Historical Landscape Architect at the Olmsted Center. The park’s cultural resources contact is Kelsey Taormina, Cultural Resource Program Manager (646-356-2176, Kelsey_Taormina@nps.gov)

Three levels of effort have been developed for CLI Updates: A, B, and C. Level C is limited to a condition reassessment of the landscape; Level B includes C and is a targeted update of select data fields; Level A includes C and is a comprehensive update of all data fields. This 2025 update to the Ellis Island NM Landscape has been conducted at a Level A effort.

SUMMARY OF CLI REVISIONS, 2025

Updates to the Ellis Island NM Landscape CLI since the 2004 and 2010 versions include:
• The management category remains, “Must be Preserved and Maintained.”
• Revisions to the National Register chapter to reflect the park’s National Register of Historic Places documentation that was completed in 2020.
• The areas and periods of significance are revised to reflect the 2020 National Register. Additional areas of significance in the CLI are Politics/Government, Health/Medicine, Conservation, and Archeology (Prehistoric and Historic, Non-Aboriginal). The period of significance is changed to 1794-1965, from the construction of the initial fortification system on the island to incorporation of Ellis Island into Statue of Liberty National Monument.
• The Chronology and Physical History chapter documents changes in the landscape since the original CLI was completed in 2004.
• Several feature evaluations in the Analysis and Evaluation chapter are revised:
o Ferry slip pilings (contributing), chain link fencing at staff house and Ward E (13/14) (contributing), and rubble wall on Island Three (noncontributing) are no longer extant.
o The iron mooring cleats, evaluated as noncontributing in the 2004 CLI, are now contributing, per the 2020 National Register.
• The overall landscape condition was evaluated as “Fair” in 2004 and 2010. The proposed landscape condition evaluation for 2025 remains “Fair.”
• New site plans and existing condition photographs.
• Upon approval by the Park Superintendent, this update will supersede all previous versions of the Ellis Island CLI

Concurrence Graphic Information:

Attachment File Path

NPS Cultural Landscapes Inventory
List of Contributing and Non-Contributing Landscape Characteristics and Associated Features
Statue of Liberty National Monument - Ellis Island
July 2004

Contributing Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features
The following landscape characteristics and associated features contribute to the district's historic character, though not all are considered countable resources according to the National Register of Historic Places.

Those marked with an * have been documented on the National Register. Those marked with a + have been identified as contributing through the NPS LCS program.

Buildings And Structures
- Administration Building - Island Three*
- Administration Building - Island Two*
- Animal house*
- Baggage and Dormitory Building*
- Bakery and Carpenter Building*
- Bluestone Curb/Retaining Wall+
- Concrete and Granite Seawall+
- Connecting Wing+
- Ferry Slip Pilings+
- Fire hydrants, historic - Islands Two and Three
- Fort Gibson Walls
- Greenhouse ruins - Island Three
- Hospital Outbuilding*
- Kitchen*
- Kitchen and Laundry Building*
- Main Hospital Building*
- Main Immigration Building*
- New Ferry Building*
- New Hospital Extension*
- New Immigration Building*
- Nurses' Quarters*
- Powerhouse - Island One*
- Powerhouse - Island Three*
- Psychopathic Ward*
- Recreation Building*
- Recreation Shelter - Between Islands Two and Three*
- Recreation Shelter - Island One*
- Refrigerating Plant
- Remnant Pilings+
- Staff House*

PARKS · RECREATION · HISTORIC PRESERVATION
OPRHP
NEW YORK STATE
Bernadette Castro
Commissioner

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189 518-237-8643

September 23, 2004

Laurie Matthews
Cultural Landscape Inventory Coordinator
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
99 Warren St.
Brookline, MA 02445

Re: Ellis Island Cultural Landscape
Inventory
New York, New York Co., NY
04PR04720

Dear Ms. Matthews:

Thank you for providing our office with a copy of the Cultural Landscapes Inventory for Ellis Island. Chris Capella-Peters and Mark Peckham of my staff have reviewed this document and have discussed it briefly with the staff of the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office. We found the report to be generally thorough and complete, however, we recommend clarification of several points:

1. The rectilinear form and perimeter of the island is itself a contributing element of Ellis Island.

2. The submerged wreck of the 1904 steam ferry Ellis Island has previously been determined as eligible for listing on the National Register and should be noted as such in the report.

3. The water tower, while similar to historic elements on the island, would appear by virtue of its recent date of construction to be non-contributing.

4. We agree with Dorothy Guzzo's observation that Criterion C is applicable to the contributing features and also support the amendment of the existing National Register documentation to incorporate these findings and evaluations.

With these points in mind, and on behalf of the New York State Historic Preservation Officer, we concur with your evaluations. The maps included with this report were particularly useful. Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to comment on this initiative and please don't hesitate to contact me if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Ruth L. Pierpont

Ruth L. Pierpont
Director
Historic Preservation
Field Services Bureau

Cc: Dorothy Guzzo, NJ SHPO

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United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Northeast Region
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106-2878

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30 (NER-RS&S)

August 18, 2004
Ms. Bernadette Castro
Commissioner
New York Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Dear Ms. Castro:

Enclosed you will find a copy of the Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) for Ellis Island, part of Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island. The report has been prepared by Laurie Matthews, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, based on the most recent research completed by J. Tracy Stakely, formerly of the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, for the Cultural Landscape Report for Ellis Island. The CLI program and the enclosed report continue the NPS efforts to update our cultural resource inventories.

Through the CLI program, the NPS is currently in the midst of a nationwide effort to inventory its cultural landscapes. The CLI is conducted in accordance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). It is an inventory of baseline information for all historically significant cultural landscapes within the national park system, and it examines multiple landscape features that contribute to the significance of historic properties. The CLI process includes gathering information from existing secondary sources and conducting on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the property's overall significance. For landscapes found potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NR), the evaluation describes their character-defining features and assesses the landscape's overall historical integrity. It also raises questions about the landscape that need further study.

It is important to note that the CLI reports are not intended as comprehensive inventory reports for any one property, although for some properties they provide fuller documentation than for others. For example, the reports do not include a full architectural description of structures, but document structures as elements of the overall landscape, and similarly documents other characteristics such as vegetation, spatial organization, and views and vistas. The CLI is one component of the NPS inventory effort that also includes cultural resource inventories for historic structures, archeological sites, ethnographic resources, and museum objects. For example, the NPS List of Classified Structures (LCS) inventory includes structural features of cultural landscapes, but the CLI takes a more encompassing approach to the properties, inventorying all above-ground features in each park in which the NPS has a legal or mandated interest.

Ellis Island was proclaimed an addition to the Statue of Liberty National Monument on April 15, 1965 and listed in the National Register in 1966. A nomination form, specific to Ellis Island as part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument Documentation was completed in 1975 and submitted to the Keeper on April 15, 1976. Separate documentation was prepared in 1981 for Liberty Island, entitled, Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World.

In the Ellis Island documentation, association with immigration was identified as the primary area of significance under Criterion A. (Architecture was checked as an area of significance on the form, although it is not discussed in the statement of significance.) The cultural landscape was not mentioned.

In addition to the National Register documentation, the NPS List of Classified Structures completed an evaluation of buildings and structures located within the park that contribute to its significance. That evaluation submitted to the NY SHPO on March 31, 1995 was approved on April 21, 1995 and identified 13 additional contributing resources (see attached list).

This CLI, based on the research completed for the Cultural Landscape Report, fully evaluates the cultural landscape, particularly its associated landscape characteristics and features. This CLI finds that in addition to those buildings, structures, and objects that are listed on the National Register or have been deemed contributing through the LCS, the overall landscape retains integrity to the period of significance. Therefore, those landscape characteristics and features that date to the period of significance should be preserved since they contribute to the property's historic character.

We call your particular attention to the Landscape Description (middle of Part 1), Statement of Significance (end of Part 1), the Analysis and Evaluation Summary (beginning of Part 3) and the National Register Information (beginning of Part 4) in the enclosed CLI Park Report.

Based on the enclosed CLI Park Report, we seek your concurrence on the following:

- The cultural landscape supports the significance of Ellis Island under Criterion A and contributes to the overall integrity of the Statue of Liberty National Monument
- The National Register documentation should be amended to specify and describe the landscape characteristics and features that are contributing to the significance of the property (see attached list).

If you concur with our evaluation of the Ellis Island landscape resources, we ask that you please sign on the space provided and return this letter to Laurie Matthews, Co-CLI Coordinator (Address: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 99 Warren Street, Brookline, MA 02445) within thirty days. Thank you for your attention to these reports. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Matthews at 617-566-1689 ext. 266.

Sincerely,

Marie Rust
Regional Director

Enclosures

cc: Cynthia Garrett, Superintendent, Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island

I concur with the above-stated evaluation, including contributing and non-contributing landscape resources of Ellis Island, part of Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island.

_____ _____
New York State Historic Preservation Officer Date

NPS Cultural Landscapes Inventory
List of Contributing and Non-Contributing Landscape Characteristics and Associated Features
Statue of Liberty National Monument - Ellis Island
July 2004

Contributing Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features
The following landscape characteristics and associated features contribute to the district's historic character, though not all are considered countable resources according to the National Register of Historic Places.

Those marked with an * have been documented on the National Register. Those marked with a + have been identified as contributing through the NPS LCS program.

Buildings And Structures
- Administration Building - Island Three*
- Administration Building - Island Two*
- Animal house*
- Baggage and Dormitory Building*
- Bakery and Carpenter Building*
- Bluestone Curb/Retaining Wall+
- Concrete and Granite Seawall+
- Connecting Wing+
- Ferry Slip Pilings+
- Fire hydrants, historic - Islands Two and Three
- Fort Gibson Walls
- Greenhouse ruins - Island Three
- Hospital Outbuilding*
- Kitchen*
- Kitchen and Laundry Building*
- Main Hospital Building*
- Main Immigration Building*
- New Ferry Building*
- New Hospital Extension*
- New Immigration Building*
- Nurses' Quarters*
- Powerhouse - Island One*
- Powerhouse - Island Three*
- Psychopathic Ward*
- Recreation Building*
- Recreation Shelter - Between Islands Two and Three*
- Recreation Shelter - Island One*
- Refrigerating Plant
- Remnant Pilings+
- Staff House*

Utility Corridors and pits, concrete and brick - Islands Two and Three
Wards 11/12*
Wards 13/14*
Wards 15/16*
Wards 17/18*
Wards 19/20*
Wards 21/22*
Wards 23/24*
Wards 25/26*
Wards 27/28*
Wards 29/30*
Wards 31/32*

Circulation
Concrete walkways, historic
Covered corridors (C-1)+
Covered corridors (C-2)+
Covered corridors (C-3)+
Covered corridors (C-4)+
Covered corridors (C-5)+
Covered corridors (Extension)+
Covered corridors (Passage)+
Covered corridors (Passageway)+
Covered corridors (Passageways)+
Ferry Basin Ramps+
Water Transportation Access Routes

Small Scale Features
Bird Bath - Island Two
Fencing, historic chain link - Island Three
Flag Staff Base, U.S. Coast Guard - Island One
Flagstaff and base - Island One
Flagstaff base - Island Two
Fogbell - Island One
Footings, concrete for old water tower - Island One
Gutter splash guards - Island Three
Lighting, historic concrete remnant bases - Island Two
Manhole covers, historic
Pilot light mast with small bell - Island One

Spatial Organization
Building placement and open space
Historic circulation system

Topography
Flat, level landform

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

Cultural Landscapes Inventory
Level II

Statue of Liberty National Monument - Ellis Island National Monument:
Ellis Island Cultural Landscapes Inventory

Statue of Liberty National Monument - Ellis Island National Monument concurs with the findings of the Level II inventory for Ellis Island including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must Be Preserved and Maintained

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Fair

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Level II Cultural Landscapes Inventory for Ellis Island in Statue of Liberty National Monument - Ellis Island National Monument is hereby approved and accepted.

Cynthia R. Gurrett 8/9/04

Superintendent, Statue of Liberty National Monument - Ellis Island National Monument Date

Park concurrence form, August 9, 2004.

In-kind replacement for historic vegetation
Planting pattern for tree rows, lawns, courtyards
Views And Vistas
Historic views, across harbor, within site, and harbor to island

Non-Contributing Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features

Buildings And Structures
Concession Kiosk
Entry portico, main immigration building
Fire hydrants, non-historic – Island One
Fuel tanks and HVAC units
Maintenance Shed
NPS Guardhouse – Island One
Wall of Honor

Circulation
Concrete walkways, steps and accessible ramps – contemporary
Parking Lots
Temporary Bridge

Land Use
Commemoration, interpretation and preservation

Natural Systems and Features

Small Scale Features
Benches
Coin-operated viewfinders
Fencing, contemporary styles including iron railing along seawall, chain link, post and chain, temporary crowd control
Iron Mooring Cleats
Manhole covers and drain inlets, contemporary
Picnic tables
Rubble Wall – Island Three
Sculptures, abstracts of immigrant figures – Island One
Signage
Trash receptacles
Waterline, abandoned – Island Three

Vegetation
All other vegetation (see above)

Undetermined Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features

Buildings And Structures
Sunken ferry boat 'Ellis Island'
Water Tower

State of New Jersey

James E. McGreevey
Governor

Department of Environmental Protection
Natural and Historic Resources, Historic Preservation Office
PO Box 404, Trenton, NJ 08625
TEL: (609) 292-2023 FAX: (609) 984-0578
www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo

Bradley M. Campbell
Commissioner

September 15, 2004
HPO-I2004-126
04-2372-1

Ms. Marie Rust, Regional Director
National Park Service
Northeast Region
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106-2878

Dear Ms. Rust:

Thank you for forwarding the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) dated 2001, revised 2004, for Ellis Island. It is a wonderful document. I concur that the cultural landscape supports the significance of Ellis Island under Criterion A and contributes to the overall integrity of the Statue of Liberty National Monument. I also believe that the contributing buildings and landscapes of Ellis Island are eligible under Criterion C. I concur that the National Register documentation should be amended (updated) to specify and describe the landscape characteristics and features that are contributing to the significance of the property based on the list of contributing and non-contributing landscape characteristics and associated features attached to your letter of August 18, 2004 (copy of list attached).

Thank you again for having provided this opportunity for consultation and comment. If you have any questions, please contact Dan Saunders at (609) 633-2397, staff reviewer for this project

Sincerely,

Dorothy P. Guzzo
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

C: Bernadette Castro
Laurie Matthews

New Jersey is an Equal Opportunity Employer
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SHPO concurrence letters, September 15, 2004 (New Jersey, 7 pages) and September 23, 2004 (New York, 7 pages).

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Northeast Region
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106-2878

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30 (NER-RS&S)

August 18, 2004

Bradley M. Campbell
Commissioner
Historic Preservation Office
Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Parks and Forestry
P.O Box 404
Trenton, NJ 08625

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Enclosed you will find a copy of the Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) for Ellis Island, part of Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island. The report has been prepared by Laurie Matthews, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, based on the most recent research completed by J. Tracy Stakely, formerly of the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, for the Cultural Landscape Report for Ellis Island. The CLI program and the enclosed report continue the NPS efforts to update our cultural resource inventories.

Through the CLI program, the NPS is currently in the midst of a nationwide effort to inventory its cultural landscapes. The CLI is conducted in accordance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). It is an inventory of baseline information for all historically significant cultural landscapes within the national park system, and it examines multiple landscape features that contribute to the significance of historic properties. The CLI process includes gathering information from existing secondary sources and conducting on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the property's overall significance. For landscapes found potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NR), the evaluation describes their character-defining features and assesses the landscape's overall historical integrity. It also raises questions about the landscape that need further study.

It is important to note that the CLI reports are not intended as comprehensive inventory reports for any one property, although for some properties they provide fuller documentation than for others. For example, the reports do not include a full architectural description of structures, but document structures as elements of the overall landscape, and similarly documents other characteristics such as vegetation, spatial organization, and views and vistas. The CLI is one component of the NPS inventory effort that also includes cultural resource inventories for historic structures, archeological sites, ethnographic resources, and museum objects. For example, the NPS List of Classified Structures (LCS) inventory includes structural features of cultural landscapes, but the CLI takes a more encompassing approach to the properties, inventorying all above-ground features in each park in which the NPS has a legal or mandated interest.

Ellis Island was proclaimed an addition to the Statue of Liberty National Monument on April 15, 1965 and listed in the National Register in 1966. A nomination form, specific to Ellis Island as part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument Documentation was completed in 1975 and submitted to the Keeper on April 15, 1976. Separate documentation was prepared in 1981 for Liberty Island, entitled, Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World.

In the Ellis Island documentation, association with immigration was identified as the primary area of significance under Criterion A. (Architecture was checked as an area of significance on the form, although it is not discussed in the statement of significance.) The cultural landscape was not mentioned.

In addition to the National Register documentation, the NPS List of Classified Structures completed an evaluation of buildings and structures located within the park that contribute to its significance. That evaluation submitted to the NY SHPO on March 31, 1995 was approved on April 21, 1995 and identified 13 additional contributing resources (see attached list).

This CLI, based on the research completed for the Cultural Landscape Report, fully evaluates the cultural landscape, particularly its associated landscape characteristics and features. This CLI finds that in addition to those buildings, structures, and objects that are listed on the National Register or have been deemed contributing through the LCS, the overall landscape retains integrity to the period of significance. Therefore, those landscape characteristics and features that date to the period of significance should be preserved since they contribute to the property's historic character.

We call your particular attention to the Landscape Description (middle of Part 1), Statement of Significance (end of Part 1), the Analysis and Evaluation Summary (beginning of Part 3) and the National Register Information (beginning of Part 4) in the enclosed CLI Park Report.

Based on the enclosed CLI Park Report, we seek your concurrence on the following:

- The cultural landscape supports the significance of Ellis Island under Criterion A and contributes to the overall integrity of the Statue of Liberty National Monument
- The National Register documentation should be amended to specify and describe the landscape characteristics and features that are contributing to the significance of the property (see attached list).

If you concur with our evaluation of the Ellis Island landscape resources, we ask that you please sign on the space provided and return this letter to Laurie Matthews, Co-CLI Coordinator (Address: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 99 Warren Street, Brookline, MA 02445) within thirty days. Thank you for your attention to these reports. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Matthews at 617-566-1689 ext. 266.

Sincerely,

Marie Rust
Regional Director

Enclosures

cc: Cynthia Garrett, Superintendent, Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island

I concur with the above-stated evaluation, including contributing and non-contributing landscape resources of Ellis Island, part of Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island.

_____ _____
New Jersey State Historic Preservation Officer Date

Utility Corridors and pits, concrete and brick - Islands Two and Three
Wards 11/12*
Wards 13/14*
Wards 15/16*
Wards 17/18*
Wards 19/20*
Wards 21/22*
Wards 23/24*
Wards 25/26*
Wards 27/28*
Wards 29/30*
Wards 31/32*

Circulation
Concrete walkways, historic
Covered corridors (C-1)+
Covered corridors (C-2)+
Covered corridors (C-3)+
Covered corridors (C-4)+
Covered corridors (C-5)+
Covered corridors (Extension)+
Covered corridors (Passage)+
Covered corridors (Passageway)+
Covered corridors (Passageways)+
Ferry Basin Ramps+
Water Transportation Access Routes

Small Scale Features
Bird Bath - Island Two
Fencing, historic chain link - Island Three
Flag Staff Base, U.S. Coast Guard - Island One
Flagstaff and base - Island One
Flagstaff base - Island Two
Fogbell - Island One
Footings, concrete for old water tower - Island One
Gutter splash guards - Island Three
Lighting, historic concrete remnant bases - Island Two
Manhole covers, historic
Pilot light mast with small bell - Island One

Spatial Organization
Building placement and open space
Historic circulation system

Topography
Flat, level landform

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

In-kind replacement for historic vegetation
Planting pattern for tree rows, lawns, courtyards
Views And Vistas
Historic views, across harbor, within site, and harbor to island

Non-Contributing Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features

Buildings And Structures
Concession Kiosk
Entry portico, main immigration building
Fire hydrants, non-historic – Island One
Fuel tanks and HVAC units
Maintenance Shed
NPS Guardhouse – Island One
Wall of Honor

Circulation
Concrete walkways, steps and accessible ramps – contemporary
Parking Lots
Temporary Bridge

Land Use
Commemoration, interpretation and preservation

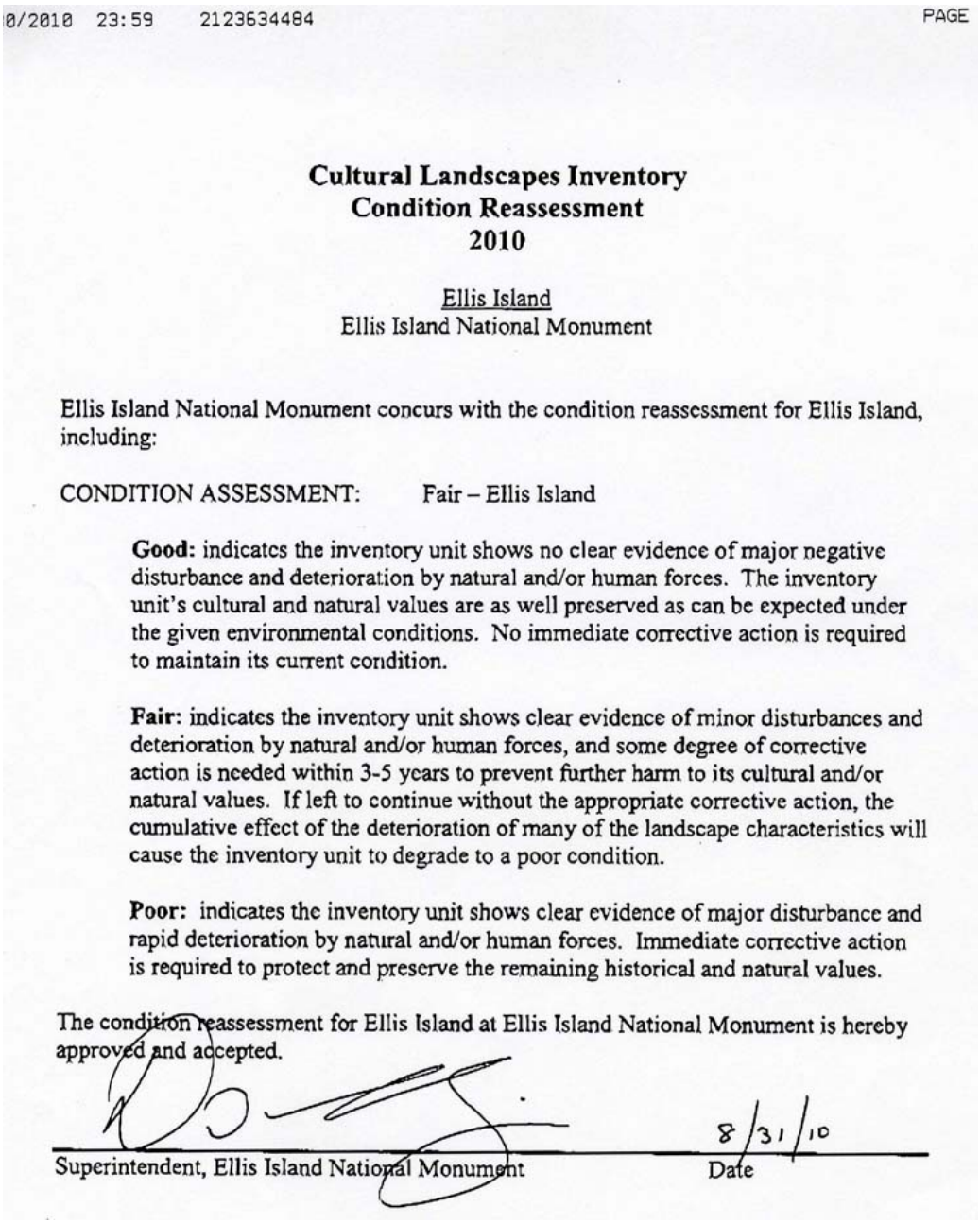
Natural Systems and Features

Small Scale Features
Benches
Coin-operated viewfinders
Fencing, contemporary styles including iron railing along seawall, chain link, post and chain, temporary crowd control
Iron Mooring Cleats
Manhole covers and drain inlets, contemporary
Picnic tables
Rubble Wall – Island Three
Sculptures, abstracts of immigrant figures – Island One
Signage
Trash receptacles
Waterline, abandoned – Island Three

Vegetation
All other vegetation (see above)

Undetermined Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features

Buildings And Structures
Sunken ferry boat 'Ellis Island'
Water Tower



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Cultural Landscapes Inventory
Condition Reassessment
2010

Ellis Island
Ellis Island National Monument

Ellis Island National Monument concurs with the condition reassessment for Ellis Island, including:

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Fair – Ellis Island

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the landscape characteristics will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The condition reassessment for Ellis Island at Ellis Island National Monument is hereby approved and accepted.

8/31/10

Superintendent, Ellis Island National Monument Date

Condition reassessment form, August 31, 2010.

Cultural Landscapes Inventory
CLI Update Certification Form
2025

Ellis Island
Statue of Liberty National Monument

Statue of Liberty National Monument certifies the CLI update for Ellis Island, including:

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Fair – Ellis Island

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The CLI update for Ellis Island is hereby approved and accepted.

JOHN PILTZECKER Digitally signed by JOHN PILTZECKER
Date: 2025.09.24 13:57:11 -04'00'

Superintendent, Statue of Liberty National Monument Date

Park concurrence form, September 24, 2025.

Revision:

Revised By	Type of Revision	Revision Date	Revision Narrative
Laurie Matthews	Addition/Deletion of Landscape Characteristic or Contributing Feature	05/30/2004	Major revisions to select sections were completed to this Cultural Landscapes Inventory in 2004 using updated information and analysis contained within the Cultural Landscape Report for Ellis Island written by J. Tracy Stakely, Historical Landscape Architect, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, in May 2003. Sections of the CLI which were revised include the Statement of Significance, Physical History, Chronology, Analysis and Evaluation, and National Register Information.
Lisa Nowak	Change in Condition	08/31/2010	Condition reassessment completed as scheduled.
Jeff Killion	CLI Update	09/24/2025	Three levels of effort have been developed for CLI Updates: A, B, and C. Level C is limited to a condition reassessment of the landscape; Level B includes C and is a targeted update of select data fields; Level A includes C and is a comprehensive update of all data fields. This 2025 update to the Ellis Island CLI has been conducted at a Level A effort.

Geographic Information

State and County:

State	County
New Jersey	Hudson County
New York	New York County

Size (Acres): 27.48

Land Tract Number(s)

01-101, 3 acres
01-102, 24.48-acre portion of 45 acre-tract

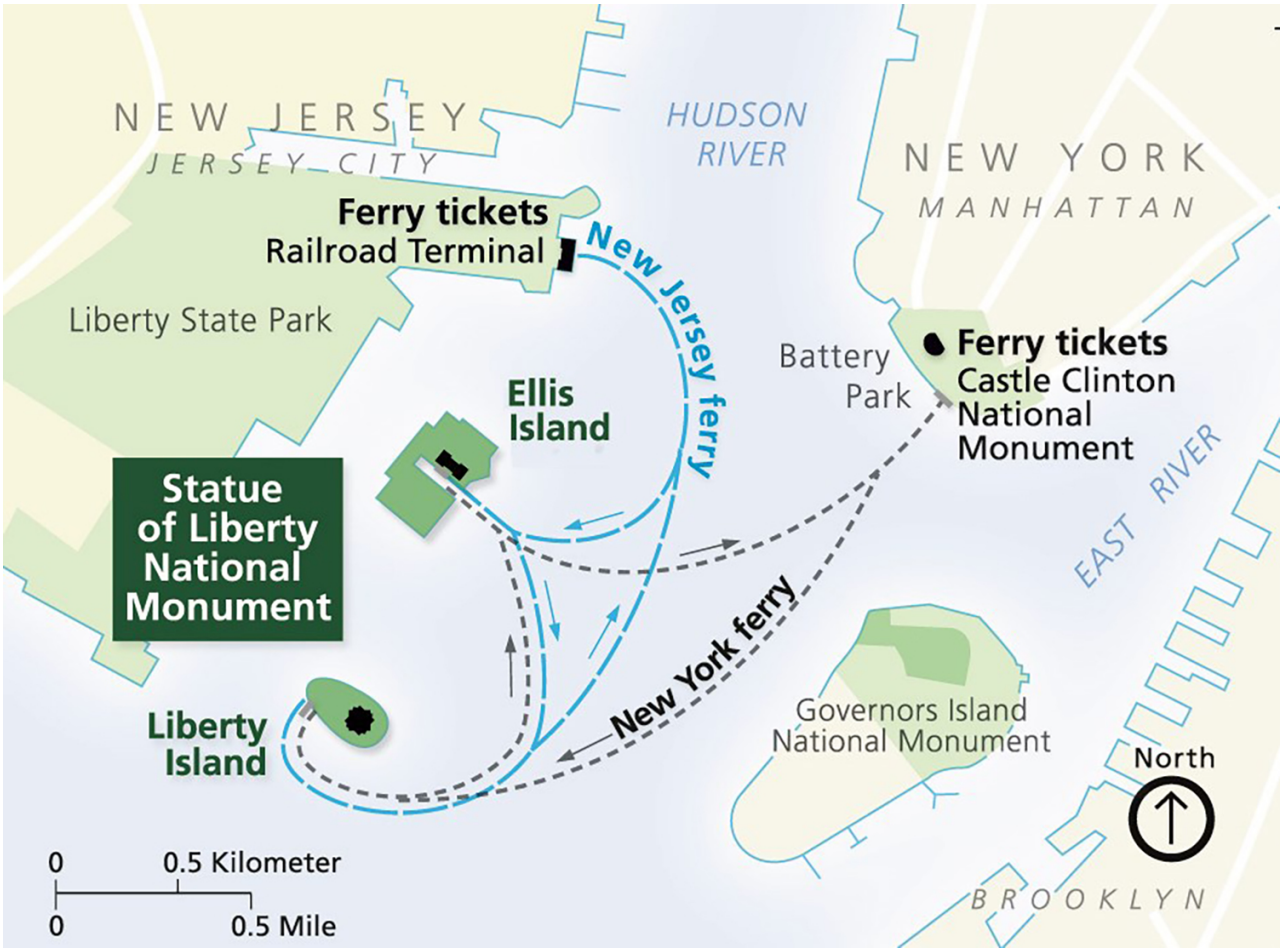
Boundary Description:

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

Boundary Coordinates

Source	Type of Point	Latitude	Longitude	Narrative
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.699343	-74.037766	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.699011	-74.038153	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.69837	-74.038255	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.69836	-74.039039	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.698136	-74.039361	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.699557	-74.04128	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.699147	-74.041774	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.697701	-74.039956	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.696478	-74.041692	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.698041	-74.043689	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.69877	-74.04271	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.699009	-74.042994	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.700472	-74.041127	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.700295	-74.040822	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.700891	-74.03996	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.700516	-74.039479	
Aerial Photograph	Area	40.700606	-74.039406	

Location Map:



Map showing Ellis Island's location in New York Harbor, and ferry connections. (Statue of Liberty NM website)

Regional Landscape Contexts:

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

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

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

Physiographic context is the large-scale physical forms and patterns of the landscape such as hill, plateau, ravine, drumlin, etc. At 0.34 miles long and 0.21 miles wide at its widest point, Ellis Island is 27.5 acres in size, an increase of more than 800% its original 3.3 acres. The island, which is located in Upper Bay at the mouth of the Hudson River, 0.1 miles east of New Jersey's Liberty State Park, and 1.3 miles west of Manhattan's South Ferry, is flat and maintains an elevation of 5 feet above sea level.

Type of Context: Political

Description:

Political context is the overlay imposed on the landscape through general land use, zoning, legal restrictions, transportation, utilities, population, and political jurisdiction (e.g., state, county, city, borough, or village). Ellis Island is owned by the federal government, is managed by the National Park Service and falls within the jurisdiction of both New York and New Jersey. The original island, a 3.3-acre remnant of glacial till known as Oyster Island, is within New York and the surrounding 24.5-acre landfill within New Jersey. Jurisdiction originally rested with New York State, however, the United States Supreme Court ruled in the 1990s that all accreted lands were to be under the jurisdiction of New Jersey.

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 08/09/2004

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

As approved on August 9, 2004, the Ellis Island NM Landscape meets the Must be Preserved and Maintained management category because the property is nationally significant as defined by the National Register of Historic Places criteria. As stated in the park's 1982 General Management Plan, "…spaces most closely associated with the immigrant's experiences on Ellis Island will be preserved..." (GMP 1982)

Management Agreements:

Type of Agreement: None

Management Agreement Expiration Date:

Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative:

Legal Interests:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

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

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Located in managed wilderness?: Unknown

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? Yes

Adjacent Lands Narrative:

Adjacent lands are lands outside the cultural landscape boundary, including lands inside or outside the park. The immigration station of Ellis Island has always been located within the highly developed confines of New York Harbor. Today, its location and the character of the surroundings remain the same. New York Harbor continues to characterize the same busy port with developed shorelines surrounding the harbor. The views to the Statue of Liberty and surroundings still persist (see Adjacent Land graphic). According to the park's 2018 Foundation Document are a fundamental resource:
"walkways along the shores of Liberty and Ellis Islands offer visitors spectacular views of the New York City skyline, as well as such other harbor sights as Governors Island, the Brooklyn Bridge, the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, the New York–New Jersey waterfront, and the Jersey City skyline." (FD 2018: 23)

Adjacent Lands Graphic:



View looking southwest from Island One toward the Statue of Liberty. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation--hereafter OCLP--2025)

National Register Information

National Register of Historic Places

Documentation Status: Listed - Documented

Documentation Narrative Description:

Ellis Island National Monument was established as an addition to the Statue of Liberty National Monument on April 15, 1965. Ellis Island was administratively listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of Statue of Liberty National Monument on October 15, 1966, in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act.

On October 22, 1976, the Keeper of the National Register approved documentation for Ellis Island as part of documentation for the Statue of Liberty. National level significance was identified under Criterion A in the areas of Social Humanitarian and Other (History) and Criterion C in the area of Architecture. A broad period of significance was identified as nineteenth and twentieth century, but no specific dates were given. The nomination noted that since its closure in 1954 the buildings "are rapidly becoming a mass of ruins" and subjected to considerable vandalism. Regarding the landscape; "the open spaces of the island, extensively landscaped in in the late 1930s, have been untended, and are rapidly approaching jungle conditions." The boundary of the 27.5-acre Ellis Island nomination was coterminous with the perimeter of the island.

On April 21, 1995, the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) of New Jersey and New York both approved the evaluation of buildings and structures through the NPS's List of Classified Structures (LCS). The LCS project identified additional contributing landscape features (see feature tables in Analysis and Evaluation chapter).

On September 15 and September 23, 2004, the SHPOs of New Jersey and New York, respectively, concurred with the NPS on the findings of a Cultural Landscape Inventory for Ellis Island. National level significance was identified under Criterion A in the areas of Social History, Ethnic History-European, and Military, and Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Landscape Architecture for the period 1892-1954, beginning with the opening of the completed facilities, and encompassing the immigration period until the date of the facility's closure. As stated by the New Jersey SHPO, and concurred by the New York SHPO, "the contributing buildings and landscapes are eligible." The CLI fully documented the island's landscape features (see feature tables in Analysis and Evaluation chapter).

On February 23, 2023, the Keeper of the National Register accepted updated documentation for Ellis Island. National level significance was identified under Criterion A in the areas of Politics/Government, Social History, Health/Medicine, Conservation, and Military, Criterion C in the area of Architecture, and Criterion D in the areas of Archeology/Historic–Non-Aboriginal. State level significance was identified under Criterion D in the area of Archeology/Prehistoric. The documentation did not cite Landscape Architecture as an area of significance. The period of significance was identified as 1794–1965, beginning with the construction of the island's initial fortification system and ending when the island was incorporated into Statue of Liberty National Monument. The period of significance for archeology was listed as 5000-450 Before Present (BP). The National Register fully documented the island's landscape features (see feature tables in Analysis and Evaluation chapter).

According to research conducted for this CLI and the categories of National Register documentation outlined in the "CLI Professional Procedures Guide," the areas and periods of significance for Ellis Island and the site's numerous historic resources that contribute to its significance, are adequately documented in the 2004 and 2010 CLIs and the 1976 and 2023 National Register. Therefore, for purposes of the CLI Update, the Ellis Island NM Landscape is considered "Listed-Documented."

Eligibility: Listed

Concurrence Eligibility Date: 02/23/2023

Concurrence Narrative:

Significance Level: National

Contributing: Individual

Classification: District

Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places:

Ellis Island is significant at the national level under Criterion A in the areas of Politics/Government, Social History, Health/Medicine, and Conservation; under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Landscape Architecture; and under Criterion D in the areas of Historic–Non-Aboriginal Archeology and Military. The site is also significant at the state level under Criterion D in the area of Prehistoric Archeology.

The historic period of significance is 1794–1965, which spans the evolution of the island's structural and functional role from a military installation to an iconic immigration facility to a national park. The overall period of significance for aboveground resources extends from 1892, when the first federal immigration station began operations on Ellis Island, to 1965, when Ellis Island was incorporated into Statue of Liberty National Monument. The period of significance for historic archeological resources begins in 1794, the construction year of the first coastal fortification system on Ellis Island. The period of significance for prehistoric archeological resources encompasses the pre-contact occupation of the landform from 5000 to 450 B.P.

CRITERION A

Politics/Government:
Ellis Island possesses national significance under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government for its association with the implementation of federal immigration policy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Selected as the site of the nation's first federally operated immigration station in 1890, Ellis Island served as the country's primary immigrant processing station until its closure in 1954. During that period, more than 12 million immigrants from countries all over the world were processed there, making Ellis Island an internationally recognized symbol of the opportunity for a better life in the United States. The vast majority of those arrivals were processed during the first three decades after the passage of the Immigration Act of 1891, under which the federal government assumed responsibility from the states for immigration. The act created the Office of Immigration (later the U.S. Bureau of Immigration) to administer immigration affairs and appropriated funds to construct a new immigration inspection station at Ellis Island. (NR 2022, Sec.8: 32)

After a fire in 1897 destroyed the original buildings, the government constructed a new fireproof station, which opened in December 1900. From that point, the complex evolved and expanded to include administrative facilities, hospital facilities, and isolation wards necessary to handle the massive influx of immigrants that arrived each year. After World War I, as the United States entered a period of nativism and isolationism, the U.S. Congress passed the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 and the Immigration Act of 1924, which drastically curtailed immigration by establishing quotas according to nationality. These acts, combined with the effects of the Great Depression (1929–1938), brought immigration to an all-time low and prompted the government to alter Ellis Island's primary function to housing detainees and deportees. As a result, the last major buildings added to Ellis Island were constructed in the 1930s as facilities to

separate detained immigrants from deportees, who were often criminals. From 1939 until 1946, the U.S. Coast Guard utilized a portion of Ellis Island as a training base, and during World War II the island served as a facility for detaining alien enemies. A brief upsurge in the detainee population occurred in the early 1950s as a result of Cold War policies, but the need for the facility subsided substantially after 1953. It was closed in 1954 after the Immigration and Naturalization Service moved their offices to a new location in Manhattan. (NR 2022, Sec.8: 32)

Social History:
Ellis Island possesses national significance under Criterion A in the area of Social History as the primary inspection station of the U.S. immigration system from 1892 to 1954. Ellis Island held a significant place in the minds of immigrants as the gateway or potential barrier to a new life in America and later as a detention station for those considered enemies of the United States. Even today, Ellis Island holds a prominent place in American culture, with millions of citizens able to trace their ancestry back through Ellis Island. The buildings on Ellis Island are the physical embodiment of the experiences of immigrants as they passed through the inspection station. (NR 2022, Sec.8: 50)

Health/Medicine:
Ellis Island possesses national significance under Criterion A in the area of Health/Medicine as one of the most important immigration stations for health screenings and testing in United States history. The protocols established by the United States Public Health Service, including rigorous procedures for screening thousands of immigrants a day and implementing public health measures, helped prevent the spread epidemic diseases on Ellis Island and New York City and proved the value of such measures to the country at large. The implementation of the then state-of-the-art microbiology techniques to test for contagious disease also played a significant role in advancing the science of medical diagnosis. (NR 2022, Sec.8: 57)

Conservation:
Ellis Island possesses national significance under Criterion A in the area of Conservation for the events that led to its incorporation into Statue of Liberty National Monument in 1965. Following the closure of the island as an immigration station in 1954, the federal government made several attempts to sell the island to private developers, sparking outrage among former immigrants who viewed Ellis Island as a historic shrine. During the Civil Rights movement of the early 1960s, when immigrant groups and public officials sought an end to the restrictive and discriminatory immigration policies that had been in place since the mid-1920s, Ellis Island became a symbol of the relatively open immigration policies that prevailed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Members of the U.S. Congress began studying the issue of what to do with Ellis Island in the early 1960s and ultimately recommended it be set aside as a national monument and serve as an adjunct to the American Museum of Immigration (AMI), which was then under construction on nearby Liberty Island. These efforts culminated in a proclamation by President Lyndon Johnson on May 11, 1965, adding Ellis Island to Statue of Liberty National Monument, thereby ensuring its preservation as a unit of the National Park System. (NR 2022, Sec.8: 60-61)

CRITERION C

Architecture:
Ellis Island possesses national significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as the first major federal complex commissioned under the provisions of the Tarsney Act of February 1893, which heralded a new era of public architecture. The architectural firm of Boring & Tilton won the 1897 design competition held by the Treasury Department's Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor for the new immigration station on Ellis Island. Boring & Tilton prepared the plans for the Beaux Arts-style Main Immigration Building, Kitchen and Laundry Building, Island One Powerhouse, and New Hospital, all constructed by 1909 under Taylor's supervision. Taylor subsequently designed the expansion of the main hospital complex on Island Two and the contagious disease hospital complex on Island Three, built from 1907 to 1909, in a Georgian Revival style to complement the Boring & Tilton designs. His successor, Louis A. Simon, oversaw the design and construction of several 1930s Moderne-style additions to the facility—the New Ferry Building, New Immigration Building, Recreation Building, two recreation shelters, and the completion of the connecting corridor system—in consultation with Chester H. Aldrich of the architectural firm Delano & Aldrich. The architectural design of the hospital complexes, based on a pavilion plan with separate wards for various contagious diseases and ample access to fresh air, reflects the status of

medical thought regarding the treatment and containment of disease during the early twentieth century. The Ellis Island immigration station as a whole is an architecturally cohesive complex that clearly conveys the federal government's presence in New York Harbor. (NR 2022, Sec.8: 66)

Landscape Architecture:
Ellis Island possesses national significance under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture for the landscape's evolution in support of changing federal immigration policy and practice as implemented on Ellis Island. During the sixty-two-year historic period, planning and development for immigration needs resulted in major landscape changes, most of which contributed directly to the immigrant experience. The pattern of landscape rehabilitation and neglect parallels the cyclic rise and fall of overall immigration activity as it occurred on Ellis Island. (CLI 2010: 39)

During the immigration period, the Ellis Island landscape was extensively altered from its early history as a Native American seasonal hunting and fishing ground, colonial commercial and residential site, and military fortification. Construction of the first immigration station between 1890 and 1897 shifted the island's primary land use to immigration and changed its spatial organization by establishing a group of interrelated buildings to support immigration operations. The organizational pattern of the facilities, with buildings clustered in close proximity to one another, provided order and efficiency in the landscape and in the immigration station's operation. (CLI 2010: 39)

Construction of the second immigration station beginning in 1898 and the subsequent addition of landfill to create Island Two and Island Three altered many landscape characteristics, including spatial organization, circulation, topography, and vegetation. The new buildings were set further back from the water's edge than the original immigration station's structures, creating additional open space and providing a more impressive setting for the public buildings. Alteration of the island's topography and size through landfill projects accommodated building development, and the establishment of direct circulation routes from ferry docks to buildings encouraged the orderly processing of immigrants. (CLI 2010: 39)

With the substantial rise in immigration during the first decades of the twentieth century, the island's landscape became many immigrants' initial introduction to America and played a vital role in their immigration experience. Recognizing this, Commissioner of Immigration William Williams implemented changes to enhance the station's aesthetics and improve perceptions of the facility. He initiated the creation of a more formalized landscape with defined walkways, expansive lawns, and ornamental plantings. Later, he advocated for increased interaction with the landscape by providing designated outdoor spaces and adding benches for immigrant use. The Williams period was likely the most eventful with respect to the frequency and significance of landscape change. (CLI 2010: 39-40)

During World War I, a decrease in immigration and reintroduction of military use left the island's landscape relatively unaltered but also unmaintained. The landscape showed evidence of neglect when the island reopened for immigration after the war; however, postwar priorities centered on reestablishing functional operations and maintaining deteriorated buildings, leaving limited resources available for the ornamental landscape. (CLI 2010: 40)

Despite these limitations, some landscape improvements did occur throughout the ensuing decades, once again enhancing the immigration experience. Landfill projects during the 1920s and 1930s, including filling the basin between Islands Two and Three, increased Ellis Island's size to twenty-seven and one-half acres, allowed the construction of new hospital facilities and recreation space, and created better circulation between Islands Two and Three. Development and partial implementation of a comprehensive planting plan in the late 1930s and early 1940s provided a sense of overall order and continuity to the landscape and enhanced the island's appearance as a well-run, orderly governmental facility. Most of the extant circulation patterns, open spaces, and tree rows were established during this period. (CLI 2010: 40)

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

immigration period in 1954, the landscape once again became neglected, completing another cycle of rehabilitation and decline. (CLI 2010: 40)

Throughout the period of significance, Ellis Island's acreage increased from just three acres to twenty-seven and one-half acres, construction occurred on more than forty buildings, and the landscape underwent a series of changes including the development and partial implementation of a comprehensive landscape plan. These alterations to the island's landscape supported and enhanced the island's primary role as the premier United States immigration facility. (CLI 2010: 40)

CRITERION D

Historic–Non-Aboriginal Archeology and Military:
Ellis Island possesses national significance under Criterion D in the areas of Historic–Non-Aboriginal Archeology and Military for its demonstrated and potential ability to provide substantive information about the structural transition of Ellis Island from an active defensive military installation to a passive munitions storage facility between 1835 and 1890, as well as the structural and infrastructural development of the island as an immigration facility and how that physical development reflected larger social and political forces shaping immigration policy and practice between 1898 and 1954. Archeological resources relate to the first immigration station, which operated on the island from 1892 to 1897, and to the earlier Fort Gibson military fortification associated with the island's use as a component of the harbor defense system designed to protect New York City from naval attack ca. 1794 to 1835. (NR 2022, Sec.7: 4 and Sec.8: 31)

Prehistoric Archeology:
Ellis Island possesses state significance under Criterion D in the area of Prehistoric Archeology for its demonstrated and potential ability to contribute substantive information about the paleo-environmental conditions and human use of the island, and the island's larger role in regional settlement and subsistence patterns in New York Harbor from the Transitional/Late Archaic through Woodland periods (5000–450 years before present [B.P.]). The pre-contact signature on Ellis Island, while discontinuous and fragmentary, retains enough integrity to address several research topics germane to Ellis Island in particular and the New York Harbor islands in general. (NR 2022, Sec.8: 31-32,83)

National Register Significance Criteria:

Significance Criteria A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

Significance Criteria C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

Significance Criteria D - Has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Archeology

Area of Significance Subcategory: Historic-Non-Aboriginal

Explanatory Narrative:

National Register Criteria Consideration:

National Register Periods of Significance (with Historic Context Themes):

Time Period: CE 1794 - CE 1965

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Creating Social Institutions and Movements	Ways of Life	Ethnic Communities (Including The Immigration Phenomenon)	
Creating Social Institutions and Movements	Social and Humanitarian Movements	Emergency Aid And Health Care	
Changing Role of the U.S. in the World	Immigration and Emigration Policies	Immigration And Emigration Policies	
Expanding Science and Technology	Technology (Engineering and Invention)	Military (Fortifications, Weapons, And War Vehicles)	
Expressing Cultural Values	Architecture	Art Deco	
Expressing Cultural Values	Landscape Architecture	The City Beautiful Movement	

Time Period: BCE 5000 - BCE 450

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Peopling Places	Prehistoric Archeology: Topical Facets	Prehistoric Settlements And Settlement Patterns	
Peopling Places	The Earliest Inhabitants:	The Early Peopling Of North America	

Area of Significance Category: Archeology

Area of Significance Subcategory: Prehistoric

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Architecture

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Conservation

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Health - Medicine

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Landscape Architecture

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Military

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Politics - Government

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Social History

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

NRIS Information:

NRIS Name:	Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty National Monument
NRIS ID:	66000058
Primary Certification Date:	10/22/1976
NRIS Name:	Ellis Island
NRIS ID:	66000058
Primary Certification Date:	02/23/2023

State Register Documentation:

Identification Number:	NJ: 1535
Name:	Statue of Liberty National Monument, Ellis Island and Liberty Island
Listed Date:	10/15/1966
Identification Number:	NY: 90NR00879
Name:	Statue of Liberty National Monument, Ellis Island and Liberty Island
Listed Date:	06/23/1980

National Historic Landmarks:

National Historic Landmark? No

Theme:

Contributing:

NHL ID:

NHL URL:

Date:

Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark:

World Heritage Site:

World Heritage Site? No

Category:

WHS ID:

WHS URL:

Date:

Is Resource within a designated National Natural Landscape: No

Chronology and Physical History

Chronology:

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1630	Land Transfer	Dutch colonists contract purchase agreement with the local Native Americans, then grant to Mynher Michael Paw (or Paauw) for his contributions to the establishment of the Dutch colonies in the New World.
CE 1674 - 1680	Land Transfer	Sometime between 1674-1680 Governor Edmond Andross of the Royal Colony of New York grants Little Oyster Island to Captain William Dyre.
CE 1686	Land Transfer	William and Mary Dyre sell island to Thomas Lloyd, who subsequently conveys the island to Enoch and Mary Story.
CE 1766 - 1767	Built	Map shows several structures that may have accommodated both fishing and increased recreational activities on the island.
CE 1774	Purchased/Sold	Samuel Ellis purchases Little Oyster Island, which becomes known as Ellis Island.
CE 1794	Land Transfer	Samuel Ellis dies, and his will stipulates that island should pass to grandson Samuel. Alternate source states the Island passes to Samuel Ellis' daughters Elizabeth Ellis Ryerson and Rachel Ellis Cooder." (Pike 1963)
CE 1794	Land Transfer	Corporation of the City of New York cedes "soil from high to low waters mark around Ellis's Island" to the citizens of New York State to install fortifications on the island.
CE 1795	Built	New York State Legislature appropriates $100,000 to construct fortifications on Governors, Bedloe's, and Ellis Islands.
CE 1798	Built	Report to Secretary of War indicates "barracks on Ellis Island had been completed, that twelve 24 pounders had been mounted there, and that the island could accommodate one company of soldiers."
CE 1800	Land Transfer	State acquires total jurisdiction over the fortifications on Governors, Bedloe's, and Ellis Islands.
CE 1800	Built	Earthwork fortifications built on the southeast end of Ellis Island, and a jetty is added to the island's southwest side.
CE 1805	Neglected	Lack of military use leaves the fort in disrepair again.
CE 1806	Land Transfer	John A. Berry acquires deed to the island.
CE 1808	Land Transfer	New York purchases Ellis Island from the Ellis heirs through condemnation proceedings and cedes it to the federal government to institute federal plan for harbor defense needs.
CE 1813	Restored	War Department upgrades earthworks to a stone parapet with thirteen embrasures.
CE 1814	Established	Site officially named Fort Gibson by the Secretary of War.
CE 1820	Built	Around 1820 War Department modifies parapet with brick facing and backing, constructs cookhouse near jetty, places crane on jetty, removes furnace & commercial buildings. Only one tree shown on earlier maps remains and is identified as apple.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1834	Established	Interstate agreement between New York and New Jersey declares Ellis Island and Bedloe's Island to be part of New York, even though the islands were on the New Jersey side of the main ship channel.
CE 1841	Built	U.S. Army resumes complete administration of Fort Gibson and makes extensive repairs during the next year, including construction of a new hot shot furnace.
CE 1861	Altered	Fort's primary role shifts from defense to ammunitions storage when the U.S. Navy partially dismantles the parapet and upgrades the magazine to a more extensive facility.
CE 1861 - 1865	Altered	During Civil War defenses are temporarily upgraded when the Army fortifies island, and the Navy constructs shell house number 1 north of existing barracks and converts former officers' quarters into shell house number 2.
CE 1870	Altered	Military converts existing barracks, officers' quarters into additional magazines and tank house; adds new structures including docks, boathouse, loaded shell house, powder house, steam fire engine house, kitchen, woodshed, carpenter shop, icehouse, and pigpen.
CE 1881	Expanded	The federal government's jurisdiction is extended to include waters surrounding the island when New York executes a deed granting the federal government "title and jurisdiction of lands covered with water at Bedloe's Island, Ellis Island and elsewhere."
CE 1890	Established	Ellis Island is chosen as the site of the new immigration station.
CE 1890	Land Transfer	Federal government formally transfers Ellis Island from War Department to the Department of the Treasury.
CE 1890	Planned	Planning for the new immigration facilities began immediately under the supervision of John W. Marshall, Superintendent of Repairs of the U.S. Public Buildings Service in New York.
CE 1890	Built	Construction begins and the island is expanded with additional landfill with the new elevation being 2-3 feet above high water mark. Docking and landing facilities constructed.
CE 1891	Built	Ferry slip, rack, and landing area are added to the basin's northwest side.
CE 1891	Built	Rainwater reservoir system installed to supply fresh water to the new facilities.
CE 1892	Built	An artesian well added to supplement the island's water supply.
CE 1892	Established	The Department of the Treasury approves the completed facilities and the site is officially opened on January 1.
CE 1894 - 1896	Built	New cribwork bulkheads and fill are added to the east and northeast edges of the island, extending the island's size to some fourteen acres at a cost of $19,882

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1896	Rehabilitated	Contractors remodel the detention building from a single-story to a two-story structure, creating a recreation area on the roof, and installing a temporary detention pen on the grounds for similar use.
CE 1897	Built	New disinfecting house on eastern side of detention building, a covered passageway with a baggage run between main building & ferry landing, and the addition of a landing dock on south end of island are built.
CE 1897	Built	Underwater cables installed from island to New York City for telegraph and telephone service via Governors Island.
CE 1897	Destroyed	A few days after construction is completed, a fire destroys most of the new immigration facility.
CE 1897	Planned	Preliminary plan submitted for enlargement of island by 3 acres and construction of 3 brick and steel buildings – main immigration building, hospital, and kitchen and restaurant. President McKinley approves plan and Congress appropriates funds on July 19.
CE 1897	Planned	An architectural competition with design guidelines is issued by the Department of the Treasury's supervising architect with the commission choosing Boring & Tilton.
CE 1898	Built	Six-inch water main installed from Jersey City, New Jersey, to Ellis Island
CE 1898	Built	Construction of Island Two begins with new crib work and bulkheads, dredging, and deposition of fill.
CE 1898	Built	Construction begins on main hospital building on Island Two, but is delayed due to funding.
CE 1900	Established	New immigration station opens.
CE 1901 - 1902	Built	Snare & Triest, Inc., of New York City, constructs a glazed porch and portico at the main entrance on the building's southwest façade, and install a baggage conveyor adjacent to the portico.
CE 1901	Built	Kitchen, laundry building, and powerhouse are built and coal hoisting and delivering equipment are added to the dock on the northeast side of the powerhouse.
CE 1901	Built	Sometime after 1901, bakery and carpentry shop, waiting room for immigrants, and waiting room for immigrants' friends constructed.
CE 1901	Built	The main hospital building is completed.
CE 1901	Built	Surgeon's house and hospital outbuilding are constructed.
CE 1901	Built	A ferry house and covered walkway are constructed in conjunction with the hospital on Island Two.
CE 1902	Built	Refuse incinerator built on the northwest edge of the island.
CE 1902 - 1903	Planted	Several flower beds are scattered throughout the island.
CE 1903	Built	By 1903, dramatic changes have occurred in the landscape under William William's direction which reflects plans Boring & Tilton had drawn up during their planning work.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1903	Expanded	Congress appropriates $150,500 for construction of Island Three but does not immediately provide funds for construction of necessary new hospital facilities.
CE 1904	Built	Railroad ticket office added to the northeast side of the building.
CE 1904	Land Transfer	Federal government begins negotiations with New Jersey to purchase submerged lands around Ellis Island. New Jersey challenges the government's legal rights to the existing Ellis Island, but loses.
CE 1905 - 1906	Built	Island Three is built with fill dredged from large trench.
CE 1905	Rehabilitated	The ferry house is widened.
CE 1905	Planned	Congress appropriates funding for contagious-disease hospital on Island Three.
CE 1907	Built	Contagious disease hospital structures – administration building, the kitchen, the powerhouse and laundry, and measles wards A, B, and E – completed.
CE 1907	Built	Hospital addition completed in February.
CE 1907	Built	Psychopathic ward between the main hospital building and the hospital outbuilding on Island Two completed.
CE 1907 - 1909	Built	Baggage and dormitory building built.
CE 1908 - 1910	Altered	Dormitory and third story on the north wing are added to the main immigration building. The upper floor of the kitchen and laundry building is renovated to add a dining room.
CE 1908	Built	Fill added around first set of buildings completed on Island Three, then graded and planted with lawn.
CE 1908	Planned	Congress appropriates funding for new hospital extension on Island Two.
CE 1909	Built	New hospital extension on Island Two complete by May.
CE 1909	Built	Remaining structures for contagious disease hospital - measles wards C, D, and G, isolation ward L, the staff house, the mortuary, and corridors from the powerhouse to measles ward E, completed.
CE 1909	Altered	Existing circulation upgraded when existing boardwalk replaced with new wood.
CE 1909	Planned	Concrete walks called for on drawings, but not implemented. Cinder used instead by 1913.
CE 1910	Altered	Baggage and dormitory building altered with improvements to outdoor courtyard space, including a concrete surface.
CE 1910	Built	Island employees erect a greenhouse on the northeast side of the main immigration building.
CE 1911	Built	Existing incinerator is replaced with new facility.
CE 1912	Maintained	Ornamental landscape well-maintained including lawn and privet hedges.
CE 1913 - 1915	Built	Third-story added to south wing of main immigration building.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1913	Built	By 1913, following construction of buildings on Island Two, concrete aprons installed around buildings, lawn fills remainder of space. Tennis court exists. Connecting walkway with pergola constructed between new hospital extension and surgeon's house.
CE 1913	Built	By 1913 four privies existed, but only one remained on Island One by 1916.
CE 1913	Planned	Existing wooden crib to be replaced by granite faced seawall.
CE 1914	Altered	A third story is added to the baggage and dormitory building
CE 1914	Built	Two-story central corridor, connecting all buildings on Island Three except isolation wards and office buildings, enclosed with glass.
CE 1915	Built	New bakery and carpentry shop completed.
CE 1915	Built	By 1915 landscape improvements include recreational spaces for adults and children, benches, and wire fence along northeast seawall.
CE 1915	Altered	Around 1915 wooden boardwalk replaced with concrete.
CE 1915	Built	By 1915, American Red Cross recreation building constructed on Island Two.
CE 1918	Built	Wooden gangway connecting Islands Two and Three replaced with covered walk.
CE 1921	Built	By 1921 the concrete and granite seawall enclosed most of Island One, excluding SE point of island (completed in1930s).
CE 1921	Built	A 75,000-gallon water tank and accompanying service pumps are built.
CE 1924	Altered	Pergola repaired on Island Two.
CE 1924	Planned	Congress appropriates funding for landscape improvements including additional recreation space, and filling in area between Islands Two and Three (begun in 1920s, but not completed until 1930s).
CE 1924	Built	Steel staircase on the northeast side of the baggage and dormitory building installed.
CE 1926	Altered	Porches, steps, railings, and ladders at rear of wards 3, 4, 7, and 8 on Island Three repaired, and concrete sidewalk between building lines around courtyard replaced.
CE 1930	Built	Two additional 250,000-gallon water towers adjacent to the original 75,000-gallon water tank are installed.
CE 1930	Built	New pump house and pumps built near the psychopathic ward and covered walkway.
CE 1931	Built	Recreation space on the northeast side of Island One increased and enclosed with eight-foot-tall galvanized chainlink fence.
CE 1932	Altered	Entry portico around main immigration building's entry removed, and paved plaza and a forty-foot diameter circular flower bed installed.
CE 1932	Altered	New steam heating system added to greenhouse.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1932	Altered	Additional incinerator added to same building as existing incinerator.
CE 1932	Altered	Drains, sewers replaced on Island Two - including leader stacks, alterations to house drains on main hospital and house sewers, repairs to sewer mains, construction of catch basins, manholes, replacement of lines, and patching of concrete, masonry, and plaster.
CE 1933	Altered	Generators in the powerhouse converted from coal to oil burners. Coal hoist and conveyor equipment removed soon after.
CE 1934	Built	Granite seawall improvements completed by this time on Islands Two and Three.
CE 1935	Built	New greenhouse built on Island One, near the powerhouse and incinerator.
CE 1936 - 1937	Altered	Contractors replace existing concrete walks around the island.
CE 1936	Built	New ferry building & covered walkways, including a new covered masonry walk replacing the 1918 covered wooden walk between Islands Two and Three, built.
CE 1936	Built	New immigration building, with focus on residents' recreational needs, built. Two tennis courts take the place of the proposed garden on the south end of the building.
CE 1936	Built	System of walkways on Islands Two and Three constructed following rectilinear grid pattern with lawn filling areas between walks.
CE 1936 - 1939	Built	Sun porches on wards 13-14, 17-18, 19-20, and 23-24 are built for patients.
CE 1937	Altered	American Red Cross recreation building razed for construction of new recreation building and recreation shelter.
CE 1937	Built	Recreation shelter on Island One northeast of the powerhouse built.
CE 1939	Inhabited	U.S. Coast Guard occupies new immigration building and several other island facilities, staying for the duration of World War II.
CE 1939	Planned	Comprehensive planting plan for Ellis Island, addressing all three islands, drafted with emphasis on large-scale approach of trees and shrub massings.
CE 1940	Built	The 1939 Planting Plan is installed using Platanus acerifolia (London planetree) and Quercus palustris (pin oak) as the dominant tree species.
CE 1940	Altered	During the 1940s, the greenhouse on Island One, built in 1935 is repaired.
CE 1940	Built	U.S. Coast Guard installs a flagstaff with a concrete base.
CE 1940	Built	Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) increases security on Island One with installation of double row of chainlink fencing in front of main immigration building, and single fence at rear of the building and on east side of baggage and dormitory building.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1946	Neglected	The Coast Guard leaves the island and new immigration building remains unused until Ellis Island's abandonment in 1954.
CE 1950	Maintained	During the early 1950s, the INS and the Coast Guard focus on maintaining the existing facilities and landscape, making minimal changes.
CE 1952	Altered	Fire protection system with hydrants on all 3 islands, additional guardhouses on Island One, additional reserve fuel oil tank on Island One, and small greenhouse on Island Three added.
CE 1954	Abandoned	By 1954 both the INS and the Coast Guard operations on Ellis Island are shut down and the island is abandoned.
CE 1954 - 1965	Neglected	From 1954-1964 vegetation matures and becomes overgrown. Island plundered for anything that is portable. Buildings fall into disrepair.
CE 1965	Established	On May 11, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signs Proclamation 3656 adding Ellis Island to the national park system and securing the island's future as a historic property.
CE 1966	Planned	Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall appoints New York architect Philip Johnson to oversee redevelopment of the island. His plan is never implemented.
CE 1968	Planned	NPS planning team develops master plan, retains some components from Johnson's plan, including removal of several buildings, but focuses on limiting visitor access to Island One for the initial stage. Funding not immediately available for implementation.
CE 1968	Eroded	The ferryboat Ellis Island sinks in her berth in the ferry basin between Islands One and Two.
CE 1975	Restored	By the mid-1970s NPS crews clear invasive trees, shrubs, and vines from the area immediately surrounding the main immigration building and the ferry landing.
CE 1975	Built	By mid 1970s a wooden post and pipe rail fence installed along the ferry slip to assist with crowd control.
CE 1976	Built	Contractors dredge ferry basin, construct new dock, and stabilize deteriorating sections of the seawall.
CE 1976	Removed	Some 40,000 bags of debris removed from Island One as part of a general cleanup of the grounds and buildings.
CE 1976	Restored	Main water lines between island and Jersey City improved and sewage treatment system is upgraded with construction of new septic tanks and leach field.
CE 1980 - 1990	Rehabilitated	Comprehensive rehabilitation completed of the interior and exterior of the main immigration building, which soon became the costliest renovation of a historic structure in United States' history.
CE 1980 - 1990	Rehabilitated	Powerhouse on Island One renovated and park offices established in the hospital administration building on Island Two.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1984	Built	Temporary bridge constructed between the New Jersey shore and the island to facilitate the extensive renovations and provide easy access for construction crews and equipment.
CE 1985	Removed	Deteriorated structures on Island One, the incinerator, greenhouse, and two original water towers, are documented and razed.
CE 1986	Built	New water tower reconstructed in same vicinity as the originals and various sections of the seawall repaired.
CE 1990	Established	Ellis Island Immigration Museum (now National Museum of Immigration) opens to the public.
CE 1989 - 1990	Built	A memorial space designated to erect a Wall of Honor. Initial wall of honor consisted of engraved copper panels attached to the top of the stone seawall on the north side of the island.
CE 1993	Built	Wall of Honor constructed with circular and straight walls of stainless-steel panels.
CE 1994 - 2004	Removed	In preparation for building stabilization on Islands Two and Three, NPS supervises removal of nonhistoric vegetation by prisoners from NJ prison system. Most overgrown vegetation cleared by fall 2002 with minor work continuing through 2004.
CE 1998 - 2001	Built	Phase two of the Wall of Honor adds row of linear panels nearby.
CE 2000 - 2004	Stabilized	Stabilization of buildings on Islands Two and Three begins in three phases.
CE 2008	Removed	Park removes and reinstalls Pilot Light Mast (non-historic bell later removed). (PEPC 21915)
CE 2012	Destroyed	Superstorm Sandy inflicts major damage at Ellis Island.
CE 2017	Repaired	Park repairs storm damage on Ellis Island. (PMIS 201065)
CE 2018	Rehabilitated	Park rehabilitates current paved areas on the north end of Island One. (PMIS 224214)
CE 2018	Stabilized	Park stabilizes Ellis Island seawall. (PMIS 211568 / PEPC 83515)
CE 2018	Preserved	Park maintains/sustains park grounds and walkways (PMIS 243720)
CE 2020	Removed	NPS Arborist Incident Response (AIR) team and park staff completes tree work: 123 trees are hazard pruned and 12 severely deteriorated trees are removed. (PMIS 227084)
CE 2020	Removed	Tree #20 on Ellis Island is taken down. (PEPC 95729)
CE 2020	Removed	Park removes concrete pavers and relocates benches by Wall of Honor. (PEPC 94647)
CE 2021	Removed	The park removes/prunes tree #s 53 and 105. (PEPC 101065)
CE 2022	Built	The park designs and installs a protective barrier at three lawn panels on Island One. (PMIS 292611)

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 2022	Built	Around 115 feet of new wall sections at the Wall of Honor are constructed in a single line, parallel to the existing 1998 expansion, and located adjacent to the baggage and dormitory building. Project includes sidewalks. (PMIS 322698)
CE 2023	Altered	Park replaces approximately 2,300 square feet of maintained lawn with concrete sidewalk near the Wall of Honor. (PMIS 327978 / PEPC 108860)

Physical History:

PRE-IMMIGRATION PERIOD (Prehistory–1890)

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

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

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

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

permanent settlement. It became far more likely that seasonal harvesting of the oyster beds and animal populations became the primary focus of human activities on the island. (Pousson 1986; Kardas and Larrabee 1976)

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

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

Under colonial ownership, Little Oyster Island continued to be a profitable location for gathering fish and shellfish, although it was eventually used for other activities as well. The site served as a temporary retreat for Dutch and English settlers from their permanent mainland homes, becoming a convenient place for picnicking and relaxation. An early map of the island drawn from a 1766-1767 survey and published in 1776 shows several structures that may have accommodated both the fishing and increased recreational activities on the island (Figure 1).

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

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

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

Samuel Ellis Purchase:
In 1774 Samuel Ellis purchased Little Oyster Island and it became known as Ellis Island. Among other activities Ellis operated a tavern on the island. He made some improvements to the site, possibly including the addition of buildings shown on the 1776 map, although the exact locations and configuration of these structures may or may not be accurate. Additional maps drawn around the turn of the nineteenth century show brick buildings arranged in a different layout. Ellis placed

advertisements on at least two separate occasions for the sale of barrels of shad and herring, indicating the island's resources continued to be exploited during his ownership. By 1785 Samuel Ellis attempted to sell the island for unknown reasons, but was unsuccessful (Berengarten 1934)

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

Fort Gibson:
In the mid-1790s, during a time of increased tensions between the United States and Great Britain, New York State prepared for the installation of defenses around New York Harbor. Ellis Island was one of the chosen sites. On April 21, 1794, the Corporation of the City of New York ceded "the soil from high to low waters mark around Ellis's Island" to the citizens of New York State to install fortifications on the island. The majority of the island, however, still remained in the ownership of the heirs of Samuel Ellis. In 1795 the New York State Legislature appropriated $100,000 to construct fortifications on Governors, Bedloe's, and Ellis Islands. The state acquired total jurisdiction over the fortifications on the three islands on February 15, 1800, and soon constructed earthwork fortifications on the southeast end of Ellis Island. A jetty was also added to the island's southwest side. An inlet on the northeast side of the island may have been dug as a source of earth for the fortifications or the jetty. The preexisting commercial facilities remained concentrated on the northwest side of the island (Figure 2). (Unrau 1981; Pike 1963; Pousson 1986)

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

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

The anticipated conflict with France did not materialize, and by 1805, the fort was in disrepair again. Nevertheless, after inspection of the facilities for the War Department by Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Williams, the federal government initiated plans to erect a "casemated Battery" on the island in anticipation of future harbor defense needs. This plan was approved in 1807, and in 1808 the state of New York purchased Ellis Island from the Ellis heirs through condemnation proceedings and ceded it to the federal government. During the legal process, it was found that those with a claim to Ellis Island included, "John A. Berry, Samuel E. Ryerson, Nancy Ryerson, William Kingsland and Rachel, his wife, and others, to the Jurors foresaid unknown." (Pousson 1986; BBB/ANF 1984; Pike 1963). In estimating what would be fair compensation for the owners, it was determined:
"The quality and appearance of the land is no criterion to judge its value to the owners. It is found to be one of the most lucrative situations for shad fishing by set netts [sic] within some distance of this place, yielding annually from 450 to 500 Dollars to the occupant from this single circumstance. The Oyster Banks being in its vicinity affords an income in the loan of oyster boats, rakes, etc. of which before I had no idea; besides this a considerable advantage results to the occupant from a tavern in the only possible place of communication for people engaged there between the oyster banks and this city." (Tompkins 1808).

The Sheriff of the City and County of New York, under direction of the Chancellor of New York State, determined that damages sustained by the interested parties if the state took the island would equal $10,000. The governor approved the expenditure and granted title to the people of New York State on June 18, 1808. On June 30, 1808, the state transferred ownership of the island to the United States government when Governor Daniel D. Tompkins executed a deed for “all the right, title and interest of the state of New York in and to the lands, tenements and appurtenances above mentioned and described [Ellis Island]” to the United States Secretary of War. (Pike 1963)

During the War of 1812, Ellis Island defenses were improved again. No battles were fought on the island during the war, but the U.S. Eleventh Regiment stationed up to one hundred eighty-two artillerists on the island, along with British prisoners of war. There was no substantial change to the island’s topography, land use, or circulation patterns. By 1813 the War Department had upgraded the earthworks to a stone parapet with thirteen embrasures. Extant buildings dating to circa 1800 included the furnace, store, barracks, and magazine, while the state and federal governments had added two-story officers’ quarters, flagstaff, pump, and sentry box at later dates. On the northwest end of the island, structures from the island’s earlier commercial use remained clustered around a well. Additionally, the inlet had been filled, and a low stone or brick wall encircled the entire island. A map from this period shows three large trees present near the commercial buildings, but none were identified and no other vegetation is depicted on the island (Figure 3).

After the war, the facilities were used primarily as a recruiting depot, and in 1814 the site was officially named Fort Gibson by the Secretary of War (Pousson 1986; BBB/ANF 1984). Activity on the island decreased over the next several years and the fort was nearly abandoned for a short time. There are few known details about island usage during the 1820s. However, historic maps indicate that by ca.1820 the War Department had modified the parapet with a brick facing and backing, constructed a cookhouse near the jetty, placed a crane on the jetty, and removed the furnace and commercial buildings. Only one of the trees shown on earlier maps remained and it was identified as an apple tree (Figure 4).

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

In 1841 the Army resumed complete administration of Fort Gibson and made extensive repairs during the next year, including construction of a new hot shot furnace. The primary land use remained military and the Navy maintained its magazine on the island. However, the Army downgraded the site from Fort Gibson to Battery Gibson, the facility was not garrisoned, and only a small navy guard was left to protect the magazine. By 1854 the fort consisted of an eleven-gun battery and three naval magazines. Other additions included a railroad line from the jetty to the magazines and a kitchen and oven next to the officers’ quarters. The military removed the cookhouse and extended the jetty with the addition of a boathouse and boat slip. The military also constructed a new group of structures in the location of the former commercial and residential buildings on the island’s north end, including a gun carriage house, a barn, gunners’ house, and privy. These changes altered the spatial organization and circulation patterns of the island slightly by adding residential facilities away from the main fort area (see Figure 4). (Pousson 1986)

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

As was the established pattern, deterioration of the fort set in after the war ended (Pousson 1986).

Eventually, the neglect was so bad that the wooden gun carriages rotted in place and the guns were unable to fire. By the late 1860s public concern rose about the dangers of storing powder and shells on an island so close to a heavily populated area and the “imminent peril” to the New York City vicinity if the magazines were to explode. However, this concern did not dissuade the Navy from keeping the magazine on the island. (Harper’s Weekly 1886).

By 1870 the Navy utilized the entire island for support of its magazine. The Navy converted existing barracks and officers’ quarters into additional magazines and a tank house, and added new structures including a loaded shell house, powder house, steam fire engine house, kitchen, woodshed, carpenter shop, icehouse, and pigpen. It also constructed two new docks, one on the northeast side of the island near the new kitchen, and another with a small boathouse on the western side of the island in front of the gunners’ quarters. Other improvements made by the Navy included the addition of railway lines between the main jetty/dock and the various magazines, the construction of several small guardhouses, and the installation of least two more flagstaffs. Maps from this period also show a large garden area between the magazines and loaded shell house. Although it is likely there were gardens on the island for food production for some time, this ca.1870 documentation gave the first indication where these features were actually located in the landscape (see Figure 4).

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

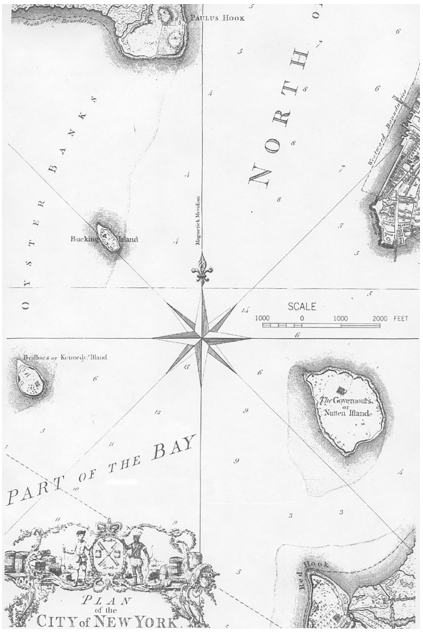


Figure 1. Map of NY Harbor from 1776, including Governors Island Bedloe's Island, and Ellis Island (labeled Bucking Island). (Cultural Landscape Report for Ellis Island--hereafter CLR--2003)

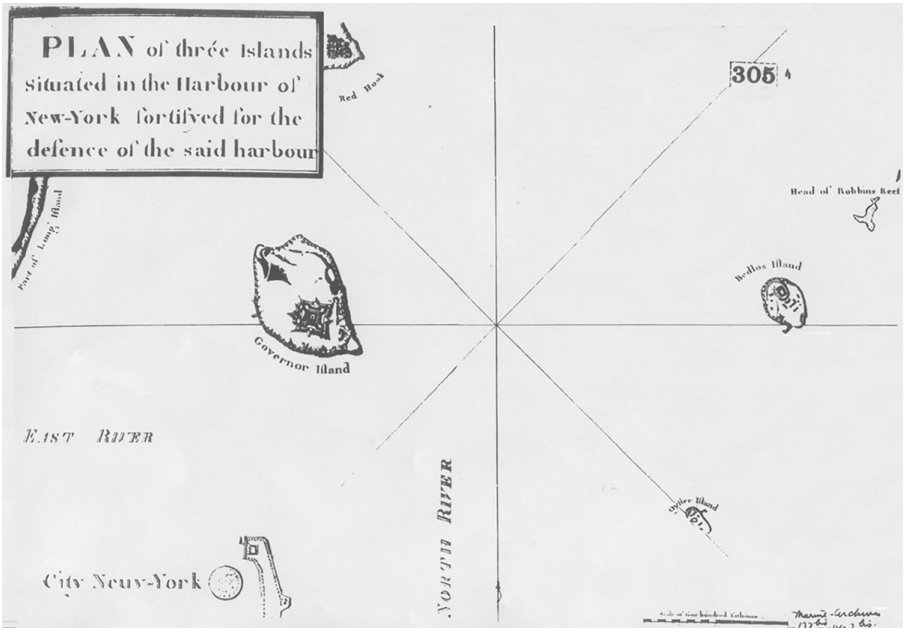


Figure 2. Circa 1800 map of NY Harbor, showing fortifications & structures on Governors, Bedloe's and Ellis Islands (Ellis Island labeled Oyster Island). (CLR 2003)

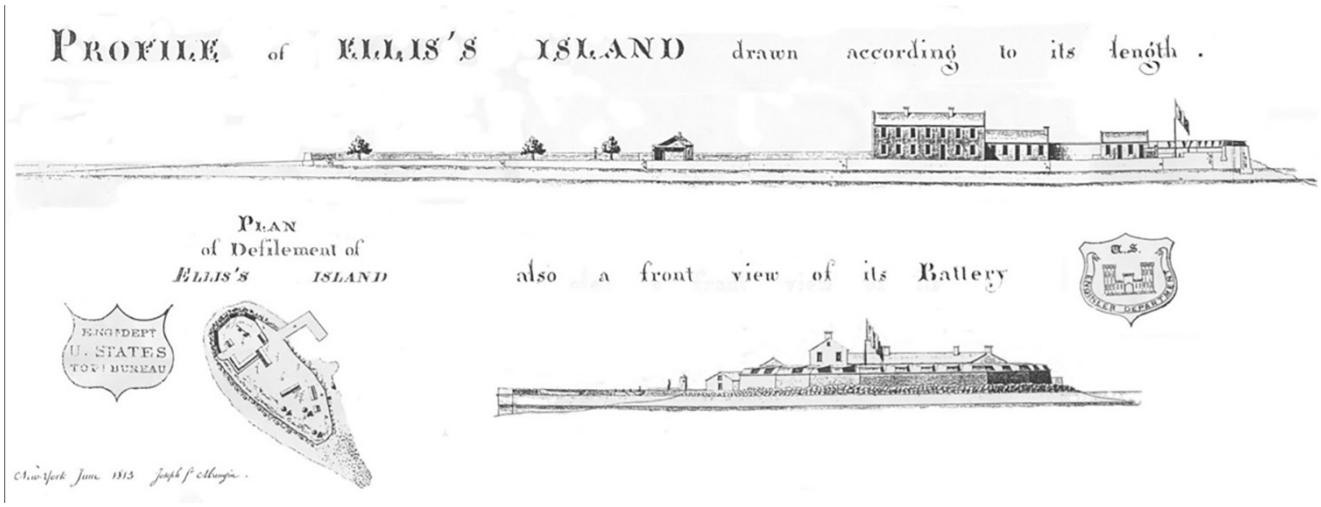


Figure 3. An 1813 map of Ellis Island with profile of buildings of Fort Gibson. (CLR 2003)

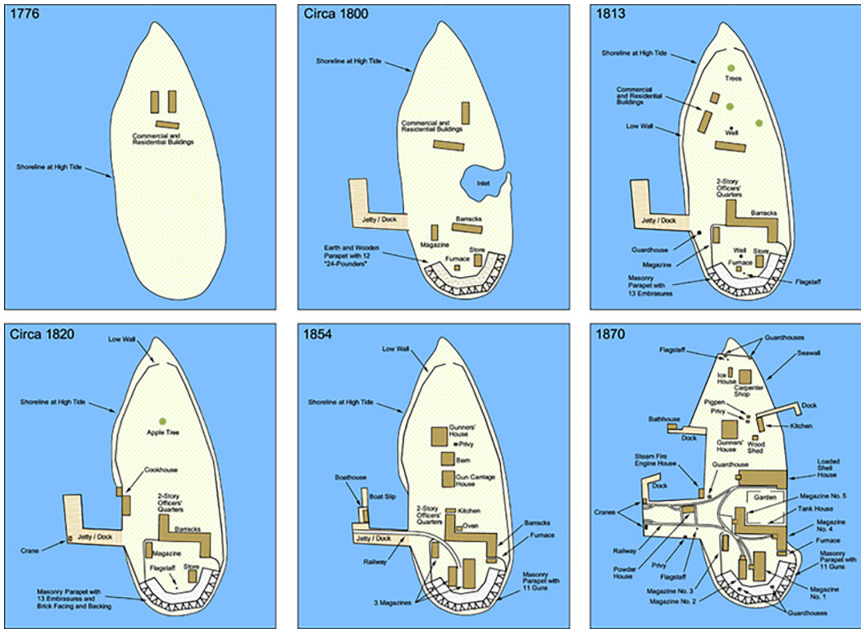


Figure 4. Ellis Island Development from 1776 to 1870. (CLR 2003)

FIRST IMMIGRATION STATION (1890–1897)

Selection of Ellis Island for Federal Immigration Station:
Up until 1875, immigration matters were generally handled by individual states, except for some minor limitations placed in immigrant numbers by the federal government. In that year a new era in immigration began with initiation of federal exclusion laws to curtail the immigration of "unacceptable"

individuals. The first law excluded criminals and prostitutes. By 1882 an additional law prevented immigration of “any convict, lunatic, idiot, or any person unable to take care of himself or herself without becoming a public charge.” A similar restriction applied specifically to Chinese laborers. In 1885 the Alien Contract Labor Law made it “unlawful to import aliens for labor under contract.” These restrictions, the inability of New York and other states to care for sick or indigent immigrants adequately, and unsuccessful attempts to manage immigration through a mixed federal-state system, led to the eventual removal of immigration control from the states and the establishment of centralized immigration oversight within the U.S. Department of the Treasury. (Pitkin 1975)

In New York, the state immigration facilities had been located at Castle Garden on the southern tip of Manhattan since 1855. At the time immigration processing was transferred to the federal government, the operations at Castle Garden were plagued with “varied charges of mismanagement, abuse of immigrants, and evasion of the laws.” As a result, Secretary of the Treasury William Windom wanted to make a complete break from the existing facilities and establish a new immigration station in New York that would be “isolated and completely under federal control.” With an island in New York Harbor as the ideal setting for the new station, the Department of the Treasury undertook a study to locate the most appropriate choice. On February 13, 1890, Secretary Windom, Solicitor Hepburn, and Collector Erhardt took a tour of the various proposed sites. (Pitkin 1975) According to a New York Times article,
“The three gentlemen went first to Castle Garden, which they inspected thoroughly. Then they boarded the Government tug, W.E. Chandler, at the Barge Office, and crossed over to Governors Island. Gen. O.O. Howard showed them all over the island. It was about a three-mile walk altogether. From there they went to Bedloe’s Island, where they spent a few moments. Then they steamed around Ellis Island. There is a quantity of gunpowder stored there, and the officials would have been compelled to throw away some freshly-lighted, special-brand cigars.” (New York Times 1890)

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

However, there was intense local opposition to using Bedloe’s Island because of the presence of the Statue of Liberty. The statue’s creator, Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, even contested the decision, calling it a “monstrous plan” and “downright desecration.” The sensitive issue of the federal government taking over immigration from New York State fueled public sentiment. Local politician Big Alderman Flynn “introduced a resolution which protested against the Government taking the island for a landing place for immigrants as a ‘wanton act of vandalism’.” He called on New York State’s congressional representatives to “do all in their power to prevent the taking of the island.” The board of aldermen passed the resolution unanimously, although it was not binding on the federal decision-makers. (Hugins 1958; New York Times 1890)

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

Construction of First Immigration Station:
On May 24, 1890, the federal government formally transferred Ellis Island from the War Department

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

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

Construction of the new buildings necessitated major site work, including the expansion of the island with the addition of landfill and the construction of docking and landing facilities. To fund this work, Congress appropriated an additional $75,000 on August 30, 1890, in addition to the initial $75,000 appropriation. The Department of the Treasury contracted various phases of the work to the W.H. Beard Company and Warren Rosevelt, both of New York City. The contractors soon began adding landfill around the island, except on the east and northeast sides. The fill material was a mixture of mud, clayey sand, and gravel and probably came from a dredging operation in the ship channel. The newly established elevation for these filled areas was approximately two to three feet above the high-water mark. In conjunction with the landfill, the contractors added more than seventeen hundred feet of docks and cribwork to the island. In 1890 they installed a breakwater on the southeast side of the island, creating a protected ferry basin. In 1891 a ferry slip, rack, and landing area were added to the basin's northwest side. The work on the ferry racks included the addition of "bridges, flows, gallow frames, hoisting chains, sheaves, wenches, platform connections, receiving platforms, backing logs, a hauling shed over the bridge at the bulkhead, a fence and gates across the ferry slip, and a shed over the side exit." By 1892, with the completion of the landfill, breakwater, and docks, the island was approximately eleven acres in size. (Pousson 1986; Unrau 1981)

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

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

On October 34, 1891, an article about the nearly completed facilities in Harper's Weekly described the island and the new immigration building as,
"two and a quarter acres in extent…long used as the naval magazine.…By necessity the island has been about doubled in size….a latter-day watering place hotel, presenting to the view a great many-

windowed expanse of buff-painted wooden walls, of blue-slate roofing, and of light and picturesque towers. It is 400 feet long, two stories high, and 150 feet wide….It is designed to permit the handling of at least 10,000 immigrants in a day, and the first story, which is 13 feet in height, is sufficiently capacious for the storage and handling of the baggage of 12,000 newcomers. Elsewhere on the island…there were, either finished or under construction, hospital buildings, bathhouse, powerhouse, kitchen and restaurant, and doctor's quarters." (Julian 1891)

The Department of the Treasury approved the completed facilities and the site was officially opened on January 1, 1892. Approximately seven hundred immigrants landed on the island during its first day of operation. Critics of the new facilities complained about the excessive construction costs, running nearly double the original budget, and the lack of architectural distinction of the main building, described by some as having "no particular style of architecture." (Unrau 1981) Victor Safford, a medical officer serving at Ellis Island at the time, published the following reminiscences of the station: "…There were several substantial stone and brick buildings on the island besides the half burned thick stone and mortar structures once used for the storage of explosives. These latter were converted into vaults for the keeping of immigration records. The other old buildings were utilized for various purposes. Some of them, enlarged and extended, formed a part of an extensive two story dormitory for detained immigrants. The hospital and the main immigration building were, however, new wooden structures. The hospital consisted of a group of one and two story buildings with sheltered verandas, arranged on the quadrangular plan. In some part of the central court, protected from the wind, rain or sun, as the need might be, a convalescent patient could almost always find comfort out-of-doors in winter or summer. The location of the main building at Ellis Island at the time when I first made its acquaintance was parallel to the present structure, but nearer the water, in fact directly alongside the ferry slip. It was a two story wooden building about six hundred feet long and perhaps one hundred feet wide with towers at each corner...." (Safford 1925)

The Department of the Treasury completed all new major building construction and remodeling of existing buildings by 1893, although additional construction projects continued at the station until 1897. Between 1894 and 1896, new cribwork bulkheads and fill were added to the east and northeast edges of the island, extending the island's size to some fourteen acres at a cost of $19,882. The fill material consisted of cinder waste from the island's new coal-fired power plant, clayey sand, and loam, and was graded at around two and a half and four feet above the high-water mark. In 1896 contractors remodeled the detention building from a single-story to a two-story structure, created a recreation area on the roof, and installed a temporary detention pen on the grounds for similar use. Other additions completed under Department of the Treasury contracts included the construction in 1897 of a new disinfecting house on the eastern side of the detention building, the installation of a covered passageway with a baggage run between the main building and ferry landing, and the addition of a landing dock on the south end of the island. In June 1897 construction on the facility ceased with the installation of underwater cables to New York City for telegraph and telephone service via Governors Island (Figures 5 and 6). (Pousson 1986; Unrau 1981)

Destruction of Facilities by Fire:
On June 15, 1897, just a few days after construction was completed, a fire destroyed most of the new immigration facility. The fire broke out during the early morning in the restaurant and kitchen building, and the flames soon engulfed the main building and other structures. The structures' wooden walls provided ample fuel for the fire. All immigrants evacuated the island within twenty minutes of the first alarm, with no loss of life. After two and a half hours, the fire consumed three to four acres of the fourteen-acre island, and by morning, only three buildings remained standing – the boiler house, the tank and coal house, and the surgeon's quarters. Some walls of the records storage office and restaurant and kitchen building also remained, and the boardwalk along the ferry basin was intact, but everything else was "a tangle of charcoal, battered and rusted iron, and ashes." (Pousson 1986; Unrau 1981; Pitkin 1975)

Surprisingly, Ellis Island's Commissioner of Immigration Joseph H. Senner was relieved that the facilities had been consumed by fire. Since the main buildings had been constructed of wood, and not masonry or iron, Senner had feared that sooner or later such an accident would overtake the structures and many lives would be lost. Although he was greatly relieved that there were no

casualties, he remarked, “A row of unsightly, ramshackle tinderboxes has been removed, and when the Government rebuilds, it will be forced to put up decent fireproof structures.” Newspaper and magazine accounts reported many citizens were equally relieved that the structures were gone, primarily because of the structures’ questionable aesthetic or architectural value. With the devastation on the island, the Bureau of Immigration temporarily transferred operations to the Barge Office, at the southeast corner of Battery Park on lower Manhattan. (New York Tribune 1897, Unrau 1981; Pitkin 1975)



Figure 5. First immigration station on Ellis Island. Buildings include (from left to right) tank and coal house, boiler house, surgeon's quarters, and main building, 1892. (CLR 2003)

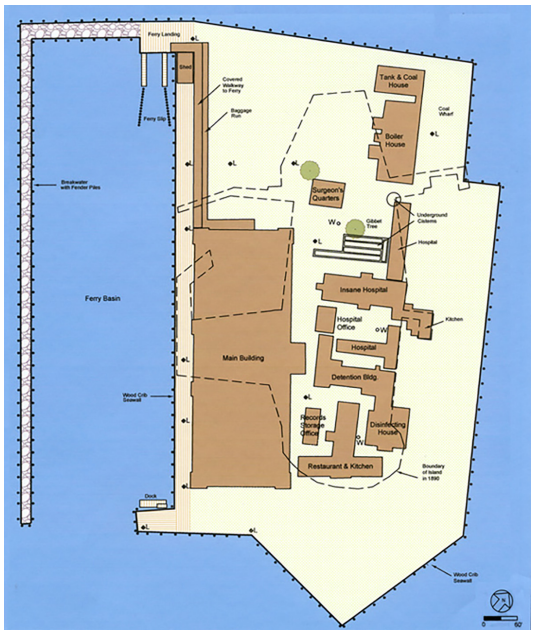


Figure 6. Ellis Island 1897 Period Plan. (CLR 2003)

SECOND IMMIGRATION STATION – INITIAL CONSTRUCTION (1897–ca.1907)

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

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

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

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

The firm also addressed the island's landscape, proposing "an ample ornamental landscape designed in a Beaux Arts style of symmetrical walks lined with allees of trees," which would underscore the importance of the immigration facilities as a governmental institution and leave a lasting impression on the newly arrived immigrant. Public response to this proposal was positive. Memories of the previous facilities often referred to as "architectural rubbish heaps," were still fresh in the public's mind. Critics from Harper's Weekly praised the Boring & Tilton plan for its addition of "much green space on the island" and the creation of a facility that would appear "comely to passing ships" (Figure 7). (BBB/ANF 1984; Harper's Weekly 1898)

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

An article in the New York Times Magazine on August 7, 1898, provided a detailed description of the new building based on the architect's plans and a scale model that had been constructed:
"The immigrant station on Ellis Island, exclusive of hospital and powerhouse, will be a palace 386 feet in length by 162 in width, with towers rising to the height of 120 feet at their apexes of gilded copper, and entrance arches 40 feet to the keystone. Owing to the tides, the first floor will be eight feet above the present level of the island; so that on calm days the structure will mirror itself in the smooth waters of the bay. A sloping greensward will rise from the top of the cribwork on the water's edge to the granite foundations. …the fact that the building stands detached and encircled by water was an advantage in some ways…it affords some of the chances for effect presented by the water court and canals at the World's Fair in showing off the buildings of the White City. The architects seem to have had those buildings in mind, at least so far as proportions are concerned. …the effect will be that the

country beckons the immigrant into the harbor with the torch brandished by [the Statue of] Liberty and then offers him the largest and finest edifice in the panorama for his landing place." (New York Times Magazine 1898)

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

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

There were numerous delays in construction of the building, caused by both contractor and governmental actions. For example, the preferred location for the new building overlapped part of the foundations of the old main building. When digging for the new foundations, the Hood Company uncovered old cisterns and underground utility corridors from both the naval magazine and first immigration station, causing unanticipated delays. To remedy the situation, Boring & Tilton prepared specifications to fill the cisterns and corridors so construction of the new foundations could proceed. (Unrau 1981; Pousson 1986)

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

After the completion of the main immigration building, the Department of the Treasury contracted for alterations to the structure on a fairly regular basis. In June 1901 Snare & Triest, Inc., of New York City, constructed a glazed porch and portico at the main entrance on the building's southwest facade. This structure protected immigrants from the elements as they proceeded from the ferry landing to the building. The porch floor was cut granite and the copper roof contained glass skylights (Figure 8). Approximately six months later, Snare & Triest installed a baggage conveyor adjacent to the portico "in a chamber forming a cellar between the dock and the main building." The portico and the conveyor were separated by granite coping with a railing on top and were both completed by April 1, 1902. In 1904 a railroad ticket office was added to the northeast side of the building to accommodate the increasing numbers of immigrants needing railway transportation after processing. (Unrau 1981)

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

The Department of the Treasury contracted for the construction of several temporary wooden structures to alleviate overcrowding, created by the increase in immigration and the numbers of detainees and visitors on the island. Sometime after 1901, the bakery and the carpentry shop were constructed northwest of the kitchen and laundry building. A waiting room for immigrants destined for New York was constructed on the north side of the connecting corridor between the kitchen and laundry building and the main immigration building. A waiting room for immigrants' friends was built on the west side of the covered walkway between the ferry
house and the kitchen and laundry building. The fenced yard north of the waiting room contained a small privy on the nearby seawall. A single-story barracks with seven hundred beds on the northeast side of the main immigration building became the largest temporary structure built on the island upon its completion in 1903. (Unrau 1981; Pousson 1986)

Island Two:
Creation of Island Two.
In order to complete the plan envisioned by Boring & Tilton, Ellis Island had to be enlarged with the construction of an additional island (Island Two) to the south and west of the existing island (Island One). Since the War Department maintained jurisdiction over the waters surrounding Ellis Island at this time, Secretary Gage submitted plans for the proposed creation of Island Two to the Secretary of War for approval. The proposal was to extend the existing island,
"one hundred and sixty feet (160') on the Southwest side of the breakwater – i.e. sixty-eight feet (68') from the West and eighty-five feet (85') from the South corner of original line of square 800 to 800 Boundary 1890, retained – running eight hundred feet (800') from the West to the South." (Gage 1897)

By late August 1897, the Secretary of War approved Gage's plan and Alfred Brooks Fry, Chief Engineer and Superintendent of Repairs for the U.S. Public Buildings Service, began preparing construction documents for the new bulkheads and landfill. The final dimensions of Island Two were enlarged slightly from the original proposal, with approval of the Secretary of War.

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

Island Two Structures.
In early February 1898, the Department of the Treasury approved initial plans for the main hospital building on Island Two and work began on installing the pilings. However, construction was soon suspended due to a funding delay by Congress. Complete funding was not acquired until March 1899 when Congress appropriated $150,000 for the main hospital building, $9,500 for the surgeon's house, and $33,340 for the hospital outbuilding. Boring & Tilton developed plans for the main hospital building, while the office of the supervising architect designed the surgeon's house and hospital outbuilding. The plans specified the use of piers on the ground and the avoidance of pilings. A small pump house was also included. After initial bids for the main hospital building came in over budget, Boring & Tilton redesigned the structure for cost savings, and Daniel A. Garber of New York City was awarded the contract on February 20, 1900. Garber finished the contract in April 1901, but only after much conflict between Garber and the authorities, culminating in the contractor having to address a number of construction inadequacies (Figure 9). (Unrau 1981)

On September 5, 1900, the Department of the Treasury awarded a contract for the construction of

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

The main hospital building accommodated one hundred twenty-five patients along with office and staff space. However, due to the budget constraints and redesign of the original plan, the completed building was not adequate to meet the needs of the immigration facility. According to Terence V. Powderly, United States Commissioner-General of Immigration at the time,
"The new immigrant hospital on Ellis Island…will not afford sufficient ward space for the service. Another pavilion is necessary for the accommodation of the patients, exclusive of those suffering from acute contagious diseases and cared for in the hospitals of the city health department under annual contract."

Powderly also suggested adding more space for officers' quarters, since the rooms allocated for this use in the new building would have to be used for wards. (Unrau 1981)

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

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

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

Landscape Improvements under Commissioner Williams.
After the completion of the main immigration building and other principal structures on both islands, Boring & Tilton developed a revised master plan for the landscape (Figure 10). A series of formally designed walks and open spaces enhanced the existing buildings. The plan was similar in style to the architects' initial design, but contained a more intricate circulation pattern with connecting passageways between the two islands and incorporated changes to the buildings' footprints and placement that had occurred during construction. However, the immediate need to enlarge the facilities due to increasing immigration and the inevitable funding shortfalls left landscape improvements far down the list of priorities. The main immigration building and other structures received generally favorable reviews for their architectural qualities by the public, but the lack of an aesthetically pleasing landscape was a blight on the facility. Criticism appearing in the local press called the island a "treeless strip of land" with some "grayish-looking buildings" – not exactly the most flattering description for the nation's premier immigration station. Despite this criticism, the Department of the Treasury failed to implement the Boring & Tilton design for the landscape. (Outlook 1902)

With the arrival of Commissioner of Immigration William Williams in 1902, the barren island

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

Landscape improvements began with the removal of construction debris and the addition of approximately seven thousand cubic yards of loam. Work crews graded the island and planted lawns. They installed scored concrete walks in front of the main immigration building and the kitchen and laundry building, extending along the southwest side of the main immigration building and connecting with rear doors. They added concrete around the powerhouse, the main hospital building, and the existing flagstaff, and installed a wider boardwalk along the edge of the ferry basin. They constructed small post and wire fences around the blocks of lawn in
front of the main immigration building, placed benches under the portico and south of the main immigration building, and added ornamental light fixtures along the boardwalk. Gardeners added greenery and color to the island by planting Ligustrum hedges and filling beds and containers with flowers (Figures 11 and 12). (Unrau 1981; BBB/ANF 1984)

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

The drastic change in the appearance of the island under Williams's direction was described in a July 12, 1903, New York Times article:
"Ellis Island, which a year ago, was with the exception of the imposing Government structures occupied by the Immigration Bureau, about the dreariest looking spot in the harbor of New York, has undergone a great change in appearance since William Williams became Commissioner. When Mr. Fitchie relinquished the Commissionership there was not a flower or a bush of any kind on the island, and the walks were not graded. To-day [sic] all is changed. The island has been divided into neat squares and crescents, in which grow blue grass, and around which a hedging of California privet is rapidly assuming substantial dimensions. Then again in the squares and crescents geraniums, nasturtiums, palms, pansies, and ferns, arranged in neat figures, have been planted, and as they are beginning to bloom, the front of the island as seen from passing ferryboats and other craft makes a very pleasing sight, and one that is sure to cause comment by people who are familiar with the way the place looked before the Williams era. Then again, on either side of the main entrances to the various buildings big iron vases of granite have been placed, and palms and various flowers planted in them. But the great attraction is the beautiful entrance [of the main immigration building] from the barge landing. This entrance is constructed entirely of iron, the pillars being fancy in shape, while the roof is of glass. Within this arcade, which extends almost clear to the waterfront, have been placed a lot of neat park benches for the use of visitors, where, seated in the shade, and where they are almost sure to get the benefit at any time of the day of a good sea breeze, the view of the city beyond and the harbor is an ideal one. The whole island is as a result of Mr. Williams's energy now what may be appropriately termed a well-regulated and unusually prettily decorated park." (New York Times 1903)

As Commissioner Williams continued to pursue funding for maintenance and improvements to the island, his ideas about the landscape began to change slightly. A rise in immigration resulted in an

increase in the number of detainees. The administration realized a need to provide an opportunity for outdoor recreation and relaxation as an alternative to indoor confinement. To accommodate this, Williams approved the addition of a roof garden with a retractable canvas awning on the southern wing of the main immigration building. Additionally, the staff encouraged immigrants to linger in the outdoor areas adjacent to the main immigration building while waiting to be processed. (Office of the Commissioner of Immigration 1903; Unrau 1981; BBB/ANF 1984)

Implementation of these small changes was apparently successful and well-received by the immigrant detainees. Commissioner Williams's 1904 report mentioned that during warm weather the detainees were,
"out of doors as much as possible, a portion of them on the westerly roof garden fitted with awnings and benches, and another portion on the broad granolithic sidewalk on the northerly side of the building where they can move about in the shade."

This commitment to provide outdoor recreation space for detainees was reinforced later in the year when,
"at the Commissioner-General's [of Immigration for the United States] suggestion special provision [was] made for the amusement of detained children by converting a portion of the roof garden into a playground, where they may enjoy fresh air and various kinds of amusements." (Unrau 1981)

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

Other reports said that in one year,
"over fifteen hundred children had come in at the station afflicted with Scarlet Fever and Measles, and that many of these diseases had been contracted on the trip…two hundred and five had died on the passage…[many] on account of the insanitary [sic] conditions of these steamships." (Burnett 1912)

In 1903 Congress appropriated $150,500 for construction of Island Three but did not immediately provide funds for construction of the hospital itself. The federal government also began negotiations with New Jersey to purchase submerged lands around Ellis Island, including an area approximately four hundred to five hundred feet south of Island Two for the construction of Island Three. New Jersey challenged the government's legal rights to the existing Ellis Island, but on November 30, 1904, the case was settled. New Jersey executed a deed to the federal government "granting all the right, title and interest of the State of New Jersey in and to land under water surrounding Ellis Island" for the sum of $1,000. The deed recorded the United States as the owner of Ellis Island and stipulated,
"The United States of America does not waive any rights or privileges which it would possess had not the [deed] been accepted, and that no rights of the grantee [New Jersey] of any kind whatsoever shall be prejudiced by such acceptance." (Pike 1963)

Alfred Brooks Fry developed specifications for construction of the new island approximately eight hundred feet from Island Two. The Department of the Treasury had previously acquired permission from the War Department to construct the new island within five hundred feet of Ellis Island, and it was feared that to gain approval for the proposed eight hundred feet distance would delay the project.

Commissioner Williams sought the advice of the Surgeon General to determine an appropriate distance from Island Two and how best to lay out the facilities to minimize contamination between patients on Island Two and contagious-disease patients on Island Three. In response, the Surgeon General indicated that an island,
"with an outside limit of 410 feet from the present island and with 200 feet of clear water space between the two islands, would be amply sufficient to insure freedom from danger of contagion according to modern ideas of hospital construction." (Wyman 1902; White, Pettus, Vaughn, Geddings and Rosenau 1902)

Also, contemporary opinion indicated that a single building was less desirable than a series of several small pavilions, where various diseases could be treated in isolation from other wards. (Unrau 1981)

In April 1905 the Department of Commerce and Labor let to New Jersey Dock and Bridge Company for construction of the island. The contractor laid boundaries for the construction of an island eight hundred feet in length by two hundred fifty feet in width with two hundred feet of open water between it and Island Two. The company dredged a fifteen-feet-deep by thirty-feet-wide trench and filled it with more than 1.2 million cubic feet of cribwork and stones. The island was formed by filling behind the cribwork with approximately sixty thousand cubic yards of dredged material including "cellar dirt, stones, clay, old masonry, etc.," and seventy thousand cubic yards of earth and "a very excellent grade of sand obtained by dredging" near the island. New Jersey Dock and Bridge completed Island Three in early 1906 and connected it to Island Two with a fifty-foot-long wooden gangway. The four and three-quarters acre island increased Ellis Island's total acreage to approximately twenty and one-quarter acres (Figure 13). (Unrau 1981; Pousson 1986)

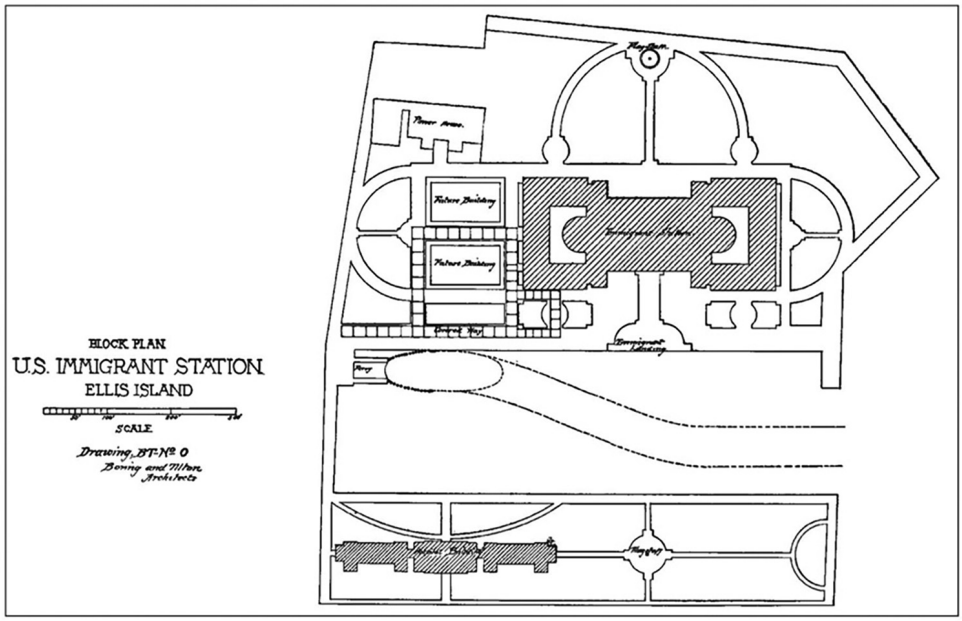


Figure 7. Boring & Tilton's early design for landscape of Ellis Island, October 1898. (CLR 2003)



Figure 8. Main immigration building with glazed porch and portico, view looking northeast, ca.1905. (CLR 2003)



Figure 9. Rear facade of the main hospital building on Island Two, view looking northeast, ca.1903. (CLR 2003)

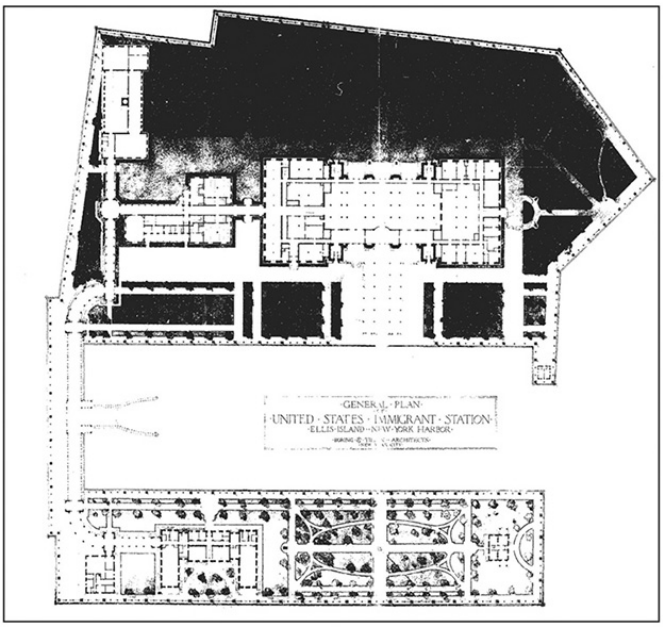


Figure 10. Boring & Tilton's revised design for landscape, ca.1902. (CLR 2003)



Figure 11. Post and wire fences and newly planted hedges surround lawn in front of main immigration building, ca.1903. (CLR 2003)



Figure 12. Landscape features on southeast end of Island One, including small flower bed, benches, flagstaff, and ornate lamp posts, 1903. (CLR 2003)

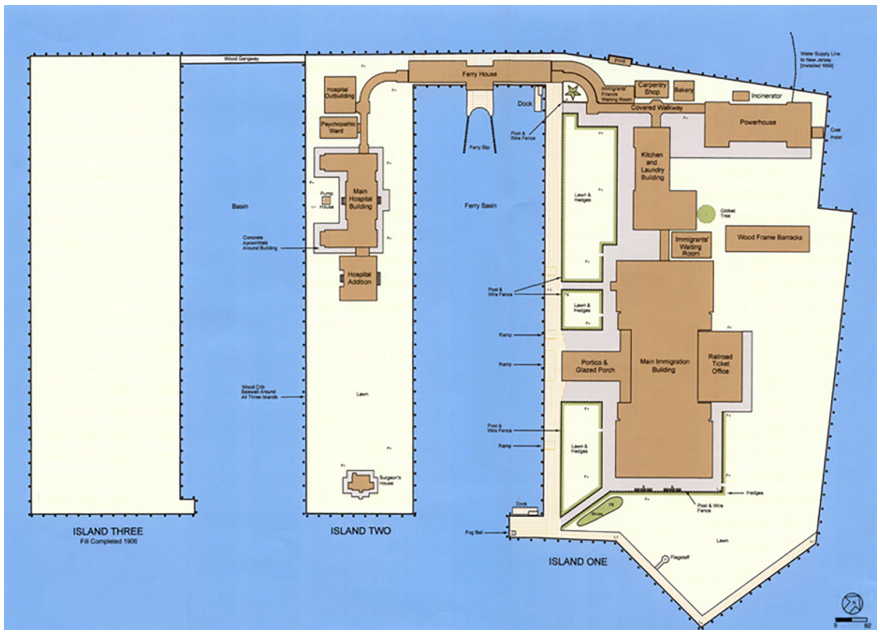


Figure 13. Ellis Island ca.1907 Period Plan. (CLR 2003)

SECOND IMMIGRATION STATION – FACILITY GROWTH (ca.1907–ca.1920)

Island One:
Baggage and Dormitory Building.
As early as 1902 immigration officials noted the inadequacy of the facilities for receiving, inspecting, and housing immigrants. The steady rise in immigration to the United States brought increasing numbers of immigrants to the island. The temporary wooden barracks installed on Island One initially alleviated some of the overcrowding of those who were detained overnight. The addition of this structure increased the island's sleeping capacity to eighteen hundred, but there was soon a need to house up to three thousand persons per night. Additionally, space for handling and storing the baggage accompanying the immigrants was limited.

After several years of funding requests, the station received a congressional appropriation of $400,000 in 1907 for an addition to the main immigration building. However, Commissioner of Immigration Robert Watchorn used the funds for construction of a separate baggage and dormitory building instead; arguing additions to the main immigration building would not adequately address the space requirements. The U.S. Public Buildings Service supervising architect developed plans for the two-story brick building, including a rooftop deck and pergola to provide outdoor space for detained immigrants. Officials from the Department of Commerce and Labor let a contract to the New York State Construction Company in January 1908, and construction on the building began in March of that year. The company sited the building near the northeast corner of the main immigration building, proceeded with construction, and completed the facility by February 1909. (Unrau 1981)

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

Greenhouse.
In September 1910 island employees erected a greenhouse on the northeast side of the main

immigration building (Figure 14). The gardener requested this facility to "decrease the amount of the annual flower bill by providing space for keeping flowers during the winter." The forty-foot-long structure was finished by early November, constructed entirely of materials recycled from other buildings on the island, and cost approximately $250. This addition was an essential element in maintaining the island's ornamental landscape. According to the Commissioner's 1913 Annual Report,
"Continued effort has been made to add to the attractive appearance of the grounds by setting out additional privet hedges and hardy plants. A small greenhouse has been erected by our own mechanics from old material, so that the Government is now able to propagate nearly all of the flowering plants needed for beds…." (Unrau 1981; Office of the Commissioner of Immigration 1913)

There were several of these beds scattered throughout the island, some dating to the initial 1902-1903 landscape improvements and others installed at later dates. Gardeners planted flowers and shrub roses along the entry path to the greenhouse, along with several climbing roses on five freestanding trellises. They used shrub roses between the baggage and dormitory building and the greenhouse in a small semicircular bed. They filled the existing star-shaped flower bed near the ferry house with begonias and protected the bed with a border of small wire hoops. Workers also installed a small pool, fountain, and flower bed in the lawn between the baggage and dormitory building and the powerhouse. Other ornamental vegetation present during this period included vines on the exterior walls of the kitchen and laundry building and the adjacent covered walkway, and numerous flower boxes and planters at several island locations (Figure 15). (BBB/ANF 1984)

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

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

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

surroundings than ever they had at home, with a view of one of the most magnificent and interesting harbors in the world added to them." (Unidentified press article 1912)

By 1915 Commissioner of Immigration Frederic C. Howe implemented additional landscape improvements. These changes increased the recreational space for detainees and increased their access to the outdoors. The Bureau of Immigration installed a wire fence along the cinder walk at the northeast seawall, added swings and other playground equipment, and created recreation spaces for both adult and children detainees. They added benches to the lawns, constructed handball courts, and encouraged outdoor activity with a series of regular Sunday band concerts on the lawn. Increased flower plantings in beds and pots enhanced the more "user friendly" landscape. The circulation system, upgraded in 1909 when the existing boardwalk was replaced with new wood, was improved again ca.1915 when concrete replaced the boardwalk on a newly rehabilitated section of seawall. (Pousson 1986; BBB/ANF 1984)

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

Island Two:
By June 1907 United States Commissioner-General of Immigration Frank P. Sargent determined that the hospital on Island Two, even with the newly completed extension, still did not provide adequate facilities for the increasing numbers of patients treated at the site. Officials proposed construction of an additional wing southeast of the recently completed addition (administration building). Called the new hospital extension, this building was similar to the main hospital building in size and appearance. Congress concurred with the recommendation and appropriated $250,000 for the project in February 1908. George W. Stoner, chief medical officer for the hospital, submitted initial sketches for the building to architects with the U.S. Public Buildings Service, but a controversy soon arose over the design. The medical staff and Commissioner of Immigration Watchorn wanted the building floors to be on the same level as the existing hospital addition (administration building), which were higher than the main hospital building, allowing room for a full-size basement in the new building. Architects wanted to maintain consistency between the facades of the main hospital building and the new structure, which would allow room for only a service basement. The issue was eventually resolved in favor of the former alternative, and the architects completed drawings for the building. The New York State Construction Company began construction in June 1908, and work was nearly complete by the spring of 1909. Cold weather delayed the pouring of concrete sidewalks and stoops until late April, but by May all construction was finished (Figure 16). (Unrau 1981)

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

As the new buildings were constructed on Island Two, immigration officials oversaw various landscape improvement projects. Concrete aprons installed around the perimeter of the buildings served as walkways and provided circulation routes. A cinder path provided circulation around the

perimeter of the island. Lawns filled the remainder of the open space. A tennis court near the surgeon's house provided recreation space for island residents and employees. Sometime after the completion of the new hospital extension in 1909, a connecting walkway covered with a wooden pergola was constructed between this building and the surgeon's house. Details of the installation and exact date of these features is unknown, however, they first appear on 1913 maps and photographs. Vines and flowers enhanced both the pergola and a circular flower bed between the pergola and ferry basin.

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

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

As building construction concluded, the landscape surrounding the newly completed hospital was gradually improved. It is unknown whether this work was contracted out or performed by immigration employees. In 1908 workers filled around the first set of completed buildings on Island Three with soil taken from the excavations of the new hospital extension on Island Two. They graded the fill, added loam, and planted a lawn. Work crews completed additional grading and lawn renovations on Island Three in 1912. However, they did not install any trees or shrubs, nor did officials develop a comprehensive plan for the island's landscape. By 1913 an established lawn existed on the north side of the island, but areas on the south side remained
rough and barren.

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

The facilities on Island Three were certainly adequate to meet the needs of the immigration station at the time of their completion, but Commissioner of Immigration Daniel J. Keefe continued to push for upgrades in his annual reports. For example, in 1909 he stressed the need for space to house aliens with "mental defects":
"Our hospital facilities, thanks to the recent construction of a contagious disease hospital on the new

island, will probably now be adequate, except that there is no proper ward for holding for observation cases in which it is suspected that the alien may be affected mentally. Certain wooden barracks are now used for this purpose. They were never intended to stand permanently, and furthermore are dangerous by reason of their inflammability." (Office of the Commissioner of Immigration 1909)

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

Granite-faced Seawall:
In Commissioner Williams's 1910 funding request to Congress, he included $150,000 for replacement of the cribwork seawall. In justifying this expenditure, Williams noted that the cribwork surrounding the island varied from two to fifteen years in age, and the reasonable life span for this type of structure was only seven years. The cribwork around Island One already showed signs of decay above the water line and according to engineers; the entire structure needed replacement with a concrete and granite seawall within the next five years. The station did not immediately receive approval for the expenditure and Williams repeatedly requested funding during the following years, with justification noting it was "desirable in the interest of economy…to encase the three islands, the life of the existing crib work above high water being very limited." (Williams 1910; Office of the Commissioner of Immigration 1913)

Congress eventually approved funding, and in 1913 the Department of Labor began initiating a series of contracts to replace the existing wooden crib, rock-filled bulkheads with a new concrete seawall with granite facing. The work covered several phases of construction. The Chief Engineer for the Bureau of Immigration recommended starting Contract #1 on the north side of the ferry basin. This section cost approximately $115,000 to complete. Contract #2 began soon after the completion of Contract #1, and covered the portion of wall directly opposite the ferry basin on the northeast side of Island Two. Placed on the water side of the existing bulkhead, the new seawall installed under Contracts #1 and #2 reduced the width of the ferry basin by approximately thirty feet. Contract #3 extended the wall around the southeast and southwest sides of Islands Two and Three, bridging the basin between the two islands. Contract #4 consisted of the section of wall on the northeast side of the baggage and dormitory building on Island One, northeast of the existing bulkhead. Upon completion of Contract #4, a wooden ramp spanned the space between the existing bulkhead and the new seawall, and the area was eventually filled. A new section of thirty-four fender piles along the face of the seawall allowed boats to moor alongside the building in this area. Contract #5 extended the seawall from northeast of the baggage and dormitory building to the north side of the powerhouse on Island One, and included additional landfill between the existing bulkhead and the new seawall (Figure 17). By 1921 the concrete and granite seawall enclosed most of Island One. However, the southeast point of the island did not receive the new wall until the 1930s, and the seawall was not completed on the northwest sides of Islands Two and Three until 1934, when landfill was added for the construction of the new immigration building. (Williams 1910; Pousson 1986; Unrau 1981; Office of the Commissioner of Immigration 1913)



Figure 14. View looking northeast at the greenhouse, showing adjacent rose & shrub beds and trellises over path. At image left is the baggage and dormitory building, ca.1913. (CLR 2003)



Figure 15. Small flower bed on northwest corner of ferry basin on Island Two with ornamental summer bulbs, view looking west, 1913. Within two years this bed would make way for the American Red Cross recreation building. At image left is the chimney of the hospital outbuilding. (CLR 2003)



Figure 16. View of Island Two, looking west from Island One, showing (left to right) new hospital extension, administration building, and original main hospital building. Note the boardwalk, wooden cribwork seawall, and fender pilings in foreground, ca.1913. (CLR 2003)

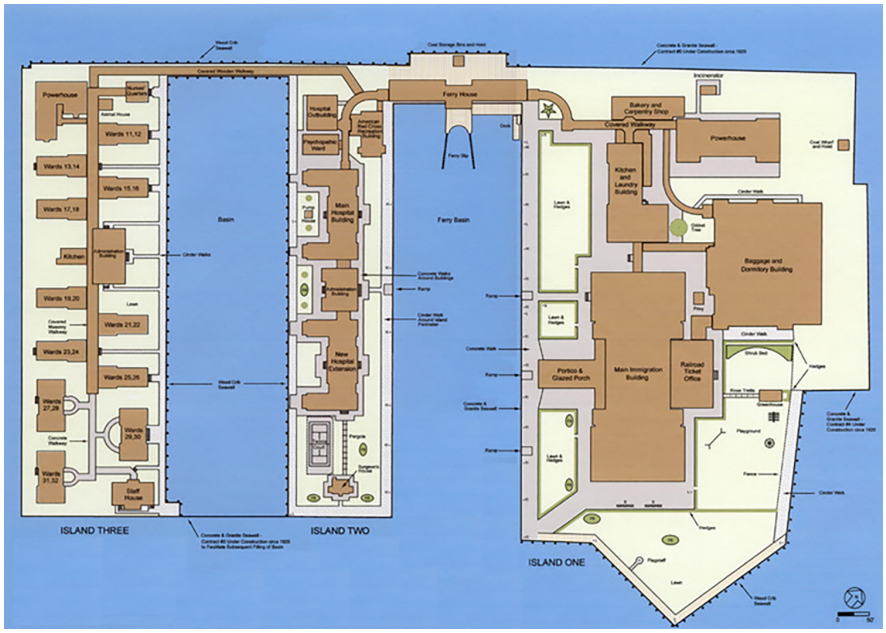


Figure 17. Ellis Island ca.1920 Period Plan. (CLR 2003)

SECOND IMMIGRATION STATION – DETENTION FACILITIES (ca.1920–1954)

Landscape Changes During the 1920s:
Throughout the 1920s, various immigration commissioners sought funding to maintain the facilities and to provide for growing numbers of detainees. Once again, the provision of recreation space for

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

A major project completed during this time was filling the area between Islands Two and Three to create additional recreation space, which began in the early 1920s but was not completed until the early 1930s. Fill consisted primarily of cinders from the coal-fired island ferry (Figure 18). William Bean, who lived on Island Three as a child during the 1920s, recalled,
"After every trip or two they [ferryboat crewmen] would clean out the ashes and clinkers, and load them into these two-wheeled carts…the kind they used to push concrete in….And they'd wheel those over on the bridge from the ferry slip between the first and second island, and dump them into the slightly diminishing lagoon there. And the ashes would be hot. And they would…bring forth deposits of sulfur and whatnot….There'd be beautiful growths of crystals and steam coming up." (Bean and Bean 1994; Pousson 1986)

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

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

Landscape Improvements Under Commissioner Corsi:
In 1931 Edward Corsi began serving as Ellis Island's Commissioner of Immigration, remaining in the position until January 31, 1934. Corsi, an immigrant himself, had passed through Ellis Island as a child. His consistent support for improving the island's facilities and grounds led to the implementation of numerous changes to the landscape throughout the 1930s. Much of the work was funded and/or constructed through the Public Works Administration (PWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA) programs. In his memoir, "In the Shadow of Liberty," Corsi described the importance of the appearance of the island and how immigrants perceived the facility. "I had advocated from the very beginning of my office the need of publicizing and humanizing the Island in the eyes of the entire world. As it is the port of entry to the largest city in the largest country of the Western World, it seemed in keeping that the physical appearance of that port should bear witness to the importance of the city and country whose door it opened. That Ellis Island should be to the immigrant, as well as to the American, an inspiration – a tribute to our physical development as exemplified in adequate buildings, well-planned grounds, satisfactory sanitary and housing conditions – was to my mind the first, but by no means the only or the most important, consideration."

(Schlesinger 1983; Corsi 1935)

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

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

Ellis Island Committee Recommendations:
In 1933 Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins established "a nonpartisan committee of prominent citizens" to complete a thorough analysis of the operation and facilities at Ellis Island. The objective of the Ellis Island Committee, as defined by Perkins, was "not to find fault with the administration at Ellis Island, but to assist in effecting greater economy in operation and to improve the general amenities in the administration of the immigration law." Commissioner Corsi worked closely with the committee and many of his suggested improvements were considered for inclusion as the committee prepared its report to the Secretary. (Pitkin 1975)

By the end of 1933, the Ellis Island Committee's Subcommittee on Buildings, Grounds, and Physical Equipment issued a preliminary appraisal of the condition of the island landscape. This evaluation focused on increasing recreation potential for the detainees and specifically recommended adding more recreation areas, improving fencing, adding shelters and comfort stations, installing turfgrass on the newly filled recreation area between Islands Two and Three, and improving landscaping on Island Two and near the new water tanks on Island One. In 1934 the Ellis Island Committee issued its final report on the island's administration and facilities. Included were the subcommittee's landscape evaluation and several additional recommendations addressing the deteriorating conditions present since the late 1920s (Figure 19). ("Report of the Subcommittee on Buildings, Grounds and Physical Equipment for Ellis Island" 1933)

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

still in use as an immigration facility.

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

George F. Driscoll also constructed a new immigration building under contract with the Department of Labor. This structure, intended to aid in segregating the different classes of immigrants and detainees, was located on the northwest side of the new ferry building. Construction required the addition of a new section of seawall and landfill north of the new ferry building. Installation of the support pilings began in 1934, and Driscoll completed the structure in 1935-1936. The building’s original plans reflected continued emphasis on immigrants’ recreation needs. Chester H. Aldrich, consulting architect for the project, specified sun porches on the north and south ends of the building as well as a playground and gardens in the surrounding landscape. Even though these initial plans were never implemented, the newly filled ground around the building was used for recreation. Two tennis courts took the place of the proposed garden on the south end of the building (Figure 20). (Unrau 1981; BBB/ANF 1984)

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

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

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

Federal Project No. 61 was one of the landscape projects already under way when the committee issued its recommendations. This project included adding “2,397 linear feet of granite facing concrete seawall to complete the enclosing of Ellis Island, as authorized by Congress 1911,”

installing “required fill and soil for the eastward extension of Island No. 1 if new sea wall is built,” and removing “2 feet of present cinder fill between buildings of Is. No. 2 and replace with 18 inches of sub soil and 6 inches of top soil and plant with grass and shrubs. Also similar treatment for north side of Is. No. 1 and south side of Is. No. 3.” The proposed cost was $549,000. In 1934 an updated cost estimate added repairs of the existing seawall, dredging in the ferry slip, and various landscaping for Islands Two and Three. It is not clear whether Federal Project No. 61 was fully implemented as proposed, but numerous projects on all three islands throughout the mid- to late 1930s addressed items included in this proposal. (Ickes 1933; “Sea Wall Grading, Etc.” 1934)

Due to the increased emphasis on projects with landscape components, the INS began developing a more comprehensive planning strategy for the entire island. Officials proceeded with the early development of an island-wide master plan, which would evolve during the remainder of the decade. A 1935 memo between the Department of the Treasury and the WPA district office identified several items a master plan should address. The memo described an accompanying 1935 drawing titled “Drawing T-L,” however; this plan has not been located. The work described in the memo is consistent with subsequent changes made in the landscape, indicating landscape projects completed in the late 1930s were the direct result of this early planning. (Note: Recommendations from the 1935 memo are listed in CLR 2003: Table 5.2)

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

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

When the U.S. Public Health Service closed the hospital facilities in 1951, the Coast Guard continued using the recreation facilities until the entire island was shut down in 1954. (Unrau 1981; BBB/ANF 1984)

Work performed as a result of the committee’s recommendations improved walkways on Island One and added a small amount of vegetation to the landscape. In 1936 and 1937 contractors replaced existing concrete walks around the island. New walks on the ferry basin side of the kitchen and laundry building and west wing of the main immigration building replicated the 1902 walk layout. Directly in front of the main immigration building, a rectilinear layout of lawns and walks with four quadrants and a small circular planting bed replaced the larger circa 1932 circular planting bed. One walkway adjacent to the south side of the main immigration building was removed. A decrease in the width of the walkway/apron on the north and east sides of the building provided a space for planting between the path and the building. Existing hedges and a row of poplar trees parallel to the ferry basin remained intact, while new shrubs filled the space between the front of the building and the new walkway. Some plant species specified for various locations on the island included Juniperus sabina tamariscifolia (savin juniper), Ligustrum ibota (ibota privet), Viburnum cassinoides (witherod

viburnum), Spiraea latifolia (meadowsweet), Ampelopsis veitchi (ampelopsis), and Ligustrum ovalifolium (California privet). The relocated flagstaff on Island One, at the "point" of the landfill southeast of the main immigration building, was enhanced with a new concrete walk circling the base. Contractors installed larger areas of concrete following specifications calling for reinforced concrete, five inches thick, scored in four-foot squares, with three-eighths-inch expansion joints set twenty feet apart. Smaller walks provided circulation between the new greenhouse, incinerator, and recreation shelter. (Unrau 1981; BBB/ANF 1984; "Invitation, Bid, and Acceptance, U.S. Standard Form 33" 1937)

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

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

Structural additions and alterations in the mid- to late 1930s also followed committee recommendations and had impacts on the landscape. The committee proposal to raze the surgeon's house and the adjacent pergola on Island Two and construct "a new pavilion for housing hospital staff" was partially implemented. The Department of Labor approved removal of the structures sometime between 1936 and 1940; however, a new facility was not built. It is unknown if the adjacent tennis courts were removed with the house, but they were no longer extant by 1940. The addition of sun porches on wards E (13-14), A (17-18), B (19-20), and F (23-24) increased available outdoor space for Island Three tubercular patients. WPA contractors completed this work between 1936 and 1939. Although the committee recommended locating porches on both the first and second floors, it is unclear if they were constructed as specified. Contractors also added a covered masonry walkway between the powerhouse on Island One and the powerhouse on Island Three, replacing the previous wooden structure. This renovation established a permanent covered masonry circulation route between all three islands. (Unrau 1981)

Landscape projects remained a priority to the end of the decade. In 1938 the INS budgeted $6,500 for installation or maintenance of "topsoil, hedges, trees, fertilizer, materials for walks." By May 1939 WPA designers developed a detailed landscape plan for the areas surrounding the hospital buildings on Island Two. This plan called for a highly ornamental landscape of shrub and flower beds, reminiscent of the extensive flowers installed on Island One during Commissioner William Williams's tenure. Some of the specified shrubs included Ilex crenata (Japanese holly), Pyracantha coccinea (scarlet firethorn), Rosa rugosa (rugosa rose), and Myrica carolinensis (bayberry), with annual color provided by blue Petunia x hybrida (petunia) and mixed colors of Portulaca grandiflora (moss rose). The plan marked existing two- to three-inch caliper Populus (poplar trees) along the ferry basin for relocation. A row of Platanus orientalis (Oriental plane tree) was proposed for the edge of the ferry basin and groupings of Pinus nigra (Austrian pine) were to be added in the lawn at the island's southern end on the former location of the surgeon's house. Despite the detail of the design, there is no documentary evidence it was ever implemented (see CRL 2003: Appendix B). (Miscellaneous Note 1938)

Implementation of the 1939 Planting Plan:
In October 1939 the Office of the Supervising Architect for the Federal Works Agency's Public

Buildings Administration developed a comprehensive planting plan for Ellis Island addressing all three islands in detail (Figure 21). This plan focused on a large-scale approach, emphasizing placement of trees and shrub groupings over the detailed design of small-scale flower beds. It built upon the various landscape projects implemented during the previous decade and reflected the changing use of the facilities, particularly on Island One. Since the mid-1920s, the primary function of the main immigration building had been as a detention station with immigration activities taking a secondary role. The addition of the new immigration building was intended to shift immigration activities to the northwest corner of the ferry basin. The main immigration building would no longer be the focal point of the island. Its main entrance shifted from the central doors to the building's southwest corner. The 1939 plan, with symmetrical rows of Platanus occidentalis (American plane tree) along both sides of the ferry basin's edge and reduced size of the large gathering space adjacent to the main immigration building, enhanced this change by focusing attention toward the end of the ferry basin and the new immigration building. Even though the new immigration building was never used for its intended purpose and immigration activities continued to be housed in the main immigration building, the planting plan did not change. As work on the landscape continued in 1940, implementation generally followed the 1939 plan as originally designed, although not all elements of the plan were installed. (BBB/ANF 1984)

The most significant element of the 1939 planting plan was the use of two tree species in large numbers. The design specified Platanus occidentalis for rows along the lawns on the south and east sides of the main immigration building, along the north side of the hospital complex on Island Two, and along both sides of the recreation space between Islands Two and Three. The majority of the trees located on the plan were installed over the next few years, however, Platanus acerifolia (London planetree) was used as a substitute in the field. The design specified Quercus palustris (pin oak) for use around the northwest end of Island One, around the new immigration building, and in a regular pattern between the buildings on Island Three. Many of these trees were planted on Island Three, but not all of them were installed around the new immigration building. The design also specified two shrub species, Ligustrum amurense (amur privet) and Ligustrum ibota regelianum (ibota privet), however, it is not clear if these were installed in the landscape.

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

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

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

Throughout the 1940's war years, detention remained the primary focus of the immigration station. The number of detainees on the island peaked at approximately eight hundred. Landscape maintenance was not the priority it had been during past eras, although the INS and Coast Guard put some effort into maintaining trees and other vegetation installed according to the 1939 plan. The detention areas on Island One were the least aesthetically pleasing locations on all three islands and even the inclusion of the baseball field did not help the

desolate appearance of the main yard adjacent to the main immigration building. A 1942 New York Times Magazine article described the condition as,
"bleak and treeless…a pretty dreary place. It is fenced on the two sides that lie open to the bay….The other two sides are shut in by the red brick walls of the administration building. The corral thus enclosed is a large rectangle of made land, as flat as a floor, with a dust-gray surface and not a spot of green anywhere…." (New York Times Magazine 1942)

This assessment remained accurate throughout the remainder of the decade.

Landscape Changes During the 1950s:
On March 1, 1951, the U.S. Public Health Service closed the hospitals on Islands Two and Three due to a steady decrease in patient numbers. However, it maintained a small infirmary on the island for the detainee population. That same year, the Coast Guard returned to the island and established the Ellis Island Port Security Unit. It occupied the hospital on Island Two as offices and crew quarters, altered the administration building to accommodate a galley and mess hall, and used a few of the buildings on Island Three for file storage.

During the early 1950s, the INS and Coast Guard focused on maintaining the existing facilities and landscape, making minimal changes. There were a few additions added by both groups, including a 1952 fire protection system with hydrants on all three islands, additional guardhouses on Island One, an additional reserve fuel oil tank on Island One northeast of the powerhouse, and a small greenhouse on the southwest side of ward K (32) on Island Three. The most noticeable change to the landscape was the maturation of many trees and shrubs planted during the previous decade (Figure 22). (Pousson 1986)

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

The Coast Guard maintained the landscape surrounding the buildings it occupied since there was no civilian crew to do the work. Each guardsman had a specific job on the island such as delivering the mail, doing the laundry, working in the operations room, monitoring communications, or maintaining the grounds. Additionally, some of the guardsmen who were prisoners in the brig often maintained the lawns on the island. According to Charles M. Allmond, III, who was a Coast guardsman stationed at Ellis Island in 1953-1954, the island's landscape, was well-maintained during this period. On Island Two there was a lawn bordered with "rows of sycamore trees…and a large parade ground behind the U.S. Coast Guard buildings, which was used for reviews and musters." Park benches along the seawall allowed off-duty guardsmen to "sit and watch the harbor traffic and get a beautiful view of the New York skyline." Purchasing records indicate consistent expenditures made by the Coast Guard throughout the 1940s and 1950s supported landscape improvements and maintenance. There are numerous entries for purchases of grass seed, flower bulbs, bedding plants, shrubs, fertilizers, insecticides, and grounds maintenance equipment, indicating maintenance of the landscape continued to be an important consideration on the island (see CLR 2003: Appendix C). The Coast Guard also continued to use the tennis courts near the new immigration building. (Hornberger 1991; Miller and Iles 1991; Allmond 1983)

By 1954 both the INS and Coast Guard operations on Ellis Island were shut down and the island was abandoned (Figures 23 and 24). The previously well-maintained landscape quickly became

overgrown with vegetation. Invasive trees like Betula (birch) and Ailanthus altissima (tree of heaven) were introduced to the island by birds or other methods of seed dispersal and spread rapidly. This was especially true for Islands Two and Three and between the baggage and dormitory building and powerhouse on Island One (Figure 25). (BBB/ANF 1984)

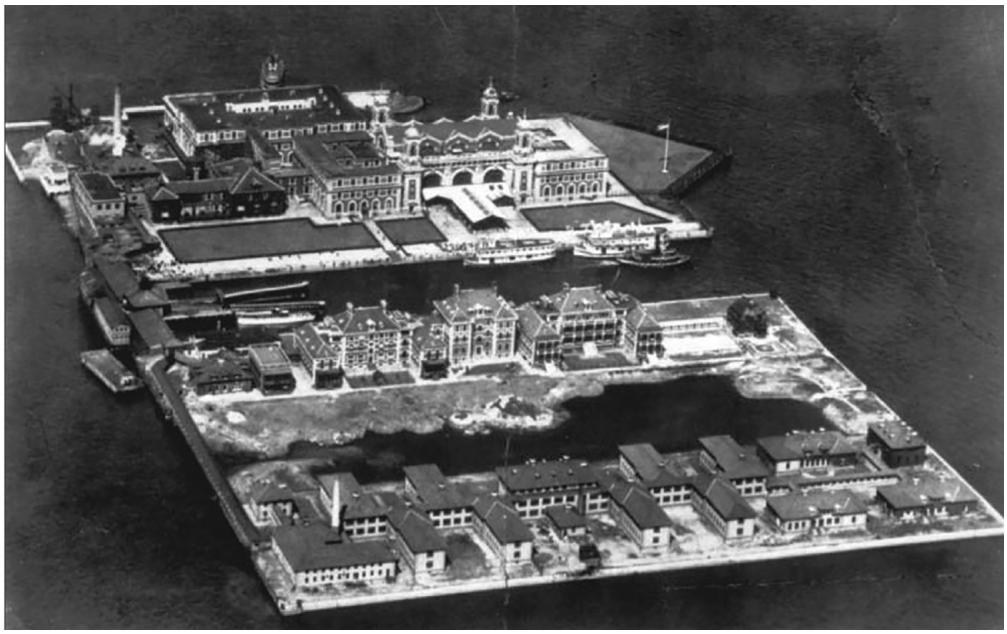


Figure 18. Aerial photo showing area between Islands Two and Three, partially filled, early 1920s. (CLR 2003)

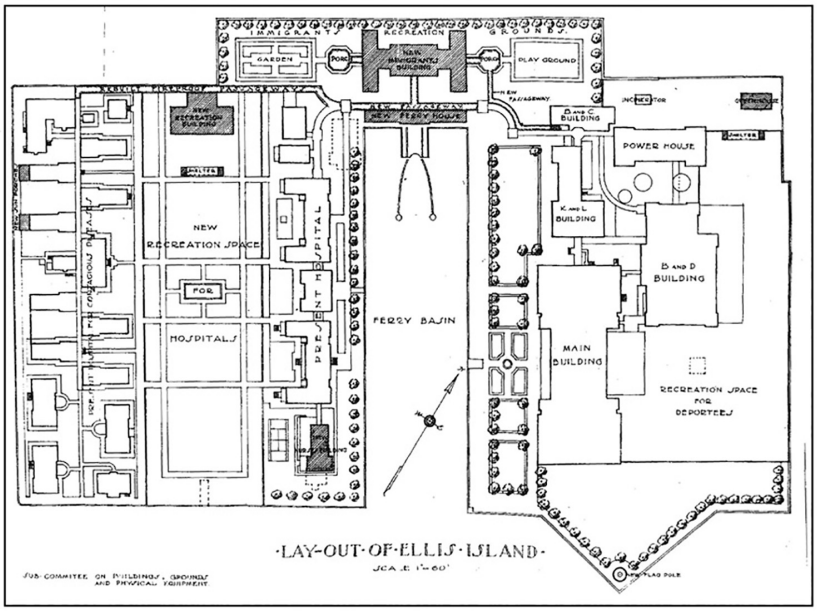


Figure 19. Plan of Ellis Island accompanying 1934 Ellis Island Committee final report. (CLR 2003)



Figure 20. Aerial photo showing completed new ferry building and new immigration building on northwest side of island, February 1936. Note the basin between Islands Two and Three is completely filled. (CLR 2003)

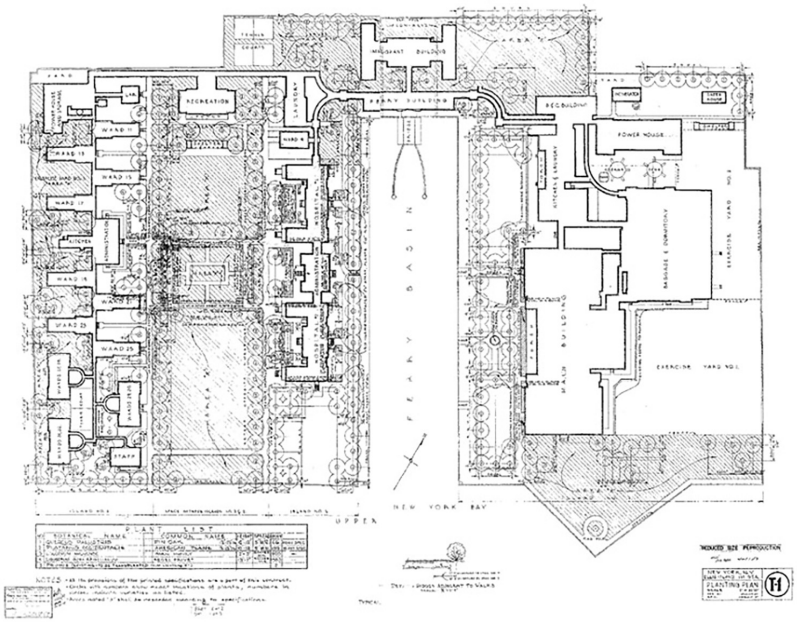


Figure 21. 1939 Planting Plan developed by U.S. Public Buildings Service, Office of the Supervising Architect. (CLR 2003)



Figure 22. Maturing trees along ferry basin on Island One, ca.1950s. (CLR 2003)

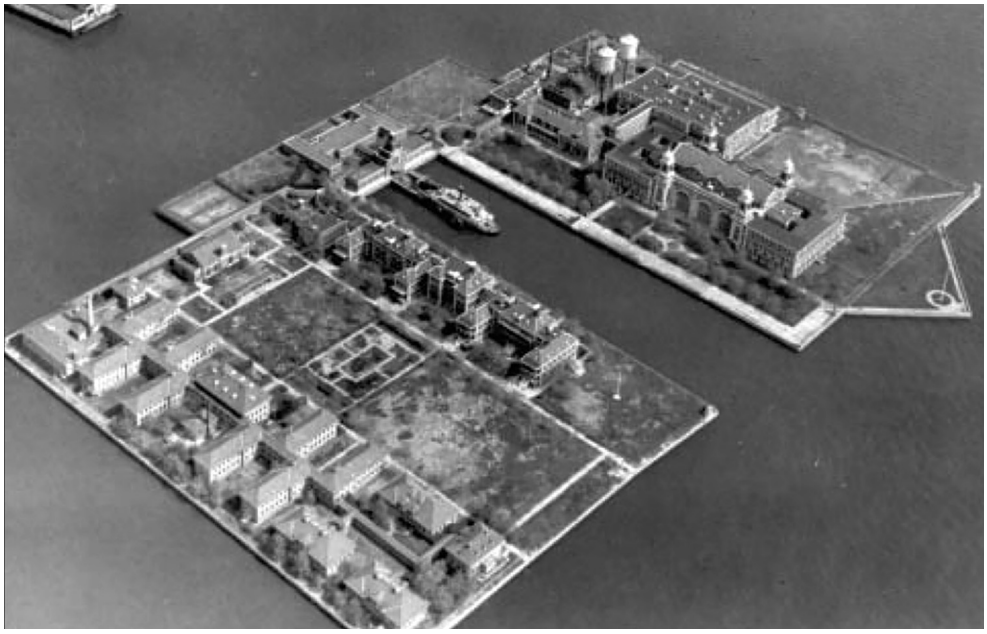


Figure 23. Aerial photo of Ellis Island, 1954. (CLR 2003)

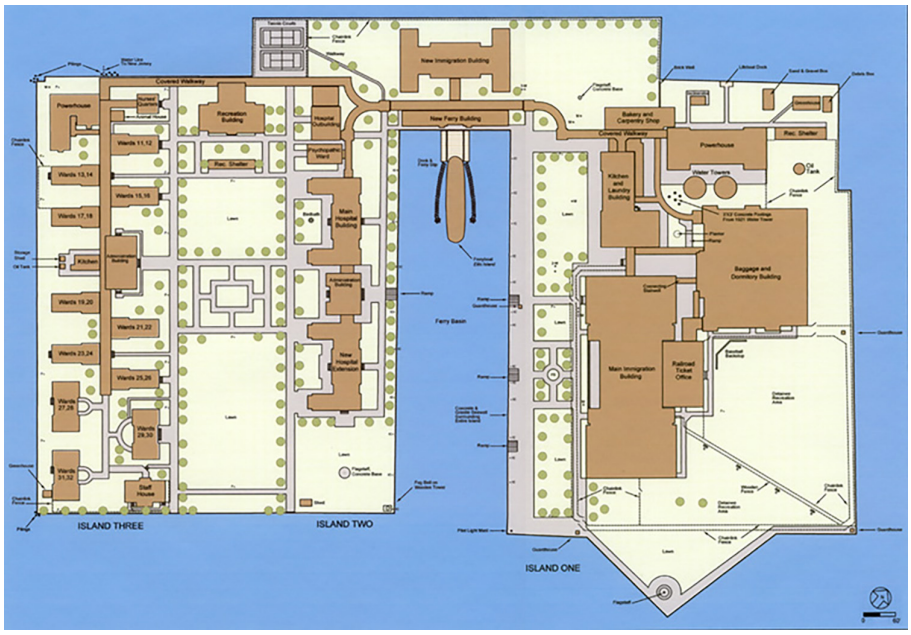


Figure 24. Ellis Island 1954 Period Plan. (CLR 2003)



Figure 25. After the island's closure, the open lawn between Islands Two and Three became filled with mature grasses and shrubby growth due to lack of maintenance. View looking south, ca.1958. (CLR 2003)

POST-IMMIGRATION PERIOD (1954–2025)

Early National Park Service Planning:
Throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, the General Services Administration (GSA) tried unsuccessfully to dispose of Ellis Island by soliciting proposals for reuse and/or redevelopment of the site. Finally, the U.S. government stepped in on May 11, 1965, when President Lyndon B. Johnson

signed Proclamation 3656 adding Ellis Island to the national park system and securing the island's future as a historic property. The National Park Service (NPS) began planning to address the complex issues involved in the preservation and/or rehabilitation of the island's facilities. Several plans emerged over the ensuing years addressing pertinent issues such as whether to preserve or demolish existing structures, what amenities should be provided for the anticipated visiting public, and the overall vision for the future use and development of the island.

In 1966 Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall appointed New York architect Philip Johnson to oversee redevelopment of the island. Since the site had been essentially abandoned for a decade, a lack of maintenance had taken its toll on the facilities. With heat and utilities shut down for some time, leaky roofs and damp conditions led to quick deterioration of the buildings' interiors. The island was plundered by "harbor pirates" who managed "to sneak ashore and carry off chairs, desks, metal piling and anything else that was portable," while vandals defaced or destroyed features that could not be easily removed. The seawall cracked and failed in various locations, and vegetation continued to grow unchecked throughout the island. Johnson took the decaying state of the facilities into account and developed a proposal in which the main immigration building, kitchen and laundry building, and hospital complex on Island Two were preserved as ruins and "vines would be encouraged to grow around and through the buildings…creating a sense of nostalgia." All other facilities, including the hospital wards on Island Three, the extant landscape features, and historic vegetation, were to be removed. Johnson recommended extensive new tree plantings for the areas surrounding the remaining buildings in an effort to create a more traditional parklike setting. Proposed new facilities included a pavilion, restaurant, and large memorial to immigrants tentatively called "The Wall of the Sixteen Million." With the plan receiving mixed reviews from the public, the NPS determined its completion would likely exceed the funds appropriated for the island's rehabilitation. As a result, Johnson's plan was never implemented (Figure 26). (Pitkin 1975)

In the meantime, the island's facilities continued to deteriorate, and something had to be done if any of the island's important features were to be saved. Consequently, a NPS planning team of architects, landscape architects, museum technicians, and historians convened in 1968 to develop a master plan. Although NPS management stressed the Johnson plan should not influence the study, the resulting 1968 Master Plan retained some of the same components as the earlier plan (Figure 27). The Master Plan emphasized the rehabilitation of the main immigration building at the expense of other resources on the island. It expanded on the earlier ideas of enhancing the island's park-like appearance by calling for the removal of nearly all extant buildings and landscape features to allow for the creation of numerous public use areas, including a memorial plaza, picnic areas, and an open space for "immigrant celebrations." The plan provided for rehabilitation of previously landscaped areas in front of the main immigration building to create an appropriate setting for the structure. Proposed additions to the landscape included a greenhouse, maintenance facility, and residential structures on the northwestern corner of Island One, all "well screened from visitor use areas." The changes to Islands Two and Three were more substantial, since all existing buildings and features were slated for removal. Proposed additions included a promenade around the islands, "a raised, informally landscaped area" providing space for "viewing the harbor, lunching, and strolling," and "a central open space" for folk dancing and other activities. Other suggested additions included a pavilion, portable stage, band shell, and concession area. The area adjacent to the new immigration building was to be a transition zone between the contemplative area on Island One and the active areas on Islands Two and Three. This zone included the rehabilitated ferryboat Ellis Island; a sculpture garden, plaza, and reflecting pool highlighting immigrants' contributions to the country; and a transportation hub for connections to Liberty State Park and Manhattan. ("A Master Plan for Ellis Island" 1968)

Realizing that full implementation of the 1968 Master Plan would take several years, and believing Ellis Island was "too important historically to continue to lie unused," the planners developed an interim plan for "controlled use by limited numbers of visitors." This plan provided visitor access to Island One by ferry and participation in a short interpretive program in the examination room of the main immigration building, including interpretive displays, a film, and a chance to "stroll to the northeast corner of the island and enjoy the spectacular view of the Manhattan skyline." Access to the rest of the island would be restricted. The requirements to implement the interim plan were minimal and included rehabilitation of the ferry basin seawall, a structural inspection and cleanup of

the main immigration building to ensure visitor safety, negotiation of a concession contract for ferry service, and the installation of temporary restrooms. Planners intended to proceed with implementation of the 1968 Master Plan after the interim public access and interpretation program were in place. ("A Master Plan for Ellis Island" 1968)

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

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

In 1976 the NPS continued making improvements and completed several projects. Contractors dredged the ferry basin, constructed a new dock, and began stabilizing deteriorating sections of the seawall. Workers removed forty thousand bags of debris from Island One as part of a general cleanup of the grounds and buildings. The main water lines between the island and Jersey City were improved and the sewage treatment system was upgraded with construction of new septic tanks and a leach field on the northwest edge of Island One, between the bakery and carpentry shop and the new immigration building. Visitors began coming to Island One in 1976, but Islands Two and Three remained closed. Although many of the original plantings from the 1940s remained, including the original rows of Platanus acerifolia, the NPS undertook minimal vegetation management on these islands. A limit of one hundred thirty persons per tour capped yearly visitation to Ellis Island to less than seventy-five thousand (Figure 28). (Pousson 1986; BBB/ANF 1984)

In 1980 the NPS let a contract to begin extensive masonry repairs to the main immigration building, which would continue throughout the decade. In 1984 it awarded a contract to the Ehrenkrantz Group for the completion of a comprehensive rehabilitation of the interior and exterior of the building. This project soon became the costliest renovation of a historic structure in United States' history. Rehabilitation plans included proposed alterations to the landscape, so in 1983, the architectural firm of Beyer Blinder Belle initiated a field survey of existing landscape conditions for inclusion in a historic structure report for the main immigration building (see CLR 2003: Appendix C). Subsequent landscape alteration included the creation of a terraced outdoor concession area on the southeast end of the building. Contractors raised the existing grade to allow universal access to this terrace from within the building. They also added a new entry portico on the south facade of the building, which was reminiscent of the style of the original 1901 glazed porch and portico. The construction of this feature necessitated additional landscape changes including alteration of the walkway, installation of planting areas in the walks on either side of the portico, and the reestablishment of lawn under the extant trees between the building and ferry basin. (BBB/ANF 1984)

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

as the Ellis Island Immigration Museum (now the National Museum of Immigration) (Figure 29).

In 1989-1990, the NPS designated an area north and east of the main immigration building, the location of the former detainee recreation yard, as a memorial space to erect a American Immigrant Wall of Honor. The initial memorial consisted of copper panels engraved with the names of donors to the Statue of Liberty / Ellis Island Foundation attached to the top of the seawall. However, the horizontal panels became routinely covered with sea bird guano, making them hard to read and requiring frequent cleaning. In 1993 contractors removed these panels and began construction of a new Wall of Honor. They constructed phase one of this project as a circular wall of stainless-steel panels, located east of the outdoor concession area and main immigration building. Phase two added a row of linear panels nearby in 1998-2001 (Figure 30). During the construction of the Wall of Honor, NPS archeologist excavated in the area, uncovering some of the original Fort Gibson walls. Upon completion of the excavation, a section of the fort's wall remained exposed for interpretive purposes

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

Changes Since the 2004 CLI:
On October 29, 2012, Hurricane Sandy caused severe damage to infrastructure located in the Main Building basement and other rehabilitated structures, and severely damage several portable trailers. Much of the island was inundated, which resulted in significant erosion and piles of debris. This damage has since been repaired. The ferry building and the hospital outbuilding and laundry have been rehabilitated through a partnership with Save Ellis Island, Inc. Most of the hospital complex buildings have yet to be restored and are only accessible to visitors on a limited basis by reserved hard-hat tours offered by Save Ellis Island, Inc.

The 27.5-acre cultural landscape of Ellis Island is maintained as such by park staff and occasionally through volunteer projects. Landscape-related projects completed since 2004 include:
• 2008: (PEPC 21915, Remove and Re-install Bell Mast, Ellis Island). Feature now called Pilot Light Mast, non-historic bell removed).
• 2017: (PMIS 201065, Repair Storm Damages on Ellis Island and to the Statue Mall and Plaza)
• 2018: (PMIS 224214, Rehab Current Paved Areas on the North End of Ellis Island (Island 1)
• 2018: (PMIS 211568 / PEPC 83515, Stabilize Ellis Island Seawall)
• 2018: (PMIS 243720, Maintain/Sustain Park Grounds and Walkways - Liberty and Ellis Islands)
• 2020: NPS Arborist Incident Response (AIR) team and park staff: 123 trees were hazard pruned and 12 severely deteriorated trees were removed. (PMIS 227084, Correct Deficiencies and Implement Cyclic Maintenance of Trees on Ellis Island)
• 2020: Tree #20. (PEPC 95729, Remove Two Hazard Trees)
• 2020: (PEPC 94647, Remove Concrete Pavers and Relocate Benches by Ellis Island Wall of Honor)
• 2021: Tree #s 53, 105. (PEPC 101065, Remove Two Trees from Ellis Island and Prune Canker Stain-Infected Limbs)
• 2022: (PMIS 292611, Design & Install Protective Barrier at 3 Lawn Panels on Ellis Island One)
• 2022: Around 115 feet of new wall sections will be constructed in a single line, parallel to the existing 1998 expansion, and located adjacent to the baggage and dormitory building at Ellis Island. Project will include sidewalks. (PMIS 322698, Construct Final Wall of Honor Expansion at Ellis Island)
• 2023: Replaced approximately 2,300 square feet of maintained lawn with concrete sidewalk at the northeast corner of Ellis Island, near the Wall of Honor. (PMIS 327978 / PEPC 108860, Perform Miscellaneous Site Improvements at Ellis Island)

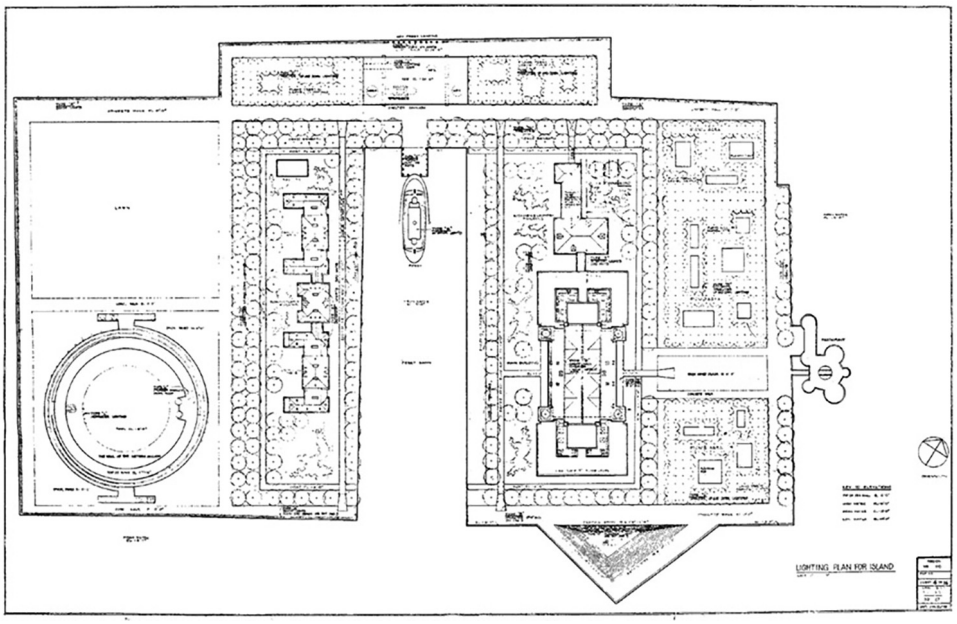


Figure 26. Philip Johnson plan developed for rehabilitation of Ellis Island, 1966. (CLR 2003)

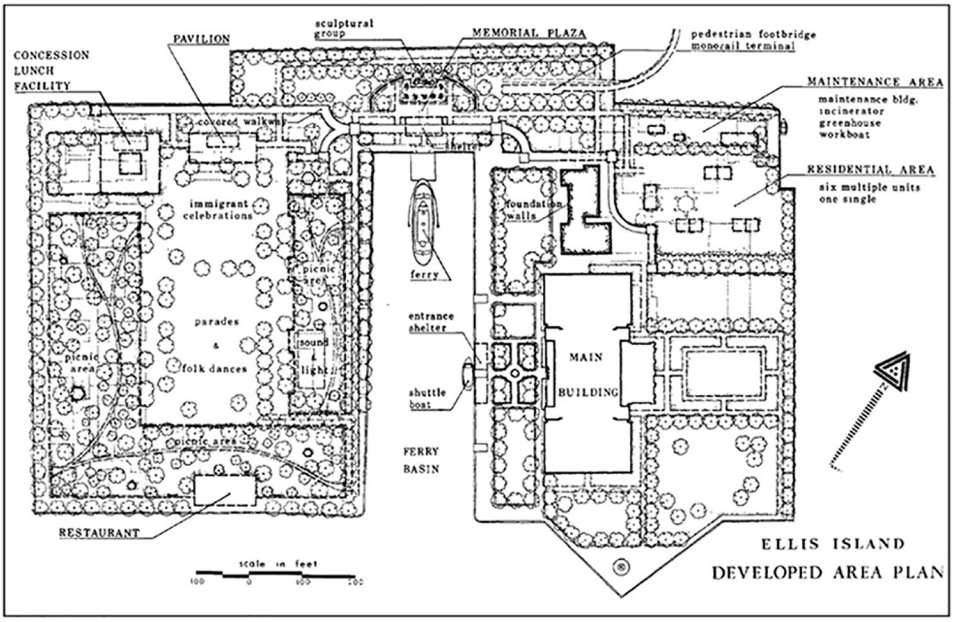


Figure 27. The 1968 NPS Master Plan for Ellis Island, like the Johnson plan, proposed the removal of many historic structures and landscape features to develop park-like setting favoring interpretation and recreation. (CLR 2003)



Figure 28. By the spring of 1978 overgrown vegetation had been cleared on Island One and initial facility improvements provided limited visitation. However, Islands Two and Three remained abandoned and off-limits to visitors. (CLR 2003)



Figure 29. Visitors arrive at Ellis Island Immigration Museum (now National Museum of Immigration) in the renovated main immigration building, 1990. (CLR 2003)



Figure 30. Linear addition to Wall of Honor completed in 2001, August 2002. (CLR 2003)

Uses

Functions and Uses:

Major Category	Category	Use/Function	Historic	Current	Primary
Defense	Military Facility (Post)		Yes	No	No
Education	Interpretive Landscape	Interpretive Landscape	No	Yes	Yes
Government	Government Office	Government Office-Other	Yes	No	Yes
Health Care	Clinic (Dispensary)		Yes	No	No
Recreation/Culture	Museum (Exhibition Hall)	Exhibit	No	Yes	No
Education	Interpretive Landscape		No	Yes	Yes
Health Care	Hospital (Mental Hospital)		Yes	No	No
Landscape	Leisure-Passive (Park)		No	Yes	No
Landscape	Scenic Landscape	Overlook	Yes	Yes	No
Education	Research Facility (Laboratory)		No	Yes	No
Vacant (Not In Use)	Vacant/Maintained (Mothballed)		Yes	Yes	No
Transportation	Water-Related	Vessel	Yes	Yes	No
Government	Government Office	Visitor Contact (Visitor Center)	No	Yes	No

Public Access:

Public Access: Other Restrictions

Public Access Narrative:

Visiting Ellis Island requires purchase of a ticket through the only authorized concessionaire Statue City Cruises, which runs from Manhattan and Liberty State Park and includes a stop at Liberty Island. A vehicular bridge from New Jersey to the island is not open to the public. The buildings and grounds on Islands Two and Three are currently closed to the public, but can be visited by private tour through Save Ellis Island, Inc.

Associated Ethnographic Group

Ethnographic Study Status: No Survey Conducted

Ethnographic Narrative:

Refer to the Resource Management Plan, p. 18 for information regarding oral histories recorded in the early 1970s, 1985 and 1991. The program is ongoing, with over 2000 interviews conducted to date. The museum collection of the Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island includes approximately 390,000 individual artifacts and more than one million archival records that represent the cultural and natural histories of both Liberty and Ellis Islands. (FD 2018: 8)

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

The historic integrity of Ellis Island is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance, 1794-1965 with the existing conditions as assessed in 2005. Many landscape characteristics and features from the period of significance remain today. Landscape characteristics identified for Ellis Island are spatial organization, land use, topography, circulation, buildings and structures, vegetation, views, and small-scale features. Of the identified characteristics, four categories stand out as most significant for the preservation of Ellis Island's cultural landscape: spatial organization, circulation, buildings and structures, and vegetation.

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

INTEGRITY

The National Register of Historic Places defines integrity as the ability of a property to convey its significance through physical resources. The National Register program identifies seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Retention of these qualities is necessary for a property to convey its significance; however, not all seven aspects must be present to retain integrity. The following evaluation is based on an 1794-1965 period of significance for Ellis Island.

Location:
Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. Although the size of Ellis Island has increased throughout its history as an immigration station, the location of the island, the immigration station, and the landscape in New York Harbor have remained unchanged. Therefore, the site retains high integrity of location.

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

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

Materials:
Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. All types of construction materials, including paving, plants, and other landscape features, as well as the materials' placement in the landscape, are included under this aspect of integrity. The quality, condition, and placement of the materials found on Ellis Island is mixed, resulting in a moderate integrity of materials. In areas of the island that have not been rehabilitated, original construction materials remain, including the brick and granite building facades, concrete walks, small-scale landscape features, and a concrete and granite seawall. However, many of these materials are in a deteriorated state or are no longer present in their historic location and may soon be lost. In areas that have already been rehabilitated, some of these original materials remain, but many original features were replaced during renovations. Numerous concrete walks are extant from the historic period, particularly on Islands Two and Three, but new sections of walk replaced some of the originals on Island One during the rehabilitation of the main immigration building. Nearly all sections of galvanized chainlink fencing dating to the historic period have been removed. Plant materials dating to the 1940s, including mature trees and some shrubs, are still extant in their original locations on all three islands. The concrete and granite seawall around the island remains intact, with some sections repaired or replaced since its construction.

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

Feeling:
Feeling is the property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. The Ellis Island landscape has moderate integrity of feeling to the immigration period. At the height of the station's operations, the island was generally well-maintained and orderly. The physical plant was in a good state of repair, and the landscape was designed and maintained to reinforce the island's status as an important governmental facility. Currently, the island landscape is only highly maintained at locations where visitors are likely to gather or view it, specifically portions of Island One around the renovated structures and areas on Islands One and Two bordering the ferry basin. Other parts of the island, especially around the abandoned structures on Islands Two and Three, remain in a derelict state, although work has been taken to stabilize these historic features. The removal of overgrown vegetation has improved the feeling of orderliness and control exhibited by the relatively well-maintained facility that was present during the historic period. Feeling has also been maintained on Island One by the continued influx of visitors into the landscape, re-creating the feeling of the busy, crowded island that existed historically during peak immigration periods.

Association:
Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. The Ellis Island landscape maintains high integrity of association. The remaining landscape design, characteristics, and features primarily date to the historic immigration period, with minor alterations to the landscape resulting from various stabilization and rehabilitation projects.

Landscape Characteristics and Features:
The next section presents an analysis of landscape characteristics and their associated features and corresponding Historic Structures Inventory (HSI, formerly List of Classified Structures) names and numbers, if applicable. It also includes an evaluation of whether the feature contributes to the property's National Register eligibility for the historic period (1794-1965) contributes to the property's historic character, or if it is noncontributing, undetermined, or managed as a cultural resource.

Landscape Characteristic: Buildings and Structures

Historic Conditions (to 1965):
Buildings are elements constructed primarily for sheltering any form of human activity in a landscape, while structures are elements constructed for functional purposes other than sheltering human activity. The first buildings and structures on the island were associated with European colonists during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who added residential and commercial buildings, freshwater wells, and structures needed for resource gathering like docking and staging areas for fishing activities. In 1774 the island's owner, Samuel Ellis, improved the buildings and structures, possibly adding additional ones.

In the mid-1790s, during a time of increased tensions between the United States and Great Britain, the State of New York built earthen fortifications (Fort Gibson) and jetties. Initial support facilities included a magazine, store, "hot-shot" furnace, and barracks, later followed by officer quarters, sentry box, kitchen, walls, and a rail line. In the 1850s the military replaced the commercial and residential buildings on the island's north end with a new group of structures, including a gun carriage house, barn, gunners' house, and privy. By 1870 the military utilized the entire island for support of its magazine, converting existing barracks and officers' quarters into additional magazines and a tank house, and adding new structures including a loaded shell house, powder house, steam fire engine house, kitchen, woodshed, carpenter shop, icehouse, and pigpen. It also constructed two new docks and a boathouse, and extended the railway.

Between 1890 and 1897, the Ellis Island landscape changed dramatically as immigration became the island's primary land use, and the federal government constructed a new facility to process the thousands of immigrants passing through the port of New York each year. To accommodate this expansion, the Department of the Treasury removed many of the existing naval magazine structures but retained some of the other buildings.

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

On June 15, 1897, a devastating fire destroyed nearly all the buildings on the island. Congress soon authorized funds for the construction of new fireproof structures, and a contract was awarded to the New York architectural firm of Boring & Tilton to design the second immigration station. Boring & Tilton's plan featured an impressive French Renaissance brick immigration building with limestone trim, and the addition of a second island and hospital. Boring & Tilton proposed extensive landscaping for both islands, but it was never implemented. Contractors completed the construction of the second island, known as Island Two, in December 1898. On December 17, 1900, the second immigration station opened on the original part of Ellis Island, now called Island One. The hospital on Island Two opened in 1901.

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

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

Thirty-four major buildings remained on Ellis Island when it closed in 1954, many of which were in a state of disrepair. The roster on Island One included the main immigration building (1900), kitchen and laundry building (1901), powerhouse (1901), baggage and dormitory building (1909), bakery and carpentry shop (1915), incinerator (1911), new greenhouse (1934), and recreation shelter (1937). The original greenhouse had been removed. A new ferry building (1936) and new immigration building (1936) constructed on landfill between Islands One and Two replaced the old ferry house. On Island Two, the main hospital building (1901), hospital outbuilding (1901), psychopathic ward (1907), administration building (1907), and new hospital extension (1909) remained. The surgeon's house and American Red Cross recreation building had been removed. A new recreation building (1937) and recreation shelter (1937) stood between Islands Two and Three. Extant buildings on Island Three included an administration building (1907), powerhouse (1907), kitchen (1907), staff house (1908), animal house (1908), nurses' quarters (1909), and eleven hospital ward buildings (1907-1909). Other extant structures included four guardhouses around the detainee recreation yard, a sand and gravel box and debris box adjacent to the greenhouse, and two water tanks and one oil tank southeast of the powerhouse on Island One. The ferry slip, along with the moored ferryboat Ellis Island, remained in the ferry basin. On Island Three a small greenhouse (ca.1950) was adjacent to Ward K (31-32), and storage shed and small oil tank stood near the kitchen. The concrete and granite seawall, completed during this era, enclosed the entire island.

Existing Conditions:
Thirty-two historic buildings remain on Ellis Island in varying states of rehabilitation, stabilization, or abandonment. On Island One, four of the six historic buildings are rehabilitated completely or partially – the main immigration building (1900), kitchen and laundry building (1901), powerhouse (1901), and bakery and carpentry shop (1915) (Figures 33, 34, 35). The baggage and dormitory building (1909) has not been renovated and the recreation shelter (1937) has been converted into an oil storage building (Figure 36). Between Islands One and Two, the new ferry building (1936) has had exterior restoration and internal stabilization, and the new immigration building (1936) now houses park offices (Figure 37). On Island Two, all extant buildings are stabilized, including the main hospital building (1901), psychopathic ward (1907), administration building (1907), new hospital extension (1909), and recreation shelter (1937) (Figures 38, 39, 40). Additionally, the hospital outbuilding (1901) has had exterior restoration and interior stabilization. The recreation building (1937) is stabilized and currently serves as a museum storage facility for NPS collections. On Island Three, all buildings have been stabilized, including the administration building (1907), powerhouse (1907), kitchen (1907), animal house (1908), staff house (1908), nurses' quarters (1909), and eleven hospital ward buildings (1907-1909) (Figures 41, 42). The small greenhouse (ca. 1950) on Island Three is no longer present, although remnants of this structure are under a layer of rubble and vegetation.

In the ferry basin, the historic ferry slip has been replaced with a modern dock, and floats next to the submerged wreck of the ferryboat Ellis Island. The granite seawall that surrounds the entirety of the island is intact due to recent rehabilitation projects (Figure 43). A ca.1902 bluestone retaining wall

is located in front of the kitchen and laundry building to support the lawn area (see Figure 35). Stone remnants of Fort Gibson are visible within a rectangular-shaped excavated area on the northeast side of Island One (Figure 44).

Several other nonhistoric structures are also extant on the island. A reconstructed water tower is present between the baggage and dormitory building and the powerhouse (Figure 45). A small NPS guardhouse is located at the ferry landing near the main immigration building's portico and a concession kiosk is located on the terrace at the south corner of the building. The Wall of Honor (1993, 2001), which features curved and linear segments, occupies much of the southeastern corner of Island One (Figure 46). A metal maintenance building is located south of the recreation shelter and a utility area containing fuel tanks and HVAC units is located north of the powerhouse on Island One (see Figures 34, 36).

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

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Baggage and Dormitory Building	97561	Contributing	022570		Location	60027	Yes
Bakery and Carpenter Building	97562	Contributing	022576		Location	60025	Yes
Bluestone Curb/Retaining Wall	97563	Contributing	040473		Location	74365	Yes
Connecting Wing	97566	Contributing	022569		Location	74374	Yes
Contagious Disease Hospital Administration Building (Administration Building - Island Three)	97558	Contributing	022703		Location	73989	Yes
Contagious Disease Hospital Kitchen (Kitchen)	98763	Contributing	022676		Location	73996	Yes
Contagious Disease Hospital Isolation Ward J (Wards 27/28)	92028	Contributing	022681		Location	74002	Yes
Contagious Disease Hospital Isolation Ward K (Wards 31/32)	93551	Contributing	022683		Location	74004	Yes
Contagious Disease Hospital Isolation Ward L (Wards 29/30)	93550	Contributing	022682		Location	74003	Yes
Contagious Disease Hospital Measles Ward A (Wards 17/18)	98788	Contributing	022674		Location	73994	Yes

Contagious Disease Hospital Measles Ward B (Wards 19/20)	98789	Contributing	022677		Location	73997	Yes
Contagious Disease Hospital Measles Ward C (Wards 15/16)	98787	Contributing	022673		Location	73993	Yes
Contagious Disease Hospital Measles Ward D (Wards 21/22)	98790	Contributing	022678		Location	73998	Yes
Contagious Disease Hospital Measles Ward E (Wards 13/14)	98786	Contributing	022672		Location	73992	Yes
Contagious Disease Hospital Measles Ward F (Wards 23/24)	92067	Contributing	022679		Location	73999	Yes
Contagious Disease Hospital Measles Ward G (Wards 11/12)	98785	Contributing	022671		Location	73990	Yes
Contagious Disease Hospital Measles Ward H (Wards 25/26)	92068	Contributing	022680		Location	74001	Yes
Contagious Disease Hospital Mortuary (Animal House)	97560	Contributing	022669		Location	73988	Yes
Contagious Disease Hospital Staff House (Staff House)	98781	Contributing	022684		Location	74005	Yes
Fort Gibson Ruins (Fort Gibson Walls)	98759	Contributing	040490		Location	60042	Yes
Greenhouse ruins - Island Three	98761	Contributing					No
Hospital Administration Building (Administration Building - Island Two)	97559	Contributing	022664		Location	73983	Yes
Hospital Outbuilding	98762	Contributing	022702		Location	74013	Yes
Kitchen and Laundry Building	98764	Contributing	022571		Location	60061	Yes
Main Immigration Building	98766	Contributing	022568		Location	60011	Yes
New Ferry Building	98768	Contributing	022580		Location	60099	Yes
New Hospital (Main Hospital Building)	98765	Contributing	022663		Location	73982	Yes
New Hospital Extension	98769	Contributing	022665		Location	73984	Yes
New Immigration Building	98770	Contributing	022660		Location	60100	Yes
Office Building and Laboratory (Nurses' Quarters)	98772	Contributing	022675		Location	73995	Yes
Powerhouse - Island One	98773	Contributing	022572		Location	59976	Yes
Powerhouse - Island Three	98774	Contributing	022668		Location	73987	Yes

Psychopathic Ward	98775	Contributing	022662		Location	73981	Yes
Recreation Building	98776	Contributing	022666		Location	73985	Yes
Recreation Shelter - Between Islands Two and Three	98777	Contributing	022667		Location	73986	Yes
Recreation Shelter - Island One	98778	Contributing	022574		Location	60057	Yes
Refrigerating Plant	98779	Contributing	040487		Location	60021	Yes
Seawall (Concrete and Granite Seawall)	97565	Contributing	040472		Location	74364	Yes
Sunken Ferry Boat 'Ellis Island'	98782	Contributing					No
American Immigrant Wall of Honor	98784	Noncontributing					No
Concession Kiosk	97564	Noncontributing			Location	74007	Yes
Entry Portico, Main Immigration Building	97567	Noncontributing					No
Fuel Tanks and HVAC Units	98760	Noncontributing					No
Maintenance Shed	98767	Noncontributing			Location	60098	Yes
NPS Guardhouse - Island One	98771	Noncontributing			Location	61203	Yes
Water Tower	93552	Noncontributing	040491				No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 33. Main immigration building, Island One, view looking northeast. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 34. Power house and HVAC units, Island One, view looking east. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 35. Kitchen and laundry building, and bluestone retaining wall, Island One, view looking east. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 36. Oil storage building (image right, formerly recreation shelter), maintenance building, and baggage and dormitory building, Island One, view looking south. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 37. New ferry building and ferry slip between Island One and Island Two, view looking northwest. Note the absence of the historic walkway that fronted the hospital buildings. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 38. Hospital extension (image left), hospital administration building, and hospital building, Island Two, view looking west. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 39. Rear facades of the Hospital Extension (image right) and Hospital Administration Building, Island Two, view looking northwest. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 40. Recreation Shelter, Islands Two/Three, view looking north. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 41. Ward K (31/32) and covered walkway, Island Three, view looking west. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 42. Administration building, Island Three, view looking west. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 43. Seawall, Island Two, view looking west. Note the historic cast iron mooring cleats on the seawall. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 44. Remnants of Fort Gibson, Island One, view looking north. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 45. Reconstructed water tower, Island One, view looking southwest. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 46. Portion of the Wall of Honor, Island One, view looking north. (OCLP 2025)

Landscape Characteristic: Circulation

Historic Condition (to 1965):

Circulation refers to the spaces, features, and applied material finishes that constitute systems of movement in a landscape. The arrival of European colonists during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries introduced new land uses, which resulted in resulted in new circulation features that residential and commercial buildings to docks and wharves. During the military period, a series of plank walks, including walks along the edge of the seawalls, provided circulation throughout the island. Railway lines used for transporting ammunition and supplies linked buildings to the main dock and with one another. Boats to one of two main docks on either the north or south side of the island provided access to and from the island.

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

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

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

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

Existing Conditions:
Ellis Island's circulation systems have seen alterations from their historic conditions. Island One retains many elements of the historic walkway system with an overlay of contemporary improvements and upgrades. The area in front of the main immigration building retains a geometric pattern of concrete walkways emphasized by formal plantings (Figure 47). The construction of a new portico created six small planting areas within the walkways, three on each side, and added an accessible entry into the main immigration building (Figure 48). Construction of the Wall of Honor and concession terrace added new walkways and an accessible entry to the southeast end of the

main immigration building (Figure 49, see Figure 46). Walkways on Islands Two and Three remain intact but are in extremely poor condition from nearly fifty years of neglect (Figure 50, 51). The park has removed the walkway fronting the three hospital buildings (see Figure 37). Parts of the covered walkway system on Island One are rehabilitated but covered walkways on Islands Two and Three continue to deteriorate. The historic ferry slip has been replaced with a modern dock for park police boats and is no longer used by visitors (see Figure 37). Instead, visitors arrive by boat at the seawall directly in front of the main immigration building and disembark onto one of the ferry ramps built into the sidewalk (Figure 52). The addition of the vehicular bridge to Liberty State Park allowed for the development of gravel and paved parking areas for staff between the new immigration building and the powerhouse (Figure 53).

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

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Concrete Walkways and Aprons [Concrete Walkways, Historic]	93553	Contributing	040494		Asset	29874	Yes
Concrete Quadrangle Walkways	209961	Contributing	040496		Location	74402	Yes
Corridor (C-1)	93555	Contributing	040481		Location	60110	Yes
Corridor (C-2)	93556	Contributing	040482		Location	60110	Yes
Corridor (C-3)	93557	Contributing	040483		Location	73976	Yes
Corridor (C-4)	93558	Contributing	040484		Location	73977	Yes
Corridor C-4 (Extension)	93560	Contributing	040485		Location	73978	Yes
Corridor (C-5)	93559	Contributing	040486		Location	73979	Yes
Corridor C-7	93561	Contributing	022579		Location	73980	Yes
Corridor C-8	93563	Contributing	022661		Location	74011	Yes
Corridor C-9	93562	Contributing	022670		Location	74015	Yes
Ferry Basin Ramps	93564	Contributing	040471		Asset	46878	Yes
Water Transportation Access Routes	93567	Contributing					No
Concrete Walkways, Steps and Accessible Ramps - Contemporary	93554	Noncontributing					No
Parking Lots	93565	Noncontributing			Location	60105	Yes
Bridge	209960	Noncontributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 47. The main walkway on Island One connects to the ramps associated with the ferry basin, view looking northwest. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 48. The portico and accessible ramp at the main immigration building are flanked by three planting beds. Island One, view looking north. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 49. Abstract sculptures of immigrants stand alongside the patio and concession kiosk at the east end of the main immigration building, Island One. View looking west. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 50. Walkways on Islands Two and Three are overgrown and uneven. View looking northwest. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 51. Geometric paths are laid out in the filled open space between Islands Two and Three, view northeast. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 52. Visitors arrive and depart by boat at Island One, view looking southeast. In the far background is the white-colored pilot light mast that once supported a beacon and bell. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 53. A vehicular bridge connects Island One to New Jersey. Paved and gravel staff parking lots flank both sides of the bridge approach. View looking southwest. (OCLP 2025)

Landscape Characteristic: Land Use

Historic Condition (to 1965):
Land uses are the principal activities in a landscape that form, shape, and organize the landscape as a result of human interaction. Prior to European contact and colonization, Little Oyster Island (Ellis Island) may have been permanently settled by native peoples. However, given the abundance of natural resources in the area around the island and more suitable locations for settlement, it is more likely that they used the island primarily for seasonal harvesting and hunting.

In 1630 Dutch colonists purchased Little Oyster Island from local Native Americans. The arrival of European colonists resulted in new land use patterns and incremental changes to the landscape to accommodate increasingly permanent human occupancy and fishing uses. In 1774 Samuel Ellis, a New York merchant, acquired the island and retained possession of it until his death in 1794. Ellis's improvements included construction of several buildings for residential and commercial use, among them a tavern.

In 1794 the threat of war with France and Great Britain persuaded the State of New York to secure a portion of Ellis Island as part of its harbor defense, along with Fort Wood on Bedloe's (now Liberty) Island, and the West Battery at the tip of Manhattan. Later named Fort Gibson, the main part of the fort was on the island's south end and housed the storage facilities for powder and ammunition shells, while residential areas for naval personnel were concentrated in buildings on the island's northern end. The tensions with Great Britain eased and the fort was never used in battle, but by the late 1790s, there was a similar threat of war with France, and in response the state upgraded and strengthened the harbor fortifications. In 1808 the state purchased the remainder of the island from Samuel Ellis's heirs through condemnation, after which it deeded the island to the federal government. Additional upgrades occurred at the fort during the War of 1812 and after, but again there was no battle action. An interstate agreement in 1834 declared Ellis Island and neighboring Bedloe's Island part of New York State, even though both islands were on the New Jersey side of the main ship channel.

As the Civil War began in 1861, the fort's primary role shifted from defense to ammunitions storage. Most of Fort Gibson was dismantled and replaced with a naval powder magazine. Defense were temporarily upgraded again during the Civil War, after which the Navy used the entire island to support the magazine. Features included barracks and quarters, docks, rail lines, guardhouses, shops, and even a large garden area.

In 1890 the federal government assumed full responsibility for the reception of immigrants at the Port of New York and commissioned a study of New York Harbor to determine the best location for a federal immigration depot. Officials considered Castle Garden at the southern tip of Manhattan, the site of the state-administered immigration station since 1855, inadequate for a new federal facility. After examining potential locales, they chose Ellis Island as the most appropriate site. On April 11, 1890, Congress appropriated $75,000 for the removal of the naval magazine, the addition of landfill, and the construction of a new immigration station. On January 1, 1892, the Bureau of Immigration formally opened the new immigration station for the processing of steerage passengers; first- and second-class cabin passengers were processed by bureau staff onboard ship. The Department of the Treasury completed construction on the immigration station in early 1897, but later that year a fire destroyed nearly all of the buildings, prompting Congress to authorize funds to rebuild the station.

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

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

Throughout the decades between 1920 and 1954, Ellis Island's landscape changed dramatically. Landfill projects during the 1920s and 1930s increased the island's size to 27.5 acres, which included filling in the basin that separated Islands Two and Three. The partial implementation of a comprehensive plan in later years finally provided a sense of overall order and continuity in the landscape. Changes in immigration patterns and island operations directly influenced how the landscape evolved and was maintained.

By 1940 the landscape's appearance began to reflect the island's diminishing role. Military land use returned during World War II and later through U.S. Coast Guard occupation of parts of the island. Just prior to abandonment in 1954, officials expressed less concern for the landscape than they had previously shown. This landscape, installed and maintained by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the U.S. Coast Guard, would soon have no caretaker and become overgrown and nearly unrecognizable as a designed landscape. Upon closure of the immigration station, institutional, residential, and military uses ended. The designation of Ellis Island as a national park in 1965 stimulated NPS planners to develop numerous rehabilitation options for the island.

Existing Conditions:
From 1965 to the present, the Ellis Island landscape continues to evolve. The island's vegetation became wild and overgrown when the station was abandoned, but other features like walkways on Islands Two and Three remained relatively unchanged. Various master plans guided preservation and construction projects in the 1970s and 1980s, primarily on Island One. Plans for Islands Two and Three were proposed but none were implemented.

The initial focus of the NPS was Island One, namely the rehabilitation of the main immigration building and its surrounding landscape for visitor use. With the opening of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum in 1990 (now the National Museum of Immigration), the NPS added interpretation and commemoration as new land uses for the island. Implementation of these new uses resulted in numerous landscape additions like the Wall of Honor, concessions areas, crowd-control features, and signage. The current focus has been to stabilize, develop, and maintain the buildings and landscape in a manner that preserves the site's significance while providing the services required and expected by the visiting public. The park considers Islands Two and Three as part of the island's historic setting, and has stabilized the empty buildings. Park planning emphasizes this direction by exploring adaptive reuse of select buildings and landscape features in a manner that is compatible with the island's historic integrity and character, as well as current security and budget considerations (Figure 32).

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

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 32. Visitor land uses are focused on Island One (image right) while Island Two (image left) and Three are closed to the public. View looking northwest. (OCLP 2025)

Landscape Characteristic: **Natural Systems and Features**

Historic Condition (to 1965):
Natural systems and features are the natural aspects that have influenced the development and physical form of the landscape, and can include geology, geomorphology, hydrology, ecology, climate, and native vegetation. Ellis Island was originally composed of glacial till approximately 15,000 years ago. The island boasted a diverse animal and plant community prior to European settlement. Many of the island's resources contributed to the subsistence of precontact human populations, but the fish and shellfish of the Hudson River estuary were of special importance in this regard, as native peoples relied on these resources for seasonal food gathering.

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

As the island was developed, first for military use and later as an immigration station, all traces of natural systems and features were erased. They were supplanted directly by cultural development that supported the use of non-native vegetation. The loss of the island's shoreline came about with the deposition of fill and the subsequent need for seawalls. This caused the loss of estuarine zones that supported native flora and fauna populations. The changing island landscape created new zones that encouraged upland plant species at the expense of the estuarine ones.

Existing Conditions:
Today, geese, gulls and pigeons currently inhabit many areas of the island (Figure 31). These birds are considered pests; goose guano stains many public surfaces, creating an annoyance for visitors. Gull and pigeon guano stains many of the buildings and contributes to their deterioration. Additionally, layers of pigeon guano in the mostly empty buildings of Islands Two and Three pose a health hazard. Goose habitation is discouraged via the use of a dog patrol throughout the island. Other methods of mitigation are used to discourage nesting on Island One buildings, but buildings on Islands Two and Three are left unprotected. Ducks, in smaller numbers, are also found on Ellis Island. In addition, barn owls have been found nesting in buildings.

Evaluation:
As Ellis Island was developed for military, immigration, and interpretive uses, the natural shoreline was replaced by seawalls, thus limiting flora and fauna populations to the open spaces between buildings. The existing natural systems and features do not contribute to the historic character of the site.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 31. Wildlife on Islands Two and Three, view looking northwest. (OCLP 2025)

Landscape Characteristic: Small Scale Features

Historic Condition (to 1965):
Small-scale features are elements that provide detail and diversity for both functional needs and aesthetic concerns in the landscape. By 1890 small-scale features included two cisterns located near shell house number two, a flagstaff near the office, and the cribwork seawall surrounding a major part of the island. Various contractors added small-scale features to the landscape during the construction of the immigration facilities between 1890-1897. Docks and wooden pilings lined the ferry slip. A covered walkway and adjacent baggage run connected the ferry landing to the main building. Lighting illuminated the front of the main building and scattered locations around the island. A system of downspouts, water pipes, and concrete cisterns collected fresh water and three water hydrants near the hospital buildings distributed it throughout the island.

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

Many of the small-scale features present in earlier periods remained on the island, including the ca.1902 lamp posts, benches, planters, a fog bell, and the flagstaff. The post and wire fencing around the lawn on Island One had been removed by ca.1913. Some wooden picket fence sections

assisted with crowd control on the main sidewalks. At several points along the seawall, including the edge of the ferry basin, large iron mooring cleats served as docking points for ferryboats and other vessels. Playground equipment occupied a small area in the recreation grounds on the northeast side of Island One.

By the end of the historic period, many of the oldest small-scale features were no longer extant, or had been replaced with new feature types. However, numerous historic small-scale features were extant. There were several ca.1945 crook-neck lights attached to the chain link fence near the main immigration building. In the recreation area between Islands Two and Three, ca.1935 Beaux Arts lamps with eight-foot octagonal posts were present. All ca.1902 lamp posts had been removed from the island. The fog bell occupied the eastern corner of Island Two, housed in a wooden tower constructed circa 1940, and a pilot light was located directly across the ferry basin on the corner of Island One. Several 1952 fire hydrants remained on Islands One and between Islands Two and Three. The ca.1920 iron mooring cleats lined both sides of the ferry basin and several other docking locations on the island. Several manhole covers were present. Some of these may have dated to construction of the original immigration station. Cast concrete downspout splash guards remained from the 1940s around several of the buildings on Islands Two and Three. Three flagstaffs remained–on the southeast point of Island One, on the southeast end of Island Two, and east of the new ferry building.

Four bench styles were used on the island. The first style, near the railroad ticket office in the recreation yard, was cast iron with one-inch-by-four-inch wooden slats and dated to ca.1904. The second style, used on the north side of the baggage and dormitory building, had bent-steel supports on seven-foot centers and wooden slats. The third, west of the new immigration building, had perforated cast-iron supports and wooden slats. An example of the fourth bench style was located on the northwest corner of Island Two and consisted of simple steel supports and wooden slats. Wooden picnic tables were also scattered around the recreation yard on Island One.

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

Existing Conditions:
Both historic and contemporary small-scale features are present on all three islands. Historic features include iron mooring cleats along the seawall edge, fire hydrants, manhole covers, a flagstaff and two flagstaff bases, pilot light, birdbath, utility trenches and pits, remnant lighting and fencing, footings for one of the missing water towers, gutter splash guards (most are overgrown), and several historic wood pilings adjacent to the powerhouse (others are gone) (Figures 61-68, see Figure 57). Historic bells are no longer in their historic location; both are stored on pallets located west of the bakery & carpentry building and northeast of ward G. Contemporary features added to the landscape include new lighting, fire hydrants, seating, trash receptacles, fencing, railings, viewfinders, and signage. Abstract sculptures of immigrants are located adjacent to the patio east of the concession kiosk, while a small monument is located on the just west of the Wall of Honor acknowledging the Delaware Indian burials discovered on Ellis and Liberty Island and reinterred in 2003 (Figure 69, see Figure 49). Historic features that have been removed since inventoried in the original 2004 CLI include the ferry slip pilings, a low rubble stone wall between Ward C (15/16) and Ward G (11/12), and chain-link fencing on the northeast side of the staff house and the southwest corner of Ward E (13/14) (some fencing remains attached to the building).

Evaluation:
Small-scale features on the island are currently a combination of historic and contemporary. Contemporary items like benches, fencing, lighting, and trash receptacles are generally in good condition, however, they do not contribute to the island's historic significance. Most historic features such as the iron mooring cleats, manhole covers, water tower foundations, a concrete birdbath, and fire hydrant are in relatively good condition. However, other historic small-scale features are in

much worse shape and are in danger of loss from vandalism or neglect, including the last existing concrete light post on Island Two. Despite their condition, all extant historic small-scale features contribute to the island's significance.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Bird Bath - Island Two	93570	Contributing			Asset	1463972	Yes
Flagstaff and Base - Island One	93575	Contributing	040497		Asset	46884	Yes
Flagstaff Base - Island Two	93576	Contributing	040492		Location	74378	Yes
Flagstaff Base, U.S. Coast Guard - Island One	93574	Contributing	040475		Asset	46882	Yes
Fogbell - Island One	93577	Contributing			Asset	1497042	Yes
Footings, Concrete for Old Water Tower - Island One	93578	Contributing					No
Fire Hydrants, Historic - Islands Two and Three	209948	Contributing	040476		Location	74386	Yes
Gutter Splash Guards - Island Three	93579	Contributing					No
Iron Mooring Cleats	93580	Noncontributing	040478		Asset	1500632	Yes
Lighting, Historic Concrete Remnant Bases - Island Two	93581	Contributing	040493				No
Manhole Covers, Historic	93583	Contributing	040477		Asset	46881	Yes
Pilot Light Mast - Island One	93585	Contributing	040489		Asset	46885	Yes
Remnant Pilings	209949	Contributing	040470				No
Utility Corridors and Pits, Concrete and Brick - Islands Two and Three	209950	Contributing	040501		Location	74381	Yes
Benches	93569	Noncontributing			Asset	29429	Yes
Coin-Operated Viewfinders	93571	Noncontributing					No
Fencing, contemporary styles including iron railing along seawall, chain link, post and chain, temporary crowd control	93572	Noncontributing					No
Fire Hydrants, Non-Historic - Island One	209951	Noncontributing	040495		Location	74367	Yes
Lighting, contemporary fixtures including posts, seawall fixtures, floodlights	209952	Noncontributing					No
Manhole Covers and Drain Inlets, Contemporary	93582	Noncontributing					No

Picnic Tables	93584	Noncontributing					No
Sculptures, Abstracts of Immigrant Figures - Island One	97257	Noncontributing					No
Signage	97784	Noncontributing					No
Trash Receptacles	97785	Noncontributing					No
Waterline, Abandonded - Island Three	97786	Noncontributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 61. Historic fire hydrant on Island Three. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 62. Historic manhole cover on Island Three. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 63. Concrete base of flagstaff,near east corner of Island Two. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 64. Concrete base of flagstaff west of the bakery and carpenter building, Island One. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 65. A birdbath still stands at the rear of the hospital building. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 66. This utility corridor is located between the new ferry building and new immigration building. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 67. View of a historic light post on Island Three. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 68. Concrete footings of one of the two water towers on Island One. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 69. This monument on Island One recognizes the re-interrment of Native American burials. (OCLP 2025)

Landscape Characteristic: Spatial Organization

Historic Condition (to 1965):

Spatial organization is the three-dimensional organization of physical forms and visual associations in a landscape, including the articulation of ground, vertical, and overhead planes that define and create spaces. Ellis Island's landscape was extensively altered from its earliest history as Native American seasonal hunting and fishing grounds to a military fortification named Fort Gibson. As the Civil War began in 1861, most of the fort was dismantled and a naval powder magazine established on the island. These two military facilities defined spatial organization on the island.

The removal of much of the former military facility by 1897, the addition of seven new structures, and the renovation of five existing buildings changed the island's spatial organization. Oriented on a northwest/southeast axis, the large main building stood on the north side of the ferry basin, relatively close to the water's edge. Smaller buildings and structures east of the main building, which collectively were slightly skewed eastward from the main building, featured courtyard spaces with additional open space extending to the island shorelines.

Construction of the new immigration facilities by 1907 also altered the island's spatial organization. Although they maintained the same general orientation, they occupied two islands, enclosing the ferry basin on three sides. There were fewer, generally larger, buildings, leaving less opportunity for intimate courtyards but providing more open space extending to the shore. The new main immigration building also stood on the north side of the ferry basin but was set farther back from the water's edge, establishing an added sense of presence and defining a more formal entry sequence into the new immigration station.

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

The island's spatial organization had changed slightly by the time the station closed in 1954. Although building additions during the 1930s complemented the spatial organization of the existing structures, maturing trees established an overhead plane that was not present during earlier periods. Removal of the surgeon's house and American Red Cross recreation building created additional open space on Island Two. Landfill was added between Islands Two and Three in the 1920s and at the northwest end of the ferry basin for construction of the new ferry building and new immigration building.

Existing Conditions:
The spatial organization developed over the immigration station's one-hundred-year history still remains, even though the patterns of land use have changed. No longer are immigration, military, or residential uses present on the island. Commemoration and interpretation are now the primary uses for Island One, where the National Museum of Immigration, NPS administrative offices, and maintenance facilities are located. The spatial organization of Island One was not altered during structural and landscape rehabilitation that began in the 1980s. On Islands Two and Three, the current primary land use is preservation, with limited park offices and storage. The ongoing stabilization and limited rehabilitation of the facilities and landscape on the two islands reinforces this use and continues to preserve the established spatial organization as well. Despite years of concealment by overgrown vegetation, historic open spaces are revealed once again, thanks to several recent vegetation clearing projects on Islands Two and Three.

Evaluation:
Spatial organization remains consistent with its historic pattern and is one of the most important contributing characteristics to the island's historic significance. Defining spatial characteristics on all three islands include linear building placement, open lawn areas, small courtyards between the

various buildings, linear tree plantings, and geometric circulation patterns.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Building Placement and Open Space	97787	Contributing					No
Historic Circulation System	97788	Contributing					No
Rectilinear Form and Island Perimeter	97789	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic: **Topography**

Historic Condition (to 1965):
Topography is the three-dimensional configuration of the landscape surface characterized by features (such as slope and articulation) and orientation (such as elevation and solar aspect). Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Little Oyster Island's topography as the high ground on a relatively flat plain provided an ideal spot for hunters to observe movement of migratory game and waterfowl. Major changes in the island's topography did not occur until construction of what would become Fort Gibson began around 1794. By ca.1800 additions of a jetty, earthworks, and the small inlet to provide the fill for these additions altered the island's topography.

By 1897 the addition of cribwork and landfill changed the topography of the island, increasing its size from just less than three and a third acres to fourteen and one-fifth acres. In 1898 Boring & Tilton recommended raising the elevation of Ellis Island for the main immigration building two feet above the original level and sloping the grade slightly away from the new buildings. This height and landform has been maintained ever since. More alterations to Ellis Island's topography occurred by 1907. The addition of landfill to Island One and the creation of Islands Two and Three increased the total size of the island and altered the topography of the existing harbor floor where the landfill was added. The completed additions conformed to the same general elevation above sea level and level landform previously established on Island One.

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

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

Existing Conditions:
The island's topographic characteristics have remained relatively unchanged. The deterioration of the seawall throughout the early years of the island's abandonment led to the development of sinkholes in the landscape adjacent to the shoreline. However, most of these have been repaired during various seawall rehabilitation projects. Minor changes in the topography of Island One occurred with the construction of a grassy knoll within the circular Wall of Honor, and the creation of a depressed area when parts of Fort Gibson were excavated and preserved as ruins for archeological interpretation. However, the predominant topographic quality of all three islands is the flat and level ground plane, much as it has been throughout the island's history.

Evaluation:
The predominant low, flat topography of the island has not changed from the historic condition. The existing topography remains relatively flat and stable. The continuity of Ellis Island's overall topography makes it a contributing characteristic to the island's significance.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Flat, Level Landform	97790	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic: Vegetation

Historic Condition (to 1965):
Vegetation includes deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, and herbaceous plants and plant communities, whether indigenous or introduced in the landscape. During the late Wisconsin Period, approximately fifteen thousand years ago, retreating glaciers deposited a small landmass in what is now called New York Harbor. As the young island's ecology developed, the site became vegetated with species similar to other coastal barrier islands. Typical plant life would have included salt-spray tolerant grasses and shrubs that could survive with limited fresh water. Along the intertidal zone, brackish marsh grasses like salt marsh cordgrass, salt grass, and salt meadow hay, would have thrived. Lacking upland terrain, it is unlikely there were any heavily wooded areas on the island. The arrival of Europeans during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought limited settlement to the island, which likely included subsistence gardens.

After 1794 vegetation areas gave way to earthen fortification and later a munitions storage area. Trees and scrub vegetation would have been removed for construction of these facilities and/or to maintain clear strategic views. Nonetheless, a map from 1813 indicates three large trees present near the commercial buildings on the northern end of the island, but none were identified and no other vegetation is depicted on the island. A later map from 1870 shows a large garden area between the magazines and the loaded shell house.

By 1890, vegetation was minimal as it had been during previous eras, consisting primarily of a few trees, native grasses, and shrubs. No substantial trees were present on the island. The garden first shown on circa 1870 maps remained extant between the two shell houses, and an additional garden was located on the island's northern end, near the gunners' house.

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

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

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

When the island was abandoned in 1954, a large amount of vegetation covered all three islands, most of it dating to a 1939 planting plan. Rows of Platanus acerifolia remained along both sides of the ferry basin and along the recreation grounds between Islands Two and Three. A row of these trees also grew along the southwest edge of Island Three with additional tree species scattered between the hospital wards. The Gibbet Tree was no longer extant on Island One. The extensive flower beds from earlier periods were gone, and turf grass covered the majority of the island. With the absence of maintenance, lawns soon became unkempt and overgrown and volunteer trees took root along fence lines, especially southeast of the main immigration building. The main greenhouse

on Island One remained, but the reduction in ornamental plantings left it infrequently used. The presence of the small greenhouse on Island Three, along with purchase records for seeds, fertilizer, bulbs, and other gardening supplies from 1943 to 1952, indicate that at least parts of the landscape were maintained until the island was abandoned in 1954. ("Ellis Island Records, Supplies: Materials Received, 1943-45; 1946-48; 1948-50; 1950-52")

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

Existing Conditions:
Subsequent island rehabilitation and preservation efforts in the 1970s through the 1990s cleared much of the overgrown vegetation, revealing many historic trees and remnant shrubs. Today, trees are the predominant vegetation on the island, dominated by numerous historic Platanus acerifolia lining the ferry basin, which date to the 1939 planting plan (Figures 54, 55). The turfgrass on Island One was renovated during the island's rehabilitation phase during the 1980s and follows the 1939 layout, with slight modification for the new entry portico. Installation of the Wall of Honor created an additional circular lawn on the southeast corner of the island (Figure 56). A few trees are extant near the Wall of Honor dating to the late historic period, including one large crabapple; these are probably volunteer species that grew along fence lines in the former detainee recreation yard (Figure 57). Contemporary additions include flower beds adjacent to the entry portico and in front of the kitchen and laundry building, approximately seventy-five trees located in the Wall of Honor area (see Cover). Evergreen screening planted around the utility yard north of the powerhouse on Island One is no longer present.

Much of the invasive and overgrown vegetation on Islands Two and Three was removed during clearing projects in the late 1990s and early 2000s. However, as the tree canopy is thinned and more light is available to the understory, the vegetation has in some areas reestablished itself at a vigorous pace and is kept in check by periodic clearing mostly around the buildings and within the courtyards on Island Three (Figures 58, 59). Historic trees dating to the 1939 planting plan have been identified, and most of these remain on both islands. The large recreation space between Islands Two and Three is maintained as a lawn (see Figure 31).

Evaluation:
Historic specimen trees and shrubs, including the mature Platanus acerifolia, Quercus palustris, and surviving shrubs from the 1940s, are considered contributing features to the island's historic significance. All other vegetation, including recently planted trees, shrubs, and flowers on Island One and volunteer trees, shrubs, or vines on Islands Two and Three, is noncontributing. However, the vegetation planting patterns surviving from the 1939 planting plan are the more significant contributing features to the cultural landscape. The linear tree rows along the ferry basin and walkways, formal lawn panels on Island One, lawn recreation spaces on all three islands, and small courtyard spaces between buildings have been defining elements of the cultural landscape since the historic period.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Extant Platanus acerifolia or other Historic Trees and Remnant Shrubs associated with 1939 Planting Plan	97792	Contributing			Asset	1140703	No
In-Kind Replacement for Historic Vegetation	97793	Contributing					No
Planting Pattern for Tree Rows, Lawns, Courtyards	97794	Contributing			Asset	1464344	No
All Other Vegetation	97791	Noncontributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 54. London planetreees line the north side of the ferry slop, Island One, view looking south. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 55. London plane trees also line the south side of the ferry slip, Island Two, view looking east. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 56. A slightly-sloped circular lawn edged with trees occupies the east corner of Island One, view looking west. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 57. A historic crabapple and the flagstaff at the southeast end of Island One, view looking south. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 58. The rapid growth of vegetation continues to challenge park maintenance crews, as shown here in the vicinity of Ward G on Island Three. (OCLP 2025)



Figure 59. Overgrown groundcover and vine cloaked trees are common in the Island Three courtyards. (OCLP 2025)

Landscape Characteristic: Views and Vistas

Historic Condition (to 1965):
A view is the expansive and/or panoramic prospect of a broad range of vision that may be naturally occurring or deliberately contrived. A vista is a controlled prospect of a discrete, linear range of vision, which is deliberately contrived. With the construction of fortifications beginning in 1794, open views of the surrounding waters and landforms were critical at Ellis Island. Such outward views persisted even after Fort Gibson's primary role shifted from defense to ammunitions storage, although interior views had likely become somewhat restricted by various buildings and structures.

Due in part to the lack of significant vegetation, views from the island to the harbor and beyond by 1890 remained relatively unobstructed. The primary views from the island were toward Manhattan and the New Jersey shore and to other harbor islands including Governors Island and the Statue of Liberty on Bedloe's Island. When the first immigration station opened in 1890, views from the edges of Ellis Island to the harbor and beyond remained consistent with earlier periods. Similar to the military period, however, interior views were influenced by the various buildings and structures. Although new immigration facilities built soon after actually contained fewer buildings than had been present in 1890, the new structures were generally larger in scale, thereby blocking more of the views across the island.

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

construction of the ferry house and hospital buildings on Island Two blocked some of the previously open views toward New Jersey.

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

The addition of buildings and the maturation of vegetation continued to alter views and vistas slightly between 1920 and the station's closure in 1954. Notably, the lines of trees flanking the ferry basin reinforced the framed view to new ferry building's central tower at the head of the basin. Views from the island edges across the harbor remained relatively consistent with earlier periods, with Manhattan providing the predominant viewshed to the northeast, the Statue of Liberty to the south, and the New Jersey coastline to the northwest.

Existing Conditions:
Both views within the island and across the harbor have changed since 1965. On-island views have improved with the removal of overgrown vegetation and the continuing renovation of the island's facilities. Views from the edges of the island are more varied with the growth of the surrounding urban environment. They are dominated by the Manhattan skyline to the east, the Statue of Liberty to the south, and Jersey City and Liberty State Park to the north (Figure 60). Also included in these view sheds are the Verrazano Narrows Bridge connecting Staten Island and Brooklyn, the Newark skyline, Governors Island, and various New Jersey harbors north and west of the island. The view of Ellis Island from the water, with its imposing and impressive building facades, is restored with the resumption of regular passenger service to the island.

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

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Historic Views, across Harbor, Within Site, and Harbor to Island	97795	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 60. View looking northeast from near the Wall of Honor, Island One. (OCLP 2025)

Landscape Characteristic: **Archeological Sites**

Archeological sites are the locations of ruins, traces, or deposited artifacts in the landscape and are evidenced by the presence of either surface or subsurface features. Only sites identified in approved National Register documentation are identified in this report.

The Ellis Island Pre-Contact Site is associated with the Prehistoric Archeology area of significance. Fort Gibson Ruins, 1890 Wooden Bulkhead, Island One Wooden Bulkhead, Bulkhead Wall, Red Cross Building, and Island Three Greenhouse Ruin sites are associated with the Historic, Non-Aboriginal Archeology areas of significance. For detailed information on these sites and the history of archeological research at Ellis Island, see the 2020 National Register documentation. (NR 2020, Sec.8: 76-98)

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Ellis Island Pre-Contact Site	209953	Contributing		STLI00020.000			No
Fort Gibson Ruins	209954	Contributing		STLI00008.000			No
1890 Wooden Bulkhead	209955	Contributing		STLI00010.000			No
Island One Wooden Bulkhead	209956	Contributing		STLI00011.000			No
Bulkhead Wall	209957	Contributing		STLI00006.000			No
Red Cross Building Site	209958	Contributing		STLI00005.000			No
Island Three Greenhouse Ruin	209959	Contributing		STLI00007.000			No

Condition

Assessment Interval (Years): 7

Next Assessment Due Date: 09/24/2032

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 09/24/2025

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The overall condition of the Ellis Island landscape is “Fair.” Ot the three islands, Island One is in the best condition with its well-maintained buildings, structures, walkways, trees, lawns, and flower beds. This is not the case on Islands Two and Three where several buildings continue to deteriorate. The lawns and trees in between Islands Two and Three are maintained, but vegetation in the numerous building courtyard areas is generally overgrown, with some non-native species present. Walkways are still present, but some surfaces are severely cracked or have deteriorated to their gravel subbases. Other walkways are bordered by ruts created by vehicular uses. Remnants of historic small-scale features such as fire hydrants and lightposts continue to deteriorate or are hidden by vegetation.

Good: The property shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The property’s cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: The property shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the landscape characteristics will cause the property to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: Indicates the property shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 09/17/2021

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Provisional. The condition reassessment for this CLI has been delayed due to Covid-19 travel restrictions and staffing shortages. In the meantime, the most recent condition assessment will remain in place until it is reassessed as part of a comprehensive update of the entire CLI. Planning and scheduling this update will occur in FY 2022.

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 08/31/2010

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The cultural landscape of Ellis Island National Monument remains in “fair” condition due to the unrestored condition of the south side of the island. As noted in the 2004 assessment, the buildings and landscapes of Islands Two and Three were in poor condition due to the impacts from unchecked vegetative growth and deterioration of the built features. Stabilization of these resources has not occurred to date, leaving the cultural landscape, as a whole, in “fair” condition.

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 05/05/2004

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

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

Condition Assessment: Poor

Assessment Date: 09/30/1998

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Impacts

Type of Impact: Deferred Maintenance

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: The park has succeeded in removing areas of overgrown vegetation on Islands Tow and Three. Lawn areas are maintained but vegetation within the various courtyards is not.

Date Identified: 09/24/2025

Type of Impact: Vegetation/Invasive Plants

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Tree-of-heaven and poison ivy are present in several unmaintained areas on Islands Two and Three.

Date Identified: 09/24/2025

Type of Impact: Inundation/Flooding

Other Impact:

External or Internal: External

Impact Narrative: The site’s flat topography makes it vulnerable to flooding from storm events.

Date Identified: 09/24/2025

Type of Impact: Inundation/Sea Level Rise

Other Impact:

External or Internal: External

Impact Narrative: The site’s low elevation and tidal location make it vulnerable to sea level rise.

Date Identified: 09/24/2025

Type of Impact: Inundation/Storm Surge

Other Impact:

External or Internal: External

Impact Narrative: The site's harbor location makes it vulnerable to storm surge, as was the case with Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

Date Identified: 09/24/2025

Type of Impact: Exposure to Elements

Other Impact:

External or Internal: External

Impact Narrative: Moisture, wind, and salt spray inherent in the site's marine environment affects buildings, structures, and landscape features.

Date Identified: 09/24/2025

Type of Impact: Erosion

Other Impact:

External or Internal: External

Impact Narrative: Erosion from constant wave action is a constant threat in land areas that abut the seawall.

Date Identified: 09/24/2025

Type of Impact: Structural Deterioration

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: While buildings and structures on Islands Two and Three have been stabilized, deterioration continues due to many broken windows and doors. Sidewalks are extant but some are severely cracked and have deteriorated to their gravel subbases.

Date Identified: 09/24/2025

Type of Impact: Neglect

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Remnants of historic light posts and hydrants on Islands Two and Three continue to deteriorate or are obscured by vegetation.

Date Identified: 09/24/2025

Type of Impact: Operations On Site

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: On Island Two, vehicular parking has been observed on some of the lawn areas. Tire ruts are present along some walkways due to vehicles making turns.

Date Identified: 09/24/2025

Treatment

Stabilization Measures

Treatment Documents

Treatment Type: Rehabilitation

Treatment Completed: No

Document Type: Other Document

Title: Foundation Document

IRMA Link:

Narrative:

To date, no Cultural Landscape Report, Volume II (Treatment Recommendations) has been completed for Ellis Island. However, completed and proposed landscape projects at Ellis Island suggest rehabilitation is an appropriate treatment approach. As defined in the 2025 Cultural Landscapes Inventory Professional Procedures Guide, rehabilitation is "the act or process of making possible an efficient compatible use for a site through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions of features that convey its historical, cultural, or aesthetic values." (PPG 2025: 115)

In 2018 the park completed a Foundation Document, which provides basic guidance for planning and management decisions. The report identified fundamental resources and values and other important resources and values. Fundamental resources are features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to warrant primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance. Other resources are not fundamental to the purpose of the park and may be unrelated to its significance but are important to consider in planning processes.

Ellis Island was identified as one of the park's fundamental resources, occupying "a singular place in America's heritage as the primary U.S. immigration station from 1892 to 1954 when more than 12 million people passed through its complex." The report identified views and vistas to and from the island, including views of the New York skyline and unimpeded views of the Statue of Liberty, as fundamental resources. Archeological resources at Ellis Island, which contain a number of archeological sites including Native American shell middens and structures related to the historic development and use of the islands by the military and government immigration agencies, were identified as other important resources.

There are several projects proposed in PMIS and PEPC that are related to landscape treatment:
• 2019, proposed. Remove tree #s 7, 121, 168, 302, 310, 318, 328, 337, 339. (PEPC 88821, Correct Deficiencies and Implement Cyclic Maintenance of Trees on Ellis Island)
• 2021, proposed. Remove and replace 56 specimen trees on Ellis Island. (PMIS 231736 / PEPC 97468, Remove London Plane Trees and Replant Island 1 & 2)
• 2025, proposed. Replace three Plantus x acerfolia on Island One – tree #s 7, 20, 105. (PEPC 128711, Remove Three Hazard Trees on Liberty Island and Replace Three Tress on Ellis Island)
• 2025, proposed. (PEPC 132619, Convert Mulch Beds to Grass at Ellis Island Wall of Honor)
• 2026, proposed. (PMIS 344624, Replace Damaged Sidewalk Pads Ellis Island)
• 2027, proposed. (PMIS 320261 / PEPC 107497, Stabilize Hazard Tree Conditions at Liberty and Ellis Islands)

Approved Treatment Costs

Cost Narrative:

Bibliography and Supplemental Information

Bibliography:

Citation Author	Citation Title	Year of Publication	Citation Publisher	Citation Type	Citation Location	Citation Number
Berengarten, Sidney	History of Ellis Island. Unpublished manuscript.	1934	New York, NY: Statue of Liberty National Monument, Liberty Island			
Beyer Blinder Belle/Anderson Notter Finegold	Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty National Monument, Historic Structure Report, The Main Building, Volume 1	1988	U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service			
Corsi, Edward	In the Shadow of Liberty	1935	New York: Macmillan Company			
MetaForm/Rathe/D&P	Ellis Island: A Conceptual Program	1984	n/a			
National Park Service	A Master Plan for Ellis Island, New York, A Preliminary Plan	1968	United States Department of the Interior			
National Park Service	Foundation Document, Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island, New Jersey and New York	2018	U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service			
National Park Service	General Management Plan	1982	U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service			
n/a	A Study Report on Ellis Island	1964	U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service			

n/a	New York Times, Ellis Island Articles, Volumes 1 to 9, (February 6, 1890 – July 20, 1924).	1924	Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Library			
n/a	Report of the Ellis Island Committee (reprint of 1934 report)	1971	New York: Jerome S. Ozer			
Olausen, Stephen, Laura Kline, Gretchen Pineo, Kristen Heitert	National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Ellis Island	2023	Pawtucket, RI: Public Archeology Lab			
Pike, Henry H.	Ellis Island: Its Legal Study	1963	Washington, DC: General Services Administration, Office of General Counsel			
Pitkin, Thomas M.	Keepers of the Gate: A History of Ellis Island	1975	New York: New York University Press			
Pousson, John F.	An Overview and Assessment of Archeological Resources on Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty National Monument, New York	1986	U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service			
Sommers, Craig	Cultural Landscapes Inventory Professional Procedures Guide: A Reference Manual for the Cultural Resources Inventory System – Cultural Landscapes	2025	U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service			

Stakely, J. Tracy	Cultural Landscape Report for Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty National Monument: Site History, Existing Conditions and Analysis	2003	Brookline, MA: National Park Service, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation			
Torres-Reyes, Ricardo	National Register of Historic Places, Inventory - Nomination Form: Ellis Island	1976	Boston, MA: National Park Service			
Unrau, Harlan D.	Historic Structure Report, Ellis Island, Historical Data, Statue of Liberty National Monument, New York/New Jersey	1981	Denver, CO: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service			
U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service	History of Ellis Island, New York	1952	Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Library, EL-MS EH-7			

Supplemental Information:

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

Supplemental Information Narrative:

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

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

Landscape Documents:

File Name	Date	Attachment Type
CL-FMSS_crosswalk-STLI_EllisIsland_CLIUpload.xlsx		Other Report

Source