

# Roosevelt Island

## Preserving Urban Design and Innovation



Columbia University, GSAPP  
Historic Preservation Studio II  
Spring 2014

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# Abstract

This preservation plan is a collaborative effort by students in a historic preservation studio at Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, completed with the help of both community leaders and heritage experts. The goal of this studio is to produce an in-depth analysis of Roosevelt Island's historic and social fabric, identify its assets and historic resources, and recommend ways to protect these resources in light of pending development pressure.

In addition to presenting a depth of new knowledge about the neighborhood, the goal of the report is to identify specific issues that affect the community's historic fabric, most notably the new Cornell NYC Tech campus plan, and to propose solutions that respect and complement the existing social conditions and historic fabric of an area with vital housing and transportation needs.

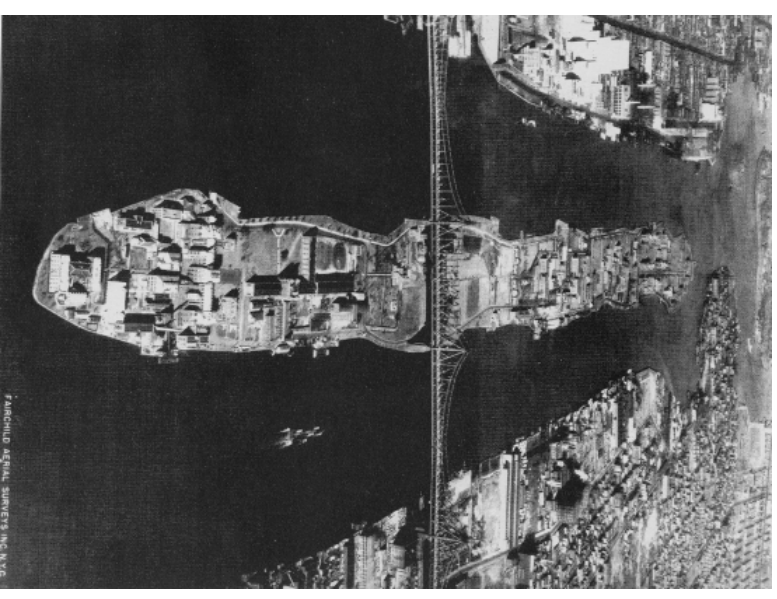
While preservation professionals, municipal authorities, and potential developers are among the intended audiences of this plan, it is also, most importantly, addressed to the residents themselves. For this reason, our plan proposes new signage and an updated website to help local residents (and visitors) learn more about the value of the island's historic resources.

Within the context of broader redevelopment strategies, an enhanced and thoughtful historic preservation plan can help identify and foster awareness of heritage resources, and connect people more meaningfully both to the urban landscape and to one another. This study aims to provide a framework for responsible growth, and suggests the enormous potential of historic preservation practices within any future community revitalization initiative of Roosevelt Island.

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## Section One: Introduction



Roosevelt Island as an institutional haven, named Welfare Island

Since its earliest habitation, the narrow island located between Manhattan and Queens, today known as Roosevelt Island, has been a laboratory for social experimentation that has manifested itself in built forms, spanning from the exclusionary institutions in the 19th and early 20th centuries to the affordable residential utopian settlement that was planned in the 1960s and 70s.

The future of Roosevelt Island is once again at a crossroads, largely due to redevelopment of the former Goldwater Chronic Care Hospital campus by Cornell NYC Tech.

As a part of Mayor Bloomberg's 2011 initiative, Cornell Tech was awarded a 99-year lease to the 12.5-acre parcel of land, south of the Queensboro Bridge, and \$100 million in city capital for site maintenance and construction.

In the place of Goldwater Hospital, a high tech complex for chronic care and cutting edge research in the medical field, Cornell Tech is building a campus "that's unlike any ever created in higher education."

The new campus will include up to 2.1 million square feet of development and will house approximately 2,000 students and 280 faculty members by 2037. The institution is building a modern, sustainable campus full of glass towers meant to house a think-tank of businesses and graduate students, similar to Silicon Valley.

Due to the changing landscape, environment, and identity of the island with the construction of the Cornell Tech campus, the study of the island is aptly timed. Our studio is a study of the island from the view of a preservationist as we look at its history and development, its significance, structures, and how to mitigate change on the island as construction moves forward.

It is important to look at the history of the island and how it has changed over time, so that we better understand what currently exists on the island. The best way to look at the development of Roosevelt Island is as a series of plans moving through history: from agrarianism; to large scale public welfare programs; to residential urban renewal ideas of new-town-in-town planning.



Early Blackwell's Island



Roosevelt Island with Cornell Campus, circa 2017

### History of the Island

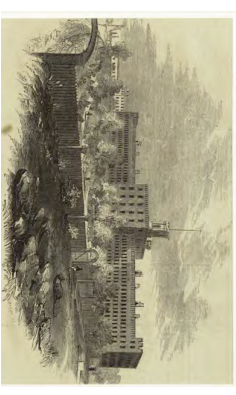
Beginning in the 17th century, interactions between the English and Dutch traders combined with an influx of Dutch settlers lead to the creation of a walled settlement at the foot of Manhattan Island in a bid to expand Dutch dominance in the area.



The Castello Plan, New Amsterdam in 1660.

As the Dutch outpost grew, in 1637 Governor Van Twiller purchased Roosevelt Island from the Mid-Atlantic Algonquian tribe known as the Canarsie tribe and renamed the territory Hog Island (Varckens Island) - in honor of the island's role in colonial animal husbandry.

In 1666, English Captain John Manning seized control, and in 1686 Manning's son-in-law, Robert Blackwell, became the island's new owner and namesake. Under the Blackwell dynasty, development shifted from agrarianism to institutional development. In 1832, the main building of the Blackwell's Penitentiary was erected, and twenty years later, in 1852, Blackwell's Workhouse was constructed. The inmates in the Workhouses were responsible for much of the quarrying of stone on the island that made up many of the buildings constructed on the island at the time.



View of the Penitentiary, 1853.



Inmates quarrying stone on the island.

Like many municipalities in the early 19th century, New York City established charitable institutions to address a range of social problems, such as mental illness, poverty, and crime. Construction of the Almshouse began in 1846 and the island became a locus for similar public welfare projects. By the 1890s over a dozen public outreach facilities stood on the Almshouse grounds, including the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, a Hospital for Incurables, and the Old Blackwell House.



Almshouse Complex, 1853.

## Section One: Introduction

Over the years, various hospital complexes were constructed. The first hospital built on the island was originally named Penitentiary Hospital, the first hospital was built in 1832 to serve the prisoners housed at Blackwell Penitentiary. Following a fire in 1858, architect James Renwick, Jr. designed City Hospital, which consisted of a variety of buildings and was completed in 1861. There were several additional buildings in the hospital complex, including Strecker Laboratory, built in 1892 and designed by Clarke Withers and Walter Dickson.



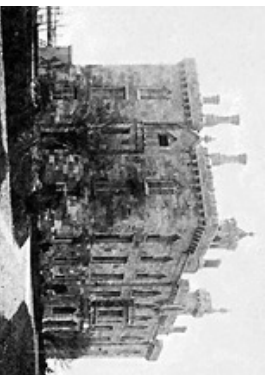
Charity Hospital on Welfare Island.

After the island's purchase in 1828, Alexander Jackson Davis was commissioned to design the New York City Lunatic Asylum, the first public institution of its kind. After years of design changes and budgetary issues, the facility opened in 1839. The asylum was closed in 1894 and converted to Metropolitan Hospital.



Metropolitan Hospital, 1900.

In 1856, James Renwick, Jr. designed a gothic revival Smallpox Hospital, the first hospital to treat victims of contagion and plague. In 1875, the hospital's name was changed to Riverside Hospital and later used as a nurses residence for the neighboring City Hospital.



Smallpox Hospital, 1870.

Due to the changing nature of the island, it was renamed Welfare Island in 1921. In January 1934, the penitentiary phase came to a close when LaGuardia's reform Correction Commissioner, Austin H. MacCormick, led a raid on the jail exposing deplorable conditions and a plethora of weapons in the cells. Subsequently, all inmates were removed to Rikers Island and Welfare Island transitioned to strictly medical facilities.



A view of the island, showing the Penitentiary, City Hospital, and the Smallpox Hospital.

In the late 1930s, seven modern medical facilities were planned for Welfare Island. Goldwater Memorial Hospital opened in 1942 as the Welfare Island Hospital for Chronic Diseases. The complex, a nursing, chronic care, and rehabilitative facility designed by Isadore Rosenfield, Butler & Kohn, and York & Sawyer, covers 9.9 acres, with seven connected buildings, all designed for handicap accessibility. In 1942, the name was changed to Goldwater Hospital.



Goldwater Hospital, 1938.

Before the hospital's construction, however, NYC's Hospitals commissioner, Dr. S.S. Goldwater and Parks Commissioner Robert Moses debated intensely on how to use the land throughout the island. Goldwater wanted a hospital park, while Moses wanted public parkland. Since Moses, however, had already opened parks on Randall's and Wards Islands, the scale tipped in Goldwater's favor. Dr. Goldwater originally planned to build seven modern medical facilities, but only a Nurse's Residence (built in 1938, North of the current subway station) and Goldwater Hospital materialized, while all other construction was postponed by WW II. After the war, the city's priorities shifted to schools, mass transit, and highways. Bird S. Coler Hospital, built in 1952 at the island's northern end, is the only remaining product of Dr. Goldwater's hospital park plan.

In 1965, Congressman John Lindsay ran for mayor of New York on a platform calling for vast increases in government-supported housing, and the creation of a rent subsidy program. A large portion of the island's current residential environment emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in response to this initiative and the housing shortage in New York at the time. The New York Urban Development Corporation or the UDC, was established in 1968 with the goal to "improve the physical environment for low- and moderate-income families." Later that year, Governor Rockefeller appointed Edward J. Logue, a Boston city planner, to the office of president of the UDC with the mission to "design and build" affordable housing statewide.

Many of the UDC ideas about residential planning reflect the New-Town-in-Town ideology of the Garden Cities movement and sought to fix the problems of the city by improving urban spaces through a community-wide approach. Some of the major ideas of this movement include a community large enough to support shopping, public facilities, public transportation, and work places; a pedestrian friendly shopping area; the selective rehabilitation of existing buildings; an increase in low income housing; and the utilization of technology to improve housing and reduce costs.

The ideas of the New-Town-In-Town Movement and the formation of the Urban Development Corporation coincided with a severe housing shortage in New York City. After his election in 1965, Mayor Lindsay made Welfare Island, which he referred to as the "most under-utilized island in the world," one of his top priorities. In 1969, a committee formed to study the future of the island recommended that four thousand units of housing be built on the island and

## Section One: Introduction

suggested that a subsidiary of the New York UDC be established to manage the island. What emerged was an agreement between the city and the state that the island would be leased to the state for a period of 99 years.

In 1968, as part of the citizens committee, Philip Johnson and John Burgee were commissioned to “develop a series of massing models to sketch out the project.” Their plan envisioned the island in two residential sections housing 20,000 residents in 5,000 units. The housing would be market-rate and publicly-assisted, using a variety of Federal and State subsidy programs, and the units would be allocated by income. Important to the plan were the spaces reserved for parks: one to the northern end of the island where the lighthouse was, one to the southern end, and Blackwell park separating the two residential sections.



Johnson-Burgee Rendering

The Johnson-Burgee plan adopted the pedestrian friendly principles of New-Town-in-Town. Except for emergency vehicles the island was designed to be car free. Cars could be parked at a parking garage called Motorgate, which is located near the Roosevelt Island Bridge, and from there bus service would provide transportation around the island. This created the pedes-

trian friendly commercial zone so important to New-Town-in-Town ideals that utilized the curving form of Main street, which was modeled after European cities and was designed to “stimulate curiosity and avoid the monotony of a long straight road.”



Johnson-Burgee Rendering

One of the principles of New-Town-in-town was selective rehabilitation. In his plan for Welfare Island, Johnson highlights six buildings which he felt need to be preserved. These were the Smallpox Hospital (now a ruin), the Blackwell House, the Octagon, the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, the Lighthouse, and City Hospital, which, unfortunately, was later demolished.

During the UDC period, there were several unique aspects of Roosevelt Island that emerged. The most impressive of these elements is the AVAC system. Also known as the Automatic Vacuum Collection system, it was the trash disposal system on the island. Another unique and iconic element is the Roosevelt Island Tram. The tram opened in 1976 as a temporary transportation method on and off the island. A third element was the mini-school system. The intention was to have eight buildings, one for each grade, distributed amongst the UDC residential buildings in a campus-like fashion. Five of the eight mini-schools were built. The is-

land was also renamed Roosevelt Island, after Franklin D. Roosevelt, in 1973.

The UDC hired several well-known architects to execute the Johnson-Burgee plan. Within six years, four residential buildings were completed. Rivercross and Island House were designed by Johansen & Bhavani. Eastwood and Westview were designed by Sert Jackson and Associates. The design for each of the buildings included a courtyard and a tiered massing so as to maximize views.



Island House and Rivercross, from Manhattan



Westview, as seen from Manhattan

The buildings were associated with the Mitchell-Lana subsidized housing program first created in 1955 to provide affordable housing for middle income New York City families. Of the four buildings, Rivercross was market rate, Westview and Island House were middle income, and Eastwood was reserved for low-moderate income residents.

In 1975 the UDC's powers were curtailed due to political and economic reasons. As a result, the plan for Roosevelt Island was never fully completed. Out of the 5000 units envisioned only 2100 were ever built. In addition to the residential buildings, a Sports Park, the Motorgate Parking Garage, and the Firehouse were built. While much has changed since the UDC era, important elements are preserved: the staggered heights of the residential buildings, the winding main street, and the island's landmarks.



Johnson-Burgee Rendering

Fourteen years after the end of the UDC, construction on the island began once more. The earliest of these projects were the Manhattan Park residential buildings located just north of the UDC complex. Designed by Gruzen & Samton, these 5 buildings consists of 1,107 rental apartments.



View of Manhattan Park

The second major phase post 1989 was the restoration and conversion of Alexander Jackson Davis' Octagon building into market rate rentals by Becker & Becker Associates in 2006.



The Octagon, after conversion to housing

The most recent construction of housing on the island is the Riverwalk development, located in the center of the island near the F train subway station, in an area called Southtown, in reference to the Johnson-Burgee plan. Construction began in 2003 and the last of these six buildings were completed in 2008. This development consists of 1202 units in the six buildings. 425-475 Main Street were designed by Gruzen Sampton Architects with SLCE Architects, while 405-415 was designed by Costas Kondylis & Partners LLP. One of the buildings is housing for Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, a second is student and staff housing for Cornell Medical College, three are market rate condominiums, and one is market rate rentals.



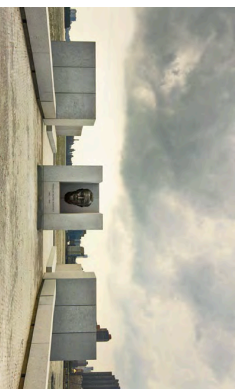
Riverwalk development

Another significant development has been the completion of the FDR Four Freedoms Park. Designed by Louis Kahn in the early 1970s, it was opened in 2012 as a memorial to Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The park, which is actually a misnomer as it is a memorial, is true to Kahn's design, even if it took 37 years to be realized. Admirers of his work and of President Roosevelt campaigned to have the monument built and by 2005, had collected over \$50 million. The memorial was dedicated as FDR Four Freedoms Park on October 17, 2012, and officially opened as a New York State Park on October 24th.



FDR Four Freedoms Park, looking South

It is the only Kahn work in New York, consisting of an entirely new portion of landfill on the southern tip of the island. The monument is based on President Roosevelt's State of the Union Address on January 6, 1941. The monument is made of large monolithic granite blocks and a bronze bust.



The monument at the end of the park

### Plans of the Island

Below is a visual explanation of how the island changed over time. This mapping includes alteration of the coastline and the construction and demolition of buildings.

New buildings are highlighted to show the development over time. This spans from the original Blackwell House until the first phase of Cornell buildings built in 2017.

#### Colonialism



#### Blackwell's Island



#### Welfare Island



#### Welfare Island 1930s Onward



#### Johnson-Burgee Plan (unfinished)



#### Roosevelt Island, 2012

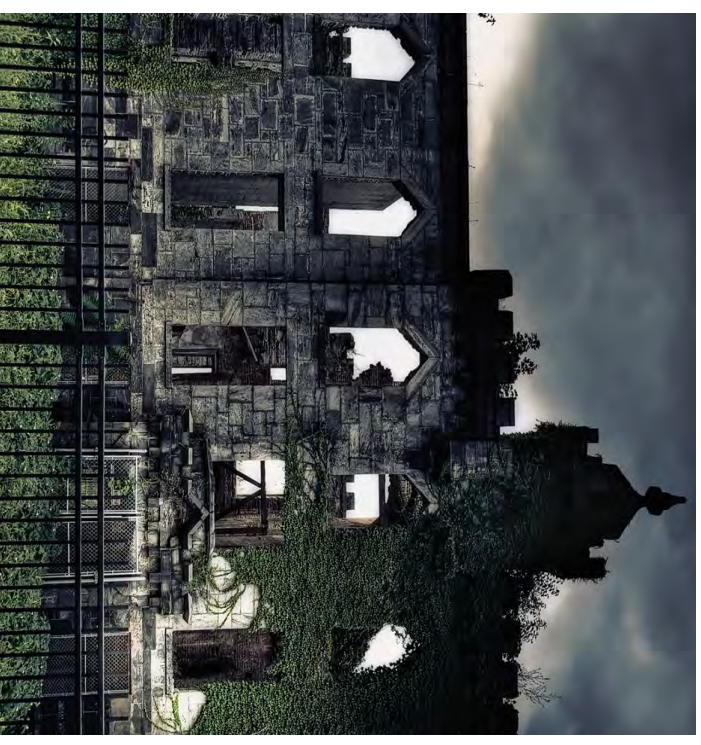


#### Roosevelt Island, 2017





## Section Two: Current Conditions



Smallpox Hospital Ruin

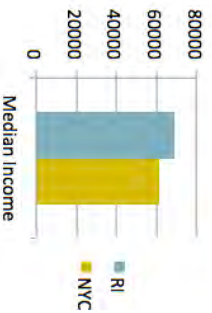
## Demographics

As the identity of the island is clearly in transition, with the current and upcoming construction and addition of a large amount of market-rate housing, it is important that we look the current demographics of the island.

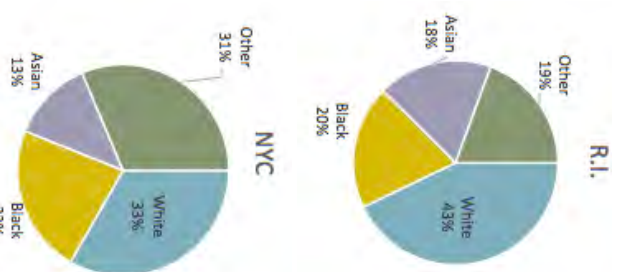
When the Johnson-Burgee plan on Roosevelt Island was created, it called for a diversity of income and race, as a slice comparable to the rest of New York City. The housing would be market-rate and publicly-assisted, using a variety of Federal and State subsidy programs, and the units would be allocated by income. This was attempted, but not entirely successful as planned.

In 2010, Roosevelt Island had a population of approximately 11,600 residents, less than 0.2% of the population of New York City as a whole. Median income on the island was approximately \$68,771, which is slightly above the average median income of New York City as a whole.

	R.I.	NYC
POPULATION	11661	8,175,133
MEDIAN INCOME	68,771	61,611



Another way to look at Roosevelt Island is to look at the diversity of race of the people inhabiting the island, as compared to the rest of New York City. At first glance, there is a similarity between the island and the city. However, there is a higher percentage of “Other” and “White” on the island.



According to the 2000 census based on a population of 9,520 residents, the demographics on the island are as such: 65% of the island were age 18-65, only 5% are under 5, 55% are family households, 37% of the islanders made less than \$35,000, 40% made \$35,000-\$99,000, and 23% made over \$100,000. See Appendix for more statistics.

## Transportation

Today transportation on the island is largely the result of the Johnson-Burgee plan. The intention was for residents to use the Roosevelt Island Bridge and historically, the Queensboro Bridge to drive to the island, parking their cars at Motorgate and using the Red Bus service to travel throughout the island; however, cars play a much more prominent role on the island today, with many people parking along main street, as well as at workplaces such as Coler Hospital. Other modes of transportation to and from the island include the Roosevelt Island Tram and the F train subway station

The Roosevelt Island Bridge is a tower drive, vertical lift, movable bridge across the East Channel of the East River connecting Roosevelt Island to Queens. It is currently the sole route to the island for vehicular, bike, and foot traffic without the use of public transportation. It was officially opened to traffic on May 18, 1955 as the Welfare Island Bridge. In the early 1970s, the bridge was painted its current bright red color to harmonize with the new UDC transportation structures being built on the island. When the bridge is open it provides ships with 100 feet of vertical clearance. It is 40 feet wide, and its total length, including approaches, is 2,877 feet. The main span is 418 feet. The bridge provides direct access to the Motorgate Parking Garage on the island side. As of 2008, the total yearly traffic was 10,161 vehicles, a 2.7% increase from the previous year.



Roosevelt Island Bridge

The Queensboro Bridge, officially titled the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge and is colloquially known as the 59th Street Bridge. Designed in the Beaux Arts style by Gustav Lindenthal, Lefert L. Buck and Henry Hornbostel, designers of the Williamsburg Bridge, the Queensboro Bridge was constructed between 1903 and 1909 and cost \$18 million and the lives of 50 men. It opened to vehicle and trolley traffic on June 12, 1909, when it was known as Blackwell’s Island Bridge and has a clearance of 130 feet. The original upper deck held two rail tracks, two vehicle lanes, and two pedestrian lanes, while the lower deck. The rail track service was removed by 1942 and the trolley was decommissioned on April 7, 1957, the last trolley line in NYC. Between 1930 and 1955, an elevator allowed vehicles and pedestrians to exit at Welfare Island, through a building that was built adjacent to the bridge. The bridge no longer allows for direct access to Roosevelt Island.

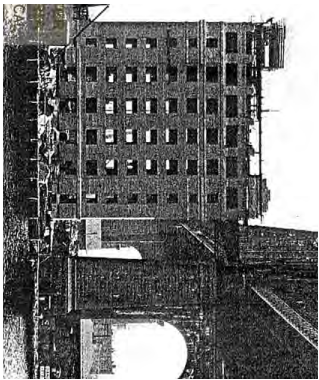


The Queensboro Bridge, 1910.



Trolley on the Queensboro Bridge, 1909

## Section Two: Current Conditions



Elevator Building off the Queensboro Bridge

Designed by Kallmann & McKimell (KM) Architects during the UDC era, the garage was completed in 1974, housing 1,000 cars and later expanded in 1990 to accommodate 1,710 cars. Intended for use as a vehicular drop off point, the garage is representative of the urban carless community ideals of New-Town-in-town planning, as it is the only boarding point for buses to Queens. The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), a public-benefit corporation responsible for development, is currently responsible for maintaining the complex. Car restrictions on the island have gradually lifted and today the garage is frequently used for art exhibitions and other events in addition to a parking facility. The island's only supermarket, Gristede's is located on the ground floor.



Motorgate Parking Garage, 2010

After the Queensboro trolley line shut down in 1957, buses took their place. Today the Red Bus line and the MTA Q102 buses operate on Roosevelt Island. Red Buses serve as the on-island shuttle and have a passenger capacity of 55. They stop at several different locations, including the Octagon, Chapel of the Good Shepherd, the Tram, and the subway station.

As of April 1, 2014, the Red Bus eliminated its bus fare and is now free to ride. This decision encourages the use of mass transit and keeps traffic moving on Main Street as a result of faster boarding times, which helps to maintain the efficiency of public transportation overall. Buses run every 8 minutes during rush hour (weekdays, 7-10 AM and 3-8 PM) and every 15 minutes during non-rush hours.

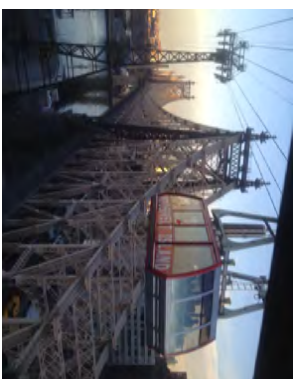


The Red Bus turning near the tram station.

The Roosevelt Island Tramway, known to Islanders simply as the Tram, was built in 1976 as a temporary access to the island until the subway station was completed. From 1976 until 1989, was the only direct way to get to Roosevelt Island from Manhattan. Designed by Prentice, Chan & Olshausen and built by Swiss company Van Reil, the Tram was modeled after ski lifts that carry passengers up a mountain in a traction of the time a conventional method would take. The Tram carries passengers 250 feet above the East River and makes over 115 trips a day. The tram is also unique as being the oldest tram system in North America, and is cur-

## Section Two: Current Conditions

rently one of only 2 aerial tramway systems in operation in the United States. With an average ride time of three minutes, delivering Islanders to Second Avenue at 60th Street, the Tram's speed helped advertise housing on the island with the campaign "From home to Bloomingdale in 3 minutes." The tram is a resident and visitor favorite, with good views, a timely travel schedule to Manhattan and back, and no major over-crowding like the subway.

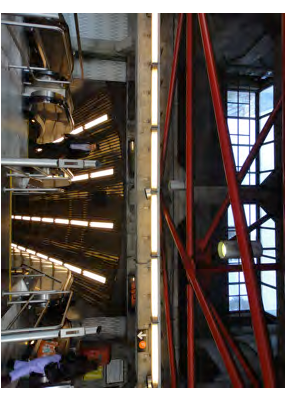


View of the newly replaced Roosevelt Island Tram

The Roosevelt Island station opened on October 29, 1989 in conjunction with the partial completion of the 63rd Street Tunnel. The station has two tracks and two side platforms. It is one of the deepest stations in the New York City Subway at about 100 feet below street level, approximately 10 stories deep, with 3 escalators for access to the bottom. Due to its depth, the station contains several features not common in the rest of the system. Similar to the stations of the Paris Metro and Washington Metro, Roosevelt Island station was built with a high vaulted ceiling and a mezzanine directly visible above the tracks. The tile work on the walls are unique to the station, being a light speckled grey glazed brick arrange into two distinct patterns at different levels of the station: horizontal at track level, vertical at the elevators and mezzanine. The ceiling is decorated with corrugated stain-

less steel panels, which, when installed on an angled surface, creates an optical illusion of extended height that adds to the monumentality of the station. There are three sets of elevators to reach track level from the station entrance. These features can also be found on some of the system's other deep stations, including several in northern Manhattan on the IRT Broadway-Seventh Avenue Line, and the 63rd and Lexington IND Station. The station is fully ADA-accessible, with elevators to street level.

Fare control is in a glass-enclosed building directly on Main Street, which contains a cast concrete ceiling and is surrounded by a metal tubing framing system painted red, similar to design elements seen in Motorgate and PS/IS 217. As of 2013, annual ridership for the station was 1,948,925, down 3.7% from the previous year. It is the 245 most popular station out of 421.



The top of the three escalators in the station.



The station as seen from the mezzanine level.

## Main Street

Main Street is currently the major shopping street on the island with a commercial vacancy rate of 31 percent. The vacancy rate in the rest of the NYC is approximately 12 percent. There are few truly successful businesses, with many complaints about the lack of good commercial products in those that are still open, such as the lack of fresh produce and high prices at one grocery store on the island.



## Governance

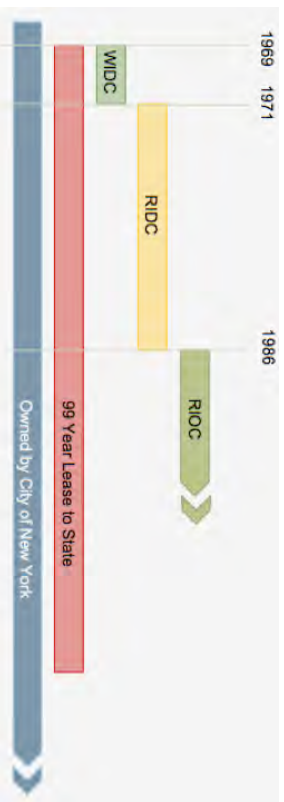
The governance of Roosevelt Island is complicated. Roosevelt Island is owned by New York City, under the political jurisdiction of Manhattan, but receives police, sanitation and fire services from Queens and is leased to the state of New York for 99 years. Once leased to UDC and the Welfare Island Development Corporation (WIDC), now has its day-to-day operations run by RIOC.

A complicating aspect of Roosevelt Island is the tenuous relationship between various stakeholders on the island including the state-run Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation known as RIOC and the residents association, known as RIRA.

The following are a list of the stakeholders interested in Roosevelt Island:

- Community
- Community Organizations/RIRA
- City of New York
- State of New York
- Senator Serrano
- Parks, Recreation
- State Historic Preservation Officer
- FDR Four Freedoms Park
- NPS (Nat'l Register)
- Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation
- Cornell University
- NYC MTA
- Leitner-Poma (tram system)
- Hudson Related
- Becker + Becker
- NYC Health and Hospitals Corp.
- NYPL
- Centralstug (AVAC)
- Small businesses

With all of these stakeholders, it is very hard for anything to get done on the island, as no one claims singular control.



## Landmarks

There are currently 6 Landmarks on the island, all of which were nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, and declared New York City Landmarks in 1976.

Blackwell House is a simple well-proportioned wooden farmhouse, built for James Blackwell between 1796 and 1804 and is the sole surviving building from this period. After 1828, the Blackwell House became the residential quarters for various institutional administrators and in the late 19th century the warden of the island's almshouse lived there. The house was abandoned during the 20th century and by the late 1960s was in an advanced state of decay, its only hope for survival being complete restoration. The well-known New York architect Giorgio Cavaglieri, was commissioned to evaluate the buildings on the island and which were of special interest with a view to preserving them and in 1973, he carried out a complete restoration of Blackwell House. During this restoration, there was a fire and a large majority of the house was destroyed, but the restoration continued. The house is now owned by RIOC and is planned to be used as a community center, as well as the new home for the Roosevelt Island Historical Society.



Blackwell House, 2014.

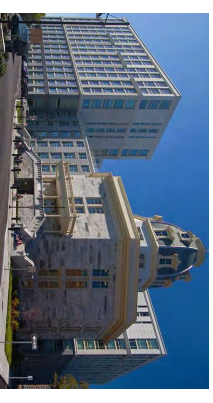
The Octagon was designed by Alexander Jackson Davis and opened in 1841 and it functioned as the entrance to the New York City Lunatic Asylum. The stone used was quarried on the island. In 1894 The Octagon was converted into the Metropolitan Hospital, which closed in 1955.

The building then began to deteriorate. The two wings extending from the rotunda were demolished, and two fires destroyed the interior and domed roof. The building's survival remained questionable for decades.

In 2006 the developer Becker and Becker restored and repurposed the Octagon as luxury housing, replacing all of the original quarried stone with a similar stone and re-designing a portion of the detailing, which seems only to be a well-done travesty. The building received LEED silver certification for sustainable design and construction.



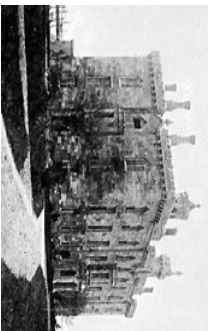
Metropolitan Hospital, 1900.



The Octagon and attached housing, 2013.

The Smallpox Hospital was designed by James Renwick Jr. and was built from 1854-1856. The wings were added between 1893 and 1905 by different firms of architects. At the time of its construction, it was the only hospital within the city that specialized in the treatment of smallpox. The building housed 100 patients, with the lower floors reserved for charity cases and upper floors made of private rooms for paying patients. In 1875, control of the hospital was transferred to the Board of Health and renamed Riverside hospital and in 1886 the hospital was converted to the "Home for the Nurses of the Maternity and Charity Hospital Training School."

The building would later be used entirely as a residence for nurses after a new smallpox hospital elsewhere in NYC. The building was vacated in the 1930s when City Hospital was relocated. The building was landmarked as a ruin, the only such type of landmark in the city. The building underwent a \$4.5 million stabilization project and is now sitting, deteriorating behind a tall fence.



Smallpox Hospital, 1870.



Smallpox Hospital Ruin, 2013.

The Chapel of the Good Shepherd was designed by Frederick Clarke Withers and built in 1889 as a Gothic Revival chapel. The Chapel was a gift to the New York Protestant Episcopal Society and was intended for use by Almshouse inmates. The project began as a two building complex and later grew to over a dozen buildings by the 1890s in the area surrounding the church and included the Blackwell House.

In 1952, the Almshouse was closed, and two long-term care hospitals, Coler and Goldwater, were built. The Chapel of the Good Shepherd was made into a residence for the Coler Hospital Chaplain.

The building was restored in 1975 by Giorgio Cavaglieri. The building ownership was later transferred to RIOQ, who renovated it in 2003 and reopened it as the Roosevelt Island Community Center, serving several different churches and community groups.



Chapel of the Good Shepherd, 2014.



Interior of the Chapel.

The Lighthouse stands at the northern tip of Roosevelt Island on a projection of land which was at one time a separate island connected to the mainland by a wooden bridge. Local legend maintains that during the 19th century a patient from the nearby Lunatic Asylum was permitted to build a stone fort on this outcropping as he feared an invasion by the British.

The lighthouse was built in approximately 1872 and is a 50-foot octagonal tower, made of rock-faced, grey gneiss that was quarried on the island, and James Renwick Jr. was the supervising architect on the island at the time. It is now a part of Lighthouse Park, a popular destination in the warmer months for residents and visitors alike.

Lighthouse Park was severely affected by Hurricane Sandy, with severe flooding and damage throughout the park, which close off a large portion of the park and access to the lighthouse for many months afterward. It is now fully open to the public once again, as a favorite place on the island for all.



Roosevelt Island Lighthouse, 2014.

Srecker Laboratory was designed by Clarke Withers and Walter Dickson and built in 1892 as a lab for City Hospital. The building is designed in the Romanesque Revival style and is faced with grey gneiss quarried on the island with contrasting orange brick. It was the first institution for pathological and bacteriological research. The building was renovated in 1905 and a third floor was added to house histological exam facilities, museum, and a library. In 1907 the Russell Sage Institute of Pathology took over the lab through the 1950s, when it was decommissioned and vacated in 1958.

The building is now owned by RIOQ and was gutted and beautifully restored in 2000 by the NYC MTA to be used as power substation for the E and F subway lines.



Srecker Memorial Laboratory

Although City Hospital was one of six buildings that were proposed to be restored and saved during the Johnson-Burgee plan, the Hospital was not landmarked and was later unnecessarily demolished and gave way to Southpoint Park, where a large majority of it is buried beneath a hill and serves as the basis for the seawalls.

## Section Three: Significance



Underneath the Queensboro Bridge

## Determining Significance

After researching and documenting the buildings, and understanding the island's development, we arrived at our statement of significance for the island concluding that: Given Roosevelt Island's unique situation and its connection to the larger metropolis, the land has frequently undergone transformations affecting the styles, uses, and various populations inhabiting its structures. Therefore, we determined that the significance of Roosevelt Island's structures is established on the basis of their contributions to and/or impact on the following five categories: architecture, planning, the islands' social and cultural history, landscape, and engineering.

## Architectural Significance

Our first category of significance is Architecture. Despite comprising only 147 acres, the island is home to a variety of architectural styles and periods, including Georgian, Romanesque Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, and the International style. As such, the island illustrates a veritable progression of architectural styles, spanning some 250 years of history with notable architects, including with notable architects, including Alexander Jackson Davis, James Renwick Jr., Joseph Louis Sert, and Louis Kahn. The significant buildings include the UDC housing, FDR Four Freedoms Park, Goldwater Hospital, and each of the six landmarked structures.



Goldwater Hospital, from the Queensboro Bridge

## Planning Significance

Our second category of significance is the history of urban planning. Nowhere in New York City has an area been as extensively scrutinized and planned as Roosevelt Island—the location of no less than five actualized plans and three additional proposed plans. Several of these plans were specifically designed to control and shape demographics in NYC through the implementation of large-scale, imposing architectural programs. The most ambitious of these was the Johnson-Burgee plan of 1969, though not fully realized, it did prompt the creation of new infrastructure, including the AVAC system, the NYC BMT Subway F station, and the Island Tramway. Physical remnants from earlier plans also exist on the island, including the lighthouse, the Smallpox and Strecker Laboratory. Planning proves significant in the UDC buildings and the other housing on the island, the Steam plant, Motorgate, AVAC, and both hospital complexes.



The Steam Plant, near the Queensboro Bridge

## Historical Significance

Our third category of significance is Roosevelt Island's Social and Cultural History: Roosevelt Island has been the setting for a multitude of plans covering punitive, welfare, convalescing, and palliative care. These plans were imposed not just on the island, but on its population, which at various times included prisoners, the sick, the mentally ill, the destitute and mid-

dle class New Yorkers, all of which have contributed to the island's checkerboard and colorful history. Many of the island's landmarks speak to the city's historic efforts to address social ills, together creating a scrapbook of New York cultural values and politics for the past two and a half centuries, and a reference guide for future plans, most notably, Cornell NYC Tech. The most significant buildings in this category are the UDC buildings, the six currently landmarked buildings, Goldwater Campus, the Queensboro Bridge, Motorgate, AVAC, Southpoint Park, Lighthouse Park, and the Community Gardens.



The Smallpox Hospital Ruin, 2013.

## Landscape Significance

Our fourth category of significance is Roosevelt Island's Landscape: Originally a hunting ground for the Canarsie Tribe, the topography of Roosevelt Island has been shaped by its development, evidence of which can still be seen today in its natural and altered coastline. The island still has natural hills existing on the southern part of the island, while large amounts of the northern half the island are much flatter, which is likely due to the quarrying on the island during the penitentiary era. The island's hard bedrock of Fordham gneiss frequently influenced where and how some buildings were constructed, as many buildings were built from this rock after being quarried. In the Johnson-Burgee plan, open space made up a large part of the plan, with open park space between the two medium-density clusters of residential buildings. There were several landscape ar-

chitects involved in the design of these spaces, most notably Dan Kiley and Zion & Brece. Another important landscape design is the FDR Four Freedoms Park constructed over a period of 38 years and designed by Louis Kahn as a memorial to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. On the island, the landscaping is most significant in 4 Freedoms Park, Southpoint Park, Lighthouse Park, Coler Hospital, and the park areas surrounding the UDC buildings.



FDR Four Freedoms Park

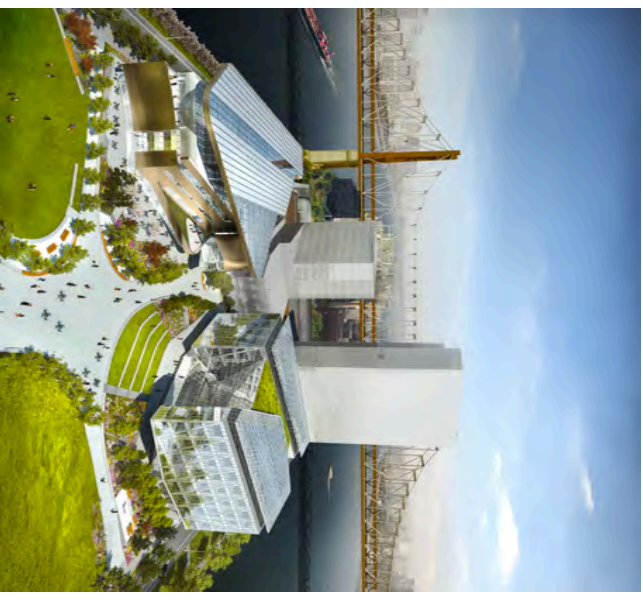
## Engineering Significance

Our fifth and final category of significance for Roosevelt Island is Engineering: Both the transportation structures and utility structures on the island represent extraordinary engineering feats. Many of the technologies used on the island are unique, especially the AVAC system and the tramway, which is only one of two aerial commuter tramways in North America. From an engineering perspective, the UDC buildings, AVAC system, transportation buildings, and the Smallpox Hospital prove most significant.



The Queensboro Bridge

## Section Four: Challenges



Cornell Phase One, to be completed by 2017



With the island's history, resources, and significance in mind, it is clear that Roosevelt Island has a distinct set of challenges. Many of the island's challenges have been exacerbated as construction of Cornell NYC progresses, and new challenges due to the construction have developed. This period of change provides an opportunity for the island as a whole to effectively accommodate a significant new addition while at the same time address its challenges. Taking into consideration the pivotal time in both the history and future of Roosevelt Island, our group has identified six main challenges, which will later be addressed with a series of solutions.

### Transportation

Transportation infrastructure on the island and access to Manhattan are prevalent issues for pedestrian accessibility and vehicular traffic. The subway is already at full capacity with the number of current residents. With the influx of people from Cornell NYC Tech's campus community, the strain on transportation will outpace its capabilities, creating a need to find other transportation options to compensate.



Roosevelt Island Subway Station

**Vacancy Rate/Main Street**  
The 30% vacancy rate and isolated atmosphere of Main Street has resulted in a lack of variety of commercial establishments and adjacent underutilized alleyways. Main Street has never been a thriving corridor, due to lease restriction and a low consumer population. With the influx of Cornell students, staff, and faculty, however, there is now an opportunity for improvement as changes occur in the residential and commercial needs of the growing community.



Vacant shop on Main Street

### Cornell Integration

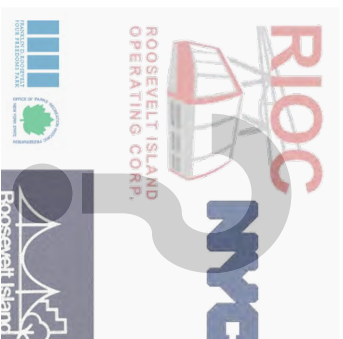
Integration of the Cornell campus into the diverse physical fabric of the island has the potential to be a contentious issue in the coming years. This concern for integration includes the physicality of the buildings versus the island as a whole, as well as the influx of people into the daily life of the island.



Cornell's phase one plan for 2017

### Governance

There is confusion over administrative control in island politics and obligations due to the multiple parties involved, which includes both state and city governance. Unclear governance creates difficulty in organizing maintenance of the structures on the island, as well as day-to-day management. This is best demonstrated by an event earlier this year when a dead rat lay on the ground outside the RIOC office. It took at least 3 days for it to be removed because no one in situation was willing to take responsibility for it, despite the many protests of residents.



### Tabula Rasa Planning

The tendency of governmental agencies to enact tabula rasa type planning on the island has resulted in a landscape of fractured plans which does not suggest a harmonious relationship. This trend is continued by Cornell Tech's campus' disconnected development. The island is peppered with remnants of previous plans that were discarded without much thought to their significance. Cornell's current demolition of Goldwater Hospital with the same lack of care or nod to the history of

place is quite similar to when City Hospital was razed and replaced by Southpoint Park.



Roosevelt Island covered in institutions

### No Historical Awareness

The majority of the issues pertaining to the historic fabric of the island can be attributed to a distinct lack of awareness concerning its history and the shifting identity of the island through time, as the island switched from one of isolation to one of commercial, residential, and now technological ventures. Many New Yorkers have never been to Roosevelt Island, some not knowing that it has a subway stop, nor do they know that it has a fascinating and diverse history that is as old as the city itself.



Roosevelt Island, as a residential island

Each of these challenges is unique requires a creative set of solutions to deal with them.

## Section Five: Physical Preservation



Goldwater Hospital, before demolition, 2013

## Solutions

In order to combat these six challenges, our group has come up with three distinct categories of solutions addressing: the physical preservation, revitalization, and interpretation of the island. Each of our solutions are a direct response to one or more of the challenges previously listed and are meant to be addressed in the future as the island evolves to accommodate Cornell and the island's changing identity.

As part of our research we documented all the extant buildings on the island in order to determine which structures warranted protection. This first category of solutions relates to the physical fabric of the island, which includes proposing the landmarking of several structures, the possibility of redesigning the negative and neglected spaces on the island, and zoning.

## Proposed Landmarks

Using our evaluation system, we decided it would be prudent to landmark those buildings we ranked highly as significant, as well as those who require protection and supervision from the corresponding agencies. However, given the age of most non-landmark structures there are few buildings that could potentially be landmarked. Our group identified six potential new landmarks: the Tram, the subway station, the AVAC system, Dayspring Church, and the UDC buildings.

The first new potential landmark is the Roosevelt Island Tramway System, which, constructed in 1976, meets the age criteria for a New York City landmark. The tram is also unique as being the oldest tram system in North America, and is currently one of only 2 aerial tramway systems in operation in the United States. Because of the moving components, a clause would be written into the nomination

providing for a change in the trams' technology if a better version is designed. We are also recommending writing a National Register nomination and Mechanical Engineering nomination when the structure reaches the age of eligibility.



Roosevelt Island Tram car passing over the river

We are also recommending that the Roosevelt Island F-Line subway station be landmarked in the future when it comes of age as a New York City landmark. This one on the island is one of the deepest stations in the system at 10 stories deep, with three sets of escalators to reach the track level, a unique mezzanine level, and barrel vaulted walls seen only in a handful of other stations. For these reasons we would also advocate National and Civil engineering Landmarking when it reaches eligible age.



Entrance to the Roosevelt Island Subway Station

The AVAC system and building are currently eligible for New York City Landmark status and we are advocating for its designation. As the only residential AVAC system in North America, it also merits a National nomination when it comes of age. Additionally, we are arguing for an exception to the age restriction for mechanical engineering due to its distinction of being the only residential pneumatic refuse system in North America. We propose landmarking not only the underground tube system, but also the above ground vents and the central collection center itself.



Viewing room in the AVAC collection facility

The Dayspring Church, is currently eligible for New York City Landmark status and National Register status and we are advocating for its designation as both. The church, built in 1924 as a part of Metropolitan Hospital, has a high pitched slate roof, wooden window frames, and the original stained glass windows. However, an anachronistic door has already been installed in one side of the church, which is its exact reason that this church needs protection.



Dayspring Church

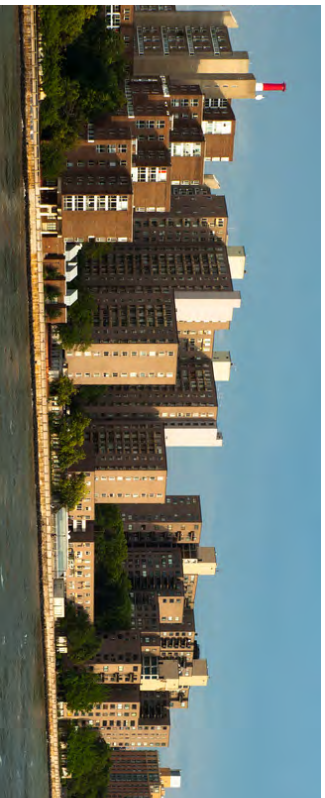
## Zoning Recommendation

In addition to Landmarking these significant structures, we are calling for a reevaluation of the island's zoning, which would help preserve not only significant structures but also significant landscapes present on the island.

Under the current New York City Zoning, Roosevelt Island is zoned as one block and lot under which approximately 4.5 million square feet and 27 buildings are regulated. While the current zoning allows for flexibility, it creates an unpredictable environment as far as future development is concerned. We are proposing that the island be re-zoned. It is our recommendation that the island be divided into multiple block and lot numbers and that the appropriateness of blanket R-7 and C-7 zoning be reexamined.



Zoning Maps showing Roosevelt Island



## UDC Historic District

For a long time, our group debated about which protections were necessary and helpful to the UDC housing buildings since they are a very significant set of buildings found on the island.

We are striving to protect the physical fabric of the UDC buildings as well as characteristic features of the Johnson-Burgee plan, including the pavers on Main Street, the AVAC system, and the island's transportation methods. The UDC buildings represent affordable housing borne out of New-Town-In-Town ideals and a utopian vision for the island. They're indicative of a very significant period of the island and given this, we feel obliged to examine some traditional preservation options.

The area can be protected collectively in two ways: a National Historic District and a New York City Historic District

Our reasons for wanting a National Register Historic District for the area included the following:

- The buildings would retain a large degree of integrity, but still allow for alterations, e.g. the windows in Eastwood will need to be replaced in the near future.

- there would be little to no increase in maintenance costs for the buildings, which is important
- the restoration work on buildings could qualify for tax credits (although this is dependent on a specific type of ownership)
- and that there can be more awareness of the significance of the UDC buildings—that they were designed by important architects and that their monolithic, streamlined facades are outstanding examples of brutalist architecture.

This recognition and potential financial assistance would help to preserve what is architecturally and historically significant within the proposed Historic District.



A view of Main Street, looking North

While a New York City Historic District would also provide these same resources, it would also instill more extensive regulations and additional, worrisome complications.

At this time we do not recommend the creation of a New York City Historic District on Roosevelt Island for the crucial reason that many of the residents appear to be unaware of what landmarking actually means. We feel that community outreach and education is necessary before beginning the landmarking process and publications such as the NY Times, "Argument over a Brownstone Neighborhood: The Case for and Against a Bed-Stuy Historic District" only serve to muddy the waters. If organizations such as The Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) hold primacy in the court of public opinion, then the onerous is on preservationists to provide clear and concise counterpoints disavowing REBNY arguments such as:

- that designation may increase property values and force out working-class and middle-class residents, especially as more buildings exit the Mitchell-Lama program in the near future. Here, the argument may be seen one of two ways: first, that the increased appreciation of a home will result in a higher resale value; or conversely, that the increased value of a home will at some point, pose an undue financial burden on the homeowner in terms of property tax. Statistically speaking there is evidence that historic neighborhoods are more expensive; however, there is no concrete evidence to suggest this is due to landmark designation.
- that the high standards of maintenance for landmark buildings would in turn result in higher maintenance fees. Here, there is some evidence to suggest not only an increase in overall maintenance costs, but also the cost associated with replacing historically appropriate materials. Additional information is required before any conclusions may be drawn.

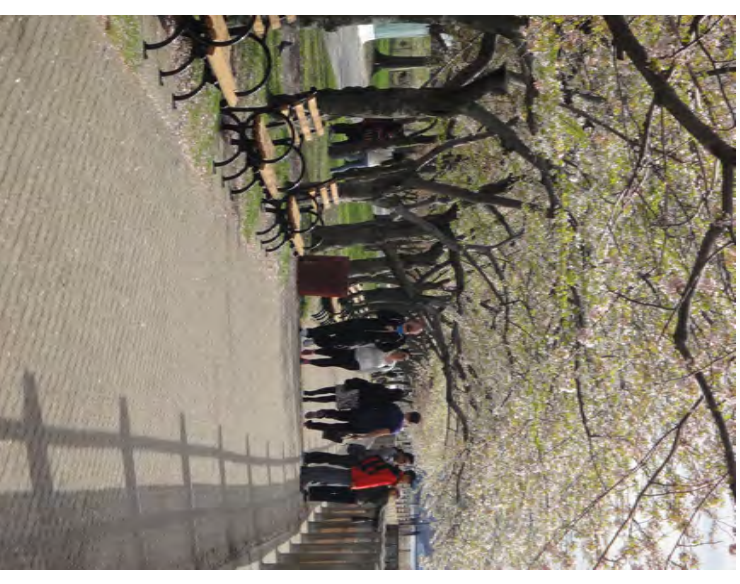
- that regulations may impede necessary changes, particularly to the Main Street storefronts as attempts to revitalize the area occur. At this time, we lack the necessary data with which to ascertain how NYC designation may affect planned alterations to the commercial center. Mr. Jonathan Marvel who is working with Hudson Related Properties on the Roosevelt Island Main Street storefronts and RIOC Main Street coordinator Ms. Arianna Sacks Rosenberg were unavailable for comment and finally
- that designation may impede fledgling enterprises entering the island economy by placing the additional burden of first gaining LPC approval and then renovating in a historically sympathetic way. Here again, our group lacks the necessary data to make a judgment call—however the sentiment is valid as the LPC does place additional restrictions on the exterior facades of historic properties.

Therefore, it is for these reasons that we do not recommend a NYC Historic District at this time until further advocacy and outreach is undertaken. Instead, we recommend that the UDC buildings and their defining characteristics, including the AVAC system and herringbone pavers, be incorporated in a National Historic District; that a study be conducted of the shortcomings and potential viability of the storefronts; and that through outreach and exhibitions, residents are educated on the significance of the buildings and what it means to live in a historic district.



Main Street, Roosevelt Island

## Section Six: Revitalization



Spring on the Promenade

Our second category of solutions, Revitalization, encapsulates a variety of concepts ranging from economic to social improvements, but at its core means working for the betterment of the community.

### Main Street

Main Street is currently the major shopping street on the island with a commercial vacancy rate of 31 percent. The vacancy rate in the rest of the NYC is approximately 12 percent. There are few truly successful businesses, with many complaints about the lack of good commercial products in those that are still open, such as the lack of fresh produce and high prices in Cristede’s—the only grocery store on the island.

There is confusion over administrative control in island politics and obligations due to the multiple parties involved, which includes both state and city governance. Unclear governance creates difficulty in organizing maintenance of the structures on the island, as well as day-to-day management.

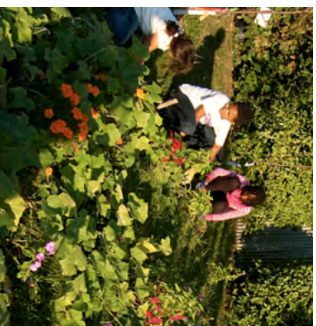
Partly due to inadequate levels of commerce and to some extent due to the uninviting and uninteresting connections between the promenade and the islands’ interior Main Street lacks the excitement of a small, winding medieval street as it was intended to replicate. A redesign of some of the negative and neglected space on Main Street is recommended, as it would not only highlight significant structures and landscapes but also draw visitors from the Promenade to Main Street.

### Four-Point Approach

The residents of Roosevelt Island are perfect candidates for the implementation of the National Main Street Center’s economic development approach—the Main Street

Four-Point Approach®. Officially launched on July 1, 2013, the National Main Street Center, Inc., (NMSC) is a newly formed, nonprofit subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. A distillation and integration of eight guiding principles established by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the approach is, “the foundation for local initiatives to revitalize their districts by leveraging local assets—from cultural or architectural heritage to local enterprises and community pride.” Working in tandem, the four points seek to establish a successful and sustainable community-wide effort. The points are organization, promotion, design and economic restructuring.

Perhaps the major hurdle Roosevelt Island must overcome is the issue of organization. Organization establishes consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various stakeholders in a commercial district. In the case of Roosevelt Island, various volunteer-driven revitalization programs could be implemented—from basic beautification projects led by residents to full-scale assistance from national organizations—these incremental steps could pay dividends not only sprucing up the island but also enticing greater numbers of visitors.



Community Garden

Promotion campaigns are another useful tool for instilling community pride and communicating a commercial district’s unique characteristics, business establishments and activities to shoppers, investors, potential business and property owners, as well as visitors. On Roosevelt Island, increased outreach programs to other more established historic events and activities throughout New York City could also help.



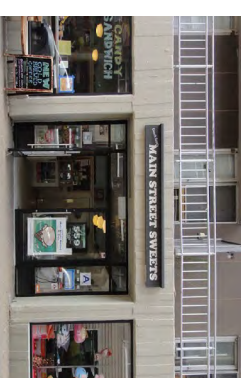
Cherry Blossom Festival Tour

Design means generating economic stimulus by creating a safe, inviting environment for shoppers, workers, and visitors. The installation of new shops catering to the needs of current residents while also anticipating the needs of a new Cornell community should be sought out. To this end, a set of design specifications should be put into place urging potential new businesses to adhere to current design guidelines.



Main Street Restaurant

Economic restructuring is accomplished by retaining and expanding successful businesses, and converting unused or underused commercial space. Residents and visitors alike need reason to spend their money locally, rather than off island. By embracing these four principles of Main Street revitalization, Roosevelt Island could easily take advantage of the economic momentum generated by the construction of the Cornell campus.



New businesses on Main Street

By embracing these four principles of Main Street revitalization as indicated by the National Main Street Center, Roosevelt Island should be able to take advantage of the economic momentum generated by the construction of the Cornell campus.

## Secondary Public Spaces

Disconnection of past planning practices, as well as ineffective design, gives rise to notable fragmenting, and consequent blight on Roosevelt Island today. Commerce should have act as a most effective bond to gather people from all over the island, but the inefficient commercial service of Main Street unfortunately fails this function.

A redesign of secondary public spaces could strengthen the connection between the present fragments, and activate "border vacuum" by bringing in more pedestrian circulation. Retouching and revitalizing past construction is an old idea dating back to the study of Jane Jacobs, it's always necessary to attend people's needs for space.

The next step is to argue the validity of altering the design of UDC housing. The New-Town-in-Town plan aimed at accommodating people cast away by rapid urban development, by making use of Federal programs and resources that deal with this issue.



Johnson-Burgee Rendering

As for the creation of public space and connections, the Johnson-Burgee Plan said:

"The Master Plan ... organized the Island into a series of lateral zones to foster a sense of community amongst the residents: high-density housing clusters alternating with large open areas for recreational use. Schools, day-care centers, and other community amenities were incorporated within the buildings. The New Town was barrier-free, providing the disabled with access to all public spaces."

Times have changed, however, and the services and amenities of UDC buildings have proved inadequate. Main Street is frustrating due to lack of proper function and unpleasant ambience, the Promenade is not strong enough to hold the series of lateral zones together, planned institution and amenity spaces are underutilized, and Main Street loses the excitement of a small, winding medieval street it was intended to replicate. Fragmenting of the island indicates that the original intentions are violated, validating the necessity for making some changes were we to preserve this historic work of UDC.

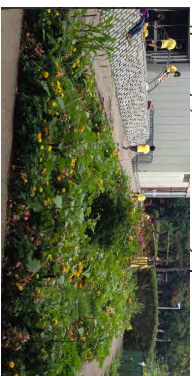
The Main Street Retail Study in 2009 surveyed residents' most desired retailers, and made market classification to decide new businesses to be added. As Cornell is coming, there should be another target market, the intellectuals. In 2011, RIOC hired Hudson Related Retail LLC to manage the retailing business of Main Street, but improvement is far from satisfying. As there has been little change in market composition, some proposals could still be utilized today.



Main street as seen today

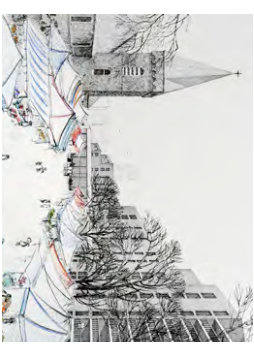
In regards to the revitalization of Main Street, redesign of secondary spaces could take place to bring vitality to a broader scope around the island. A suggestion is to put businesses of better market radiation in the open spaces, such as plazas to extend their service space there.

The plain entrance of Main Street is worth attention. Across the road is Blackwell Park, which in the Johnson-Burgee Plan has been designed to be the town center, though not realized, it could still serve as an inviting entry of Main Street. It could accommodate a restaurant and a library in the vacant buildings on 503 & 504 Main Street (which are on the two sides of the entrance), and arrange to have some of their services outside of the buildings in view of the public, which would evoke a positive image of Main Street. This idea could also make use of a gardening program for children's ecology education ("a Living Library") located beside 504 Main Street.



"Living Library"

The beloved Chapel of Good Shepherd could have its surrounding space renovated into a town plaza. Dining spaces could be arranged along its sides, the weekend Farmer's Market, which is now uncomfortably located under the spiral approaches between Roosevelt Island Bridge and the Motorgate could be moved to the plaza, or confection booths could also fill the space.



The more closed alleyways extending from Main Street could be decorated with contemporary art installations or greenery. A good example is the renovation of outmoded industrial regions into stage of creative cultural industry, a great idea experimented around the world. The upcoming Cornell campus could arguably sponsor cultural salons and galleries, and help decorate these alleys. Then more inviting passages between the gloomy Main Street and the delightful Promenades will take shape (Figure 23) - this is also how a real medieval gained its liveliness, by being used in people's everyday life.



The amphitheaters of Eastwood, some with child school and daycare center in them, were designed as some kind of community center, which could be a source of vitality. Such approach was sensible, as these institutions deal with issues cared about by most people; however, the scale was not economic and they all eventually became vacant or underutilized – right now only a theatre program, Island Shakespeare, use these places occasionally, making them holes within residential complexes (Figure 24). Reusing for public service, commerce or gardens, maybe some redesign as well, are thus recommended, to utilize these places.



A show in the amphitheater

Green space could not bring people from a distance, but could smooth their trips to other attractions. There are a variety of destinations on Roosevelt Island laid out, their usage and appeal unresolved. For one thing, people should be persuaded into a more pleasant rhythm when visiting the green corridors, therefore we may add more seats and drink/food services on the waterfront. As a matter of fact, residents do present demand for such amenities in our survey – a few of them, probably placed by the entry between the UDC buildings towards Main Street, would do a good job, not to interrupt the naturalistic scenery of the water front.

The Community Garden, which is a valuable product of the NYC community garden movement, attracts gardeners all over the island. As has been mentioned above, it has failed several of its ambitions for the relocation to the present site in 1992; even the positions it has to offer is far from enough – dozens of people are on the waiting list. We would suggest RIOC, which is in charge of the active region of RI Garden Club, to open some more places for gardeners around the island. The Northtown could be a proper attempt, so as to make a gardening center on the other end of the island, and lots of gardeners are willing to participate into its landscape design, despite the limited sunlight in this area – they're confident that real gardeners could successfully cultivate this gloomy place.



The Community Gardens, near the Octagon

### Transportation

As its only vehicular passageway Main Street is one of the primary modes of circulation through Roosevelt Island; however, with the introduction of Connell's construction into the community, the transportation issues on the island need to be addressed as the population and use of the island changes.

While transportation to and from the island is an important logistical ques-

tion, it needs to be dealt with as Connell comes into the island, whether be the construction or the students in the future.

To accommodate these changes and keep the island as car-free as possible, there will need to be adjustments to the transit system in order to improve circulation and to bring people on and off the island easily. The feasible solutions are: introduce a ferry service and increase the number of buses and tramway trips. While the more idealistic or less feasible solutions include: Re-building the elevator to allow pedestrians to access the island from the Queensboro bridge, creating a subway stop on the E train, and building a pedestrian bridge to Manhattan.

One option is to have a ferry service. In December 2012, RIOC commissioned Ocean and Coastal Consultants to assess the feasibility of ferry service here. The proposed landing sites are at Observation Pier, the former Oil dock, the Octagon, and Southpoint Park. Observation Pier would provide the shortest commute at six minutes, to the 34th Street Dock in Manhattan and was judged to be the most suitable location but there may be another. See the image below.

In 2013, a citywide ferry study was completed by the New York City Economic Development Corporation. One of the most promising sites they proposed would be located toward the southern part of the island, near the former Oil Dock and the projected cost for this site is \$8.6 million.



Roosevelt Island Tram over the river

A viable option to deal with transportation on and off of the island is to increase the trip frequency of the tram with less waiting time between crossings, as well as and have it operate 24 hours a day.



Red Bus service goes up and down Main Street

Another option is to increase the number of buses to and from the island. There are currently 10 Red Bus and Q102 buses running per hour in the afternoon. There is room for an increase from 10 buses an hour to 16 by 2038, which will help with circulation throughout the island.



## Section Seven: Interpretation



The Visitor's Kiosk, removed from the Queensboro Bridge to the island

Our last category, interpretation, involves elements that help tell the story of Roosevelt Island's history, including structures that are no longer extant. We feel that building a compelling story of the island's history is of the utmost importance, as more and more parts of the physical historic fabric of the island disappear with redevelopment.

## Oral History

Our first interpretative step is collecting oral history from former patients of the Goldwater Campus and original residents of the UDC buildings. Due to the removal of patients from Goldwater to the Coler campus and the new facility in Harlem, we believe that now is a crucial time to undertake the interviews before the community becomes too disparate. Using standards set forth by the non-profit group StoryCorps, we are actively collecting interviews of former Goldwater patients. We are also recommending to the New York Department of Public Health to partner with StoryCorps itself in order to have a wider range of interviews and to allow them to be archived in the Library of Congress, creating a permanent testament to a piece of the island's history that is currently threatened.



## Graphic Standards

Signage and unique graphic identification is a necessary part of promotion and developing a sense of visual familiarity with locations and people. The establishment of a cohesive narrative for the island's history has been completed, however getting this story out to the public is most easily done through applied signage across the island identifying locations and their associated stories.

To this end, the following graphic standards for the Roosevelt Island Historical Society have been prepared to assist in marketing the history of the island.

The new polychrome logo incorporates images representative of several of the historic eras and landmarks on the island and boasts a new color scheme that is both distinct enough to identify the Historical Society but meshes well with the color schemes of other island organizations. It is intended to be used in large displays, as well as in any promotion of the island or of the Historical Society.

The monochromatic logo depicts an abstraction of the Blackwell House, which can be color shifted for use, although red, blue, or teal on the color palette is advised. This logoi is best used in the identification, small promotion, and representational logos in conjunction with partners. The color may be shifted to any saturation of the proposed color scheme, in a monotone.

The graphic standards may be employed for official documents, on the Historical Society website, and on any other signage or promotional material. Proposed signage for Roosevelt Island Historical Society is in accordance with National Park Service standards for signage and way stations.



Polychrome logo, for large displays and promotion



Monochrome Logo, for identification, small promotion, and logos in conjunction with partners

Signage is a principle heavily used by the National Park Service, with great success, in assisting with viewer experience in self-guided parks. Their standards and principles, set forth in publications such as the Wayside Exhibits: A Guide to Developing Outdoor Interpretive Exhibits, are suggested as the main guidelines for the creation of signage types. There are two suggested types of signage for use on the island. They are directional signage and educational waysides.

Directional signage can work in coordination with the implemented tour as well as attracting visitor attention to local business, transportation, and means of egress. The signs should be placed at, or slightly below, average sightline height to encourage visibility by both abled and disabled visitors and residents. Educational waysides can range from small plaques at sightline or below to large self-supporting "desk type" waysides that allow for the interpretation of a greater amount of material.

Due to the mix of users on the island, digital and manual engagement are recommended, where smaller signs can be placed with QR codes allowing access to an informational website, but it is also recommended for medium to large format signs be made accessible for digitally averse persons.

### HEADER TYPE 1 TRAJAN PRO BOLD

### HEADER TYPE 2 ERAS MEDIUM ITC

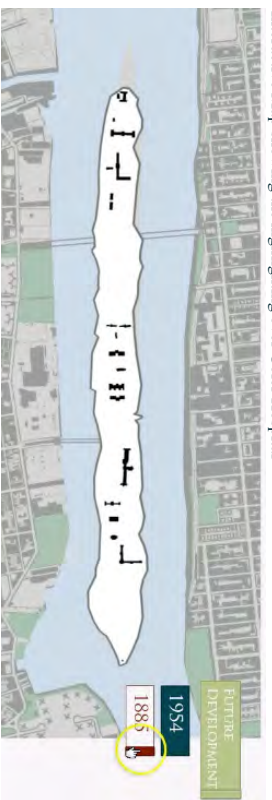
### Body Text Constantia



### Interactive Map

The third interpretive measure we designed is an interactive map that not only captures in more detail the complexity of the current physical fabric, but also shows how the island and its structures have evolved over time. This map will be installed as an interactive station at

the End of Year Show, part of a larger exhibition on the history of the island, before being given to the Roosevelt Island Historical Society for future exhibitions and user interactivity. Images from the map may also be used in printed format as a graphic on transportation or pamphlets.



Interactive Map showing the future development of the island.

### Interactive Map

Our last and most user friendly interpretive step is reviving the Roosevelt Island Historical Walking Tour, which was undertaken in 2002, but is now missing almost all of its signage and has an inoperable and undesirable website.

We found that reviving the historical tour an important part of the outcome of our studio. One of the main problems with the island, is the lack of information and basic knowledge about the history of the island. The residents do not often know what interesting history of the island exists and the would-be tourist does not know of the rich history that makes Roosevelt Island such a unique and interesting place. It behooves the Historical Society and the Island to encourage the presentation of the history of the island, as it is likely to appeal to tourists visiting NYC and keep them on the island longer, which could easily encourage economic development of the local main street commercial sites.

With the large influx of people on the island due to the beautiful setting in the river and nice weather, the wonderful views of Manhattan (and Queens), and the newly revealed FDR Four Freedoms Park, having a tour start in an easily available location near the tram and subway, and stops throughout the island is a great way to share more about Roosevelt Island and keep everyone, visitors and residents alike, engaged.

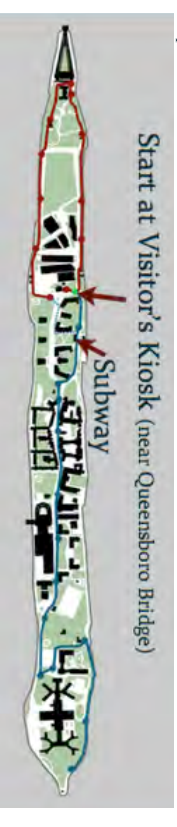
With the permission of Judith Berdy, president of the Roosevelt Island Historical Society, we re-designed the Historical Walking Tour website to make it mobile friendly, linking it to the new signage with the new graphic standard, and attaching QR codes that direct visitors to the improved website. The new website will include the history of each stop on the tour, audio files of oral history and dramatic readings of historical documents, as well as a link to books related to topics discussed on the tour, available at the island's New York Public Library branch.

The tour itself was re-written to include two different routes, one available for either the Northern or Southern parts of the island, instead of having a single tour starting in Southpoint Park. The routes now start at the Visitor's Kiosk, which is close to transportation on and off the island, and this encourages users to visit the Kiosk with any questions.

The Southern route is a 30 minute, 12 stop tour that uses the promenade as a basic loop to show off the island's core and the sites available on that half of the island.

The Northern route is a 45 minute, 15 stop tour that brings the audience up through main street and the center of the island, ending in Lighthouse Park, one of the most celebrated parts of the island by residents and visitors alike.

It is our intention to carefully showcase the history and unique beauty that Roosevelt Island has to share and making it easily accessible to everyone that are interested.



## Section Seven: Interpretation

### Preview of the Website



With the seasonal influx of crowds seeking to enjoy the island, having a tour start in a tourist-friendly transit location is a great way to share more about Roosevelt Island and keep everyone, visitors and residents alike, engaged.

A preliminary website has already been launched, showing the new graphic standards of the Historical Society, as well as making the tour accessible to those who wish to take it. Check it out, when you want a nice walk outside.

## Conclusion

Roosevelt Island has been a laboratory for social experimentation that has manifested itself in built forms, spanning from the agrarian societies in its early history to the close residential community that exists today. As Cornell NYC Tech moves onto the island, the identity, form, and needs of that community are changing. With a campus “that’s unlike any ever created in higher education,” Cornell will bring Roosevelt Island into the future in the attempt to create “Silicon Alley,” to rival the tech industry on the West Coast. Our study of the island and the community within it reflects a critical junc-

tion in the island’s history and its future, as Goldwater Hospital, the once-high tech complex for chronic care and cutting edge research in the medical field, is torn down, and a business think tank rises up to replace it. As preservationists, we aim to keep the island’s history and significance relevant in a time of monumental change, while mitigating the change as construction moves forward. From our study, we have created solutions to alleviate the many challenges on the island and the best way to encourage visitors to return time and time again to enjoy the increasingly unique Roosevelt Island.

## Section Nine: Appendices



## Ranking System

In understanding the island's significance we created a ranking system to determine the significance each of the buildings and landscapes, which is established on the basis of its contributions to those categories of significance: architecture, history of urban planning, the island's social and cultural history, landscape, and engineering. Each building was given a 1 to 4 rating for each category, with 1 being a non-contributing factor and 4 being central to the site's significance. By reviewing approximately 45 buildings on the island and surrounding green space, we have been able to give each of the buildings and parks up to 20 points and as few as 5.

### Ranking Definitions

- 1- This element does not contribute to the site's significance.
- 2- This element has modest bearing on the site's significance.
- 3- This element has major bearing on the site's significance.
- 4- This element is central to the site's significance.

## Building Documentation

After documenting and researching the island's structures and landscapes and evaluating them in concordance with the island's significance, we broke down the details about each of the buildings present on the island.

### Island House, c. 1975

**Location:** Northtown, 551 Main Street

**Architect:** Johansen & Bhavnani

**Current Owner:** RIOC

**Previous Owner(s):**

**Alterations:** Poor decommissioned

**Architectural Style:** Brutalist

**No. of Floors:**

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Concrete; Concrete

**Description:** U-shaped tiered housing with courtyard

**History:** Island House, which is situated at 551-555-575 Main Street, was designed by Johansen & Bhavnani and opened in 1975. The building has 400 apartments, a now-defunct indoor swimming pool, a courtyard, and the tiered massing found throughout the island. Some apartments are duplex with terraces.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	3-Major	4-Central	4-Central	3-Major	3-Major	None	NHD

### Rivercross, c. 1976

**Location:** Northtown, 531 Main Street

**Architect:** Johansen & Bhavnani

**Current Owner:** Co-Op

**Previous Owner(s):**

**Alterations:** Windows replaced

**Architectural Style:** Brutalist

**No. of Floors:** 19

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Concrete; Concrete

**Description:** U-shaped tiered housing with courtyard

**History:** Rivercross, located at 531 Main Street, was designed by Johansen & Bhavnani and opened in 1976. The 19-story building has 377 apartments, an indoor swimming pool, a courtyard, and the tiered massing found throughout the island. Some apartments are duplex with terraces. The building is now a co-op, has newly replaced windows, and is working to replace the electric heating in the building.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	3-Major	4-Central	4-Central	3-Major	3-Major	None	NHD

### Eastwood, c. 1976

**Location:** Northtown, 552 Main Street

**Architect:** Sert Jackson and Associates

**Current Owner:** Roosevelt Landings

**Previous Owner(s):**

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Brutalist

**No. of Floors:**

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Concrete; Concrete

**Description:** U-shaped tiered housing with courtyard

**History:** Originally built by Sert Jackson and Associates in 1976, Eastwood features modern design concepts and is a model of efficiency. Situated at 552 Main Street, this apartment complex holds a historical value for residents on Roosevelt Island. Eastwood is a part of a ten-unit complex that boasts of 1,003 studios to three-bedroom units with about 280 residences devoted to elderly and disabled tenants. Eastwood is a prime example of Sert's investigations into high-rise multiple-dwelling residential buildings. It achieves a remarkable level of efficiency by triple-loading corridors with duplex apartment units, such that elevators and public corridors are only needed every three floors. This high rise has an on-site garage and laundry facilities within the building.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	4-Central	4-Central	4-Central	3-Major	3-Major	None	NHD

## Appendix: Building Documentation/Ranking

**Westview, c. 1976**  
**Location:** Northtown, 595, 625 Main Street  
**Architect:** Sert Jackson and Associates  
**Current Owner:** RIOC  
**Previous Owner(s):** RIOC  
**Alterations:**  
**Architectural Style:** Brutalist  
**No. of Floors:**



**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Brick  
**Description:** U-shaped tiered housing with courtyard buildings. This building has an open U-shaped layout and a brilliant view of the water and Manhattan, with 371 rental apartments. The building itself continues the tiered-design found throughout Roosevelt Island and is clad in brick. Situated at 576 Main Street, the complex boasts of a well-designed attended lobby, elevator service, an indoor swimming pool, and laundry facilities located within the building.

Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	3-Major	4-Central	4-Central	3-Major	2-Moderst	None	NHD

**Promenade, c. 1975**  
**Location:** Surrounding the island  
**Architect:** Zion & Breen  
**Current Owner:** RIOC  
**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York  
**Alterations:**  
**Architectural Style:** Naturalistic  
**No. of Floors:**



**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:**  
**Description:** Waterfront garden path  
**History:** The Promenade is a park-like path that entirely surrounds the island, which was fully functional by 1975, with approximately 4 miles of paths winding around the coast. The landscape architects were Zion & Breen, who provided a landscape garden design for the island in 1965. The western half of the promenade is more complex utilizing multiple levels, while the eastern promenade is modest and subtle, tracing the coast of the island. There are several more defining features throughout the Promenade, including the Observation Piers, the Meditation Steps, the sculpture of Tom Ottenness from his 1996 work entitled "The Marriage of Real Estate and Money," a boat's prow, and the Cherry Walk.

Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Path	1-None	4-Central	3-Major	4-Central	3-Major	None	None

## Appendix: Building Documentation/Ranking

**FDR Four Freedoms Park, c. 2012**  
**Location:** Southpoint, 1 FDR Four Freedoms Park  
**Architect:** Luis Kahn  
**Current Owner:**  
**Previous Owner(s):**  
**Alterations:**  
**Architectural Style:** Modernism  
**No. of Floors:**



**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Granite on landfill  
**Description:** Park with promenade and memorial at end  
**History:** Designed by Louis Kahn in the early 1970s, FDR Four Freedoms Park was opened in 2012 as a memorial to Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The park, is true to Kahn's design, and took 37 years to be realized. Admirers campaigned to have the monument built and by 2005, had collected over \$50 million. The memorial was dedicated as FDR Four Freedoms Park on October 17, 2012, and officially opened as a New York State Park on October 24th. This is the only Kahn work in New York, consisting of an entirely new portion of landfill on the southern tip of the island. The large monolithic granite monument is based on President Roosevelt's State of the Union Address on January 6, 1941 and contains a large bronze bust. The monument sits at the end of a triangular park with promenades on both sides.

Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Park	4-Central	2-Moderst	2-Moderst	4-Central	2-Moderst	None	None

**Chapel of the Good Shepherd, c. 1888-1889**  
**Location:** Northtown, 543 Main Street  
**Architect:** Frederick Clarke Withers  
**Current Owner:**  
**Previous Owner(s):** New York Protestant Episcopal Mission Society  
**Alterations:** Restored 1975 Giorgio Cavaglieri, Plaza 1975  
**Architectural Style:** Gothic Revival  
**No. of Floors:** 2



**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Slate, brick and Brownstone; Concrete  
**Description:** Chapel with reading room, robing room, and a room for Mission Society workers  
**History:** The Chapel of the Good Shepherd was designed by Frederick Clarke Withers and built in 1888-1889 as a late Victorian Gothic Revival chapel. A gift of New York banker George H. Bliss to the New York Protestant Episcopal Mission Society it was intended for use by the inmates of the Almshouse (later called the New York City Home for the Aged and Infirm). Constructed using gray gneiss rock quarried from the island, the roof is finished with asphalt shingle and the walls are red and gray brick with brownstone window and door entranments. The chapel once served as the residence for the Coler Hospital Chaplain before a restoration by Giorgio Cavaglieri and subsequent re-opening as an ecumenical facility in October 1975. Today the church is located in a plaza off Main Street designed by Johansen & Behman. The chapel's ownership later transferred to RIOC, who renovated it again in 2003 and reopened it as the Roosevelt Island Community Center, serving several different churches and community groups.

Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	4-Central	2-Moderst	4-Central	1-None	3-Major	L, NR	L, NR



**Smallpox Hospital Ruin, c. 1854**

**Location:** Southpoint, Southpoint Park  
**Architect:** James Renwick Jr.  
**Current Owner:** City of New York  
**Previous Owner(s):**  
**Alterations:** 2 additional wings built in 1903 and 1905; Structural reinforcements & removal of floors/roof  
**Architectural Style:** Gothic Revival  
**No. of Floors:** 3  
**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** None; Stone and Brick



**Description:** Stone ruin

**History:** The Smallpox Hospital was designed by James Renwick Jr. and was built from 1854-1856. The wings were added between 1903 and 1905 by different firms of architects. At the time of its construction, it was the only hospital within the city that specialized in the treatment of smallpox. The building housed 100 patients, with the lower floors reserved for charity cases and upper floors made of private rooms for paying patients. In 1875, control of the hospital was transferred to the Board of Health and renamed Riverside Hospital and in 1886 the hospital was converted to the "Home for the Nurses of the Maternity and Charity Hospital Training School." The building would later be used entirely as a residence for nurses after a new smallpox hospital was constructed on North Brothers Island. The building was vacated in the 1950s when City Hospital was relocated. The building was landmarked as a ruin, the only such type of landmark in the city. The building underwent a \$4.5 million dollar stabilization project and is now sitting at the south island of the island slowly deteriorating behind a tall fence.

Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	4-Central	3-Major	4-Central	1-None	3-Major	L, NR	L, NR

**AVAC System and AVAC Building, c. 1975**

**Location:** Northtown, North of Motorgate  
**Architect:** Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood Architects (KMW)  
**Current Owner:** Managed by NYC Department of Sanitation  
**Previous Owner(s):**  
**Alterations:** Repaired 1990-1995  
**Architectural Style:** Contemporary  
**No. of Floors:** -3  
**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Metal; Concrete, Glass; Concrete  
**Description:** Refuse sorting facility  
**History:** Roosevelt Island has a unique form of waste collection—and it one of the more interesting engineering projects undertaken on the island. The AVAC (short for Automated Vacuum Assisted Collection) system designed by Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood (KMW) Architects and opened in 1975 has the distinction of being the only such residential AVAC system in the United States. The AVAC building and system are operated by the New York City Sanitation Department. Like many apartment garbage collection systems—AVAC uses a series of connected chutes to siphon trash into collection tanks at the basement level of each apartment building. Following the island's UDC redevelopment in the early 1970's all new residential buildings were required to plug into the AVAC network, which currently extends from the Octagon apartments to Southtown. As only a portion of the island is serviced by this collection system, not including recycling, waste from Coler Hospital, businesses along Main Street, or the numerous parks,



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
System	1-None	4-Central	4-Central	1-None	4-Central	None	L, NRE

**Goldwater Hospital, c. 1935-1939**

**Location:** Southpoint, 1 Main Street  
**Architect:** Isadore Rosenfeld, Butler & Kohn, and York & Sawyer,  
**Current Owner:** Cornell NYC Tech/City of New York  
**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York  
**Alterations:** 1971 Chapel Addition by William Lescaze; 2014 Demolition  
**Architectural Style:** Art Deco/International Style  
**No. of Floors:** 4-6  
**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Asphalt tar; buff brick, concrete; pink granite  
**Description:** Five chevron pattern patient wings connected by a north-south axial spine  
**History:** Constructed using WPA Labor from 1935-1939 and with an initial design by Isadore Rosenfeld, Butler & Kohn, and York & Sawyer, the Goldwater Hospital campus covers 9.9 acres, with seven connected buildings four stories high, shaped like chevrons to garner river views and let in sunlight, of crucial importance to the hospital's tuberculosis patients. Extensive sun studies were undertaken by Rosenfeld, who determined that the chevron wings with patient beds set parallel to the wall, instead of the conventional perpendicular position, all connected by a single central spine would be the most beneficial for the patients. Materials used included limestone, a pink granite base, bronze window surrounds, and wooden handrails. As a high-tech and modern facility, four abstract murals were commissioned for the semicircular walls of the day rooms. These were completed by four separate WPA artists: Riccardo Dane Chanase's Abstraction Based on Music, ca. 1942; Joseph Rygielos's Abstraction, ca. 1942; Albert Swindon's Abstraction, ca. 1942; and Ilya Bolotowsky's Abstraction, ca. 1942. Three of the murals were removed during demolition of the complex.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	3-Major	3-Major	4-Central	2-Modest	1-None	None	None

**Motorgate Parking Garage, c. 1974**

**Location:** Northtown, 688 Main Street  
**Architect:** Kallmann & McKinnell (KM) Architects  
**Current Owner:** Managed by Central Parking  
**Previous Owner(s):**  
**Alterations:** Repaired and expanded 1990-1995  
**Architectural Style:** Modern Brutalist  
**No. of Floors:** 5  
**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Concrete; concrete; concrete  
**Description:** Covered parking facility  
**History:** Designed by Kallmann & McKinnell (KM) Architects during the UDC era, the garage was completed in 1974 housing 1,000 cars and later expanded in 1990 to accommodate 1,710 cars. Intended for use as a vehicular drop off point connecting traffic on and off the island from Queens via the Roosevelt Island Bridge, the garage is representative of the utopian carless community ideals of New-Town-in-town planning as it is the only boarding point for buses to Queens. The RIOC governing organization is currently responsible for maintaining the complex. Over the years, car restrictions on the island have gradually lifted and today the garage is frequently used for art exhibitions and various other events in addition to a parking facility. The island's only supermarket, Gristede's is located on the ground floor.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Garage	2-Modest	4-Central	4-Central	1-None	2-Modest	None	None

## Appendix: Building Documentation/Ranking

### Lighthouse, c. 1872

**Location:** Northpoint, Lighthouse Park  
**Architect:** James Renwick Jr.  
**Current Owner:** RIOC  
**Previous Owner(s):**  
**Alterations:** Removal of light  
**Architectural Style:** Gothic  
**No. of Floors:**

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Tin; stone; stone

**Description:** 50-foot octagonal tower, made of rock-faced, random gray ashlar.

**History:** The Lighthouse stands at the northern tip of Roosevelt Island. The lighthouse was built in approximately 1872 by inmate labor and is a 50-foot octagonal tower, made of rock-faced, grey gneiss that was quarried on the island, and James Renwick Jr. was the supervising architect on the island at the time. It is now a part of Lighthouse Park, a popular destination in the warmer months for residents and visitors alike. However, the Lighthouse is in need of a new roof, as the current tin roof is failing.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	4- Central	1- None	4- Central	2- Modest	2- Modest	L, NR	L, NR

### The Octagon, c. 1834-1839

**Location:** Northpoint, 888 Main Street  
**Architect:** Alexander Jackson Davis  
**Current Owner:** The Octagon  
**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York  
**Alterations:** 2006 Reno for residential complex by BCA for Becker & Becker  
**Architectural Style:** Palladian  
**No. of Floors:** ~5

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** -; Stone; Stone

**Description:** Octagonal centerpiece to the NYC Lunatic Asylum, converted to housing in 2006

**History:** After the island's purchase in 1828, Alexander Jackson Davis was commissioned to design the New York City Lunatic Asylum, the first public institution of its kind. After years of design changes and budgetary issues, the facility opened in 1839. While strange stories began disseminating over the years, not much notice was paid to the asylum until the 1887 release of Nellie Bly's expose of the terrible conditions and neglect at the Asylum on Blackwell's Island. Her article prompted a Grand Jury Investigation aided by her account. The asylum was closed in 1894, and converted to Metropolitan Hospital, which operates until 1955. After, the building is abandoned and slowly falls to ruin. During the 1970s the wings of the original building were torn down. A catastrophic fire partially gutted the building in 1982, and in 1999 a second fire destroyed the remaining interiors. In 2006 Becker + Becker renovated and restored the central octagonal building for use as the centerpiece to their new luxury residential complex. The new LEED silver rated building follows the original L-shape design and replicates the exterior finishes and dome.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	3- Major	4- Central	4- Central	2- Modest	2- Modest	L, NR	L, NR

## Appendix: Building Documentation/Ranking

### Queensboro Bridge, c. 1901-1909

**Location:** Southtown, Overhead  
**Architect:** Gustav Lindenthal, Leffert L. Buck and Henry Hornbostel  
**Current Owner:** City of New York  
**Previous Owner(s):**  
**Alterations:** Removal of trolley, reworking of James  
**Architectural Style:** Beaux Arts  
**No. of Floors:** 2 decks

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Steel; concrete

**Description:** Double cantilever bridge with decorative towers

**History:** The Queensboro Bridge, officially titled the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge and is colloquially known as the 59th Street Bridge. Designed in the Beaux Arts style by Gustav Lindenthal, Leffert L. Buck and Henry Hornbostel, designers of the Williamsburg Bridge, the Queensboro Bridge was constructed between 1903 and 1909 and cost \$18 million and the lives of 50 men. It opened to vehicle and trolley traffic on June 12, 1909, when it was known as Blackwell's Island Bridge and has a clearance of 130 feet. The original upper deck held two rail tracks, two vehicle lanes, and two pedestrian lanes, while the lower deck. The rail track service was removed by 1942 and the trolley was decommissioned on April 7, 1957, the last trolley line in NYC. Between 1930 and 1955, an elevator allowed vehicles and pedestrians to exit at Welfare Island, through a building that was built adjacent to the bridge. The bridge no longer allows for direct access to Roosevelt Island.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Bridge	1- None	4- Central	4- Central	1- None	4- Central	L, NR	L, NR

### Blackwell House, c. 1798-1804

**Location:** Southtown, Blackwell Park  
**Architect:**  
**Current Owner:** RIOC  
**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York, James Blackwell  
**Alterations:** Restored in 1974  
**Architectural Style:** Georgian  
**No. of Floors:** 3

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Asphalt Shingle; Wood Cladding; Fieldstone

**Description:** 2 1/2 story wooden farmhouse with front and rear porch, kitchen addition. Heavily altered.

**History:** The Blackwellhouse, New York City's sixth oldest surviving woodenhouse, is a simple vernacular style farmhouse in a Georgian design aesthetic, with a two story main structure and a one-story kitchen addition completed shortly after the construction of the original house, built for James Blackwell. The house is the sole surviving building from the era of private ownership of the island. A later addition was demolished during the 1973 restoration due to a fire. The eastern side of the home has a porch extending the full width of the structure, while the western has a portico. The home has two dormers on both faces and six-over-six window configurations. After 1828, it became the residence of several institutional administrators, such as the warden of the Alms-house on the island. The house was later abandoned in the first half of the 20th century, and by the late 1960s, the house was in an advanced state of disrepair. The house underwent an extensive restoration by New York architect Giorgio Cavaglieri in 1973. The house is now owned by RIOC and is planned to be used as a community center, as well as the new home for the Roosevelt Island Historical Society, but the building is still deteriorating.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	3- Major	3- Major	4- Central	2- Modest	1- None	L, NR	L, NR

## Appendix: Building Documentation/Ranking

### Roosevelt Island Subway Station, c. 1989

**Location:** Southtown, Main Street near Road 5

**Architect:** Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA)

**Current Owner:** MTA

**Previous Owner(s):**

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Post-Modern

**No. of Floors:** 3

**Roof/Wall, Foundation Materials:** Metal; Stainless steel and glass tile; bedrock

**Description:** Subway station

**History:** The Roosevelt Island station opened on October 29, 1989 in conjunction with the partial completion of the 63rd Street Tunnel. The station has two tracks and two side platforms. It is one of the deepest stations in the New York City Subway at about 100 feet below street level, approximately 10 stories deep, with 3 escalators. Roosevelt Island station was built with a high vaulted ceiling and a mezzanine directly visible above the tracks. The tile work on the walls are unique to the station, being a light speckled grey glazed brick. The ceiling is decorated with corrugated stainless steel panels. There are three sets of elevators to reach track level from the station entrance. Fare control is in a glass-enclosed building directly on Main Street, which contains a cast concrete ceiling and is surrounded by a metal tubing framing system painted red, similar to design elements seen in Motogate and PS/IS 217. As of 2013, annual ridership for the station was 1,948,925, down 3.7% from the previous year. It is the 245 most popular station out of 421.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Station	2- Modest	3- Major	2- Modest	1- None	4- Central	None	L, NR, NRE

### Roosevelt Island Tram, c. 1976

**Location:** North and adjacent to the Queensboro Bridge

**Architect:** Prentice, Chan & Olhansen

**Current Owner:** RIOC

**Previous Owner(s):**

**Alterations:** 2010, complete renovation by Lettner-Poma of America

**Architectural Style:**

**No. of Floors:**

**Roof/Wall, Foundation Materials:** Metal; metal; concrete

**Description:** Aerial tram

**History:** The Roosevelt Island Tramway, known to islanders simply as the Tram, was built in 1976 as a temporary access to the island until the subway station was completed. From 1976 until 1989, was the only direct way to get to Roosevelt Island from Manhattan. Designed by Prentice, Chan & Olhansen and built by Swiss company Van Roll, the Tram was modeled after ski lifts that carry passengers up a mountain in a fraction of the time a conventional method would take. The Tram carries passengers 250 feet above the East River and makes over 115 trips a day. The tram is also unique as being the oldest tram system in North America, and is currently one of only 2 aerial tramway systems in operation in the United States. With an average ride time of three minutes, delivering islanders to Second Avenue at 60th Street, the Tram's speed helped advertise housing on the island with the campaign "from home to Bloomingdale in 3 minutes."



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Transport	1- None	3- Major	3- Major	1- None	4- Central	None	L, NR, NRE

## Appendix: Building Documentation/Ranking

### Blackwell Park, c. 1972

**Location:** Northtown, Blackwell Park

**Architect:** Dan Kiley

**Current Owner:** RIOC

**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:**

**No. of Floors:**

**Roof/Wall, Foundation Materials:**

**Description:** Paved park with trees

**History:** Blackwell Park was designed by the landscape architect assisting the comprehensive landscape design of the island. Dan Kiley, who emphasized the integration of man and nature, and multi-sensual space, which he interpreted as "the poetry of space". Blackwell Park preserved trees and meadows that were originally on site, and added some facilities for social interaction and recreation.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Park	3- Major	3- Major	3- Major	2- Modest	1- None	None	None

### Strecker Memorial Laboratory, c. 1892

**Location:** Southpoint, Southpoint Park

**Architect:** Clarke Withers and Walter Dickson

**Current Owner:** RIOC/MTA

**Previous Owner(s):** City Hospital, Russell Sage Institute of Pathology, UDC

**Alterations:** 1905, William Flanagan, Third Floor added; electricity added

**Architectural Style:** Romanesque Revival

**No. of Floors:** 3

**Roof/Wall, Foundation Materials:** Metal; Stone; Stone

**Description:** Stone and brick building with large windows

**History:** Strecker Laboratory was designed by Clarke Withers and Walter Dickson and built in 1892 as a lab for City Hospital. The building is designed in the Romanesque Revival style and is faced with grey gneiss quarried on the island with contrasting orange brick. It was the first institution for pathological and bacteriological research. The building was renovated in 1905 and a third floor was added to house histological exam facilities, museum, and a library. In 1907 the Russell Sage Institute of Pathology took over the lab through the 1950s, when it was decommissioned and vacated in 1958. The building is now owned by RIOC and was gutted and beautifully restored in 2000 by the NYC MTA to be used as power substation for the E and F subway lines.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	3- Major	2- Modest	4- Major	1- None	1- None	L, NR	L, NR

## Appendix: Building Documentation

### Dayspring Church, c. 1921

**Location:** Northpoint, 851 Main Street

**Architect:**

**Current Owner:** Dayspring Church

**Previous Owner(s):**

**Alterations:** Door inserted in place of a window

**Architectural Style:** English Parish Church

**No. of Floors:** 2

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Slate; stone- gneiss; stone

**Description:** Small church with attached rectory

**History:** Greenery and the Octagon development both dwarf this tiny gneiss, a type of stone, chapel, originally constructed in 1924 as the Episcopal Chapel of the Holy Spirit, for the former Metropolitan Hospital. The building has a high-pitched slate roof, the original wooden window frames, and the original stained glass windows. When the hospital moved to Harlem in 1955, the chapel was effectively abandoned, save for the hospital's chaplain, who liked his quarters in the chapel's rectory so much that he decided to stay until the 1990s. The Chapel is currently home to Dayspring Baptist Church, and although the building is in use, many of its stained glass windows are cracked or broken, and several highly noticeable alterations have been made. The rear yard of the chapel is home to another cat sanctuary.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	3- Major	2- Modest	4- Central	2- Modest	1- None	None	L, NR

### Steam Plant, c. Pre-1976 (Date Unknown)

**Location:** Southtown, adjacent to Queensboro Bridge

**Architect**

**Current Owner:**

**Previous Owner(s):**

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Industrial

**No. of Floors:**

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Concrete; concrete; concrete

**Description:** Steam plant with two stacks.

**History:** The Roosevelt Island Steam Plant is located next to the Queensboro Bridge and behind the Roosevelt Island tram station. Built in the 1930s, this oil fired steam plant services Goldwater and Coler Hospital as well as the Sports Park. The Plant is to be decommissioned in 2014. There is currently a proposal to convert the Roosevelt Island steam plant into an innovative space for art, science, and technology. In 2013 Friends of the Roosevelt Island Steam Plant (FRSIP) was formed.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	1- None	4- Central	2- Modest	1- None	3- Major	None	None

## Appendix: Building Documentation

### Youth Center, c. 1976

**Location:** Northtown, attached to Eastwood

**Architect:** Sert Jackson and Associates

**Current Owner:** Roosevelt Landings

**Previous Owner(s):** RIOC

**Alterations:**

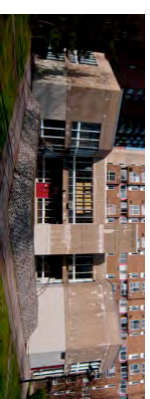
**Architectural Style:** Brutalist

**No. of Floors:** 2

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Concrete; Concrete

**Description:** Small building attached to Eastwood

**History:** Originally built by Sert Jackson and Associates in 1976, Eastwood features modern design concepts and is a model of efficiency. The Youth Center is attached to Eastwood, is situated at 525 Main Street, Eastwood is a part of a ten-unit complex that boasts of 1,003 studios to three-bedroom units with about 280 residences devoted to elderly and disabled tenants. Eastwood is a prime example of Sert's investigations into high-rise, multiple-dwelling residential buildings. The building was once used to house a youth center and is currently in the process of being turned into the the New York Public Library Branch on the island.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	1- None	4- Central	4- Central	1- None	1- None	None	NHD

### Riverwalk Building 1, c. 2003

**Location:** Southtown, 475 Main Street

**Architect:** Gruzen Samton Architects with SLCE Architects

**Current Owner:**

**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Contemporary

**No. of Floors:** 16

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** -; Brick, glass; concrete

**Description:** Modern Housing

**History:** Located in Southtown next to the F train subway station are 405, 415, 425, 455, 465, and 475 Main Street, known as the Riverwalk. Construction began in 2003 and the last of the buildings was completed in 2008. 425-475 Main Street were designed by Gruzen Samton Architects with SLCE Architects, while 405-415 Main Street was designed by Costas Kondylis & Partners LLP. The six buildings consist of 1202 units. This building has 356 units and serves as student and staff housing for Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	2- Modest	3- Major	2- Modest	2- Modest	2- Modest	None	None

## Appendix: Building Documentation

### Riverwalk Building 2, c. 2003

**Location:** Southtown, 405 Main Street  
**Architect:** Gruzen Samton Architects with SLCE Architects

**Current Owner:**

**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Contemporary

**No. of Floors:** 16

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** -, Brick, glass; concrete

**Description:** Modern Housing

**History:** Located in Southtown next to the F train subway station are 405, 415, 425, 455, 465, and 475 Main Street, known as the Riverwalk. Construction began in 2003 and the last of the buildings was completed in 2008. 425-475 Main Street were designed by Gruzen Samton Architects with SLCE Architects, while 405-415 Main Street was designed by Costas Kondylis & Partners LLP. The six buildings consist of 1202 units. This building has 136 units and serves as Staff Housing for Weill Cornell Medical College.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	2- Modest	3- Major	2- Modest	2- Modest	2- Modest	None	None

### Riverwalk Place, (Riverwalk Building 3), c. 2006

**Location:** Southtown, 455 Main Street  
**Architect:** Gruzen Samton Architects with SLCE Architects

**Current Owner:**

**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Contemporary

**No. of Floors:** 16

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** -, Brick, glass; concrete

**Description:** Modern Housing

**History:** Located in Southtown next to the F train subway station are 405, 415, 425, 455, 465, and 475 Main Street, known as the Riverwalk. Construction began in 2003 and the last of the buildings was completed in 2008. 425-475 Main Street were designed by Gruzen Samton Architects with SLCE Architects, while 405-415 Main Street was designed by Costas Kondylis & Partners LLP. The six buildings consist of 1202 units. This building has 218 units, with an 88 block of units sold to Weill Cornell Medical College, and while are market-rate condominiums.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	2- Modest	3- Major	2- Modest	2- Modest	2- Modest	None	None

## Appendix: Building Documentation

### Riverwalk Landing, (Riverwalk Building 4), c. 2007

**Location:** Southtown, 425 Main Street  
**Architect:** Gruzen Samton Architects with SLCE Architects

**Current Owner:**

**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Contemporary

**No. of Floors:** 16

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** -, Brick, glass; concrete

**Description:** Modern Housing

**History:** Located in Southtown next to the F train subway station are 405, 415, 425, 455, 465, and 475 Main Street, known as the Riverwalk. Construction began in 2003 and the last of the buildings was completed in 2008. 425-475 Main Street were designed by Gruzen Samton Architects with SLCE Architects, while 405-415 Main Street was designed by Costas Kondylis & Partners LLP. The six buildings consist of 1202 units. This building has 320 units, with 96 units for MSK and 48 units for NYU, while the rest of the units in the building are market-rate condominiums.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	2- Modest	3- Major	2- Modest	2- Modest	2- Modest	None	None

### Riverwalk Court, (Riverwalk Building 5), c. 2008

**Location:** Southtown, 415 Main Street  
**Architect:** Costas Kondylis & Partners LLP

**Current Owner:**

**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York

**Alterations:**

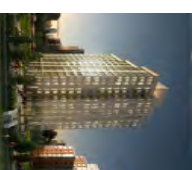
**Architectural Style:** Contemporary

**No. of Floors:** 16

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** -, Brick, glass; concrete

**Description:** Modern Housing

**History:** Located in Southtown next to the F train subway station are 405, 415, 425, 455, 465, and 475 Main Street, known as the Riverwalk. Construction began in 2003 and the last of the buildings was completed in 2008. 425-475 Main Street were designed by Gruzen Samton Architects with SLCE Architects, while 405-415 Main Street was designed by Costas Kondylis & Partners LLP. The six buildings consist of 1202 units. This building has 123 units, while the rest of the units in the building are market-rate condominiums.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	2- Modest	3- Major	2- Modest	2- Modest	2- Modest	None	None

## Appendix: Building Documentation

### Riverwalk Crossing (Riverwalk Building 6), c. 2008

**Location:** Southtown, 405 Main Street  
**Architect:** Costas Kondylis & Partners LLP

**Current Owner:**

**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York

**Alterations:**

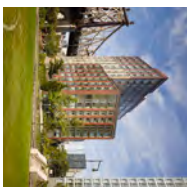
**Architectural Style:** Contemporary

**No. of Floors:** 16

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** -; Brick, glass; concrete

**Description:** Modern Housing

**History:** Located in Southtown next to the F train subway station are 405, 415, 425, 455, 465, and 475 Main Street, known as the Riverwalk. Construction began in 2003 and the last of the buildings was completed in 2008. 425-475 Main Street were designed by Gruzen Samton Architects with SLCE Architects, while 405-415 Main Street was designed by Costas Kondylis & Partners LLP. The six buildings consist of 1202 units. This building has 242 units, while the rest of the units in the building are market-rate rentals.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	2- Modest	3- Major	2- Modest	2- Modest	2- Modest	None	None

## Appendix: Building Documentation

### 30 Manhattan Park, c. 1989

**Location:** Northtown, 30 River Road

**Architect:** Gruzen & Samton

**Current Owner:** RIOC

**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Late Century Modern

**No. of Floors:** 21

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Brick

**Description:** Modern Housing

**History:** In 1989, five buildings designed by Gruzen & Samton were built to the north of the UDC complex. These late 20th century modern buildings are all made of brick. Numbers 10-40 are identical to one another with the exception of the color of their trim. The front facade of each of these buildings is broken into three blocks of varying heights—21, 16, and 11 stories. Columns of protruding balconies break up the facades. The entrances are recessed and are set behind a series of two-story brick columns. Four of the buildings are market rate rentals, while the fifth is Section 8 housing.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	2- Modest	3- Major	2- Modest	2- Modest	2- Modest	None	None

### 40 Manhattan Park, c. 1989

**Location:** Northtown, 40 River Road

**Architect:** Gruzen & Samton

**Current Owner:** RIOC

**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Late Century Modern

**No. of Floors:** 21

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Brick

**Description:** Modern Housing

**History:** In 1989, five buildings designed by Gruzen & Samton were built to the north of the UDC complex. These late 20th century modern buildings are all made of brick. Numbers 10-40 are identical to one another with the exception of the color of their trim. The front facade of each of these buildings is broken into three blocks of varying heights—21, 16, and 11 stories. Columns of protruding balconies break up the facades. The entrances are recessed and are set behind a series of two-story brick columns. Four of the buildings are market rate rentals, while the fifth is Section 8 housing.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	2- Modest	3- Major	2- Modest	2- Modest	2- Modest	None	None

### 20 Manhattan Park, c. 1989

**Location:** Northtown, 20 River Road

**Architect:** Gruzen & Samton

**Current Owner:** RIOC

**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Late Century Modern

**No. of Floors:** 21

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Brick

**Description:** Modern Housing

**History:** In 1989, five buildings designed by Gruzen & Samton were built to the north of the UDC complex. These late 20th century modern buildings are all made of brick. Numbers 10-40 are identical to one another with the exception of the color of their trim. The front facade of each of these buildings is broken into three blocks of varying heights—21, 16, and 11 stories. Columns of protruding balconies break up the facades. The entrances are recessed and are set behind a series of two-story brick columns. Four of the buildings are market rate rentals, while the fifth is Section 8 housing.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	2- Modest	3- Major	2- Modest	2- Modest	2- Modest	None	None

## Appendix: Building Documentation

## Appendix: Building Documentation

### 10 Manhattan Park, c. 1989

**Location:** Northtown, 10 River Road  
**Architect:** Gruzen & Samton

**Current Owner:** RIOC

**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Late Century Modern

**No. of Floors:** 21

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Brick

**Description:** Modern Housing  
**History:** In 1989, five buildings designed by Gruzen & Samton were built to the north of the UDC complex. These late 20th century modern buildings are all made of brick. Numbers 10-40 are identical to one another with the exception of the color of their trim. The front facade of each of these buildings is broken into three blocks of varying heights—21, 16, and 11 stories. Columns of protruding balconies break up the facades. The entrances are recessed and are set behind a series of two-story brick columns. Four of the buildings are market rate rentals, while the fifth is Section 8 housing.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	2- Modest	2- Modest	2- Modest	2- Modest	2- Modest	None	None

Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	1- None	1- None	3- Major	4- Central	1- None	None	None

### 2-4 Manhattan Park, c. 1989

**Location:** Northtown, 2-4 River Road  
**Architect:** Gruzen & Samton

**Current Owner:** RIOC

**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Late Century Modern

**No. of Floors:** 14

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Brick

**Description:** Modern Housing

**History:** In 1989, five buildings designed by Gruzen & Samton were built to the north of the UDC complex. These late 20th century modern buildings are all made of brick. Number 2-4 Manhattan Park differs from the other four buildings. The building is narrow but deep. The front facade of the building is eleven stories while the rest steps up and down in height. The entrance to the building is recessed and behind a series of two-story brick columns. The windows of the building have a turquoise trim. Four of the buildings are market rate rentals, while the fifth is Section 8 housing.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	2- Modest	2- Modest	2- Modest	2- Modest	2- Modest	None	None

### Lighthouse Park, c. 1977

**Location:** Northpoint, Lighthouse Park  
**Architect:** Quennell Rothschild & Partners

**Current Owner:** RIOC

**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York

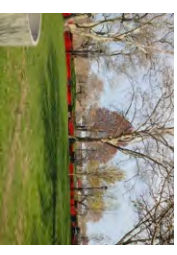
**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Naturalistic

**No. of Floors:**

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:**

**Description:** Park at northern tip of island  
**History:** Lighthouse Park was designed by Quennell Rothschild & Partners. Their design mainly dealt with vegetation and wetland, which included the first artificial landscape wetland in NYC, now the former barren plain has been cultivated into a 1.47 acre natural landscape garden. The park has several rentable grills for use during the summer and a variety of seating and features the Lighthouse, built in 1872. This park is a favorite of residents and visitor's alike.



### Southpoint Park, c. 2011

**Location:** Southpoint, Southpoint Park  
**Architect:** The Trust for Public Land

**Current Owner:** RIOC

**Previous Owner(s):** New York City

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Naturalistic

**No. of Floors:**

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:**

**Description:** Park with large hill and several landmarks  
**History:** Southpoint Park, constructed in 2011, features large area of lawn, hills, trees, and several landmarks. Streeker Memorial Laboratory and the Smallpox Hospital ruins are both in the park, as well as a thriving Canadian goose community. The large hill in the center of the park is primarily made up of debris from the demolition of City Hospital, which is undoubtedly polluted. The park has several remaining aspects from the hospital, including stones from the facade that make up short walls on the edges of the paths and assorted other pieces. For years this place has been fenced off until a master plan was accepted and fund was raised in 2004 to "retain the historical character of the site and create a great green open space" by The Trust for Public Land, cooperating with RIOC.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	1- None	2- Modest	3- Major	3- Major	1- None	None	None

## Appendix: Building Documentation

### Coler Hospital, c. 1949-1952

**Location:** Northpoint, 900 Main Street

**Architect:**

**Current Owner:** Department of Public Health, City of New York

**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Post-War Institutional

**No. of Floors:** 4

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Asphalt tar; brick and limestone; concrete

**Description:** 3 brick hospital buildings

**History:** Located at 900 Main Street, the Coler Campus of Coler-Goldwater Memorial Hospital was constructed between 1949 and 1952 by the Department of Public Health of the City of New York as part of Hospital Commissioner Dr. S.S. Goldwater's master plan for a high-tech hospital campus on Welfare Island. Named in honor for New York City's first Comptroller and former Commissioner of Public Welfare, Bird S. Coler, the plan to construct the Coler Complex existed before WW II, but was postponed until after the war. Coler's treatments plans were predominantly focused on rehabilitation. In 1996, the two hospitals merged, creating Coler-Goldwater memorial hospital, one of the largest sub acute care facilities in the world. As of 2014, Coler is the only remaining operating campus of the hospital. The complex consists of three buildings: two five-story patient wards each connected to one six-story administrative building, covering 14 acres total. It is a typical post war hospital design. The main materials of construction are brick and concrete.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	1- None	3- Major	2- Modest	3- Major	1- None	None	None

### Roosevelt Island Bridge, c. 1952-1955

**Location:** Northtown, South of Motorgate

**Architect:** Frederick H. Zurmuhlen(Manager - DPW)

**Current Owner:** New York City Department of Transportation

**Previous Owner(s):**

**Alterations:**

**Architectural Style:** Conventional truss lift bridge

**No. of Floors:**

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Steel; concrete

**Description:** Bridge with steel body construction with cast concrete pillars and red paint  
**History:** The Roosevelt Island Bridge is a tower drive, vertical lift, movable bridge across the East Channel of the East River connecting Roosevelt Island to Queens and provides direct access to Motorgate Parking Garage. It is the sole route to the island for vehicular, bike, and foot traffic without the use of public transportation. It was officially opened to traffic on May 18, 1955 as the Welfare Island Bridge. The initial cost of building the bridge was \$6,498,255-13. In the early 1970s, the bridge was painted its current bright red color to harmonize with the new UDC transportation structures being built on the island. When the bridge is open it provides ships with 100 feet of vertical clearance. It is 40 feet wide, and its total length, including approaches, is 2,877 feet. The main span is 418 feet. As of 2008, the total yearly traffic was 10,161 vehicles, a 2-7% increase from the previous year.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Bridge	2- Modest	1- None	3- Major	1- None	3- Major	None	None

## Appendix: Building Documentation

### Visitor's Kiosk, c. 1909

**Location:** Southtown, West of the Tram Station, adjacent to the Queensboro Bridge

**Architect:** Gustav Lindenthal & Henry Hornbostel

**Current Owner:** Roosevelt Island Historical Society

**Previous Owner(s):** City of New York

**Alterations:** Moved from Queensboro Bridge to Roosevelt Island, renovated 2010

**Architectural Style:**

**No. of Floors:** 1

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** Metal; terracotta and cast stone; concrete

**Description:** Small kiosk

**History:** The kiosk, one of five in use from 1916 to 1957, was the original entrance to the Trolley Station below 59th Street and Second Avenue. The kiosk, a cast-iron and terracotta building with Gasstano tiling, was designed by Gustav Lindenthal & Henry Hornbostel. In 2010, it was renovated and converted into a visitor's center for Roosevelt Island.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	3- Major	1- None	3- Major	2- Modest	1- None	None	None

### Roosevelt Island Community Gardens, c. 1992

**Location:** Northtown, Main Street

**Architect:** Weinraub & di Domenico

**Current Owner:** RI Garden Club

**Previous Owner(s):**

**Alterations:** Moved from original location in Southtown

**Architectural Style:**

**No. of Floors:**

**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:**

**Description:** Garden with 200 plots

**History:** The Community Garden created by the Roosevelt Island Garden Club was a product born out of the NYC community garden movement. In 1992, the garden was moved from its original location, presently the site of the Southtown development, to its current site just south of the Octagon. During the move, the number of flowerbeds shrank, and some plans, such as a "hanging garden," and a lawn connecting the garden with the east promenade, were never realized. Today, the garden is a popular community activity, though it lacks a cohesive design linking it with the Octagon or surrounding green space. The gardens are divided into 200 individual plots where members of the Roosevelt Island Garden Club grow everything from local fruits and vegetables to exotic and rare flowers and public access is prohibited.



Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Gardens	1- None	1- None	3- Major	2- Modest	1- None	None	None



## Appendix: Building Documentation

**Firefighter's Field, c. 2003**  
 Location: Southtown, 405-425 Main Street  
 Architect:  
 Current Owner: RIOC  
 Previous Owner(s):  
 Alterations:  
 Architectural Style:  
 No. of Floors:  
 Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:



**Description:** Sports field  
**History:** Firefighters' Field was named in honor of the fallen of September 11, 2001, dedicating to the Island residents who perished in the terrorist attack; this also responded to the fact that Roosevelt Island serves as headquarters for the FDNY Special Operations Command. This is a soccer field with state-of-the-art facilities (sprinkler system, etc.), and also serves as the site for summer outdoor movies.

Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Park	1- None	2- Modest	2- Modest	1- None	1- None	None	None

**Capobianco Field, c. 1972**  
 Location: Northtown, 595 Main Street  
 Architect: Michael Fieldman & Partners  
 Current Owner: RIOC  
 Previous Owner(s):  
 Alterations:  
 Architectural Style:  
 No. of Floors:  
 Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:



**Description:** Sports fields  
**History:** Capobianco Field is the oldest sports field on Roosevelt Island, dating back to the UDC Northtown Planning. It was designed by the acclaimed architect Michael Fieldman & Partners, and is composed of courts for handball, paddleball and basketball, but the most unique feature is a baseball/softball field for Little League.

Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Park	1- None	2- Modest	2- Modest	1- None	1- None	None	None

## Appendix: Building Documentation

**Sportspark/Roosevelt Island Raquet Club, c. 1977**  
 Location: Southtown, 250 Main Street, Under Queensboro Bridge  
 Architect:  
 Current Owner: RIOC  
 Previous Owner(s):  
 Alterations: Refurbished pool, tennis courts  
 Architectural Style: Post-War Institutional, Modern (bubble)  
 No. of Floors: 2  
 Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials: -; Brick/Plastic; Concrete



**Description:** Plastic bubble building with brick building next door  
**History:** Sportspark, opened in 1977, is a recreational center that includes a recently refurbished, hand-capped accessible, Olympic-style pool with stadium seating, a full sized basketball court with 6 hoops and soccer goals, a ping pong room with six Olympic regulation tables, a weight room, and offers yoga and zumba classes. Right next door is the Roosevelt Island Raquet Club, a plastic bubble building where members have access to 12 Har-Tru courts that are heated and air-conditioned for comfortable year-round play and a mid-court lounge, complete with a new room offering exercise machines and free weights.

Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Buildings	1- None	2- Modest	1- None	1- None	2- Modest	None	None

**Otagon Fields and Pony Fields, c. 1992**  
 Location: Northpoint, 591 & 810 Main Street  
 Architect:  
 Current Owner: RIOC  
 Previous Owner(s):  
 Alterations:  
 Architectural Style:  
 No. of Floors:  
 Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:



**Description:** Sports fields  
**History:** The Otagon Fields are the largest complex of sport fields on the island, consisting of one regular size soccer field, six all-weather tennis courts, a baseball field named Pony Field (all with nighttime lighting), and a picnic & barbeque area. The architect was Weintraub and di Domenico, and the design process involved the whole community: 12 island organizations each appointed a member to a single task force that worked with architects and RIOC.

Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Parks	1- None	2- Modest	1- None	2- Modest	1- None	None	None



**PS/IS 217**, c. 1992  
**Location:** Northtown, 645 Main Street  
**Architect:** Michael Feldman of Rawlings Architects  
**Current Owner:** NYC Dept. of Education  
**Previous Owner(s):**  
**Alterations:**  
**Architectural Style:** Modern  
**No. of Floors:** 4  
**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** -; brick; concrete  
**Description:** Modern school building  
**History:** PS/IS 217 is the public intermediate school of Roosevelt Island. It was first built in 1975, but when the Manhattan Park residential complex opened 1989, the school became too small to accommodate all the students. As a result, a new space was opened in 1992, designed by Michael Feldman of Rawlings Architects. Currently, the school serves approximately 520 students from pre-K to eighth grade, including special education. This state-of-the-art building has a two-story gymnasium, a 420-seat auditorium, a library, well-equipped classrooms, and science and computer labs.

Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Building	2- Modest	1- None	2- Modest	1- None	1- None	None	None



**Special Operations FDNY Command**, c. 1968  
**Location:** Northtown, 750 Main Street  
**Architect:**  
**Current Owner:** Managed by FDNY  
**Previous Owner(s):**  
**Alterations:**  
**Architectural Style:** Contemporary  
**No. of Floors:** 1  
**Roof, Wall, Foundation Materials:** -; Concrete, glass; concrete  
**Description:** Fire department special command station  
**History:** Located behind the AVAC complex is a post for the New York City Fire Department's Special Operations Command Division. The facility houses squads for the Rescue, Mask, Hazardous Materials, and Scuba Support units.

Structure Type	Arch. Significance	Planning Significance	History Significance	Landscape Significance	Engineering Significance	Current Designation	Recommend Designation
Park	1- None	1- None	1- None	1- None	1- None	None	None

### Ranking

Ranking for significance of each structure is established on the basis of its contributions to and/or impacts on the following five categories of significance we discussed earlier: Architecture, Engineering, Landscape, Planning, and History.

Each building was given a 1 to 4 rating for each category, with 1 being a non-contributing factor and 4 being central to the site's significance. These rankings are displayed with the darkest elements being the most significant.

Architecturally speaking, there are 14 significant buildings and parks on the island. This ranking refers to the architect, aesthetic, and style of the building. The significant buildings include the UDC housing, 4 Freedoms Park, Goldwater Hospital, and each of the landmarked structures.



From an engineering perspective, the AVAC system, UDC buildings, transportation buildings, and the Smallpox Hospital prove most significant. This ranking refers to the infrastructure and engineering ingenuity of the significant buildings on the island.



The landscaping is most significant in 4 Freedoms Park, Southpoint Park, Lighthouse Park, Coler Hospital and the park areas surrounding the UDC buildings. This significance can be attributed to open space, design, and landscape architect involved.



Planning proves significant in the UDC buildings and the other housing on the island, the Steam plant, Motorgate, AVAC, and both hospital complexes.



The most historically significant portions of the island, based on the history and use of the island, are the UDC buildings, the six currently landmarked buildings, Goldwater Campus, the Queensboro Bridge, Motorgate, AVAC, Southpoint Park, Lighthouse Park, and the Community Gardens.



Demographics			
Census 2000	Roosevelt Island	New York City	
<b>Age:</b>			
Under 5	5%	8%	
Under 18	20%	26%	
18-65	67%	62%	
Over 65	15%	13%	
<b>Sex:</b>			
Female	4,995 (52%)	4,214,074 (52.6%)	
Male	4,525 (48%)	3,794,204 (47.4%)	
<b>Family Structure:</b>			
Married couples with children	17%	18%	
Married couples without children	19%	21%	
Male-based households with related and unrelated children	3%	6%	
Female-based households with related and unrelated children	16%	18%	
Total family households	55%	62%	
Female-based households	N/A	18%	
Two or more person non-family household	9%	6%	
One person households	36%	33%	
Total non-family households	45%	39%	
<b>Color and Ethnicity:</b>			
White non-Hispanic	45%	62%	
Black non-Hispanic	27%	15%	
Hispanic	14%	15%	
Asian and Pacific Islander	1%	5%	
Other	0.3%	0.4%	

Census 2000	Roosevelt Island	New York City
<b>Income:</b>		
Less than \$35,000	37%	41%
\$35,001-\$99,999	40%	44%
Over \$100,000	23%	15%
Median Income	\$49,976	\$43,393
<b>Female Employment:</b>		
Women working	54%	93%
Women with children under 6 working	56%	7%
Women with children under 18 working	7%	24%
<b>Density:</b>		
Persons per acre	11	36
Dwelling units per acre	4	15

### Ferry Service

In 2010, New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) completed the Comprehensive Citywide Ferry Study (CFS2010), which provided an overview of potential for passenger ferry transportation throughout New York City. Building on the recommendations of the CFS2010, the City of New York launched several ferry initiatives, including the implementation of the East River Ferry.

Given the success of the East River Ferry's first two years of service and dramatic development changes on New York City's waterfront, NYCEDC commissioned a consultant team to complete an updated and expanded Citywide Ferry Study (CFS2013).

The goals of this effort were to identify new ferry service opportunities, increase understanding of ferries' economic impacts, and evaluate the full potential of this emerging transportation resource in New York City

### Route 2B

Route 2B, serves Astoria, Roosevelt Island, Long Island City North, East 34th St, and Pier 11/Wall St, thereby connecting three rapidly growing sites with Citywide Ferry Study 45 the two most attractive commuter destinations. Astoria and Long Island City North will gain tens of thousands of commuters by 2018 as a result of planned developments currently underway. Roosevelt Island will become both a destination and generator of commuter trips as Cornell University develops its applied science campus. This route would require construction of three new ferry landings, approximately valued at \$22.7 million in capital expenditures. (See image opposite, on page 87)

### Estimated Cost

The detailed estimates produced often include a new pier at sites with an existing pier or bulkhead. This was done for a few reasons.

- To allow placing the float at an acceptable location due to site constraints.
- To provide space for queued ferry riders such that adjacent landside uses are not impacted.
- To bridge across, or locate the gangway away from existing shore protection (riprap).

The estimates also show dredging at a few sites that may require it due to existing water depths. It could well be that it is not required, which can be confirmed with a bathymetric survey. It is also possible that dredging may not present serious permitting issues if the site was already permitted for a deeper dredge depth in the past and has merely silted in from lack of use in more recent years.

In addition to the infrastructure costs, as mentioned previously, improvements to vessel capacity are needed for route 2B to perform optimally. The two ways to increase vessel capacity are to procure larger vessels or to reconfigure existing vessels for higher passenger capacity. In order to accommodate the capacity demands on route 2B while maintaining 20 minute headways, at least one of the vessel capacities would need to be increased. The most cost effective way to do this is through vessel reconfiguration.

The 2/3B Roosevelt Island South stop is estimated to cost \$8.6M.

"Citywide Ferry Study 2013," *Preliminary Report*. The New York City Economic Development Corporation. 2013.



- page 1: Jason Hawkes
- Page 7: AIA NY
- Page 8: Graphics by Kathryn Gardner
- Page 9:
1. The Castello Plan. New Amsterdam in 1660. (1916 reproduction).
  29. 100.709, John Wolcott Adams (1874-1925) [http://collections.mcnyc.org/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult\\_VPage&VBIID=24UAYWNVNQ5G&SML5=i&RW=1366&RH=643](http://collections.mcnyc.org/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult_VPage&VBIID=24UAYWNVNQ5G&SML5=i&RW=1366&RH=643)
  2. View of the Penitentiary at Blackwell's Island, New York Harbor. Wade, William. 1853. From Gleason's pictorial drawing-room companion. (Boston: F. Gleason, 1851-1852). <http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/id/2809454>
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- Page 11:
1. Goldwater Hospital, as photographed from the Queensboro Bridge on March 3, 1938
- Page 12:
1. Welfare Island Master Plan, New York, N.Y. [graphic] : [perspective renderings] / [Philip Johnson and John Burgee, architects ; Ronald Love, delineator]
- Page 13:
1. Addison Godel Photography
  2. Welfare Island Master Plan, New York, N.Y. [graphic] : [perspective renderings] / [Philip Johnson and John Burgee, architects ; Ronald Love, delineator]
  4. Dona Yu
- Page 14:
1. forgotten-ny.com/2006/10/open-house-new-york-2006/
  2. Addison Godel Photography
  3. Paul Warhol
  4. Paul Warhol
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- Page 17:
1. Mark Garbowski Photography
- Page 18:
1. Graphics by Kathryn Gardner
- Page 19:
1. Burger International Inc.
  2. New York circa 1909. "East River and Blackwell's Island Bridge," 8x10 inch dry plate glass negative, Detroit Publishing Company. <http://www.shorpy.com/node/10004>
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1. Greater Astoria Historical Society
  2. Michael Mimm, 2008
  3. Marena Wisniewski
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1. Craig Nelson, [across16thstreet.com](http://across16thstreet.com)
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  3. Marena Wisniewski
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  2. Jerome Ryan, [www.mountainsofttravel-photos.com](http://www.mountainsofttravel-photos.com)
  3. Zoning Map, NYC Department of Planning
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  2. Roosevelt Islander
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1. Welfare Island Master Plan, New York, N.Y. [graphic] : [perspective renderings] / [Philip Johnson and John Burgee, architects ; Ronald Love, delineator]

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  2. alivringlibrary.org
  3. Drawing by Manqing Cao
  4. Drawing by Manqing Cao

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