

ARCHITECT NAMED FOR ELLIS ISLAND

Philip Johnson Is Chosen to Design 27.5-Acre Park

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

Ellis Island will be redesigned by Philip Johnson, New York architect, as a standard-setting project for the city's park program, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall announced yesterday.

Mr. Johnson, known for sophisticated buildings of great polish and elegance—such as the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center and the new wing and garden of the Museum of Modern Art—indicated that he was delighted with the assignment.

"I've never been to Ellis Island," he said. "But I know the old immigration building, and we will take its flavor and use it, with its associations, to make the place into something interesting and attractive so people will want to go there."

27.5 Acres Involved

The news of the commission, which will turn 27.5 acres of deserted, dilapidated grounds and buildings into a National Immigration Museum and Park, was announced at a luncheon, the midpoint of an all-day, bipartisan conservation marathon in the New York area attended by Mayor Wagner and Senators Javits and Kennedy.

Ellis Island was declared a national shrine as part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument in New York Harbor by Presidential proclamation on May 11.

Hearings were held last week before a House of Representatives subcommittee on bills and resolutions that are expected to appropriate \$6 million for the remodeling and rehabilitation work.

The National Park Service of the Department of the Interior will supervise the project. Secretary Udall is directly responsible for the architectural appointment.

Only One Building to Remain

The only definite plans at present call for razing all of the buildings on the island except the four-towered, somber, polychrome brick Victorian main building with its central vaulted hall. This building was the point of entry to the United States for millions of steerage immigrants from the late 19th century to 1920. More affluent arrivals came by the Port of New York. Everything has been shut down completely for the last 10 years. The rest of the island will be made into a landscaped park.

"There are many possibilities," Secretary Udall said. "There might be a sculpture garden and fountains. We want something green and attractive so that everyone who comes can enjoy history and the beauty of nature."

"But I wouldn't presume to tell Mr. Johnson what to design," he added, with a respectful nod to the architect.

Rehabilitation of Ellis Island will be a bistate effort, with New Jersey contributing a 400-acre waterfront park on the Jersey shore opposite, reclaimed from shabby wharves and industrial uses. It will be connected to the island by a 1,300-foot causeway.