

[McSweeney]

COPY.

OFFICE OF U. S. COMMISSIONER OF IMMIGRATION,
New York, N. Y.

August 20, 1897.

Col. John L. Smithmeyer,
Inspector of Public Buildings,
Room 105, General Post Office, N. Y. City.

Dear Sir:

After consultation with you this day I beg to state that the plans submitted by you appear to be in accordance with the ideas given to you by me from time to time, in regard to the arrangement of space, etc., in the buildings contemplated on Ellis Island; and that the plans thus shown are in my opinion practicable for the proper conduct of business by the Bureau of Immigration at this Port, as follows:

The various offices and rooms comprising a group of five structures, to be subdivided for the various uses and purposes of the Immigration Bureau of the Port of New York, and must contain accommodations necessary for the reception, registration and examination of immigrants.

The main building of this group of structures will be devoted to the examination of immigrants on the second floor and on the first floor the necessary provisions for getting their baggage---if they be railroad passengers--checked and forwarded to the various points and, if local passengers for the purposes and business of the Transfer Company, Passengers, on being transferred from the boat, will enter the building #1 into the large space V2 subdivided so that groups of thirty to the number of about 1,000 may be accommodated. They will then pass up the stairs marked and proceed along the corridor marked W¹, where they will be examined by the physicians and matrons. Immigrants who are held by the physicians or matrons will be put in the rooms L¹ and L¹ pending special examination. Immigrants will then proceed to the hall marked K J¹, which is also laid out to accommodate the groups of thirty, from which they enter the registry aisles marked W W-1, where they are examined as to their fitness to land. Those admitted and destined to New York pass down the stairs X X; those going by railroads to any of the various points go through the corridor to the building No. 4. Those who, upon examination, do not appear to be entitled to land, are conducted through the corridor W-1 to building No. 3. The rooms A-1 and C-1 are for the use of the Boards of Special Inquiry, where the large room B-1 is for witnesses and others intending to testify before the Board. The rooms on the east side of the building marked N-1 to U-1 are for the general executive offices of the Medical Bureau; the space in the center of the main floor marked I-1 is for the use of the registry clerks and the process of special examination of immigrants. The spaces F-1 are for the use of the telegraph office and money exchange bureau respectively; the space F-1 is also for the general water closets for the use of immigrants and employees on this floor. This completes the plan of the upper floor of Building No. 1.

BUILDING NO. 2.

The Executive Building. On the upper floor will be the main executive office, with the offices of the Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, Treasurer, Secretary and the general offices of the Contract Labor Bureau, with the office of the Supervising Inspector. On the lower floor will be the office of the company transporting immigrants from the ships to Ellis Island, the Secretary of the

Board of Special Inquiry, the missionaries, retiring room for the registry clerks---giving ~~xxxx~~ them a place to hang their clothes, etc. ---and an office for the matrons. On the northerly side of Building No. 2 will be a space K on the first floor and C-1 on the second to be used as record rooms, both stories, with separate stairs for the use of those desiring to make use of these record rooms. On the westerly and main floor, first story building #1 will be placed the offices of the statistician, marked T and V-2.

On the same floor of Building No. 1 will be in space R and S-2 the customs and appraisers offices. The space N-2 first floor will be used for the general business of the baggage department; in the space K-2, L-2, M-2, O-2 will be the weigh master's room. Space G, H and L-2 will be the general offices of the local baggage delivery. Space B and C-2 on the main floor will be used as the offices of the Italian Bureau, connecting with Building 3.

BUILDING NO. 23.

FIRST FLOOR. Space A is the general information bureau, where all people desiring information regarding immigrants or matters concerning the immigration bureau are received and immigrants are discharged to their friends. In space B are kept all the immigrants--women, minors and others--whom the inspection officers are satisfied should be landed when their friends arrive or have told stories which require verification, they being conducted through the corridor D, Main Building down stairs into space B of Building No. 3. Parties coming to the Information Bureau and desiring to go to the Board of Special Inquiry are admitted by means of the stairs C to the waiting room of the Board of Special Inquiry.

SECOND FLOOR. Space F is for those immigrants who on inspection do not appear to be qualified to land and are held for the Board of Special Inquiry. Space E is for those immigrants whom on examination by the Board of Special Inquiry, have been excluded for the various reasons given in the law.

BUILDING NO. 4.

The northerly side of the upper floor of Building No. 4 is occupied as a general ticket counter for the Immigrant Clearing House; the westerly end, space A and B is the general offices of the agent representing same. The northerly sub-divisions of Space E are for the various outside companies having agencies at Ellis Island. Going down stairs by the stairs marked we enter the lower floor which is subdivided into waiting rooms for the various railroads, where the immigrants are placed after examination and having bought their tickets, had their baggage checked and are waiting until the proper time to be transferred to their destination.

BUILDING NO. 5.

Both first and second stories are used as dormitories, where the immigrants detained on the Island, both temporarily and those excluded, are given accommodations for sleeping at night. The various toilets accommodations are shown in the plan.

The utilization of the attic space over the main floor of the dormitory purposes to be used in case of overcrowding of the dormitory building No. 5, will, in my opinion, furnish adequate sleeping accommodations for all the immigrants that we will be obliged to detain at any one time.

As stated in the commencement of the letter I believe that the plans thus submitted are practical and carried into execution will furnish an immigrant station that will allow us to give proper treatment to the immigrants arriving at this port, while at the same time reflecting credit on the country.

Respectfully yours,
Ed. F. McSweeney,
Assistant Commissioner.

*Approved by the Board of Commissioners
of the Immigration and Naturalization Service
Ed. F. McSweeney
Assistant Commissioner*