



A Special Place Deserves Special Attention

Governors Island is special. Just a half mile from Manhattan or Brooklyn at the head of New York Harbor, it has been a military base for over 200 years, off-limits to ordinary citizens. Its massive stone fortifications, 19th-Century frame houses, shaded walkways, and sweeping harbor views make it an undiscovered waterfront gem with a history from colonial settlers to the fall of the Iron Curtain.

The recent transfer of the 173-acre island from the Coast Guard to the joint city/state Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation (GIPEC) and National Park Service offers a singular opportunity to shape the future of this remarkable place.

The members of the Governors Island Alliance civic coalition, led by Regional Plan Association, are working collaboratively to help secure the island's return to the people of New York and to ensure that the public interest guides its reuse. Our concept of redeveloping the island as a grand civic space with educational and recreational attractions for New Yorkers and tourists alike is the basis for the recent transfer. Thanks to the advocacy of the Alliance and its members, the redeveloped island will include a 22-acre National Monument, a two mile waterfront esplanade, at least 40 additional acres of public park land, and protection of the island's spec-

tacular national landmark historic district.

Our job is just beginning. Realizing these improvements and ensuring affordable access to them for the public will require advocacy, planning, and citizen involvement. The transfer to local control is just the first chapter of integrating the island into the lives of New Yorkers and visitors from around the harbor and across the seas. Please join us in making it New York's next great place.



1 Castle Williams
The unique 1811 fort is now part of Governors Island National Monument.

2 Liggett Hall
Originally the barracks for an entire regiment, it was designed by McKim, Mead and White.



3 Colonel's Row
Just one of a series of landscaped spaces on the island.



4 A Park?
Governors Island could offer parks and open space to city residents.



8 The island offers spectacular views of the harbor and lower Manhattan.



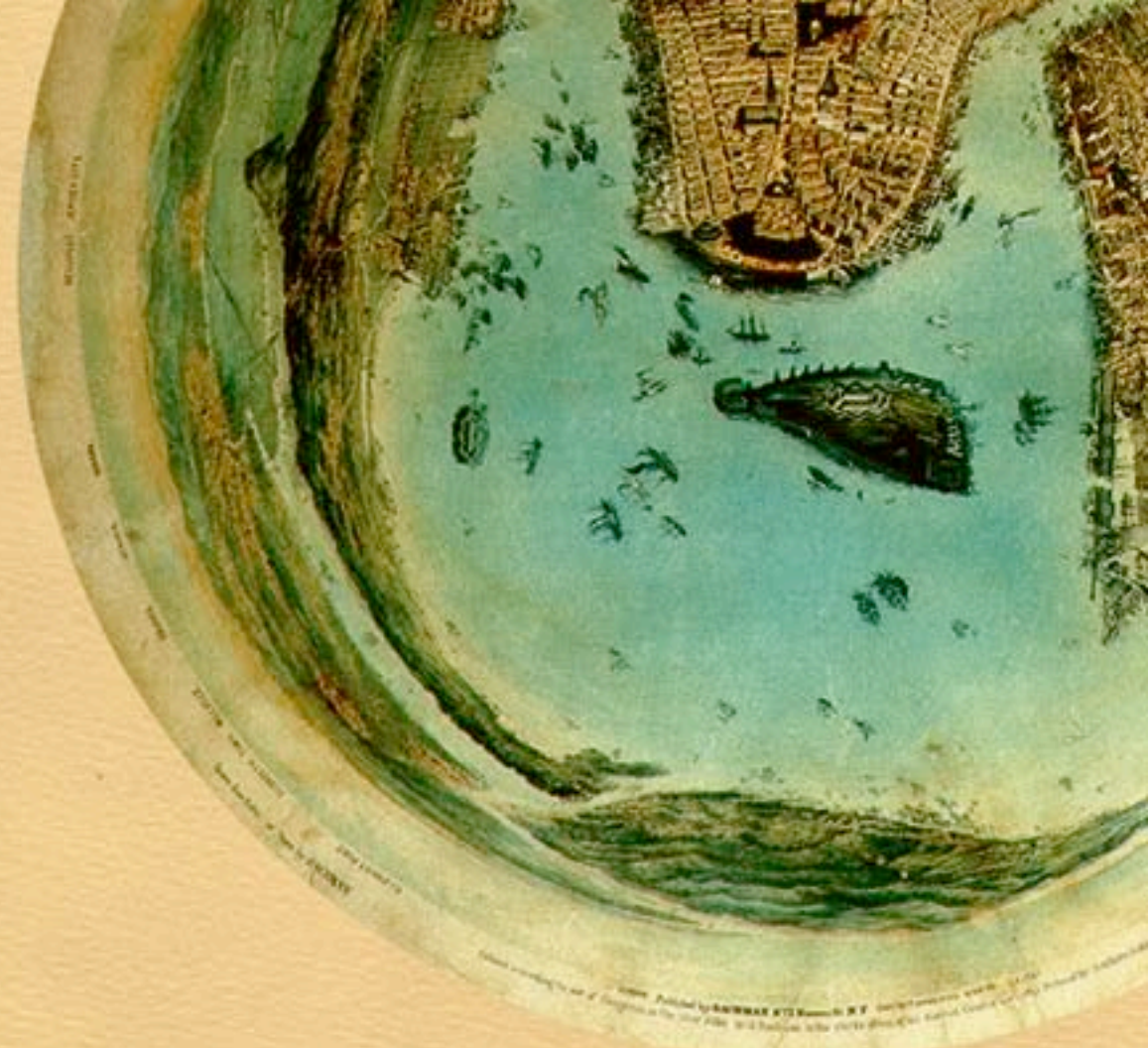
7 The Admiral's House is a City and National Landmark.



6 Nolan Park has been home to the families of Army and Coast Guard officers for generations.



5 Fort Jay
Begun in 1794, star-shaped Fort Jay is surrounded by earthen walls and dry moats.



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New York's Next Great Place

Since 1995, the members of the Governors Island Alliance civic coalition, led by Regional Plan Association, have worked collaboratively to celebrate the Island's rich history, create memorable parks and public spaces, and ensure appropriate reuse of the Island and its historic structures.

General membership in the Alliance is open to any organization or individual that shares our commitment to public access and historic preservation. Members of the Alliance will receive regular email updates on the status of the various plans now being developed for the island, and advance notice of interim public tours and other special events.

To join the Governors Island Alliance or to make a contribution, please fill out the form at right or visit our website: governorsislandalliance.org

photocopy or cut out this section and mail or fax to the address/number at right

Join us

Send this form with your donation to: **Governors Island Alliance c/o Regional Plan Association 4 Irving Place, 7th Floor New York, NY 10003** OR fax this form with your credit card information to 212-253-5666.

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Making History, Making Plans

Governors Island is New York's birthplace: the first European settlement when the Dutch established New Amsterdam in 1623. After the British took over, the island was set aside for the colonial governor. In 1776, Patriot cannons on the island helped General Washington preserve his battered army. After the revolution, the island was given at no cost to the Federal Government to provide for the defense of our fledgling nation. It has played a significant military role ever since. Star-shaped Fort Jay was completed by 1807. Castle Williams, a massive, three-tiered masonry fort completed in 1811, was one of the most formidable American seacoast defenses of its era. These two forts helped New York escape the fiery fate of Washington, D.C. during the War of 1812.

During its 200-year history as an important military base, Ulysses Grant, Confederate prisoners, Wilbur Wright, World War I doughboys, Samuel Morse, Soviet President Gorbachev and even Rocky Graziano all had their moment on the island. Generations of Army and Coast Guard kids were born and raised on the island: a self-contained small town thriving in the shadow of skyscrapers. This history is palpable when one walks in the 93-acre National Landmark and City Historic District. Lined with hundred-year-old shade trees and surrounded

by spectacular views of Lower Manhattan and the Statue of Liberty, the historic district features 19th century Federal and Victorian-style buildings and green, manicured grounds.

In January 2003, the Federal Government announced the transfer of the 173-acre island to the City and State of New York and the National Park Service, concluding two centuries of restricted military use on the island. Twenty-two acres, including the two forts, constitute New York's newest National Park, Governors Island National Monument. The other 150 acres are owned by the Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation (GIPEC). The Park Service and GIPEC have begun distinct but collaborative planning efforts, a process expected to conclude by 2006. Working with them and our elected officials, the Alliance seeks to ensure that parks and historic preservation are primary goals in the final plans and proposals – and that there is funding to make these plans happen. Even as overall plans are being drafted, the Alliance is working with these agencies to enliven the island right away with a variety of parks and arts programs.

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