

LIBERTY *today*

Reclaiming an urban void
<https://competitions.uni.xyz>



Fig 1. First immigration wave in USA took place in 1812. [Source](#)

Premise

Statue of Liberty with its changing timely definition has always been a universal **symbol of freedom, patriotism and liberty**. A gift by France to the USA in 1889, to embody hope and opportunity in the new age that the country had entered.

The **1800s was a defining era for the United State of America**. From a rural agrarian, it became an industrial-based economy with the onset of industrialization. With the invention of the first commercial **railway** in 1827, industrialization escalated. It helped in the mobilization of goods and people across the country. Meanwhile, peace got re-established between the US and Britain after the War of 1812. **Immigration** from Western Europe increased which caused a shift in the demographics. US Civil war (1861-65) led to the **abolition of slavery**, as the country underwent a massive change - culturally, socially, politically and economically

Liberty was a welcome point for immigrants, embodying hope as they seek a better life in America. Along with Liberty State Park and Ellis Island, it is part of '**Historic Trilogy**'. One of the most popular tourist destinations in States today.



Fig 2. Central Railroad of New Jersey during its prime operation. [Source](#)

History

Waterways have played an important role historically as a transportation link. With an increasing daily network of passengers and goods, a passenger terminal complex called **Central Railroad of New Jersey** was constructed in 1889. Along the Jersey City waterfront, it comprised of a Richardsonian Romanesque style terminal and a 20 track train shed (1914). Present near a Dutch settlement who immigrated during British rule in 1667. It previously was designed for a ferry service and housed many steam engine factories.

Statue of Liberty was a gift commissioned by France to celebrate abolition of slavery after the Union's win in the US Civil war. Beyond upholding strong friendship between two nations, it was a statement to inspire French people to call for their democracy in the face of the repressed monarchy. **Ellis Island** - an Immigration inspection centre was constructed and started in 1892.

The terminal along with nearby Ellis Island and Statue of Liberty is **reflective of the era of massive structural change in the US**. A melting point for commuters, interstate travelers as well as immigrants that were beginning their journeys to their new homes in America.



1835-37

Boom in railways



1861-65

US Civil War. Union wins and slavery is abolished.



1889

Central Road of New Jersey Terminal built in 1889 replacing one in 1864



1912

Terminal Train Shed was designed by Abraham Lincoln Bush



1964

Terminal shut down. Later incorporated into Liberty State Park as a museum

1815

War between US and UK ends. First wave of immigration of Irish descent from Europe.



1839

Railroad of New Jersey



1889

Statue of Liberty commissioned by France.



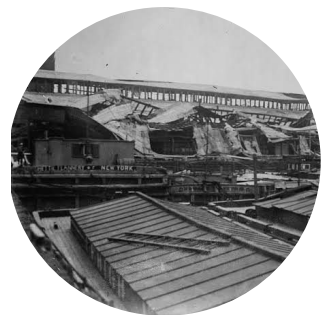
1892

Ellis Island, busiest immigration inspection center near shore of New Jersey is established. In operation till 1954. Movement increase



1916

Black Tom, an island next to Liberty Island got destroyed in an explosion killing 7.



1976

Liberty State Park is inaugurated.



Chart 1 - Major events leading to construction of Liberty State Park, Liberty Terminal and Train Shed

Today

Unfortunately, the Great Depression hit hard. With rise of the automobile, and a decline in business caused the waterfront **terminal to shut down in 1967**. Decline of industry, deterioration of rail and maritime infrastructure, and toxic waste - eventually made the area obsolete. Due to efforts of influential environmentalists and historians – Liberty State Park was commissioned in 1976.

A reclaimed space, the park is a bicentennial celebration. The park today serves a variety of worthwhile public and cultural avenues. Along with Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, it forms the 'Historic Trilogy'



Image 3. Jersey Terminal from transport hub to tourist destination (now Liberty State Park).

Issue

Historic Trilogy besides being a cultural and historic melting point, holds great symbolic value. Despite the universality of its image, what the place (especially Statue of Liberty) represents is open to interpretation. In broadest sense - it was a gateway to America. The first welcoming sight for immigrants. It also was a symbol of liberation for slaves during the late 1800s. During 2001 Terrorist attack, it became a symbol of strength. It's meaning changing with time and through cultural barriers.

The presidency of Donald Trump has stirred debate about what it means to be American today. What ideals should the nation embody? **In lieu of changing political and cultural spectrum, what does liberty represent today?**

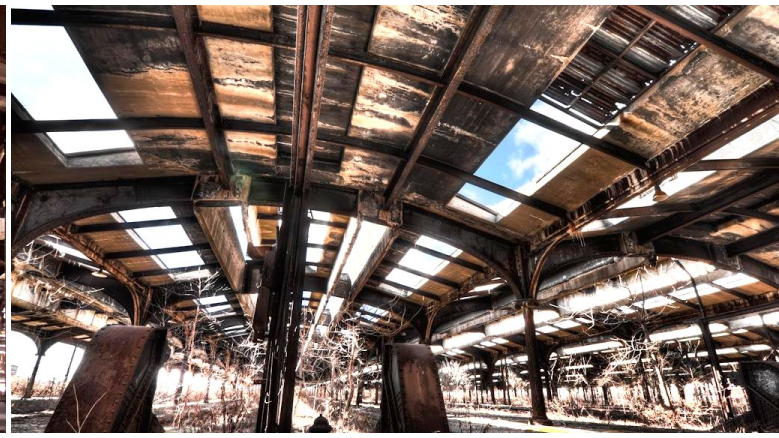


Image 4. Current state of the train shed - site of intervention

Site

In Liberty State Park while the terminal has been converted into a museum, the **railway shed remains a desolate space**. It sits as a broken link in the chain that connects all these growing areas. Vacant since train traffic at the terminal ceased in 1964, the old departure boards and stately metal columns still loom. Prohibited for public access, the shed today presents only a shadow of its former use. Despite approval for preservation from Liberty Estate, the question always remains. 'To what purpose?'



Fig 5. Context Plan constituting Historic Trilogy in New Jersey. Source - Google

Brief

Rethink a disused 4000 sqm railway shed into space for culture, art and public relationships. Design that retrieves collective memories and also responds to the contemporary idea of what the space stands for. It can be a memorial, a relic, an interpretation, an urban park - any idea that **infuses new meaning of liberty in existent urban void?**



Path

Bridging the missing link in the present fabric of museums, parks, restaurants and other contextual cultural spaces.



Context

Responding to immediate context of State Park like the Terminal, now a museum



Future

Design should respond to changing fabric and times. Shouldn't become obsolete.



History

Design should preserve and respect the history of train shed

Objectives

Liberty State Park along with Ellis Island and Statue of Liberty celebrates the changing history of USA. It's reflective of what country stands for. The design should strive to reinvigorate the principles that the country for long has identified itself with.



Symbolism

Identifying what liberty means in today's changing political time.



Respond

A structure that completes the Liberty Plaza. Adds value to existing site and not overpower it.



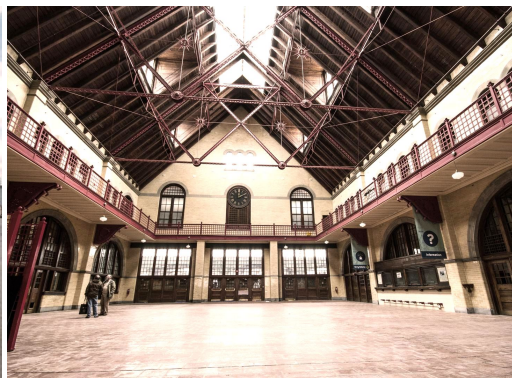
Celebrate

Celebrate the past but also responds to the contemporary demands.



Context - Liberty State Park

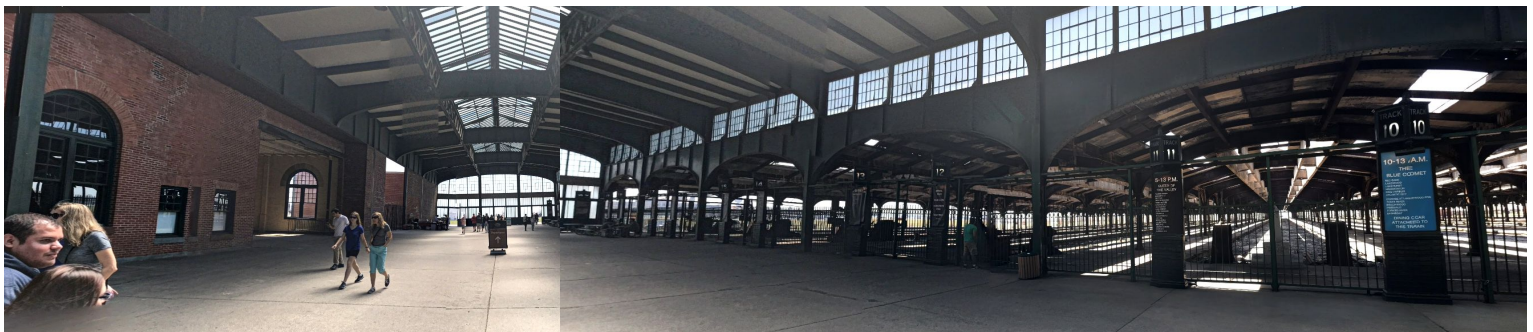
Celebrating USA's history of industrialization, railways and immigration - Central Railroad of New Jersey constitutes Liberty State Park. With a context including Reserved Nature Area, Waterfront Walkway, Liberty Science Center, Liberty Landing Marina, restaurants, viewing deck, ferry service to Manhattan, Ellis, and Liberty Islands – it serves a variety of worthwhile public purposes.



Context Pictures comprising of View A - Elevation of Jersey Terminal. View B - Terminal from inside. View C - View of shed; alongside the perimeter (Left to Right)



View D - Train Shed from adjacent Parking Lot. Red building on left is public toilet



View E - Train Shed from inside of the Terminal.

Site Images

Train shed covers 18 tracks and 10 passenger platforms through a series of pitched concrete roofs supported on arched steel girders. The shed measures 249m x 118m and has spans ranging from 11.8m to 13.1m. With skylight and longitudinal vents of 0.45m width, the structure allows ventilation for smoke and gas. The 4.87m tall train shed can be entirely used for intervention according to participant's design proposal. Area Programme and other design attributes to be decided by the participant.

Ground Coverage - 80% | **Site Area** - 40,000 sqm |
Coordinates - 40°42'28.2"N 74°02'13.6"W

Guidelines

You have to deliver an architectural outcome on the following site, based on the given outlines.

- Recommended number of sheets/presentation images/boards:

5 (Five) of size [**2362px x 3544px**] or [**400mm x 600mm in 150 dpi**] in portrait digital format (**JPEG only**).

Minimum 3 (Three) & No maximum sheet limit. Each image should be less than **15MB**. (Do not submit PNG format)

Minimum requisite submission are sheets/boards + Cover image containing:

- Site plan (Compulsory)
- Key conceptual sections x 1 (Minimum)
- 3D views x 4
- Cover image / Thumbnail of size 2000px x 1000px or larger in aspect ratio 2:1.
- Answering 6 FAQ's.#
- This is the link for new file sizes, [here](#).

#The FAQ's have to be answered as instructed in the FAQ document in the 'additional resources folder'.

Deadlines

Discover the competition schedule and deadlines on the competitions page or on this link - [Schedule](#).

Resources

This competition contains additional resources that will help you complete the design process quickly. This folder is made available on your profile dashboard as soon as you register.

This additional resources folder of this competition contains: Submission Format files in PSD | AI | InDD, FAQ Questions, High Res maps, Sketchup Model of the site and CAD file of the site plan.

Rules

- + The competitions is open for **students and professionals** from all the disciplines of design.
- + The team limit for this competition is **4 members maximum per team**.
- + You can register more than one team but they have to be registered separately.
- + Ensure that the final sheets submitted **do not include your name or any other mark of identification**. Your submission is linked to your user account which stands as your identification.
- + This is a design **ideas challenge only**. There is no built commission/realization associated with the problem.
- + In case of publication in yearbook we will reach out separately for selected entries.

Pro-Tips

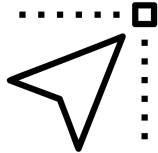
- + Use exploded views to discuss multi levelled conceptual models better.
- + Mention sheet number on corner of every sheet.
- + Plagiarism of any idea / form / design / image will be disqualified with a notice.
- + All the sheets or images will be viewed on a digital device. **e.g.** Laptop screen or projector. Uploaded sheets or images will not be physically printed for evaluation. The submission hence should be prepared for digital viewing only.
- + Submit JPEG images only. (PNG will not function)



Awards

Grants of up to a total of **20,000\$** can be won on this challenge. Learn more about the full conditions on the competition page [here](https://competitions.uni.xyz).

The entries will be judged by an international jury of the competition on the following criteria:



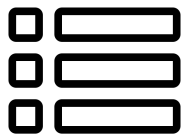
Presentation

The fundamental to a good entry is a good presentation.



Concept/Idea

Quality of thought and intent in pre-design phase.



Spaces/Programme

How the spaces are calculated and ordered.



Design Outcome

The final architectural outcome of the solution.

Judging Criteria

The judging panel can also add other criteria based on their internal discussions - which will be in line with the problem statement. Participants are advised to fulfil above given criteria first in their design.

About



Communi serves as a unit block for **UNI** in the field of Urban Design. It intends to break the fusion of traditional design barriers and methodologies by making it a platform for experimentation and conceptual exchange of ideas in **urbanism, society, culture and ecology**. It is a research initiative dedicated to provide opportunities for designers from all domains to explore ideas that go beyond the boundaries of the discipline and enrich our built environment holistically; thereby opening up possibilities for promotion of urban design thought at a global level.

Queries: support@uni.xyz

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Discover FAQ's about this competition on our help forum here: <http://help.uni.xyz/>

Changing definition of Liberty



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