

## Rekindling the old

## FLAME

Liberty museum welcomes masses yearning to see

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The revamped Liberty Island museum is designed to let Lady Liberty's original torch shine.

An enlarged Statue of Liberty Museum is slated to open its doors beside the famous figure on Thursday, offering access to a trove of artifacts and interactive exhibits highlighting the iconic structure. The 26,000-square-foot museum aims to ensure that a greater share of those who trek out to Liberty Island come away with a sense of the structure's history and significance, since demand has kept many from entering the statute itself.

The original torch now rests atop a pedestal in a 22-foot-high room, with space to accommodate the crowds it has long attracted, according to Edwin Schlossberg, the museum's principal designer.

"Seeing it here, you can tell its scale is impressive," Schlossberg said, noting that the relic was previously kept in the old, 5,000-square-foot museum inside the statue's base.

Generally, about 20 percent of the 25,000 people who

visit Liberty Island daily make it inside the statue's pedestal and 2 percent progress to the crown, according to the National Park Service.

"There is limited access to the statute, but there will not be limited access here," said Stephen Briganti, president and CEO of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation Inc., the nonprofit that maintains the statue and museum.

Funded entirely through private donations, the \$100 million museum sits on the eastern section of the island and faces the statue's rear. Its sizable windows allow visitors vistas of Lady Liberty, New York Harbor and the Manhattan skyline.

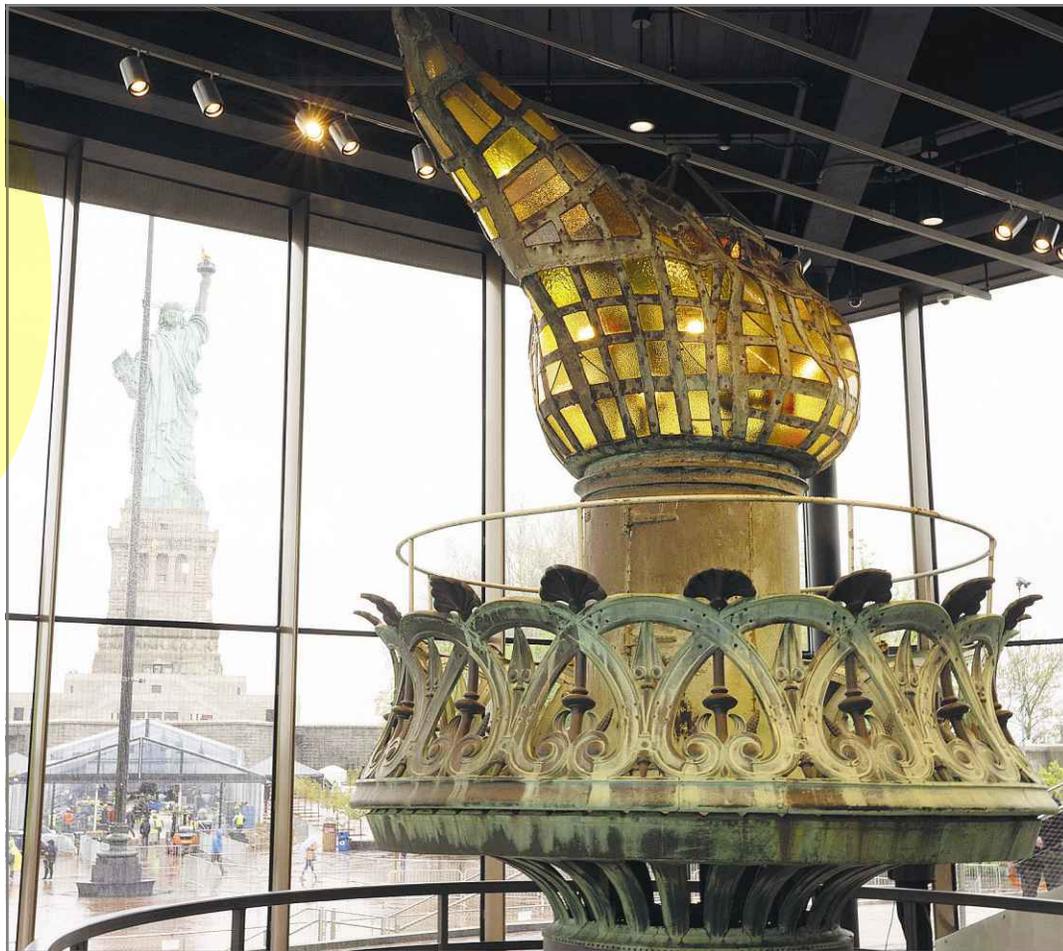
Cameron Ringness, the building's architect, said her team incorporated the same copper, granite and brick used in the statue and its pedestal and surrounded the museum with greenery.

"We wanted it to be more of a landscape and less of a building," she said.

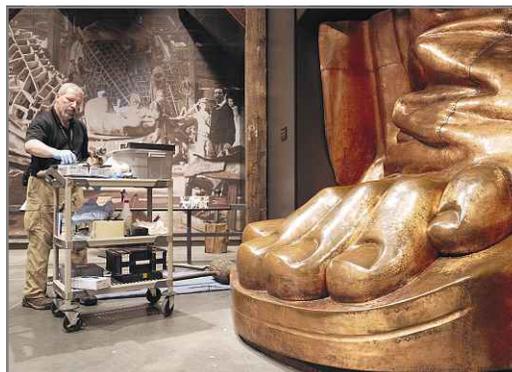
The museum, which is free to anyone who purchases a ferry ticket to Liberty Island, includes several small exhibits. A three-part video chronicles the statue's origins, design and construction and its legacy in American culture over the past 136 years. To-scale replicas of Lady Liberty's face and foot may be touched.

One exhibit invites visitors to snap pictures and select descriptions they associate with liberty, such as justice and equality, which are displayed in a digital collage that forms the statue's silhouette.

**A museum model showing the internal structure of the statue.**



The original torch is on display at the new Statue of Liberty Museum on Liberty Island, opening Thursday.



The public can touch a replica of Liberty's foot.



The museum covers 26,000 square feet.



Workers put the final touches on the museum's theater. Museum admission is free with a ferry ticket.