

## 2022 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

### **Angel Island Immigration Station Hospital**



In the early 1900s, seeking to replicate the success of the US Immigration Station at Ellis Island, Congress appropriated resources to build a similar facility on the West Coast to enforce the United State's exclusionary immigration policies that began with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Over a million persons from 80 different countries – including China, Japan, Russia, India, Germany, Korea, and Mexico – were processed at the US Immigration Station at Angel Island during the period it was open from 1910 to 1940. Although often referred to as the "Ellis Island of the West," Angel Island is a reminder of the nation's complex histories of exclusionary immigration policies.

The former hospital at the US Immigration Station had been abandoned after its last use in 1946 as a barracks for American soldiers. The building suffered significant structural damage primarily from water and pests. As part of a larger plan for the site, the former hospital was rehabilitated to expand interpretive offerings, present innovative exhibits, and expand visitor services within the US Immigration Station complex.

The community-centered and community-instigated effort to rehabilitate the former hospital building was co-led by the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (AIISF), the primary nonprofit cooperating association for the site, and

Angel Island State Park. The board and staff of AIISF have included descendants of immigrants who were formerly detained on Angel Island. Over the past 40 years, AIISF has helped to raise over \$40 million in public and private funding to support restoration and rehabilitation of the site's buildings as well as develop educational programming. AIISF garnered community support for this project through state and federal advocacy as well as by leading a capital campaign entitled "Open the Doors."

The former hospital, now known as the Angel Island Immigration Museum (AIIM), contains permanent and changing exhibits, multi-purpose rooms, a catering kitchen, retail space, restrooms, staff and volunteer office space, and support service space. After the completion in 2019 of the major rehabilitations to the hospital building, AIISF and Angel Island State Park co-convened a community board to assist in the design and development of the hospital building's exhibits. The three permanent exhibits feature the personal stories of over 50 community members from around the world. They include a diverse group of immigrants who were held at Angel Island, immigrants who arrived post-1940 (after the immigration station closed), and immigrants who arrived in more recent years.

The Angel Island Immigration Station Hospital project brought together the well-executed rehabilitation of a historic resource, with strong community support and fundraising, to preserve and tell the full story of Angel Island.