

ROOSEVELT ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL & ROOSEVELT ISLAND BRIDGE

The K-8 **ROOSEVELT ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL** (P.S./I.S. 217M), designed by acclaimed architect Michael Fieldman and Partners, opened in 1992. Before 1992 students were split into five mini-schools: Blackwell Primary School (grades K-2), Rivercross Middle School (3-4), Island House Intermediate School (5-6), Westview Upper School (7-8), and Eastwood School (art and laboratory classes). Main Street was the students' hallway, and Sportspark (south of the Tram) was their gym. When the Manhattan Park residential complex opened in 1989, a bigger centralized building was deemed necessary.

This \$28 million, 93,000 square-foot structure has its own two-story gymnasium, an auditorium, modular classrooms, a waterfront cafeteria, a library, a fine arts wing, and generous playground space. The school's 570 students speak some 14 languages and represent 36 nationalities, many of them children of United Nations staff and diplomats. P.S./I.S. 217 has rated as one of Manhattan's best public elementary schools, with consistently excellent reading scores and high acceptance to the city's specialized secondary schools.

Looking up to your right, you see one of the two red towers of the **ROOSEVELT ISLAND BRIDGE**. This 418-foot long vertical lift draw bridge (operated by the New York City Department of Transportation) opened on May 18, 1955, as the Welfare Island Bridge. It replaced the Queensboro Bridge's Elevator Storehouse as the island's only vehicular connection. (The elevator closed in 1955 and was demolished in 1970.)



*Above, Welfare Island Bridge, ca. 1969.
Right, Roosevelt Island Bridge, 1999.*

Rising 40 feet above the East River's East Channel, the bridge can draw to a height of 103 feet, though, save for testing, it is seldom done. (Most tall boats simply take the East River's West Channel.) The bridge has had three different paint coats: blue, gray, and its present red. Originally, this bridge exited onto what is now the Manhattan-facing seawall until its spiral ramp, exiting onto Main Street, was built in 1974.



Roosevelt Island Historical Walk

For a better view of the Roosevelt Island Bridge, walk across Main Street and to the Queens-facing seawall. Then, to continue your tour, return here and follow Main Street north (that is, towards the parking garage). Follow the white and green "Roosevelt Island Historical Walk" signs.



*Above, Roosevelt Island Public School, 1999.
Below, Roosevelt Baseball Field, which then occupied this site, 1979.*

