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For Immediate Release

'LIBERTY STATE PARK: THE MASTER PLAN'
UNVEILED AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Exhibition Featuring Models, Photos and Sketches to Be Open
To Public -- Robert Geddes Is Principal Designer

NEW YORK, Oct. 12¹⁹⁷⁹ -- "Liberty State Park: The Master Plan" was unveiled here today at a gala preview in the Museum of Modern Art's Goodwin Galleries.

The exhibition, which opens to the public tomorrow, and runs through November 22, features panoramic photographs, original drawings and architectural models of what is becoming the "Central Park" of New York Harbor.

The 600-acre Liberty State Park is located on the western shore of New York Bay's inner harbor, forming the backdrop for two of the country's greatest national monuments: The Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

The Master Plan for the park was prepared for the State of New Jersey by the architectural firm of Geddes Brecher Qualls Cunningham, under the direction of the firm's principal designer/founder, Robert Geddes, who also is Dean of Princeton University's School of Architecture and Urban Planning. The firm was the recipient of the 1979 Professional Firm Award from the American Institute of Architects.

Once totally derelict, the site of Liberty State Park has been called "a sleeper of a landscape, awaiting one mammoth, magic touch to

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awaken to great beauty." Some of that magic touch has already been applied, and is evident in a shoreline area that was opened to the public for the nation's Bicentennial celebration in 1976.

"If the plan is vast and visionary," one critic wrote of the Master Plan, "it is also rational and organized, and it is very well begun. Liberty Park could be the most dramatic open space in the metropolitan region in the next century."

The greatest attraction of Liberty Park will be Liberty Walk, a graceful, tree-lined promenade along the crescent of the harbor edge. Well-lighted and patrolled day and night, Liberty Walk is designed for a variety of uses, in addition to providing perhaps the most spectacular set of views of the New York Harbor -- its skyline, bridges, monuments, shipping and diverse life. Also in the Liberty Walk area will be The Bowl, a large grass amphitheater designed for outdoor festivals and sound and light shows focused on Ellis Island.

Liberty Park will also include the restored Railroad Maritime Terminal originally built for the Central Railroad of New Jersey and currently being adapted for many purposes -- from performing arts events to shopping and restaurant areas. The Terminal is scheduled to open next summer.

The core of Liberty Park -- it is New Jersey's first urban State Park -- is a large greenpark, designed in the naturalistic tradition of America's great pastoral landscape parks. The greenpark will offer gently rolling grasslands, woodlands, water lagoons and two large wetlands areas, which will remain as wildlife preservations for thousands of waterfowl and many species of mammals living in the salt marshes. Boardwalk trails and observation points will be located in the midst of these marshes.

The proposed completion date for the park is 1986 -- in time for the 100th anniversary of the Statue of Liberty.

Text of Panel in Museum of Modern Art Exhibition
By Arthur Drexler, Director (Museum's) Department
of Architecture and Design

Liberty State Park on the New York harbor was first proposed over twenty years ago. Planning began in 1974 and the first designs were published in 1976. That year some thirty acres of landfill at the southern end of the site were completed in time for the Bicentennial celebration. Already the most popular park in New Jersey, it amply demonstrates the appeal of green space along the harbor edge. This exhibition presents in detail the master plan for the entire site, now officially approved by the New Jersey State Department of Environmental Protection.

Liberty State Park is a project of exceptional interest on virtually every level. Its architect, Robert Geddes, has brought into equilibrium features derived from ecology, landscape design, building preservation and renewal, and large-scale architectural configurations. Earthworks as giant sculpture are already familiar to readers of art journals, but Liberty Park is the first example of that concept applied to a permanent public site, which happens to be the symbolic entrance to the United States.

The earthwork element, perhaps the most important feature of the design, is a stone embankment forming a crescent promenade

7600 feet long (about a mile and a half, or a 30 minute walk). This concave masonry edge along the water draws the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island into a vast composition, with New York City as its backdrop.

Behind the crescent, and in maximum contrast to it, are some 500 acres divided between a green park of naturalistic landscape, and lagoons for boating.

Midway along the crescent the visitor will find an amphitheater -- one of several connections from the crescent to the park -- from which there will be especially dramatic views of sound and light festivals to be held at Ellis Island.

The amphitheater itself will be given over to sculpture on the theme of ethnic diversity. The green park will also provide numerous beautiful sites for works of art. Governor Byrne has appointed the sculptors George Segal and Tony Smith to advise on their selection.

Renovation of the Maritime-Rail Terminal at the northern end of the site has been under way since 1977; part of it will be in use by spring, 1980, as an information center. The nineteenth century Flemish Renaissance brick and iron work is being preserved and the buildings will provide generous space for restaurants, exhibitions and theaters.

The next step is the construction of the crescent and the green park itself. Federal and State funding is available in increments, as construction requires. It is intended that the park be completed by 1986, in time for the 100th anniversary of the Statue of Liberty.

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