

Learning Places Fall 2016
SITE REPORT #2
The Morgan Library



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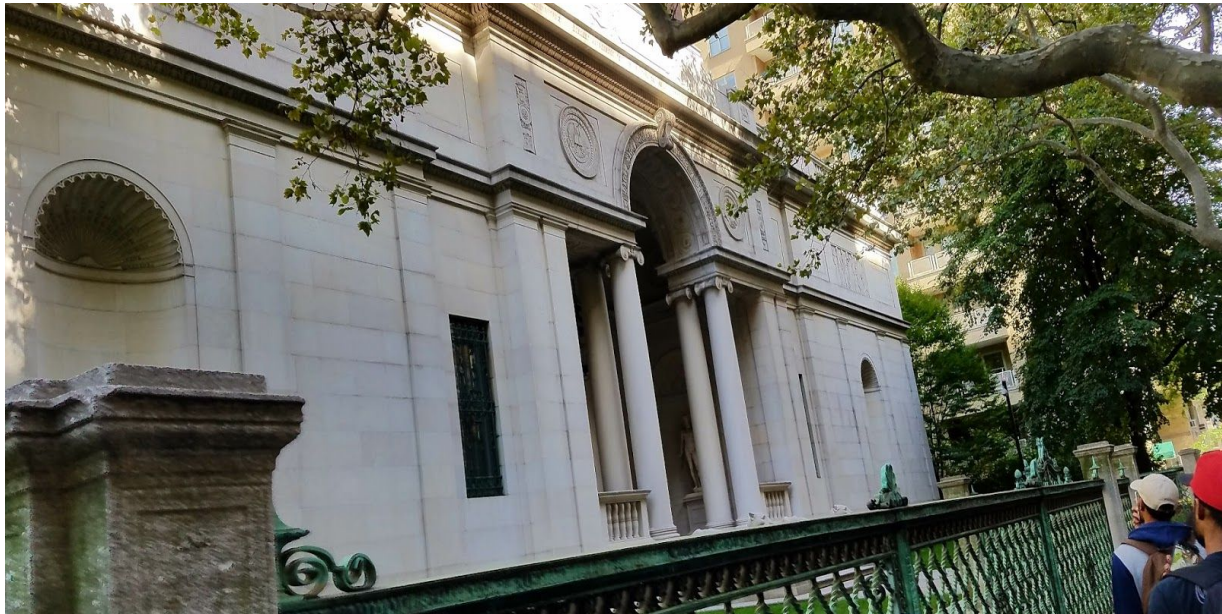
28.09.2016

INTRODUCTION

The Morgan Library is a complex that takes up one side of Madison Avenue from E36th to E37th Street and one side of E36th Street. It is now considered a complex because it consists of 4 different buildings, the main entrance building or Lobby, the Annex to the right of the Lobby, the brownstone building to the left of the Lobby and the original Library. The original library, designed by Charles McKim, was J.P. Morgan's personal library. Eleven years after J.P Morgan's death, his son known as Jack, made the library public in honor of his father's dreams. The Annex replaced J.P. Morgan's original residence. The brownstone building was J.P. Morgan's son residence. The main entrance building or Lobby was built with the same idea of what was originally there. Before the Lobby, there was a garden court that connected the different buildings. The Lobby as we know it today connects the different buildings but in such a way to make it feel like outdoors.

SITE DOCUMENTATION (photos*)

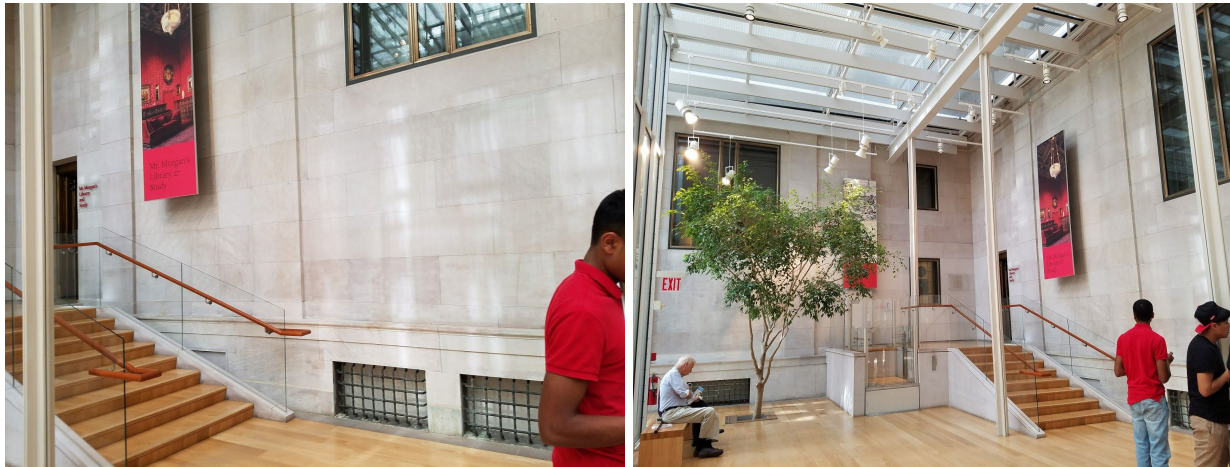
*3 photos minimum required per site visit



This picture shows the front of the Library. The outside of the Library gives a Monumental look even though it is not a huge building. It seems to show from the outside that the inner contents are treasured.



This is a picture of one of the lionesses that are on both sides of the entrance to the library. These lionesses were sculpted by Edward Clark Potter and they seem to be placed in such a way to guard the entrance of the Library. This supports the idea that the contents of the library are very valuable and are treasured.



These pictures show the back of the Lobby. The Lobby is supposed to connect the buildings but still feel outdoors or like a public area. This part of the Lobby does feel like a public area especially with the glass roof and the tree. The other elements that make it feel like outside are the stairs that gives it a backyard feel, the wall showing the anathyrosis joints that is usually found on outside walls and the steel bars on the bottom over the windows which are also only found on the outside.



These pictures show the inside of J.P. Morgan's personal study. The main element that depict that it is a personal space, is the fireplace. Fireplaces are traditionally an element of a personal or private spaces. The red fabric creates an atmosphere of royalty and it shows that even though this is a personal space, J.P. Morgan wanted to feel proud of it.



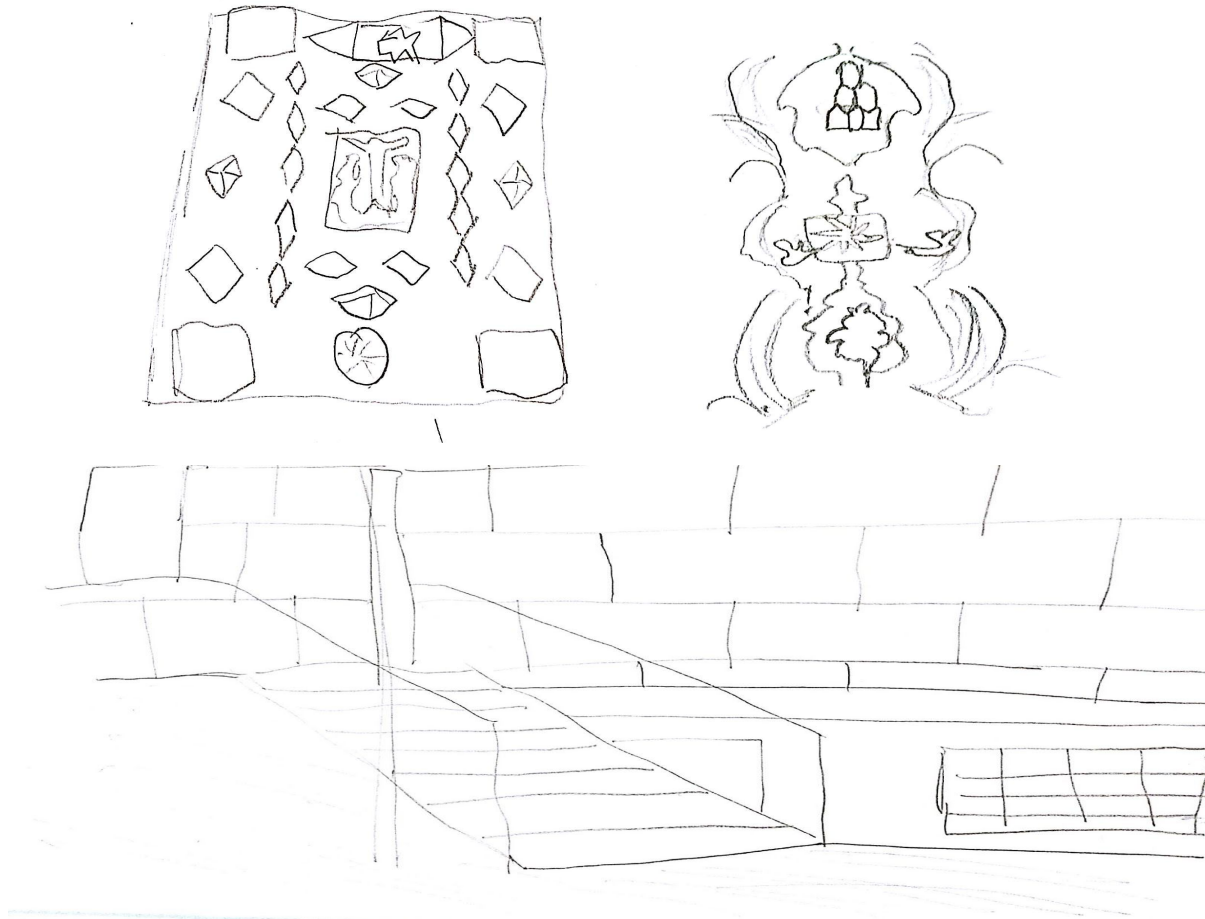
The above image shows "*The Triumph of Avarice*" tapestry. This image conveys that one may have water and still be thirsty, so is J.P. Morgan for wealth even though he is very wealthy.



A representation of religion when entering from the Lobby. The above picture of Mary and baby Jesus shows that J.P. Morgan was either religious or maybe striving to be.

SITE DOCUMENTATION (sketches*)

*2 sketches minimum required per site visit



The sketch on the top left shows the “Jewel Cover” of a gospel book in the library. This supports the idea that J.P. Morgan was either religious or striving to be.

The sketch on the top right shows the crest that is on the fabric that is on the wall in J.P. Morgan’s study. The crest was a representation of the Chigi family. Agostino Chigi is a famous Sieneese banker and perhaps J.P. Morgan wanted to identify himself in the same way.

The sketch on the bottom shows the anathyrosis joints and the window with the bars on it that gives the outdoor atmosphere.

GENERAL NOTES:

- The Lobby was built in a way to connect the all the buildings or give a sense of symmetry.
- The exterior of the Lobby looks very modern in my view.
- The interior wall of the Lobby entrance makes a connection to the brownstone. Walking in feels exquisite and private even though it is meant to have a public feel.
- Past the Lobby entrance, it feels more like the outdoors or public.
- The Library seen from E36th street was completed in 1906.
- The Annex replaced J.P. Morgan's original residence in 1988.
- The residence of J.P. Morgans son on the corner of E37th and Madison Avenue, was added to the complex in 1988.
- The predecessor of the current Lobby, was a garden court.

INSIGHTS/DISCOVERIES

During the visit to the Morgan Library, I discovered that the Lobby was built to connect the different buildings. In my view, this building does not visually connect the buildings because it looks too modern. I know that the architect Renzo Piano worked out all the elements and incorporated them into the design, but looking from the outside it doesn't look like it connects anything. If architectural elements do connect the buildings, then maybe only people who know about architecture, would see it. I think from a regular person's view from the outside, there is no connection. The other criticism I can give is, if this building is supposed to have a public or outdoor feel, then

why would they block out some of the glass panes. If office space is needed, maybe it should have been placed in the basement or in another building. To get a better outdoor feel, they should unblock the upper glass panes on the front wall. It only feels outdoor-ish all the way in the back when looking at the Library and up.

I also discovered that Charles McKim designed the original Penn Station. I am sure that based on the pictures I saw and seeing his work, that the original Penn Station was a beautiful building. I was not aware that there is not much to see and talk about in the current Penn Station.

KEYWORDS/VOCABULARY & DEFINITIONS

*5 keywords minimum required per site visit

Studiolo - an Italian word for a luxurious reading, writing and studying. (In The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms)

Edward Clark Potter - Sculptor of the lionesses in front of the Library, (UWIRE Text)

Charles McKim - Designer of The Morgan Library on E36th Street. (A Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture)

Renzo Piano - the winning architect that designed the Lobby to connect all the buildings and gives the feel of an Italian Piazza. (About the Morgan)

Piazza - an Italian public meeting place (OED)

Anathyrosis - joints of the slabs or bricks that does not show the mortar or joints that look smooth (A Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture)

Agostino Chigi - the famous Sienese banker. (Arts and Humanities Through the Eras)

“The Triumph of Avarice” - Tapestry on the wall over the fireplace in the Morgan Library (About the Morgan)

QUESTIONS for Further RESEARCH

1. Why didn't the entrance stay on 36th street?
2. Was the glass platforms the original idea and can it withstand the average person?
3. Why didn't isn't the front glass wall completely open?
4. Is there any elements at all from the original Penn Station in the current?

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