

Learning Places Fall 2016

SITE REPORT #1

Grand Central Terminal



Street view of Grand Central Terminal

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the visit to Grand Central Terminal was to identify the study subject of the class. Also visual and verbal observations were performed in order to collect information for the research. A small tour inside of the Terminal helped to reinforce our understanding of the history of this New York City Landmark, history, which had been introduced to us earlier by Professor Jeffrey Burden.

SITE DOCUMENTATION



Main Concourse of Grand Central Terminal

The meaning of this picture is to illustrate the height of the ceiling, the three arch windows and the size proportion between people and the structure at the East Balcony. It also shows the interior ornamental details of the ceiling and columns.



West Balcony

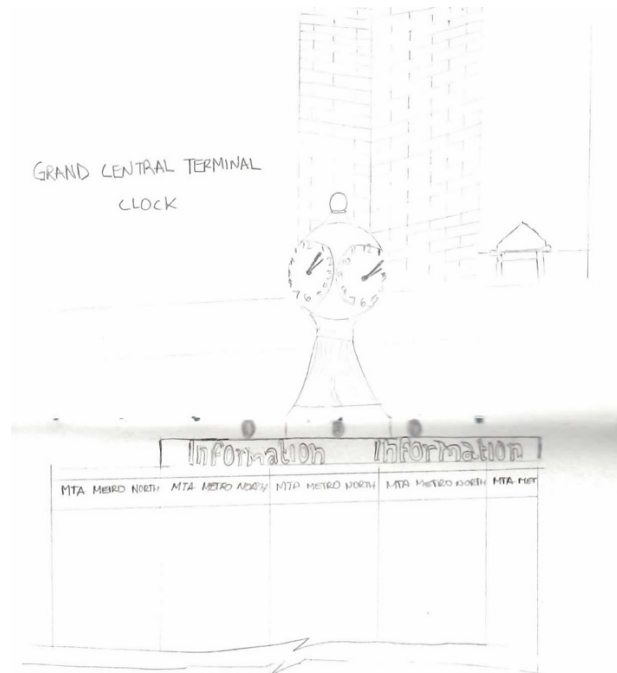
This picture reveals many important aspects of the building. It shows the elevation of two levels and the flow of people walking in several directions. It also reveals the amount of natural light entering to the building. Architects take into consideration all of these aspects and others, when producing an efficient design. Grand Central Terminal is a symbolic icon, a destination for people who visit New York City. In this photograph, the tourists at the west balcony are taking pictures of the building.



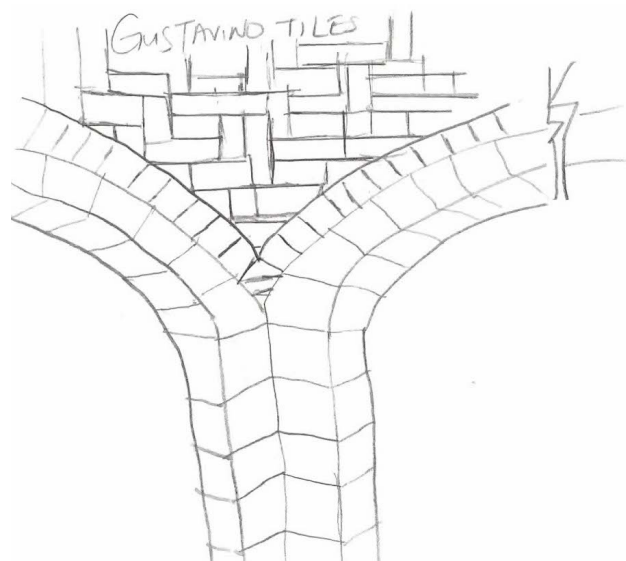
Waiting Room Ceiling at Grand Central Terminal

This picture shows a partial decoration of the column and ceiling. It reveals the immensurable ornamental detail that the building contains. Every structural member such as the columns, beams, arches, lintel ceilings, etc. are decorated in the style of the late 1800s and early 1900s, known as the revival of the neo-classic period.

SITE DOCUMENTATION



The sketch illustrates Grand Central Terminal Clock, an emblematic symbol of time. It is a spherical golden clock that shows the four faces pointing out the cardinal directions. The clock is sitting on top of a round kiosk.



This sketch illustrates a partial column and arch that support a vault. The vault ceiling is decorated with the Gustavino's Tiles, which were hand carved by the artist, himself. The vault is located at the ground level and connected by ramps.

GENERAL NOTES:

- Ecole des Beaux Arts was the training school of the Architect Whitney Warren, thereby influencing the design style of Grand Central Terminal.
- New York City Landmark Preservation Law in 1965 saved Grand Central from destruction.
- Neo-Classicism style refers to the simplicity used in many New York City Landmark Buildings.
- Reed and Stem Architectural Firm was where the Architect Whitney Warren worked.
- Gustavino's tiles are found in the lower level vaults.
- Helligo's Zodiac is depicted on the main concourse ceiling.

INSIGHTS/DISCOVERIES

During this short visit to Grand Central Terminal, I learned many historical facts and details about the building. Walking by East 42nd Street and Vanderbilt Avenue, I viewed an electrical canopy, representing the invention of electrification. Walking down the ramps and arriving at one of the many vaults, I saw the decoration and vault ceiling. There are more than 20 thousand carved tiles by Gustavino.

At the main concourse, I saw the Helligos' zodiacal ceiling and understood why it seemed to be backwards. Also, I was reminded that the original building only had a set of stairs at the West Balcony. During the 1990s renovation, the equivalent staircase was installed at the East Balcony.

KEYWORDS/VOCABULARY & DEFINITIONS

Railroad: compared earlier with railway n. A roadway laid with rails (originally of wood, later also of iron or steel) along which the wheels of wagons or trucks may run, in order to facilitate the transport of heavy loads, originally and chiefly from a colliery; a wagonway. Formerly also: †the lines of rails along such a road (obs.). Cf. rail n.2 Now hist.

Beaux-Arts: The fine arts. Also used ellipt. for the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris; freq. attrib., of the standards of architecture and art maintained by the École in France in the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century and imitated elsewhere, characterized by the influence of older styles and a reliance on decorative and period design.

Commodore: Navy. An officer in command, ranking above captain and below rear-admiral.

Concourse: The running or flocking together of people; the condition or state of being so gathered together. †to have concourse: to resort in crowds to, unto.

Neoclassicism: Neoclassical style or principles in the arts, or adherence to these; spec. (a) Art and Archit., an 18th cent. style characterized by a rejection of baroque and rococo ornamentation in favor of classical simplicity and regularity of form; (b) Music an early 20th cent. style of composition characterized by a revival of 17th and 18th cent. baroque and classical forms, procedures, and styles, esp. as a reaction against 19th cent. Romanticism.

Reference: Oxford English Dictionary

QUESTIONS for Further RESEARCH

1. Is there a museum at Grand Central Terminal?
2. What are the proper names for the ornamental details?
3. Where do we find the archives of Grand Central Terminal?