

Learning Places Fall 2016

# SITE REPORT #2

## THE MORGAN LIBRARY



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09.28.2016

### INTRODUCTION

J. P. Morgan was not only a well known banker and financier, he also had a passion for collecting. The Morgan Library in a sense is a gallery to some of the various pieces he collected. The

building itself isn't just one building but a collage of several properties owned by Mr. Morgan. The brownstone residence later owned his son, the McKim building where Morgan's private study and personal library was housed, the Annex and the newest addition which serves as a lobby and cafe.

## SITE DOCUMENTATION (photos\*)



This is a photo of the main entrance on the 36th street side, this building was designed by the architect Charles McKim in 1903 and follows the trend of a lot of buildings built around the turn of the century. A neoclassical style which holds true to the tripartite concept. From the outside you could tell this place was of high importance because as you would enter from this side you would feel the



presence of the building greeting you with two lioness statues and high ceilings. We learned that the design of the entrance is called Serliana or Palladian Arch.



When you enter the library from the 36th st entrance, you enter what they call the Rotunda which also served as a lobby. If you looked up you would see this mural done by Siddons Mowbray. The Art itself was captivating and the lobby felt grand with the marble cladding in place.

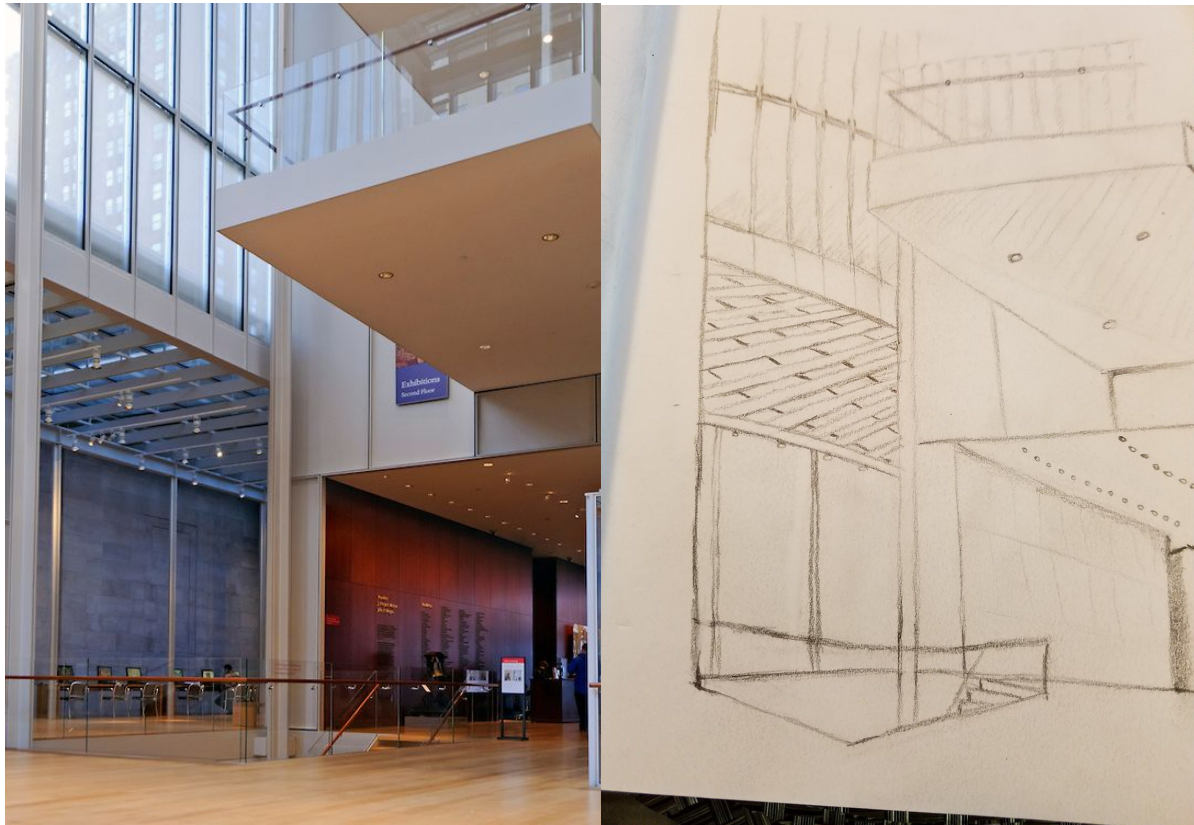


This was a portrait hung up in Mr. Morgan's study where you can see the red crested silk wallcovering. The room itself felt very quiet, which gave us a sense that this place was very sacred and profane. The crest is of the chigi family from rome whom he had admired. His desk was actually facing this portrait which i found interesting because I don't know if it was an ego thing or just something rich people did at the time.



These were pictures taken in the original library where most if not all of Morgan's books were housed. I began to question if he actually read all of them or he got them because he wanted them. There were quite a few valuable manuscripts also set on display here, including 3 guttenberg bibles. In the first picture you'll see a fireplace and above it was a mural that was a representation of the deadly sin greed. Which is ironic because Mr. Morgan was actually also known to be very philanthropic. The other two pictures are the 3 layers of books, art, music, and other works what was interesting was that there was 3 levels but no staircase in plain sight. A student later pointed out that the staircase is actually hidden behind some the book cases.

## SITE DOCUMENTATION (sketch)



This is a sketch the main lobby now, built in the renovation of 2006 by Renzo Piano and Italian Architect. He blended the 3 morgan properties in what looks like a seamless effort. He made the building basically transparent so you can see the surroundings of the manhattan complexes and to allow sunlight to illuminate the central cafe. This form of central gathering was referred to as a piazza. When we walked in here we could hear everything going on around us. This is because since this was the place everyone had their lunches and gatherings it was very open and public. The transparent design gave the lobby a beautiful glow and I was taken back by the actual view.

## GENERAL NOTES:

- In 1907 there was a bank crisis in America and J.P. Morgan actually gathered up the bank heads and told them that couldn't leave his study until they found a solution to that crisis.
- 2006 Renovations were made by Renzo Piano for the new modern entrance for the museum.
- Belle da Coasta Greene was the first director the Morgan library once it was open to the public

## KEYWORDS/VOCABULARY & DEFINITIONS

Piazza: italian for public square or central gathering spot

Morganization: Monopolization techniques used by J.P. Morgan in the nineteenth century. J.P. Morgon used his reputation to lure European financiers into America by taking over an industry and stabilizing it through monopoly.

Shist: A coarse-grained metamorphic rock that consists of layers of different minerals and can be split into thin irregular plates.

Serliana: Tripartite window, door, or blind architectural feature consisting of a central opening with a semicircular arch over it springing from two entablatures each supported by two columns or pilasters

flanking narrower flat-topped openings on either side.

Anathyrosis: is the technical term for how the ancients frequently dressed the joints of stone blocks.

## **QUESTIONS for Further RESEARCH**

1. Did Mr. Morgan read all the of the books in his collection?
2. What other buildings has Renzo Piano made?
3. Are we allow to go up to the 3rd level in the library?