

Learning Places Fall 2016

SITE REPORT #1 (Expanded)

Grand Central Terminal



Bryan Ortiz

10.06.2016

INTRODUCTION

Grand Central Terminal (commonly mistaken as Grand Central Station), was built between 1903 and 1913, on 42nd and Park Avenue. This terminal was built to replace the older Grand Central Station and have the electric trains instead of steam trains.

The style that the terminal was built in was Beaux-Arts style. From Vanderbilt Hall to the Main Hall, GCT is filled with many secrets and history that that make the terminal a landmark for NYC. Today, it is known as the U.S's largest regional railroad and is one of the most visited tourist spots in the country, perhaps even the world.

SITE DOCUMENTATION (photos*)



This is part of the ramp to the lower level of the terminal. At the bottom of this ramp, there is the Whispering Arch. The ceiling in the arch was made in a way where a

person can talk from one side to a person in another side. The reason for this was that back then, people didn't have loudspeakers or any of the technology we have today. So the architects made sure that ceilings like the Whispering Arch so people can be heard if there was an announcement, like a train coming in or any delays.

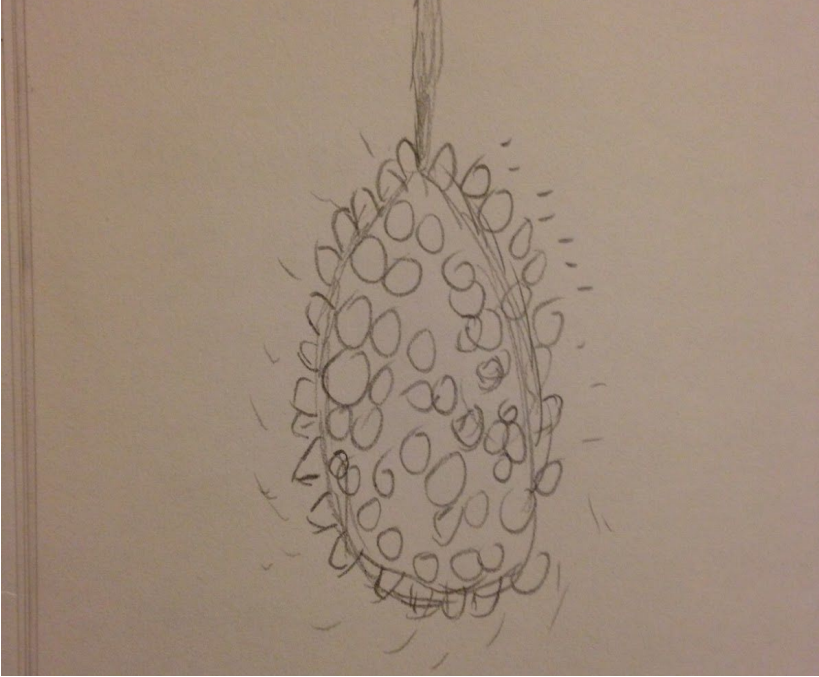


This is a picture of the Main Concourse, the center of the terminal. Up in the ceiling is a painting of the stars, and has all the zodiac signs. The windows in the photo have glass walkways that only employees in GCT can enter and walk through them. This photo was taken in one of those hallways. The architects did a great job making the windows give out natural light, brightening the whole place.

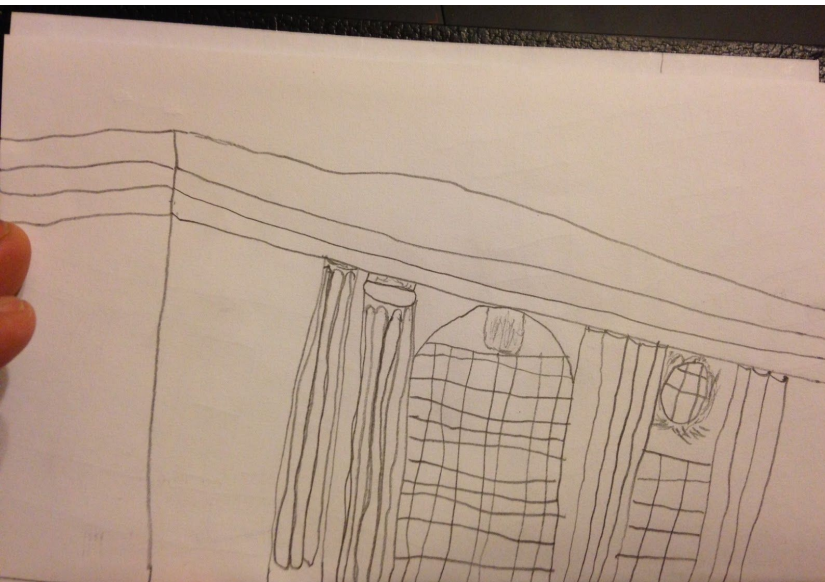


This is a picture of Vanderbilt Hall in the terminal. It used to have a large amount of benches to have people wait for trains, but after New York was losing money, the hall was filled with homeless. The waiting room was then removed and this hall is now for special events and cultural events. The architecture is great, with layers of marble on the walls and surrounding the doors, and the chandeliers made of actual gold, and are worth a fortune.

SITE DOCUMENTATION (sketches*)



This is a sketch of one of the light fixtures in the terminal. Although the light fixtures look much more detailed than my sketch, I still got the sense of the design of them. Much like the building itself, these fixtures were handled with time and care to make the terminal itself more appealing.



A sketch of the front of the terminal, minus the sculpture on the top. It must have taken them a long time to design the sculpture, cause i would have never been able to draw it on the first try. The building itself is just as detailed, from the

marble columns to the design of the windows.

Insight

- One of the Mta heads and the Railroad Chief were held at gunpoint to discuss a business opportunity.
- “Rolling out the red carpet” was term created in Vanderbilt Hall.
- At the roof of the Main Concourse, a block brick can be seen. That brick represents the color of GCT before renovations.
- A different black hole can be seen in the ceiling, and was caused by the first American spaceship.
- The zodiac signs on display, the whole thing is upside down!
- The information desk has a staircase inside, so employees can go from the upper to the lower level desks.
- One staircase in the Main Concourse was built in a different time than the other.

GENERAL NOTES:

- Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794- 1877) - U.S businessman and philanthropist. Vanderbilt made a fortune from shipping and railroads.
- June 5th, 1910- the last train leaves Grand Central Station and demolition begins on it.
- 1913- The Grand Central Terminal is finished.
- Main Concourse is the center of the terminal.

KEYWORDS/VOCABULARY & DEFINITIONS

1. Neo Classicism- a term used to describe art that originate from Europe
2. Beaux Arts Style- a theatrical and heavily ornamented classical style taught during the 19th century from Paris.
3. rhodium- is a chemical element with symbol Rh and atomic number 45. It is a rare, silvery-white, hard, and chemically inert transition metal. It is a member of the platinum group.
4. Intermediate rider-ship- a train taking a long trip, like the Metro North, LI Railroad, etc.
5. Reverse rider-ship- a train taking a round trip, commuting a small distance, such as the MTA system.

-Definitions derived from Wikipedia. 4 & 5 were self definitions.

QUESTIONS for Further RESEARCH

1. Are there any special events that take place in the secret walkways of GCT, like a treasure hunt?
2. What are the walls and light fixtures made out of and what was the process to make them?
3. Where's FDR's secret train, and do presidents of today still use it when visiting NYC? Or do they have other secret ways they navigate through the city?