

Learning Places Fall 2016

SITE REPORT #2

Morgan Library/Penn Station Site Report



Sotir Zhupa

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INTRODUCTION

For this site visit we went to the Morgan Library and museum as well as briefly visiting Penn Station. The original building shown in the picture above was built between 1902-1906, by the architects McKim, Mead, and White, and housed Mr. Morgan's most prized collection of books and held his own private study. The new building, which connects the library and the house which Jack Morgan, Pierpont Morgan's son lived, was built by Renzo Piano in 2006. The new structure was a way to connect the two buildings formerly separated and make it one whole. We also visited Penn Station which was built immediately after the old structure was demolished in 1964.

SITE DOCUMENTATION (photos)



The picture you see above is that of an eagle in front of Penn station on 7th ave. This is a significant picture because of its historical importance. As pointed out by professor Grace this is one of the two eagles that remain from the old Penn Station. There used to be a total of 24 of them surrounding the building along with a variety of other statues but now only two have survived and stand in front of this building. I chose this as one of my pictures because of its connection to the old and new structure that we see in downtown Manhattan.

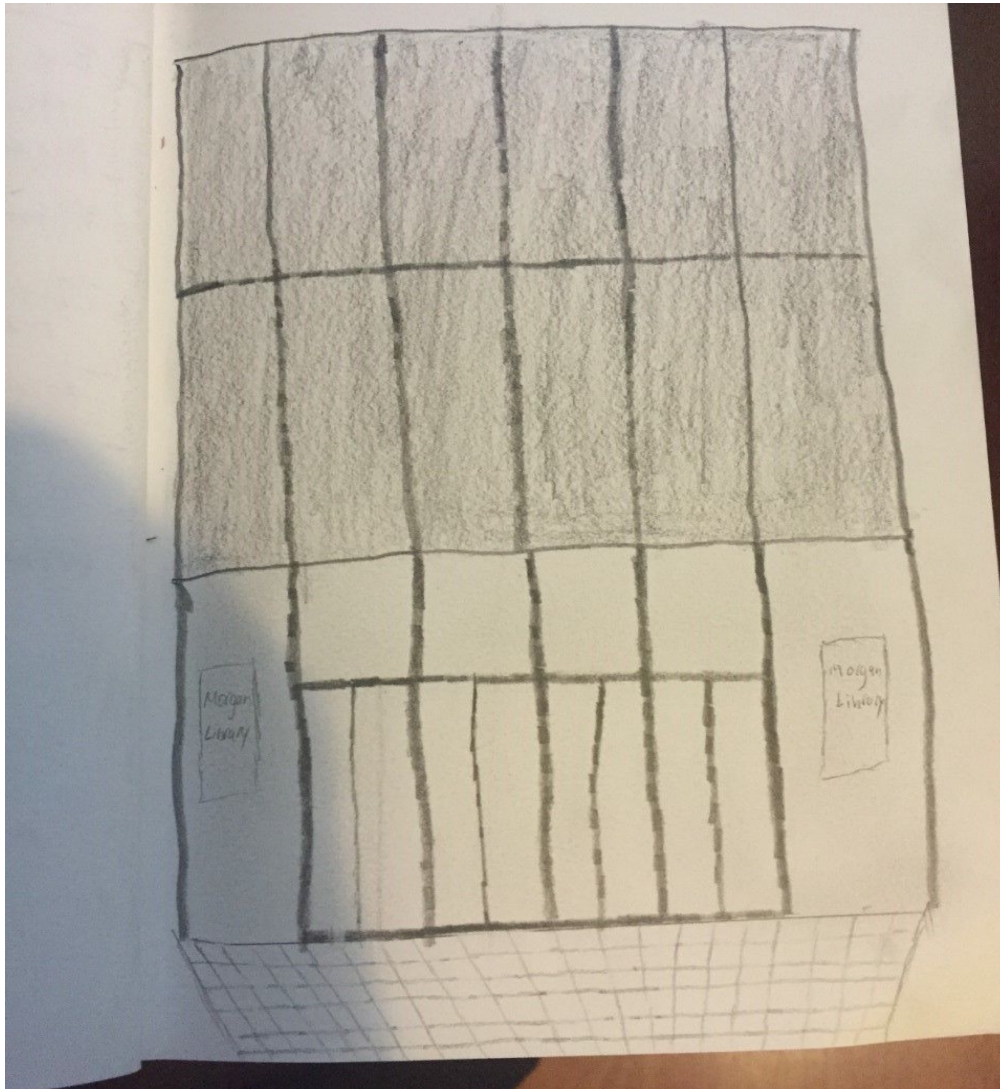


This next picture is inside the Morgan Library in Pierpont Morgan's private study where he spent most of his time reading his favorite books. This photo shows us what Mr. Morgan saw every time he sat down at his desk to read or do some kind of work. The whole study is indeed beautiful but this fireplace like piece captures the whole room and tells you that an important man worked here. One part in particular that extremely important, in my point of view, is the picture of himself up above the fireplace. I think he placed it there as a reminder to himself and to everyone, that walked in his office, that he is the boss of this place and he is important.

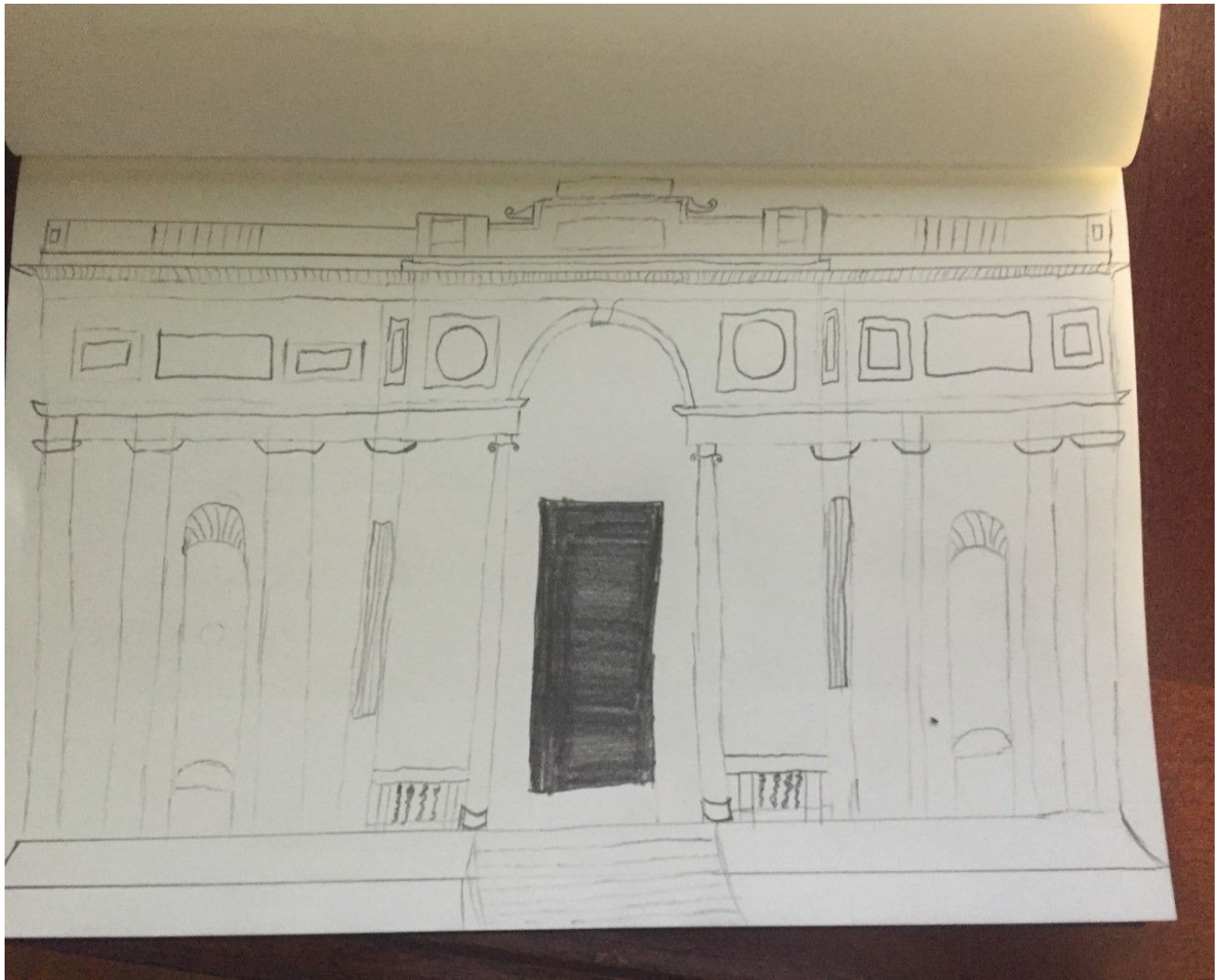


My last photo is the entrance to the librarians study, where the librarian would work and do her research for anything Mr.Morgan required. I chose this photo not only because of its aesthetic beauty but also because of its importance in relation to the building. This picture is directly across from where people would enter in before the new building was built. It is my belief that this was done purposefully because it gives instant access to the books.

SITE DOCUMENTATION (sketches)



The sketch above is that of the main entrance to the new building of the Morgan Library and Museum on Madison ave between 36th street and 37th street. I chose to draw this to show you the difference between the old and new building and what structural differences they hold. This entrance is very blocky and plain it's not at all intimidating on the contrary it is rather inviting because of its transparency and allows you to see inside before you enter. This could easily be called a modern building.



This is a sketch of the old entrance on 36th street between Madison ave and Park ave. Very clearly this is completely different than the entrance I discussed before. This is a neo-classical building with influences from both ancient roman and greek buildings. This gives off a vibe of it being a fortress not a library because of its large intimidating door and huge pillars not to mention the lion statues right at the start of the stairs (not shown in this drawing). I chose to sketch this to again show you the contrast of the two structures.

GENERAL NOTES:

- Today, the Morgan Library is referred to as the Morgan Campus.
- J.P. Morgan was educated in Switzerland.
- The Library holds three of the famous Gutenberg Bibles.
- Penn Station was still being used even while it was being demolished
- The phrase in my last picture of the entrance to the librarians study, *solī deo honor et gloria*, means “glory to God alone”

INSIGHTS/DISCOVERIES

In all, my visit to the Morgan Library and Penn Station was very informative. The Morgan Library was a very beautiful building with a lot of interesting things inside that caught my attention. The first thing that amazed me was the impressive feat by Piano to combine two buildings into one. The next was Morgan's private study which seemed like a place fit for kings with its extraordinary decor. The last was the main part of the library which held most of the books, and to my surprise I discovered that there was in fact a hidden staircase that led to the upper parts of the library. During my time I learned various new terms that could help me both in this class and in life. All of these made this a visit that I would happily repeat. The brief visit to Penn Station, although not nearly as nice as the Library, taught me to view building in a nonconventional manner.

KEYWORDS/VOCABULARY & DEFINITIONS

Studiolo: is a private study that many wealthy people used as a retreat.

Piazza: refers to a central gathering place

Transparency: in architectural terms a building that is very open and well illuminated by natural light.

Renaissance Men: a person that is good at a lot of things.

Illuminated manuscripts: books that shine because of the gold lettering.

QUESTIONS for Further RESEARCH

1. Why was the staircase in the main library hidden?
2. Why were the two eagles left in front of Penn Station?
3. Who was the architect that built the new Penn Station?