

Learning Places Fall 2016

SITE REPORT #1

Grand Central Terminal



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09.17.2016

INTRODUCTION

We explored the Grand Central Terminal which had more than 100 years in history. It had gone through three different stages of reconstruction. Now, thousands of people enter and exit the city through this building. Because of the neo classical decoration, it is very recognizable in the public space. We learned why the structures were built in certain way, the Bard Act save Grand Central, and the Grand Central considered an achievement of civil engineering. We still have a lot to learn in Grand central Terminal.

SITE DOCUMENTATION (photos*)



I can see inside of Grand Central Terminal through the giant windows. The top of the building has great statue of Greek Gods that perch above us mortals. Hercules, Minerva, and Mercury are the symbolize to the terminal's strength, brains, and commerce. They came from Religion in ancient Rome. The 14 feet Tiffany clock that is adorned by the Greek Gods. The clock helped standardized time and train schedules, so that we could be able to figure out when a train was arriving and/or departing.



The lighting is ornamented and beautiful. The chandeliers are dipped in 24 carat gold. Also, it is important because it represents the significance of electricity during the time of the Grand Central Terminal's creation. All the light bulbs were displayed on outside of the chandeliers and light fixtures. Electricity was the part of the major development and achievement of civil engineering in Grand Central Terminal.



I like this photo a lot because the bare lights bulbs make the Terminal shine even in sunny day. The eagle is monumental. The statues of Hercules, Mercury and Minerva remains intact. In this day, people are amazed by the beauty of the GC, and They took lots of picture to prove they have been here, but they did not truly understand the building. The Beaux-Arts Style mislead people to question the existence time of the building.



Vanderbilt Hall or waiting room used to fill up with homeless. After GC improve their management, the hall uses as Christmas market, social exhibition, and private events. Restaurant business came into GC, and it attracts tourists and locals people. It is good to see GC can make enough money to maintain the building.



This acorns and oak leaves sculpture is almost everywhere. Why is that? Because that is a symbol for Cornelius Vanderbilt's family. The detail on the sculpture is amazing. How many hours of human work in order to have one of this art?

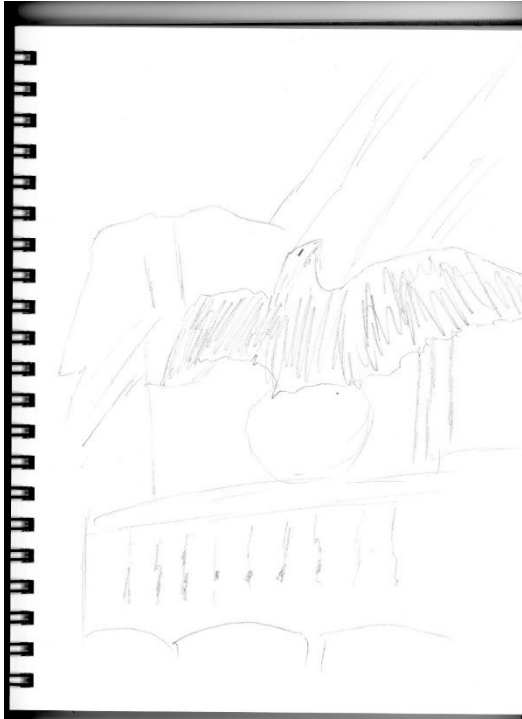


I can tell that four-faced brass clock took an important role in 19th century, when not everyone had a watch, and they had to be on time. However, the clock looks useless in this day. Especially, most people use their phone as a watch.

SITE DOCUMENTATION (sketches*)

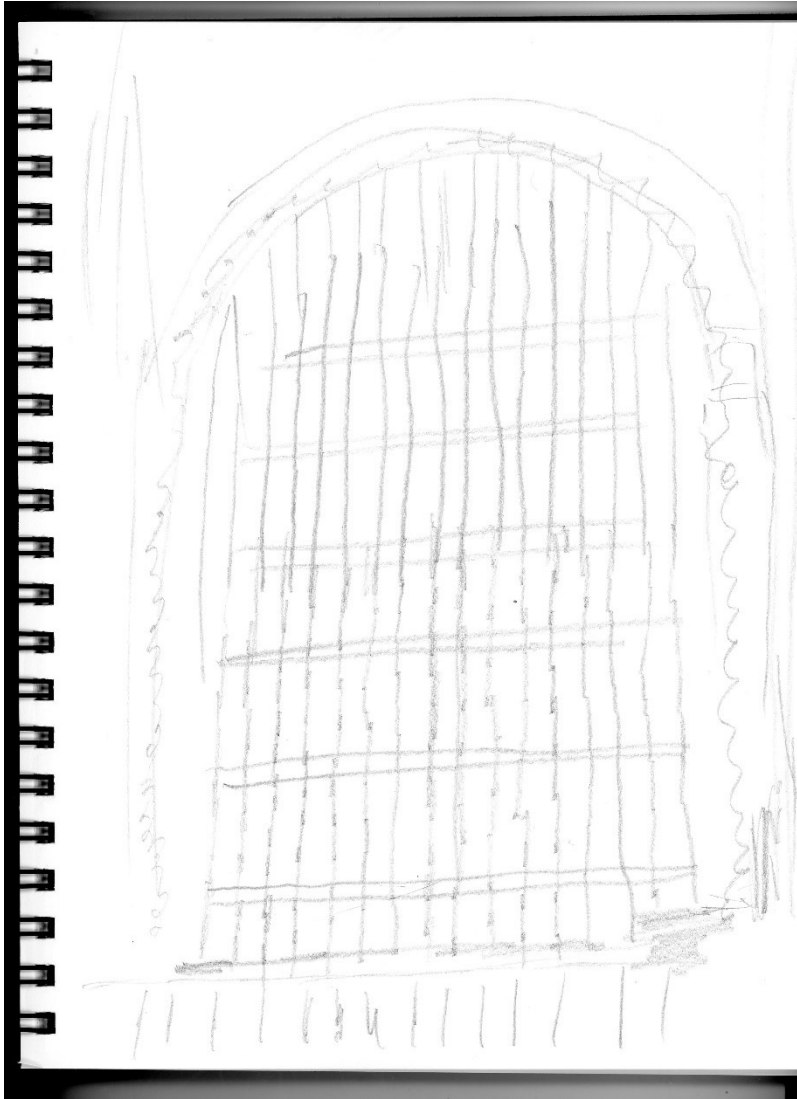


This is a sketch from where we were waiting outside the Grand Central Terminal



I like this eagle, because it was so outstanding in the public space. There must be a reason for it. The eagle is monumental. I read the story behind it. [It was originally from the 22 eagles of Penn station.](#)

<http://untappedcities.com/2014/02/24/where-are-the-cast-iron-eagles-of-the-original-grand-central-terminal/>



This sketch was from inside of the main concourse. It is important for all the light coming inside.

GENERAL NOTES:

Cornelius Vanderbilt, an American business magnate

Grand Central Terminal was finished in 1913.

The building is styled in a neo-classical way with steel frames running through it.

Vanderbilt hall is no longer open to the public because there was too many homeless in there. Now, we use it sparingly for art exhibits and events.

All train were 98% on time

INSIGHTS/DISCOVERIES

In 1956, the New York State Legislature passed the “Bard Act”. The purpose of that was to protect all historic landmarks and spaces. Without this law, Grand Central would no longer exist. Because New York is an urban city, and lands are super expensive. The old GC design do not reach the high efficiency standard in the modern city. That was the same reason that they destroyed the old Penn station. Thanks to the Bard Act. The law has been protect 1347 individual landmarks, 117 interior landmarks, and 10 scenic landmarks. GC was one of them. The New York’s landmarks preservation law was only changed the New York city, but also in many cities and countries development.

The Grand Central Tour was very acknowledged. The waiting room has been converted into one big hall used occasionally for exhibits. There are various parts of the building are either scrolls, rosettes, acorns or a combination of all. On the top of the four-faced clock, there are acorns representing the Vanderbilt family. The great ceiling opening above with the zodiac studded sky by Helleu. A tiny block hole in the ceiling which actually comes from the dawn of the space age. There was an error in the terminal. Helleu painted the beautiful constellation backwards. Grand Central Terminal is considered an achievement of the civil engineering because it includes a lot of calculation in force, gravity and electricity. ” *Its centerpiece is the Grand Concourse, a soaring space that features an arched, 25,000 sq ft ceiling decorated with the constellations of the Milky Way.*” and “*Extensive blasting was required to excavate some 1.6 million cu yd of rock and 1.2 million cu yd of soil.*” Without all the precise calculation in science, Grand Central Terminal could never be finished.

According to our tour guide Brucker. Vanderbilt Hall or waiting room used to fill up with homeless. After Grand Central improve their business management, the hall uses as Christmas market, social exhibition, and private events. Restaurant business came into GC, and it attracts tourists and locals people. It is good to see GC is making money to maintain the building and handle the furfure passenger

KEYWORDS/VOCABULARY & DEFINITIONS

Neo Classicism – is a term coined in the 19th century to describe the overwhelmingly dominant style in the fine and decorative arts in Europe and North America during the 18th and 19th

Luxury: A thing that is expensive and enjoyable but not essential. Such as chandeliers

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.

Paul César Helleu: were a French oil painter, pastel artist, dry point etcher, and designer,

Jules-Alexis: Were a French sculptor and educator.

Beaux-Arts Style- is a theatrical and heavily ornamented classical style taught during the 19th century at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

Restoration- the action of returning something to former owner, place or condition

Landmark Preservation Committee- the New York City agency which charged with administering the city's Landmarks Preservation Law.

Vault- a roof in the form of an arch or a series of arches, typical of churches and other large, formal building.

QUESTIONS for Further RESEARCH

1. Is Grand Central Terminal use golden ratio? What kind the ratio that GC is using? What is the reason for that? Is it high efficiency standard?
2. When do Grand Central Terminal go to the next reconstruction? Why is the reason for that? Is it beneficial? How much will it cost?
3. How many tourists came to Grand Central Terminal each year? Can GC handle the all the tourist in next 20 years?