

Learning Places Summer 2016

SITE REPORT #1

Grand Central Terminal



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INTRODUCTION

The site report of Grand Central Terminal by my observation in order to discover and learn its history, experience its present condition, and deep my knowledge about the architecture



Walking on 42nd street in Manhattan, NY at 4:30pm, I was surrounded by many tall buildings and many people walking faster than me. The weather was cloudy, but the temperature was very comfortable. 42nd street has 4 car lanes, and I saw many yellow cabs and MTA transit buses.



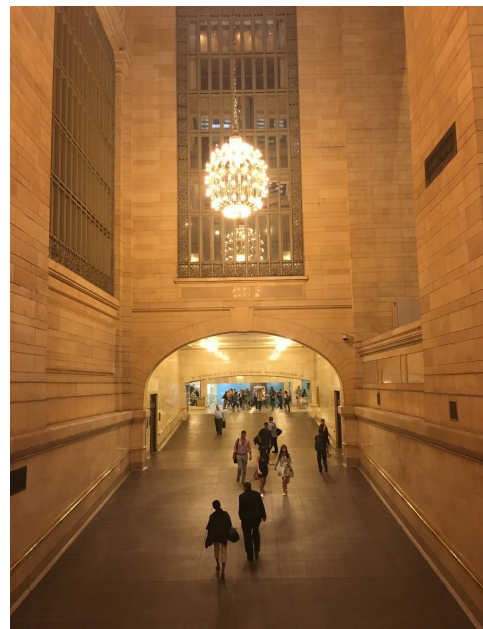
On Park avenue, there is a bridge, which has some ornaments and its width is about 30 feet above me. I saw the name of the architecture which was my reason why I went there. TD bank and Cipriani Club Residences are across the street, and also I saw Chrysler building and Grand Hyatt New York.



The architecture that I came to see was Grand Central Terminal. It was designed by Reed & Stem and Warren & Wetmore and was built in 1913. From 42nd street, I could see its iconic statue of Minerva, Hercules, and Mercury surrounding a big green and gold clock. On the facade above the street level, it has about 25 feet long super columns, variety of windows with rich ornaments and green frames.



The first place that I arrived was Vanderbilt Hall which has very high ceiling and simple wall that has the same color as its facade, and it welcomes people with the gorgeous chandeliers which has many light bulbs sticking outwards. There were many people who just arrived at this terminal with big luggages.



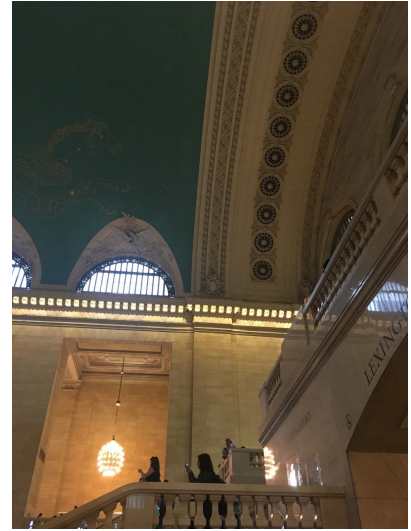
After passing through Vanderbilt Hall, there was a small bridge that gives the sense of the transition

from the street level to the Main concourse level. I saw different shape of the chandeliers above me.



In the Main concourse, the first thing that caught my eyes was the ceiling much higher than that of the hall with beautiful green and gold astronomical paintings. There are also big half circle shaped windows right under the ceiling. On the floor, I saw an information counter with a clock on top in the middle space, and gates to each tracks are behind it. The space has a huge space atmosphere even though with many people who was walking a little bit slower than the people outside, and many tourist who was stopping to take pictures. There were variety of people such as family, business men and women, couples, students and military officers.





Under the massive three arch windows, there is the second floor that people can go up by the stairs, and symmetrically there is another 2nd floor on the other side. On the second floor there are cafe and Apple store where people can spend their time to wait for their trains or people.



The gates to the track platforms have an circle opening in the middle, and it has ornaments with black color. This space was especially darker than other spaces, but I felt that this gives an impression of starting their journeys to passengers. This platforms are oriented towards north on park avenue. There were some vending cars so that passengers can buy drinks and snacks at the last minutes before they leave, and also I saw some employees who were taking a break time by sitting down by the wall next to the gates.



After spending time inside the terminal, I decided to walk to 41st street where I can see the terminal's facade more, and see what's surrounding in this neighborhood. I saw the very tall MetLife building right behind the terminal, and when I looked right, I could see New York Public Library next to the Bryant Park a couple blocks away from there.



The bridge above the 41st street, which leads cars to the elevated car lanes on both side of Grand Central Terminal.

DISCOVERIES

This site visit was very interesting to me because I was always just passing through this Grand Central Terminal without paying any attentions before. Thus there were many things that I noticed and I was surprised at when I started the observation by spending more than one hour inside the building, and in the neighborhood.

The first thing I paid attention to was the amount of people. Regardless the fact that this New York City is one of the busiest city in the world, the amount of the people in the terminal I saw on that day was more than I expected. I was almost feeling dizzy, but as our professor told us, the high ceiling helped me as well with distributing the atmosphere of the crowd. Next thing that caught my eyes was the color. I knew that the ceiling has green and gold, but I did not know that the clock and the statue on the facade have the same colors as well as the windows. When I think about what surprised me most, or what was the unique characteristic of this terminal was the layout and orientation. From my experiences, terminals are always a little bit confusing in terms of their layout for passenger's circulation. I always look for ticket counters, gates, exit or information desks, however this terminal is very easy to find clearly all of them which passengers need in general. From the 42nd street, people enter in the terminal, walk towards north, find tickets and information center right after they pass the bridge from the Vanderbilt hall, and there are gates on north sides which is easily found from everywhere in the Main concourse, and I believe its symmetrical design helps people with finding what they want and understanding the layout quickly.

KEYWORDS

Grand Central Terminal

42nd Street and Park Avenue

Vanderbilt Hall

Elevation

Clock

Windows

Light bulb

Ceiling

Main Concourse

Orientation

Layout

Passengers