

Learning Places Summer 2016

# SITE REPORT #1

## Grand Central Terminal: Thru the Eyes of a New Yorker



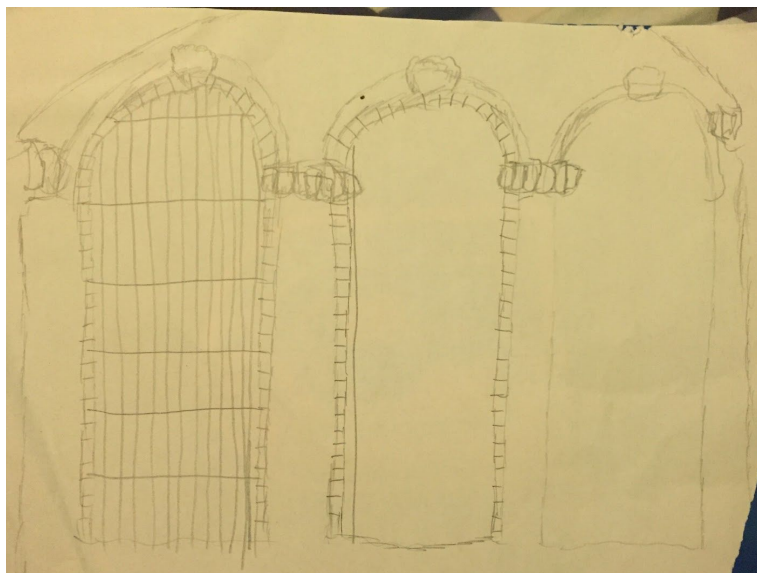
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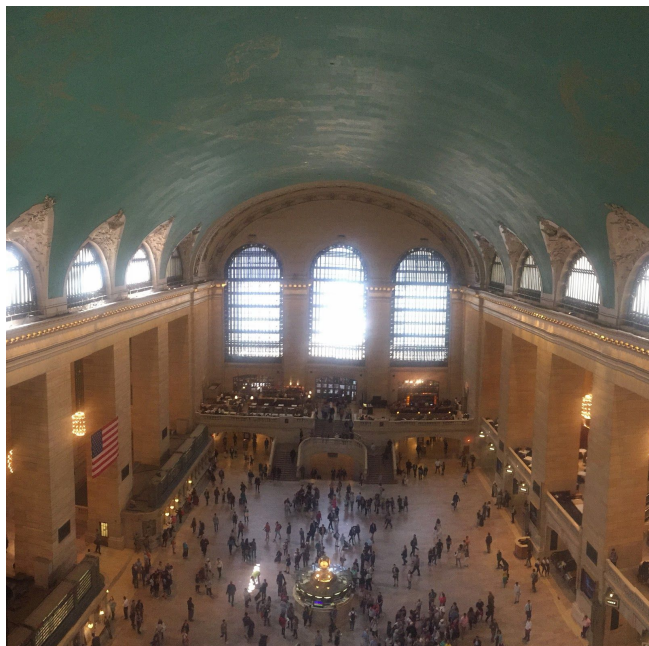
## INTRODUCTION

It's been said that the eyes of a person is the doorway to one's soul, so the question is, are the main doors of Grand Central its eyes. Grand Central is one piece of architecture that has a long history in New York City; first being known as a depot back in 1871, then transitioning to a station by 1900 and in 1913 making its final transformation into a terminal. Grand Central Terminal is a structure that reveals the true beauty of New York City, and it was brought to my attention during a site visit to Grand Central with my entire Arch/Lib 2205 class. So Much of this grand structure was revealed within two visits (June 8th and 9th), hearing and seeing these new discoveries has allowed to look at New York with so much more awe and amazement.

## SITE DOCUMENTATION (photos/sketches/notes)



These two photos above are quite influential to me since one is a picture of the west side of the main concourse which I took with the SnapChat application. I took this photo because of the beauty of the three tall windows and the fast paced activity people moving about the concourse trying to get to where they need to go. The windows here speak so much to me and resonates with my being. When you see these windows, the grandness of them adds so much more to the height and god-like feeling of this concourse. What I find so intriguing is the light fixtures impeded in the moldings adjacent to the windows. I also love how easy it is for natural light to enter the concourse and shine upon commuters and tourist alike. The following photo is a tracing of the windows that caught my eye from the time i walked into the main concourse. What I find intriguing is that the windows look so divided but yet so much natural light is capable of entering into the room through all this division. What I noticed is that division must be the walkways and the support system for the walkways. And in my sketch I was trying to capture the essence of the walkways and their support system. I noticed after looking at my sketch that the moldings besides the windows stand out very prominently to me, though they are small in comparison to the window. My view of the molding seems to be more grand and extraordinary, based on my sketches, it seems that i see more details in the molding then in the

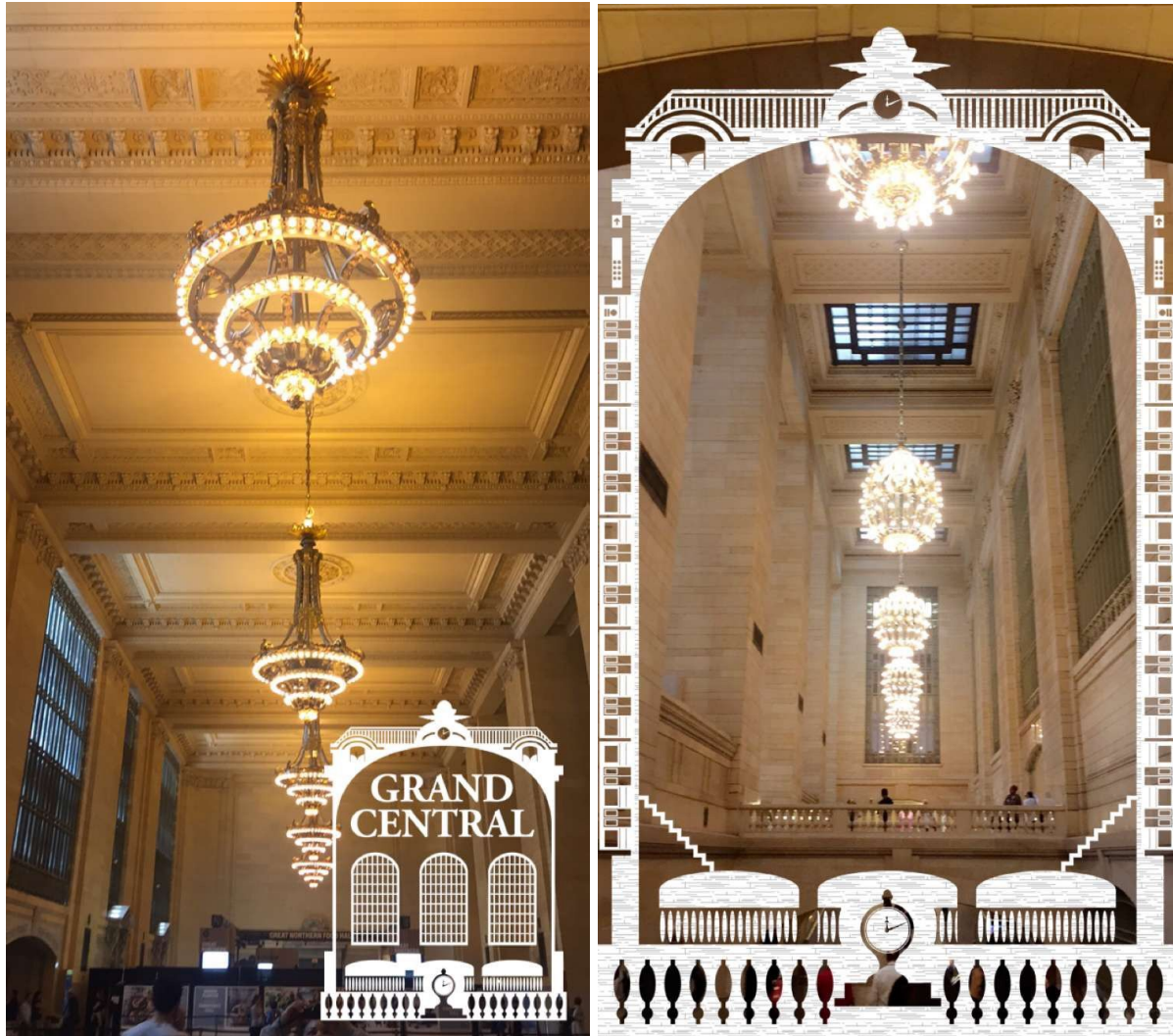


windows.

I used the panoramic option on my camera to take this picture, which I took from the top walkway from the east side windows. I quite enjoy this photo because it shows everyone walking thru the concourse as just a tiny speck of dust in a large universe. I get to enjoy the thought of us humans are not the center of the universe and are not big and bad but are tiny



and simple creatures in this universe that have no control of what's going on around us. Another spectacular thing about this photo is that that I can see the symmetry of this grand and almost perfect structure. The beauty of the semi-circle shaped window with their gorgeous moldings and their ability to allow natural light into the building so strategically.



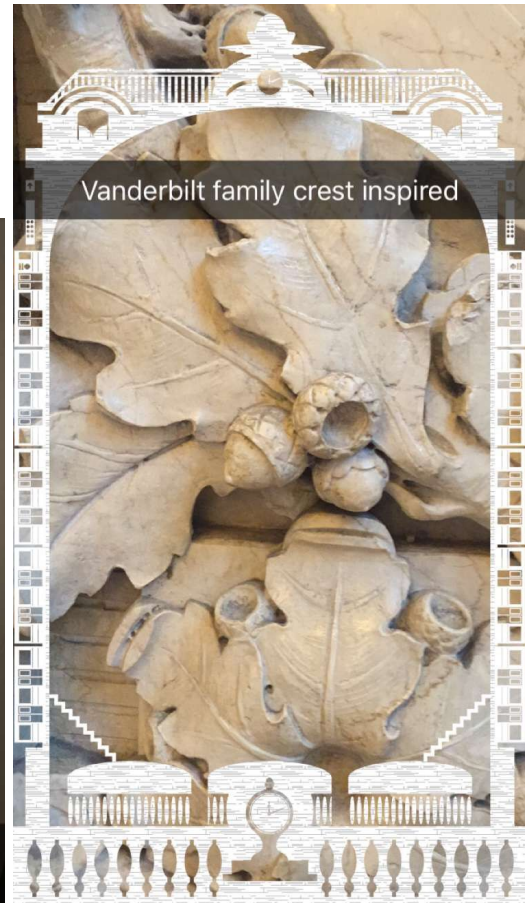
These two photos are grand sites of innovation and beauty, which once again I took with Snapchat, thru these photos I truly see the bragging that its architects and main investors were doing their best to display. What we have here are light fixtures that have their light bulbs on the outside of the fixtures and are fully exposed to the world. Electricity is normally used for just necessity but in the instance of Grand Central, electricity is used to exude art and true beauty. These fixtures truly add to

inner architecture of Grand Central. These chandeliers are a true accessory to this grand architecture known as Grand Central Terminal. Now I do have to say that when I look at these chandeliers, it's like looking at mini versions of the sun indoor, their brightness is incredible and their beauty is almost unthought of. There's one thing though, I remember while we were on the tour, one of my fellow classmates did say a few of the chandeliers look like faberge eggs and honestly I do agree with her since they aren't completely round but have an oval touch to them. Then you have the chandeliers that are in vanderbilt hall, to me they seem like a construction drill made of light, its design is quite elegant which actually flows very well with the architecture and design of the ceiling of vanderbilt.



The following photo was taken with Snapchat, what we have here is a photo of the Whispering Gallery which is in front of the Oyster Bar. The tiles of the whispering gallery are known as Gustavino tiles named after the patented material and methods of the spanish tile worker Rafael Gustavino (Black). My experience with this gallery was incredible and creepy all at one time. To stand in one corner and have someone stand in the opposite corner and talk into the corner and hear them so clearly was a complete shocker. But it is one thing that i will continue to show so many others. This gallery is an

amazing one cause I find it incredible that based on how the tiles are made and positioned causes sound to vibrate across the tiles from one end of the room to the next and not through it. I'm so use to cheap materials that absorb sound rather than deflect it, this space alone surprised me and changed my perspective on architecture and its importance.



The first picture is of a light fixture we are walking past during our tour through Grand Central, once again I see even through this one single light bulb, the bragging of the buildings grand use of electricity is revealed even thru this one light fixture. Thought this is only one light fixture, just notice how they draw you in. around this one bulb is gold molding that is so tremendously crafted, this molding allows the light to bounce off of it and makes this one bulb shine so much brighter.

The second picture is of the Vanderbilt's family crest, which is the acorn, the presence of their family crest is strategically placed throughout the terminal and I find that quite interesting, what I also find



interesting is that the Vanderbilt's family crest is the acorn, since the acorn is quite common in New York, which tells me that this family must have felt that they are the heart of New York. Their pride and confidence is evidently on level that could be compared as almost extraterrestrial or extreme thoughts of grandeur. If you pay attention to the center of the photo and you will see the acorns, when i look at them I feel the two acorns that still has the seed embedded in it signifies the movement through everyday life and surviving through it all and then you have the acorn with the missing seed which to me signifies the halting of process and then going through a rebirthing process to become new.

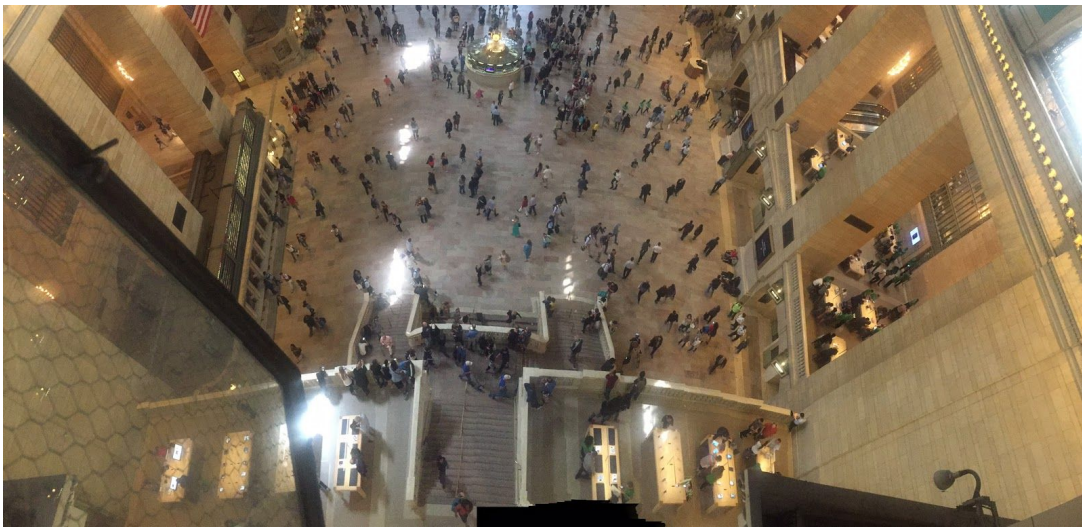
## DISCOVERIES

Basement Daniel Bruckner  
13 story below street lvl  
doesn't exist on 4100's plans  
750,000 ppl come thru here daily  
Feb 1913  
nation largest national rr  
98% on time performance  
#3 in the world  
Roll out the red carpet started  
at GCT  
After WWII RR station/terminal  
were worn down/out + exhausted  
1976 landmark conservcy act  
96-98 sold <sup>MTA</sup> 1/8 million in bond to  
public to restore GTC  
one of the most successful shopping ctr  
in USA  
\$12500/day to rent  
light bulbs naked to show that the whole  
terminal is electrified

Secret train station created in  
1930's for FDR to travel into  
NYC. Still protected til this day  
Secret service protects it  
FDR train still there  
Rotary converted in secret room if ppl  
walk into room with sand they would kill  
them on site  
hole in ceiling because of rocket  
times on board is incorrect for  
safety reasons  
Secret staircase in information  
booth.  
Clock made on each side of precos  
opel  
Painting on ceiling is backwards  
a mirror image of the congregation

The following two photos are of my notes from my classes Grand Central Terminal tour, these notes

display major discoveries I made of terminal which surprised me and even caught my attention. One of the most influential facts from the first photo is that Grand Central is 13 stories below street level (making it the deepest basement in the city). To be honest, I always thought Hunter College had the deepest basement in New York but now I know that GCT officially has the deepest basement, I'm just amazed at the fact that they can dig so deep into the ground and not cause an issue. In the second photo the most influential fact is the secret train station created for FDR traveling into the city and still being currently used for the purpose of the US presidents traveling into NYC safely and secretly. I spoke of this with others and they couldn't understand why the president would need to come into NYC by train if he has his own personal plane. But personally I find it incredible that the president can sneak into NYC by coming into a terminal that is the second most visited place in NYC.



A major discovery for me, is learning the fact that there was now an Apple store located on the east side of the terminal and it was wide open to the public with no doors or protective walls. It being there in such a historical site, shows me that the future is embracing the past and vice-versa. And thru this picture you see it all, the history and grand architecture surrounding the people of the present as they venture about these ancient hall ways and in the bottom of the photo you see technology slowly creeping in to leave its mark on the world.





In the following picture, I discovered a chair with the Grand Central Terminal symbol on it, so I decided to take the photo with Snapchat upside down to reveal the secrets of the symbol, which symbolizes the original primary source of the Vanderbilt's money which is boating. The GTC on top of each other as such reveals to be an anchor, when viewed upside down. The designers of this crest were very slick and quite innovative with this design. To create the logo of GCT with an inverted

logo of something else is quite intelligent and almost illuminati/mason like; hidden meanings in all of its structures. This logo alone makes me wonder about what other secrets lie architecture and engineering of this grand and marvelous structure called Grand Central Terminal.

## KEYWORDS

Vanderbilt

Grand Central

Grand Central Terminal

New York City

Architecture

Electricity

Gustavino

Whispering Gallery

Main concourse

Chandeliers

Snapchat

Molding

Secrets

Deepest Basement

President's Train

Technology

Lights

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand\\_Central\\_Terminal#Restorations\\_and\\_expansion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Central_Terminal#Restorations_and_expansion)