

Learning Places Summer 2016

SITE REPORT #1

Grand Central Terminal



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INTRODUCTION

Grand Central Terminal has a rich history that continues on up to this present day. The original property had gone through three main different stages of reconstruction as well as part of its name establishing its purpose. From Grand Central Depot to Grand Central Station and finally to Grand Central Terminal, it is active in serving the public and is established as the #2 tourist attraction in the United States. The site has been and is still used in making movies. Included in this site report are screenshots of movies made in four different decades displaying similarities and differences that is visible to the eye.

SITE DOCUMENTATION (photos/sketches/notes)



Our Tour Guide Danny. Dan had taken our group on a special tour that included areas of the Grand Central Terminal not available to the public. Thank you Danny for an awesome experience!



“Grand Central Murder” – a combination of a comedy and mystery movie released in 1942. This image shows that throughout time, the chandeliers remain to be the same as for the most part of Grand Central Terminal. Scrutinizing this image, one can find subtle differences. The differences purposely is not pointed out, this I will leave as a task for the viewer.



“North By Northwest” – a 1959 action thriller directed by the legendary Alfred Hitchcock starring the famed actor Cary Grant along with Eva Marie Saint and James Mason. It is a thriller based on a tale of mistaken identity.

These two particular screenshots displays the original lamps attached to the ticket booths. Sadly these lamps were replaced. It is clearly visible that the ticket booths also

went through some type of transformation. Looking closely at the first image, one can see the words “Tickets” and “New York Central System” inscribed over the booths.

Rock Hudson... Seconds



“Seconds” – 1966 film Starring Rock Hudson is a Science Fiction Drama entered in the Cannes Film Festival.

Large portions of the movie “Seconds” had been filmed in Grand Central Terminal in 1966. This particular image shows the announcement boards that displayed arrival and departure information.



“Superman” – released in 1978. This screenshot shows Lex Luthor’s (character played by Gene Hackman) hideout underneath Grand Central Terminal. The image displays an exit to 45th and 46th Streets and the Hotel Roosevelt. I don’t think this area is open to the public. It is believed to be located in one of the lower levels of Grand Central Terminal not open to the public. Since I am not sure, a plan for a future adventure is being made

on my behalf for more discoveries.



It is rumored that this area does not exist. I believe that is does since the inscription on the wall below the arch, “To Lower Level Baggage Delivery,” is clearly visible. The room is interestingly round-shaped. The lighting fixture does not coincide with the ones normally scene on the Main Concourse floor.



Grand Central Depot first opened On October 9, 1871. This image depicts the first original building of Grand Central.



Grand Central Station after 1899.

In 1898 a new facade was erected around the 42nd Street depot and three stories were added. Architect: Bradford L. Gilbert. In 1900 the interior was remodeled to combine separate waiting rooms into one. Architect: Samuel Huckel, Jr.

Between 1899 and 1900, the main building of Grand Central was transformed and renamed “Grand Central Station.”

Grand Central Terminal first opened on February 2, 1913. This amazing building still stands and is actively

in use by commuters. It is especially attractive to tourists from all around the world. As a Brooklynite, I have visited this site many times. As a teenager, with several friends, I have played hide and seek within this building many times until it became too dangerous to do so.



It has been quite a while since I last visited Grand Central Terminal. I had taken this image when I arrived on my first site visit. It stills takes by breath away when I see it. The bare lights bulbs makes the Terminal shine even in rainy weather. As I stood across the street taking photos, I have seen the expression on the tourists faces when they first laid their eyes on this grand structure. The eagle is monumental and one can't help but to admire it.

The upper level roadway coincides with the design of the building. The distinctive Ovolo seen coincides with the structure's design.

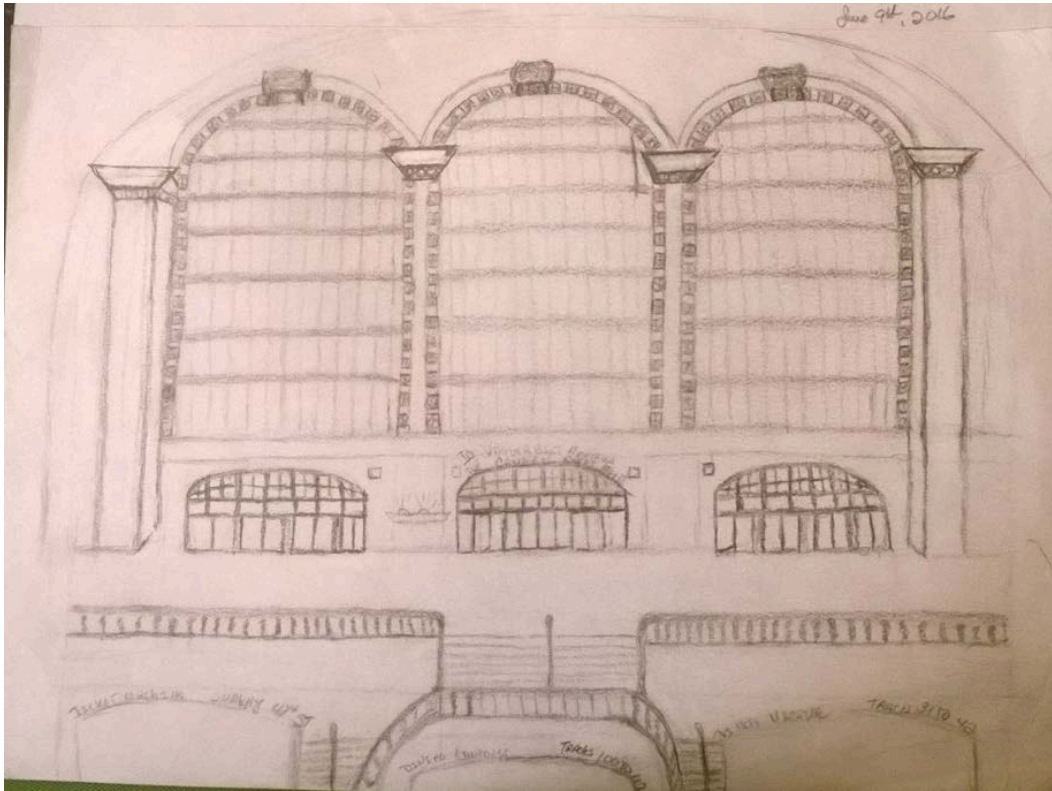


The Beaux-Arts Style gives a feeling of traveling back into time. The statues of Hercules, Mercury and Minerva remains intact. Jules-Félix Coutan lives on forever through his creation.

Inside Grand Central Station, the Main Concourse as seen from above. What a great view!



My first attempt of drawing one of my favorite features of Grand Central Terminal. Professor Montgomery gave us about ten minutes to sketch on the spot during our first visit to the site.



On our second visit, after the official tour, I decided to sit on the steps of the grand staircase in the attempt to the draw once more.

DISCOVERIES

I have discovered that the original benches in the waiting hall have been removed leaving “rib” impressions on the tiled floors. The waiting room has been converted into one big hall used occasionally for exhibits. The trimmings found in various parts of the buildings are either scrolls, rosettes, acorns or a combination of all. The acorns which can also be seen on top of the four-faced clock in the middle of the main concourse is a symbol of the Vanderbilt family. The Vanderbilt’s motto is as follows “From the acorn grows the mighty oak.”

Upon entering Grand Central Terminal through the 42nd Street entrance inscribed on the walls appear these marvelous words:

“To All Those Who With Head Heart And Hand

Toiled In The Construction Of This Monument To
The Public Service This Is Inscribed”

The chandeliers are dipped in 24 carat gold. The constellations on the ceiling was always there, it is not a new painting as I once thought (before restoration, the ceiling was black as can be seen in one of the images above). Grand Central Terminal has an echo room, a phenomenon made possible by Guastavino Tiles or its “vault” design or maybe a combination of both and is located in front of the entrance of the Oyster Bar. So many things discovered including some secrets, but as the saying goes, some secrets are meant to be kept as secrets.

KEYWORDS

Cornelius Vanderbilt - United States financier who accumulated great wealth from railroad and shipping businesses (1794-1877)

Neo Classicism - A revival in the 1700s and 1800s in architecture and art, especially in the decorative arts, characterized by order, symmetry, and simplicity of style.

Guastavino Tile - is the "Tile Arch System" patented in the United States in 1885 by Valencian (Spanish) architect and builder Rafael Guastavino (1842–1908). Guastavino vaulting is a technique for constructing

robust, self-supporting arches and architectural vaults using interlocking terracotta tiles and layers of mortar to form a thin skin, with the tiles following the curve of the roof as opposed to horizontally (corbelling), or perpendicular to the curve (as in Roman vaulting). This is known as timber vaulting, because of supposed likeness to the skin of a timbrel or tambourine. It is also called "Catalan vaulting" and "compression-only thin-tile vaulting". Guastavino tile is found in some of New York's most prominent Beaux-Arts landmarks and in major buildings across the United States.

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

Preservation - the act or process of returning something to its original condition by repairing it, cleaning it, etc.

Conservation - the things that are done to keep works of art or things of historical importance in good condition

Reconstruction - is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

Beaux-Arts Style - Beaux-Arts architecture (/ˌboʊˈzɑːr/; French: [bozaʁ]) expresses the academic neoclassical architectural style taught at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris

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

Cornice - an ornamental molding around the wall of a room just below the ceiling

Ovolo - a rounded convex molding, in cross section a quarter of a circle or ellipse.

Balustrade - a kind of low wall that is placed at the sides of staircases, bridges, etc., and that is made of a row of short posts topped by a long rail

Pediment - A pediment is an element in classical, neoclassical and baroque architecture, and derivatives therefrom, consisting of a gable, originally of a triangular shape, placed above the horizontal structure of the entablature, typically supported by columns. The tympanum, or triangular area within the pediment, was often decorated with relief sculpture depicting scenes from Greek and Roman mythology or allegorical figures

Scrolls - The scroll in art is an element of ornament and graphic design featuring spirals and rolling incomplete circle motifs, some of which resemble the edge-on view of a book or document in scroll form, though many types loosely represent plant forms such as vines, with leaves or flowers attached. Scrollwork is a term for some forms of decoration dominated by spiraling scrolls, today used in popular language for two-dimensional decorative flourishes and arabesques of all kinds, especially those with circular or spiraling shapes.

Lunette - something crescent-shaped, in particular. An arched aperture or window, especially one in a domed ceiling.

Rosette - a disk of foliage or a floral design usually in relief used as a decorative motif