

Foundations of Identity

The buildings which we demolish depict the narrative of our cities

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AR2A011 Architectural History

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ABSTRACT //

The work is a discussion regarding the direct link between the demolished architecture of New York City in the 1900s and the societal, economic and environmental shifts of the time. Its aim is to convey that our built environment must be able to evolve to meet the needs of the community in which it serves or be replaced by buildings that better align with those needs. New York City, like most older American cities, has changed drastically over time, but the ‘city that never sleeps’ has a fascinating history that continues to shape and mold its modern identity. Throughout the late 1800’s and early 1900’s the city grew at an exponential rate with both global and local historic events acting as the driving forces for the continuous urban change. Although this constant shift towards the new brought forth an appreciation for the technological advancements in the entertainment and hospitality industry at the time, it caused a drastic shift in the economic and societal landscape of businesses throughout the city.

The work will focus on three cases in New York City that share five key criteria, in order to demonstrate relevance and applicability within the framework that is presented. The work will define the word icon in terms of the architectural field. Therefore, the focus will be on defining the word iconicity, as a derivation of the word icon. The next chapter will focus on the methods and ideology that were utilized in order to select the three cases that are included in the study, while also conveying the characteristics that allow for them to be identified as iconic structures. The work will then address some of the relevant historic events that caused the drastic shift in the economic and societal landscapes of the 1900’s and touch base on the direct impact each event posed to the three cases. Lastly, the work will look at present day site conditions and discuss any relevant legacies that have touched modern day communities through the act of the demolition.

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01 INTRODUCTION //

In today's society many have a lack of understanding for what was, as the urban context continuously evolves in order to serve the needs of its community. As such, in the realm of lost architecture, buildings are immortalized through photographs, drawings and patrons' stories that have been recorded for posterity. While they can no longer be experienced in the physical world, their impact can still be recognized by their influence on the technology, laws and architectural styles that are often still present today. Cities are living entities, and monumental pieces of architecture are torn down for the new, often to the immediate or longer term detriment of the community which they serve. The work does not aim to criticize the act of demolition, as it is a natural process that must occur in order for the urban context to continue its progression into the future. Although demolition has the ability to bring forth a sense of innovation and improvement to the quality of life through the encouragement of growth it has also served as a form of vandalism to the distinct identity of historic cities throughout the world.

These demolished buildings, however, do have the opportunity to tell a compelling story about the ever-changing purpose of buildings within our field of architecture, sometimes far better than those that have been preserved, whether by chance or design, ever could. The buildings chosen in this proposal serve as examples for the depiction of the city of New York. They were chosen not only because of their architectural and/or engineering triumphs, but also because they changed how New York approached architecture and building even after they were demolished. The buildings of yesterday were crucial stepping stones for the architectural and engineering landscape of today's New York City.

When considering why urban environment's change, the work will draw inspiration

from some of the key ideas of Darwin's "Theory of Natural Selection". The theory of evolution is defined as "descent with modification", the distinct perspective that species must evolve over time to meet challenges to their continued survival due to changes in their environment or pressures from competing organisms - allowing for the rise of new species while sharing a common ancestry. The key principles of the theory are the understanding that natural selection revolves around the evolutionary process by which a species' advantageous traits and characteristics are preserved and unfavorable or disadvantageous ones are discarded. Although the theory is concerned with the basis of animal evolution, we are able to apply similar thinking to our built environment. Our buildings must have the ability to continuously evolve to better address the ever-changing societal, environmental and economic shifts of our world, with the architect acting as the hand that guides the evolution based on the prevalent thinking of the time. The work aims to convey the direct relationship between the societal and economic shifts of the time with the demolition of some of the most iconic buildings in the city of New York and how these structures have continued to influence New York architecture even after they were demolished.

In order for the analysis of the chosen structures to be based on their impact as iconic pieces of architecture within a historic urban context, several key questions have been created to guide the work and the reader in an informative and structured manner. Each society develops their own definition of the term 'iconic architecture' based on the historic events that have cultivated their urban landscape. As such the term will be defined in relation to the city of New York in order to form a direct connection with the research prompt. Throughout the 1900's several historic events took place that were crucial to shaping the economic and social landscape of New York City and that had a direct impact on the structures studied in this

work. As such, the work will dive deeper into the issues facing New York City and the changes that are noted as being a direct reflection of those affairs. The events directly contributed to the lifecycle of the urban fabric of New York City, with hundreds if not thousands of structures being demolished and replaced with the new. What then distinguishes the three pieces of architecture that have been selected as important artifacts in the historic and cultural identity of the city? The work will put forth its input on the matter through the surveying and investigation of several forms of sources, with the aim of providing the reader with the required factual and theoretical evidence to grasp the concept of what was, what is and its impact on society, community and history.

02 Defining Iconic Architecture //

Within our built environment there are structures that are created with the intent of being icons, some achieve iconicity while others have iconicity thrust upon them. The question that is asked within this chapter is what are the parameters by which the status of iconicity is measured in the case of architecture. In order to understand the requirements for such an evaluation, we must first define the term icon. London School of Economics professor Leslie Sklair defined the noun in terms of the field of architecture as follows “Iconicity in architecture is defined in terms of fame and special symbolic/aesthetic significance as applied to buildings, spaces and in some cases architects themselves” (Sklair, 2010 : 03) In essence, there might be a derivation of the status through several studied building attributes, such as the contrast of the structure with their surroundings, the structure's transcendence of scale or the structure's symbolism of the cultural times in which they were constructed.

Often, buildings that are tasked with standing in for the city's identity must establish a certain sense of differentiation within the urban context, whether within scalarity, architectural style or programmatic integrity. A building must hold unique characteristics in relation to its neighboring structures, as even the most distinct buildings would lose their power if set amongst a whole neighbourhood of similarly planned structures. As such, many researchers classify their understanding and findings for defining iconic architecture within three categories - form, functionality and location. The work will therefore follow a similar approach in the classification of architectural icons, through the analysis of the architectural style and historic urban context of each structure.

03 Methods and Architectural Analysis //

03.1 Methods for Case Selection

The work is based on the selection of three iconic New York City buildings within the historic urban landscape, the historic Pennsylvania Station (more commonly known as ‘Penn Station’), the Hippodrome theater and the Astor Hotel. The selection of these three architectural feats were based on a set of criteria in order to ensure relevance and applicability in the research conducted. The criteria for the building selection are as follows: The structures chosen to be a part of the study must have been demolished in the mid 1900’s in order for the historic events taking place at the time to hold relevance in the structures timeline. The structures are to be classified as a form of iconic architecture as well as serve New York’s citizens as a public building. The three cases are to be constructed in the beaux arts architectural style that was customary at the time. Lastly in order for the cases to show relevance within their historic urban context they must all be within one mile of one another.

The criteria above were utilized in order for the work to include case studies that have several comparability to ensure appropriate conclusions. The work will study these cases through a selection of analysis, beginning with the structure's form, its functionality as well as its location both in terms of the case studies as well as the current conditions on site. The work will also study relevant historic events that had taken place during the 19th century, with a direct correlation to the case's ultimate demolition. The work aims to compile a cohesive and conclusive understanding between the societal and cultural occurrences in relation to the urban landscape.



Figure 3.01
Mapping of the Cases
New York
Graphic by - Christina Soentiono

03.2 Case Architectural Analysis - Penn Station

During the first half of the twentieth century, the original Pennsylvania Train station was deemed as a palace in the middle of Manhattan, one of New York City's grandest landmarks. Locally known as Penn Station, it opened its doors in 1910 with the intention to complete the NYC Grand Central Terminal. The beaux-arts style station was designed by the renowned American firm of McKim, Mead and White. Through an Architectural Digest interview conducted with New York City architect Micheal Wyetzener, a thorough look into the architectural qualitative and quantitative attributes of the station are vocalized.

Penn Station takes inspiration for several of its noble design characteristics from iconic European architectural structures. Visualized in the exterior facade of the station, the six doric columns that adorn the pedestrian access point are based on the spacing of Bernini's Piazza in

Rome. Similarly, the station's waiting room, which extrudes above the remainder of the structure, takes its inspiration from the ancient baths of Caracalla in Rome. A closer look into the architectural qualities of the station's great waiting hall conveys the impressive magnitude of the space which is composed of steel vaulted coffered ceilings that are clad with travertine and distinctly frame the station's entryways. The train shed is similarly composed of vaulted steel ceilings but is alternatively clad with small panes of glass, creating an incredible sky lit space. The structure was incredibly advanced for its time in terms of its usage of steel as a building material, as the beautifully laced framework was composed of several small pieces of steel that were riveted together. Overall, the structure presents itself as a grand expression of New York City's public transportation system, and through its position within the landscape, its formal facade and renowned grandiose interiors and distinct waiting rooms, it was deemed an architectural icon for the city.

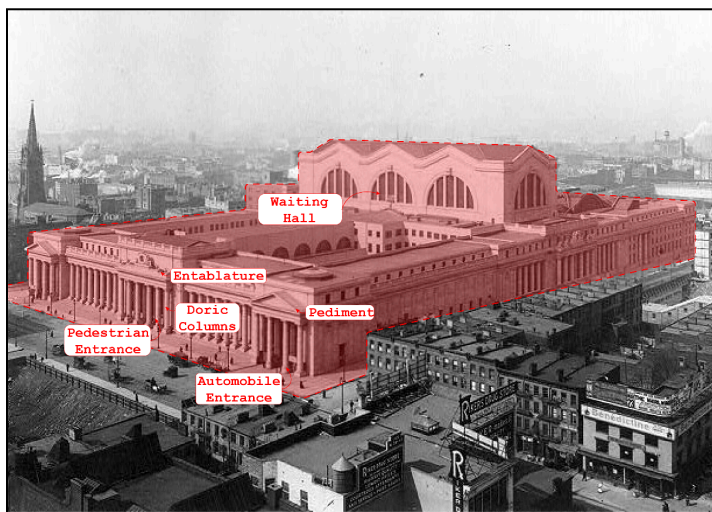


Figure 3.02

Penn Station Waiting Hall

New York

Graphic by - Christina Soentiono

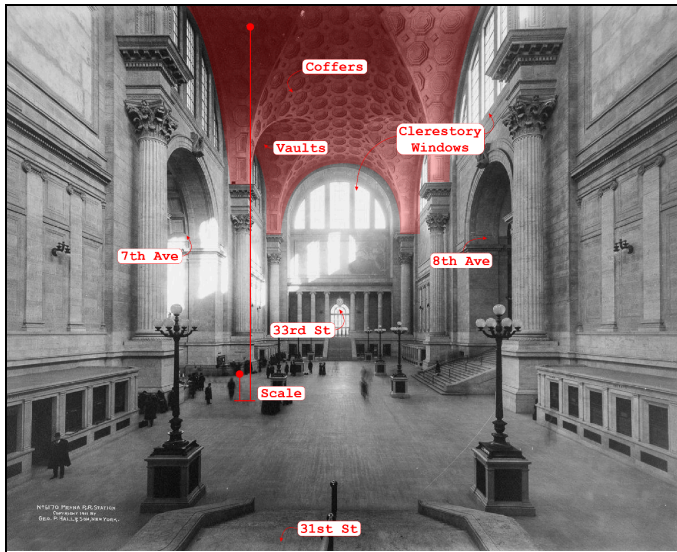


Figure 3.04
Penn Station Train Hall
New York
Graphic by - Christina Soentiono

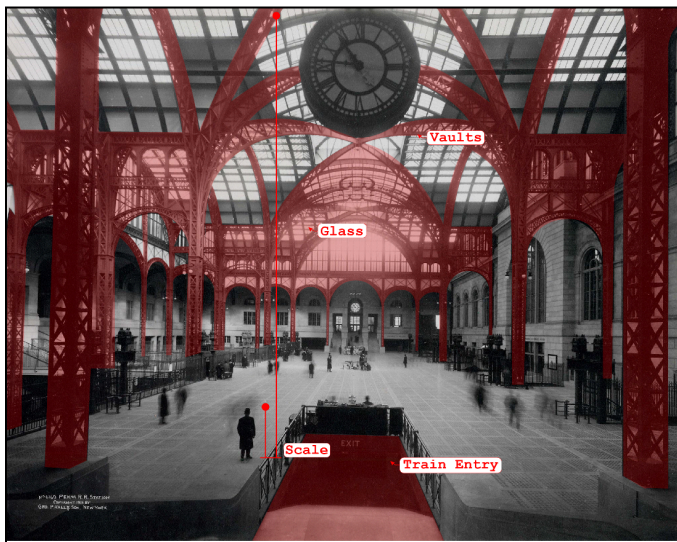


Figure 3.05
Penn Station in Urban Context
New York
Graphic by - Christina Soentiono

03.3 Case Architectural Analysis - Hippodrome Stood

Billed as one of the largest theatres in the world, New York's Hippodrome stood tall on Sixth Avenue between 43rd and 44th Street. The theatre seated approximately 5,200 patrons with a stage twelve times larger than any Broadway stage today and opened its doors in 1905. The Beaux-Art style theatre with Moorish revival influences was designed by the renowned architect J.H Morgan for Frederick Thompson and Elmer Dundy. After the Luna Park opening on Coney Island, there was a giant leap in the understanding of entertainment in the city. The

theatre radically changed the landscape of the area, with its intent to bring the pleasures of an amusement park to the inner city, while providing admission costs that attracted the masses.

Described by its owner as an enlarged playground that allowed adults to return to their childhoods, by extending the qualities of Coney island into the overall building design, the theatre was an architectural marvel that was a spectacle of its time. Within a year, the Hippodrome was constructed and topped with domes that were remarked as being the largest domes in the world after those adorning the pantheon in Rome. Although the entire block-long facade was an electrical billboard that lit up the entire street, the theatre's value lay in its interior landscape that was an almost distorted view of reality. The Hippodrome's interior architecture was a series of scenarios with the intention of surprising the patron, through the use of towers, varied stage devices and a dome of the stalls. The theatre also encompassed a fully sized circus for the use of elephants and horses, as well as a clear water tank that could be raised and lowered from below the stage for use during swimming and diving shows. The theatre's overall size was at an incredible scale, giving it the ability to house all sorts of spectacles and determining its value as the face of New York City entertainment.

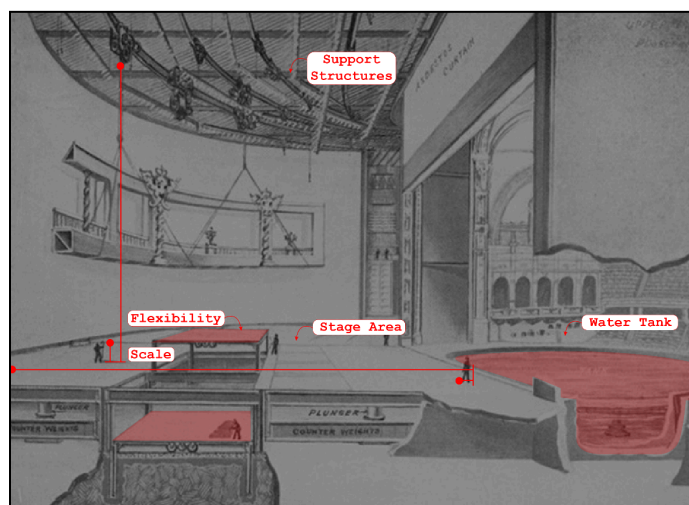


Figure 3.06
Hippodrome Inner Workings
New York
Graphic by - Christina Soentiono

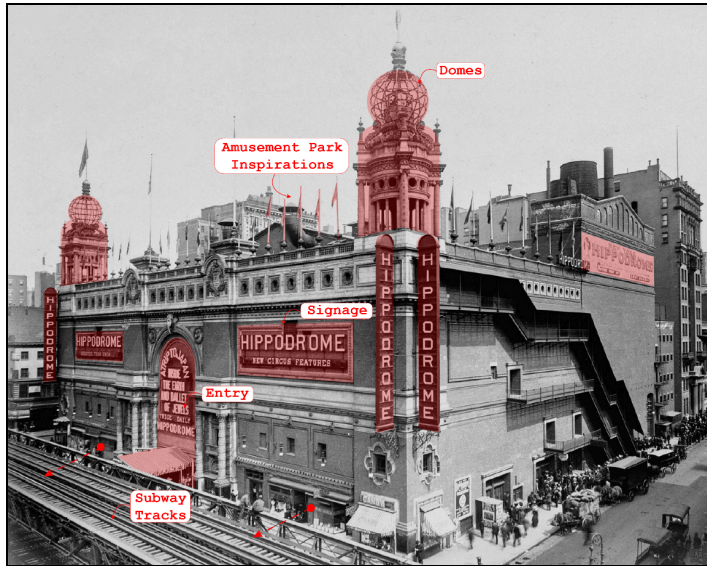


Figure 3.07

Hippodrome Train Track Facing Facade
New York

Graphic by - Christina Soentiono

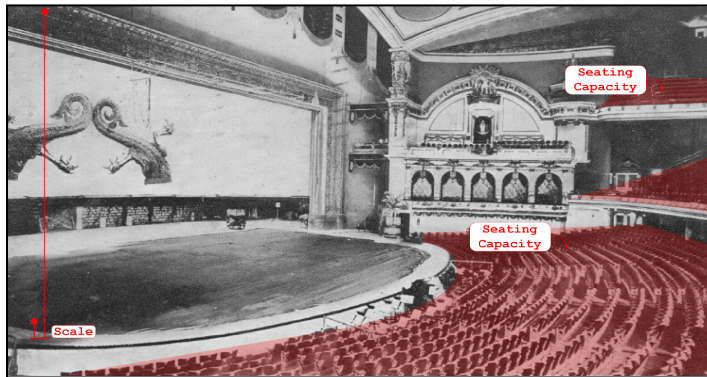


Figure 3.08

Hippodrome Interior Seating
New York

Graphic by - Christina Soentiono

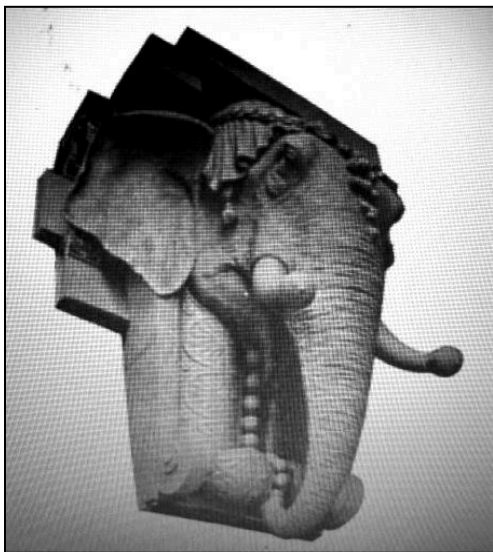


Figure 3.09

Facade Element

New York

*Graphic by - American Architect and
Architecture(1905)*

03.4 Case Architectural Analysis - Astor Hotel

The Astor hotel was deemed as one of the first luxury hotels to mold the landscape of today's Time Square. The hotel's plans were conceived in the late 1800s, as an 11 story hotel spanning approximately 35,000 square feet, during a time when the area was simply acres of undeveloped farmland. The aim of the Astor family was the innate transformation of the area, but the subway was still a few years away from extending up Fourth Avenue and the surrounding plots were far from developed. At the time, efforts had begun to bring social and economic growth to the area, firstly through relocation of the New York Times newspaper operations to a newly developed tower in the neighbourhood, then as new theatres with magnificent auditoriums beginning to occupy the district and finally with the mayor of New York City at the time being persuaded to construct a new subway station, which is still known today as Times Square.

The Beaux arts style hotel was designed by architects Charles W. Clinton and William H. Russel whose design imitated various features of the hotel's predecessor located on 34th Street. The hotel opened in 1904 as patrons walked through its grand doors in awe of the architectural qualities of the space. The structure was enclosed within a green copper mansard roof, with intricately themed public rooms, vast ornate ballrooms and a roof garden that spanned the hotels entire width and length. In a matter of no time, several elegant hotels began taking over the area and the tide of the wealthy and socially elite came flooding through the area of Times Square. Sophisticated crowds moved swiftly from their nightly social events along the theatre district onto the rooftops of the grand hotels to celebrate what was becoming the new epicenter for glamour, fashion, music, art and politics. Hotel Astor stands as a catalyst for the development of Times Square into one of New York City's most famous landmarks as a vibrant, lively and international tourist and entertainment hub.



Figure 3.10
Astor Hotel Cross Section
Post Card
Image by - WorthPoint

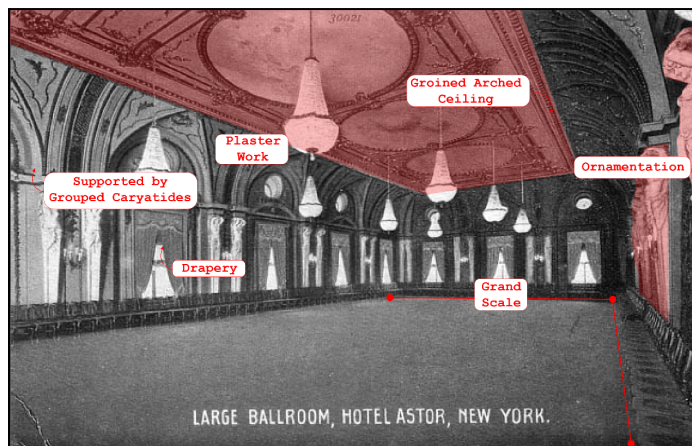


Figure 3.10
Astor Hotel BallRoom
New York
Graphic by - Christina Soentiono

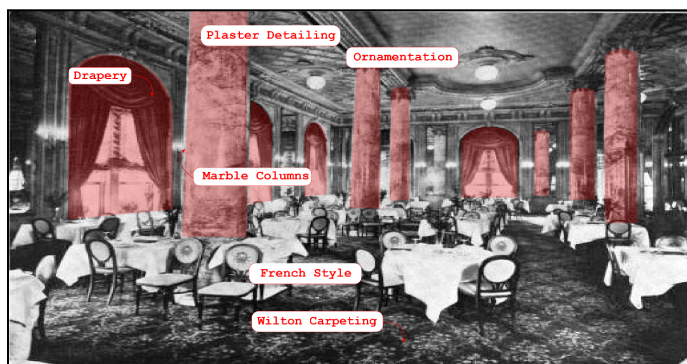


Figure 3.11
Astor Hotel Womens Dining Room
New York
Graphic by - Christina Soentiono

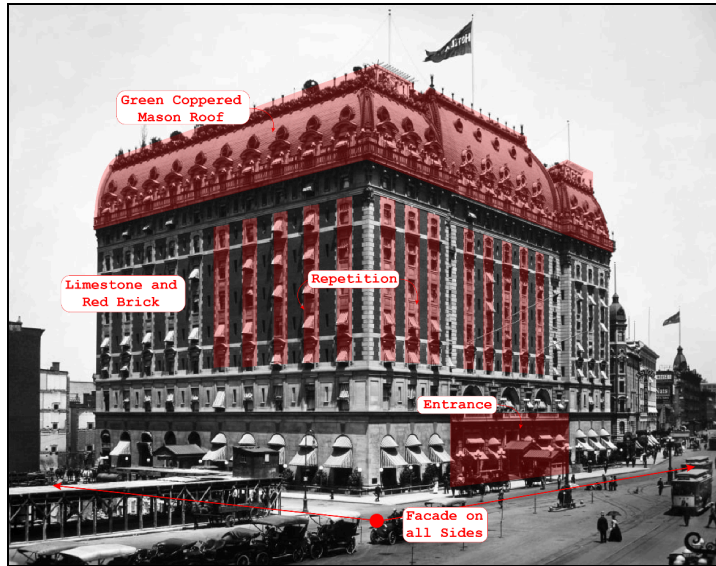


Figure 3.12
Astor Hotel in Urban Context
New York
Graphic by - Christina Soentiono

04 Shaping of the Economic and Social Landscape in the early 1900's //

New York underwent a remarkable transformation in regards to its architectural landscape in the early 1900's. This period is remarked as the groundwork for the city's rapid urban development and cultural evolution. Architecturally, the period heralded with construction of some of the most iconic and significant structures, alongside the city's vibrant cultural scene, the innovative spirit fueled and enriched the ever evolving urban fabric. The historic events that follow in the paragraphs below, have a direct correlation to the demolition of the cases studied within this work.

05.1 The Incredible Change the United States Underwent

With the turn of the century the world underwent a great deal of change. The Great War started in 1914 with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, with over 30 nations declaring war. The conflict that followed saw unprecedented levels of carnage and destruction, as it was the first true war between industrialized nations, and it went on until 1918. World War One, as well as leaving historians horrified by the scale of destruction, was classified as a war of innovation and led to major advances in weaponry and military technology, as well as advances in the manufacturing, chemistry, medical and communications fields.

The American homefront continued to see great impact in its economic and social landscapes throughout the early 20th century. The 'roaring' 20's came to a shuddering halt with the United States being consumed by the harsh economic crisis that came to be known as the Great Depression, starting with the Wall Street crash of 1929. The extreme bank

failures and high unemployment rates soaring through the country plagued the economic status of the United States through the 1930's. The depression began to weaken towards the turn of the decade after policies were drafted to assist in the nation's recovery by President Roosevelt. As the United States began seeing positive economic change in their status, the Second World War broke out in Europe in 1939.

The United States initially maintained their neutrality but continued to provide Great Britain with the supplies needed during the war, in turn causing a shift into a wartime economy for the nation. Employment opportunities became radically available in factories throughout the country in an attempt to fulfill the production of machinery required, and the United States began calling millions of men to duty after the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor precipitated the entry of the United States into the war and resulting in a further drastic shift in the social character of the country. The nation's labor force began using a number of individuals previously deemed unqualified, as well as millions of women entering the workforce at an unprecedented rate, many holding employed positions for the first time. The availability of jobs continued to expand at a steady rate throughout the duration of the war, resulting in the migration of African Americans to factories throughout the North and West. The changes within the nation's social system continued to shift, as a program agreement between the country of Mexico and President Roosevelt allowed for Mexican laborers to migrate to the United States in an attempt to fulfill the shortage of workers within the agriculture industry. The nation's labor force and military saw a great deal of transformation, bringing with it several social issues that plagued American society, such as racial tensions and discrimination. The United States alongside the rest of the world continued to undergo a transformation in both their economic and social landscapes while working towards a victory of the Second World War, which came to an end in 1945 with a radically different world

order than at the start of the century.

The historic events of the 20th century that altered the United States alongside the rest of the world, brought forth a great deal of advancement, not only in terms of military weaponry but also in everyday consumer goods. The 1900's churned out a host of ideas and inventions that changed the framework of our modern world. Everyday items such as instant coffee, the escalator or colored photography, were a result of major developments in technology and resources that have altered society to this day. Although all advancements have contributed to the betterment of society in their own respect, a number directly impacted the economic status of the cases studied within this work. Inventions such as the airplane, the gas powered car, as well as the air conditioner directly shifted the perspective of the American consumer. The American population began utilizing interstate highways and commercial air travel, while expecting a new set of standards in terms of accommodation and entertainment quality. The historic events that had taken place, accompanied by the continued force towards growth and innovation drastically impacted the social and economic landscapes of the nation.

05 The Leading Cause of Demolishment //

The world of the 1900's underwent a drastic shift through the historic events that swept through the economic and social landscapes of Europe and the United States. The events that took place in both continents brought forth a level of innovation that went on to drastically shape the world it left behind. Ultimately, resulting in an era of reconstruction of the New York City landscape through the demolition of various structures, including the three cases studied within this work.

05.1 Case Leading Cause - Penn Station

The Pennsylvania Railroad Station of New York City grew at a steady pace, as the Americans dependency on trains as a form of transport grew in popularity following its opening in the early 1900's. Train travel reached its peak in 1945 with over 100 million commuters passing through the grand station that echoed the great spaces of Ancient Rome. With the Second World War in the rear view of American society, the growth of air travel and automobiles began to reduce that reliance on trains. The average individual would utilize affordable air travel as a new form of commuting long distances, while utilizing the automobile for everyday transportation. The use of the railroad system declined, with Penn Station witnessing a deep plummet in ridership in the 1960's.

As these technological advancements began to eclipse rail travel, Penn Station fell into disrepair. The station's architecture, which was once praised for its opulence and grandeur that came to popularity in the Gilded Age, was now seen as simply an ungainly relic compared to the modern architectural approach of the 1960's. The growing fear among Penn Station's Leadership that the decline in rail travel was not a temporary trend, resulted in the demolition of the station's main structure and relocating all commuter traffic underground. The land that

Penn Station resided on was far too valuable at the time, the air rights were rented to a developer building a new entertainment arena. The granite columns and steel-vaulted ceilings that were once a symbol of New York City met their end on October 28th, 1963.



Figure 5.01

The Removal of one of Penn Stations famous eagles
Image by - The New York Times



Figure 5.02

The Station in Ruins
Image by - The New Historic Society



Figure 5.03

A Metal Structure was built over the tracks
amidst the Demolition.
Image by - The New Historic Society

05.2 Case Leading Cause - Hippodrome Theatre

For two decades, the Hippodrome was ranked as the largest and most successful theater in the city of New York. Its grandeur and magnitude would be an aspect that would not be replicated until the construction of the Roxy Theatre in 1927. While World War One was ongoing the Hippodrome housed an assortment of spectacles, complete with circus animals, diving horses and 500 member choruses. When the War came to an end the theatre made a drastic shift to presenting musical extravaganzas produced by Charles Dillingham, an American theatre manager and producer. The theatre went through a series of extreme running costs making it a perennial financial failure, with several attempts to revive the theater being unsuccessful.

The Hippodrome continued its operation based on a series of renovations, creating smaller stages for individual performers alongside the removal of the unique features that had come to be the theaters identifying elements. In the year of 1925, the Hippodrome underwent another drastic shift into presenting cinematic shows, an attempt to compete with the newer and more sumptuous movie palaces that had been constructed all along Times Square. The theatre sat in darkness until 1935 when it was leased for the spectacular musical of “Jumbo”, receiving favorable reviews but the reprieve lasted only five months due to the Great Depression. The theatre closed its doors to the patrons of New York on August 16, 1939 and was demolished that same year due to the escalating value of real estate along Sixth Avenue.

05.3 Case Leading Cause - Astor Hotel

Hotel Astor, a grand and opulent establishment in the heart of New York City hosted the socially elite for decades, but was ultimately not spared from the inevitable march of time. Hotel Astor was demolished due to a combination of factors that directly affected its viability

and desirability amongst New York City social circles. Hotel Astor was a catalyst for the development of Times Square, resulting in the expansion of urban development in surrounding areas. The once glamorous neighbourhood that housed the grand structure, gave way to newer, more vibrant areas in the city causing a decline in popularity of its location. As patrons shifted towards more favorable neighbourhoods the decrease in accommodation demand gave way to a decline in the hotel's revenue, increasing the difficulty for the hotel to maintain its once glorious persona.

As time passed, the hotel was left behind along with its outdated infrastructure, with unfavourable facilities and amenities. As the world came out of both World Wars and America began healing from the Great Depression that plagued its social and economic landscapes, patrons began shifting their perspectives and seeking out advancements in the fields of technology and art. The Astor Hotel lacked the capability to compete with the modern hotels popping up throughout the city, as guests began seeking state of the art facilities with contemporary designs. The hotel was unable to contribute to upgrading the hotel into the new era, the lack of investment in renovations and upgrades led to the noticeable decline in the hotels overall quality of stay. Hotel Astor's life came to an end, after almost six decades of operation, with its demolition in 1967.

06 Today's Reality //

The paragraphs below touch base on the current state of the sites in which the three cases studied within this work once existed. The aim of the paragraphs below is for the reader of the work to further understand the relationship between societal desires and the ever evolving urban fabrics. The work follows up on certain aspects of the three cases that still remain with the site, as some individuals still continue to recognize and celebrate the glory of what once existed before them.

06.1 Today's Reality - Pennsylvania Station

One of the most treasured stations in America met its end on October 28th, 1963. The decision for Penn station's demolition drew a number of picketers made up mostly of architects and designers in front of the structure to protest against its demise. The city's architectural community believed that the train station should have been saved regardless of the financial issues at the time, as it served as part of New York City's architectural heritage. Three years after the fall of the station, a law was passed in an attempt to ensure no other loss of any New York City landmarks that embodied and made up the sheer essence of the city's identity. The landmarks preservation commission ultimately came to save Grand Central Terminal and more than 30,000 other structures from similar fates throughout the city of New York.

In 1968, the present iteration of the arena that is Madison Square Garden was opened on the above ground portion of the terminal. The structure was considered an engineering marvel at the time, due to its circular shape and unique cable supported ceiling, which contributed to its distinct intimate feel. The construction of the arena forced the new station to be constructed completely underground. Today, Penn Station is the busiest terminal in the country, serving nearly 650,000 commuters each day. The overcrowded tunnels make it

difficult for one to imagine the glory of the old station, as the modern maze design is inadequate in herding commuters between corridors efficiently. Vincent Scully was quoted in the New York Times on February 12th 2012, about the differences between the iterations of Penn Station, “One entered the city like a god; one scuttles in now like a rat.”(Kimmelman). In an attempt to rectify the situation the government of New York has proposed a “rebuild” of Penn Station. The billion dollar project will form a connection to the current underground station while providing commuters with new points of entry, more tracks and a larger waiting space. The current projects are by no means a recreation of the romanesque architectural feats that once was Penn Station, but an attempt to transform the station into a world class facility, that improves the user experience.



Figure 6.01
Construction of Madison Sqaure Garden
Image by - Untapped New York City



Figure 6.02
Madison Square Garden Today
Image by - Getty Images



Figure 6.03
Penn Station Today
Image by - JetBridge Journal

06.2 Today's Reality - Hippodrome Theatre

The Hippodrome turned off its lights for the last time in August of 1939, with its complete demolition before the end of the year. The grand palace of theatrical and other spectacles that once lit up the entire city street was gone, and the barren lot sat empty, growing weeds and grass. In 1953, a five-story high office building was constructed in its place by Kahn and Jacobs, memorializing the past through the naming of the structure as the Hippodrome. The conceptual aspect of the building's function was extremely successful, causing the addition of three stories to the existing five in 1954. In the year of 1961, the same architects expanded the building again, through a major addition of a 12 story setback tower, in the same style as the existing now eight story building. The building underwent another drastic shift in its architectural style at the turn of the century, in order to create a modern building facade with clean lines, in an attempt to match the neighbourhood's architectural style.

Although the Hippodrome Theatre as a whole can no longer be experienced in the physical world, there are some aspects of its former glory that can be felt to this day. An image of the original theatre adorns the lobby of the office building in recognition of the building's historic significance. In 2010, the office building had to undergo a series of renovations to repair the central air system, when the excavation of the basement uncovered a 100 square foot patch of the original bricks that had lined the floor of the stage. The bricks, alongside a metal gaff with a wooden handle that was found, were carefully removed and saved. Today, patrons who visit the tower and find themselves in a lower level garage are still able to see evidence of the rich history of the building. Tucked away, behind a row of parked cars, there is an unassuming iron ring that has been affixed to the masonry for the past 119 years. The ring is a horse hitch that was utilized in the basement level stables of the theater that once stood there.



Figure 6.04
Hippodrome Building
Image by -
Hippodrome.com

06.3 Today's Reality - Hotel Astor

At the turn of the 1960's, the area around the Hotel Astor began evolving into a business district, encouraged by city officials' belief that the existing theatres had become obsolete and therefore encouraging the westward expansion of office towers. The plans to erect a 40-story office building on the site were first proposed in January of 1966, with the hotel officially closing its doors in June of 1966 and demolition of the structure began immediately. The rear of the structure was demolished first, due to the fact that the restaurant leasing the ground floor of the hotel held a lease that did not expire until 1967. The demolition of the entire structure was completed in February of 1968, due to numerous unforeseen circumstances with the structural durability of the hotel. Architects Kahn and Jacobs, proposed their fifty story tall office concept, made up of a stone and tinted glass facade.

As one of twenty three major office projects in the city at the time, One Astor Plaza, was named in memory of the Hotel Astor that once stood in its place. Today, the building is home to a number of companies renting out its floors as office facilities, as well as Paramount Global Studios occupying the entirety of the second floor, while the lower stories of the structure are commercial and retail spaces, with a large public passageway and lobby. The structure was also initially constructed to include two theaters, quoted by the president of the company Jerome Minskoff as "our way of paying the city back." A Broadway house occupies the third story of the structure to this day, while the basement cinema is now an event venue.



Figure 6.05
One Astor Plaza
Image by - Flickr

07 Conclusion //

The city of New York has always been eager to embrace the mantra of change and that was no different in the early 1900's, but that enthusiasm was based on the understanding that what was to replace a beloved building would most likely serve the city's needs better than its predecessor. The city of New York, alongside the rest of the world, underwent a series of changes both in its economic and societal landscapes, that were innately due to the severe historic events that engulfed the world at the start of the 20th century. As the world made its way out of the World Wars, society began chasing the advancements of tomorrow, with a drastic shift in the expectations of service in the transportation, entertainment and accommodation industries.

New York city was, like now, a buzzing mass of extremes and contradictions, with architecture both driven by and at the leading edge of the city's transformation. As such, the world of architecture was pulled and pushed to new extremes, resulting in some of the most iconic landmarks of their time, many of which, although demolished, continue to shape and mold the urban context of cities around the world. From the long acres of undeveloped land to today's New York City's iconic global crossroads, Times Square is an emblematic landmark of the city. The three cases studied within this work, molded and shaped the area into the vibrant, energetic, entertainment and leisure metropolis it is today. The structures, designed in Beaux Arts architecture with extravagant amenities, were a reflection of the city's optimism and wealth at the turn of the century and were a direct representation of the best the United States had to offer at the time, reflecting this in their patronage and popularity with the populace.

The traumatic events of the First World War, the Great Depression and the Second World War changed the character of the nation, pushing New York to the forefront as a world city. As

the scientific and technological advances changed society's expectations for transport, accommodation and entertainment, these buildings fell, at different speeds, from their lofty perches as the exemplars of their respective industries. They were replaced by other buildings that better reflected New York's new position in the world. When the three cases were demolished it marked a turning point in not only the societal impact it placed upon the community of New York City, but also in terms of the value placed upon architectural marvels. The study reflects back to the ideas presented by Darwin's "Theory of Natural Selection" and serves to provide examples of the direct correlation between the theory and the ever changing field of architecture. With the key principle of understanding that natural selection revolves around the evolutionary process by which advantageous traits and characteristics are preserved and unfavorable or disadvantageous ones are discarded, the work demonstrates the importance of having the means to maintain the desirability and modernity of a facility, incorporating the trends and inventions of the time. At the time of their demolition, there was a lack of appreciation for the building's architectural quality, seen as merely entities no longer serving their function for the patrons of the city. While today, we can look back with a heightened admiration for the historic landscapes of cities around the world, this is in turn based on all the built environments that have since been lost.

The City of New York has been a kaleidoscope tapestry of form and function since its earliest days, with the architecture reflecting the city's societal and economic realities at each stage of its development. The influence of the case studies has far outreached their physical existence, with the creation of the NYC landmarks preservation commission being in many ways directly attributable to the protests at the demolition of Penn Station, in many ways saving the architectural history of the city. All three buildings were a core part of the evolution of Times

Square into a world-renowned spectacle, as their grandeur allowed them to become symbols of grandeur in their respective programs. The buildings of yesterday were crucial stepping stones for the architectural and engineering progress of today's New York City.



Figure 7.01
Times Square 1919
Image by - Untapped Cities



Figure 7.02
Times Square 2017
Image by - Flickr

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