

From Glorious Gateways to “White Elephants” to a Mall and Museum:
Cleveland and Cincinnati Union Terminals, 1900 to circa. 1990.

by

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ABSTRACT

From Glorious Gateways to “White Elephants” to a Mall and Museum:
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The thesis focuses on the development, architecture, and adaptive reuse of the Cleveland and Cincinnati Union Terminals from a period of about 1900 to 1990. Both cities had plans for union terminals as early as 1903, but neither city had them until the 1930s. By the end of the Second World War, passenger traffic had declined significantly. Soon after, they became “white elephants” in need of adaptive reuse.

As early as the 1950s, ideas came about in both cities to reuse the terminals. However, it was not until the 1980s that anything with either terminal was done. In Cleveland, real-estate developers came up with the idea to create a mall, The Avenue at Tower City Center, out of the old union terminal. In Cincinnati, local museums needed new homes, so they created the Museum Center at Cincinnati Union Terminal.

The Avenue at Tower City Center in Cleveland, Ohio opened March 29, 1990 and the Museum Center at Cincinnati Union Terminal opened November 10, 1990. The twentieth anniversary of both adaptive reuse projects occurred last year in 2010.

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of the nineteenth and turn of the twentieth century, the railroad industry continued to grow in order to keep up with the increasing populations, as well as the booming industrial cities at that time. In order to keep up with the demand for passenger service, railroad companies built multiple stations that eventually congested the urban areas. The situation forced railroad companies and cities to come to some form of solution. Many times the answer was to build a union terminal that combined several different railroad companies. The Cleveland and Cincinnati Union Terminals were two of the last great union terminals constructed in the United States. Although the construction of the terminals came long after the boom of railway passenger service, Cleveland and Cincinnati were good cities in which to construct union terminals. It just happened that there were several factors working against the construction of the terminals until the 1920s.

Union terminals are often hard to describe, especially since there are many perspectives from which to look at them. A union terminal complex consisted of at least a union station, coach yards, engine terminals, maintenance buildings, signal towers, and most obviously railroad tracks. When passengers entered the union station, a myriad of services awaited them. These services, usually located in the headhouse, included a ticket area and baggage room, an information booth, restaurants, restrooms, telephones, newspaper stands, and some included newsreel rooms where travelers watched movies containing newscasts about world events. If travelers departed from a union terminal, they headed to the train concourse. Passengers at union stations with stub-end layouts

avoided stairs and ramps but had a long walk to board trains because of the way the concourse was situated. Through terminals provided an efficient way for passengers to board trains. Passengers boarded their train from a concourse perpendicular to the track orientation, so they just had to pass above or below the tracks and take either stairs or ramps down to track level.

Architecturally, union stations went through three phases after 1880. From 1880 until the 1890s, the fashion was to build railroad terminals in the Romanesque Revival style (Figure 1). Following the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, Neoclassical and Beaux-Arts became the preferred style, as they were the styles of the City Beautiful Movement, which swept America after the exposition (Figures 2, 3, and 4). The 1920s saw a transition from the Neoclassical and Beaux-Art styles to a more modern approach as European influences affected architecture in the United States. From the International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts in Paris in 1925, the Art Deco style appeared in railroad architecture (Figures 5 and 6). Essentially, a union terminal is a large complex serving massive amounts of people built in the most fashionable style of the time.¹

America was not always a host to grand railroad terminals. It took many years to build to that point. During the heyday of rail travel, people saw the railroad station as the gateway to the community as airports are now the gateways to cities. The railroad station did not have to be much. It could be a posted sign and platform to show people where the train would stop, a small depot, a union station, or a union terminal complex.² As the railroads and populations of cities grew, so did the need for larger railroad stations. The

¹ Kevin J. Holland, *Classic American Railroad Terminals*, (Osceola, WI: MBI Publishing Company, 2001), 9-15.

² Holland, 9.

small depot often turned into a large railroad station. By the 1870s, in places where the population grew to the point of being a major city, more railroad systems emerged and they built more railroad stations. The multiple railroad stations inconvenienced passengers because many passengers needed to get to the other side of town to catch their connecting train. Eventually, the multiple railroad systems built a union station, but more often than not, there were multiple union stations. One union station might have served two or three railroad systems, while another may have served three or four other railroad systems. Railroad companies had the union stations built to handle an expected number of passengers for the following decade, but often the predicted number of passengers was incorrect. In this case, railroad companies either built more union stations or built larger stations to replace the existing one. Union stations were convenient for passengers because they did not have to walk across town to catch the connecting train and they were convenient for railroad companies because they only had to maintain a few buildings.

By the 1890s, some cities had grown so large and had become so prominent as railroad junctions for passengers that they built union terminals. In some cities, a union terminal was a necessity because they had many union stations. For these cities, the multiple union stations were not inconvenient for travelers, but for the railroad systems and the cities themselves. When too many lines and stations crowded cities that needed more area for urbanization, city governments or members of the community proposed union terminals. Prominent members of the community formed terminal development companies to negotiate the construction of a union terminal. When all the railroad companies in a city agreed to share costs by building one station to accommodate several lines, union terminal companies formed to oversee the construction and operation of the

union terminals. Although union stations cut costs for railroad companies, union terminals cut costs even further because they no longer had to switch passenger cars between stations and could eliminate many structures within the city that cost a lot of money.

Although the union stations put most of the inconveniences into the hands of the railroads, the time it took to switch the cars between the union stations could be considered an inconvenience to passengers. It was especially important for railroad companies to reduce the amount of time taken to get passengers to their next destination because other modes of transportation began to compete with the railroad companies. The main modes of transportation competing with the railroads included motor coaches and automobiles.

By World War I, passenger service had already begun to decline in the United States and railroad companies built very few union terminals in the 1920s and 1930s compared to earlier decades. Two architectural firms, however, did well in the 1920s and 1930s. Alfred Fellheimer and Steward Wagner, an architectural firm based in New York, designed three union terminals in major railroad cities. In the mid-1920s, they designed Grand Central Terminal in Buffalo for the New York Central. In 1928, North Station in Boston, designed by Fellheimer and Wagner, opened for passenger service. Lastly, the Cincinnati Union Terminal was constructed from 1929 to 1933. This particular terminal was the culmination of the architectural firm's career as union terminal designers and one of the greatest highlights in the history of Cincinnati.

Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, an architectural firm based in Chicago, also designed two union stations and one union terminal in major railroad cities. In 1925, they

designed a union station in Chicago. From 1925 to 1929, the firm designed and completed the Cleveland Union Terminal and the Terminal Tower Complex. They also designed the Thirtieth Street Station in Philadelphia, which was completed in 1934. The Cleveland Union Terminal was not the firm's last project, but certainly one of their greatest. The Cleveland Union Terminal and the Terminal Tower Complex were not necessarily significant because of their architecture, but for their monumental size and use of space. The designers provided Cleveland with one of the greatest highlights in the city's history, as well as a symbol of the city's prominence as an industrial center.³

In the late nineteenth century, railroad building was at its peak with more than 40,000 depots. As of 1991 less than half of those existed. Since the Second World War, air and automobile travel heavily competed with rail travel, leaving many depots and stations useless. These stations are considered "white elephants," or properties "requiring much care and expense and yielding little profit," objects "no longer of value to its owner but of value to others," or "something of little or no value." Many of these white elephant stations are "abandoned," others are "demolished," and some are adaptively reused and/or restored. Adaptive reuse is basically giving "a new function [to] an old building." In many cases "extensive interior and exterior renovation are necessary." Restoration is "something that is restored; especially: a representation or reconstruction of the original form (as of a fossil or a building)." Urban stations and rural stations both have been adaptively reused, but people also have problems reusing either of these stations. In cities, the stations are so large that adaptive reuse seems and may be "financially

³ Brian Solomon, *America's Railroad Stations*. (New York: Gramercy Books, 2002), 4, 6-8; Brian Solomon, *Railroad Stations*, (New York: Michael Friedman Publishing Group, 2000, 1998), 48, 51, 55, 57; Janet Greenstein Potter, *Great American Railroad Stations*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1996), 39; Carroll L.V. Meeks, *The Railroad Station: An Architectural History*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995), 145, 121-132.

inconceivable,” especially when people consider that many are in need of extensive repairs before they can even think about adaptive reuse. Outlying communities with depots often lack the people with the “technical and financial resources necessary to complete successful reuse projects.” Fortunately, in cities, suburbs, and rural communities many groups wanted to preserve “historically and architecturally significant” depots and stations. The groups include city governments, preservation groups, and private companies. As is the case in Cleveland and Cincinnati, other cities have more than one group helping in the adaptive reuse of the stations. The groups realized that these stations can be converted into a variety of uses including “restaurants, shops, offices, transit centers, and museums.”⁴

Since the 1970s, there have been many stations adaptively reused in the capacities listed above. In Lincoln, Nebraska, developers created a bank building out of a station. A depot in San Antonio, Texas is now the “city employees’ credit union.” Fargo, North Dakota converted their station into a “senior citizens center and public offices.” Proponents of adaptive reuse turned a depot into “a tourist information center and chamber of commerce headquarters” in Savannah, Georgia. Developers in Livingston, Montana turned that city’s depot into a museum. In 1979, the St. Louis Union Station was purchased by “Oppenheimer Properties as a prelude to a \$135 million redevelopment. The structure was restored, hotel accommodation was reintroduced under Hyatt Regency management, and 160,000 square feet of retail space was created in the head house, Midway, and portions of the train shed.” A new light rail system also stopped at the St.

⁴ “White Elephant,” Meriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2010, Meriam-Webster Online, 30 May 2010 <<http://www.meriam-webster.com/dictionary/whiteelephant>>; “Restoration,” Meriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2010, Meriam-Webster Online, 30 May 2010 <<http://www.meriam-webster.com/dictionary/restoration>>; “Railroad Depot Acquisition and Development,” Information Series, no. 44 (Washington D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1991), 1.

Louis Union Station. On January 6, 1977, “Governor Godwin officially rededicated the [Richmond Union Station] as the permanent home of the Science Museum of Virginia.” This museum includes a planetarium and an IMAX theater. In 1992, developers rehabilitated the Jacksonville Terminal and it reopened “as part of the Prime Osborn III Convention Center.” In the early 1980s developers in Louisville, Kentucky turned their station into a bus hub, offices, and transit museum. A station in Nashville, Tennessee opened in 1986 “as the 124-room Union Station Hotel.” In Chattanooga, Tennessee, the station was “redeveloped as a Hilton hotel property and reopened in 1973.” It also has retail space, gardens and an electric trolley that they use as a parking lot shuttle. The St. Paul, Minnesota union depot was redeveloped in the early 1980s to hold office space and restaurants. It has also “hosted art and cultural events.” The Omaha Union Station has been used as the Western Heritage Museum since 1975. In 1999, the Kansas City Union Station reopened as ‘Science City at Union Station,’ a \$250 million project.⁵

Many stations are a prime location for redevelopment because most railroads built them within or near the “central business district.” The adaptive reuse possibilities listed above have proven successful already in cities across the country. Those stations not viable for “commercial development” can be used by “destination tenant[s]” such as government offices. While it is clear from a preservation and community standpoint that these stations can have new life after being adaptively reused, the railroad company also has a stake in what happens to the buildings.⁶

The decision for railroad companies to get rid of their depots and station is complex. On one hand, the land that the stations sit on still has value even though the

⁵ “Railroad Depot Acquisition and Development,” 2; Holland, 65, 97, 101, 107, 109, 116, 122, 126.

⁶ “Railroad Depot Acquisition and Development,” 2.

building has little value because it has been “fully depreciated” for tax purposes. Stations also have a high cost of maintenance, which is unjustifiable when it provides little to no “economic return.” Also, if they demolish the building there is a high cost. Lastly, reusing the building often means a “costly removal of asbestos” for the railroad company. While it is true that there are high costs and little value to the railroads to do anything with the building, it is also true that unused railroad stations have “intangible value.” If railroad companies donate extra railroad property to “agencies or organizations” willing to redevelop it, they can better their “public image and secure local goodwill.” It is important for railroad companies to interact positively with the community in which it operates because the city ultimately controls how fast the freight trains can go through town and what they can carry through the city.⁷

Railroads also face liability issues when donating stations that still have tracks that are in use, especially for high speed freight trains. There are, however, ways to lessen the risk to railroad companies. The new developers should add “fences or barriers that separate the tracks from the building.” If there is still passenger traffic, developers must provide a way for people to get from the “depot to the tracks.” The railroad company should “require the developer to carry adequate insurance to indemnify the railroad against risk.”⁸

Even though donated property goes into the hands of the new developers, the public often still identifies the building with the railroad. If the redevelopment is a success, it is a positive for the railroad companies and developers. If the new owner lets the property deteriorate before the adaptive reuse begins then it becomes a negative for

⁷ “Railroad Depot Acquisition and Development,” 2-3.

⁸ “Railroad Depot Acquisition and Development,” 3.

the railroad companies.

There are many options for acquiring railroad stations from the railroad companies. The optimal way to get the station is through donation because it allows developers to have more money to spend on the actual adaptive reuse and it gives the railroad company a way to reduce their taxes. Developers can also get the railroad station “through a bargain sale.” This costs the developers less money because they purchase the station at below market value. It also gives the railroad company a “tax write-off.” Another option is a negotiated sale price at estimated market value.

Outright ownership of the station by the developer is not the only option. Some railroad companies may be “interested in participating in the project, perhaps by retaining ownership and acting as landlord for the new user/tenant.” This is positive for all parties involved because it can generate revenue for the railroad company, either short-term or long-term, and it can help developers by “reducing the amount of capital and financing necessary” for the adaptive reuse project. There are other ways railroad companies and developers can save money when they own the station. If the station is on the National Register of Historic Places, they can receive up to “20% of the cost of rehabilitation” in tax credits. This is only the case if the owners are for-profit businesses.⁹ The government provides tax incentives for the rehabilitation of buildings by for-profit businesses because they are income producing properties that will generate revenue for them, such as income tax from employees and sales tax from purchases.

While it would be great to think that every station can be saved, the reality is that many are abandoned and left to deteriorate or they are demolished completely. It is also true that railroad executives do not make the decision to demolish a property “overnight.”

⁹ “Railroad Depot Acquisition and Development,” 3-4.

It should be the priority of someone in the community to think of ways to save these buildings and adaptively reuse them. If the station is in imminent danger of demolition, there are ways to “forestall demolition” in certain states and localities by having it designated as a landmark “while negotiations for purchase and reuse of the depot are pursued.”¹⁰ If the station receives landmark status and plans are being developed for it, railroad companies and cities are less likely to demolish the building.

This examination of union terminal development, architecture and adaptive reuse in Cincinnati and Cleveland is both a synthesis of existing popular and academic literature, as well as a unique study of the three topics as they relate to the Cincinnati and Cleveland Union Terminals. There is an interaction between union terminal development, architectural ideas, and adaptive reuse that academic historians have neglected in regard to both cities. Many authors touch on or focus their studies on each of these topics or some aspects of these topics, but they do not make all three a priority.

There are three types of studies related to Cleveland and Cincinnati union terminals: “Popular” books without proper citation for a general audience, theses and dissertations, and published works by and for academic professionals. John J. Grabowski and Walter C. Leedy Jr.’s book *The Terminal Tower Tower City Center: A Historical Perspective* is a popular work by respected historians. James Toman and Dan Cook’s book *The Terminal Tower Complex* is also a popular book. Both of these works serve a general audience and discuss the Cleveland Union Terminal. They are useful to historians because they give general readers information provide the impetus to produce something more academic with cited sources. There are also academic works that touch on the various themes mentioned above. The disadvantage of some of these books is that they

¹⁰ “Railroad Depot Acquisition and Development,” 4.

tend to focus only on the Van Sweringen brothers, who are important because of the role they played, but there is a lot more to building a union terminal than what the developer did and did not do. Such is the case with Ian S. Haberman's *The Van Sweringens of Cleveland: The Biography of an Empire* and Herbert Harwood's *Invisible Giants: the Empires of Cleveland's Van Sweringen Brothers*. Eric Johanessen goes a step further in *Cleveland Architecture: 1876-1976* by discussing the brothers' involvement in the terminal project, as well as the architecture of the complex.

There are very few studies about the Cincinnati Union Terminal, but all have a place and usefulness for a general audience and academics. Linda C. Rose, Patrick Rose, and Gibson Yungblut produced the only popular book about the Cincinnati Union Terminal. *Cincinnati Union Terminal: The Design and Construction of an Art Deco Masterpiece* is a decent study but it only skims the surface of everything about the CUT. Frances Crotty's "The Cincinnati Union Terminal and the Art Deco Movement" and Barbara Hahn's "Union Terminal: Businessmen, Railroads and City Planning in Cincinnati, 1869-1933" master's theses come the closest to achieving in two separate works what will be done in this thesis. Carl Condit's work *The Railroad and the City: A Technological and Urbanistic History of Cincinnati* is the most important study about rail transportation and its affect on the city of Cincinnati. All of these works are what should be combined in a case study of Cincinnati. These three works about Cincinnati examine the built environment, as well as the political, economic, and social factors that played an important role in shaping that environment and serve as a model for what needs to be done for Cleveland.

This thesis will look at the union terminal development and architecture of the

Cleveland Union Terminal. It will also examine the union terminal development and architecture of the Cincinnati Union Terminal. Lastly, it will look at the adaptive reuse of both the Cleveland and Cincinnati Union Terminals. While it is often hard to make union terminal development, adaptive reuse, and especially architecture palatable for all, it is hoped that this thesis will accomplish that at the very least. Ultimately, this thesis is an academic work that can be read and enjoyed by academics and non-academics alike.

CHAPTER ONE

The concept of a railroad station on Cleveland's Public Square originated with the need for a terminal for Oris Paxton and Mantis James Van Sweringens' Shaker Heights rapid transit line. The city planned for a union station on the lakefront in the 1903 Group Plan, which voters approved in 1915. However, only three of the seven railroads wanted to use the lakefront station for passenger use. The Van Sweringens' rapid transit station developed into a stub end terminal for the rapid transit, Baltimore and Ohio, Wheeling and Lake Erie, and Erie railroads, which was approved by the Cleveland City Council. Discussions about the two stations continued during the United States' involvement in the First World War, but nothing came of the projects. In August 1918, the Van Sweringens' organized the Cleveland Union Terminals Company and created more elaborate plans for the union station on Public Square. The plan received much attention and caused much debate and controversy among proponents and opponents of the project. The debate about the Public Square Station went on throughout the 1910s and early 1920s with many people changing their opinions and a few people remaining steadfast in their opposition. These debates hampered progress for several years, but the result was a union terminal complex developed by two men that completely altered the city's urban landscape.

From the 1850s to the turn of the century, there was a large increase in the number and size of cities, which led to the rise of American metropolises. The railroads and the industries it supported often wreaked havoc on the urban landscape forcing many residents and retail districts outward from the city's downtown. The development of the streetcar system in the 1870s allowed citizens and businesses to move away from the city's center; over time these citizens and shops moved further away into suburbia.

Cleveland was no different from other rising metropolises in this respect. In fifty years, from 1850 to 1900, the population of Cuyahoga County rose from 48,099 to 439,120 people. The value of products manufactured in Cuyahoga County also rose during this time period from \$883,924 to \$156,760,354.¹ The railroads had the most profound effect on the city's landscape. The city allowed the railroads to build wherever they wanted because railroads and the industry it supported brought great economic prosperity. The tracks and facilities associated with the railroads altered the terrain of the city and the industry that followed created more problems by polluting the environment. While railroads used the lakefront for much of Cleveland's industry, some of the railroads began entering the city from the south and industry moved from the Flats, the floodplain of the Cuyahoga River which separates the "high plateaus on which the city stands," to areas surrounding Public Square.² The only way to escape the encroachment of railroads and industry was for the citizens and businesses to move outward from the downtown area. The railroads congested the city and people continued to move farther out to avoid the pollution of the railroads and industry. It was not until after 1900 that a concentrated effort was made to control this growth through city planning, but by that point, people were already moving outwards to suburbs. One such suburb was Shaker Heights; the diaspora from Cleveland eventually brought six of the seven city's railroads into one passenger station on Public Square, allowing freight facilities to center on the

¹ The population and manufacturing data for Cuyahoga County in 1850 and 1900 can be found at the University of Virginia Library Historical Census Data website.
Fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/

² "The Flats," *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, Case Western Reserve University, <<http://ech.cwru.edu/ech-cgi/article.pl?id=F3>> (26 March 2011).

lakefront once again.³ While freight facilities never left the lakefront area altogether, the freight and passenger traffic would be distinctly divided between the lakefront and Public Square.

The city of Cleveland had reform-minded leaders, as well as citizens concerned with the physical growth of downtown and in particular, Public Square and the lakefront. In 1895, the city began to think about grouping buildings together in a central area, largely because of the influence of Chicago World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, and the encouragement of the Cleveland Architectural Club. The Club sponsored two competitions for the grouping of buildings, one in 1895 with little result, and one in 1898. In January 1899, Charles F. Olney introduced a resolution to the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce to appoint a Grouping Plan Committee. The 1900 Group Plan adopted by the Chamber of Commerce showed five buildings along an east/west axis with a railroad station to the northwest of the mall.

At the turn of the century, Cleveland was not a well laid out city, nor did it have many architecturally significant buildings. It had some magnificent houses along Euclid Avenue and some beautiful buildings, but the town suffered from a lack of planning and years of grit and grime from the growth of industry. Not only was the city suffering from a poor environment, but also because of corruption by political machines. The physical and political image of Cleveland changed when Tom Loftin Johnson, a reform leader, presided as mayor from 1901 to 1908. Cleveland's government was set up under the Federal Plan, which provided a city government similar to the federal government's with a system of checks and balances. Also in this plan was a cabinet of people who worked

³ Gerlerner, 185, 193-194, 244; Edmund H. Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis* (Cleveland: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1964), 97, 102, 148, 150.

under the mayor. Tom Johnson was a proactive mayor who sought to include people from both the Democratic and Republican parties, as long as they had the same goals. Mainly, the goal was to clean up Cleveland and help its citizens through the elimination of slums, revitalization of the lakefront, and creation of a civic center. In many ways, he sought to improve the quality of life of his constituents by opening up the city parks that had signs saying to keep off the grass, ridding the streets of garbage, and providing public bathhouses.

With all of these reforms for the improvement of the city, it comes as no surprise that Tom Johnson helped initiate the Group Plan, which beautified downtown Cleveland. In 1902, the Cleveland Institute of Architects and the Chamber of Commerce presented the Ohio Legislature with a bill to authorize the formation of a Group Plan Commission. The bill passed and Governor George K. Nash approved Johnson's appointment of Daniel Burnham, who was the lead architect at the Chicago Exposition, as well as John M. Carrere, and Arnold Brunner to the commission. The Group Plan fit nicely with the city's goals to eliminate slums, revitalize the lakefront and create a civic center. The Group Plan Commission presented its recommendations to Johnson on August 17, 1903, which included the five buildings along an east/west axis with a court of honor and the railroad station due north of the buildings instead of northwest. This railroad station sat along the lakefront, where there were many existing railroad tracks. The construction of the buildings in the Group Plan was completed after Johnson left office. Though he did not have much to do with the Group Plan after special legislation passed, it would not have happened without his help and that of other reform-minded individuals.⁴

⁴ Eric Johannesen, *Cleveland Architecture: 1876-1976* (Cleveland: The Western Reserve Historical Society, 1979), 71-76; Carol Poh Miller and Robert A. Wheeler, *Cleveland: A Concise History, 1796-1996*

The Group Plan was a conscious effort to provide some form of city planning. This Group Plan was one of the most comprehensive and most thoroughly completed plans of the time. The railroad station to the north of the group of buildings proved to be the most difficult task to complete. Both city officials and railroads in Cleveland approved of the station to be built on the lakefront. In a referendum vote in November 1915, the citizens of Cleveland also approved the union station.⁵ However, the completion of a union station for passenger use was delayed by World War I. By the end of the war, the Van Sweringen brothers had a different vision for the city.

Oris Paxton and Mantis James Van Sweringen were born April 24, 1879 and July 8, 1881, respectively, to James Tower Van Sweringen and Jennie Curtis on their family farm in Wayne County, Ohio. The brothers had three siblings including Herbert C., Edith and Carrie Van Sweringen. The children's mother died in 1883. Not long after, James Tower moved to Cleveland. The sisters took care of the family, while the brothers went to school. The brothers attended the Bolton School and Fairmont school, where they attained an elementary level education. Since the family was poor, all three brothers had to work after school. The Van Sweringen brothers had a paper route in the Shaker Plateau. In 1894, all three brothers worked for Bradley Chemical Company. O.P. Van Sweringen wanted something more, so he left the company on his twenty-first birthday, taking his brother M.J. with him. They began purchasing tracts of land in the old Shaker

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 107-108; Eugene C. Murdock, *Tom Johnson of Cleveland* (Dayton: Wright State University Press, 1994), 174; Thomas F. Campbell and Edward M. Miggins, *The Birth of Modern Cleveland, 1865-1930* (Cleveland: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1988), 293, 301, 305-309.

⁵ "Approach Station by Way of Mall," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 18 June 1914, n.p.; "Permits City to Plan New Depot," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 22 April 1915, n.p.; "City and Railroads Concur on Land Trade and Lake Front Extension," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 10 July 1915, n.p.; "First Official Move is Made for Big Depot" *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 31 August 1915, n.p.; "Railroads Unite to Back Station" *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, ca. September 1915, n.p.

settlement and continued to do so as fast as they could get the financing. Eventually, they had enough land to develop what is now known as Shaker Heights. The Van Sweringen brothers had a way of finessing people into investing in their enterprises and, it was said, “They made others, through their own deep-seated enthusiasm, catch their inspiration and their vision.”⁶ The Shaker Heights development led them to other ventures, including the creation of a railroad empire and the development of the Terminal Tower Complex.

The development of Shaker Heights directly affected the future enterprises of the Van Sweringen brothers, or some could say that their future enterprises affected Shaker Heights. The development of Shaker Heights presented the brothers with a challenge. John J. Stanley, president of the Cleveland Railway Company, would not provide transportation to and from Shaker Heights unless the brothers had enough riders to make the route profitable. On the other hand, the brothers could not get people to buy property in Shaker Heights unless there was transportation to the city proper. The brothers’ solution was to build their own rapid transit line along Kingsbury Run. The Van Sweringens proceeded to buy property along Kingsbury Run for the rapid transit line and four acres on Public Square for a station. On July 18, 1911, the brothers organized the Cleveland and Youngstown Railroad Company to construct an electric railway along Kingsbury Run to take passengers to Cleveland from Shaker Heights. In October 1911, they applied for a franchise, which council approved without any controversy because the project would greatly benefit Cleveland. In 1913, the brothers formed the Cleveland Interurban Railroad and made a deal with the Cleveland Railway Company. Essentially, the brothers’ owned the property and Stanley’s Cleveland Railway Company operated it;

⁶ “The Van Sweringens – A Vision! The Terminal!,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 29 June 1930, Union Terminal Section, p. 4.

however, the line did not go into downtown.⁷ It was important for the railroad line to extend into downtown so that the line could go completely from Shaker Heights to Public Square. The successful or failure of the Van Sweringen projects depended on it.

The brothers' rapid transit did not go downtown, nor did they have the financing to bring the line to public square. By this time, the Van Sweringens were associated with Alfred H. Smith, president of the New York Central, through the purchase of his sister's farm in Shaker Heights. Smith desperately needed better freight facilities for the New York Central, so he turned to the Van Sweringen brothers, who had a broad charter under their Cleveland and Youngstown Railroad line. Essentially, the New York Central would get a new freight facility on Broadway and Orange Avenue under the guise of the Cleveland and Youngstown Railroad, and the Van Sweringens would get a rapid transit line between East 91st Street and East 34th Street bringing them one and one-half miles from Public Square. While there was virtually no debate over the Cleveland and Youngstown's franchise to build a rapid transit system, there was much debate and opposition to a freight station built by the railroad because the city felt that it was the idea of the New York Central and not the Van Sweringens. This business venture tainted the future developments of the Van Sweringen brothers because it created a greater distrust for the New York Central and tarnished the image of the brothers who Clevelanders viewed as men wanting to help the city.

The Nickel Plate Road, a railroad company operating under the auspices of the New York Central, owned the right of way for the last one and one-half miles of track

⁷ Ian S. Haberman, *The Van Sweringens of Cleveland: The Biography of an Empire* (Cleveland: The Western Reserve Historical Society, 1979), 20-21; "The Van Sweringens – A Vision! The Terminal!," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 29 June 1930, Union Terminal Section, p. 6.

and wanted too much money for usage rights. Yet again, Alfred H. Smith played a vital role in the development of the rapid transit line to Public Square. In 1915, the Interstate Commerce Commission warned the New York Central that they operated too many parallel railroad lines. One of the parallel lines was the Nickel Plate Road. Smith saw an opportunity to sell the Nickel Plate Road to the Van Sweringen brothers, who would not want to hurt the New York Central's freight business. The New York Central officially sold the Nickel Plate Road to the Van Sweringen brothers on July 7, 1916.⁸ The deal worked out nicely for both sides. The New York Central got rid of the Nickel Plate Road and did not have to worry about the ICC warnings, and the brothers got the right of way necessary to take the rapid transit line downtown.

By 1915, the development of Shaker Heights and its rapid transit line to downtown was well underway, but they still needed a station for the rapid transit line from Shaker Heights. The Ohio legislature passed the Myers Bill in April 1915, which allowed the city to consider plans for a union station on Canal Road used by the Baltimore and Ohio, Wheeling and Lake Erie, and the Kingsbury Run transit that had steam locomotives, transit cars, and freight cars entering it. The union station was to be a part of the Van Sweringens' developments in the area bounded by Ontario, Prospect, and Canal Road, which also included storage facilities, warehouses, and a hotel.⁹ While the development of this piece of land was being considered for use as a union station for the Baltimore and Ohio, Wheeling and Lake Erie and rapid transit lines, major railroads finally came to an agreement with the city concerning the lakefront property used by several railroads, and the placement of a union station on the north end of the mall as

⁸ Herbert H. Harwood, Jr., *Invisible Giants: The Empires of Cleveland's Van Sweringen Brothers*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 21-53; Haberman, 23.

⁹ "Permits City to Plan New Depot," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 15 April 1915, n.p.

proposed in the 1903 Group Plan.¹⁰ The New York Central and the Pennsylvania Railroads supported the lakefront station. It looked as though the town would have two more union stations. Discussions continued about both union stations, but the United States' entry into the First World War prevented the railroads and city from constructing either station.

By 1918, promoters of the Cleveland Union Terminal no doubt made convincing arguments for the union station to be located on Public Square because the city council passed a new ordinance introduced by the Van Sweringens providing for a union station on Public Square, though no one stopped supporting the idea of a lakefront station. The ordinance allowed the railroads to “install new connections and facilities to change, modify or discontinue the routing of freight and passenger trains, so as to permit convenient connection with and access to the facilities of the terminal company.”¹¹ Before any work could begin, the ordinance and plans had to be approved by the United States Railroad Administration, which took over the railroads in 1918, the citizens of Cleveland, and the ICC under the Transportation Act of 1920.

The approval of the project by the U.S.R.A. proved to be the easiest aspect of the project. In September 1918, Alfred H. Smith, acting as regional director of the United States Railroad Administration, approved of the union station on Public Square. Smith provided considerable cooperation about time limits for agreements between the Cleveland Union Terminals Company, the railroad companies, the Railroad Administration and the city, which Smith said would protect Cleveland if the citizens did not approve the union station. Although he knew that there was a possibility of the

¹⁰ “Railroads Union Unite to Back Station,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, ca. September 1915, n.p.

¹¹ “Promoters Modify Depot Ordinance,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 18 September 1918, n.p.

proposal's defeat by the citizens, he asserted that the station was necessary for the "continued growth of Cleveland," as well as the city's ability to serve as "an important gateway to the East and West."¹² The county's population was steadily growing. In fact, it grew by 306,070 people between 1910 and 1920 alone.¹³ The need for a union terminal was imperative for the county's citizens alone. It was also imperative because many people travelled through Cleveland and connecting to their next train in one station would be much more convenient.

The conflict that ensued regarding the Public Square station had multiple components. On one hand, people were more concerned with the power given to the railroads and terminal company by the ordinance and disruption to Public Square than the project itself. On the other hand, people debated the advantages of the lakefront station under the 1915 ordinance and the new proposal for a union station on Public Square. Prior to the election, property owners on streets to be vacated for construction protested the street closings because they limited access to the Flats. One councilman pointed out that there was no time limit on the construction of the passenger station in the ordinance and the impression was that the freight facility improvements were more of a priority than the passenger station. This meant there was no guarantee that the city would have the passenger station on Public Square any sooner than the lakefront station approved in 1915. O.P. Van Sweringen asserted that the freight facilities did not have priority. It was just that the federal authorities would not allow expenditures for public travel since the country was still at war.¹⁴

¹² "Station Plan Approved by U.S. Official," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 21 September 1918, n.p.

¹³ The population data for Cuyahoga County in 1910 and 1920 can be found at the University of Virginia Library Historical Census Data website. fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/

¹⁴ "Station Plan Approved by U.S. Official," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 21 Sept. 1918, n.p.

The debate continued over the ordinance in subsequent months and became more heated as Election Day neared. In December 1918, the members of the City Club held discussions about the Public Square station. Peter Witt and Morris Black were particularly against the idea. Witt contended that the city's rights were not properly protected in the ordinance. Black asserted that the railroads built one station after another, each one being bigger and more elaborate than the previous and each one reaching full capacity. According to Black, Cleveland was not a "one station town," especially if the city would outgrow it and it would create a public "nuisance."¹⁵ Presumably upset about the Van Sweringen's business deal with the New York Central for the Broadway and Orange Avenue freight facility, W.G. Lee, president of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, was quick to point out that Alfred H. Smith was again president of the New York Central.¹⁶ Throughout the debate over the ordinance, the Cleveland Union Terminals Company was willing to make changes in the ordinance to please the city, as long as they did not hurt the progress of the project.¹⁷ The ordinance and the powers it gave to the terminal company (mainly meaning the Van Sweringens) led city lawyers to plan a lawsuit to stop the public from voting on the matter in January 1919 because the election would result in the misapplication of public funds. The Cleveland Engineering Society opposed the ordinance because its passage meant the city would lose its rapid transit rights. However, O.P. Van Sweringen had already agreed to give more control of the rapid transit system to the city.¹⁸

¹⁵ "Attack Square Depot Plan at City Club Meet," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 15 December 1918, n.p.

¹⁶ "Attack Square Depot Plan at City Club Meet," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 15 December 1918, n.p.

¹⁷ "Depot Promoters Seek to Satisfy," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, ? December 1918, n.p.

¹⁸ "Lawyers Plan Suit to Halt Station Vote," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 18 December 1918, n.p.

A few days before the election there was a special debate held in the Grays Armory between representatives of the Cleveland Union Terminals Company and the citizens' union station committee. Attorney William H. Boyd debated for the Van Sweringens' interests, and Common Pleas Judge Robert M. Morgan and Councilman E.H. Krueger, chairman of the committee studying the ordinance, debated for the opponents. The Cleveland Federation of Labor campaigned for the passing of the ordinance.¹⁹ County Surveyor William A. Stinchcomb felt that the Public Square station plan was the "most comprehensive one ever worked out for the benefit of Cleveland," however, he opposed the ordinance because it did not "protect the public's interest in the lakefront and grant[ed] a public utilities monopoly" to the Van Sweringen brothers.²⁰ The public utilities monopoly concerned Stinchcomb because of the way the interurban lines were going to be charged for using the terminal and because the Van Sweringens wrote the ordinance so that they would not have to show their ledgers to the state public utilities commission. The public's interest would not be represented because the ordinance provided that the arbitrators could charge the city up to fifty million dollars for the cost and maintenance of the terminal regardless of other railroad systems using it. Essentially, not have to show their ledgers. He was also upset that the ordinance allowed the Cleveland Union Terminals Company to use the land above the terminal for the Van Sweringens' real estate development.²¹ The use of air rights above the terminal for private enterprise played a decisive role in future decisions about the Cleveland Union Terminal project.

¹⁹ "Boyd vs. Morgan in Station Debate," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 2 January 1919, n.p.

²⁰ "Points Defects in Station Franchise," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 4 January 1919, n.p.

²¹ "Points Defects in Station Franchise," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 4 January 1919, n.p.

Despite all of the debate and lawsuit, the election still took place on January 6, 1919 and the citizens of Cleveland approved the ordinance.²² The controversy, however, was not over. The ordinance called for all of the railroads in the city, as well as the rapid transit line to use the union terminal on Public Square and to agree to use it by January 6, 1920. The railroads included the Baltimore and Ohio, New York Central, Pennsylvania, Big Four, Nickel Plate Road, Wheeling and Lake Erie, and Erie. In November 1919, the Big Four and New York Central officially agreed to use the terminal. Unofficially, the Erie, Nickel Plate Road, and Wheeling and Lake Erie agreed to use the terminal and it seemed likely that the Baltimore and Ohio would also use the terminal. The Pennsylvania railroad was “sympathetic” to the public square terminal, but they had until January 6, 1920 to decide. The Van Sweringens wanted them to use the terminal as they planned to start construction in 1920, but they would continue with or without the Pennsylvania. The city’s law director, W.S. Fitzgerald, said that if the Pennsylvania did not join the plan the Van Sweringens could ask the council to pass an amended ordinance that would become law in forty days if no one initiated a referendum.²³ On December 1, J.J. Turner, first vice president of the Pennsylvania, sent a letter to city council stating that the railroad would not join the others in using the Public Square passenger station.²⁴ With just thirty-six days until the railroads, city and terminal company had to come to agreement, the amended ordinance necessary to permit continued development could not become law before the January 6, 1920 deadline. If the city council did not approve the amendment to the ordinance so that the agreement would be in order by January 6, the Cleveland Union Terminals Company stated they would not build the station.

²² Haberman, 39.

²³ “Union Station to be Started Early in 1920,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 26 November 1919, n.p.

²⁴ “Pennsylvania Will Not Join in New Depot,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 2 December 1919, n.p.

The Cleveland Union Terminals Company was able to continue with the project without the Pennsylvania railroad because the city council's joint depot committee voted "to treat the amended ordinance as an emergency measure" instead of a regular ordinance. Interestingly, an opponent of the original ordinance, James R. Hinchcliffe, wanted to go ahead with the amended ordinance and project because Clevelanders "want[ed] action" and the Van Sweringens had a "great constructive plan." The same night the committee also dismissed their secretary, William G. Clark, because he went to J.J. Turner of the Pennsylvania with an alternative plan for the railroad to keep their Euclid and East 55th Street station for a future rapid transit line built by his company or the city. Since he was acting as a railroad promoter for his own company they did not want him on the committee, but Clark pointed out that it was even worse that O.P. Van Sweringen was chairman of the City Plan Commission.²⁵

On July 11, 1920, the Transportation Act of 1920 took effect and the terminal company and railroads had to have approval of the project from the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC). As was the case during previous years, the struggle for the Cleveland Union Terminal continued locally. The approval of the project by ICC brought the issue to the federal level and the debates also continued there. In February 1921, the New York Central, Big Four, and Nickel Plate Road, as guarantors of the terminal, applied to the ICC for a Certificate of Public Convenience for authority to build and use the terminal, as well as purchase corporate stock of the Cleveland Union Terminals Company.²⁶ The ICC hearing began on April 19, 1921 in Washington D.C.

Meanwhile, in early April 1921, the city council wanted to investigate the

²⁵ "Clears Way for Station Legislation," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 24 December 1919, n.p.

²⁶ Haberman, 41.

progress of the public square depot.²⁷ The Wheeling and Lake Erie also decided to protest the station because it could be built cheaper at the lakefront.²⁸ In May 1921, C.C. Townes, opponent of the project and city council president, wanted the law director, Fitzgerald to draft an ordinance to repeal the ordinance for the Cleveland Union Terminal. He was concerned that the terminal company was not making timely progress. The council did not know if the progress made so far was because of the Cleveland and Youngstown project or the Cleveland Union Terminals Company. Walter E. Cook, chairman of the committee investigating the project's progress, felt that drafting a repeal ordinance was "unnecessary and possibly embarrassing."²⁹

There was finally a concentrated effort on the part of the citizens of Cleveland when in July 1921, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* published an article insisting that the ICC allow the interested parties to build the Cleveland Union Terminal on Public Square. The citizens and all railways in town except the Pennsylvania approved the project, yet Peter Witt, a local politician, convinced the ICC not to approve it. It was incomprehensible how it took only four members to defeat the project when there were eleven members on the ICC.³⁰ Newton D. Baker, former mayor of Cleveland and former Secretary of War under Woodrow Wilson, appeared on behalf of the New York Central. Peter Witt was the only Cleveland citizen that attended the meeting to fight against what he called a 'fraud on the public.'³¹ The official ruling was made on August 12, 1921 with the ICC refusing to allow the Cleveland Union Station Terminal Company to issue sixty million dollars in bonds to construct the Cleveland Union Terminal. In its ruling, the ICC stated that they

²⁷ "Asks City Inquiry on Depot Project," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 12 April 1921, n.p.

²⁸ "Ready to Reply to Depot Foe," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 16 April 1921, n.p.

²⁹ "Repeal of Grant for Depot Asked," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 24 May 1921, n.p.

³⁰ "Citizen Demand Station-on-the-Square," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 20 July 1921, n.p.

³¹ "Project for Union Station Rejected," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 17 August 1921, n.p.

questioned the Van Sweringens' use of air rights, which was inconsistent with building the terminal for the benefit of the city. They also questioned the cost and method of financing the project.³²

The city and the Chamber of Commerce petitioned for a new hearing because the ICC ignored evidence for the construction of the terminal on Public Square, saying that the city needed the terminal built by the Cleveland Union Terminals Company and the opportunity to build the terminal would never come again. Peter Witt said he would ask the ICC to come to Cleveland for the rehearing because he believed that the New York Central did not want the commission to come to the city and see the project. He also expected that the ICC would not come to Cleveland.³³ At a Lions Club meeting, Peter Witt “declared war” on the Public Square station project saying he would fight it in the state courts if the ICC reversed its decision. He threatened to go as far as the Supreme Court if he lost at the state level. He bought one share of stock in the New York Central, Union Trust Company, and the Nickel Plate Road to demand access to their records. Witt said, ‘I’m in this fight to win ... and I’m going to win. This depot on the square, which is a New York Central project solely, will never be built.’ He proceeded to plead for the Pennsylvania and New York Central to build the lakefront station under the 1915 contract where thirty million dollars had been spent already on public buildings for the Group Plan.³⁴ The ICC granted a rehearing by the full membership of the commission rather than the finance division, which refused the New York Central, Big Four and Nickel Plate Road a “certificate of public convenience and necessity” to allow them to build.

³² Harwood, 69; Haberman, 41-45. This particular segment is confusing because newspaper reports in July speak as if the ICC made its ruling, but then go on to make another ruling in August. The secondary sources do a very poor job in describing this portion of the project’s history and further research is necessary to clarify it.

³³ “Asking New Hearing of Station Case,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 18 August 1921, n.p.

³⁴ “Buys Stock for Fight on Depot,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 26 August 1921, n.p.

Interestingly, both political parties in Cleveland endorsed the Cleveland Union Terminal project.³⁵

While the ICC considered a procedure for rehearing the case, Clayton C. Townes, leader of the opposition in city government at that time, wrote a resolution to have two ICC commissioners come to Cleveland. Under this resolution, opponents would have the opportunity to speak against the ICC decision to reopen the case. Opponents of the ordinance wanted to know if the approval of the ordinance by citizens was just a grant or franchise because a franchise was irreversible. The mayor backed Law Director William B. Woods' statement that as an initiated ordinance, it could only be repealed by voters.³⁶

In September 1921, the ICC decided that testimony for the rehearing would be taken in Cleveland, which pleased both proponents and opponents of the project. Proponents of the project believed the ICC decision on the matter would be guided by the citizen's and country's need of better travel facilities in and through Cleveland. Many people felt that the Pennsylvania's unwillingness to participate in the project should not block the great public improvement project. If the city, terminal company, and railroads were not permitted to build the Cleveland Union Terminal, the city would never have a union terminal because the lakefront station was "mere idle chatter."³⁷ Later that month W.A. Colston, finance director of the ICC, conducted the testimony in Cleveland. Peter Witt challenged Newton Baker and Mayor Fitzgerald and submitted an argument that the "entire proposition [was] fraudulent." Also at the rehearing, the Wheeling and Lake Erie contended that the Cleveland Union Terminal would destroy their existing depot property. They also hinted that the Cleveland Union Terminal project was a public work

³⁵ "Entire U.S. Body Will Sit in Case," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 27 August 1921, n.p.

³⁶ "U.S. Body to Push Hearing on Depot," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 28 August 1921, n.p.

³⁷ "To be Heard in Cleveland," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 8 September 1921, n.p.

that would benefit the Van Sweringens but not necessarily the public at large. Mayor Fitzgerald read a transcript from a conference held in former mayor Harry L. Davis's office on December 31, 1919 in which the vice president and general manager of the Wheeling and Lake Erie, H.W. McMasters, stated that the railroad supported the Cleveland Union Terminal project and that they just needed a contract that was agreeable to them. The city was under the impression that the Wheeling and Lake Erie would join the project.³⁸

Opponents of the Cleveland Union Terminal project fought hard, but in the end, the ICC did reverse its decision on December 6, 1921, allowing the Van Sweringens to build the terminal.³⁹ That did not mean, however, that the battle was over. The Van Sweringens had to secure loans, sell bonds, buy property, and get the city council's approval for any street vacations. Most importantly, the Van Sweringens needed financial backing for the terminal project. They met with various New York banking institutions for a ten million dollar bond, but the price the banks offered and the proposal to give the banks part of the air rights led the brothers to look elsewhere. A.H. Smith directed them to the New York Central's bankers, J.P. Morgan and Company. The brothers and the bank reached an agreement and in June 1922 issued the first Cleveland Union Terminals Company bonds. From June 1922 to March 1930, sixty million dollars worth of bonds were issued.⁴⁰ As in the Shaker Heights development and the purchase of the Nickel Plate Road, the brothers convinced investors to back the Cleveland Union Terminal's financing, which was far more than the brothers could afford to pay for themselves.

³⁸ "Challenges Baker and Mayor at Hearing on Public Square Station," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 20 September 1921 n.p.

³⁹ Haberman, 45.

⁴⁰ Haberman, 46.

The design of the project began in 1922 and the official groundbreaking of the project occurred in September 1923. The Cleveland Union Terminals Company made some progress, but it was not until 1924 that they bought and excavated the rest of the land needed for the project. In March 1924, the Van Sweringens paid \$1,700,000 for police and fire stations on the union terminal property. They also offered to pay inspection costs of the union terminal site, saving the city \$250,000. City Council and the Van Sweringens also amended the 1919 ordinance so the police and fire stations could remain on the union terminal property for twenty months until the city completed construction of the new police and fire stations.⁴¹ In April 1924, the city council allowed the terminal company to vacate Prospect Avenue. O.P. Van Sweringen sent a letter with the ordinance saying that the Cleveland Union Terminals Company would replace the vacated streets if they did not complete any part of the union terminal project. Peter Witt was not happy about this ordinance being passed because it did not go to the steam railroads committee, of which he was a member. Mayor Clayton C. Townes said it was an error on his part.⁴² In November 1924, the Van Sweringens revealed the plans for the entrance of the new union terminal and told city council that they would not have to vacate any of Public Square for construction of the entrance.⁴³ In February 1925, the Van Sweringens revealed the Cleveland Union Terminal design with a fifty-two story tower. In April 1925, the city and the Van Sweringens settled the price for properties in the Flats for \$2,400,000.⁴⁴ In the same month, they also announced plans to electrify all the

⁴¹ "City Gets New Bid of \$1,700,000 for Station Holdings," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 7 March 1924, n.p.

⁴² "Council Yields Prospect Av. To Depot Shovels," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 15 April 1924, n.p.

⁴³ "Council to Get New Depot Plan," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 11 November 1924, n.p.

⁴⁴ "Settlement For Flats is in Sight," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 10 April 1925, n.p.

railways going into the union terminal, which would eliminate much of the congestion, smoke and noise of rail traffic in the city.⁴⁵

By October 1925, the union terminal project was a year behind schedule. O.P. Van Sweringen accused Mayor William H. Hopkins of delaying the project. Hopkins denied any attempt to delay the project and only wanted to protect the city's interests in approving the plans.⁴⁶ In 1926, the foundation for the tower was poured and construction began on the steel frame.

By 1927, the project was well on its way. In January, workers completed the fourth of fifty-two stories on the terminal tower and poured cement on the steel of the depot tower. In February, the Baltimore and Ohio, New York Central and Van Sweringens purchased the Wheeling and Lake Erie to gain tracks and avoid more construction costs. The Van Sweringen's took out the two largest insurance policies in Cleveland history up to that time with the station site being split into two horizontal sections. The portion beneath the ground went to the Cleveland Union Terminals Company and the tower went to the Cleveland Terminal Building Company. The station building would be fourteen stories high with a tower of thirty-eight additional storeys. In April 1927, the arches were being set for the main entrance and the tower's steel reached the seventeenth storey. In August 1927, workers completed construction on the tower, ceremoniously placing the United States flag atop the tower.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ "Roads Plan to Electrify Terminals to New Station," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 16 April 1925, n.p.

⁴⁶ "Hopkins' Action His Reply to O.P.," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 16 October 1925, n.p.

⁴⁷ "Station Tower Taking Shape," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 2 January 1927, n.p.; "Pour Cement on Steel at Depot," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 26 January 1927, n.p.; "Wheeling Sale Solves Depot Track Tangle," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 9 February 1927, n.p.; "Pour Cement on Steel at Depot," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 26 January 1927, n.p.; "Huge Insurance on Depot Titles," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 13 February 1927, n.p.; "Cleveland Station Rights are Leased," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 24 March 1927, n.p.; "Station's Arched Arcade in Shaping," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 5 April 1927, n.p.; "Flag over Tower Today," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 13 August 1927, n.p.

The Cleveland Union Terminal, and more importantly the complex built by the Van Sweringens, provided the city with an architectural masterpiece that forever changed the city's urban landscape. Construction of the Cleveland Union Terminal's concourses began in May 1928, but it is not clear who was responsible for each design in the Cleveland Union Terminal. Howard J. White of the Chicago based firm of Graham, Anderson, Probst, and White was the senior architect of the terminal tower project and Henry D. Jouett was the chief engineer. The Terminal Tower complex is a variant of the Beaux-Arts style, which features two loosely based subtypes: the Neoclassical style in the main concourse and the Second Renaissance Revival style in the main entrance and portico (Figures 2 and 7). The exterior of the complex can be classified as Second Renaissance Revival because it has the effect of combined trabeated and arcuated construction, which has a mixture of historically based styles dating back to the Renaissance. The foyer is Second Renaissance Revival as well because of its smooth-faced ashlar stone, and its vaulted ceiling. The main concourse is in the Neoclassical style featuring smooth-faced ashlar stone and Doric fluted columns.

Since the main entrance and the foyer are common to both railroad passengers and shoppers, it is necessary to discuss those designs as well as those featured in the concourse.⁴⁸ The main entrance features seven round arches flanked by colossal fluted engaged Ionic columns. These arches are 18 feet across and 35 feet high. All of the arches have their own sets of doors, and the doors of the five center arches lead to the foyer, while the doors of the two outer arches lead to the east and west concourses in the terminal. The foyer has walls and a floor made of Botticino and Tennessee marble,

⁴⁸ Jim Toman and Dan Cook, *Cleveland Landmarks Series: The Terminal Tower Complex*, vol. 1 (Cleveland: Cleveland Landmarks Press, Inc., 1980), pictures throughout book; "Some Men Who Built The Terminal Project," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 29 June 1930, Union Terminal Section, p. 29.

respectively (Figure 8). Along the walls, there are seven murals designed by Jules Guerin, which depict water, earth, fire, air, transportation, commerce, and industry (Figure 9). The vaulted ceiling of the portico is 47 feet high and is made of pre-cast ornamental plaster that has bronze chandeliers hanging from it (Figure 10). At one point in time, the portico also featured a skylight. Sometime before 1980, huge mirror panels were added to the portico, which makes it appear even larger to viewers. First time visitors are often impressed by the foyer's brightness, size, and elegance.

The main concourse's walls were also lined with Botticino marble with a Tennessee marble floor and it is rimmed by twenty-two fluted Doric columns that are twenty-five feet high. On the western wall of the concourse, there was a waiting room that held 500 people. On the eastern wall, there was a train board, an entrance to the lunchroom, barber shop, and restrooms. There was a mural on the southern wall of the main course that was added in 1941. The Ferro Enamel Company in Cleveland made this mural, and the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce gave the mural to the terminal as a gift because they did not want it to be destroyed after its use at the New York World's Fair of 1939.⁴⁹

The Cleveland Union Terminal project encompassed much more than a passenger station. It provided citizens with a civic center that eliminated much of the city's dilapidated buildings and slums, not unlike the goals of the 1903 Group Plan. The terminal company razed over one thousand buildings for the project and excavated about three million cubic yards of land to complete the project. The station occupied approximately seventeen acres with the terminal buildings linked to each other through

⁴⁹ Toman, 36-38.

interconnected stairways creating a “city-within-a-city.”⁵⁰ The conglomeration of terminal buildings is the Terminal Tower Complex. It eventually included the Hotel Cleveland built in 1918, the Cleveland Union Terminal, Midland Bank Building, Medical Arts Building, Builders Exchange Building, Higbee Department Store and Post Office. The Cleveland Union Terminal featured Harvey restaurants and shops, which included a restaurant, lunchroom, tearoom, employee cafeteria, drug store, barber shop, men’s shop, hosiery shop, bookshop, fountain room, toy shop, candy shop and four news and cigar stands. The first passengers entered the terminal on October 23, 1929 and citizens celebrated its official opening on June 28, 1930.⁵¹

In the face of declining railway traffic, many union terminals became useless buildings prone to disrepair and sometimes demolition. The Van Sweringen’s union terminal complex dramatically altered the city’s urban landscape, creating significant structures that could be used for many generations, well after the terminal’s original purpose had come to an end. The usefulness of the Cleveland Union Terminal is indicative of the Van Sweringen brothers’ foresight to bring business back to Public Square and create a passenger facility with many amenities. Though the Cleveland Union Terminal had periods of neglect, it has been used for various purposes throughout its history.⁵²

Cleveland was one of the last great terminals built in the United States, signaling the end of the City Beautiful Movement in that city. The lack of use of the Cleveland Union Terminal was no different than most other railroad stations in the nation at the

⁵⁰ C.L. Bradley and H.D. Jouett et al., *The Cleveland Union Station: A Description of the New Passenger Facilities and Surrounding Improvements* (Cleveland: Union Terminals Company, 1930), 9.

⁵¹ Bradley and Jouett, 1-12.

⁵² John J. Grabowski and Walter C. Leedy Jr., *The Terminal Tower Tower City Center: A Historical Perspective* (Cleveland: The Western Reserve Historical Society, 1990), 43, 49, 57.

time of its development and later on in the period of decline for railroad traffic. It was also no different than other railroads stations in terms of people's questions about what could be done to the terminal once rail traffic slowed down. Ultimately, the United States faced a conundrum about what to do with their unused and underused passenger facilities. Many cities demolished there stations, but others like Cleveland repurposed them until a legitimate adaptive reuse project came along.

CHAPTER TWO

The Cincinnati Union Terminal was one of the last great union terminals constructed in the United States. Although the construction of the terminal came long after the boom of railway passenger service, Cincinnati was the perfect city in which to construct a union terminal. It just happened that there were several factors working against the construction of the terminal until the 1920s.

From 1850 to 1900, Cincinnati was a rising metropolis like Cleveland. In Hamilton County, the population rose from 156,844 in 1850 to 409,479 in 1900. The total value of manufacturing products in the same period rose from \$20,790,743 to \$173,582,824.¹ These statistics demonstrate that the county and Cincinnati in particular needed separate passenger and freight facilities. The population continued to grow into the 1920s and many passengers traveled through Cincinnati, so the need for a union terminal seemed necessary.

During the 1910s and 1920s, Cincinnati experienced major reforms in city planning and politics, which both hindered and helped the city. It almost declared bankruptcy in 1922 due to excessive spending and borrowing of money, but by the 1929, Cincinnati's finances recovered and it spent millions of dollars to update the city and build the Cincinnati Union Terminal. The problems in Cincinnati largely resulted from the different visions that mayors, city planners and railroad officials had of the city. The political powers wanted a rapid transit system, but they needed a union terminal and other people saw that need.

¹ The population and manufacturing data for Hamilton County in 1850 and 1900 can be found at the University of Virginia Library Historical Census Data website. fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/

After the defeat of Mayor George B. Cox in 1911, housing issues came to the forefront because of the inadequacy of tenement housing. During Mayor Henry T. Hunt's term from 1912-1913, the city looked for a way to create adequate housing for the poor, as well as "appropriate" housing for the metropolis. He also promoted the idea of a rapid transit system in Cincinnati. This rapid transit system was to play an integral part in Cincinnati's physical development as Mayor Hunt believed it would allow people to move out of Cincinnati's basin area. Although the basin area had many floods, the reason he wanted people to move out of it was so it could be a business and manufacturing center. After the election of Rudolph K. Hynicka, the successor to Hunt, the city's progress seemed to be slipping away. Although Hynicka claimed to be working with officials of the Cincinnati Southern, which was owned by the city, to agree on a site for a union station (not a union terminal), it seems odd that the Cincinnati Southern had to appeal to the Governor to allow them to proceed with the project they proposed in 1917. Unfortunately, the mayor and the trustees of the Cincinnati Southern had different political views. This may be why the city officials initiated the rapid transit project rather than worrying about the congested passenger service in Cincinnati. By this time, city planning and improved housing were not of great concern to the local government.²

In 1919, the citizens of Cincinnati elected Republican John Galvin to be mayor. It appeared that Galvin was a little more concerned with city planning and transportation than his predecessor. The construction of the rapid transit system championed by Hunt in the 1910s got started in 1920, as did a city planning movement directly related to transportation in Cincinnati. From April 19-22, 1920, Cincinnati hosted the twelfth

² Robert B. Fairbanks, *Making Better Citizens: Housing Reform and the Community Development Strategy in Cincinnati, 1890-1960*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 26, 28, 61; "Proposed Union Station in Cincinnati," *Railway Age Gazette* 62, no. 8 (23 February 1917): 327-328.

annual National Conference on City Planning, in which speakers stated that city planning must go together with transportation plans because both were necessary for the improvement of the city. City planning in Cincinnati was to employ “systematic development and beautification.” Planning was always an issue because of the city’s topography, but its uniqueness gave it the potential to become a beautiful city.

Cincinnati attempted to become a beautiful city during the 1920s; however, it came at a price that proved too costly. By 1922, the city was close to bankruptcy because it paid too many deficits with borrowed money, had too large of a payroll, and did not have enough tax revenue. By 1923, the city stopped construction of the rapid transit system, abandoning \$6,000,000 worth of projects devoted to its development. The city council reduced the police and fire department budgets between 1917 and 1924, and the city visibly deteriorated rather than improved.³ In 1925, the City Planning Commission published *The Official City Plan of Cincinnati, Ohio*. It laid out plans to beautify the city, as well as to create civic centers. Normally, cities tried to have one civic center downtown. However, Cincinnati had many areas that created city centers because of the topography and the way public buildings built up in the city. More importantly, the city plan prioritized what needed to be done first. Near the top of the agenda was the creation of a union terminal, however, the document contradicts itself. It says steam railroads need not be considered in its “transit” section because there were only “3,167 commuters per day.” Yet, in another section it states that “approximately 25,000” people would use a union terminal daily. The document also says that “the city should do everything within

³ Fairbanks, 61; “City Planning is Linked to Improvement Projects in Program for Conference to be Held This Week,” *The Enquirer, Cincinnati*, 19 April 1920, p. 4; “Picture of Future Beauty of Cincinnati Outlined to City Planners,” *The Enquirer, Cincinnati*, 20 April 1920, p. 14; Federal Writer’s Program, *Cincinnati: A Guide to the Queen City and Its Neighbors*, (Cincinnati: The Wiesen-Hart Press, 1943), 128; Fairbanks, 61.

its power to aid and encourage the private development of a union passenger station for Cincinnati.” In the plan, they endorsed a site in the Mill Creek Valley.⁴

After the city government proposed another bond issue to meet the city deficit in 1923, citizens were outraged. The citizens of Cincinnati supported the City Charter Committee and they called a special election to vote on amendments proposing the city-manager plan that gives mayors less power and a smaller city council elected by proportional representation. The citizens approved the plan and they reduced the council from thirty-two members to nine members. The councilmen’s salary was increased to \$5,000 a year from \$1,150, but it was appropriate because they now worked full-time.⁵ The new council elected the mayor rather than the citizens, and it chose Murray Seasongood to serve from 1926 to 1930.

Under Seasongood’s administration, Cincinnati prospered, as it became one of the best-governed cities in the United States. City planning programs that previous mayors promised to Cincinnati came to fruition. As promised, Seasongood’s administration made Cincinnati beautiful. The city had well-paved streets and parkways, as well as a wonderful system of parks and playgrounds. He did all this while reducing the city’s debt. By 1929, banks cleared four billion dollars showing that citizens, businesses, and Cincinnati earned a lot of money.⁶ Since Cincinnati was back out of a financial slump and a city rising in prominence, it was only fitting that the city have a union terminal that exhibited that prominence.

The inflow of money to Cincinnati fostered a huge building program. It was clear

⁴ *The Official City Plan of Cincinnati, Ohio*, (Cincinnati: The City Planning Commission, 1925), 111, 130, 132, 254.

⁵ Federal Writer’s Program, 128-129.

⁶ Federal Writer’s Program, 128-133; “Land Purchase is Favored by Board to Extend Park System to Western Hills,” *The Enquirer, Cincinnati*, 1 June 1927, p. 16.

that Cincinnati was booming and needed to show its prominence in the American landscape. Railroad lines and stations still congested Cincinnati and railroads still had not escaped the floods of the Ohio River. Cincinnati was finally ready to build a union terminal. It would reduce congestion in the city, making way for more building projects. The terminal would be the gateway to Cincinnati, and it would show the city's prominence as one of America's booming cities.

It took three tries before Cincinnati successfully developed and built a union terminal. The first two attempts in 1904 and 1910, respectively, failed, but different groups proposed both projects for nearly the same reasons. Fortunately, the last attempt in 1923 succeeded and construction began in 1929. In June 1904, the Union Terminal Railroad Company formed to build a union terminal in Cincinnati. It wanted to build a union station with approach and yard tracks, engine terminals, and other structures necessary to accommodate the fourteen trunk-line railroads running in Cincinnati at the time. The Union Terminal Railroad Company intended to construct the union station on one block with South Canal and Court Street on the north and south sides and Race and Elm Streets on the east and west sides of the building. The company had several reasons for constructing the union terminal. It wanted to unify the five union stations with the administrative and ticket offices located throughout the city. The building also had to be within the core of the city. The company also wanted to eliminate the congestion on the main lines and approach tracks, as well as separate the street and railroad grades in the city.

It was also very important for the city and railroads to have the station built where the floodwaters of the Ohio River could not reach it. Construction of the headhouse

would have consisted of a seven-story building with a rectangular plan. The ground floor would have typical features seen in terminals, such as waiting rooms, ticket and telegraph offices, and restaurants. The other six floors would have been devoted to railroad offices. The proposal had negative aspects, such as the destruction of prime downtown property to construct the union terminal and its approach tracks. The expense in money and land was unjustifiable for the railroads and the city, as they saw it, because there were only about 20,000 passengers in and out of the city each day.⁷ Although the city and the railroad did not think that they needed a union terminal because of the cost in terms of money and land, a second proposal for a union terminal project came in 1910.

The second proposal for a union terminal came when John E. Bleekman released plans and estimates relating to such a project in 1910 and again in 1911. In early 1910, the Ohio General Assembly passed an act allowing a union station company to be incorporated in Cincinnati. After another act passed in May 1910, a group of business executives from Cincinnati and New York was formally allowed to establish the Cincinnati Union Depot and Terminal Company. The company's responsibility was to construct union freight and passenger stations in Cincinnati and an act passed in May gave them one year to plan the project and five years to complete it. The president of the company was Archibald S. White, who was president of the Columbia Gas and Electric Company. John E. Bleekman was the vice-president and general manager of the company. He was also a New York financier. Secretary and treasurer of the company was F.R. Williams of the Cincinnati Trust Company. G.H. Worthington of Cleveland and G.L. Seasingood, J.L. Hauck, and C. Bentley Matthews of Cincinnati acted as directors

⁷ Carl W. Condit, *The Railroad and the City: A Technological and Urbanistic History of Cincinnati*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1977), 147-150.

of the company.

Bleekman stated the company would build the terminal on the north side of Third Street between Walnut and Main streets. They intended to have the building's interior and exterior designed in the French renaissance style and constructed of brick, terra cotta, and stone. The proposal completed in 1911 had more details relating to the project. The proposal outlined where the company could locate the steam passenger lines and connections, freight belt line, interurban and urban lines, as well as an alternative route for the interurban and urban lines. Bleekman included drawings of how the union station would sit in relation to the street and tracks, as well as a layout for the interior of the station. He also listed several reasons for constructing a union terminal. Primarily, the railroads needed to get away from the flooding of the river. They also needed a direct and inexpensive way to interchange freight between railroads. It would also provide an entrance to the city for the interurban lines, convenience for the urban population wanting to use the railroad in or out of Cincinnati, as well as rapid transit for people in the suburbs. Also important was the elimination of congestion as well as the need for railroad crossings. Once again the expense in money and land got in the way of completing the project.

These arguments against the expense took a back seat; however, to a misunderstanding in which the promoters of the project claimed that the directors of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company approved the plan at its announcement in 1910. A correspondent of the *Gazette*, however, reported in May 1910 that an officer of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, as well as representatives of the New York Central said that they were not affiliated with the new terminal company and no decision were made

regarding the union terminal project. The executives of the railroads stalled in deciding and considerations for the projects stopped when a major flood struck Cincinnati in 1913. It would be a full decade before the railroad companies and city would truly consider the idea for a union terminal.⁸

By the late 1910s, Cincinnati had seven railway systems in the city, which included the New York Central (formerly Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis), Pennsylvania, Baltimore & Ohio, Chesapeake & Ohio, Norfolk & Western, Louisville & Nashville, and the Southern (formerly Cincinnati, New Orleans, and Texas Pacific). These seven railroad companies operated out of five union stations. The companies built all of these stations between 1859 and 1888.⁹ The city and railroad companies also failed to come to any agreement on how to fix the problems associated with the city's stations, including flooding, operating expenses, and congestion, even though two terminal companies offered solutions. William G. McAdoo, director-general of the United States Railroad Administration, recognized the city's congestion from both freight and passenger traffic as being an inconvenience and expense that created a bottleneck rather than the hoped-for natural gateway to the south. McAdoo called attention to Cincinnati's problems before the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce on January 3, 1919. He believed that the city needed \$70,000,000 to rehabilitate the stations to bring them to modern standards in the public's interest without any regard for the needs of any of the seven railroad companies in Cincinnati. It was also his belief that some public authority needed to take control of the situation because the railroads had tried to fix Cincinnati's

⁸ Condit, 151; John E. Bleekman., et al., *Cincinnati Union Depot and Terminal Company*. (Cincinnati: n.p., 1911); John E. Bleekman., et al., *Cincinnati Union Depot and Terminal Company*. (Cincinnati: n.p., 1910).

⁹ "Union Terminal, Cincinnati; A. Fellheimer and S. Wagner, Architects." *Architectural Forum* 58, no. 6 (June 1933): 470; "Cincinnati Union Terminal Company." *Railway Age* 82, no. 21 (19 November 1927): 1016.

rail problems for nearly twenty years and never succeeded.¹⁰

Ward Baldwin, chief engineer for the Board of Trustees of the Cincinnati Southern, which was the city-owned railroad line, had a few reasons for the city's problem. The biggest problem was the topography. Hills surround the city and it is plagued with constant flooding. The reasons included insufficient funding and the lack of a City Planning Commission that could plan for the best arrangement of transportation and other matters concerning citizens of Cincinnati. This commission was in place by 1920; the same year that the National Conference of City Planning met in Cincinnati. The Cincinnati Southern secured money from the local government in the form of \$20 million in city bonds upon approval by vote of the citizens of Cincinnati to build a union terminal and tried to get an agreement between all of the railroads coexisting in the city. There is no evidence, however, that the railroads considered the plan or that the citizens approved the bond issue.¹¹ By 1920, there was no way for the city to grow physically and the only way to solve the problem was to change radically the railroad facilities in Cincinnati.

The development of the Cincinnati Union Terminal project from 1920 to its completion in 1933 included many people, but without the help of George Dent Crabbs, none of it would have been possible. As president of the Philip Carey Company and chairman of the Cincinnati Community Chest, the public viewed Crabbs as a community leader and businessman. In 1921, he started to persuade the railroad companies in Cincinnati to support the idea of a union terminal. He also had to deal with Cincinnati officials to get them to readjust the city plan. It was not until 1923, however, that the railroad companies paid close attention to Crabbs. Although the railroad companies'

¹⁰ Condit, 178-179.

¹¹ "Relation of Railroad Terminals to City Plan" *Railway Age* 68, no. 18 (30 April 1920): 1287-1288.

revenue increased from previous years, the operating expenses increased more than the revenues forcing the railroad companies to look at the idea of a union terminal. The Cincinnati Railroad Terminal Development Company formed in the summer of 1923 with Crabbs as the president and Robert A. Taft as the secretary. Though the railroad companies listened to Crabbs' initial idea to construct a union terminal, it took four years for the development company and seven railroad companies to sign a preliminary agreement on July 14, 1927.¹² When dealing with multiple entities, it can be time consuming to come to some form of agreement. This was the case in Cincinnati.

The announcement of the preliminary agreement was on November 5, 1927. This announcement included a statement by H.A. Worchester, vice-president of the New York Central. He said that the general location of the union terminal was to be in the Mill Creek Valley. Since the preliminary agreement was signed in 1927, it is logically concluded that the Cincinnati Union Terminal Company formed in the same year to oversee the construction of the facilities. Henry M. Waite, former city engineer of Cincinnati, was chief engineer, and C.A. Wilson, former chief engineer of the Wheeling & Lake Erie and the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton, was consulting engineer of the project. The terminal company estimated in 1927 that the project, including the station, equipment terminal, and freight facilities would cost \$75 million and half of that would be for the union station. In January 1928, the terminal company applied for permission from the Interstate Commerce Commission to construct and operate a union passenger station and equipment terminal in Cincinnati, as well as 5.79 miles of double main track and 13.55 miles of single track to be rented and used by the seven railroad companies.

¹² "Union Terminal, Cincinnati; A. Fellheimer and S. Wagner, Architects," 469-470; Condit, 216, 218; "Cincinnati Union Terminal Company." *Railway Age* 82, no. 21 (19 November 1927): 1016.

Railway Age announced in the following month that Cincinnati would have a union terminal. The expected opening was 1932 and they believed the most difficult tasks were picking the site and making the plans. The project appeared to be moving smoothly as the Cincinnati Union Terminal Company hired the firm of Alfred Fellheimer and Steward Wagner to design the terminal in June 1928. They were to prepare immediately the plans for the station to be located in the Mill Creek Valley facing Lincoln Park.¹³ The city and the railroads wanted this project completed as soon as possible. The faster the architects completed their plans and construction began, the sooner the railroads could move passenger traffic to one location and save money.

On June 15, 1929 the Cincinnati Railroad Terminal Development Company, the seven railroad companies in Cincinnati, and the Cincinnati Union Terminal Company signed the final agreement for the union passenger station, passenger equipment terminal, and connecting tracks and approaches. The terminal company also received a certificate from the ICC that stated Cincinnati required the construction of the union station facilities for public's convenience and necessity. The project was funded primarily through the sale of stock to various interests. The Cincinnati Union Terminal Company issued 30,000 shares of preferred stock worth \$300 million purchased by the Cincinnati Railroad Terminal Development Company. They also issued 35,000 shares of common stock worth \$3.5 million with each railroad company purchasing 5,000 shares. The railroad companies advanced funds to the terminal company in the amount of \$3,465,000. They also had to pay for taxes, rentals, and interest during construction. The Cincinnati

¹³ "Cincinnati Union Terminal Company." *Railway Age* 82, no. 21 (19 November 1927): 1016; "Cincinnati Union Terminal Company." *Railway Age* 84, no. 2 (14 January 1928): 166; "Cincinnati to Have Union Station." *Railway Age* 84, no. 7 (18 February 1928): 409-410; "Cincinnati Union Terminal Company." *Railway Age* 84, no. 23 (9 June 1928): 1359.

Union Terminal Company had to repay the money advanced to them by the railroad companies at the end of construction.

The railroad companies were required, as a part of this agreement, to use the Cincinnati Union Terminal as their primary passenger station in the city. Railroad companies deciding not to use the station after construction were still responsible for their share of the cost. In July 1929, the Cincinnati Union Terminal Company was finally able to construct the union terminal complex. The City Council of Cincinnati passed the last ordinance required to make changes to the streets and to erect and maintain the complex. They set the construction to start in August 1929 for what was later to be deemed a true union terminal because all of the railroad companies in Cincinnati used it, a rarity in American railroad history.¹⁴

The project began in August 1929 with 5.5 million cubic yards of fill material from Bald Knob used to level off the site so the facilities were above the record level of floodwaters. The contractors were James and A.M. Stewart of New York. They started the new union station in spring 1931 by laying the foundation of the building. The Stewarts built the station, but it took many other people to design the building that was under construction.¹⁵ The designers obviously include Fellheimer and Wagner, who the terminal company hired in June 1928. Other designers were Anthony Roland Wank, Paul Philippe Cret, Winold Reiss, and Pierre Bourdelle.

The Cincinnati Union Terminal Company hired the firm of Fellheimer and Wagner to design the terminal in 1928, but the names many authors associate with the

¹⁴ *Agreement for Union Station Facilities at Cincinnati*, Cincinnati Union Terminal Company, (Cincinnati: The Cincinnati Union Terminal Company, 1929), 1-2, 4, 8, 11-12, 14, 19, 23, 29; "Union Terminal, Cincinnati; A. Fellheimer and S. Wagner, Architects," 471; Lacher, Walter S. "Cincinnati's New Union Terminal Now in Service." *Railway Age* 94, no. 16 (April 1933): 575.

¹⁵ "Cincinnati's New Union Railway Terminal." *Engineering News-Record* 111, no. 18 (2 November 1933): 524; Lacher, 590.

terminal are Anthony Roland Wank, Paul Philippe Cret, Winold Reiss, and Pierre Bourdelle.¹⁶ The original design was by Roland Anthony Wank, a designer for Fellheimer and Wagner, who had recently returned from Europe and had gained a strong background in modern design.¹⁷ Wank combined “Art Deco motifs with vocabulary of the Beaux-Arts and the rational simplicity of the Modern Movement.” Wank was largely responsible for the exterior design and layout of the terminal.¹⁸ Alfred Fellheimer and Steward Wagner contributed little but their names to the aesthetic design of the Cincinnati Union Terminal, which is not a surprise because Fellheimer felt that large accomplishments, such as the Cincinnati Union Terminal, required the cooperation of many individuals.

The pair of architects, however, contributed much to the theory of how the terminal should be laid out, in particular, to the relation of traffic flow.¹⁹ The original designs of Fellheimer and Wagner were dramatically changed when the cost and sterile feeling of the building prohibited their conservative Neoclassical design from being completed.²⁰ Despite the terminal company’s disapproval of the design, the architectural firm liked it and scheduled its construction anyway. Since the design lacked the impact that the terminal company looked for, they asked Fellheimer and Wagner, in 1930, to hire Paul Cret in order to assist Wank with the interior design.²¹ With the help of Winold Reiss and Pierre Bourdelle, Paul Cret was able to create the magnificent Art Deco interior of the Cincinnati Union Terminal.

¹⁶ Linda C. Rose, Patrick Rose, and Gibson Yungblut, *Cincinnati Union Terminal: The Design and Construction of an Art Deco Masterpiece*, (Cincinnati: Cincinnati Railroad Club, Inc., 1999), 17.

¹⁷ *Art Deco and the Cincinnati Union Terminal*, (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, 1972), 8-9.

¹⁸ Steven Parissien, *Station to Station*, (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1997), 190.

¹⁹ Stanford, Linda Oliphant. “Designs by Fellheimer and Wagner, New York to Cincinnati.” *Queen City Heritage: The Journal of The Cincinnati Historical Society* 43, no. 3 (Fall 1985): 12, 18.

²⁰ *Art Deco and the Cincinnati Union Terminal*, 10-13; Stanford 17.

²¹ Holland, 49 and Parissien, 191.

For the exterior, Roland Wank created a semi-circular arched façade. Curved wings flank the façade where taxis, motor coaches, and busses used to enter through the wings on one side and went under the station to the other side to exit. He had the wings covered with light colored limestone with a granite base (Figure 11).²² Vertical windows dominate the façade. In front of these windows, there are two stepped pylons supporting a neon-illuminated clock. Behind the pylons, there are actually two sets of vertical windows with stairs that lead to the clock. The main entrance is at the bottom of the vertical windows. Once inside the building, one enters a vestibule, which leads to the main concourse that is in the shape of a quarter-sphere. Wank also designed the semicircular ceiling in the main concourse that is 125 feet at its apex. Maxfield Keck was responsible for the carvings on the façade of the terminal that feature a woman on the left side representing transportation and a man on the right side representing commerce (Figures 12 and 13).²³ Cret, Riess, and Bourdelle coordinated the decorative design of the interior.

In 1930, Paul Cret started to work on the Cincinnati Union Terminal. Fellheimer and Wagner hired him to change the plans to be modern and exciting, as well as less expensive to construct.²⁴ As soon as Paul Cret entered the Cincinnati Union Terminal project, the interior designs changed dramatically. He focused on curves and bright colors expressed abundantly on the terminal's interior. For the semicircular ceiling, Cret chose yellow and orange pastels that change color depending on the time of day and the time of year (Figure 14). Underneath the ceiling, there is a terrazzo floor with a pattern that

²² Lacher, 577; Holland, 49 and Rose et al., 42. It is important to note that the building was constructed out of reinforced concrete.

²³ Holland 49-50, Parissien 190-91, and Rose et al., 42.

²⁴ Potter, 386

mimics the flow of traffic. They arranged the leather seated and aluminum-framed chairs, which Cret designed, in a semi-circular pattern to fit in with the traffic flow pattern.

Although the idea for the seating arrangement was not Cret's, his modern approach to the interior design had influenced whoever did come up with the floor arrangement. The metal molded bars and wrapped ceilings made of light colored wood that show the grain were a part of the shops and the original elevators that Paul Cret designed.²⁵ Even though this was magnificent, the work of Winold Reiss made the headhouse and concourse stand out.

The terminal company, in conjunction with Fellheimer and Wagner, hired Winold Reiss to create murals painted on canvas for the rotunda and concourse. Winold Reiss halved his fee, so the terminal company agreed to let him execute the murals as mosaics instead of canvas paintings. Reiss felt that the mosaics would look better, but in most cases the reason for the use of the mosaics was that "mural decorations" gained popularity, once again, after the stock market crash of 1929 because they represented "prosperity and optimism" that was apparent prior to the crash.²⁶ Upon entry into the main concourse, there are two mosaics that circle the rotunda, which are 105 feet long and 25 feet high (Figure 15 and 16).²⁷ One of the rotunda mosaics represents the development of Cincinnati and the other illustrates American history.²⁸ Fifteen mosaics between the train gates on the north and south walls, each designed from photographs, depicted Cincinnati's industries. Until the 1970s, a map of the United States and the

²⁵ *Art Deco and the Cincinnati Union Terminal*, 14 and 34, and Rose et al., 100.

²⁶ Meeks, 157.

²⁷ Reiss, W. Tjark. "My Father Winold Reiss." *Queen City Heritage: The Journal of The Cincinnati Historical Society* 51, no. 2/3 (Summer/Fall 1993): 73; Potter, 388.

²⁸ Holland, 50.

eastern and western hemisphere, decorated the west wall of the concourse.²⁹ Reiss designed all of the mosaics in the Art Deco style and had them put onto glass by the Ravenna Mosaic Company out of New York. Craftsmen from this company came to Cincinnati to help the laborers with the installation of the mosaics.

Interestingly, people broke into the station in February 1933 and stole glass tiles for the mosaic that the laborers had laid out on the floor to install. The people wanted these tiles as souvenirs, but it proved costly to the terminal company, and they closed off the station to the public until its opening in March.³⁰ While it was Cret's idea to use pastel yellows and oranges in the terminal's interior, it was Reiss who designed the arrangement of the color combinations with the central arc of silver and the surrounding bands of yellows that had a range of shades.³¹ Winold Reiss was largely responsible for the terminal's main concourse, while Pierre Bourdelle contributed to the other areas in the terminal.

Pierre Bourdelle had designs for the entire interior of the terminal, but the terminal company did not hire him to design the concourse mosaics. It is believed that Bourdelle was hired because of his background in using the Art Deco style, but he was not given the concourse commission because he was more free-spirited and did not use the photographs of Cincinnati faithfully as Reiss did. The only mosaics that he did use a photograph for was his design of the tannery industry.³² Even though he did not get to

²⁹ Holland, 50.

³⁰ "New Station Damaged by Vandals," Cincinnati Enquirer, 21 February 1933, n.p.

³¹ *Art Deco and the Cincinnati Union Terminal*, 29, 33.

³² *Art Deco and the Cincinnati Union Terminal*, 35-36.

execute his designs for the concourse, he was able to contribute some unique designs elsewhere in the terminal that added “texture and imagination to the terminal.”³³

Using an electric spray gun, Bourdelle painted canvas murals “in the lunchroom, [on] the ceiling of the hall leading to the restaurant,” and on the restaurant’s ceiling.³⁴ On one of the walls of the women’s restroom, Bourdelle took linoleum panels, and he carved and painted them, which gave the mural a sculpted feel. On the other three walls in the women’s restroom, he used different colored and shaped wallpaper materials to create geometric patterned murals. Using a transportation theme for the men’s room, Bourdelle created an abstract wall mural made of very light and dark toned, thin wood-like materials that he glued to the wall.³⁵ His importation of French decorating techniques, such as the wood veneer, wallpaper, and carved linoleum, were considered “new and fresh” in 1933.³⁶ His work stood the test of time and today people are still moved and impressed by his designs, just as Winold Reiss and Paul Cret are still admired for their interior designs.

The terminal company finished the Cincinnati Union Terminal project in March 1933 and its official dedication was in April 1933. Unfortunately, it never reached its full potential. The amount of passenger traffic declined steadily from the early 1920s onward due to the advancements of automobiles and bus transportation, as well as the onset of the Great Depression of the 1930s. By 1939, people considered the terminal a ‘white elephant’ rather than the gateway it was meant to be in Cincinnati. The Cincinnati Union Terminal was not used to its full capacity on a regular basis, except during World War II

³³ Rose et al., 82.

³⁴ *Art Deco and the Cincinnati Union Terminal*, 35.

³⁵ *Art Deco and the Cincinnati Union Terminal*, 35.

³⁶ Rose et al., 82.

when the number of passengers far exceeded the terminal's capacity. After World War II, the interstate highway system and growth of air travel had a devastating affect on the terminal. Fifty-one trains arrived at the union terminal each day in 1953 and nearly half of that amount passed through the terminal in 1962. The cost of operating the terminal eventually was too much for the Cincinnati Union Terminal Company, so they leased the building to the city of Cincinnati for one dollar a year to use it as they saw fit. One year later, the Cincinnati Planning Commission considered eight different uses for the building, but they chose to do nothing. Beginning in February 1968, the Cincinnati Science Museum operated in the union terminal for two years. On May 1, 1971, Amtrak took over the facilities but the decline continued; by 1972, only two trains used the terminal. After about four decades of use, the terminal discontinued service on October 28, 1972. The Cincinnati Union Terminal Company sold the property to the Southern Railway which demolished the train concourse for a supplemental freight yard.

Except for the U.S. map on the west wall of the train concourse, all of Winold Reiss's mosaics were saved and placed in the Greater Cincinnati Airport. In 1975, the city purchased the union terminal for two dollars, and fifteen acres surrounding it for \$1,000,000. The Joseph Skilken Company of Columbus leased the building and turned it into a shopping mall, which failed by 1985 due to the economic recessions of that decade. The Cincinnati Historical Society and the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History came together subsequently and formed the successful Museum Center at Union Terminal.³⁷ The museums joined together in the 1980s to save money and obtained enough space to

³⁷ Rose, et al., 170-172; "Cincinnati Union Terminal 1933-2003." *Ohio Valley History* 2, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 3-22.

hold their collections and exhibits. They succeeded because they worked together to create a destination spot in Ohio and the Midwest.

Cincinnati followed the same patterns as the rest of the country concerning rail traffic. By the late 1920s, railroads across the nation faced competition from automobiles and busses, which forced their revenues to decline. Some cities, such as Cincinnati, remained optimistic about the future of the railroads and built union terminals. By the 1930s, passenger traffic declined to the point that railroad companies closed small stations and stopped unprofitable services. As in the case of Cincinnati, railroad companies saw a great increase in passenger traffic during World War II, but immediately saw a decline after the war. Some railroads tried to attract customers with fancy trains, which worked for a while during the 1950s, but ceased with the construction of the interstate highway system and air travel. By the 1960s, passenger service declined to the point where many stations no longer had any passenger trains arriving or leaving. The railroad companies pretty much abandoned passenger service for freight service in the 1970s, leading the federal government to create Amtrak in 1971 to take over the remaining passenger routes. Amtrak only continued about fifty percent of the passenger routes and many stations closed. Many of the union stations faced a terrible fate being abandoned and demolished after the railroad companies' heyday as providers of passenger service.³⁸ The abandonment and demolition of these buildings was a shame as many of them could have been adaptively reused.

Cincinnati truly was an ideal city in which to build a union terminal as a railroad gateway to the south; however, it was not successful because they constructed it too late in the history of passenger service. If the city and railroad companies agreed to build the

³⁸ Brian Solomon, *America's Railroad Stations*, 9.

union terminal in 1904 or in 1910, there would have been a considerable amount of revenue. In addition, the railroad companies would not have had to suffer great financial losses due to flooding during the 1910s that set them back to such an extent that a union terminal was not even a possibility until 1923. Even though it was not considered a success to the railroads, the Cincinnati Union Terminal represented the culmination of Cincinnati's building projects in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as an excellent representative of the transition in architecture from the classical to the modern styles. Luckily, the Southern Railway only demolished a portion of the Cincinnati Union Terminal, so Cincinnati's former gateway can still be admired and appreciated.

CHAPTER THREE

The end of the Second World War marked the virtual end of passenger rail service. After seeing a spike in passenger service during the war, it quickly declined. By 1950, rail transportation had to compete increasingly with the automobile and airplane as the consumers' choice of transport. A larger issue was what to do with the grand railroad stations left behind after passenger service ended. As early as the 1950s, people proposed ideas on how to reuse the stations.

The Cleveland Union Terminal was part of the Terminal Tower complex. The Terminal Tower is one of the most recognizable buildings in Cleveland. Clevelanders have been "emotionally attached" to the building since it was built in the 1920s and finished in 1930. This attachment created a civic pride in the complex that continued down to the present.¹

The Cleveland Union Terminals Company owned the railroad station. Due to economic conditions in the 1930s, the company had to reduce what it charged to use the terminal. Since the station did not bring in enough revenue, it was already considered to be a "white elephant." While passenger traffic never reached what was expected and declined steadily after the Second World War, the station was still used for the rapid transit line that went from Shaker Heights to Cleveland. In 1955, the Cleveland Transit System (CTS), now the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA), opened a new rapid line running on an east-west axis between East 37th Street and Fulton Road. This led to improvements to the station, including the opening of the station's West

¹ "Terminal Tower still stands tall over city," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 11 May 1980, C5; "Happy 50th!", *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 26 May 1980, C1; "Terminal Tower is a status symbol now," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 1 June 1980, C3; John J. Grabowski and Walter C. Leedy Jr., *The Terminal Tower, Tower City Center: A Historical Perspective* (Cleveland: The Western Reserve Historical Society, 1990), 42.

concourse, the addition of new stores, and an update of older stores. Ridership grew to thirteen million by 1961. However, long-distance passenger service declined rapidly during this period, so much so that the New York Central wanted to leave the station. Meanwhile talks between the CTS and the City of Shaker Heights, who owned the Shaker line since 1944, prevented the adaptation of the station “to a non-railroad use.”² In 1958, the Cleveland Union Terminals Company put the station up for sale.

For the next two decades the city studied the station’s use as a convention center, as well as its use for expanded rapid transit facilities. In 1968, an extension of the rapid transit line opened to the Cleveland Hopkins airport. There were ideas of having an air terminal installed so passengers could check in before their flight, but the airlines never liked the idea. In the same year, a Frank Orrico of Seattle conducted a land-use study for U.S. Realty Investments, who owned the Terminal Tower since 1964, and the Cleveland Union Terminals Company. U.S. Realty wanted to purchase the station, but the Cleveland Union Terminals Company would not sell because it saw its potential for commercial use and wanted to wait for a better offer. In order to “increase operating revenue,” the Cleveland Union Terminals Company converted the “steam concourse into tennis courts” and converted the coach yards at ground level into parking lots in 1970.

As early as 1972, there were plans to change the Terminal Tower complex into what is now Tower City Center. However, politics and financial difficulties delayed the projects commencement until 1980. In the 1970s, there were two major developers for the project, U.S. Realty and Forest City Enterprises. In 1972, U.S. Realty intended to purchase the station for twelve million dollars. Forest City Enterprises would join them in the project to revitalize the station and complex. The complex, centered on the steam

² Grabowski and Leedy, 42.

concourse, would be interconnected and cost about \$350 million. The complex would consist of “a new hotel, sports arena, underground air cargo terminal, two or three office buildings, another department store, theaters, and terraced housing overlooking the river.”³ Sheldon Guren of U.S. Realty got the Democratic Governor John J. Gilligan to promise to construct an administrative office building in the complex and in 1973 “secured an agreement with J.C. Penney Company to build a department store.” City leaders supported the proposal. However, the project stalled over who would pay to repair bridges and streets in the area of the complex.⁴ Due to this issue, financial difficulties, and an assumption that new Governor James A. Rhodes would cancel the construction of the new building in the complex, U.S. Realty’s proposal died in 1974, as well as J.C. Penney’s commitment to establishing a department store in the complex. Rhodes announced that the building would be constructed in the complex, and it was completed and is called the Lausche State Office Building.

In 1975, the station’s premier restaurant, the English Oak Room, closed due to lack of business and a ceiling that was about to collapse due to severe water leakage. Two years later, the Harvey shop’s lease expired and they did not continue to operate in the station. In 1976, there was an effort to get Amtrak to use the Cleveland Union Terminal,⁵ but Congress “killed the \$10 million funding provision for the Cleveland project,” which would have helped restore the terminal. At the same time, the Ostendorf-Morris company took over the concourse area for the Cleveland Union Terminals Company. They wanted to convert the concourse into a “super shopping center with a major, anchor, department

³ Grabowski and Leedy, 44.

⁴ Grabowski and Leedy, 44; “Tower re-emerges as city centerpiece,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 25 March 1990, A1.

⁵ “Senate backs terminal renovation,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 2 September 1976, A1.

store.” In 1977, Sohio planned to build a twenty-two story building in the complex area with the station concourse becoming ‘Sohio’s computer center,’ but they backed out, citing money problems as their reason. In 1979, Sheldon Gueren of U.S. Realty approached the Cleveland Union Terminals Company in order to purchase the station and once again partnered with Forest City Enterprises to develop the complex area.⁶ This time around U.S. Realty and Forest City Enterprises had more support from the community, government and financial institutions to actually complete the project.

The 1980s were a time of change and revitalization in the city of Cleveland, particularly the Public Square area. In 1980, the complex project gained political support as Republican Mayor George Voinovich’s administration believed in working with businesses “to promote the public good.”⁷ With this new found support, the project received funding for it to continue. Repair of the bridges was put at the forefront during Voinovich’s administration.⁸ The federal government approved a grant for \$2.5 million dollars for the repairs and the developers had to match it with \$250,000. At the same time, the developers planned a \$5.9 million dollar renovation of the station concourse. A partnership called Tower City formed “between U.S. Realty and a subsidiary of Forest City Enterprises, Inc. to buy the station, the land underneath it, and fifteen adjoining acres for \$6.6 million from the Cleveland Union Terminals Company in 1980.”⁹ Plans for the complex were not concrete, but the project was to be a shopping-office complex. The project to renovate the terminal was to be financed by \$7 million in industrial revenue bonds and \$1.25 million in financing by the developers. However, the bonds would not

⁶ Grabowski and Leedy, 45.

⁷ Grabowski and Leedy, 48.

⁸ “Concourse sale may bring bridge repair,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 24 January 1980, A18.

⁹ “Terminal Tower spans in line for repair grant,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 8 April 1980, D16; “Concourse deal due in 60 days, principals say,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 9 April 1980, D16; Grabowski and Leedy, 49.

be issued until the developers gave the county more information on the project.¹⁰

The first phase of the project included the removal of the tennis courts from the concourse. They revealed an 80-by-100-foot sky light, which had been covered since the Second World War.¹¹ The developers added a food court, which was the first in downtown Cleveland and added new retail stores.¹² The total goal for the first phase of the project was thirty shops. As of May 1983, they had twenty-nine. They also opened the concourse up for community events.¹³ Since the public image of the station was one of high crime, the developers added security guards which “renewed public confidence in the area.” A department store, a hotel and an office building was to be added in the second stage of the project.¹⁴ This simply was too big of a project to complete at one time. It was necessary to complete it in multiple stages because of the sheer size of the project both in spatial and financial terms.

In 1982, Forest City Enterprises bought the Terminal Tower, and a year later, bought out U.S. Realty’s ownership in the station.¹⁵ They also purchased the U.S. Post Office building. The ownership of the whole complex by one developer gave politicians more hope that the project would be completed and plans were made to secure more funding for the project. This gave Mayor Voinovich the go ahead to apply for Urban

¹⁰ “Help with face lift of Terminal Tower delayed by county,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 11 March 1980, A6.

¹¹ “Sun comes up on dawn of Tower rebirth: Skylight repair marks work start,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 30 November 1980, A36; “Terminal skylight shines on concourse,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 1 July 1983, A1.

¹² Grabowski and Leedy, 49.

¹³ “Indoor ‘parties in park’ planned for revived Terminal concourse,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 25 June 1980, A1; “First phase in extensive plans for Tower City nears completion,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 20 May 1983, SU10.

¹⁴ “Indoor ‘parties in park’ planned for revived Terminal concourse,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 25 June 1980, A1; Grabowski and Leedy, 49.

¹⁵ “Forest City buys Terminal Tower,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 12 October 1982, A1; Grabowski and Leedy 49; “Terminal Tower is Forest City’s now,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 2 November 1982, C2; “Terminal skylight shines on concourse,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 1 July 1983, A1.

Development Action Grants (UDAG) for the project. The year 1984 was a turning point for the project. The groundbreaking ceremony took place for the bridge repairs and more politicians, such as Mary Rose Oakar and Louis Stokes, showed support for the project which led to the securing of the “\$16 million in state and federal money necessary for the bridge repairs.”¹⁶ The city also gave Tower City a UDAG, which gave the city a part of the project’s possible profits while also taking on part of the risks of the project. The project received a total of \$88.2 million in public funds in the form of loans, grants, and tax incentives. Since there was such a large amount of public funds and support, a group of banks was convinced to come together and finance part of the project. This funding, along with other private investment, equaled another \$350 million for the various components of the Tower City Center.¹⁷

Since only two of seven UDAG projects had been successful up to this time in terms of job creation, local people who were pessimistic said it would happen in Cleveland too. The Tower City developers and Cleveland’s economic developer saw the Tower City Center as a main component for downtown revitalization. There were specific guidelines made in the legislation that approved the UDAG grant. The legislation required Tower City to pay relocation costs for businesses that would have to move. Twenty-nine businesses relocated within the city of Cleveland. One went out of business rather than relocating. Tower City also had to have a certain number of women and

¹⁶ Grabowski and Leedy, 49-50; “Forest City buys Terminal Tower,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 12 October 1982, A1; “U.S. grant to aid Tower face lift,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 27 November 1982, A1.

¹⁷ Grabowski and Leedy, 50; “U.S. grants city \$9.2 million to loan for Tower City Plan,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 31 January 1985, C1; “\$10 million granted for Terminal Tower mall,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 1 June 1985, A1; “Tower City, First Federal win grants,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 1 October 1985, E1; “New look ahead: 6 banks provide \$59 million loan for Tower City,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 8 January 1986, A10; “3 projects get grants from U.S.,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 30 January 1986, B1.

minority contractors and businesses. Tower City Center's developers' willingness to give authorities what they saw as important in order to get developmental incentives "significantly helped the project."¹⁸

The Greater Cleveland Growth Association spearheaded efforts to build awareness and support for the project. Two ways they helped do that was to reorganize "Cleveland's annual tradition of community-wide holiday celebration by creating the Twinkling Kingdom of Cleveland on Public Square" and by reopening the observation deck in Terminal Tower on the weekends which had been closed since 1977.¹⁹ Also important in raising awareness of the project was the Urban Mass Transit Authority's approval of a new station at Tower City as requested by the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority. They also let RTKL Architects, Inc., design the new facility which would connect the Shaker and Airport-Windermere transit lines more easily.²⁰ By connecting the Shaker and Airport-Windermere lines in the new complex, airport travelers could park at one of the rapid transit's parking lots and simply take the rapid directly to Public Square and take a short walk to the airport line.

At the "ground-breaking" ceremony in October 1986, the president of the Stouffer Hotel Co. renamed the Stouffer Inn on the Square to Stouffer Tower City Plaza Hotel to conceptually and physically integrate the hotel with Tower City Center. At this time, Tower City started to try to get both national and international tenants into the complex. It used national advertising that focused on the positives of locating or relocating in Cleveland. Then it used a "direct-mail postcard campaign" to lure people outside of the

¹⁸ Grabowski and Leedy, 50; "Businesses await return to renovated Tower City," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 20 July 1988, C8.

¹⁹ Grabowski and Leedy, 50; "Tower's observation deck will be open on weekends," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 11 August 1980, C22; "View from tower deck available again," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 12 August 1980, A4.

²⁰ Grabowski and Leedy, 50.

Cleveland market. Third, it produced three dimensional pop up models that illustrated the project. Agents of Tower City employed these models when approaching a potential client. As a result of these efforts, “a Ritz Carlton Cleveland Hotel became part of the project, joining with Higbee’s Department Store and Stouffer Tower City Plaza Hotel to provide essential anchors.”²¹ The developers sought out stores that were new to Ohio and they were successful. At least twenty-four out of one hundred and ten of the stores that were to open in Tower City were new to Ohio. Thirty-five were new to the Cleveland region. They also attracted numerous eating establishments ranging from fine dining to fast food. An eleven screen movie theater also provided another recreation option other than shopping or eating. In order to help people see the retail stores as a separate component in the complex, Tower City officials name the new mall within the complex “The Avenue.”²² The whole Van Sweringen complex, including Terminal Tower, “underwent major renovations, meaning that the older elements in the complex were upgraded to suit their new environment.” By upgrading the complex to include retail, hospitality, and office spaces, Tower City was not dependent on a single market for success.²³

While Tower City had a leasing and marketing challenge, not unlike other similar projects, a bigger challenge was the public-private partnership aspect of the project. This also extended development and construction time because it took longer for decisions to be made. It took over one year to secure public funding for the new RTA station. Then, a review group monitored expenditures because it was a private developer using public

²¹ Grabowski and Leedy, 50-51.

²² Grabowski and Leedy, 51.

²³ Grabowski and Leedy, 52.

funds. Once the new station was completed, the RTA took over operations.²⁴

In 1986, the developers released the design of the new Tower City Center. Local preservationists immediately criticized the design because it did not preserve the “essential parts of the historic structure.” In the design, “the arcade from Public Square to Prospect Avenue [was] to be demolished, the ramps leading down to the station level [were] to be removed, the east and west concourses...were to go, and the steam concourse was to be dramatically altered.”²⁵ Although there were many major alterations to the historic fabric of the complex, the state historic preservation officer approved the developers’ request for the historic preservation tax credit. Under the U.S. Secretary of Interior’s standards, both the regional office of the National Park Service in Philadelphia and the National Park Service in Washington D.C. turned down the developers’ application.²⁶ The National Park Service proposed a plan that would fall into the Secretary’s standards, but the developers refused to reuse the complex in that fashion.²⁷ Instead, “the need for more retail space to make the adaptive reuse of the terminal economically viable won out over the desire to make [it] a historic preservation project.”²⁸

The architects of this project, under the direction of Joseph J Scalabrin of RTKL Architects, Inc., had unique problems to face in the redevelopment of the complex. While they wanted to “preserve Cleveland’s heritage and the complex’s feel,” they also “wanted to create contemporary spaces that would illuminate the future.”²⁹ In order to preserve the complex’s feel and create a new space, the architects wanted to have a space that fit in

²⁴ Grabowski and Leedy, 52.

²⁵ Grabowski and Leedy, 52.

²⁶ “Tower City is denied historical tax credit,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 13 May 1986, A1.

²⁷ \$8 million tax break denied for Tower City,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 14 August 1986, A1.

²⁸ Grabowski and Leedy, 52.

²⁹ Grabowski and Leedy, 52-53.

with the surrounding area, so they left out a primary façade. Since the retail area had to be made to fit the historic complex while fitting into the “downtown environment,” the project had to be “more vertical, thus increasing the problem of facilitating indoor pedestrian traffic.” The architects also had to consider rush hour traffic within the terminal and how to keep them from interfering with other users of the retail area. While parking was an increasing problem for people in Cleveland, the project’s site allowed for 4,000 parking spaces with the possibility of adding 4,000 more. This gave the retail project an advantage over other “downtown developments on or near Public Square.”³⁰

When designing the new space, the architects wanted to use the “structural system already in place.” Essentially, they designed a “new building within an old one.”³¹ While the architects solved many problems when creating the new design for Tower City, “one of the most vexing was the low ceiling height in some of the proposed pedestrian and retail areas.” In order to help them solve the problem, the architects created “full-scale mock-ups” of the space. This technique has been used for a long time by architects and it enabled them to “test their visual solution for making the ceiling appear higher than it actually is, thereby avoiding claustrophobia among the users.”³²

The new mall, as mentioned above, is called “The Avenue.” The architects separated The Avenue into three areas, including the Tower Court, the Station Court, and the Skylight Concourse.³³ The first area, Tower Court, is a retail and office space that goes from Public Square to Prospect Avenue. This space has two levels which people can access from Public Square. The second level continues all the way to the river into

³⁰ Grabowski and Leedy, 53.

³¹ Grabowski and Leedy, 53.

³² Grabowski and Leedy, 53.

³³ “Strolling The Avenue: Renovation mixes aspects of old look with new,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 25 March 1990, A16; Grabowski and Leedy, 53-55.

another retail and office space. The main portion of Tower Court is a “four-story atrium crowned by a clear glass dome that saturates the area with changing patterns of natural light.”³⁴ Underneath the glass dome are escalators that take people down to “Tower Court’s first level, which was the concourse level of the old train station.”³⁵ The area beyond Tower Court that goes to the river is called Station Court and it is located beneath Prospect Avenue. This level contains the “RTA commuter facility” and it has “direct access” to Prospect Avenue where people can get on a bus after riding the rapid transit train into the station (Figures 17 and 18). The Prospect Avenue entrance has a new façade that has a “strategically placed small, clear glass ribbed dome, which presents a new, memorable view of Terminal Tower.”³⁶ The third section of The Avenue, called Skylight Concourse, is situated exactly where the old concourse was in the Union Terminal. The developers kept the same floor plan for this section as was in the terminal and it is located between Prospect Avenue and Huron Road.

While they used the same floor plan, “a new structural system was placed within it.” They removed part of the concourse to make it “twice as tall” and they added “new architectural elements made of modern materials.” The old station had a skylight in it, so the developers added a “new barrel-vaulted skylight—reminiscent of the old one” (Figure 19). This is what gave this section of The Avenue its name. There is also a second level within this section that can be reached from Public Square. People can get to the main level of the Skylight Concourse from Public Square “via a sculptural stairway” (Figure 20). Upon arrival at the main level people can watch a “dancing water display” (Figure 21). The Skylight Concourse “serves as a pedestrian hub and location for community

³⁴ Grabowski and Leedy, 54.

³⁵ Grabowski and Leedy, 54.

³⁶ Grabowski and Leedy, 54-55.

functions.”³⁷

The Tower Court level retains many of the original brass storefronts. These storefronts are also in their “original location beneath the old vaulted ceiling.” Nearly twenty-five percent of the vaulted ceiling was demolished and “replaced with a glass dome and deeply recessed windows.” There are also original brass chandeliers which hand over The Avenue’s escalators. Many of the “old marble columns and floors and original plaster moldings and friezes have been cleaned and patched.” The floors are new and made of “multicolored terrazzo in a geometrical design copied from the English Oak Room.” The new steel railings in The Avenue are “decorated with ornamental brass medallions saved from the old Steam Concourse.” While the developers used original brass storefronts and lighting fixtures where possible, much of The Avenue’s architectural elements are recreated. The only room in the former Union Terminal to be truly preserved “and restored to its original condition” was the English Oak Room.³⁸

Observers of the project noted that “Tower City [is] a shining example of what the taxpayer, coupled with the private investor, can accomplish.” When speaking of Tower City Center, newspaper authors usually talk about the whole complex and not just The Avenue. For this reason, it is unclear exactly how much The Avenue cost to create. However, it is known that the developers projected a cost of \$400 million for the whole Tower City Center. More than \$100 million came from “public subsidies.” In return, the city would get approximately 3,000 jobs within the complex. We know that of the public subsidies, three UDAGs went to the redevelopment of the terminal into The Avenue.³⁹

³⁷ Grabowski and Leedy, 55.

³⁸ “Strolling The Avenue: Renovation mixes aspects of old look with new,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 25 March 1990, A16; Grabowski and Leedy, 55.

³⁹ “Tower re-emerges as city centerpiece,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 25 March 1990, A1.

Developers anticipated that seventy three businesses would open in The Avenue by October 1990.⁴⁰

The official opening of The Avenue was March 29, 1990 and it had “thirty retail stores and eleven eateries.”⁴¹ People celebrated the building’s new use with much fanfare. There was confetti, balloons and even Mickey Mouse attended in the Skylight Concourse.⁴² Thousands of people attended the opening celebration, an estimated 400,000 people came to The Avenue on the second day it opened, and over two million people celebrated the opening over the first four days.⁴³ Today, The Avenue has approximately 50 retail stores and approximately 30 eateries.⁴⁴

While many developers adapt railroad stations into retail and restaurant spaces, others choose to use them as visitor’s centers or even museums as is the case in Cincinnati. There were a number of proposed ideas and concrete solutions to adaptively reuse the Cincinnati Union Terminal. New ideas sprung up in the late 1950s to the 1980s, including converting it into a baseball stadium (1959), a museum (1962), an airport (1963), a shopping mall (1971), a county jail (1971), a school (1972, 1973, and 1974), a Greyhound bus station (1974), and an Olympic Hall of Fame (1975). Finally, in 1977 developer Joseph Skilken came up with the idea to turn the union terminal into a recreation center with stores. Its name was “Oz” and it had a roller skating rink in the rotunda and a “human pinball machine throughout the concourse.” While it seemed like a legitimate proposal, Skilken’s “Oz” idea was not accepted. He did not, however, give up.

⁴⁰ “Swanky shops have Tower City roster brimming,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 25 March 1990, A16.

⁴¹ “Shops scrambling to open on The Avenue today,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 29 March 1990, A1.

⁴² “Disney sends its gang of characters to open store in Tower City Center,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 29 March 1990, E8.

⁴³ “Tower City crowd put at 400,000,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 1 April 1990, B4; Grabowski and Leedy, 55.

⁴⁴ “Directory,” Tower City Center, <<http://www.towercitycenter.com/go/dirListing.cfm?FL=all>>, 30 January 2010; “Directory of Stores” Tower City Center, Flyer, February 2010.

In 1980, Skilken opened a shopping mall in the union terminal instead of “Oz.”⁴⁵ Even while Skilken was using the terminal as a shopping mall people were coming up with new ideas of how to use it. In 1982, city officials wanted it to be a convention center, an idea that came up several times in the union terminal’s history. A local group wanted to create a health, science, and industry museum. Sam Britton, a Cincinnati city council candidate wanted to turn it into a casino.⁴⁶ While all of these proposed ideas could coexist with the mall because of the terminal’s size, it is also possible these people felt the mall would eventually fail because it was already in decline as early as 1982. Tenants were unhappy with the developer and started to leave and the developer and city had a rocky relationship.⁴⁷

The first mention of the Museum of Natural History and the Cincinnati Historical Society using the Cincinnati Union Terminal as their home was in January 1985. The city and the two institutions tried to find a site for a proposed Heritage Center which was one project selected to celebrate the bicentennial of the city of Cincinnati. The number one site selected by the three parties was Cincinnati Union Terminal. Skilken, however, was still in control of the building.⁴⁸ In February 1985, the city proposed putting the Heritage Center in with a new shopping center developed by Arthur Ziegler and his Cranston Development Company who created Station Square in Pittsburgh. The city wanted

⁴⁵ “The Not-So-Golden Year,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 19 September 1983, D1:2.

⁴⁶ “Strauss Suggests Conventions in Terminal,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 24 February 1982, D4:4; “Expanding Convention Center a Priority,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 11 April 1982, B1:2; “Local Group Plans Science Museum at Union Terminal,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 1 August 1982, B9:1; Candidate Wants to Make Union Terminal a Casino,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 21 September 1983, F1:1.

⁴⁷ “Merchants at Union Mall Critical of Management,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 5 June 1982, D1:5; “Schwarz Toys Closing Shop in Terminal,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 16 March 1983, B2:6; “Terminal Lease Puts City on Sideline,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 9 September 1983, B1:1; “City Probing Whether Skilken Broke Lease By Not Keeping Terminal Full,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 14 September 1983, D4:3; “Jewelers Sue Union Terminal,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 14 December 1983, F3:2.

⁴⁸ “Use of Terminal Still Uncertain,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 13 January 1985, C3:1.

Skilken out of the terminal as only one tenant remained; however, “the city council [balked] at the approximate \$3 million buyout cost of Skilken’s long-term lease.” Some council members also feared “that the city would be forced to pay the museums’ renovation costs, which [were] estimated at as much as \$37 million.”⁴⁹

By April 1985 there was already talk of putting a “five-year, .5-mill levy for a proposed bicentennial Heritage Center.” The levy would cost the average taxpayer six dollars more on their property taxes. According to Gale Peterson, director of the Cincinnati Historical Society, “a levy for the center, tentatively planned for the Union Terminal, may go on the November ballot if business and public officials back the measure.”⁵⁰ By this point there was very little talk about a shopping complex mixed with the Heritage Center. In July 1985, the city bought back the union terminal from Joseph Skilken for three million dollars.⁵¹ At the same time, the University of Cincinnati released a survey commissioned by the Museum of Natural History and the Cincinnati Historical Society that found seventy-seven percent of the people contacted thought that “the Heritage Center would be a valuable addition to the community.” Yet, only half of the registered voters said that they would vote for the tax levy to help develop the museum.⁵² While only half of the voters were willing to pass a tax levy for the museum, it was clear that there was considerable support for the idea. The support was not that surprising since Cincinnati has been known for its cultural activities since at least the 1920s.

In November, there was a more formal announcement of the city’s intent to

⁴⁹ “City Has a Plan to Resuscitate Union Terminal,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 19 February 1985, B1:4.

⁵⁰ “Tax Hike, New Levy Discussed,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 2 April 1985, A1:1.

⁵¹ “City to Buy Terminal, Sell Fay Apartments,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 4 July 1985, C2:5.

⁵² “UC Survey Shows Support for Museum,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 6 July 1985, C3:3.

buyout Skilken's lease to create the Heritage Center and more information given to the public on how the city and the two museums were going to raise the necessary funds. Gale Peterson was an integral part of making the museum a reality and he took a partial leave of absence from the historical society to "help guide those efforts, including fundraising." Peterson announced that the museums hoped to receive funding from a Hamilton County tax levy, state grants, and corporate contributions. It also seems that there was break between the bicentennial committee and the museums as they were now raising funds for their projects separately. The museum center was no longer a bicentennial project as they reached a "friendly agreement that they won't cross each other's paths in seeking corporate contributions for their projects."⁵³

In May 1986, the Hamilton County voters approved a levy that would give the museums \$41.7 million to adaptively reuse the union terminal. The vote was very close as it passed 50.7 percent to 49.3 percent. It was also announced that the levy money would be "matched with an \$8 million state grant."⁵⁴ The following month *The Cincinnati Enquirer* reported that the renovation would cost an estimated forty million dollars. It would take twenty-six million dollars for building construction which would include the new Omnimax theater, eight million for exhibit construction, and three million for "equipment and furnishings."⁵⁵ In June, Hamilton County commissioners picked Glaser and Myers, a local architect firm, to oversee the renovation of the Union Terminal. The new Center would have three entities in it including the Cincinnati Historical Society, Museum of Natural History and Children's Discovery Center. Funding came from two sources, including \$33.7 million from a levy and \$8 million in

⁵³ "Heritage Museum Put in Layaway," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 12 November 1985, A1:5.

⁵⁴ "Heritage Center Levy Approved," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 7 May 1986, B1:1.

⁵⁵ "Workers sought to supervise Union Terminal conversion" *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 18 June 1986, E4:1.

state grant money.⁵⁶ As noted in the survey, only a few more than half of the voters voted for the levy. It still showed that the community valued the project and what happened to their beloved union terminal.

In the same month some potential problems with the financing occurred due to changes in federal tax law which stated that five percent of the levy money had to be used in thirty days and rest within three years. It was a problem because the parties involved knew it would take longer than three years to renovate the Union Terminal, so they decided to issue the bonds early to avoid those new tax laws. City and county officials also wanted it stated in the agreement between them and the museums involved that the museums would be responsible for and overrun costs. No money would be released to the Heritage Center until this provision was met. Joseph M. DeCourcy, a county commissioner, also stated that the project developers should be prepared to go through the bidding process twice as the county wanted one bid from a minority contractors and one with no minority requirements.⁵⁷

In early December, the formal agreement between the city and the museums was still under consideration. The main concern, according to Councilman James Cissell, was funding because state budget officials' correspondence said that the states \$8 million dollar contribution was contingent upon the museums' ability to raise \$10 million in private donations. A group, Union Terminal Associates, was formed by the museums to run the Heritage Center. This group hoped "to open the rotunda-lobby area in 1988 for special events during Cincinnati's bicentennial." The museums planned to open in the

⁵⁶ "Local architects picked," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 2 July 1986, C2:1.

⁵⁷ "Heritage financing speeded up," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 23 July 1986, D1:5.

Union Terminal in 1989.⁵⁸ By mid-December, the city was ready to approve the museum deal. The city would contribute \$3 million dollars to buy back the Union Terminal and would lease the building to the museums for ten dollars a year for ninety-nine years. The city would not be responsible for building maintenance or operating costs. Also, the Union Terminal Associates had to comply with city and state “minority participation requirements” or the city could shut down the project at any time.⁵⁹ Since the government was funding much of the adaptive reuse project in Cincinnati, the project leaders had to comply with any requests by the government. This included things such as matching funding with private donations to meeting minority requirements in the contracts. The city greatly supported the project because of their willingness to buy back the terminal and only charge ten dollars a year in rent.

In May 1987, the development of the project hit a small snag. The department store, Loehmann’s, occupied the rotunda of the Cincinnati Union Terminal. Unfortunately, they did not want to relocate without compensation in the amount of \$925,000. The Hamilton County commissioners refused to offer the store any amount of money until the store detailed exactly what it would cost them to relocate. Hugh P. Evans, president of the Union Terminal Association, said the money was included in the budget of the redevelopment of the terminal. However, Commissioner Norman Murdock, said that he found it “unacceptable and repugnant” to take nearly \$1 million from a project supported by a tax levy and he felt the taxpayers would feel the same way.

By the end of July, the Museum Center Foundation (possibly the former Union Terminal Association), came to an agreement with Loehmann’s. The foundation would

⁵⁸ “City concerned about Union Terminal funds,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 11 December 1986, F4:1.

⁵⁹ “City ready to OK deal for museums,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 16 December 1986, n.p.; “Union Terminal agreement OK’d,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 18 December 1986, E7:1.

pay up to \$925,000 if the store relocated in Cincinnati or Hamilton County. If they could not relocate within Hamilton County, the store would get the full amount.⁶⁰ In September 1987, the county commissioners picked the Messer/Cargile Association as construction manager for the renovation of the terminal. They were paid a rate not to exceed 6.5 percent of the projected \$32.1 million cost. The construction manager's responsibilities included preparing estimates, assuring cost and quality control, meeting set deadlines, and "securing satisfactory Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Business Enterprise participation in the project."⁶¹

In May 1988, Hamilton County officials stated that the cost to renovate the union terminal would be \$5 million more than projected. The increase was due to asbestos removal. Also, the original projection did not include the Loehmann's buyout as stated earlier by the Union Terminal Association president. It also did not include the \$2 million for the management services of the Messer/Cargile Association and another approximately \$2 million in architect fees.⁶² In September 1988, there was talk of Amtrak moving back to the union terminal with both county and museum officials liking the idea.⁶³ After a seventeen month fundraising drive, the Museum Center Foundation raised \$14.5 million. \$11 million dollars would go to operating costs once the museum center was opened and the rest was designated for the increase in renovation costs. By this point, the renovation was projected to reach a cost of \$50 million.⁶⁴ The museum only allocated enough funds to relocate two of Winold Reiss's murals due to the budget problems, so they called upon local philanthropists to donate the \$150,000 needed to

⁶⁰ "Loehmann's terminal lease demand irritating officials," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 6 May 1987, D4:1.; "Terminal group will pay store," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 21 July 1987.

⁶¹ "Messer/Cargile gets nod for Union Terminal job," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 10 September 1987, D2:2.

⁶² "Terminal cost raised \$5 million," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 21 May 1988, C1:1.

⁶³ "Union Terminal plan running on new track," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 13 September, 1988, A7:1.

⁶⁴ "\$14.5 million netted for museum," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 12 October 1988, C3:7.

relocate the other two that would be covered by the new Omnimax Theater. At the time, Gale Peterson, director of the Cincinnati Historical Society, said

If they are encased, it won't be the end of the world... There's always the possibility at some point in the future that the Omnimax Theater could go out of vogue and they could go back in and rescue the murals. Still it would be make an awfully nice Christmas present if we were to get the money to keep them from being boarded up.⁶⁵

Although the county said it would not provide any more funds other than the \$33.7 million provided in a tax levy, the city was willing to add more than its \$3 million contribution to buy the terminal back from Joseph Skilken. In January 1989, the city appropriated the \$150,000 necessary to relocate the murals threatened to be boarded up and covered by the new theater. In April, the Hamilton County commissioners approved a \$12.4 million "package of construction bids" for the renovation the union terminal. The bids included work on the "heating, air conditioning and ventilating, plaza waterproofing, electrical system, plumbing, fire protection, interior masonry, hydraulic lifts, earth work, and interior concrete." At the same time the project developers reported that the Omnimax Theater and restaurants would open in the museum center in late 1990 and the museums would open in 1991.⁶⁶

In August 1990, the Cincinnati Railroad Club decided it would return to its previous home in the union terminal. They signed a contract with the museum center to return to the union terminal. The club also restored the control tower for use as their permanent home. The following month it was announced that Scott Johnson would be the executive director of the Museum Center at Cincinnati Union Terminal. His appointment came after working as Cincinnati's city manager and serving on the union terminal board.

⁶⁵ "Union Terminal seeks donor," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 15 December 1988, C2:3.

⁶⁶ "City council finds funds for projects," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 10 January 1989, A8:6; "County accepts bids on Union Terminal work," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 27 April 1989, D3:3.

He would be responsible for overseeing the move of the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History and the Cincinnati Historical Society into the union terminal, as well as overseeing final construction of the terminal. In late October 1990, Museum Center representatives gave a definite date of November 10, 1990 for when parts of the museum center would open. At that point what little was left of construction, such as painting and cleaning, would be completed. On November 10, the Omnimax Theater would open, as well as four exhibits including “Dinamation: Return of the Giants,” “All About you,” “Pathways to Change,” and “On the Road to Union Terminal.” Other exhibits would be added throughout the 1990s which would replace temporary or traveling exhibits. Exhibits that were already in progress to be opened at a later date were “a replica of a Kentucky limestone cave complete with bats, an exhibit on the Ice Age, and a display of fossils and skeletons recovered from the La Brea tar pits.” It was also announced that Amtrak could return to the terminal as early as June 1991.⁶⁷

While creating the new Museum Center at Union Terminal, architects, craftsmen, and skilled artisans were as careful as they could “to preserve as much as possible of the original Union Terminal building.” Arthur Hupp III, project designer for Glaser Associates, said, ““you have to preserve what’s there while you’re making it functional for today’s needs. You keep worrying that you might break something.””⁶⁸ Restoring the terminal was a challenge at time because of what was done to the terminal before the museum took it over. When Loehmann’s used the rotunda, they used a “ramset” instead of a drill to put holes in the floor, meaning that the workers had a harder time filling the

⁶⁷ “Railroad club on track back to Union Terminal,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 30 August 1990, C7:4; “Scott Johnson to head museum,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 26 September 1990, D2:1; “Terminal to reopen with a roar,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 29 October 1990, A5:2.

⁶⁸ “Art of Restoration,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 28 October 1990, I1:2.

holes and matching up the colors. The workers installed new flooring and also fixed the “holes and cracks that had to be matched in the rotunda floor.” Most of the work that was done in the Union Terminal was completed in spaces that were never open to the public. The museum spaces are actually underneath the plaza in front of the terminal. Since there were leaks in the plaza and the plaza was the roof of the museums, the “entire plaza surface had to be removed and replaced except for the fountain.” In the curving wings on each side of the terminal, aluminum railings and gratings had to be replaced and missing terra cotta tiles were replaced with painted cement.

At the time of the transformation of the Union Terminal into the museum center, “little art restoration was needed.” Specialists found that the mosaics were in good condition and that the carved linoleum, though crackled, was also in good condition. Paintings on paper were the only items to have been damaged and they were taken down for restoration at a later date. The four murals that remained at the terminal after the concourse was torn down in 1973 had to be moved. It turned out that “the murals were not just attached to the wall,” but were actually a part of the wall. The murals are partly mosaic but also partly cement (Figure 22) The workers had to cut the murals from the wall and encase them in steel frames so they would not crack. While moving two of the murals that were curved, one cracked. Those two murals depicting trains are now at the entrance of the Cincinnati Historical Society Library (Figures 23 and 24). As of October 1990, the other two murals were crated “awaiting installation elsewhere in the Historical Society.”⁶⁹

While those restoring the Cincinnati Union Terminal said that the mosaic murals were in good condition, they also noted that they could use cleaning. The task would cost

⁶⁹ “Art of Restoration,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 28 October 1990, 11:2.

up to \$150,000. Since the cleaning was not in the budget when they restored the building, museum officials held a “\$250-a-plate” dinner fundraiser. The dinner raised \$88,400 to help pay for the “cleaning of the mosaics and other works of art in the terminal.” The total amount needed to clean the mosaics and the rest of the artwork in the terminal was \$300,000. While all cleaning was on hold while the money was raised, museum officials had a plan for what needed to be cleaned and repaired. The items included in the project were the cleaning Pierre Bourdelle’s murals in the ladies’ waiting room, the repairing of “the city map on the ceiling of the president’s office and the designs in wood veneer in the meeting room,” and the restoration of the café’s painted murals which they removed and put in storage while fundraising continued.⁷⁰ The Museum Center finally received enough money to clean the mosaics for the sixtieth anniversary of the terminal in 1993.⁷¹

When the museum opened on November 12, 1990, twenty thousand people came to visit over the weekend. They visited the new Cincinnati History Museum, the Museum of Natural History, the Cincinnati Historical Society Library, and the Omnimax Theater. The Museum Center had to be kept open an extra hour and extra shows had to be added at the theater. Currently, the Museum Center has an additional museum, The Duke Energy Children’s Museum. The combined museum attendance for all of the museums is over one million visitors per year.⁷² Considering that the population of Hamilton County was only 866,228 in 1990, many visitors to the museum had to be coming from outside the county.⁷³ The Museum Center is the place to be for its architectural beauty and

⁷⁰ “Terminal murals need a cleaning,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 13 November 1990, B8:1.

⁷¹ “Murals come clean for Union Terminal anniversary,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 11 March 1993, C1:2.

⁷² “History,” Museum Center at Cincinnati Union Terminal.

<http://www.cincymuseum.org/explore_our_sites/union_terminal/history/>.

⁷³ Information on the population of Hamilton County in 1990 can be found at the county government website at http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hcrpc/data_products/census_2000/1990_2000_census_tracts_population_change_table.pdf

cultural activities.

Cleveland and Cincinnati both had terminals considered as “white elephants” after the decline of passenger railroad traffic. Both cities struggled for nearly three decades before developers brought a viable project to each city. The Cleveland and Cincinnati Union Terminals represent two successful adaptive reuse projects as a mall and museum, respectively.

Conclusion

The question one must ask at the end of any study is whether or not the projects discussed were successful. As railroad stations, it is possible for anyone to conclude that they were not successful because their use was limited until the Second World War and thereafter. However, they were very successful as gateways to the communities, since they engendered civic pride from the time of their construction to the present. In the end, the adaptive reuse projects make both union terminals successful. The Avenue at Tower City Center in Cleveland added stores from its opening to the present. The Museum Center at the Cincinnati Union Terminal also added to its function from its opening by adding a children's museum.

By looking at the initial development and adaptive reuse of the Cleveland and Cincinnati Union Terminals, we learn not only about the terminals themselves, but also the mindset of the communities they are located in. From the initial development of both projects we learn that the union terminals could have been useful to both cities. However, the rapid rise of the automobile precluded any real success of the union terminals as passenger hubs. We also learned that communities can breathe new life into abandoned and underdeveloped railroad properties.

The Cleveland and Cincinnati Union Terminals were built and opened around the same time, both fell out of use and became "white elephants," and both have been successful adaptive reuse projects. Broadly speaking they are similar in nature. However, when looking in closer detail the two are very different. First, and most obviously, they have completely different architectural styles. While Cleveland is more classical in nature, Cincinnati is more modern. Also, Cleveland's initial development of the union

terminal was funded mainly by private investors, whereas Cincinnati's initial development was mainly funded by the city and those willing to buy bonds for its construction. The adaptive reuse projects also parallel the initial development. While Cleveland had some government help with financing the project, it was funded mostly through private investors. Cincinnati, on the other hand, had mostly government assistance with some help from private donors. Another way in which the terminals are different is in how the architects reused the buildings. In Cleveland, they used as much as the original fabric as possible, but they tore out a whole floor to create an open air feeling. They also did a lot of reproduction work in The Avenue. Cincinnati came as close as possible to restoring the terminal to its original state.

Cities and private investors made the investment in these union terminals initially for two reasons. First, it was more practical to have all the passenger railroad lines entering and leaving from a central location. Second, and possibly more importantly, they wanted to project an image to outsiders and citizens of their city's rise and prominence as a metropolis. Despite having very different architectural styles, both Cleveland and Cincinnati accomplished this. Even today, the community and outsiders recognize the union terminals as great architectural achievements and as former gateways to the communities.

Terminals all over the country were built with the impression that the passenger railroads would never cease to operate. Unfortunately, within fifty years of the time when most terminals were built, they would be unneeded. In the cases of Cleveland and Cincinnati, it was a mere twenty years. It is true that trains still entered and departed the stations. However, it was only a few compared to a few hundred per day at the height of

the two terminals use. The culprits, plain and simple, were airplanes, busses, and automobiles.

Since their use declined, so did their image as the gateway to the community. Sometimes the old adage “out of sight, out of mind” applies to certain circumstances. Fortunately, they were still valued as an asset to the community in both Cleveland and Cincinnati, even though they had been dubbed “white elephants.” It was just a matter of time before someone came up with a solid plan to reuse both of these terminals. Both now shine as a centerpiece of each community even though they are no longer truly the gateways to their respective communities.

We know that adaptive reuse can have varying degrees of success. This is also the case in Cleveland and Cincinnati. Overall, I would deem both adaptive reuse projects a success. However, Cleveland could be considered less successful than Cincinnati as an adaptive reuse project just based on observation of both places. I have been to both locations on several occasions over the last seven years on various days of the week. The Avenue in Cleveland tends to be busier on the weekends with very few people there during the week. The Avenue seems also to be the busiest when the rapid transit enters the complex. However, it is hard to estimate how many of those rapid passengers are using the complex to get to another destination or using The Avenue as their final destination. The Museum Center at Cincinnati Union Terminal is busy during the week and even busier during the weekend. On one occasion in February 2009, my fiancé and I went to the Museum Center on a Saturday morning and had to wait in line for nearly half an hour to get our tickets. During the week, I saw fewer adults and more children because of the school groups coming to the museum. There were more families with children on

the weekend, as well as other single adults and couples without children. What I learned from casual observation is that Cincinnati made the Museum Center more of a destination spot than Cleveland made The Avenue one.

APPENDIX

Illustrations:
Figures 1-24



Figure 1
Example of Romanesque Revival
architecture

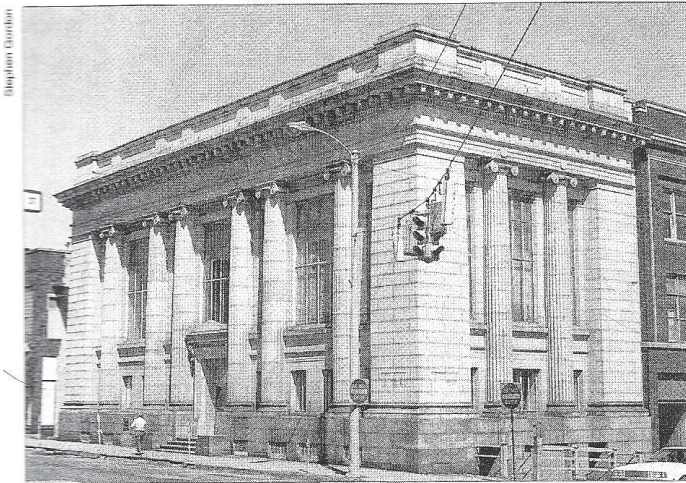


Figure 2
Example of Neo-Classical
architecture



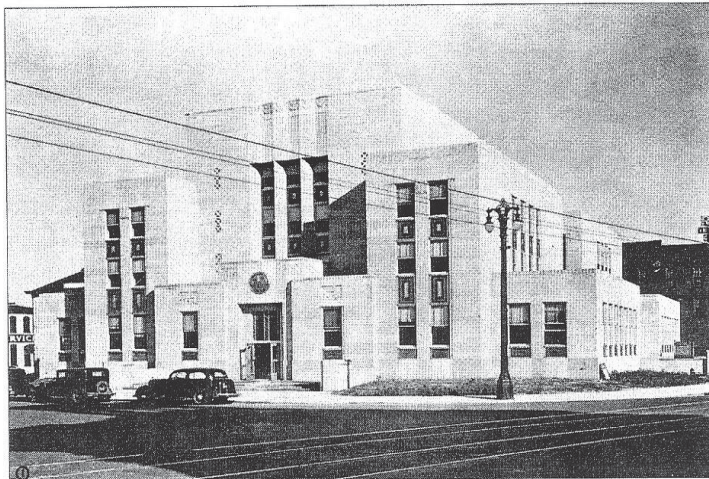
Beaux-Arts, Zanesville Post Office, Zanesville, 1906

Figure 3
Example of Beaux-Arts
architecture



Beaux-Arts, Columbus Public Library, Columbus, 1903

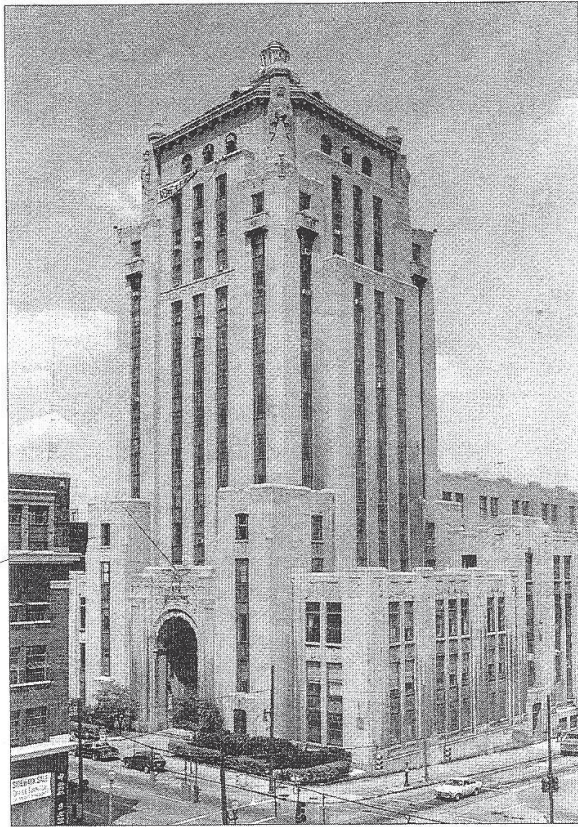
Figure 4
Example of Beaux-Arts
architecture



Art Deco, Hamilton Municipal Building, Hamilton, 1935

Figure 5
Example of Art Deco
architecture

Ohio Historical Society Archives Library



Art Deco, Cincinnati Post Times-Star Building, Cincinnati, 1933

Figure 6
Example of Art Deco
architecture



Second Renaissance Revival, Phoenix Club, Cincinnati, 1893

Figure 7
Example of Second
Renaissance Revival
architecture

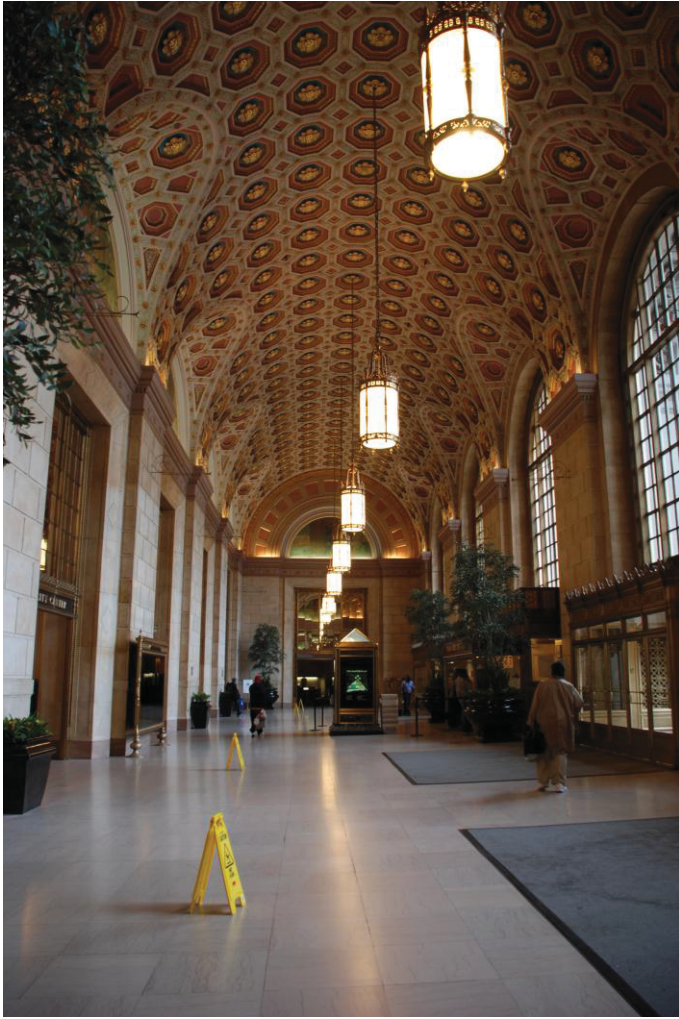


Figure 8
Portico at Tower City Center



Figure 9
One of 7 murals
in the portico at
Tower City
Center



Figure 10
Brass Chandeliers in portico at
Tower City Center



Figure 11
Façade of the Museum
Center at Cincinnati
Union Terminal



Figure 12
Relief of woman representing transportation
at the Museum Center at Cincinnati Union
Terminal



Figure 13
Relief of man representing commerce at the
Museum Center at Cincinnati Union
Terminal

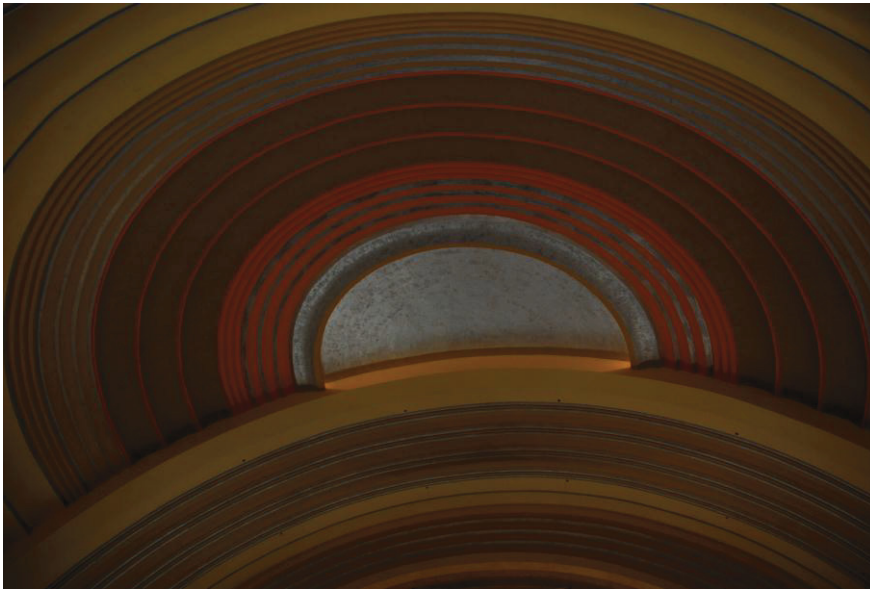


Figure 14
Rotunda ceiling
Museum Center
at Cincinnati
Union Terminal



Figure 15
Rotunda Mosaic
Museum Center
at Cincinnati
Union Terminal



Figure 16
Rotunda Mosaic
Museum Center at
Cincinnati Union
Terminal



Figure 17
Station Court
Tower City
Center



Figure 18
Station Court
West Concourse
Tower City
Center



Figure 19
Barrel-vaulted Skylight
The Avenue Skylight Concourse
Tower City Center



Figure 20
Sculptural
Staircase
The Avenue
Tower City
Center



Figure 21
Dancing water display that is not
dancing at the moment.
The Avenue Skylight Concourse
Tower City Center



Figure 22
Picture showing that
murals are a combination
of mosaic and cement.
Museum Center at
Cincinnati Union
Terminal



Figure 23
Mural outside the Cincinnati
Historical Society at Museum
Center at Cincinnati Union
Terminal



Figure 24
Mural outside the Cincinnati
Historical Society at Museum
Center at Cincinnati Union
Terminal

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