

Name: [Margaret Mancusi-Ungaro](#)

Where you are from: Marblehead, MA

Major: Architecture

Project Title *The Future Lives of Forgotten Industry: The Architecture of American Railroads*

In architecture classes, we study the monument, the cathedral, and the palace. We praise these buildings, but rarely discuss the bank, the school, or the home. The study of vernacular architecture truly allows us to witness the everyday priorities of the individual and the community. My project, *The Future Lives of Forgotten Industry: The Architecture of American Railroads*, explores the vernacular and how it adapts.

Train stations are a predominant example of vernacular architecture. They exemplify a town's priorities through history. A train station was often the first thing newcomers would encounter as they entered a town. The station was the “best foot forward” of the community. It is rare that such a structure is both politically and religiously neutral, and is still standing today. The stations often remained even when train service stopped, and they have taken on multiple lives and purposes as communities have changed and needed different programming. A train station no longer needs to be a train station, it can serve a municipal function, or a commercial one. Many stations have become new things multiple times, changing purposes every 10-15 years as the need arises.

This project began with data gathering and a typology study of train stations that already exist, done by first collecting national historic register listings, and cross referencing historic train maps to present satellite images. I researched the historic line, dates active present use, and implied current status of the structures. I then traveled to some of these stations to document them and develop a typology. In doing so, I have been able to determine the most common adaptations, how the buildings have changed over time, and through conversation, the impact these structures have on daily life.