

Learning Places Spring 2016

SITE REPORT #2

EXPLORING FAMILIAR TERRITORY



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INTRODUCTION

During this field trip, we were split into pairs and were asked to survey a cluster of blocks that were assigned to us. Aisel and I explored the territory of Farragut Housing, which is on the north border of Vinegar Hill. We were provided with a map from 1855, and thus made comparisons from this map.

PRE-VISIT REFLECTION

Our last visit felt quite fruitful and inspiring. There were many questions which arose during the visit, some of which I am hoping to further look into. Will the act of drawing choose observational skills for these problems, or will the hinder them instead?

SITE DOCUMENTATION (PHOTOS / SKETCHES)



Sands street is considered a wide street, with an island in between the road to separate the direction for



drivers. Sands street soon becomes intersected by the BQE, which is about forty feet above ground. It's yellow color brightens up the ambiance of the street. It looks as though the island from the image above was constructed after the introduction of the BQE.



These images show the intersection between Sand and Gold Street. This intersection is midway



between the Farragut Housing complex. The Farragut Housing Complex has a total of 10 housing buildings. On our site, we were given 3 buildings. Each building has 14 floors.



These images show the traces of Hudson Avenue and High street. The image above shows what may have been Hudson Avenue, looking onto Nassau street. The image below shows what may have been

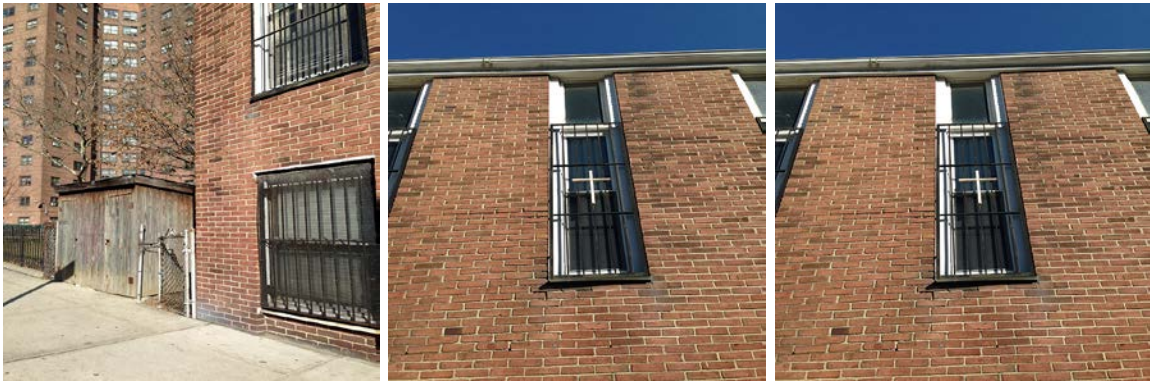


High Street, looking onto Navy street. The view to Nassau street reveals a direction connection to the street, whereby the curve is cut and sloped in the same way that it would for say a driveway or parking space. The image above also shows how High street may have intersected Hudson avenue. Now, the trace of each street is a pedestrian walkway.

To the northwest corner of Hudson Avenue and High street, Nassau Place existed. It's remnants are still in tact, and the roadway separates the now existing parking lot for these complexes.



The collection of images above celebrate the church on the corner of the Farragut Housing Complex. The church of the open door is on the corner of Gold and Nassau, next to the underbelly of the BQE. The church is evidence of an institutionalized building within the complex. Aside from two schools, which border the complex, the church emphasizes the idea of a community. There is no evidence of an entry condition at the corner of the building, but rather through the site of Farragut Housing itself.



It takes up several lots on the corner as it is about 5 bays by 8 bays wide. The church is two stories high, with iron fences on top of the windows. The fences emphasize the issue of protection, and are often unseen on a church. It was a big comical to witness the golden cross on top of these bars/fences. Next to the church is a wooden shed, which exhibits rust on the roof and discoloration on the front.

QUALITATIVE SITE OBSERVATIONS

1. Neighborhood / Street Character
 - a. Vinegar Hill, Ferragut Housing
 - b. Heavily industrial, typical of a housing project
2. Vitality of Neighborhood
 - a. General Description
 - i. Ferragut Housing Complex exhibits the same feeling that a typical housing complex would.
 - b. Pedestrian Activity
 - i. Pedestrian activity amongst the Ferragut Housing was much more dense than at the scale of Vinegar Hill. While sketching, I would note that several pedestrians walked through the public walkways within the housing complex--that is, only if they are residents here.
 - c. Vehicular Traffic
 - i. Vehicular traffic was almost absent here, within the complex, but ubiquitous around it.
3. Age of Buildings (provide evidence for prediction)
 - a. Each of the Farragut Buildings look relatively new, as if they were built in the late 20th century. Evidence of recent renovation is scarce (discoloration of bricks, etc)
 - b. There's a church that is on the north east end of the housing complex. I would gather that perhaps it is also a mid 20th century building, with a common bond surrounding it.
4. Relationship Between Buildings
 - a. Each housing complex is extremely widespread. The complex follows a corbusian idea of housing, whereby each complex is complimented with a vast landscape. While comparing the map from 1855, we have observed that one complex was allotted per each block.
 - b. Buildings outside of this housing complex are mostly institutional. P.S 307 corners the south end of the housing complex, whereas P.S 8 corners on the other side of it.
5. Building Details
 - a. The housing complex takes the form of an x shape, optimizing circulation and light. It's facade is covered with bricks, carefully placed but exhibits weathering and aging.
 - b. The church follows the same language of the housing complex buildings; It wears the same brick outfit. However, the bond that it carries is not the same as these complex buildings. The church is no taller than 2 stories, and has iron fencing around each window. Crosses are placed on each window as an obvious attempt to glorifying the building and making it into a church. The typology of the building looks much more like a residential building than a charge. The cross in plan is missing, and so is the grand

entryway. The issue of light is blocked by the iron fence and crosses as mentioned from before.

- c. The schools around the complex are also made out of brick, but P.S 8 looks more modern as there is evidence of concrete cladding instead of brick building.
6. Relationship to the Waterfront
- a. Farragut Housing exhibits next to no relationship to the waterfront.
7. Other Observations
- a. As compared to the 1855 map, it seems that the issue of urban renewal has completely depleted the previous condition of Sands and Gold Streets to Nassau and Flushing Streets. Vinegar Hill's main street, Hudson terminates at this complex, but it's remains are still intact. In fact, Hudson street still rips through the complex. While it has a slight level change (elevation of a sidewalk), hudson street still serves as a pedestrian walkway between inhabitants.
 - b. In addition to the preservation of Hudson street, H- is also carried throughout the complex. It rests perpendicular to Hudson street, making a perfect intersection in the middle. The plus sign like shape marks the ghost of Vinegar hill, but the perimeter around it is preserved by Sand street and Nassau.
 - c. Four blocks were combined to preserve the complex.
 - d. Alleyways were also depleted, except for Nassau Place, which is currently used as separation for the parking lot.

QUANTITATIVE DATA for Area of Study

Subject	Data
Street Names	Gold, Navy, Sands and Nassau streets.
Street Width	Rather large, since it is close to the BQE. Probably 60” wide
Street Pavement	The street pavement varies within interior and exterior of the complex. Within the street complex, walkways are paved but are not as smooth or wide as the asphalt on the roadways.
Building Heights	The complexes are each 14 stories high. The buildings around them around tiny compared to them, at 2-3 stories high.
Building Widths (Window Bays)	Each portion or side of the x shaped complexes are about 3 bay bays wide.
Building Types/Uses	Housing Complexes and Institutional / community buildings, such as schools and a church.
Empty Lots / Gardens	There is a vast amount of space between each complex. Upon studying the 1855 map, we had noticed that the between Sands and Gold and Nassau and Navy, there were a total of four blocks. While the remnants remain through the cut of Nassau and Hudson, each of the four blocks have a complex on them.
Shops / Restaurants	Not present
Industrial Shops	Not present

QUESTIONS to Research Further

QUESTIONS:

1. While High Street and Hudson Avenue were preserved, what happened to Bridge Road?
2. Why was Nassau Place preserved? It's the only substreet within the complex that still exists.
3. Why are there so many institutional buildings around the complex? Is it part of zoning rules for that area?
4. Why is Farragut Housing on the border of Vinegar Hill?

RESEARCH METHOD/SOURCE FOR EACH QUESTION ABOVE:

1. Question 1
 - a. Understand how and when Bridge Road was removed, through a series of maps and documents.
 - b. Analyze the change of planning through the series of maps and documents.
 - c. Understand when the Farragut Houses were planned / built through maps and NYCHA documents. Were any of the previous analyses informative or conclusive?
2. Question 2
 - a. Understand when Nassau Place was planned, through a series of maps and documents.
 - b. Again, understanding when the Farragut Houses were planned / built through maps, NYCHA documents. Were any of the previous analyses informative or conclusive?
3. Question 3
 - a. Understand zoning rules in NYCHA particular to Vinegar Hill, through looking up zoning maps and documents.
 - b. What are the present institutional buildings surrounding the Farragut Housing complex?
 - c. Were any of the previous analyses informative or conclusive?

SUMMARY / POST VISIT REFLECTION

The site of the Farragut Housing is a prime example of the Urban Renewal. I was pleased to see the physical manifestation of this phenomenon, as urban renewal combined four blocks along the border of Vinegar Hill. Fragments of the original blocks still remain, although some vital parts of it remain missing. This finding is puzzling, but also imperative in understanding the heart of Urban Renewal.