

Learning Places Spring 2016

SITE REPORT

Vinegar Hill Site Report(1)



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INTRODUCTION

The mission here was to explore the neighborhood as a whole, in attempt to determine what structures are original and what purpose may they have served, as well as what may be some newer structures and what influence they have on the surrounding original structures.

PRE-VISIT REFLECTION

I have never knowingly been to Vinegar Hill, although in the past year I have been downtown Brooklyn many times, and over the course of my short lived life span. I am a little anxious to go, and after reading the some of its history I am very interested. I am however trying to not set my expectations so high for what the sight may look like, so I am trying to keep my mind as open as possible until we actually visit the site. I do however hope that the places looks very cool and has some type of visual history but I will definitely be waiting until I see the site in person before coming to a conclusion about

my thoughts.

SITE DOCUMENTATION (Photos)



Located between Little Street and Evans Street is a Mansion built around 1806 which once housed the Commandant of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. This house for me just showcased some charm of Vinegar Hill.



Located on York Avenue and Navy Street and constructed between 1951 and 1952 are the Farragut houses. These housing units border the Brooklyn Navy Yard. By taking a picture of these buildings, it allows me to share some of its information. The building of these houses closed down eight streets. Also, the land that these units sit on onced was a place for sailors or anyone who worked along the waterfront to enjoy themselves, there were restaurants,

tattoo parlors, illegal drinking businesses and brothels.



Located on Little Street and Evans Street is a modern building, which breaks the old charm chain that Vinegar Hill has going on.

Though not all that clear to see, this is a photograph of a preserved structure that once supported and served a purpose for Trolley Cars. Located on Plymouth Street and Jay Street, these tracks and many others, take us back to a visualization flashback to when

these tracks were in full effect.



This is the view from the Brooklyn Bridge Park, quite a breathtaking view if I may say so myself.



This is one of two streets that were probably very busy way back when they were constructed.



Another street that may have also been busy, and a repurposed construction.

QUALITATIVE SITE OBSERVATIONS

1. Neighborhood / Street Character
 - a. Charming.
 - b. Historic.
2. Vitality of Neighborhood
 - a. General Description
 - i. Pretty mellow, very quiet.
 - b. Pedestrian Activity
 - i. Little to none.
 - c. Vehicular Traffic
 - i. None.
3. Age of Buildings (provide evidence for prediction)
 - a. Buildings on Plymouth and Hudson may roughly be 186 years (An online source-FNY).
 - b. At roughly 64 years are the Farragut Houses (Farragut Houses Wikipedia page).
 - c. The Commandant's Mansion is roughly 210 years old (An Online Source-Brooklyn Eagle).
4. Relationship Between Buildings
 - a. The buildings on Hudson were probably booming businesses, so potential competitors.
 - b. The Brick buildings may be supporting non brick buildings.
5. Building Details
 - a. Steel reinforcements decorated with star caps or star plates.
 - b. Running Brick Bonds, Common Brick Bonds, and Flemish Brick Bonds.
 - c. Average sized windows on most of the buildings.
6. Relationship to the Waterfront
 - a. The buildings on Plymouth and Hudson may have been direct paths to the Waterfront.
 - b. Buildings on Hudson and Water Street may have also been a busy passageway.
7. Other Observations
 - a. The different roads, cobblestone roads and smooth road pavements.
 - b. Common areas that were once opened are now fenced, preventing entrance.
 - c. The buildings that are most likely newly constructed.

QUANTITATIVE DATA for Area of Study

Subject	Data
Street Names	Hudson Avenue, York Avenue, Navy Street, Gold Street, Plymouth Street, Jay Street, Water Street, Front Street, Little Street, Evans Street, Harrison Alley, and John Street.
Street Width	Between 7 and 10 feet.
Street Pavement	Cobble Stone and Black top roads.
Building Heights	Around 10 feet.
Building Widths (Window Bays)	Anywhere between 18 and 27 feet.
Building Types/Uses	Residential, Commercial, and Mixed Use.
Empty Lots / Gardens	Harrison Alley.
Shops / Restaurants	Vinegar Hill House.
Industrial Shops	None that I am aware of.
Factories	Broovm(Brooom) & Pease Company was once up and running
Businesses	Gallery Gaia

QUESTIONS to Research Further

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the full story behind the 1806 mansion which once housed the commandant?
2. What is the reason for the mixture of the cobblestone roads and the smooth road pavements?
3. What were the purposes of constructing the Brooklyn Bridge Park?

RESEARCH METHOD/SOURCE FOR EACH QUESTION ABOVE:

1. Question 1
 - a. Looking online for articles
 - b. Looking through a library archive
 - c. Find the history behind the house, any information at all.
2. Question 2
 - a. Looking online for information
 - b. Find a book on roads
 - c. Look into the records of the neighborhood and see why there was a change in the roads
3. Question 3
 - a. Looking online for articles
 - b. Look at a map and see what the area looked like prior to construction.
 - c. Find out a common main purpose the space is serving for the public.

SUMMARY / POST VISIT REFLECTION

After visiting the site in Vinegar Hill, I definitely was spot on with the area having visual history, there was a lot of visual history all in the small area we covered. I was actually not all that taken away by the site which is a little weird for me considering I adore history, the reason being was, the area for me was just way too quiet and seemed very much vacant which scared me a little. I personally can't always enjoy something if I'm a little frightened. I saw so many cars but so few people. I suppose I'm so used to busy streets and sidewalks, experiencing that a part of Brooklyn could be "so dead", so to

speaking, shook me in my shoes a little. Seeing the site through a historian's lens or even an architecture's lens, yes this was awesome to take in all that great scenery. I look forward to our next visit, hopefully more people will be around and bring the streets to more life than it already has.