

Learning Places Spring 2016

SITE REPORT 02

The second Vinegar Hill visit



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INTRODUCTION

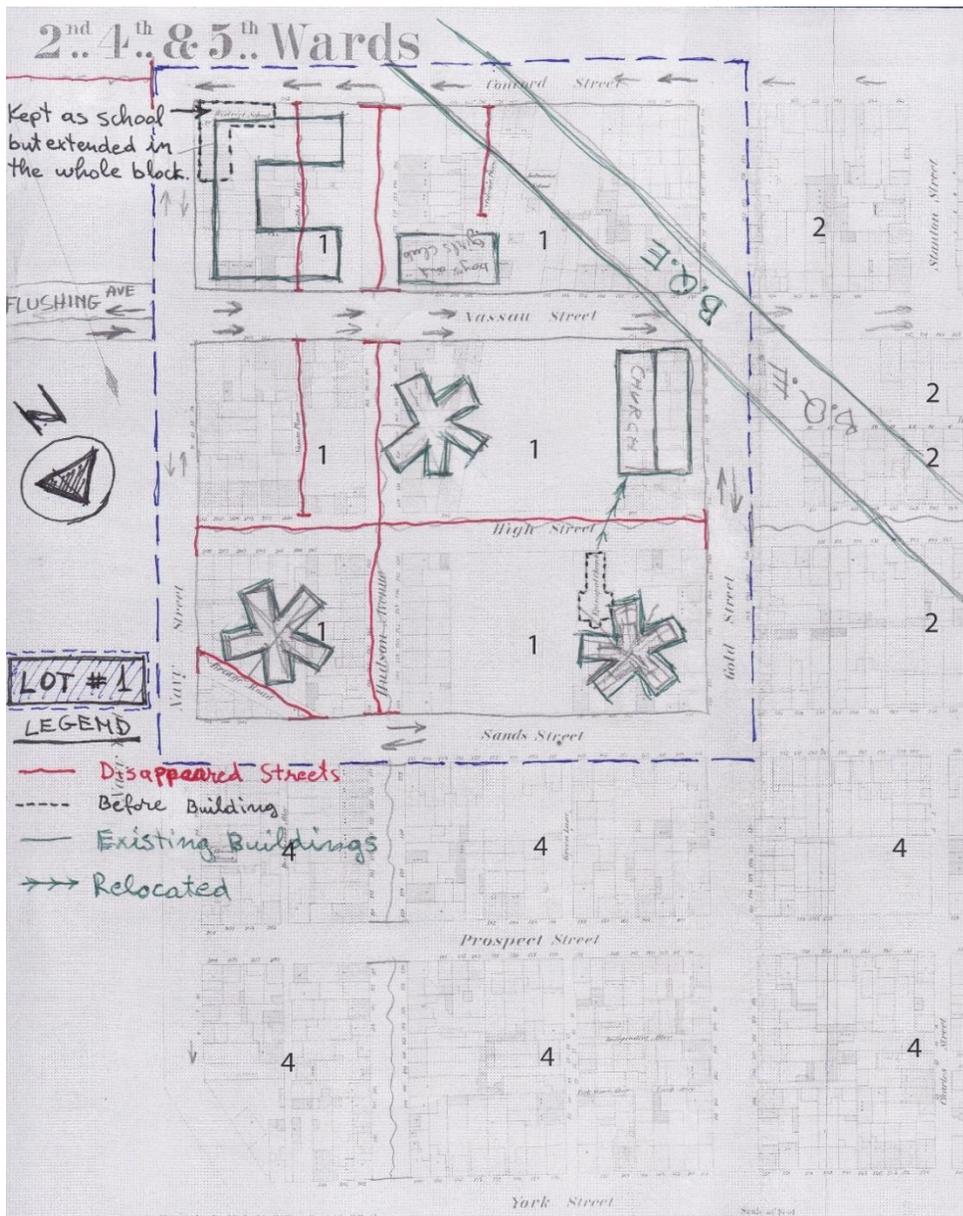
We were spread in groups and we were assigned a map section for each group. The scope of the activity was to walk onto the area that we were assigned and to look for any changes that were made from the map era to the existence of today. The map we worked with was the 2nd 4th & 5th Wards, City of Brooklyn 1855 made from William Perris. To me and my teammate was assigned the area of blocks between Sands Street, Concord Street, Gold Street and Navy Street.

PRE-VISIT REFLECTION

I was more positive and excited for the second Vinegar Hill visit since the weather was greater than the first site visit when we were freezing. This time we would have had the time to seat and do some sketches. I expected that we would go to some historic places in Vinegar Hill that are accessible to public

and that we would listen to some historian that will add more detailed information to our knowledge about this neighborhood. I was curious if there were more buildings with Flemish Bond brick work from 19th century around there, I enjoy just watching them and thinking of how much history they have seen, went thru and they would want to share with us. While writing about the first site visit report some questions came in my mind, so I was looking forward to ask some questions as well.

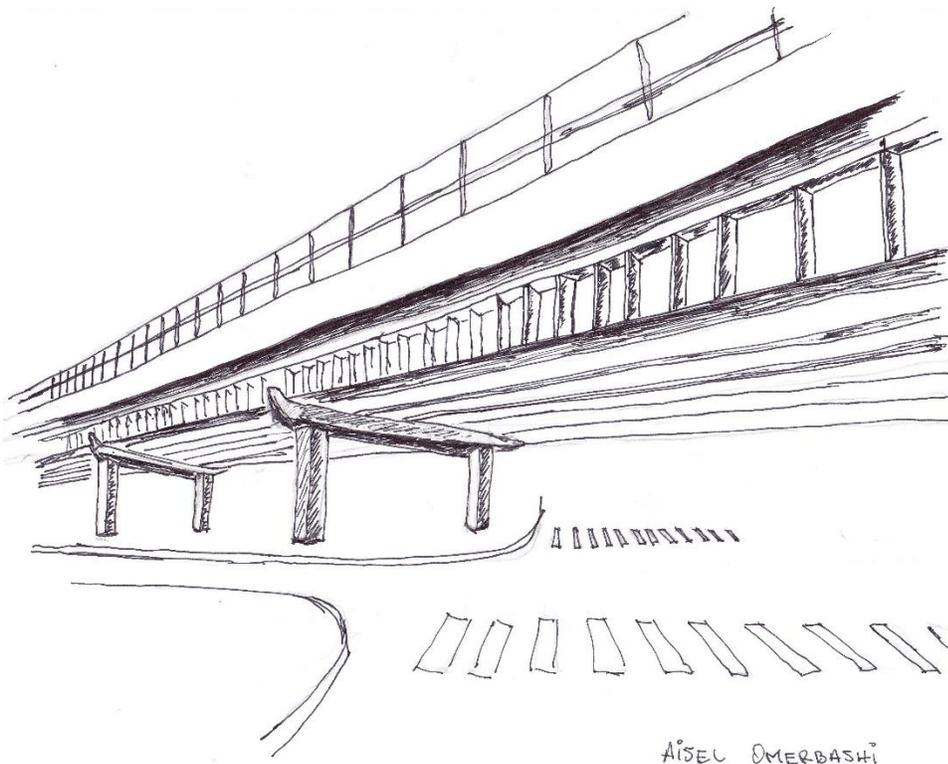
SITE DOCUMENTATION (photos/sketches)



This is the map that was given to us for the research of the before and after of the area. I have tried to make a "legend" of the changes that I noticed when I was walking through the given area. Everything on this blocks has been completely changed, except the school on the upper left side. The function of the space is still the same, but the building is newly constructed.



In this picture I wanted to show the Brooklyn Queens Expressway (BQE) going thru our site in the intersection of Nassau Street and Gold Street. BQE is going diagonally thru this block and all the houses on it at that time were demolished for the purpose of this project.



In this sketch I tried to show BQE going thru the block diagonally. A small portion of this block now is being used, most of the land on it is the property of the Department of Transportation (DOT).



This is The Church Of The Open Door that was relocated here from 209 Concord Street because of being on BQE's way. At that time it was called City Park Chapel and it was built on 1896.



This is the area where the existing school at that time was, and it was taking a corner of this block located on the left side of this picture. The newly constructed school expanded and took the whole block



This is the intersection of Gold Street and Sands Street. I am showing here two wide streets that weren't as large at that time. They expanded these streets when urban renewal came into play.



In this sketch I am showing a straight way in which approximately was located High Street and in the end of the way there is the wall that is part of BQE's entrance ramp. So this is another street/area

affected by the construction of BQE. This sketch portion is located inside the Farragut Housing complex.

QUALITATIVE SITE OBSERVATIONS

1. Neighborhood / Street Character
 - a. Vinegar Hill/Dumbo, Brooklyn.
 - b. Wide with island separators, two traffic lanes, bike path and parking on each side.
 - c. The streets are made out of asphalt and concrete.
2. Vitality of Neighborhood
 - a. General Description
 - i. Affordable housing buildings with green open spaces, a parking lot, a school, a church and a clubhouse.
 - b. Pedestrian Activity
 - i. Plenty of pedestrians considering the time we were went to visit the area.
 - c. Vehicular Traffic
 - i. Plenty of vehicular traffic on the big streets that supports well the circulation.
3. Age of Buildings (provide evidence for prediction)
 - a. Farragut Housing were built from 1950 to 1951. I did search for it online and I found a Wikipedia article that was dedicated to the Farragut Houses. The buildings height, American bond brick work and the aluminum doors and windows also show as well that it is built in mid-20th century.
 - b. The Church Of The Open Door was built in the location that is today on 1954, since it was demolished because of the BQE's project. I looked up this information at the churches website history. The details in this church are running bond brick work, metal doors and aluminum windows.
 - c. The school P.S. 287 Bailey k Ashford was built in mid-20th century as well. It has the common bond, metal doors and windows. They have almost the same detail where we can notice the building's age. Looks like this project for this blocks started in mid-20th century after the completion of the BQE section that goes thru this area, and look like the whole area was constructed at about the same time.
4. Relationship Between Buildings
 - a. In our studying area the buildings are far away from each other. The biggest space of our site is taken by high rise residential affordable houses buildings and their open spaces.
 - b. The other buildings like the church, the clubhouse or the school are apart from each-other but not as much as the residential buildings from one another.

- c. In our given area residential and commercial
- 5. Building Details
 - a. Running bond brick work
 - b. Aluminum windows
 - c. Buildings height
- 6. Relationship to the Waterfront
 - a. There is no relationship of this area with the waterfront. To have access to the waterfront you have take a 15 minutes walk or you can take a ride to it.
 - b. There may be a view relationship with the waterfront from the top floors.

QUANTITATIVE DATA for Area of Study

Subject	Data
Street Names	Sands Street, Nassau Street, Concord Street, Navy Street, Gold Street.
Street Width	Two way streets both included are approximately: 54' / 44' / 34' One way streets are approximately: 24'
Street Pavement	Asphalt and concrete
Building Heights	Residential 13-14 stories high, commercial 2-4 floors
Building Widths (Window Bays)	Residential are in star shape and each start's corner is 3-bays. Commercial ones are 11-14 bays
Building Types/Uses	Residential, commercial
Empty Lots / Gardens	Gardens, playgrounds, parking lots

Shops / Restaurants	N/A
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QUESTIONS to Research Further

QUESTIONS:

1. Is there any plan for Brooklyn Queens Expressway to expand to more lanes?
2. Why did they decide to remove an important street at that time like Hudson Avenue?
3. Did the closing of these streets and alleys affect this neighborhood's population decrease or vice versa?

RESEARCH METHOD/SOURCE FOR EACH QUESTION ABOVE:

1. Question 1
 - a. Department of Transportation webpage.
 - b. Street Blogs
 - c. Brooklyn Daily News
2. Question 2
 - a. School's library
 - b. Google "Hudson Street in Vinegar Hill"
 - c. Brooklyn Historical Society
3. Question 3
 - a. Old newspapers from the Brooklyn Public Library website.
 - b. Online Brooklyn history.
 - c. Oasis NYC map

SUMMARY / POST VISIT REFLECTION

The second site visit was pretty entertaining and what's more important was very educational. The comparison with the 1855 Wards map with the actual condition was dramatic. Many of the streets and alleys that existed at that time, now they don't exist anymore. The block where BQE goes through now used to be full with residential houses, houses that apparently were demolished for the expressway to be fulfilled. In the other blocks as well were big changes, going from 2-3 floors houses to 13-14 floors buildings. Experiencing these big changes made me appreciate more the Vinegar Hill area that has survived for all these years and that gives us the chance to witness the far past.

