

Learning Places Spring 2016

# SITE REPORT



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## INTRODUCTION

Our class mission was to explore a particular neighborhood in Brooklyn, name Vinegar Hill and compare how the neighborhood had changed over the years to the present time. During this site visit we were able to view a map of Vinegar Hill dated 1855. We noticed certain areas on the map such as Nassau Street, Harts Alley, and High Street were no longer there and were replaced by either roads or highways. Also on the map there used to be many streets and residential occupancy but now at the present time it's just abandon empty lots with no buildings or structures.

## PRE-VISIT REFLECTION

After a previous class trip, I can now have a clear visual of the old neighborhood of Vinegar Hill and what it used to be like. I would like to find out why a community once filled with life and hope is now filled with so many abandon areas that looks like a ghost town. I would also like to find out during our next archive visit why the architects during that time chose to use cobblestone style to build many building and structures in Vinegar Hill during the 1800's. Cobblestone style looks very old and ancient

but was it cheaper at that time to use cobblestone architecture? Below is an example of what a cobblestone building and street looks like. As you can see it is very different from our present time.



## SITE DOCUMENTATION (photos/sketches)



This is a newly renovated structure of an apartment complex located on 99 Gold Street. There used to be an old abandoned warehouse on this lot.



This is an empty abandoned lot between a residential building on the left and a warehouse on the right. It is located on Hudson Avenue between Water Street and Front Street.



This is Globe Storage and Moving Company, it is a warehouse located on the corner of Front Street and Hudson Avenue. Before this warehouse was build this used to be an old abandoned lot.



This is an old cobblestone building located on Hudson Avenue between Water Street and Front Street. This building was not re-model for modern time. It still has the same exact doors it had in the 1980s. As you can see these doors were very strong and durable.

## QUALITATIVE SITE OBSERVATIONS

1. Neighborhood / Street Character
  - a. Peaceful
  - b. Historical
2. Vitality of Neighborhood
  - a. General Description
    - i. Quite
  - b. Pedestrian Activity
    - i. None
  - c. Vehicular Traffic
    - i. A little bit not too much
3. Age of Buildings (provide evidence for prediction)
  - a. Some building are very old with bricks that look chip, or about to fall off. I believe that these building was erected before the 1950.

- b. The newer building has bond brickwork and have a little wear and tear over time in the weather.
4. Relationship Between Buildings
    - a. The building that was updated for modern time was falling apart so they have to change the structure.
    - b. The older building is use for housing.
  5. Building Details
    - a. Brick bonds around the building to help keep them up.
    - b. Different design on the building gave a more divert look.
    - c. Strong and heavy doors on the old building.
  6. Relationship to the Waterfront
    - a. Give people access to the river to move and get their goods from the boats.
    - b. A path was made so people could see the view of Manhattan.
  7. Other Observations
    - a. Some roads had tracks for carts for transport.
    - b. Building was rebuilding so they would lose their design and their history.
    - c. Some areas are close to the public and weren't like how people saw them before.

## QUANTITATIVE DATA for Area of Study

Subject	Data
Street Names	Hudson Avenue, York Avenue, Navy Street, Gold Street, Plymouth street , Water street , Front street,
Street Width	Between 8 to 10 feet
Street Pavement	Stones and tar
Building Heights	Around 11 feet

Building Widths (Window Bays)	Somewhere Between 15 to 30 feet
Building Types/Uses	Residential, Commercial ,
Empty Lots / Gardens	Harrison alley
Shops / Restaurants	Brooklyn Roasting Company
Industrial Shops	None that I know

## QUESTIONS to Research Further

### QUESTIONS:

1. Why are there so many empty spot in the middle of some building?
2. What are the reasons for fences around the alley and many abandon areas?
3. Why did they take so long to build new builds and structures in many of these abandoned lots?

### RESEARCH METHOD/SOURCE FOR EACH QUESTION ABOVE:

1. Question 1
  - a. Library
  - b. Google/Internet
  - c. Wikipedia
  - d. New York Public Library - Archives division
2. Question 2
  - a. Library
  - b. Google/internet
  - c. Wikipedia
  - d. New York Public Library - Archives division



### 3. Question 3

- a. Library
- b. Google/Internet
- c. Wikipedia
- d. New York Public Library - Archives division

## SUMMARY / POST VISIT REFLECTION

It was sad to see such bright and lively neighborhoods and community in Vinegar Hill experience such a downfall due to the effects of urban renewal. Changes are good when it doesn't impact the lives of a vast majority of individuals. I can't help to think that the government had no sympathy or remorse for the individuals that were impacted by the changes of urban renewal. It was good to have new streets and highways to ease the flow of traffic but at the same time the lives of family and individuals should also matter. I believe that building houses and apartment complexes on the vast amount of abandoned lots in a timely manner in Vinegar Hill for the many homeless families and individuals might have done a lot of good for the community.