

Learning Places Fall 2018

SITE REPORT #1A

Zuccotti Park



The forest of the city

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INTRODUCTION

What were your expectations of the place, before arriving? Did your experience of the place match your expectations? How did it, or did it not, live up to your expectations? What did you notice about the place that you didn't already know from reading or previous visits?

Before the arrival at my destination I had a completely different mental image of Zuccotti park. Taken by surprise, it didn't look like its ordinary park that we see on a day to day basis. Rather than seeing patches of greens with flowers blooming and grass everywhere , it brung about a plaza vibe. It had little to no plants throughout the park and had tables and sitting areas where bystanders or residents can use it as a pit stop throughout their busy routines. Having high expectations for zuccotti park to be a grand park that has multiple areas where its a family setting, where they can go to enjoy on their free time. Rather, it was mostly adults who were eating their lunches on the tables embedded into its structure. When reading about the location , it was described as large , however, on arrival it seemed smaller. I couldn't imagine tents everywhere and large amounts of people for a small city block.

SITE OBSERVATIONS

Insert 3 photographs and provide a title for each image. The title should be a a word or short phrase that sums up the subject matter of the photo or a visual theme present in the photo.



The park within



Joy of life



Modern world

Why did you choose these images? Do they summarize a feeling you have for the place? Do they focus on prominent objects or features of the place? Explain.

The reason that these three figures stood out to me was because each tell a story of the atmosphere that Zuccotti park is acquired in. In figure 1 *The park within* was chosen as well as got its title due to the fact that is the only area that can give about a park vibe. In comparison to a generalized park it is common to see flowers and plants, however, in Zuccotti park there were patches of green that were minimal. In figure two *Joy of life* it is a sculpture that located at the entrance of the park and stands bright and tall from any standing or sitting viewpoint within the park. This sculpture is extremely powerful due to the fact that the artist Mark di Suvero was known to be a protest against the vietnam war and for this reason his work at zuccotti park is a perfect fit because that's also where the occupy wall street movement was taken place. It's a sculpture of "open ended tetrahedrons" which displays equilibrium and empowerment. Finally in Figure 3, *Modern World*, it was chosen on the grounds that this is the circular surroundings of the park . Although there are few older architectural buildings of stones , these new modern and enhanced buildings and malls that stand out. This building in specific is so large that it makes the park look tiny in comparison. The way the light of this building is reflected on the park making it a bright area where people can enjoy a park view as well as a little taste of the city.

Describe the size and shapes of buildings in this area. Is there general uniformity or heterogeneity among structures?

The atmosphere in which circulates Zuccotti park, had areas that contained large skyscrapers as well as traditional brick buildings. However, most buildings were more city like modernized. Ranging from various heights, style and material that these buildings are formed in. One specific view point from Zuccotti park is a commercialized area with shopping stores as well as one large glass folcate skyscraper. From another angle of the park there was a very old traditional building where it resembles the roman architecture. The buildings were a mixture of uniformity and heterogeneity among the structures.

Describe the patterns, textures, colors, and ornamental features of the surfaces of the buildings and structures in and around the place.

When entering Zuccotti park , you're almost blinded by the flashing lights that is being projected from the strip of cart trucks at the parameter of the park. When looking past the lights and distractions retaining them, you see the texture of the park itself. Almost a washed

out dull theme that is carried out throughout. The tables , seats and stairs are all one color, a brownish marble. For a park its expected to be colorful with obtuse patterns and full of life. However, the buildings surround the park bring about those features. There were buildings that were built of all glass and had light bounce off it. Also there were transparent buildings across the street that displayed the insides of it. Not only that but the famous oculus was down the block and its dove like wings were illuminating.

How is the natural world integrated into the built environment? Were trees, plants, lawns, and bodies of water established *around* existing architectures, or were the buildings and walkways built to observe preexisting “wild” areas? Describe patterns and methods of integration.

Zuccotti park had the natural world built into it environment. There was regions of greens where trees were intentionally planted rather than grown out natural. Each tree had a outlet attached to it, this indicates that it had alternative purposes. Also there was a circular region where plants were sort of gated with a “Do not feed birds” sign. There wasn’t body of water like a fountain or sprinklers. Zuccotti park looks newly renovated where all signs of pre existing wild areas were taken away and rebuilt to a specific scenery. They had a pattern for the trees where its in rows where there is a table or bench then a tree and etc. It was well organized where all features of natural environments were precisely placed.

Other than buildings, what are the functions of the designed / built structures (walkways, seating, etc)?

The one thing that caught my eye that was built into the design was the benches. There were bulges of stone made of the same material, making the resting area uncomfortable. This was made so that people can’t lay or sleep in the public area. Although there wasn’t any physical metal gates the structure of the park looked gated due to different levels. The entrance was leveled on the sidewalk and then it slowly deepens in the middle where the sidewalk is no longer on the same level. I noticed on the sidewalk there was police officers parked outside watching for any unusual activities. Not only that there were a few gates on the sides leaning , the ones that cops use to maintain a crowds.

What public amenities are offered to users of the space (water fountains, wheelchair access and other supports for the disabled, public telephones, phone charging stations, WiFi, subway and bus stations, etc.)?

There were minimal amenities offered to the users of the park. It was accessible to people with disabilities, however there were zero moveable seating areas. Near the park there was a payphone but it seemed to be yanked out. However, since its a modern world where technology is blooming, on every tree there was two outlets attached that can be utilized to charge devices. There wasn't any water fountains insight however there was a food carts that were circling the park. The park is convenient in location because its a walkable distance from the train station.

How have the planners and architectects communicated the purpose of the place, via signage or design elements?

The planners and architectects purpose of Zuccotti park atmosphere was to make it a pit stop area where local residents or citizens who work in that area can use on their break. It doesn't bring about a stay in family location where one can spend their whole day with their loved ones. Starting from the benches where there is no back rests and stoppers on it which brings about discomfort once sitting in for too long. It's more of a adult life atmosphere because it isn't child friendly with the sharp marble edges that each table and bench contain. It was intended to be a open public area where one can easily pass by during breaks because it's convenient rather than a typical park that welcome families.

Are there any restrictions or rules (either explicit or implied) about how to use the space or interact with other people? Do you see anyone using the space in a manner that exceeds or violates the intentional design? Describe.

There is one rule that is posted within the park. "Do not feed the birds" was posted near the flowers. Most likely there was events that occurred that caused the sign to be put up, however, in the moment it doesn't seem like any people were breaking rules. Most

people were eating their lunch on their electronics peacefully. There were many untold rules such as keeping the park clean with trash cans in various locations. Other than that one written rule there wasn't a lot for the people to follow retaining to respecting the public area.

How do people generally interact with the environment? Is this place crowded? Walkable? Easy to navigate? Comfortable?

When observing the location there was two types of crowds. First being the people who were in professional clothing eating lunch while watching or using their electronic devices. They almost seem phased by their surroundings since it's in their daily routines. The second crowd group was sort of like the class. Sitting, walking, taking pictures and observing the scenery. Surprisingly for a busy location the park wasn't packed and very easy to navigate through. There was a handful of people but not enough to enclose the walking space. The park seemed to have people sitting in upright positions since all the seating areas had no back to them where they can lean on it comfortably.

What is your personal experience of the place? Think about sound/smell/touch, your body's movement, contact with the ground and physical comfort. How does the place make you feel?

Personally I wasn't very happy with what I saw, especially since it was my first time entering the park. It gave about a plaza vibe when I was expecting a beautiful green landscape. The location was too routy and city like. The cars were beeping, people were having conversations loudly as they passed by and there was various smells due to the different types of food carts that were lined up. To me this isn't a place I would label as a park but as a convenient eating region during someone's busy day. Even sitting there brought about discomfort because the seats were marble which are hard to sit on. Overall Zuccotti park made me feel like traditional parks are being stripped and made into these modernized areas and just received the "Park" label.

ANALYSIS/DISCOVERIES

Use this section to reflect on your observations. Remember to refer to your observations when drawing general conclusions.

Thinking about the neighborhood in which the place is embedded, who is this space designed for and for what general purpose?

Thinking about the neighborhood the place seems to be suitable for the upper class, professionals, working citizens within the area and business related people. Although it's open to the public the location on the map was smack in the middle of the city where there are multiple business and companies. However, this place is also a landmark within the city and tourists tend to swing by when they are visiting. Overall, I believe that this park was built to reflect the neighborhood that it was placed in rather than being an open public park where people can go for family gatherings.

More specifically, what kinds of social interactions does the place encourage or support? How do noise and light affect social interaction? What about the proximity of design elements (walkways, benches, etc.)? Mention specific design elements in your answer.

Social interactions that is supported by its surroundings are lunch breaks, reading a book, having a conversation with a person or even to sit down and to do work. Since there are tables and outlets anyone within the park can pull out their laptop or ipad and do work. It's convenient for the technological environment we live in. Also its a very light location but not to light that it will bother someone's eyes. There are trees for shade but the light radiates from the sides of the park. Although it is a busy area where there are busses and cars passing by and beeping their horns. There is benches all over the park so there is almost always a place to sit.

How might you use the space in a creative way that exceeds the intended use of the designers? Think about behavior, physical movement and organization, numbers of people, etc.

Since the park is built with different levelings it would be a perfect location to conduct a show, act , or performance or even a runway show. It can be used to organize protests such as Occupy wall street. It is a open space where plenty of people can attend.

QUESTIONS for FURTHER RESEARCH. Write down questions that require further research to answer. These should follow directly from your analysis section and be complex and specific enough to serve as the basis of a research project; do not include questions you can answer with a quick google search.

- 1. Question? Was Zuccotti park intended to give off a plaza vibe? If so how did the architectures bring about the plans to keep it consistent**
- 2. Question? If Zuccotti park is a public area why is it still privately owned ? Is there an strings attached?**
- 3. Question? Why was this location picked to be the landmark Zuccotti park? Is it due to the fact its near wall street or the 9/11 memorial?**