

Learning Places Fall 2018

SITE REPORT #1A

ZUCCOTTI PARK



Caption: The Only Greenery in Zuccotti 'Park'

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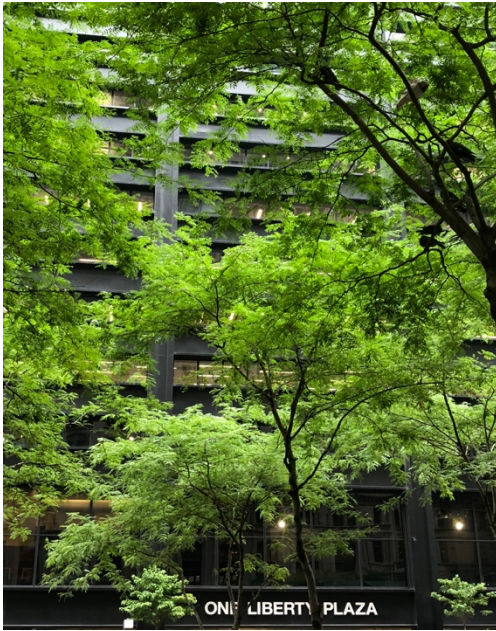
INTRODUCTION

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?

Since it was my first-time visiting Zuccotti Park I had a few expectations of what the space would be like. My first expectation was that the park would be a lot larger. After reading about the extent of the community the occupiers had built, I assumed the space would be large enough to accommodate a larger amount of people. I thought the park would be more circular rather than a narrow stretch of land. Zuccotti Park is very different from what would be, traditionally, considered a park. The amount of greenery in the park was limited to a few decorative shrubs and there was no grass.

SITE OBSERVATIONS

TOWER OF DOOM



AS GREEN AS IT GETS



LOOMING TOWER



The overwhelming presence of the Liberty Plaza Building.

The strange flooring choice for a park.

Along with Liberty Plaza Building, this building surrounds and hides the park.

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.

I chose these images because I believe they capture the feeling I had while at the park. The two buildings on either side of Zuccotti are imposing and infiltrate the space. The trees partially cover up the buildings in a way they create a divide between the park and the city. I also think these images highlight the parts of the park that I had least expected. For example, the lights in floor creates a different atmosphere than a traditional, grassy park would. For the first image I wanted to showcase how menacing the Liberty Plaza Building seemed. The modern, metallic appeal of the building seemed like a representation of wall street and what the occupiers in Zuccotti protested against. Similarly, the third image was of another massive, looming building. While the design of the building was different (stained glass and mounted statues) it was also representative of higher class and wealth.

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

The buildings surrounding Zuccotti had similar traits. They were, for the most part, tall and rectangularly shaped. Yet, the appearance of the buildings varied from modern and dark steel to glass to roman styled buildings.

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

The liberty plaza building was one of the most prominent. The structure was tall, steel, black, and free of ornamental designs. The design seemed very modern and sleek. The building opposite was beige with arched windows. There were several statuettes and ornamental decorations on the building. South of Zuccotti there was another memorable building that was made entirely of glass.

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.

It was evident that the trees, and plants in Zuccotti were integrated to fit the preexisting architecture and possibly as a compliment to one of the building surrounding it (liberty plaza?). I came to this conclusion because the limited "wild" life seemed out of place in the concrete jungle surrounding Zuccotti.

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

There was seating built into the ground of the park. Since the seating options in the park were not very comfortable it gave me the impression that we were not meant to lounge around in Zuccotti. Rather the park provides people with a place to eat a quick lunch or as a walkway.

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.)?

The public amenities were limited to the public transportation in the surrounding area.

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

The planners communicated the purpose of the space through the seating options, lack of greenery and the size of the park.

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 were signs posted against feeding the pigeons and littering. It seemed these rules were put in place in order to make the space easier to maintain and clean. Everyone seemed to be using the space for its intended purpose. People would eat and chat with colleagues or use the park as a walkway between the north and south side.

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

The space was as crowded as most spaces in the city are. It was walkable and easy to navigate. Perhaps, it would have not been as comfortable for an extended period of time.

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?

My personal experience of Zuccotti is that it is underwhelming. The space seems confined and does not fit my idea of what a park should be. It was loud and uncomfortable. There was nothing special to look at. The place did not feel like a destination. It is possible that my experience was affected by the readings that described Zuccotti as such a lively space during the Occupy Wall Street era.

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? The space seems to be designed for people who work nearby or people who are passing by. The general purpose is to provide seating for short-term usage such as eating or as a rest stoop between places.

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.

The tables and seats encourage social interaction between friends, and colleagues. The park receives enough light for the atmosphere to feel welcoming. While the towers and trees provide some coverage from the elements. In a way it is a combination of an outdoor and an indoor space. There are food carts nearby which add to the “cafeteria” atmosphere.

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 space seems too narrow, it is a possible that someone may perform or showcase their talent. This would definitely exceed the intended use of the space since its shape does not easily allow for an audience.

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. Did the owners of Zuccotti redesign the space to discourage protests similar to occupy or was it design out of convenience?
2. What effect would movement like Occupy Wall Street have on the public today? Would it be possible in Zuccotti Park in 2018?
3. Does the purpose of the space alter at different times of the day (and night) or does it remain constant?