

Learning Places Fall 2018

# SITE REPORT #1A

## Zuccotti Park



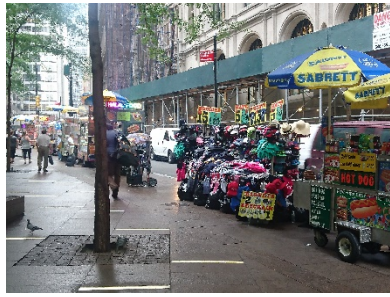
An example of the typical usage of Zuccotti Park in lower Manhattan. Some people use the park as a shortcut, while others use it as an area for eating lunch, meeting, taking a break, reading, selling, or making phone calls.

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### INTRODUCTION

I've by-passed and walked through Zuccotti Park; however, those moments were a year or more after the Occupation of Wall St On my way to the park, I kept trying to remember what OWS looked like to mentally compare the park then and now. I was unable to frame the images of OWS based on my recollection of that time, yet I remembered that the trees seemed green and lush compared to last December when I walked through the park. I hadn't realized that space was a park nor that the park was Zuccotti Park because I didn't see a sign with the name on it.

## SITE OBSERVATIONS



Vendor's Lane



Law enforcement Presence



Park Signage & Notices

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 vendors on the Cedar Street side of the park sell food and souvenirs. Their collective presence encourages people to take a moment in the park to consume or utilize what they bought from the vendors. It could be a coincidence that an NYPD vehicle and NYPD barricades were on the Liberty Street side of the park on the day of the field trip, or it could be a permanent occurrence. Either way, I immediately thought of Occupy Wall Street and the role the NYPD played as they served and protected. Ironically during that time, it didn't seem like they were serving and protecting the OWS protestors but the interests of the management of the park. In the picture, it appears the NYPD was keeping a watchful eye over the park. After reading the signage plaques located on a wall along the Liberty Street side of the park, it was apparent that OWS had influenced new rules of Zuccotti Park's public usage on one of the plaques.

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

The buildings around Zuccotti Park have variance in their height and design. Whereas the buildings on Trinity Place look like short vertical rectangles, and the building on Cedar Street looks like a horizontal rectangle, the buildings on Liberty Street and Broadway look modern and are like tall vertical rectangles.

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

The building on Trinity Place is cream and looks like it was partially made with large bricks. It also has a black edging at the top which looks like it was crafted from steel or metal. The building on Cedar Street also looks as though it was made with large bricks, but the windows are decorative and some have artisanal

designs around them., Most of the brick looks off-white and there is a green edging at the top of the building. There is a stark contrast with the buildings on Liberty Street and Broadway which are both black and designed with lots 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.

Zuccotti Park is slightly odd as a park because of its tiled design aesthetic for the walkway, the benches, and tables. The park's layout is like a slanted grid, and the trees are carefully placed in line on the grid. There are also two islands of grass and flowers as well as a hedge on the Liberty Street side of the park. It is apparent that the nature in the park was added as a part of the design.

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

The benches and seating in the park seemed like they were designed to encourage relatively brief interactions between small groups of people throughout the park.

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 park is wheelchair accessible, has a reasonable amount of seating space and is only two blocks away from Fulton Street Train Station which is a hub that connects nine train lines.

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

The designers of Zuccotti Park used elements such as concrete tables and chairs to show that they wanted people to eat in the park as well as several rectangular blocks made for shared seating. There is a wide space which seems like it was made to be a walkway from Broadway to Trinity Place or vice versa and there are signs on the surrounding wall of the park on the Liberty Street side that states what the public can do in 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.

The publicly stated rules of the park are; no skateboarding, rollerblading, bicycling and no feeding the birds. There is also a notice which states that camping, lying down on the ground in the park, using sleeping bags or storing personal items in the park is prohibited. On the Trinity Place side of the park, a young man skated across the flat area of the park towards the circular seating structure, took a seat and started texting and vaping.

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

The park is very easy to navigate. It was not crowded but had a fair capacity of people occupying the space. There were people using the space to eat but a larger number of people were using the space as a short-cut from Broadway to Trinity Place.

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?

I don't see Zuccotti Park as a park but as an open public space. One to pass through or pass by but not to sit for a while. The seating is uncomfortable, and the material used throughout the park feels generic.

## 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?

Zuccotti Park is unique as a park because of the design and the materials used throughout the park which lends to its look as a park fit for a concrete jungle. Unlike other parks in the city, the seats are made from concrete and tiles, the floor of the park is completely covered in tiles. The only nature that is present are flowers, patches, and hedges designed to be in the park.

The park's location is unexpected in the financial district because that area of the city is densely populated with financial institutions because the stock exchange is nearby and there are expensive luxury apartments. Given that basis, I would guess that the park's personality was designed with these things in mind.

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 park encourages patrons to walk through the park, to have lunch, meet up with others and take a break but not for long. The park purposely does not provide any means for other activities. In a way, parks are usually considered peaceful retreats but because of its location, Zuccotti Park is not omitted from the hustle and bustle of downtown Manhattan. The walkways are wide which makes me think that the designers expected a lot of foot traffic. Based on the groves on the tiled benches throughout the park, it's clear that the designers didn't want people sleeping in the park. The park is opened 24 hours which is unusual for a park in NYC. The park's open design means that there are no gates or doors to lock so patrons can use the park any time of day or night.

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, et c.

I could imagine using the park as a work out boot camp location. Based on the general definition of passive recreation, and the availability of flat smooth surfaces in the park, several varying stations could be set up throughout the park for different targeted exercises.

**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. What was the inspiration of the design and material usage of Zuccotti Park?
2. Zuccotti Park is a privately-owned public space, what lead to this definition of the space?
3. What type of passive recreation did the owners of Zuccotti Park intend for the usage of the park's space?

