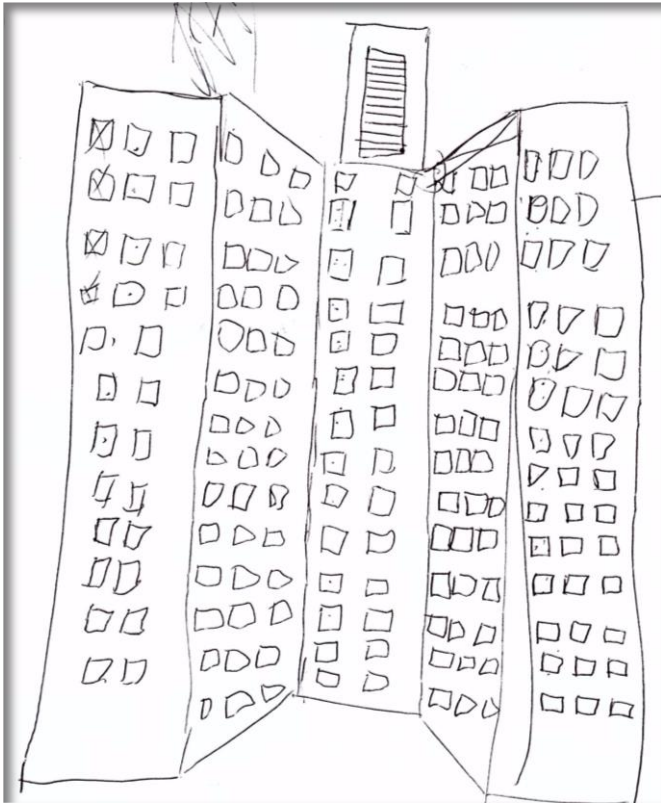


Learning Places Fall 2015

SITE REPORT

DUMBO and Farragut Houses



STUDENT NAME

Ben Sternhell

9/25/2015

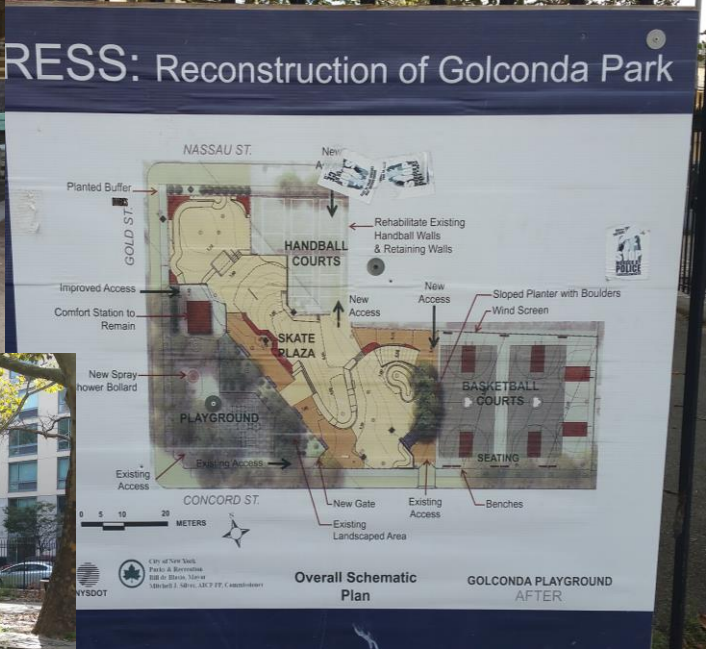
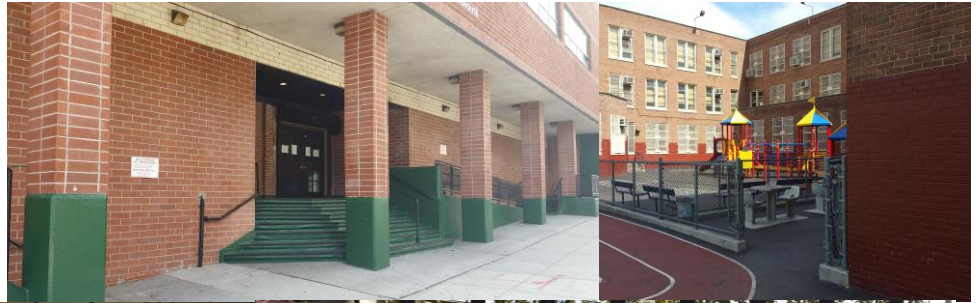
INTRODUCTION

We again visited DUMBO and the Farragut Houses in the Vinegar Hill section of Brooklyn. This time we were looking particularly at the neighborhood around the Farragut Houses. We walked along a block adjacent to the projects and sketched a building, also taking photos and notes about the architecture and layout of the area. Then we split into teams and each team surveyed one square block in the area. My team surveyed the block surrounded by Nassau, Navy, Concord, and Gold Streets. Because our block contained a school, a Boys & Girls Club, and a playground, my follow-up research focused on children and education in the area.

SITE OBSERVATIONS

1. The buildings we sketched look like a simple star shape but they're really not; they have a lot of twists and turns.
2. The block we surveyed was fairly empty because the BQE cuts across it.
3. There is a school building on Navy Street, Community Roots Charter School/PS 287 Bailey K. Ashford.
4. Nearby is the the Madison Square Boys & Girls Club Navy Yard Clubhouse.
5. There is also a playground, Golconda Park, currently being renovated.

SITE DOCUMENTATION



QUANTITATIVE DATA

| Subject | Data |
|---|--|
| Number of schools in building | 2 |
| Address of school building | 50 Navy Street |
| Number of children in schools | Community Roots Middle School: 153 PS 287/Bailey K. Ashford: 199 [Community Roots Charter School, at different address: 300] |
| Grades served by schools | Community Roots Middle School: 6–8 PS 287/Bailey K. Ashford: PK–5 [Community Roots Charter School, at different address: K–5] |
| When clubhouse built | As Navy Yard Boys' Club, 1917; acquired by Madison Square, 1981 |
| What ages use the clubhouse | 6–18 |
| When BQE built | 1961 |
| Number of cars using BQE daily | 160,000 through Brooklyn; 120,000 through Queens |
| Size of Golconda Park | 2 acres |
| When renovation scheduled to be completed | Fall 2016 |

QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

QUESTIONS:

1. What sort of schools are these?
2. How are the schools ranked?
3. Who are the students? Are any of them from the Farragut Houses?
4. What percentage of students come from public housing projects?
5. Is traffic noise from the BQE disturbing?
6. How were the complicated buildings constructed?

HYPOTHESIS:

1. Children from the Farragut Houses probably attend these schools.
2. The schools are probably not highly ranked educationally.
3. Children in the nicer sections of Vinegar Hill probably do not attend these schools.

SUMMARY / POST VISIT REFLECTION

It was very interesting sketching the Farragut Houses because I realized how complicated the architecture was. Before I visited here, I would have assumed that the architecture of housing projects would be very dull. It was also interesting seeing a school because it made me think about education in New York City, which is shockingly unequal.

I know this from my own experience, truly a tale of two cities. I went to elementary school at a “progressive” private school in the West Village. Progressive or not, what private means is rich. The library was gleaming and packed with books; the French club took a field trip to Paris. I wasn’t rich. My family didn’t have a country house, or even a big apartment. I was there on a scholarship, and though I didn’t realize it at the

time, some people saw us as poor. I went to middle school at a brand-new public school near the Lower East Side. Most students came from the projects, and unlike me, most qualified for a free lunch. The school didn't have a library; it didn't even have textbooks. My mom donated pencils and copy paper. We once took a field trip on the subway to Lincoln Center, somewhere most students—unlike me—had never been. Here people saw us as rich, and this time I realized it. What I didn't realize then, but do now, is that in New York City, even the public schools reflect this sort of class divide. Public schools in wealthy, predominantly white, neighborhoods have resources that public schools in poor neighborhoods can only dream of.

The school building on the block we surveyed housed two schools, but I knew nothing about them until I started doing some research. I was pleased to see the Boys & Girls Club and the playground, even though the playground is not currently available because of a big renovation project. It's important for kids to have somewhere safe to play.

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