

Learning Places Spring 2017

SITE REPORT

Vinegar Hill



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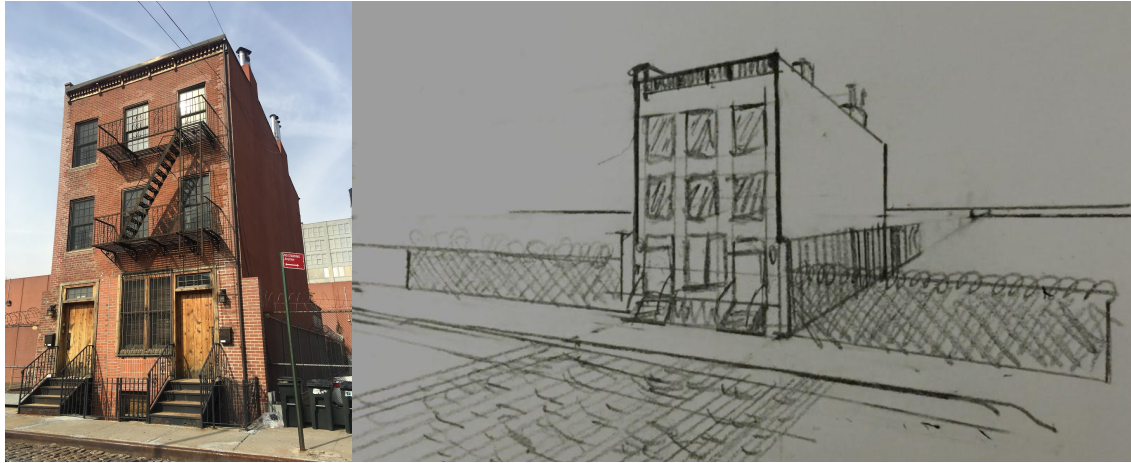
INTRODUCTION

The class was divided into 5 groups to specifically analyze the neighborhood of Vinegar Hill. The group I worked with was focused on Preservation and Development. There is a visible contrast between that of the preserved buildings and that of the developed buildings. There is also an in between state where buildings look uncared for and even hazardous at times. The goal is to determine how this affects the neighborhood and if there is a future for Vinegar Hill. Who wins popular vote when it is preservation versus development?

PRE-VISIT REFLECTION

Because this was the second visit to the site, I already anticipated buildings aging from the 1800's to present day construction. This time, I was trying to prepare for how to determine the best way to understand the views of the developers, which seem to be flowing out of the DUMBO area, and the people whose families have lived in Vinegar Hill for generations and watched the transformation of Downtown Brooklyn, Brooklyn's Waterfront, and Vinegar Hill itself.

SITE DOCUMENTATION (photos/sketches)



This is a photo and sketch located on Water Street between Gold Street and Hudson Ave. I wanted to capture the solid versus void. This building is wedged between two overwhelming parking lots which represent negative space. This negative space seems almost intimidating to the building. Behind this building is also a large ConEd building. This is unique because the detail in this building, although appear to be decaying, give great character to this building and the buildings date. (1899(zola NYC))



(Left: old house on Water Street; Middle, Vacant parking lot on Water Street(factories in back); End: Parking lot on Water Street(Factories in back)) These three images were all taken from Water Street. The two houses are the only residents remaining on the North side of this street between Gold St and Hudson Ave. This is unique because industry overpowers these houses in each of the three pictures. Residences are sinking.



(Left: House with a different vernacular than the rest; Middle: New architecture using neighborhood materials; End: Leasing space) These three images were taken at various locations in Vinegar Hill. They represent the development of the neighborhood. There is new construction, various forms, and commercial opportunities now available for those who chose to be in Vinegar Hill. Although there is a modern edge, these buildings seem to not be capturing the interest of people like DUMBO buildings would. Barely anyone was even walking around these streets.



(All above, parking lots) These three images represent derelict lots. Unused or used poorly. The image to the right is the most poorly maintained lot. At this time it is owned by ConEd but is clearly not maintained. These lots pose a negative impact on the neighborhood. This is where the neighborhood needs to decide if development should take place to revitalize the neighborhood, or if it should be left alone, for the good of the neighborhood. Potentially leaving people out and stopping newcomers.

OBSERVATIONS

1. Unequal balance of factories versus residences.
2. Vacant lots giving the neighborhood a derelict feel.
3. New construction scattered

QUANTITATIVE DATA

Subject	Data
Unused lots	7
Playgrounds	3
Business	9
Industry/ Commercial	~50%

QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

QUESTIONS:

1. When did the industrial buildings arrive?
2. When were most houses built?
3. Were the houses here before the industry?
4. What was vinegar hill like before the 1900's?
5. Why is the city not doing anything to improve the neighborhood quality? (remove ConEd, merge communities)
6. What are the requirements for designing in vinegar hills/ historic and industrial area?

HYPOTHESIS:

1. Around WW2 - Industry for war.
2. Near the arrival of the brooklyn bridge, 1883?
3. I feel like there should have been houses or at least businesses on the waterfront. I can't imagine it only ever being an industrial zone. Unless of course there was a fishing dock, then that makes sense.
4. Tying into the last, I think there needs to be something "undesirable" on the land for the government to take over but what is less undesirable than factories?
5. Money, developers are the crutches the city rests on. If community doesn't allow developers in, developers expect community to die out?

SUMMARY / POST VISIT REFLECTION

From this second site visit, I feel there is a lot more to research. I would like to meet with developers and residents. I would like to know how long they have lived in the neighborhood. I would like to know if the residents are angry about the living conditions in vinegar hill

REFERENCES TO EXPLORE HYPOTHESIS

1. <http://maps.nyc.gov/doitt/nycitymap/template?applicationName=ZOLA>
2. <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/zoning/districts-tools/m3.page>
3. <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/zoning/districts-tools/r6.page?tab=3>
4. <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/zoning/zoning-maps/historical-zoning-maps/maps12d.pdf>
5. <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/buildings/index.page>