

Learning Places Spring 2017

SITE REPORT # 2

Preservation and Development



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INTRODUCTION

A revisit of the neighborhood of Vinegar Hill, located in Brooklyn New York which focused on the preservation and developmental side. The purpose of this second walk was to explore different paths not previously seen and to focus on the how the neighborhood can be improved and why hasn't it improved at the same time.

PRE-VISIT REFLECTION

Coming back for a second time I expected the visit to feel dangerous because of the lack of population and the feel of the area. Some parts of Vinegar Hill have been beaten up with the numbers of years gave it that sense of danger as we walked in a group of four this time around. Focus of looking for any construction or indications that the neighborhood was doing everything to improve its state.



Point of Interest 1



Reconstruction site which blocked off the left side walk on the street. There were some workers inside the building we passed by so there could have been a reconstruction of the building as well. Most notable thing was this was the only reconstruction in the area, at least when we discuss street maintenance. It's not clear whether this is one of many reconstructions to come to Vinegar Hill.

Point of Interest 2



Located in 56 gold Street there was a bakery called Damascus Bakery owned right now by third generation Edward Madoud. It's a bakery that per him has been operating since around the 1930s as boldly stated in the picture. Cited now by the Bloomberg Administration, the small store located in the middle of nowhere is now actually a global company. Branching out across to New Jersey for 20 million dollars for a research and developmental facility.

Point of Interest 3



A message board that seems to have endured the battle with time. It seems that this message board has been around 1798 as engraved below the messages. Interesting enough there has been activities posted up in this board. This includes some political cartoon, an advertisement of a radio show and reach out from a religious group. Other than that the board is completely falling apart. The interesting about this board is how people seem to still use it after all these years.

Point of Interest 4



A restaurant that not to long ago was opened up. It seems now like they are rennovating it, in order to start selling more alcoholic bevarages as indicated by the notice. What we saw inside indicated that it hasn't been active in a month or so. Next to this restaurant we saw a bench from a different time period still being used. We tested it out to see if it wouldn't break by sitting on it. It's was interesting how the owner refuse to buy a new bench and rather stick to this antique.

SITE OBSERVATIONS: Note conditions you found and explain how they relate to the topic of your investigation

1. Again, the area felt empty and dangerous because of the lack of population
2. A lot of empty parking lots
3. Numerous of building just beaten down and not being used
4. Unsanitary conditions, such as garbage disposal in the middle of the street and kids park
5. Restaurant lack comfort - What kind of restaurant has no seats?
6. A few new places opening such as café Gitane
7. Not enough points of interests like Dumbo where you can get a good view of the city. Therefore, no many tourist because of lack of attractions.

QUANTITATIVE DATA:

| Subject | Data |
|-------------------|--|
| Constructions | 1 side walk being renovated and 1 building being renovated |
| Attractions | 1 park through the area we visited and it wasn't in the best conditions for kids |
| Restaurants/ Bars | 5 places where people can eat. Chinese food restaurant we passed by didn't have any seating, 1 of the bar was closed and was still trying to obtain licensing. |

QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS Consider the data found during your site visit and review the material you included so far in this report.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why aren't more projects being started to populate the area?
2. Why are the streets and parks so unsanitary?
3. Do people really want change?

HYPOTHESIS: From the question, you wrote above - select the most important question for your own research. Propose an explanation made on the basis of the limited evidence you have so far as a starting point for further investigation

1. People in the neighborhood could be rejecting projects due to the fear of many contractors starting to change the whole neighborhood.
2. People might not care or there may just not be enough voices to call for change.
3. People sometimes fear change for numerous reasons. Are the people in the vinegar hill rejecting any kind of drastic change the city might be offering for the fear of losing their small neighborhood? Or do people around there just don't care?

SUMMARY / POST VISIT REFLECTION / NEXT STEP? –

What I saw after my second visit in Vinegar Hill was how some older and antique pieces still are valued in the neighborhood. A message board from 1798 can easily be changed, a bench that looks 20 years old can easily be exchanged, but it's not about new thing for Vinegar hill, it's about its identity. It's why the community of Vinegar Hill rejected a 9-story rental building because they feel it would be a domino effect if the zoning changes. The community doesn't want big changed and thus I see a stand of between developers and the community. I believe there should be a middle ground for this and that's what my next step would be. I see many ran down places not even being used so why not fix those places, renovate them before you construct new fancy building. My next step would be to find out what some of the residence thinks should happen and see if that would be a middle ground for developers.

PRELIMINARY REFERENCES TO EXPLORE HYPOTHESES:

1. <http://www.ediblebrooklyn.com/2013/the-road-to-damascus-through-dumbo/>
2. <http://ny.curbed.com/2017/1/21/14345946/brooklyn-vinegar-hill-rezoning-development>
3. <http://nypost.com/2015/07/08/why-vinegar-hill-is-brooklyns-edgiest-enclave/>