

Learning Places Spring 2017

SITE REPORT #2

COVER IMAGE: Farragut Houses



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INTRODUCTION

For Site Report #2, we went back to Vinegar Hill to visit some of the landmarks we stopped by in our first visit. What was different about this visit was that each person was assigned a group and a specific place or idea to study. I chose to be a part of the Farragut houses group because I didn't know much about the area and I felt like this would be a good opportunity to get to know it better. The information I gathered was enough to see that the area has no comparison to the upper parts of Vinegar Hill near DUMBO.

PRE-VISIT REFLECTION

When I was assigned Farragut Houses, I knew that my focus was going to be around the inner parts of the housing's outside area and the wall dividing them from Downtown Brooklyn. I wanted to see how these people take care of their environment around them and find out why the neighborhood looks like what it is now. These answers would help me to develop a better hypothesis and conclusion about living conditions and overall lifestyle of the people who live there.

SITE DOCUMENTATION I: MAP OF AREA OF INVESTIGATION

Route



Picture Pinpoints

*Marked with numbers from 1-4



SITE DOCUMENTATION II: photos/sketches for 2-3 significant stops.

1. The Wall



In this photo, we see the Brooklyn Queens Expressway access ramp to the Manhattan Bridge. Now to me this picture can be perceived as the dividing of two communities because of the residential to business aspect of Downtown Brooklyn. On the right-hand side of the wall you see Downtown Brooklyn. Notice the design and overall beauty at some of the building on that side. To have the highway blocking the two sides only goes to show that this side of the wall where the houses are placed are not meant to be a part of the beauty of downtown. The red brick design only coincides with the belief of older structures as most of the buildings in Vinegar Hill that are also behind the curtains of this wall.

2. Unregistered Vehicles



When walking to my second stop I saw a sign that said “Farragut Houses, A wonderful community “. But when I looked over to my right the first thing I see was a broken in vehicle near the property. I know that they weren’t trying to sound hypocritical about this, but I couldn’t believe fact that, that wasn’t the only vehicle in that alley way with a broken in window. I feel like Farragut Houses has a long way to go before they can own up to such a title.

3. Gardens and Garbage



The surrounding areas of Farragut Houses can be seen having garbage being thrown into a gated part of the building and many of the trees having plastic bags stuck in them. I was also able to spot tools that may be for gardening on one of the lawns inside the complex. If the area was cleaned more often and the people who lived there cared enough to try to help, it would look better.

4. Community Church



The community church is placed at the end of my visit and when going there I was not able to go in. The Church doors were locked and ironically enough the name of the church was the church of the open door. Maybe the doors were locked for a safety precaution.

SITE OBSERVATIONS:

1. A lot of playgrounds and parks but many of them with little to no people in them
2. Many unregistered vehicles that have physical damage, parked in an alley next to the housing complex
3. Many of the gardens were either vandalized or not taken care of.
4. Residents of the complex could be seen either loitering in front of the entrances or in front of stores
5. Garbage and plastic bags are piled up on most of the grassy areas in and around the area

QUANTITATIVE DATA:

Subject	Data
Broken Vehicles	4
Bus/Train	8
Parks	3

QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

QUESTIONS:

1. What does the NYCHA management office have to say about the garbage scattered all over the complex?
2. How do residents feel about the overall living conditions in and outside of Farragut Houses?
3. Do the people living there feel like the wall is a way to keep them away from the overall beauty of Downtown and DUMBO?

HYPOTHESIS:

1. While there, I was able to visit the management office, but when I tried to go inside, I was stopped and asked to leave.
2. Mainly people seem to not care about the living conditions because if they did, it wouldn't look like it did when I visited.
3. I highly doubt that people there are considering the wall as being a factor of beauty and popularity among the housing and Downtown Brooklyn. I

feel like if things were to change, then more and more people would want to demolish what's there to put something even better. Meaning something that residents living there can't afford.

SUMMARY / POST VISIT REFLECTION / NEXT STEP? --

The people of Farragut Houses to me have no interest in the overall appearance of the outside of the houses. To already have the stigma behind living in what is called "the projects", it already creates a label not just for the area, but the people living there. Even if they could band together and clean up the area, the fact that the beauty will be there is irrelevant because there will always be that stigma. Also, the wall breaking them off from the modernized version of Brooklyn(Downtown) doesn't help either. I feel like the next step would be to see if the people living there are willing to help clean the area and maybe help brighten up the place with gardens to attract more people. This would help with the overall look of the building and not scare people away with the thought of the projects.

PRELIMINARY REFERENCES TO EXPLORE HYPOTHESES:

1. <https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20150126/vinegar-hill/brazen-drug-dealers-used-farragut-houses-as-headquarters-officials-say>
2. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/19/nyregion/promised-a-supermarket-five-years-ago-a-housing-project-is-still-waiting.html>
3. <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/life-poverty-fear-brooklyn-housing-project-shadow-wealth-article-1.136773>
4. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/53704481/?terms=funds%2Bokayed%2Bfor%2Bfarragut>