

Learning Places Fall 2019

# SITE REPORT #2

## Newtown Creek

**NAMING PROTOCOL.** When saving and posting your site reports on OpenLab, please follow the following format: SiteReport#.LastnameFirstname. Here's an example: SiteReport2.SwiftChristopher.



A lost connection rekindled to a forgotten lifestyle, how is the waterfront so close yet so far?

**STUDENT NAME:** Ariandy Gomez

### SITE OBSERVATIONS

1. What are some general observations about the character of this place? What does it remind you of? How does it make you feel? Some general observations of this place are that it's great if it wasn't for the smell. The site reminds me of Fort Washington park near where I live and how difficult it is to be near the water in the city. The site makes me feel melancholic for starters as this is a reminder that the city should do more but isn't. This redesign is probably the bare minimum to say hey we care somewhat? I feel that this is 1 percent of what the city should do for a sustainable habit in this city. Just look how beautiful the waterfronts of Venice, Amsterdam and Sydney those are cities that care about humanity's connection to the water.
2. Historically, what are some of the important developments that have created the current environmental situation at Newtown Creek area. Refer not only to the reading and Prof. Spellane's lecture, but also what you learned on the Newtown Creek Alliance tour (hint... estuaries, for instance)? Historically the Newtown site from Prof. Spellanes' lecture stated that

location was important to the development of the Newtown Creeks' problem because it was far away from the city. Factories and cemeteries saw the location and access to water as a golden opportunity. The Newtown Creek Alliance tour also adds that the only reason it isn't used today was the fact that boats were too big to fit in the creek. The problem of Newtown Creek is 2 centuries old as it is a situation of how Brackish water combined with fecal matter from CSO system, the invention of the Kerosene and its byproducts plus standard oil factories by John D Rockefeller can ruin an environment to such an extent that a lifetime isn't enough to fix the problem. All present and future issues are from past mistakes and lack of foresight.

3. In what ways is the natural environment contained or shaped by the architecture of the Newtown Creek Nature Walk? In what ways is the natural world repossessing, interacting with, or invading spaces that have been over-polluted or industrialized? The natural environment is contained by its inaccessibility to the water, no one cares about the waterfront because it is completely hidden. This uncaring nature is a natural response as if it is out of sight out of mind. If you don't see a war happening then there is no war, ignorance is bliss. The Newtown Creek nature walk has architectural aesthetics such as the ship design, portholes and a designed lane path that reminds me of a forgotten time we were a waterfront city before. Water is a source of life and a city but we have forgotten that. The circle enclosure is interesting as if you stand in the center you see something unique. You are given two directions to face and accept. Looking in one direction you see the Empire State Building the current NYC lifestyle a symbol of the empire state a familiar view in this city. On the other hand, you see the waterfront as an unfamiliar symbol of what could've been a beautiful waterfront city. A future that can never happened as we closed off the waterfront and polluted our beautiful rivers beyond human repair. The interesting part is that everyone makes their decision to take a picture of the Empire State building over the waterfront direction. Looks like everyone chooses to have things be the same as they have always been.
  
4. Discuss the program of the nature walk. How are people meant to interact with one another and with the environment? The program of the walk seems more like a display of information meant to be experienced on an individual basis. People are supposed to read and experience the lane. Also the flowers sometimes hide the awful smell of the water treatment plant.

5. If you were to stage a performative intervention in a *specific* site (i.e., a single structural aspect of the walk or industrial remains) where would you stage it and why (how does the environment add meaning to the performance)? Ok since I won't be doing this type of performance an interesting idea would be to use the idea of water rising and a sense of pilgrimage to effect. The start of the pilgrimage would be at the G train and have large groups of people walk to the water's edge in Newtown Creek. Once the water's edge is reached we have to take a selfie to repost and send it to the person of interest to riddle the city's representatives and the media with hundreds of selfies that keep rising similar to that of climate change and the rising waters. The message having a massive amount of people group together in the area and cluster to symbolize the path a water drop and bring attention to the rising waters in the world. If hundreds of clusters together we can make a big impact on the city. This is a similar process one of my favorite artists named Yuumei art has used for the free Hong Kong movement. As her artworks were being blocked by the Chinese government but the government can't block thousand or millions of reposts from other individuals. Also, this would destroy the notifications of the individuals in questions. Each selfie is also meant to symbolize that these rising world won't just take one life or two there are going to be millions at risk.
  
6. What message would your performance convey and who needs to hear this message? The message is for the big tech companies in Newtown Creek, the Mayor, city representatives local and public, the head of the dept of sustainability in NYC and every News station (ABC New Fox News Channel 1 News ETC.). The message would be that one raindrop in the sea isn't a problem but millions of raindrops can raise the sea level beyond our control especially the social media accounts of those in power. They can only block so many before it is not humanly possible anymore.

**QUESTIONS for FURTHER RESEARCH.** These should follow directly from your analysis section and be complex and specific enough to serve as the basis of a research project.

Questions might relate to architectural or environmental observations, socio-political problems and/or solutions, demography, history, zoning, civic processes, performance strategy, etc.

1. Question? How can Brooklyn reclaim the Newtown Creek waterfront?
2. Question? How much money would a clean up of Newtown Creek cost and how long would it take?
3. Question? Does living near a water treatment plant create ill effects of the residents?

## FURTHER RESEARCH

Choose and **revise** one of your research questions for further research. Refine your question following from examples that we've discussed in class.

**Revised Research Question: How much money and time would a complete cleanup of Newtown Creek take for the city of New York ?**

Find and cite 2 sources that address your question in [MLA format](#). Respond to the questions below.

**CITATION 1: Selemon, Helina, "Greenpoint's Superfund Problem" (2015). *CUNY Academic Works*.**

[https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gj\\_etds/72](https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gj_etds/72)

Why did you select this source? How does it address all or part of your research question? I chose this source because it can share information on the area of Greenpoint and its superfund problem.

Is the source credible? Why or why not? Yes this source is credible as it is not sell me something and was written for Cuny graduate school of journalism and had two advisors who read the page.

What further information would you need to answer your question? Where would you look for additional sources? Numbers and data would be extremely helpful but I couldn't find any.

**CITATION 2:**Campbell, Lindsay. (2007). *New York City's Forgotten Industrial Waterway: Assessment, Goals, and Indicators for Long-term Sustainability of the Newtown Creek.*

Why did you select this source? How does it address all or part of your research question? This source shows that the issue Newtown Creek is facing is not a new issue as in 2007 there was attention on how awful the location is. The source gives data and percentages of how the location is a factor for this superfund site.

Is the source credible? Why or why not? Lindsay K. Campell is research social scientist so yes the source is credible.

What further information would you need to answer your question? Where would you look for additional sources? This source is really old from 2007 so an updated version who be helpful.

**CITATION 3:**“Newtown Creek’s Cleanup Could Begin 5 Years Ahead of Schedule.” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 20 Sept. 2019,  
<https://brooklyneagle.com/articles/2019/09/20/newtown-creeks-cleanup-could-begin-5-years-ahead-of-schedule/>.

Why did you select this source? How does it address all or part of your research question? This source gives information on the estimated time this cleanup could take.

Is the source credible? Why or why not? The source isn't selling me anything more like reporting

information. Plus this more like a journalism website.

What further information would you need to answer your question? Where would you look for additional sources? Number are everything with statistics. A more numbers based article or a sample example from a similar city.

**CITATION 4: panell.M.Choua1, Author links open overlay, et al. "The Cleaning of Singapore River and the Kallang Basin: Approaches, Methods, Investments and Benefits." *Ocean & Coastal Management*, Elsevier, 15 Sept. 1998, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0964569197000690>.**

Why did you select this source? How does it address all or part of your research question? This an example of how much cost waterfront cleaning cost the city of Singapore. It is an excellent example as Singapore is the world's most sustainable city and is truly an inspiration to me as an architectural student. The source gives numbers I can use as an example because Singapore is a city that within 2 decades altered itself as a self sufficient city state.

Is the source credible? Why or why not? This source is part of an ocean and coastal management book that was publicated so I believe it is credible.

What further information would you need to answer your question? Where would you look for additional sources? Would love to compare this source with data from New York dept of sustainability. The relationship could be worth wild. The city of New York could learn a lot from the city of Singapore.