

Learning Places Fall 2016

SITE REPORT #1

It Came from the Gowanus



This cover photo is of a building near the canal that has graffiti. The meaning is the graffiti, graffiti is all around the Gowanus canal.

STUDENT NAME

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INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of going to the Gowanus canal is to get a look at the surrounding area and everything that it has to bring. Also, it's get a feel of the surrounding area and how it makes the canal appear. The expectations that I had about the Gowanus is that it will have a cleaner surrounding and the streets near the canal would be clean up and the sidewalks would be walkable. When getting to the start point of the canal you feel a pull to the canal because there's a small slant going downward. When arriving a block away from the canal the street changes from smooth gravel road, to expose gray brick on the ground.

SITE OBSERVATIONS :

This three pictures are of different buildings across the street from one another , showing the difference between the two streets.



The scale and shape of buildings are amazingly different. When you get to Bond st and Douglass street and turn away from the canal you will see the high building of the Gowanus houses and across the street from the buildings you see brown stone buildings which are two stories high. And the buildings are nice and sharp like the corner, where as for the Gowanus buildings, they are structured in a way that there more geometrically shaped instead of being a big rectangle building going up. The building across the street from the Gowanus houses are of different structures, some are stones and others have a new structure builded on top the building. But the buildings are all straight rectangles that are about two or three stories high.

What stood out was that one of the buildings had a lot of plant life on the roof of it and that the building next to it has a rusty iron exterior, which gave both buildings a very urban modern feel to it. The Gowanus houses had a lot of plant life around it and tall trees. Also on the streets that are the block of the canal some of the sidewalks have been completely taken over by streets, grass, and bushes. It sort of seems like nature is taking back it's home.



The functions of the buildings are all different. Some buildings closer to the canal are business that have been there for a long time. There's a lot of two stories buildings as you continue along the canal that all have different purpose to them. Some of them are homes, cafes, studios for different artist, spots for different events. There is many different places where people could get together around the canal there are two event spots across the street from one another. One of the event spots has an olive green with black accents exterior, which also has a restaurant where you could go seat and eat and hang out.

The places seems to consist of both planned and organic structures all over. Some places have a very organic feel to it with a lot of plant life around it and other structures consist of planned work, because of how the building were built. What pops out the most is the graffiti that some would say disrupts the environment of the surround area of the canal and the buildings there. But all the graffiti pops out and looks really good with all the new things that are either being built or are being brought back to life.

The people that occupy the space are business people going into the factories that are around there, people who live around the area, a lot of different artist. The place surrounding the canal i not crowded a lot until you get to where the whole market is. On that street there are more cars being driven, more work being done on buildings and a lot more people walking around. The area is very walkable around the canal. But on some of the sidewalks closer to the start point of the canal the sidewalks are not walkable and the only opinion to get to the canal is to walk on the street which has a lot of grass growing from it.

My personal experience of the place was great i enjoyed all of the art that was around the area and also how all the buildings look different from another but still look good together. I also like how the bridges are structured, one of the building was a little scary to walk on which was the bridge that was near the condos that were being built because it was made from wood it just seem unsafe. When i first got near the canal i could smell something strong it was a weird smell coming from the canal but i couldn't figure out if it was a bad or good smell, but it was a strong smell. There is a lot of plant life around the canal which were very bright and green and my body towards the top of the block of canal was drawn to walk

to the canal where when i turn around could see the slant that the block had. The area made me feel all artistic. I wanted to go and draw and paint on the walls and leave my imprint somewhere near the canal. But the overall feel of the area is very comfortable and very humble like feeling.



This the image of the start point of the Gowanus Canal

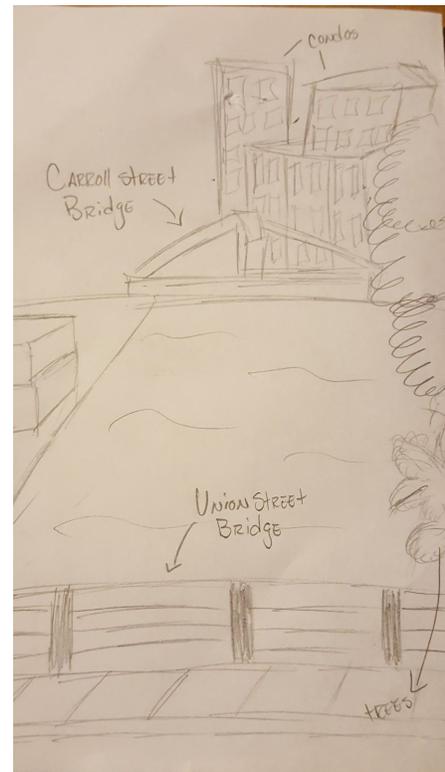
The reason i chose this photo is because you see the high buildings on the other side and also you see the gray brick stones, instead of black smooth roads.

ANALYSIS/DISCOVERIES

The Gowanus canal area seem to be a very important part of brooklyn where the neighborhood is still growing and changing itself. From watching some youtube videos on how the Gowanus use to look back in the day it has for sure changed a lot. Now that they build those big condos and are rebuilding the building with all the graffiti you can see how much change is actually happening and is going to happen when the condos are open for people to move in and the building with graffiti is finally fixed. The area surrounding the canal is similar to the other parts of brooklyn which surround it because a lot of artist seem to have taken a liking to different scattered areas. The way that the area is different if that they still ty to keep the old parts of the area, just give it a more polished look. Until you get around where the condos are, those condos are being built all over brooklyn give every neighborhood a modern urban feel to everything.

Also, what this area tells us about Brooklyn is simply that a lot of change is happening, meaning that different type of people are moving into areas where either at a lot of factories use to be or changing certain area to an art area. A lot of different artist seem to find similar places like the surrounding area of the canal and make studios to do their work or live by. Every area in Brooklyn has their own spirit of place, for the Gowanus area, that has to be the Gowanus canal itself it has had a lot of different change happen to it through all these years and still it's there and represents a part of Brooklyn where people didn't think of even living, it was always used more for different factories. Overall the experience of going to the canal and see the surrounding area and noticing some of the new and old things that are

happening around it shows that many people do want to change the canal itself to become better. And also make the surrounding area more welcoming and more artsy.



Both sketches are of the Canal at different points, the left sketch is the start point of the Gowanus Canal and the right sketch is the two bridges that were built over the Gowanus Canal.

KEYWORDS/ VOCABULARY (these might include specialized vocabulary, city agencies, names of businesses or people

*5 keywords minimum required per site visit)

1. chester
2. Pig Beach
3. Ample Hill
4. Caution
5. Labinet

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; do not include questions you can answer with a quick google search)

1. How can the surrounding area of Gowanus canal help the canal become more clean?
2. How can plants be planted in the canal to help filter out the water to make it more clean?
3. Does the surrounding area of canal help make it better ?