

Learning Places Fall 2017

# SITE REPORT #1

## The Gowanus Canal

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(Photo of the Gowanus Canal along with construction in the background..)

### INTRODUCTION

The Gowanus Canal was and still is a very interesting place that has gone through so much over the years. I had honestly expected the Gowanus to go from a filthy industrial area to a modernized and gentrified neighborhood which did end up happening. It has two ends which differ very much from each other. On one end the Gowanus is very industrial, yet on the other there are many modern developments being built. The pedestrian count on the streets seemed to be very low, almost empty.

## SITE OBSERVATIONS:

(include photographic documentation and visual notes—at least 3 photographs 2 sketches required -- provide a caption for each image. Also provide a brief explanation why you chose the image and how it is related to the text)

What do you notice about the scale and shape of buildings?

As I walked to the site i had noticed that i had passed by nothing but short to somewhat tall shops and red brick housing. There wasn't much vegetation. But there were may new shops that were being built. Trees had lined the streets where the housing was located to obviously help give the sense of a homey kind of feeling. Once i had arrived i noticed that the road went from smooth tar to rugged cobblestone which somewhat shows a small sense of preservation of certain areas.



(photo of the cobblestone road)

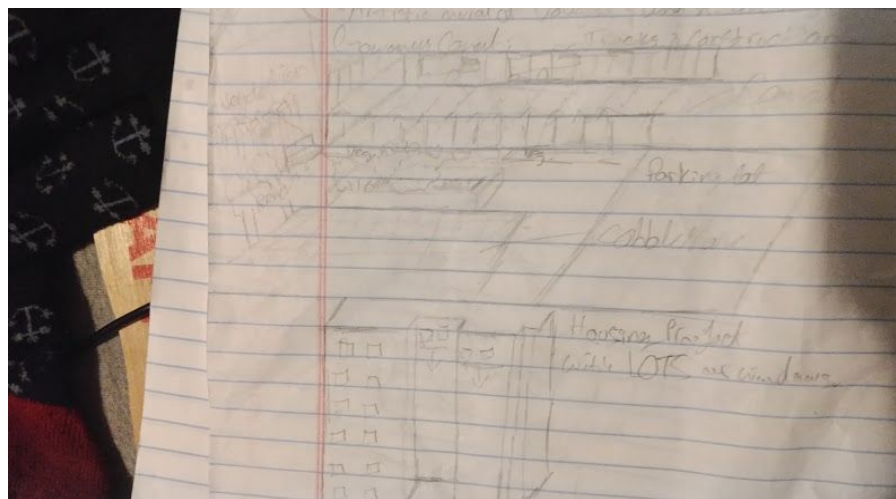
As we started to make our way along the Gowanus Canal we began to see murals pop up. At first it was maybe one or two, but as we progressed more and more began to pop up.





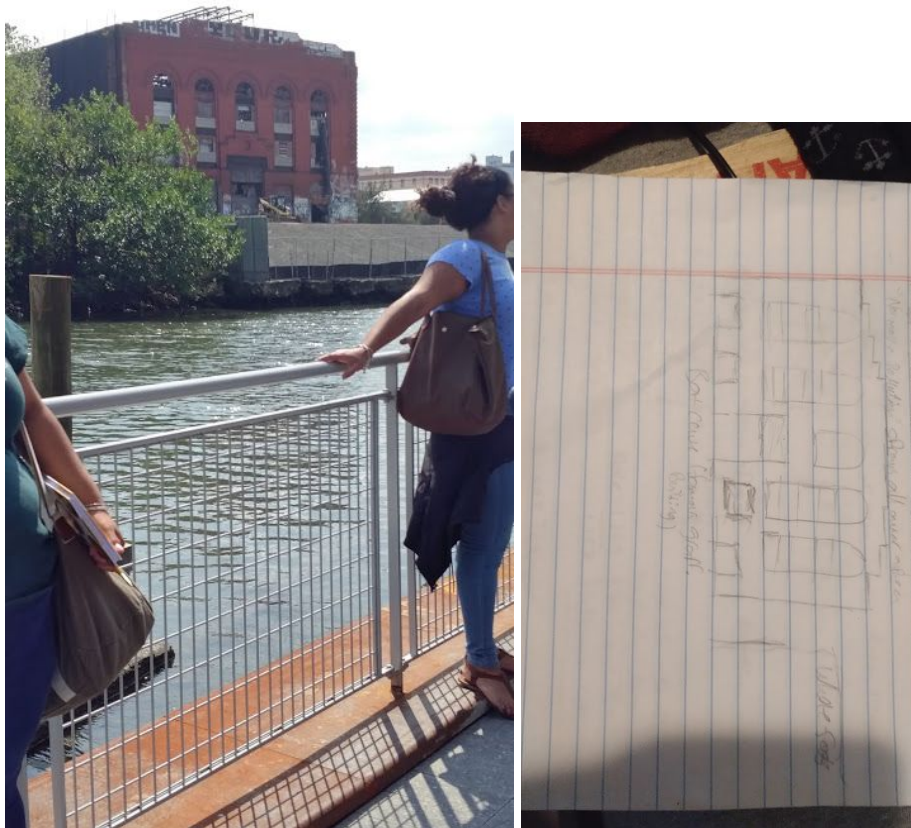
( one of the many murals that we passed by)

All these murals reminded me of all the artists that used to squat here in the Gowanus area that eventually left due to all the gentrification and development going on. Speaking of which, mass developments across the majority of the walk was everywhere. From residential to commercial, it shows how the only people in the Gowanus area are either business people, developers, high income citizens, or low income citizens that are slowly being pushed out of their home.



(Photo of one of the residential buildings in development and sketch of the NYCHA housing project as well as the canal.)

All these planned structures don't seem to care much for preservation. For example, we had passed by one of the somewhat famous landmarks, The Batcave. The Batcave was an abandoned warehouse that was overrun by graffiti artists and was used as a giant blank canvas.



(The Batcave in the works of being torn down and Batcave sketch))

To be honest, I am not really fond of the filth and the pollution and kind of lean towards the modernization of the area. The cobblestone roads aren't easy on the feet and the smell of the canal wasn't pleasant. All in all the Gowanus makes me feel mixed because I do not like the filth and yet i love

the sight of all the construction and the mystery of what the new developments will look like excite me.

## ANALYSIS/DISCOVERIES

Through my observations i can see that the gowanus has gone through so many changes and has more yet to come within the coming years. The community will evolve and go from squatters and middle to high class citizens to mostly high class citizens whom will be able to afford all the apparent price hikes. The canal will still be heavily polluted despite all attempts to clean it, and shops will continue to pop up. I haven't really seen any places similar to the Gowanus so it is very different to see what is going on in the area. As opposed the the more organized and clean areas in the city. But, the spirit of place will live on through the graffiti and old converted buildings and vegetation.

## KEYWORDS/ VOCABULARY (these might include specialized vocabulary, city agencies, names of businesses or people \*5 keywords minimum required per site visit)

1. Superfund
2. Pollution
3. Conversion
4. Development
5. Gentrification

## 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. Why didn't the city approve of the superfund to clean the Gowanus Canal?

2. How will different residents react to all these developments?
3. What processes is the city taking to clean the canal, and quick will the results show?