

Learning Places Fall 2017

SITE REPORT #2

Back To the Gowanus



You can see how on the Left, it's the newer side of Brooklyn with large skyscrapers, and the right side has the old classic Brooklyn.

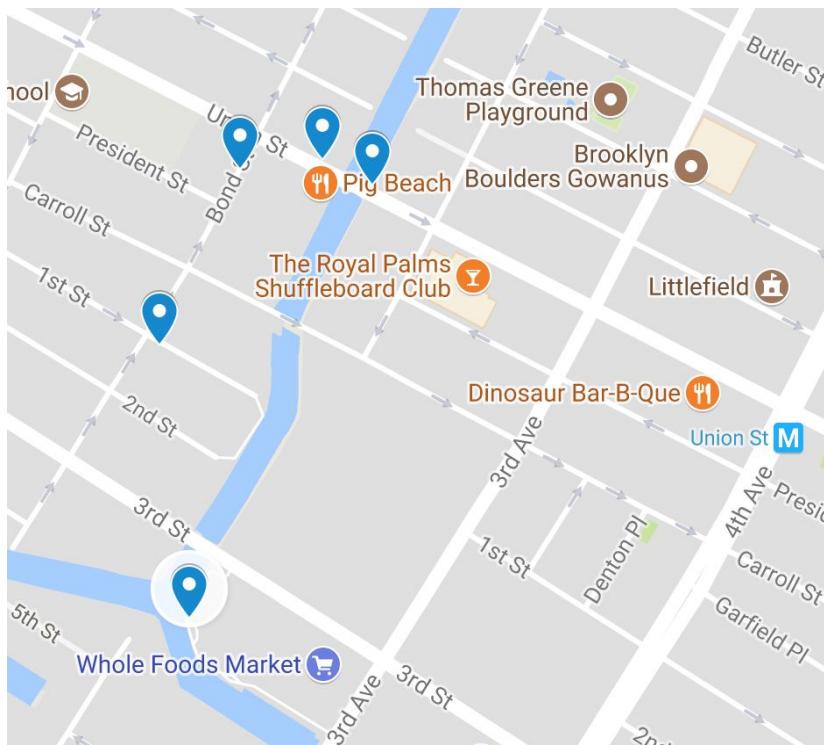
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10.02.2017

INTRODUCTION AND PRE-VISIT REFLECTIONS

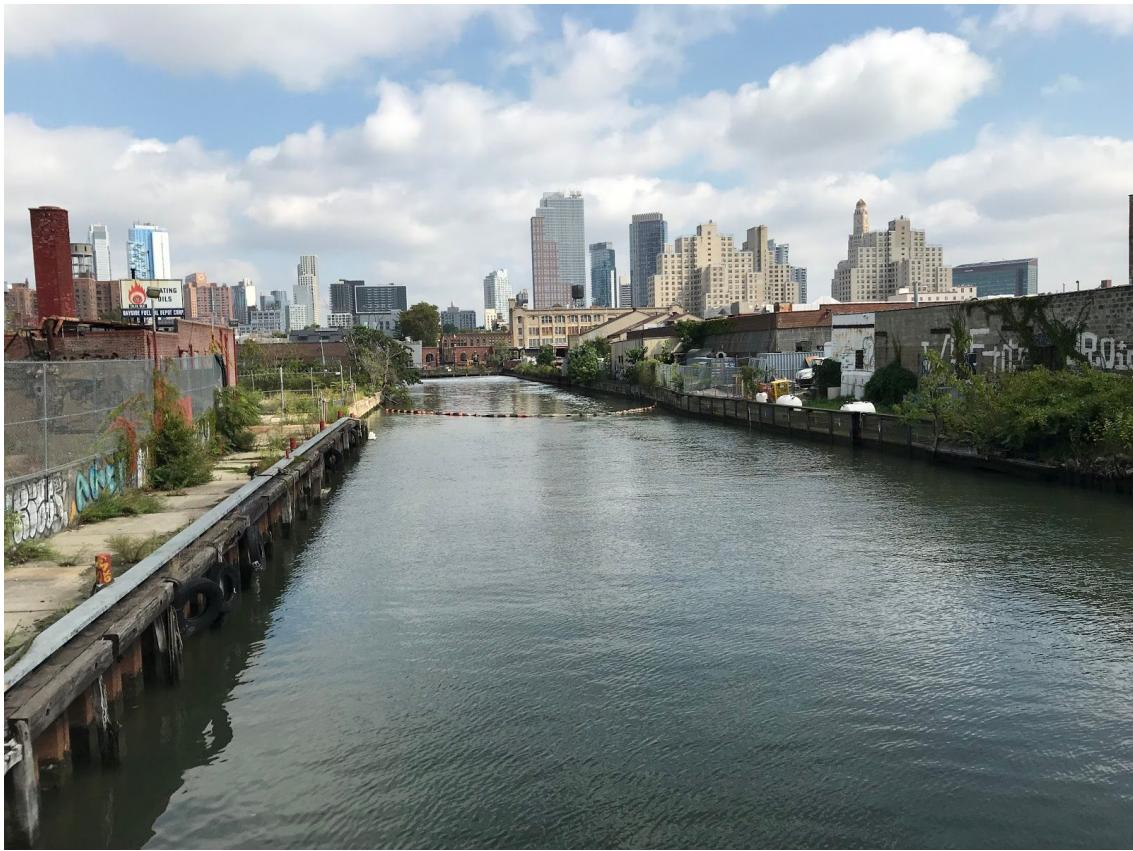
I want to learn more about what will happen, or is already happening to the people currently living in the Gowanus area, while gentrification goes on, and the Superfund cleanup is in effect. I understand that the surrounding areas, such as the land surrounding the canal won't be cleaned up as part of the Superfund, but maybe someone will be forced to take on this responsibility also? And if so who?

Map of Sites Visited:





Luxury Apartments on Bond St; This is an interesting location to build luxury apartments. It's right next to the Gowanus Canal, which is still very polluted. Was it really a wise location to build luxury apartments at? We can also see images of people putting their feet over the Gowanus Canal, and sitting on the edge of the canal and enjoying and laughing like it's the edge of a boardwalk on a beach.



View from the Carroll St Bridge; You can see that the Water isn't clear at all, and is clearly polluted. There is a divider in the middle to drain out any large debris too.



View from Whole Foods Lot; You can see that from this point, there are still a lot of industrial businesses in and around the Gowanus area.

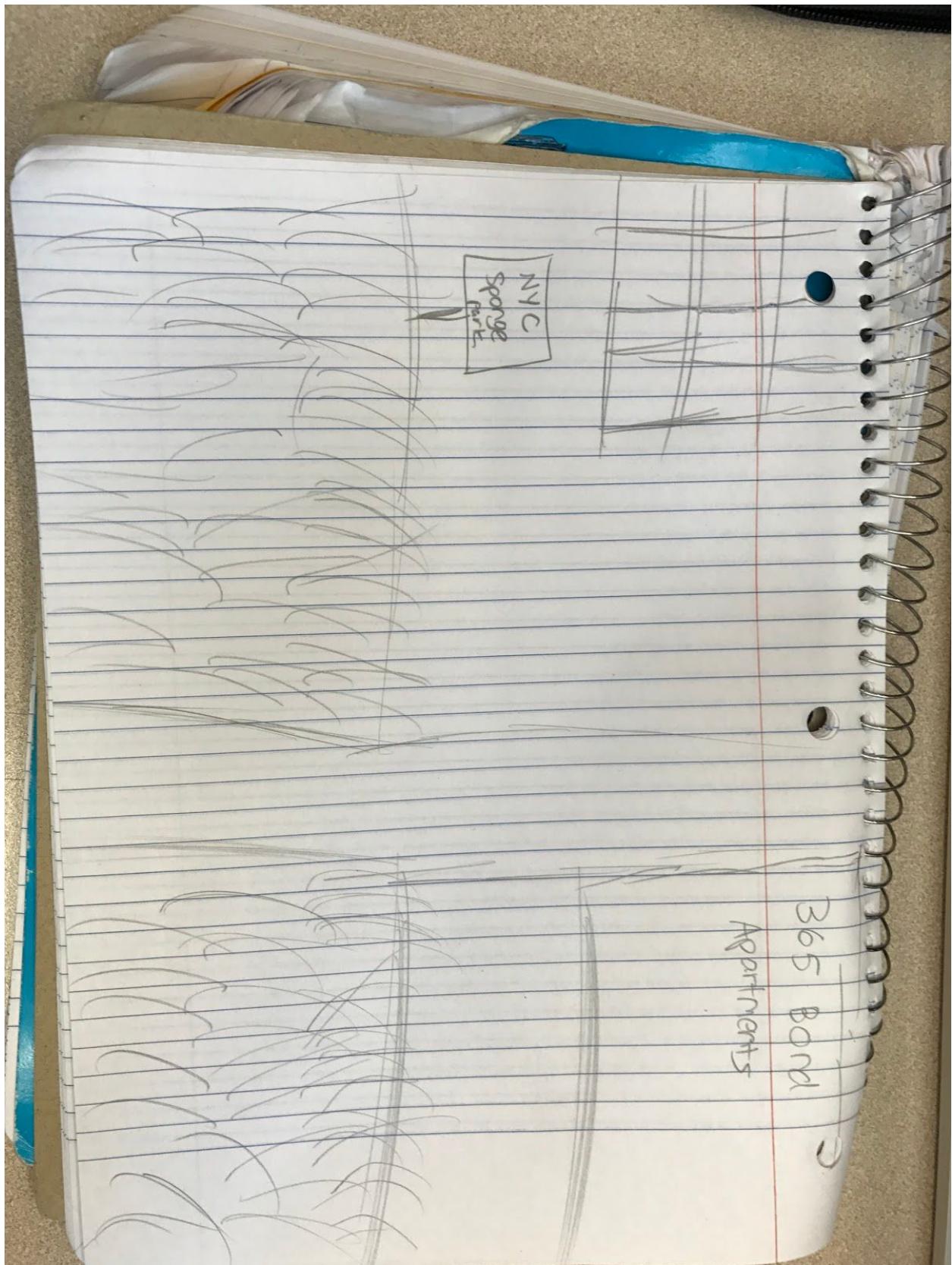


The Sponge Park located right next to the Canal; This Sponge Park was designed to assist in cleaning up the toxins from the Canal and prevent it from entering the drainage on the streets surrounding the Canal.

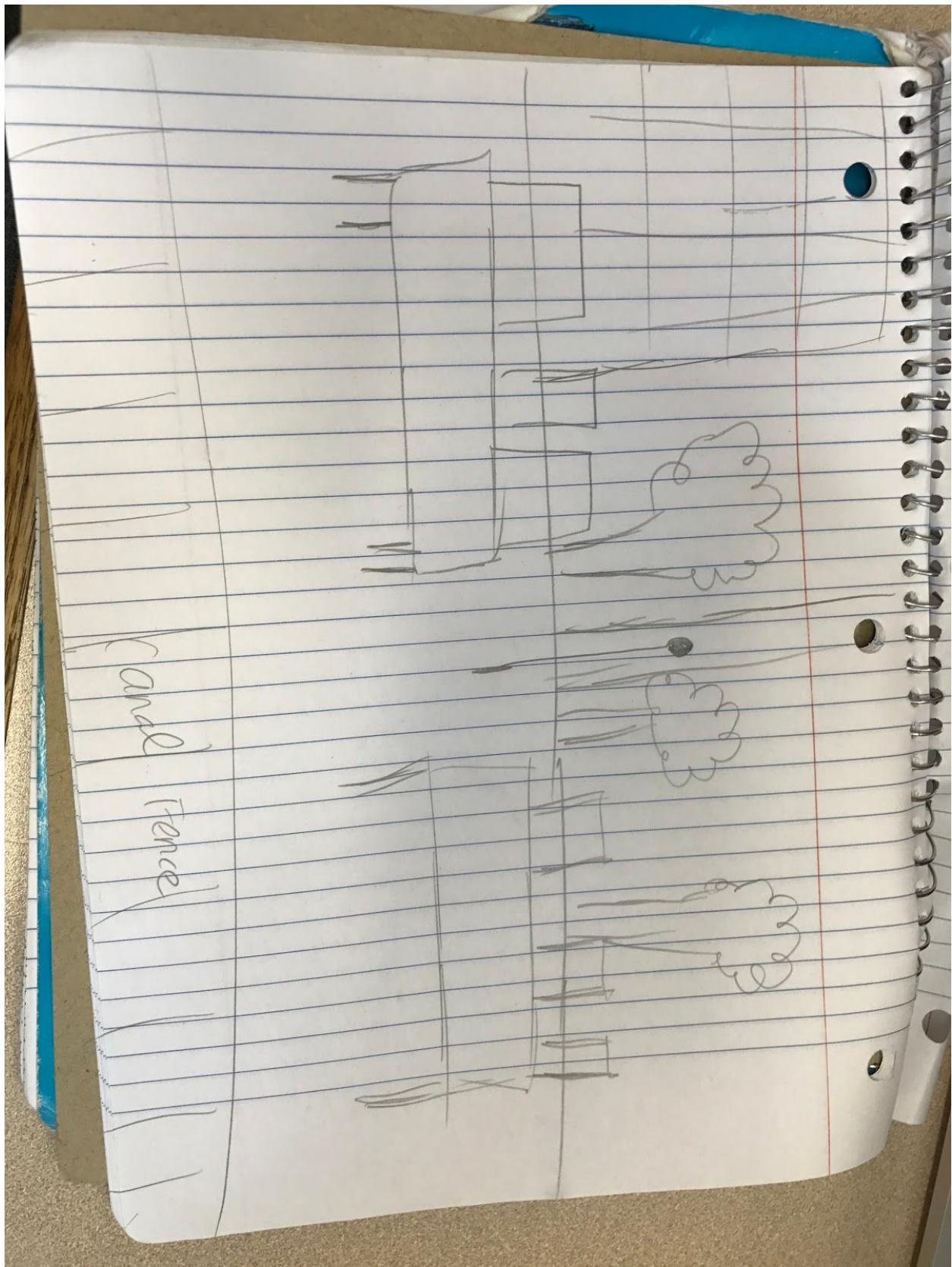
ANALYSIS:

We discussed how the superfund doesn't completely clean up the canal, and it only takes out some of the waste from the water itself. Super Fund is a program from the Federal Government, but they usually don't pay for the cleaning process themselves. Instead they look into who caused the pollution in the first place, and in this case, one of the people who are being forced to pay for the cleaning up, is the City of New York. However, the cleaning with the Super Fund, doesn't clean up the surrounding areas of the canal. This might not prove to be effective in the end, mainly because if they clean up the canal only, the surrounding areas will still end up polluting the canal once again. Even though most of the toxic waste would be removed from the top layer right under the water, there will still be a lot more if you dig in a bit more. The fact that they won't clean the surrounding areas, won't really help the community in many ways. People would be much more willing to move into the area near the Gowanus Canal, if it was much cleaner than it is now. The Superfund cleanup should still help the community, because it starts the cleanup process. A lot of others might follow in the path of it, if the cleanup proves to actually work. It will take time, but I think that if the Canal's top layer is cleaned up,

and they prevent *most* of the waste from rising up again, people would still look to move back into the area. When the canal floods, all of the polluted water tends to go all over the place, flooding nearby streets and homes. The City also needs to look into ways to keep the canal from severely flooding when it rains a lot, especially since it's still very polluted. I think that if the Super Fund does work, even in a little way, the Genius Loci would definitely change for the better. The area seems to still be a very industrial location, but if residential homes were to be put back into the area, this would change the whole "mood" of the neighborhood. People would once again think very highly of the Gowanus neighborhood, and its surrounding areas. They would actually be proud of the fact that they might've been the people who made a change by standing up for the cleaning up process.



Quick Sketch of the Gowanus Canal's Sponge Park located towards the Luxury Apartments on Bond St.



Quick Sketch of how the builders near the Canal only meet the bare minimum requirements when it comes to decorating or keeping the areas right next to the Canal clean.

KEYWORDS/ VOCABULARY (these must be words you learned on this walk such as specialized vocabulary, city agencies, names of businesses or significant people – they must be specific to the topic of the walk) *5 keywords required per site visit

1. Modular Treatment
2. Heavy Metals
3. NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
4. Sponge Park
5. EPA

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 will the Super Fund affect population growth near the Gowanus?
2. How will the city keep the Gowanus from flooding even after it's cleaned up?
3. How effective will the Sponge Park be in the long run?