

Learning Places Fall 2017

SITE REPORT #2

Exploring the Surrounding Areas of the Gowanus Canal



This is an image of the description of the Old Stone House, found towards the basketball courts of Washington Park. You can see that this plaque was added during Mayor Giuliani's time, but it shows that the Old Stone House was first built in 1699. It makes you think how a building can last almost 300 years, while the rest of the surrounding areas have changed significantly.

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INTRODUCTION AND PRE-VISIT REFLECTIONS

So far with the previous two visits, we have focused on the canal itself. This time around, it sounds like we will get to explore the areas around the canal, while still focusing on a specific topic that we have chosen as a group. Our topic was to focus on Public Space, so we decided to focus on an upcoming park and new housing developments in the area.

SITE DOCUMENTATION: Take notes and sketch in your notebook, take many photographs – search for angles and details that really tell a story and use those to report your documentation. Your site documentation will include the following:



- Meeting Point - Near Whole Foods
- Left Point - St. Mary's Playground (Upcoming park under the Subway Tracks)
- Top Point - 365 Bond Public Space (Benches near the Canal)
- Right Point - Washington Park and the Old Stone House



Washington Park and the Old Stone House (Street Entrance) - This is the view of the Old Stone House from the 3rd Avenue point of view.



Another view of the Old Stone house from the front entrance.



One block away from the Playground - Smith/9th St Subway Station



Residential Housing right next to the Washington Park and the Old Stone House

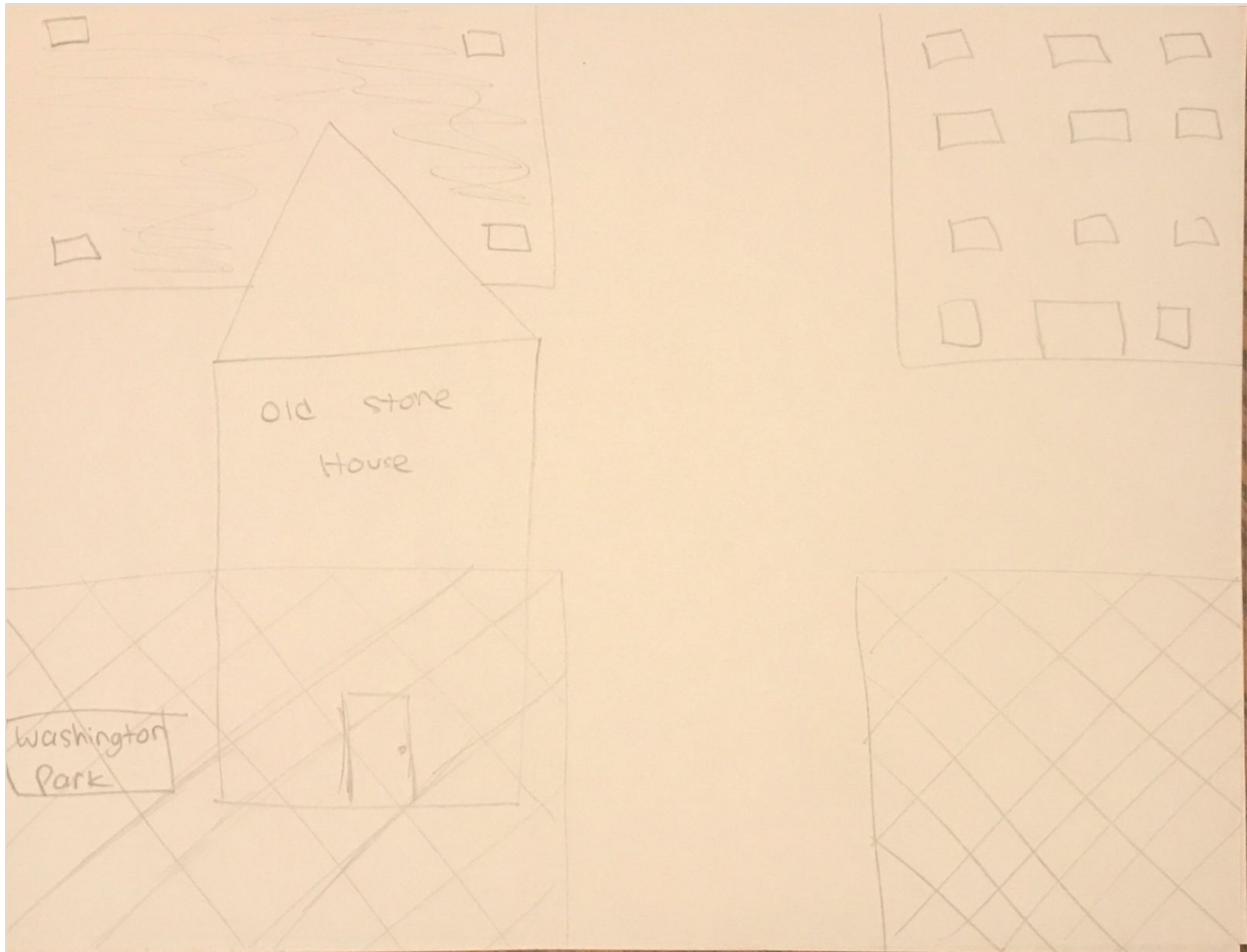
ANALYSIS: The St. Mary's Park that is being constructed seems like it would be an important addition to the neighborhood. Across the street, there is pretty much just construction going on, as you can see in the image below:



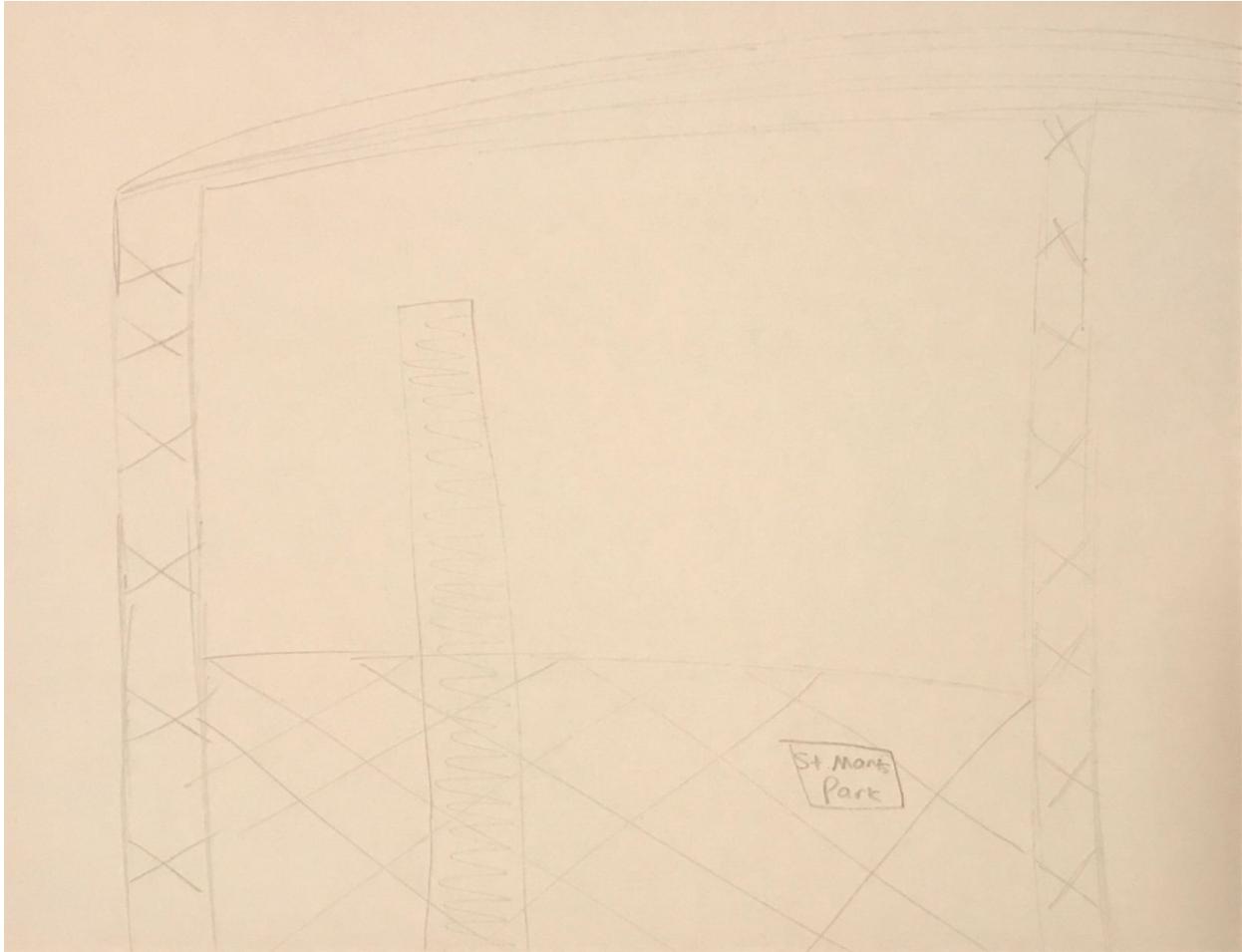
The area seems somewhat depleted, and abandoned. It seems like it was once a great neighborhood to live in before the businesses came in. One block away however, there are a bunch of local businesses that still look like they're doing pretty well. This could just mean that Gentrification hasn't yet affected all of the areas surrounding the Gowanus, but it most likely will catch up to them soon.

It looks like there was a park at one time where the new St. Mary's playground is being built. It might've been shut down for a number of reasons, but it is directly under the subway tracks, and it looks like they've been doing repairs for the tracks to make it hold up stronger. It is possible that the old park wasn't safe enough for kids to play in if it was under the subway tracks like before. A playground and park for kids to play in is just what the neighborhood needs. It seems kind of dull and quiet in the area, and there are residential homes behind the location for the park, so there will most likely be kids for the park. The only issue with this is, there is a LOT of construction going on across the street, and time will tell what will actually come out from there. Hopefully, it's something that won't ruin the businesses that are a block away, and families living in the houses near the playground/park can stay in the neighborhood. This is the northwestern side of the canal, and it seems to be much more residential than the sides that we walked around in the previous visits.

The images that I have selected show different aspects of the neighborhood that we explored in. You can see that one side is slowly starting to become industrialized, while the other is still all residential. The Genius Loci of the neighborhood right now seems to be very calm and peaceful, but if a playground opens up, it will get louder but also it'll become a more family friendly place to live in. I would guess that a lot of people do not want to raise families around the Gowanus because of the constant changes and pollution from the canal and the surrounding businesses. Eventually, it could catch on to the rest of Brooklyn, depending on how the progression of Gentrification happens.



View of the Old Stone House and Washington Park from 3rd Avenue - You can see in the picture that there is a lot around the Old Stone House, such as a residential building in the back right, and then a school in the back left corner.



This is a view of the St. Mary's Park, which is still under construction. You can see that there are subway tracks right above it, and pillars to hold up the tracks on both sides of the park.

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. Smith
2. Line Bagels
3. Stone Park Cafe
4. Washington Park (Wall)
5. Hotel Le Bleu

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 Carroll Gardens side of the Gowanus Canal change as Gentrification catches up to it?

2. Why are the sides of the Gowanus so different from one another?
3. Will the playground change the neighborhood for the better?