

Learning Places Fall 2017

SITE REPORT #2

Gowanus Canal Tour with Christine Petro



The image above is a picture of the Union Street Bridge sign. This bridge is a significant bridge as it is the last bridge towards the end of the Gowanus Canal.

Anjali Rawat

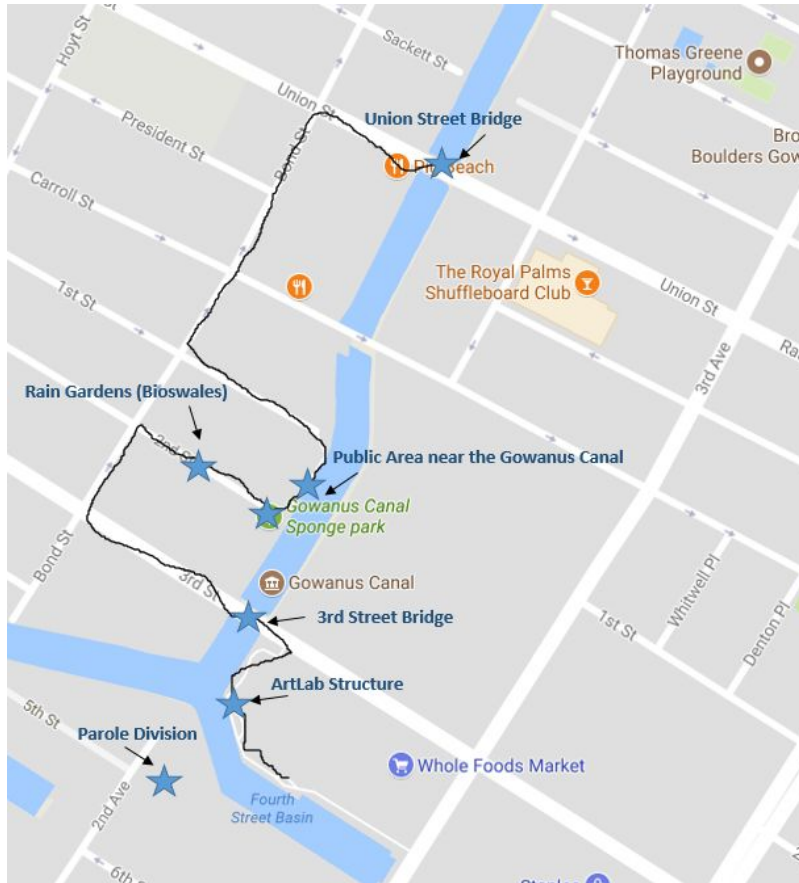
09.30.2017

INTRODUCTION AND PRE-VISIT REFLECTIONS

Before going on the second trip, I anticipate on learning more about the history of the Gowanus Canal during this trip. We did in fact learn more about the history about it and more. We started walking from the Union Street Bridge and then walked around 1st and 3rd streets observing and learning about the surrounding infrastructures. We also learned more about the conservation and the cleanup of the area. Our guide taught us more in depth about the new developments in green infrastructure and more details about the companies and organizations responsible for the aid such as the EPA and the NYC Department.

SITE DOCUMENTATION:

- (1) MAP OF AREA OF INVESTIGATION



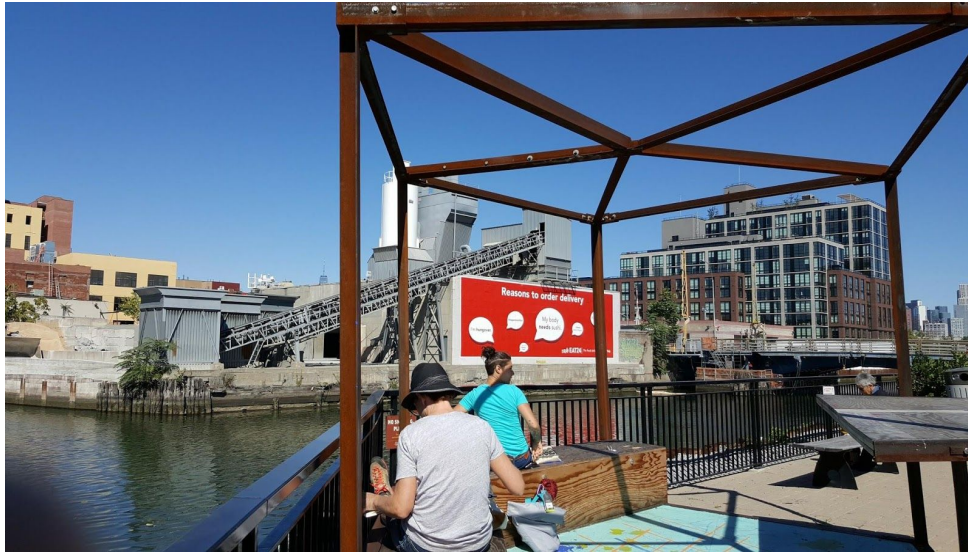
(2) PHOTOS AND SKETCHES:



Rain Garden(Bioswales); These gardens are placed on the sidewalk and can absorb up to 2,500 gallons of rainwater that falls on a single block. It helps prevent any overflow from water and sewage.



Parole Division; The NYC Department of Corrections and Community Supervision is responsible for the confinement of 53,000 people. This is one of the new and main locations in the city. Residents in the area are furious at this new development and are timid to have parolees there.

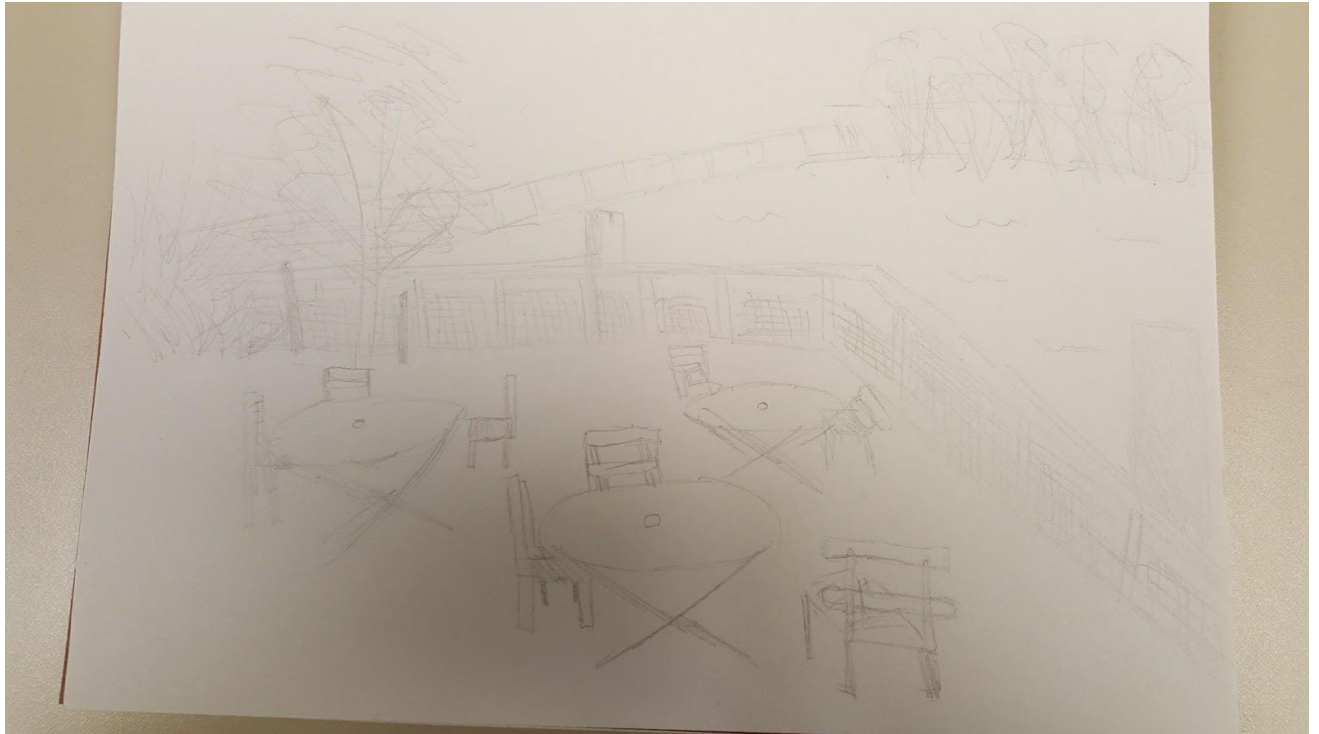


Artlab Structure; The area above is called the ArtLab Gowanus. It's located at the end of 3rd street near the Gowanus Canal. The structure is owned by Whole Foods and hosts free art workshops there with local artists. Some of the workshops are environmentally based and the space can be utilized for art as well as educational purposes.

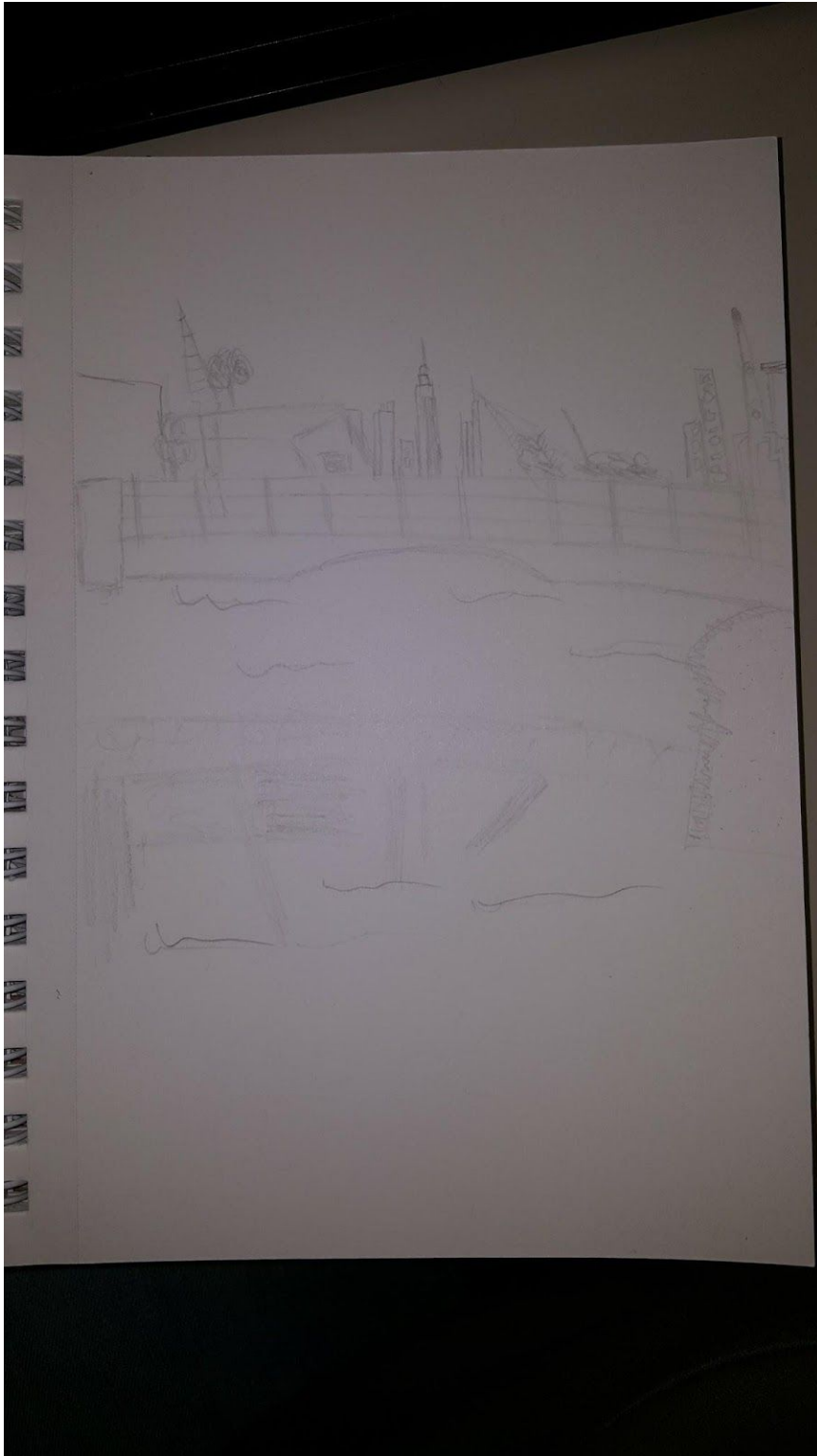


Conservation: Sponge Park ; The image is the Gowanus Canal Pilot Sponge Park. It's located at the end of 2nd street and the Gowanus Canal (After Bond Street). The function of this park is to treat

the contaminated water that goes into the Canal. The goal is to help clean and refine the Canal overtime from the contaminants.



Public Area near the Gowanus Canal; This area is located between 1st and 2nd street near the Gowanus Canal. The tables and chairs show the improvements and developments being done to the area. This improvement caters to the public and maybe a product of gentrification. There's also vegetation in the area including fresh grass and trees.



The sketch above is the Third Street Bridge on the Gowanus Canal. It's located between Bond Street & Third Avenue. This bridge is the last bridge before the canal reaches the mouth. There's also a heavy amount of development and construction in the area surrounding the bridge.

ANALYSIS:

The topic I've chosen to discuss is the idea of conservation and further developments with plants and other forms of vegetation. The pictures I've chosen are Conservation: Sponge Park and Rain Garden (Bioswales). The people in charge of the conservation and developments of the environment, manipulate the areas in a positive way in order to help preserve and prevent future disasters. The bioswales will greatly affect the residents living there as well as the surrounding environment. It absorbs the excess rainwater especially during storms. This is a huge benefit as it will prevent sewage overflow from flooding the streets. The new plants and trees are also providing fresh, clean oxygen that helps dilute the air pollution. The Sponge Park is a 1,800 square foot park. The rainwater picks up contaminants from the street and runs through the Sponge park. The bioretention cells under the plants absorb and filter the water before it flows into the canal.

During the trip, Christine mentioned that not only does the state aid in these developments, local volunteers also take part. People of various ages do their part and help with the vegetation. This is a major step for the community as people will become even more informed about the Gowanus Canal in its entirety from the history to current events. I think the Genius Loci of the Gowanus Canal is affected because all of these positive changes represent hope and optimism with all these new innovations working with natural vegetation. I don't believe that there are any negative reactions towards conservation and utilizing natural reinforcements. The only negative I can envision is the costly maintenance for plants and gardens. There might also be a space issue for residents and developers and this might encourage gentrification as developers eye the nice change of scenery and think of ways to attract wealthy people there.

KEYWORDS/ VOCABULARY

1. Pollutant
2. Infrastructure
3. Waterfront
4. Remediation
5. Contaminants

QUESTIONS for FURTHER RESEARCH:

1. How can I get more involved as a citizen to help conserve the environment?
2. How can affordable housing be created during all of this development?
3. What can be done to get investors to be involved in further development?