

Learning Places Fall 2017

### **SITE REPORT #3**

A Walk in The Neighbor"hood"



Cover Image: select a meaningful image and provide a caption explaining what the image is

Kristopher Garay

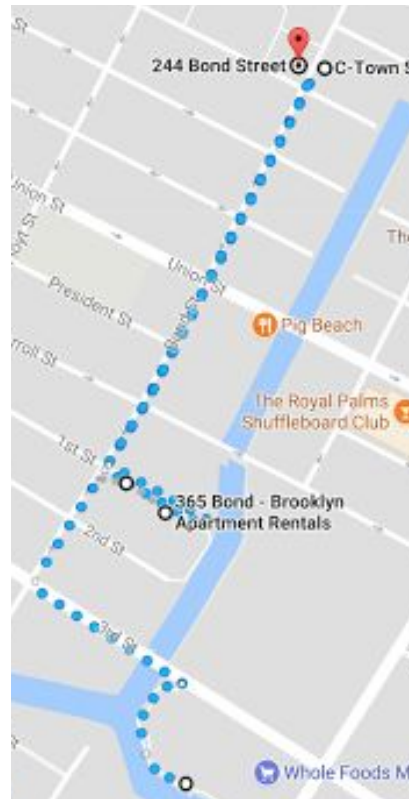
10.23.2017

#### **INTRODUCTION AND PRE-VISIT REFLECTIONS**

Prior to the visit I had anticipated the idea that my group and I were going to walk around new areas of the gowanus that had been gentrified, and interview some local residents/workers to get their perspective on the change in the gowanus. Though that was the intention, we ended up walking around the same area instead, but still interviewing locals as we walked.

#### **SITE DOCUMENTATION:**

(1) MAP OF AREA OF INVESTIGATION --



(2) PHOTOS AND SKETCHES:

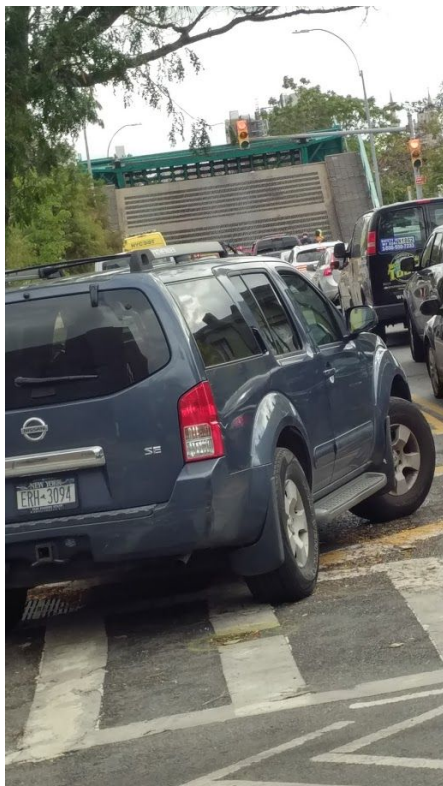




This is a photo of one of the basins being dredged. From the gathered information it seems that these machines are only doing light work to make the area more accessible by the bigger more stronger machinery.



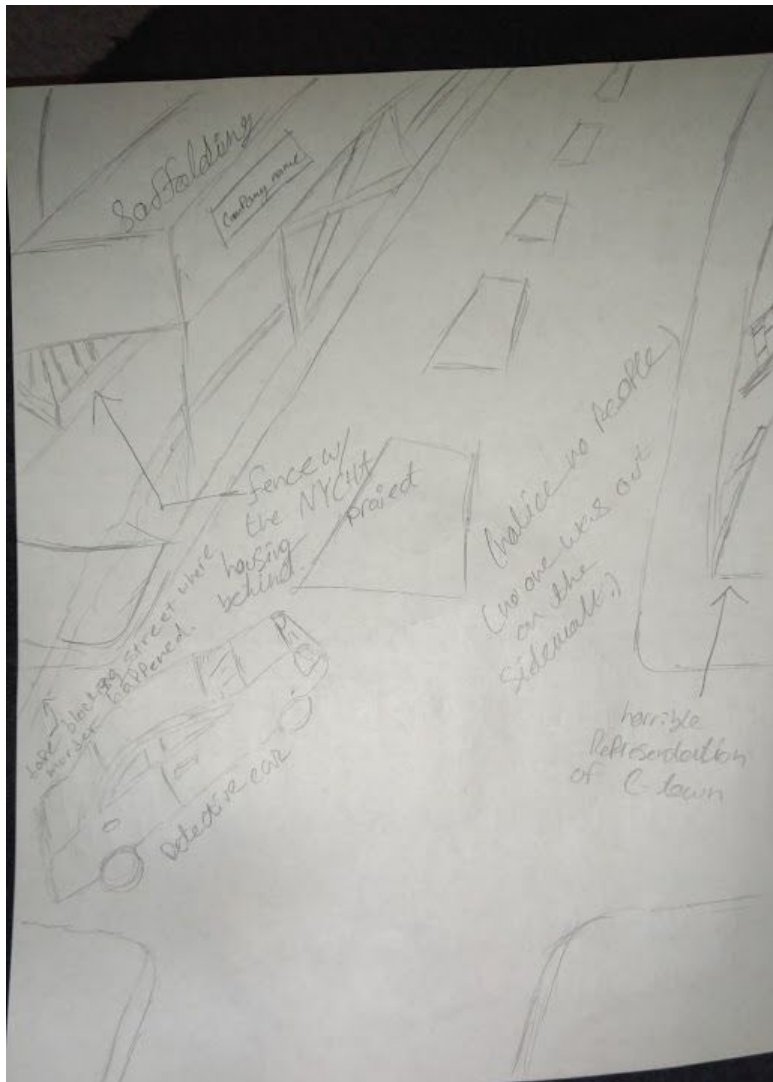
Just a photo of the advertising, making me wonder how and why they portray the gowanus area to look like this given the current condition.



A photo of the Union street bridge being held up, a sight we have not seen in the past two visits to the gowanus.



This is a photo that designates a "High School" underneath one of the NYCHA housing projects. something I have never experienced. also for further information, there was a murder that morning on the next block over so detectives and cops were roaming around. therefore we did not want to stick around for more photos.



Sketch of the crime scene.





Sketch of the dredging.

#### ANALYSIS:

Gentrification and marketing in the gowanus is quite interesting once you delve deeper into the mix of things. On our walk the group had stopped by the infamous 365 Bond street luxury housing complex. we decided that interviewing anyone at the leasing gallery would be a good start. Before we hit the leasing gallery we were lucky enough to speak to one of the lessee's, Matt, who had been moving a great deal of personal items into his new home. Matt had stated in his response to our questions that he had just recently moved into the complex with his wife, fully aware of the area and its past, because it "looked new". He stated that there was no advertising that he had seen that influenced his final decision, his decision was solely based on the fact that the place looked new.

after we finished interviewing Matt, the leasing gallery was next. When we arrived that two of us would go in and ask the questions because an entire group would be intimidating. After maybe about 10-15 minutes, we had found out that the two buildings that were being developed were being built by two different companies under the same developer. And we also found out that to lease, or rent, or whatever is about 7 grand a month which is extremely expensive. We also found out through sales rep., Diana, that they are trying to "integrate" themselves with the community by allowing all the local artists to showcase their art in the "public" gallery next door. They also have breakfast for the lessee's. while it may seem like they are trying to become community friendly, I wonder if it is truly just some kind of act

to try and get more upper class citizens to move into the area given that good gossip about the residence is spread.

On our way to the NYCHA housing projects we came across a mailman and decided to interview him as well. From what he expressed, the area has grown in density which gives him more work to do.

Our last and final stop was the NYCHA housing project, to which we were surprised when we arrived because there had apparently been a murder earlier that morning so some streets were cut off. I can only imagine how “integrated” the residents and employees at 365 bond were when that happened. After agreeing to not check it out we decided to go to the C-Town across the street where we met a wonderful elderly woman named Mary Glover. Upon interviewing her we found out that she had lived in the gowanus in the 80’s, moved into the housing project after receiving a letter in a hotel she had lived in previously with her children, to which invited her to the projects and she gracefully accepted. saying how she wanted her kids to grow up in a diverse neighborhood where everyone looks out for you. She is very involved with the community to the point where everybody knows her and says hi or hugs her. She even involved herself in a recent rally about housing, using her dancing skills as an abstract artist to try and help raise awareness. her rent has not increases from what she told us, and she makes sure it stays that way.

#### **KEYWORDS/ VOCABULARY**

1. Gentrification
2. Marketing
3. Integration
4. Community
5. artsists

**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 is the neighborhood described to new residents?
2. How are the current gowanus citizens reacting to gentrification and why are/aren’t they acting?
3. Do the developers care about the community when they try to “integrate” it into their developments, or are they putting up a front to try and gain an influx of residents? If so, why?