

Learning Places Fall 2017
Site Report # 3



Image: The old stone house in Washington Square Park. This is a historic site in Brooklyn, where many of those fight in the Battle of Gowanus found safe haven.

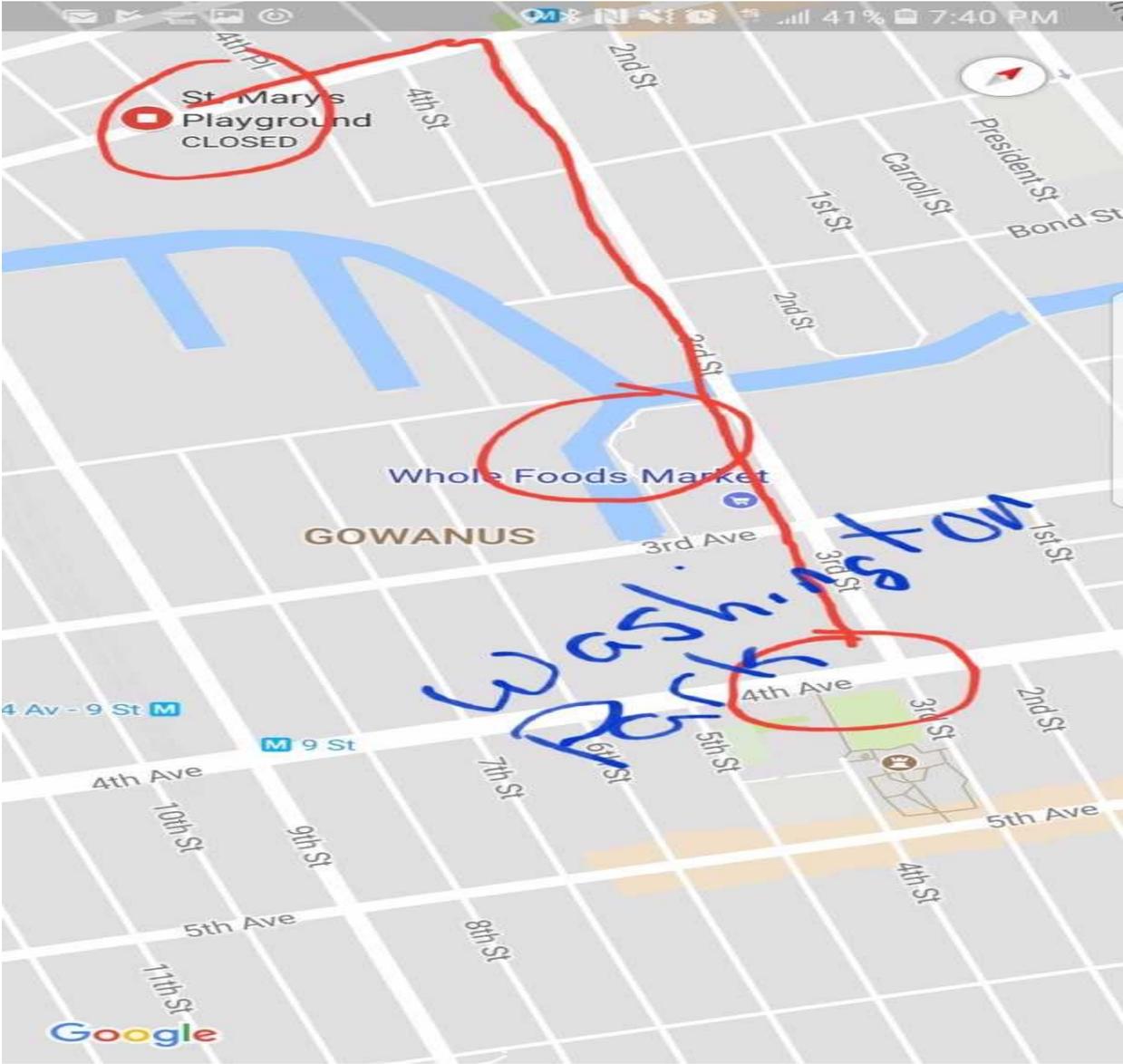
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Introductions

Once again we visited the Gowanus area but, this time we were exploring aspects of Gowanus that directly related to each group project. My group was “Public Spaces” where we explored the different types of public spaces in Gowanus and their uses. Public spaces are social space that is generally open and accessible to people such as plazas, town squares, parks, marketplaces, public commons and malls, public greens, piers, special areas within convention

centers or grounds, sites within public buildings, lobbies, concourses, or public spaces within private buildings. We saw some of these examples throughout the walk and saw how it adds to the spirit of the neighborhood.

Map



Photos and Sketches



Image: This is a sign of St. Mary's Playground that's currently under construction. This park borders the neighborhood of Gowanus, Red Hook, and Carroll Gardens. The new reconstruction will include a skate park, basketball courts, multi-use synthetic turf field, adult fitness equipment and color seal coat walking track. The date of completion is estimated October 2018.



Image: The Old Stone house is a public space within a public space. This historic site is situated inside Washington Park. Host exhibits and tours for NYC schools and also allows local events such farmers'

markets, performances, concerts, and workshops. Also as we see in the photo people just come to hang out around the cobble floor area giving it this town square vibe.



Image: Whole Foods

public space is an example of public space within a private area. The public space is designed as a pier with tables and chairs to sit and enjoy the view and nice weather. This area isn't just for the customers but anyone in the area as we saw last visit of a drawing class coming together to draw the Gowanus.



Image: This is another entry point of Washington Park, where you access to the basketball court, hand court. We can see how those who live in the area have easy access to the park, and it gives those who live in buildings a sense that they have a backyard.

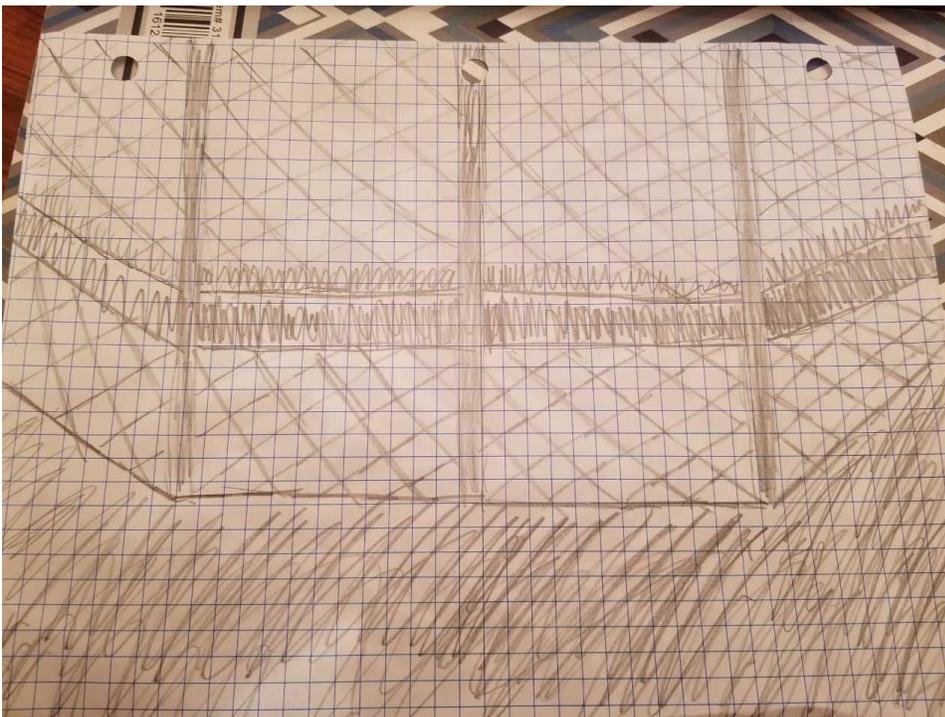


Image: The baseball park within Washington Park.

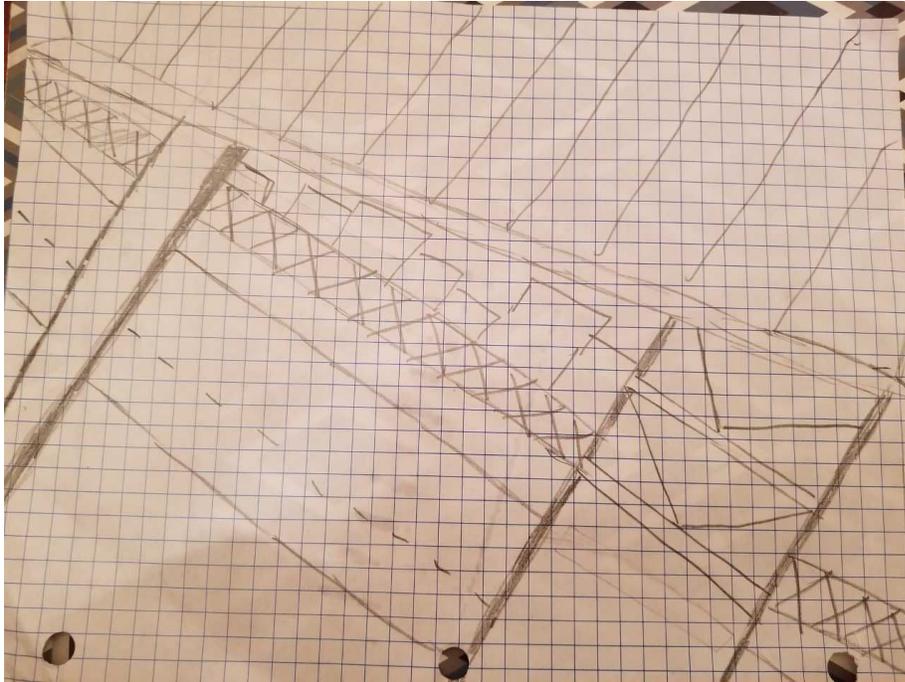


Image: A sketch of how

deserted the area around St. Mary Park'

Analysis

I believe public spaces are beneficial to a neighborhood because it gives it a sense of community. For example parks you see kids playing together stimulating their creativity, parents taking a break from entertaining the kids, and older folks talking with one another as if family. It's just a safe environment for locals to get some fresh air. Also, as we walked further away from the canal I got this more homier vibe, because in all of our visit in the Gowanus their isn't that much foot traffic. Yet once we got closer to the parks or the pier by Whole Foods their more activity. Which just proves how open spaces just brings people together, and that brings a positive affect the neighborhood.

Another thing is that I felt Gowanus has this gloomy aspect towards it but these public spaces brighten it up. Yet this is not just for Gowanus but all over Brooklyn where you can have a run down area but add a garden, park, or benches and it just changes the whole spirit of the area. Before I thought Gowanus Genius Loci was an older man with smudges on his face wearing a raincoat and rain hat just sitting in a tiny rowboat fishing in the Gowanus while smoking a cigar. Now I see it more of "where the wild things are" vibe, Gowanus is underrated which is sad because it has so much to offer.

Keywords

1. Public Space
2. Washington Park
3. St. Mary's Playground
4. Old Stone House

5. Whole Foods Pier

Questions for further Research

1. What is the city doing more to add public spaces in brooklyn?
2. Does everyone see public space as essential or a waste of space?
3. Can public space harm a neighborhood?