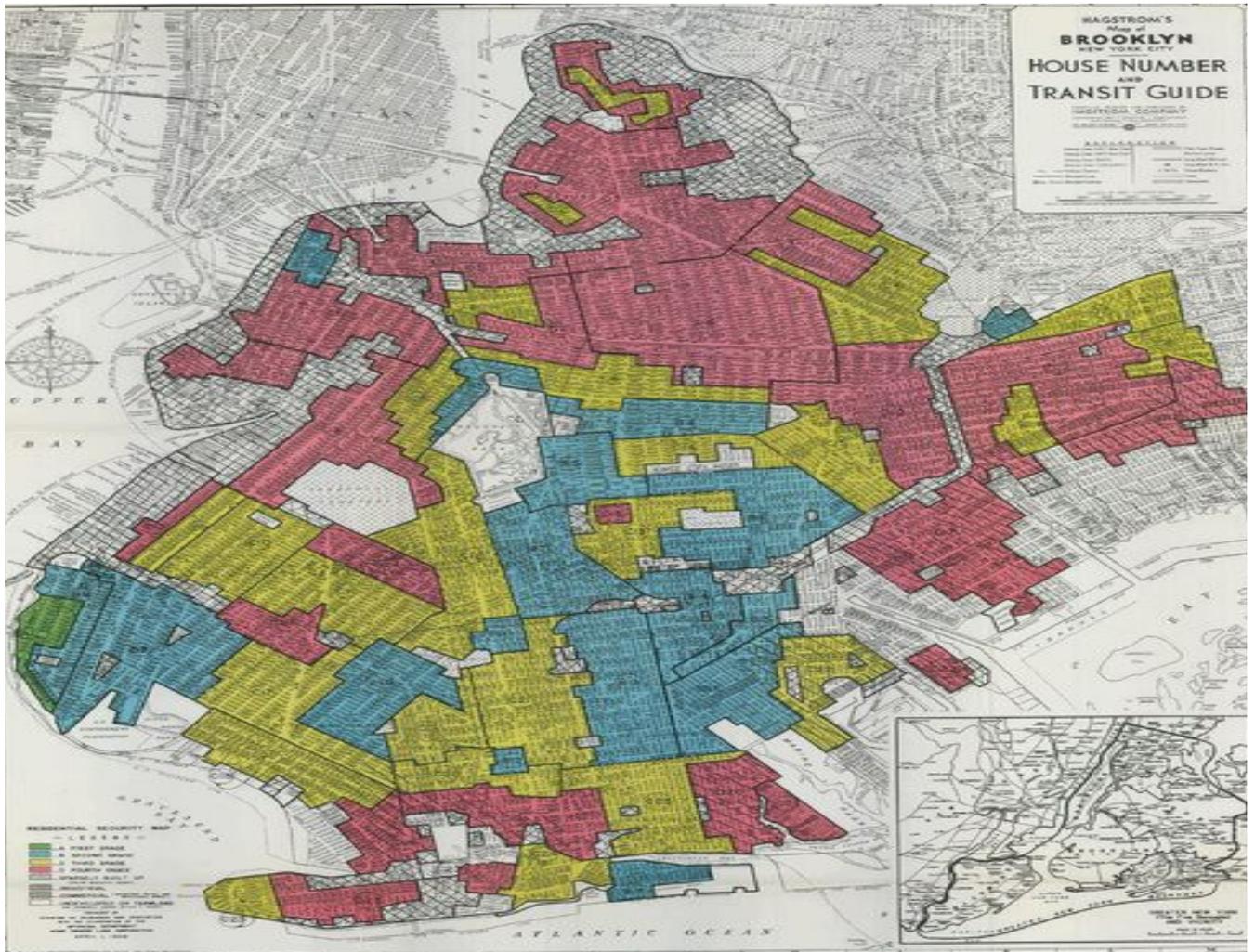


Community Relationships/Gentrification



Redlining of The Gowanus 1938

Courtesy of: <http://www.urbanoasis.org/projects/holc-fha/digital-holc-maps> (Accessed 2016)

Lisa White

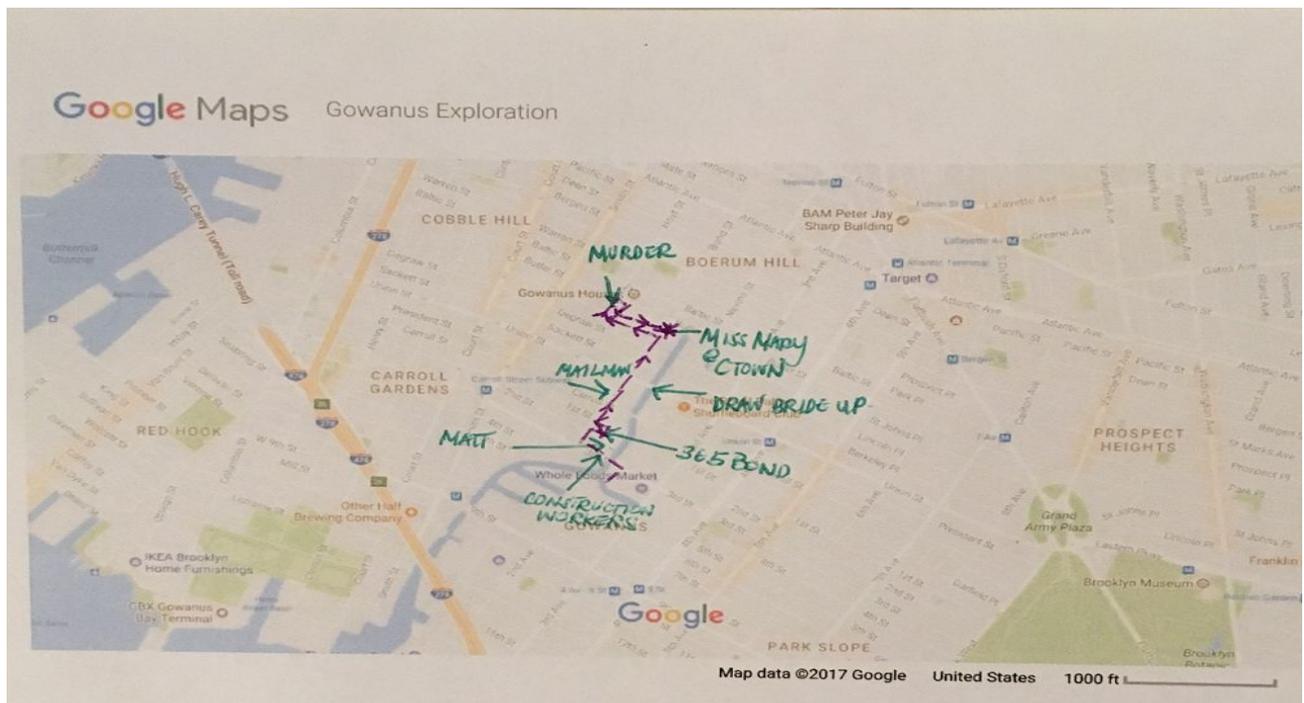
10.22.2017

INTRODUCTION AND PRE-VISIT REFLECTIONS

In my mind going back to the Gowanus seemed so repetitive and uneventful. This was going to be our third trip back to the Gowanus. In class we had guest speakers, Joseph Alexiou who wrote the book “Gowanus-Brooklyn’s Curious Canal” and Abby Subak from Gowanus Art speak about the history and current climate of Gowanus; saw multiple movies about gentrification and discussed the effects of Robert Moses but to my delight this exploration was an adventure.

SITE DOCUMENTATION:

MAP OF AREA OF INVESTIGATION





Changing Architecture; Modern buildings 3rd St and Bond



Opened Drawbridge; Union St Bridge



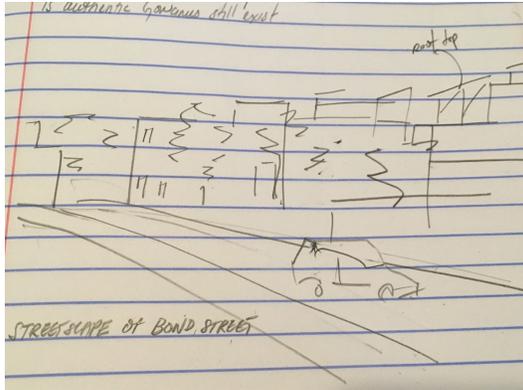
Artist in Gowanus; Artist Depiction of a human figure outside of their work space on Union St.



Butler and Bond Streets; Gowanus Projects



The Future; Gowanus streetscape along the canal (365 Bond and Gowanus Projects)



Sketch of Bond Street by Lisa White



Sketch of Miss Mary Glover by Lisa White

ANALYSIS:

Gowanus who do you belong to? After sitting down and reflecting on our interviews my group was able to obtain. This question lingered in my brain. After World War One and the Great Depression a lot of urban areas throughout the city were redlined and deemed unmortgageable. Homeowners were forced to move to the suburbs and minorities, primarily black and hispanic began to move in and make these areas home. It always struck a chord within me that most outsiders felt it was the minorities that brought down these neighborhoods, when in fact it was good old fashion politics and a development strategy. You see once an area became blighted, Developers can then buy parcels of land, buildings or even communities for pennies on the dollar. This holds true for the Gowanus.

So once again I ask myself who does Gowanus belong to? Is it the people who moved in after Gowanus was redlined and built a community with its mix of brownstones and the infamous Gowanus Houses; or is it the Artist who moved into those dilapidated buildings bringing notoriety to a long forgotten area; or does it belong to the New Urbanites (young professionals and millennials with deep pockets). With Jane Jacobs "a community is a functional system of complex order not chaos," I search to find the answer.

I told you in my introduction this time to the Gowanus was an adventure of exploration. After disbanding from Whole Foods and walking across the 3rd Street Bridge our exploration started with meeting Construction Workers who must've been on a top secret mission because they refused to talk

to us as if we were the police! Continuing on Bond we met a new resident, Matt, who moved into a twin development across from 365 Bond with his wife from London, interviewed Kristina a Sales Agent at 365 Bond, and a mailman, found out a murder happened that morning at Gowanus Houses, and then having the honor of meeting Miss Mary Glover.

Miss Mary, an eighty year old senior, has lived in Brooklyn since 1959 on S. Oxford Street between Dekalb and Lafayette before moving to 198 Bond Street in the 80's with her three children (2 girls and 1 boy), Gowanus Projects aka Gowanus Houses. Miss Mary doesn't call her community the projects, she feels the "projects is what you make it." Her first account of 198 Bond Street was how beautiful the grass and trees surrounding the buildings were, and the chains along the street used to keep people from walking onto the grass.

After moving into Gowanus Houses her children felt like their mother had did them a grave disservice. During the 80's Gowanus Houses was just like every other urban area or housing complex riddled with drugs and crime (note: redlined communities). Miss Mary's children weren't used to this type of environment and when they had the opportunity to leave they did. Her oldest, Deborah, went to Buffalo State University and never looked back; she now resides in Raleigh, NC. Miss Mary's middle daughter, moved to Atlanta and her son was killed when he went to a party (year unknown). Despite her children leaving Miss Mary still feels love for The Gowanus and a sense of community, which was apparent to all of us who watched all types of people from young to old stop to say hello or give her a kiss. As per Miss Mary even during those times the Gowanus was a mixed neighborhood and despite their problems, the people within that community stuck together. As she accounts the neighborhood is on an upswing and changing, but she doesn't feel like she will ever be pushed out of the Gowanus (198 Bond Street) because her rent will never increase due to her being a senior.

Now three blocks down at 365 Bond Street I met Kristina a Real Estate Sales Agent at the new luxury development Leasing Office, 365 Bond. 365 Bond is a 200 unit boutique rental that opened its doors June 2017 that has already reached 40% occupancy. Developers of 365 Bond were able to purchase that site at a cheaper cost and obtain spot zoning. Townhouses rent for \$7,000/month and 2 bedroom apartments rent between \$5,000-\$6,000/month. Kristina was proud to note unlike most developments that come into a neighborhood, 365 Bond doesn't overshadow its community but rather "vets itself into the story of Gowanus." 365 Bond with its full service concierge amenities and elevation of lifestyle, feels like its biggest asset is the Gowanus neighborhood. This rental has woven itself into the community by having an art gallery open to local artist and playing off of the neighborhood local spots.

Kristina whom herself was a former Manhattanite believes the Gowanus and Brooklyn as a whole is the "New Manhattan" but personally believes it will be at least forty to fifty years before Gowanus becomes like downtown Manhattan.

Even though the canal is what brings these two worlds and communities together. I'm starting to understand that the Genius Loci doesn't always have to be a structure but it can be a community. 365 Bond has catered to eclectic and like minded people, attracted to what this development is, becoming its own community within a community. While Miss Mary, Mayor of Gowanus Houses, has a community of her own deep in the roots of the Gowanus.

Through accounts of Kristina and Miss Mary I now see that change isn't always a bad thing if done respectfully. In the words of Miss Mary " I will ride that ball like that white girl (Miley Cyrus) because they won't tear down 198 Bond."

KEYWORDS/ VOCABULARY

1. Mary Glover, Self Proclaimed Abstract Artist
2. Boutique Rental
3. Concierge Amenities
4. Redlining and Community
5. Like Minded

QUESTIONS for FURTHER RESEARCH:

1. How can communities work with Developers to be apart of future changes?
2. What makes a community prosper?
3. How do we bring new communities and old communities together to foster one community?