

SITE REPORT #3

Community Relationships/ Gentrification Group



This is an image of people protesting and clearly against gentrification. I don't believe change is a bad thing but once it begins to force people out of their homes it's clearly a problem.

Ashley Lee

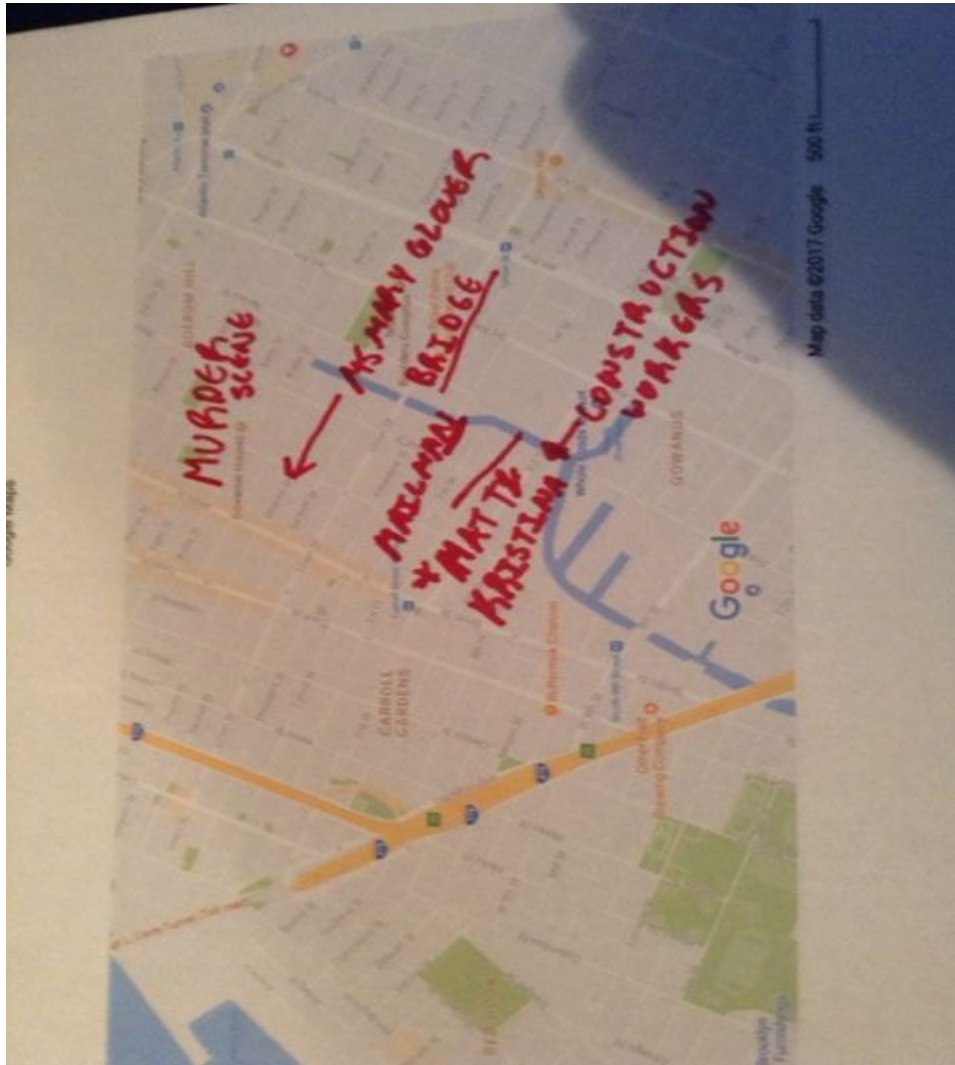
10.25.2017

INTRODUCTION AND PRE-VISIT REFLECTIONS

As the arrival of our third trip to the Gowanus has finally came, I knew that today we would have the freedom to see what it is that we wanted instead of being lead by our professors or a guide. I was looking forward to working with my group since we all had the same type of interest in what we wanted to do for our final topic. Other than that, I honestly wasn't anticipating much. Being that this was our class' third trip to the Gowanus I thought to myself, "What more can we possibly learn about this place?". In the end, I can honestly say that this was my most informative visit yet.

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:

- (1) MAP OF AREA OF INVESTIGATION -- on a map like the one below chart the route of the walk and mark the following: (a) significant stops; (b) Locations and directions of your photos and sketches.



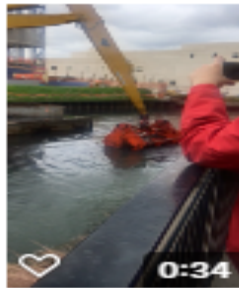
- (2) PHOTOS AND SKETCHES: Provide a minimum of 4 photos and 2 sketches of places, elements, processes, people or anything else that you found significant and meaningful during the walk. Focus on scenes that relate to ecology, the environment and public spaces. Feel free to include IN ADDITION other “findings” that you found intriguing. For each photo provide captions and explanations – why is the image shown significant for your exploration.



Union Street Bridge



Artist's creation



365 Bond

Dredging of the Gowanus Canal

ANALYSIS:

My group and I were able to meet with several people throughout our walk. One of the main topics that we were discussing was gentrification and the different changes that have come about in the Gowanus neighborhood. We were willing to talk to any resident or worker in the neighborhood who would speak with us. After one failed attempt to speak with a few construction workers on the site that they were working at, we continued our journey anyways! We didn't let their unwillingness stop us from doing what we set out to do. We continued our journey and met with a gentleman named Matt. He and his wife just moved to the community from London, they were renting an apartment across from 365 Bond. He informed us that he knew very little about the Gowanus, but he did know about the plans to clean it. He and his wife were there on a short term lease they were staying in a newly built duplex apartment. He was open and willing to answer our questions, although he was sort of on the go it was a pleasure meeting with him and getting his views on the neighborhood. Shortly after our meeting with Matt, we met with Kristina a local sales agent. Kristina gave us tons of information about the development, it was just opened in June and she explained they were just about 40 percent full. Rent was going for as high as 7,000 dollars a month. She informed us that they provided breakfast for the residents that lived there. She was another pleasant person to meet and speak with. After making our way from Bond Street we saw that the Union Street Bridge was up. Although nothing spectacular, it was kind of cool to see what it looked like while all of the cars had to wait until it came back down. We met with a mailman who worked in the community for 8 years. He told us that it was much more people, which for him, meant much more work! Shortly after, we went into the Gowanus housing projects where we didn't stay long because after meeting with one resident who informed us that there was just a murder that morning that took place, we saw police cars as well as someone in a suit who looked like a detective. So we decided to leave. After seeing that I thought to myself about how the residents living just two blocks away paying 7,000 dollars a month would feel about this. It was clear that there was a disparity between the types of people living just two blocks away! Although the same neighborhood, it was interesting and mind blowing to see what life was like "on the other side". Across the street from the development we met with the highlight of our trip, her name was Ms. Mary Glover. She was an 80 year old resident of the community who has seen it all! She spoke with such poise and confidence in her community. She explained to us that she moved to the Gowanus housing projects back in 1959 with her three children. Before she came there she was living in a shelter with her kids, she prayed to God to find her a home and she said three weeks later her prayers were answered and she made her way to the Gowanus. We asked Ms. Mary how she felt about the changes in the community and she explained how

she seen the neighborhood grow, change, develop and stated that she loved Gowanus. As she was speaking it was evident that she was very popular around the neighborhood because at least three people stopped to hug and kiss her on the cheek, a few just waived. She stated that the neighborhood grocery store needs to be updated and it seemed as though no one cared to update it since it was catering to mostly minorities. She informed us that the newly built development just two blocks down where we met Kristina and Matt were factories and burned down houses and she was proud to see her neighborhood grow as times changed. Ms. Mary felt that the community was still very much united and explained that they have problems just like everybody else and that they stick together. One thing that was surprising to me was when Ms. Mary informed us that she recently won an award for her abstract art. Overall, it was a pleasure talking to her and hearing her views on her neighborhood. She had mostly positive things to say. Everyone that we met with and were willing to talk to us were very informative and it was amazing to hear everyone's views about what they thought of the changing neighborhood.

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. 365 Bond
2. Ms. Mary Glover
3. Diversity
4. Disparity
5. Development

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 do you develop neighborhoods without displacing the residents who have been there prior to all of the development taking place?
2. How would the residents that live two to three blocks down on 365 Bond feel about the murder that occurred just blocks away/ do they even know?
3. How can developers continue to develop communities and still allow the neighborhood to flourish for everyone?