

Learning Places Summer 2019

SITE REPORT #1

name of site report

NAMING PROTOCOL. When saving and posting your site reports on OpenLab, please follow the following format: SiteReport#.LastnameFirstname. Here's an example: SiteReport2.SwiftChristopher.



Gowanus, a light industrial swath of Brooklyn centered around the Gowanus Canal, is picturesque, with a gritty history dating to the mid 1800s. Today, the neighborhood offers the promise of waterfront property, water-refracted light, old warehouses and factory buildings with amazing space that are full of potential for revitalization.

STUDENT NAME: Ixchel Gomez

SITE OBSERVATIONS

Insert 3 photographs and provide a *creative* title for each image. The title should be a word or short phrase that suggests a theme or conceptual association related to the photo.



1. What are some general observations about the character of this neighborhood? What does it remind you of? How does it make you feel?

Gowanus neighborhood I remember DUMBO in Brooklyn, the channel is very related to the water around this neighborhood. The two are located in Brooklyn. Both share the fact that they are places that are very important part of the history of Brooklyn. They were primarily manufacturing industry, with warehouses and factories. That eventually gave rise to citizens who started living in the area. Besides being both popular in culture, they are considered as a neighborhood with artistic districts.

2. How is the natural world contained or shaped by human activity or architecture in Gowanus? In what ways does the natural world invade or disrupt human activity or architecture in Gowanus?

Like other neighborhoods in Gowanus, the environment, dangers etc are not incidental, but central to their current identity; The Gowanus Canal, an industrial canal polluted with old factories, coal plants and wastewater discharge points. Other neighborhoods face different types of problems however some neighborhoods are working to clean up the legacies of pollution, Gowanus is almost the only one in trying to do both at the same time. Although most of these factories are now closed and transformed into artists' studios and a cleaner industry, the one created from these manufacturers is still there. As a result, the EPA declared that the channel Superfund site in 2010, which means that the federal government will finance and control the efforts to clean the canal and demand the companies that owned those factories to be able to recover some of the costs. It was expected that the Superfund designation would stop both the development of real estate property. This would cause them to destroy the character of the community, displacing artists and industrial companies that employ thousands of workers.

3. What people did you observe in the neighborhood and what activities are they engaged in?

Beginning with the fact that in Gowanus has certain specific places from president Street you notice a division between different social classes and districts, one looks richer than another and each one is characterized as one an industrial district and another resident. Therefore, the population and culture changes, the industrial district due to the businesses and trade itself will be surrounded by workers, characters or members of the community council. On the other hand,

on the side of the district is the Gowanus community, mostly people who have lived there for many years and the culture varies a lot since it is a historic neighborhood with economic, political and social changes brought about by changes and movements of cultures through the years. There is a large young community that goes to the parks, pets, elders, and state personnel in charge of caring for the canal and cleaning up the area.

4. Reflect on a **specific** space you viewed in this neighborhood:
- who was the space designed for and what is its general purpose?



Lavender Lake is a restaurant- bar on Carroll St. right next to the Canal. And it's called like that because it used to be Gowanus nick name before. This is space was a Horse stable, today it is a hip bar with a compact beverage list & creative plate. Distressed materials add urban flair that makes this place the perfect place to have a good time with friends, coworkers etc.

- what are the implied rules of this **specific** space? How are people meant to interact with one another and with the environment?

It is a Bar-restaurant therefore the intercession is between the same clients, residents of the neighborhood who visit the place, workers etc. share while having a drink or lunch. This place is more visited during the summer than the winter since the most special attraction of this is a garden in the back overlooking the canal.

- c. describe a possible creative reuse of this **specific** space for a theatrical event:
- a) Which areas are best for actors and which areas are good for observers? Do these spaces overlap? Mention specific objects and structures in your answer.

The area of the tables is better for the observers and for the actors it can vary between any place in the bar, near the bar or in the back area where the garden is.

- b) Describe the potential audience. Who are they (workers? inhabitants? recreational users? tourists?) and why would they be passing through? Where are they going and where did they come from?

The factory workers, the residents of the community, tourists, etc. They would be some of the audience members of this place. They are passing by to have a good time and enjoy the atmosphere.

- c) Discuss how light and sound would support a theatrical event.

According to the materials in which this restaurant is made, they are brick, wood, metal. They make this place be of the degree of who visit it, they make the site look comfortable and vintage at the same time. Being close to the canal and having a garden benefits a lot from the natural light in those places that are needed. For this same reason of being in a well open area and close to natural resources sound is not a problem.

- d) What kinds of performance would work best (intimate or grand; processional or stationary; text and/or music; interactive or passive audience; etc.)?

I would say music and interactive. since it is a bar-restaurant and the music and the interaction between people is paramount for this type of spaces, besides those are the things that we as clients look for when visiting these places therefore we would make the audience in this case Do not feel uncomfortable and be part of the event.

QUESTIONS for FURTHER RESEARCH. Write down questions that require further research to **answer.** 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. Question?

- How can we preserve the history and character of Gowanus?

2. Question?

- What would happen if you drank water from the Gowanus Canal?

3. Question?

- What Exactly is that Black Mayonnaise at the bottom of the Gowanus Canal?

FURTHER RESEARCH

Choose and revise one of your research questions for further research.

Revised Research Question:

- How can we preserve the history and character of Gowanus?

Find a book or newspaper article that could help you answer your question.

MLA Citation for source:

“Gowanus Landmarking Coalition.” *Gowanus Landmarking*, Gowanus Landmarking Coalition Launches Website Ahead of Rezoning, 6 Feb. 2019, www.gowanuslandmarks.org/.

Why did you select this source? How does it address all or part of your research question?

Because the Gowanus Landmarking Coalition in their article and website talk about how they with organizations, local businesses, and city-wide organizations have come together to advocate for city landmark designation for key historical, architectural, and cultural sites in Gowanus prior to neighborhood rezoning. They seek to ensure that Gowanus retains an authentic sense of place - and remains capable of telling its own many-layered story.

Describe the process you used to find this source including any keywords and the search engine or tool you used to search.

I start for looking into words like

- Gowanus Community
- Historic buildings
- Gowanus Architecture
- Culture in Gowanus

I visit Several Pages and I finally found about the organization when I visit the website of the New York City Council.

What other sources or further information would you need to answer your question? Where would you look for them?

Maybe for next time I will find more information in newspapers, or also I really like interview people around the area of their own experience because it's a more real connection.