

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**.



Select a meaningful image that captures your perception of the site we visited and provide a caption explaining what the image is.

**STUDENT NAME:** Genesis Aguirre

## 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.



Sinking Boat



Paulownia Tree



Growing plant on top of wooden planks



The National Packing Box Factory

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

Some of the observations I made from the neighborhood is that there are two types of atmospheres. One of them is Carroll Gardens. Which has a classy chic feel to it with a touch of old charm. Makes you feel like your walking into the early 1900s. However, walking down towards President and Bond street close to the entrance of the canal; everything started to look different, very dim. It had more of an urban dirty feel to it. Also, when hearing the tour guide he mentioned how back then near the Gowanus there was a strong influence of mafia criminals in this area. This gave the neighborhood a scary feel and at night I can imagine it looks even more of a dangerous. Although many factors have changed the environment make it a safer place by closing old business and building and creating new projects around it. However, it still manage to preserve that gritty feel compared to carroll gardens.

**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?**

The natural world is contained or shaped by human activity in the Gowanus in the way that they have constructed new apartment condos on top or next to the canal. There are also new restaurants and cafes like Lavender Lake and many old factories like The Mill and the National Packing Box Factory, that are now turned into apartment lofts and condos. Another interesting thing about the way nature shapes human activity is due to the toxic levels of the Gowanus canal the residents that live in the new condos that live by the canal get taxes lifted off because of the fact that they live on top of a toxic area. One of the ways that the natural world disrupts human activity might be the strong smell around in the atmosphere of the Gowanus Canal. Also, when the weather changes drastically like heavy rains or hurricane like sandy it creates floods invading the apartments of the people living around it bring in the toxic water.

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

The type of people I saw in the neighborhood was people in there late 20 mid 30s and up. In this neighborhood it seems like laid back middle class people live there with few presence homeless people walking around. Most people I saw there were engaged in activities such as biking, running, walking people taking pictures of the Gowanus canal and standing there for a few minutes observing the canal itself. There was also two men riding on a canoe in the Gowanus canal which seemed to be people from the Environmental Protection Agency. In which they declared the Gowanus Canal a Superfund site, meaning that this program creates not only to safeguard public health and the environment, but to protect taxpayers. Even though most of these sites are public they seem to be kept purposely low-key because landowners and neighbors prefer to avoid too much publicity.

**Reflect on a specific space you viewed in this neighborhood:**

**who was the space designed for and what is its general purpose?**

One of the places that impressed me the most was Carroll Gardens because this place was designed specifically for middle class people in the 1900s. This raised curiosity in me as to why middle class people would want to live near the gowanus canal but I assume this place was built nice and classy in that time to divide them from the nearby urban, dirty and scary feel that came from the Gowanus canal. In this area you can see how the nice brownstown apartments are mimicked all around the carroll gardens and stops as soon as it hits the Gowanus canal. I believe that the general purpose of this neighborhood was to establish residential places to live in apart from the Gowanus to create a nice atmosphere to live in apart from the canal. It is also an Italian rooted neighborhood in which is demonstrated by the many catholaic churches around it. This place today is considered to be a high class neighborhood with their well preserved pricey brownstone apartments sharing with the Gowanus canal.

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

The implied use of this space is purely residential. Even though, many people walk around to observe the vintage feel it gives off. As well as the churches and lively restaurants and shops around it. People in this area interact interchangeably with the environment in terms of it keeping Carroll Gardens pretty and clean look while at the same time maintain the rough, gritty feel of the Gowanus canal right next to them. However, their interacting the the environment a little different than before in terms of preserving the streets less dirty creating more of a hipster vintage look. With this being said they take more care of the area near the Gowanus canal without taking away from its urban vibe.

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.**

A possible creative reuse area of this specific space for a theatrical event would be right next to president street and bond street because it's where you can see the actual division between Carroll Gardens and the Gowanus meaning that with this visual change of atmosphere one can make a good statement for their theatrical performance. This area would be great for both observers and actors because you can use the change of atmosphere to the actors and audience advantage. This place overlaps with the Gowanus because it creates a clear distinction between what is going on in this neighborhood today and also explains some of its rich history.

- 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 potential audience can be workers( that are working around the site on new projects in the areas development project), Business people (who want to develop new ideas in the specific area), tourest (that are interested in the history of the Gowanus canal) coming from different parts of New York City.

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

The light and sound would support a theatrical event because it draws attention to the people that may be walking around or that might be near but a little too far to hear or see without the use of lights and sound. With the light and sound being displayed in the background it can help draw more attention to potential audiences.

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

I think that the type of performance that would work the best is stationary passive audience because by displaying a show or performance in one specific spot that is often visited it attracts audience by itself. Also, by it being a passive audience it allows people who are shy or uncomfortable with people engaging them to do or inform them about something they don't want to do or aren't interested to listen too. They might feel better if its the other way around by the audience having the option to engage in the performance or ask questions about it without feeling attacked or annoyed.

**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: Why does it seem so impossible to clean the gowanus canal ?**
2. **Question: How bad will the gowanus canal be in terms of how toxic it is in the future if left the way it is?**
3. **Question: How does the environment around the gowanus affect the health of the people that live around it.**

## **FURTHER RESEARCH**

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

Question: How does the environment around the gowanus affect the health of the people that live around it.

Revised Research Question: **How does the air quality around the Gowanus canal affect the health of people that reside in that area?**

According to the New York Times “ Gowanus Canal Inquiry Underlines Severity of Pollution” it states the long wait investigation on the Gowanus canal demonstrated the severe extent of its contamination and the threat it poses to the public health. Especially to those people that fish from it or have constant contact with the contaminated water. To further expand, the article explains that the only way for the contaminated water of the Gowanus canal to affect someone health is by any oral intake from it or actually having constant physical contact with the water. So with that being said the air quality does not affect the health of people who live or are constantly around the Gowanus canal.

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

**MLA Citation for source:**

Navarro, Mireya. "Gowanus Canal Inquiry Underlines Severity of Pollution." *The New York Times*, *The New York Times*, 2 Feb. 2011, [www.nytimes.com/2011/02/03/science/earth/03gowanus.html?searchResultPosition=3](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/03/science/earth/03gowanus.html?searchResultPosition=3).

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

I selected this source because it was related to how the Gowanus canal affects the health of the people living around it. This source did not address much of my research question it had very minimal information on my question exact but had related topics.

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

The process I used to find my source was city tech library search. Then I went directly to news and current event resources and chose New York Times, Digital which sent me directly to the New York Times site in which I searched Gowanus canal health effects.

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

I don't believe I needed further information I think there was not much information on that specific topic in general. Other sources I would use would be government websites such as .gov.