

Learning Places Summer 2019

SITE REPORT #1

Gowanus Canal



STUDENT NAME: Kevin Garcia

SITE OBSERVATIONS



GARDEN PERFORMANCE



EXPENSIVE YET MODERN BLUESTONE



GOWANUS CHANGE

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

Being in this neighborhood feels different. I grew up in a neighborhood of Brooklyn that wasn't as rich or expensive as Gowanus, so being there did make me feel weird because it is not a neighborhood, I feel I belong in. Gowanus itself is a very beautiful neighborhood, especially seeing all the beautiful gardens in front of the Brownstones. To me this gave the neighborhood an identity because whenever someone thinks of Gowanus, they will be reminded of Carroll Gardens, but also of the dump of a canal.

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?

Some of the things we discussed was the canal sewage system and how all the waste is being dumped. This can be a major issue because people will refuse to live or engage in any activities near the canal because of the sewage system and how toxic the canal is. A discussion of building something over the canal was talked about on the site visit, but then there are the issues with how toxic it is because of the "black mayonnaise" growing under and floods will still occur.

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

I didn't really get the chance to notice many people but I do remember the old couple on President Street, they seemed to just be sitting in front of their home and enjoying the nice weather, which is nice to always see Brooklyn natives in the area and they seemed very friendly. There were also a lot of dogs passing by throughout our walk through Gowanus.

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

- a. who was the space designed for and what is its general purpose?

The space I am speaking about is Carroll Gardens and the space itself was designed for the upper class because of how expensive the neighborhood is, which is why brownstone was used for the facades and bluestone for some of the street flooring.

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

Well this space is particularly quite because it's a small community of brownstones and people interact pretty much everywhere because there are always people walking around and admiring the space and that gives opportunities for people to engage in conversations. Like for example when we were walking, and the old couple started engaging in talking about the neighborhood because they saw us observing and we had a tour guide with us.

- 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.
I think actors will be best to perform on the stairs of the brownstones and in front of them, kind of like a live musical performance and the audience can occupy space on the street to watch the performance.
 - 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?
I would say the audience will be tourists because areas like Gowanus are always occupied with many tourists, but other audiences can just be regular theatergoers or other art performers that want to experience this kind of performance.
 - c) Discuss how light and sound would support a theatrical event.
Well light will support a theatrical event because they would rely on natural sunlight and on a summer day with the garden in front of the brownstones, that can be a beautiful thing. Sound would support because it's one of those quite suburban neighborhoods where it's very quiet and you can hear the birds chirping, so having a performance in such a quiet neighborhood can cause lots of attention.
 - d) What kinds of performance would work best (intimate or grand; processional or stationary; text and/or music; interactive or passive audience; etc.)?
The kind of performance for this area can be a musical. I can picture a big musical where the performers step out of the brownstones and start singing and dancing by the staircase of each building and a passive audience that just enjoys every moment.

QUESTIONS for FURTHER RESEARCH

1. Question 1: How can the government clean up the Gowanus canal?
2. Question 2: What are ways the community can help change the less fortunate parts of Gowanus?
3. Question 3: How can performance be used to raise awareness on issues of the Gowanus canal?

FURTHER RESEARCH

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

Revised Research Question: What is the EPA's plan to cleaning up the Gowanus Canal?

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

MLA Citation for source:

Landers, Jay. "U.S. EPA Proposes Plan for Cleaning Up Long-Polluted Canal in New York City." *Civil Engineering* (08857024), vol. 83, no. 3, Mar. 2013, pp. 24-26. EBSCOhost, search.<http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=10&sid=7b7d132c-71a4-4134-86c5-d0145a2aa981%40sessionmgr4008>

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

I selected this source because it was the most relevant source to my question. It had all the necessary information if I needed to answer this question.

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

I used the library's search engine to find the article. I used the Applied Science and Technology source to help me find the article and the keyword that I used was "Gowanus Clean-up," not long after I was able to find my article.

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

If I needed to find additional information to answer my question I would either use a different search engine in the library database or I would use Google Scholar to find valuable sources and even news articles relating to the toxic Gowanus canal and how the EPA plans to clean it.