

Learning Places Summer 2019

## SITE REPORT #2

Newtown Creek

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

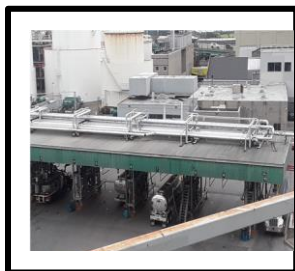


Select a meaningful image to that captures your perception of the site we visited and provide a caption explaining what the image is.

STUDENT NAME: Touray Bokum

### SITE OBSERVATIONS

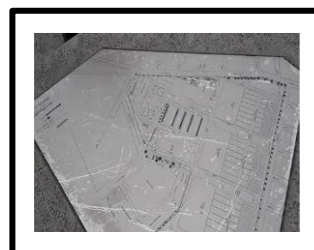
Insert 3 photographs and provide a *creative* title for each image. The title should be a word or short phrase that suggests *a theme or conceptual association* related to the photo.



Neighbors of  
Newtown Creek



Digestive Eggs



Newtown Creek  
2008

## General instructions:

- a. **Do not try to anticipate an answer the instructors “are looking for”. We want you to write truthfully about your own observations.**
- b. **Be sure to draw meaningful connections between what you observed and the purpose of the performative intervention. In other words, how does the performative intervention respond to, or integrate directly with, the specific material conditions of the site.**
- c. **Finally, your research question should respond directly and specifically to your site observations.**

1. Historically, what are some of the important developments that have created the current landscape of the Newtown Creek area. Refer not only to the reading and Prof. Spellane’s lecture, but also what you learned on the Newtown Creek Alliance tour (hint... estuaries, for instance)?

Newtown Creek is a very interesting landscape in that its estuary forms part of the boundary between Brooklyn and Queens. This body of water was one of the most heavily used forms of transportation between New York and New Jersey, which contributed to the massively populated waters. Our tour guide showed us the plant boxes intentionally put around the creek as a signifier of the strength and resilience plants have even in harsh conditions. Raw sewage full of toxic chemicals from chemical and oil companies using the creek as a mode of transportation and dumping waste in the water still resides in the creek.

2. Discuss the historical remnants that you observed in the current landscape.

As I mentioned the water is still full of waste and toxics like copper, lead and arsenic that are remnants of decades of harmful care done to the creek. If though most of the plants in the plant boxes were surviving, some were unable to adapt to the creek.

3. In what ways is the natural environment contained or shaped by the architecture of the Newtown Creek Nature Walk designed by George Trakas? In what ways is the natural world repossessing spaces that have been over-polluted or industrialized?

During our tour around Newtown Creek I noticed a gasoline company across the street from the natural environment of the Creek, the gas station undermines Newtown Creek Alliance aim behind the nature walk, shown in the first image to the left. The greenhouse shown in the cover image reflects the use of space and function against over-polluted and industrialized spaces. The greenhouse works in lessening the effects of sewage overflow, having the gas stations and oil fuel companies near the creek further pollutes the air and people.

4. Discuss one instance of architectural semiotics. **Choose *only one building or built structure.***  
If the building or designed structure could talk, what would it say?

The first image to the right is a representation of the failed promises made to renovate the creek, the image shows a map of the geographical nature of the creek and its surrounding structures by 2008. The metal fence surrounding the creek and its accompanying structures makes the environment feel industrial, however the enclosed space the fence conveys a feel as though the creek is protected from its neighboring sites. If the metal fence could talk it would say, "I am doing my best to protect our creek from the monsters of the outside world." There is also construction being done to expand the nature walks which represents progress and exposure of environmental awareness.

5. If you were to stage a performative intervention in a *specific* site (i.e., a single structural aspect of the walk or industrial remains) where would you stage it and what message would your performance convey?

I would stage a performance where the oil fuel companies reside across from the creek. Our presentation is on gentrification, specifically tenant rights and when speaking to our tour guide she mentioned how frustrating it is to have the oil companies near the creek and its impact on the air quality. I am not familiar with the length of time the oil company has been there but doing a performance of the rights people of Newtown Creek Alliance and residence in the surround area have when disputing the oil companies would be an informative message.

## FURTHER RESEARCH

Research Question (*should follow directly from your above observations, and be complex, specific, and researchable*):

What environmental regulations oil companies must follow regarding their treatment of bodies of water like Newtown Creek?

Find an article from a journal, website, or newspaper that you believe will help you answer your question

MLA Citation for source: Allison, E, and B Mandler. "U.S. Regulation of Oil and Gas Operations." *American Geosciences Institute*, 18 June 2019, [www.americangeosciences.org/critical-issues/factsheet/pe/regulation-oil-gas-operations](http://www.americangeosciences.org/critical-issues/factsheet/pe/regulation-oil-gas-operations).

How many sources did you look at before selecting this one? Why did you select this source?

How does it address all or part of your research question? Be specific.

I looked through less close to a dozen sources. I selected this source because it states environmental regulations oil and gas companies must comply by. This is a reliable source with facts and not opinions.

Is this source credible? How can you tell (what criteria did you base your evaluation on)?

The source is from the American geosciences institute which looks to be credible, the people who wrote the source seem to be experts in their field and knowledgeable.

What other sources or further information would you need to answer your question? Where would you look for them? I would look at sources like the Environmental Protection Agency and laws under the 'Superfund' act for addition information.