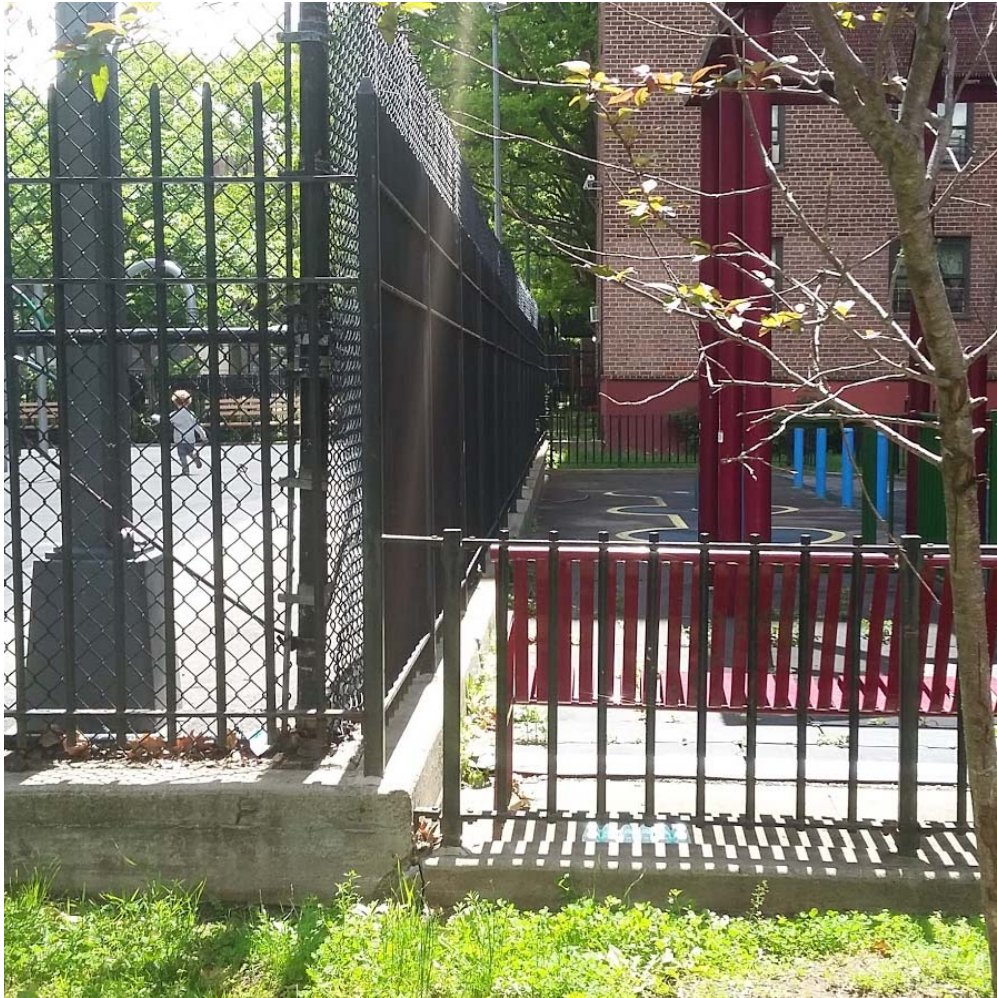


Learning Places Fall 2017

SITE REPORT #1

Gowanus



ELVIS WILLIAMS

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INTRODUCTION

In this project i looked at the Gowanus community and how it has developed over the years. We also looked at the canal, reviewing its history and the impact it leaves in the community. The canal is an outlet to the city sewage overflow and because of this it has made the surrounding areas somewhat

difficult to live in. I will also take a look at the effects of gentrification in this community.

SITE DOCUMENTATION (photos*)



This photo displays the Gowanus canal. The photo shows how wide the canal is for water transportation and also businesses and residential homes at that are being developed close to its environs. We can also see that efforts are being made to ensure the canal walls are reinforced. This picture also shows somewhat how dirty this canal is, old boats are still lying in the water like a graveyard.



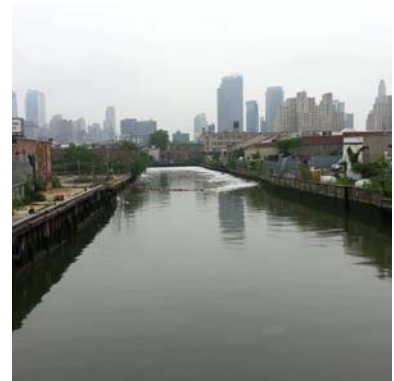
In this photo we can see the South Brooklyn Casket company. I too this photo to show you that small business are located in the community which provides jobs for locals.



Citibikes are usually associated with specific communities. This picture gave me an indication of where this community is heading and the type of people that has called the Gowanus home.



On observation of the site we noticed a new residential tower. I noticed how this nw tower affected the appearance of the site with its new walls and modern design, however just right across the street a factory is located. Little emphasis was made to correct the aesthetic of the area because one side had old cobble stones and graffiti walls and the other side had beautiful flowers and new concrete pavement.



These three images shows Industry located on the canal banks. Although these businesses generate income for some locals there is also a possibility that harmful chemicals can run off into the canal, contributing to already polluted water. The image on the right shows a containment boom which is used to control oil and other debris from floating further into the river.



These two images shows a swale and a sponge park which are used to absorb and hold water for a period of time. This process helps to prevent flooding which is a major problem in the community. The Sponge park is much larger than the swale and can hold a much more water effectively reducing the amount of water rushing to the canal.



Here you can see the new residential homes built. The image on the right shows an advertisement illustrating how wonderful it would be living in this community. They advertise the canal as somewhere you can come and relax and maybe put your foot in the water, however it is not shown how dirty the canal currently is. I guess they know that eventually, with influx of new residence that the canal conditions will definitely improve.



This is the border line of where high rise commercial, residential and an existing community intersects. I found the image on the right very profound because at this intersection a painting was placed on a high rise residential home. This image is of a boy climbing on a pole and placing a wheel on a street sign. This gives people a feeling of community where kids can play and people interact. However even though they display red residential homes and bird flying in the background, Atlantic ave does not create this environment for this behaviour.



A fine line between the projects and an upscale residential community. The image on the left shows a public park with kids playing in a park on one side and another park left isolated. The houses are stacked and the community feels somewhat segregated from its surroundings. The image on the right shows a tall tower housing low income residents.

SITE DOCUMENTATION (sketches*)



This sketch illustrate what the Gowanus is currently. The canal, industrial business along with new residential buildings a populate the Gowanus. You can also see in the sketch the ruins of the old boats in the polluted water.



I decided to sketch this scene of the factory located along the canal emphasizing the importance of the canal to the industries located along it.

GENERAL NOTES:

- The professors gave us a good idea of history and life along the canal. Connecting new towers and old residential houses with the industrial community and also pointing out the advantages and disadvantages this scenario brings.
- We met with an environmental conservative who took us on a tour and gave us a thorough overview of the canal, vegetation and steps taken to avoid flooding.
- We learned key words and saw how it applied to the community.
- During our second visit i could see that people took pride in their community. One lady took time out to find out who we were and interacted kindly things about the neighborhood.
- We also saw how new businesses such as Whole Foods are designing its infrastructure to cope with the natural environment.

INSIGHTS/DISCOVERIES

After watching "MY BROOKLYN" I got a sense of this whole class and what we are trying to raise awareness of. Seeing downtown Brooklyn as community being manipulated and destroyed by developers who seek to gain riches at the demise of the poor. Many small businesses are being displaced and put out of business leading to owner not providing for their families. Another essence of Brooklyn that is being lost is the cultural aspect of the community. Rezoning has introduced many new multi level high end housing which brings a new community to the existing. Although It might seemed like a great idea, the new residents didn't support commerce at the Fulton mall. Instead they frowned upon the people who sold there. Streets that usually was busy with people buying and selling now feels like a ghost town. The only people benefited from these new developments were the developers who walk away with

millions of dollars totally turning a blind eye to the people it truly affected.

I have always notice whenever i travel on the train that type of people which comes off the train in certain areas and the type of people that travel to the final stops. In most cases that i am familiar with it is usually the minorities (Blacks and Latinos). I have done architectural research on the Coney Island and also the Rockaways and notice that the areas where crime is prevalent are the areas where we have these high rise poor settlements. Interestingly the article shows us how the poor has been dislocated to these far, flood prone areas, away from the vision of the city Robert Moses envisioned. Ironically gentrification continues as poor people are now being moved once again, as many middle to upper class families are moving to the coastline.

The story is concentrated around two main characters, Jane Jacobs and Robert Moses who fought on opposite sides of the fence to create what each saw was the perfect community. Moses idea of developing a city based on the influx of the motor vehicles, concentrated mainly on Le Corbusier's concept of providing multi level apartments, while destroying communities in the process of building these towers and highways. Jacob on the other hand realized the ramifications of Moses's vision and fought to stop the mass gentrification which would destroy the essence of communities. I feel both were visionaries, Moses had some great ideas and may have made NYC what it is today however i also feel that Jacob's intervention happened at the right time because it started a revolution of people fighting for their communities.

KEYWORDS/VOCABULARY & DEFINITIONS

GENTRIFICATION: To renovate or convert (housing, esp. in an inner-city area) so that it conforms to middle-class taste; to render (an area) middle-class

ZONING: Planning, the regulation of land use by particular planning restrictions in designated areas.

CORNICE: A horizontal moulded projection which crowns or finishes a building or some part of a building; spec. the uppermost member of the entablature of an order surmounting the frieze.

PROJECTS: An urban block of apartments built and administered by the government for low-income tenants, typically perceived as dangerously crime-ridden.

SUPER FUND: a federal government fund established in 1980 to finance the Environmental Protection Agency's clean-up of sites contaminated with hazardous waste.

MODERNISM: Any of various movements in art, architecture, literature, etc., generally characterized by a deliberate break with classical and traditional forms or methods of expression; the work or ideas of the adherents of such a movement.

COALTAR: A form of tar produced by distilling bituminous coal.

PERVIOUS: Allowing the passage of water, air, etc., through its substance; permeable.

IMPERVIOUS: Through which there is no way; not affording passage (to); not to be passed through or

penetrated; impenetrable, impermeable, impassable.

BIOSWALE: landscape elements designed to concentrate or remove silt and pollution from surface runoff water.

BIO-SPONGE: A porous structure used to hold excess water to prevent flooding.

BRACKISH WATER: Water that has more salinity than freshwater, but not as much as seawater. It may result from mixing of seawater with freshwater, as in estuaries.

BROWNFIELD: A former industrial or commercial site where future use is affected by real or perceived environmental contamination.

PARAPET: A low wall or barrier, often ornamental, placed at the edge of a platform, balcony, roof to prevent people from falling.

LINTEL: A horizontal piece of timber, stone, etc. placed over a door, window, or other opening to discharge the superincumbent weight.

BLIGHT: legal term for land that is in a dilapidated, unsafe, and unsightly condition.

SALT WATER: Marsh overflowed or flooded by the sea.

FLUSH TUNNEL: Pumps oxygen fresh water.

COMBINED SEWAGE OVERFLOW: Sewers that are designed to collect rainwater runoff, domestic sewage, and industrial wastewater in the same pipe.

QUESTIONS for Further RESEARCH

1. If we are so aware of Gentrification, why do we continue to make it happen today and what can be done to positively modify it?
2. What will be the outcome of the canal be now that these new residential towers are developing in the community?
3. What are the social and economic effects of integrating projects and these gentrified communities?

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