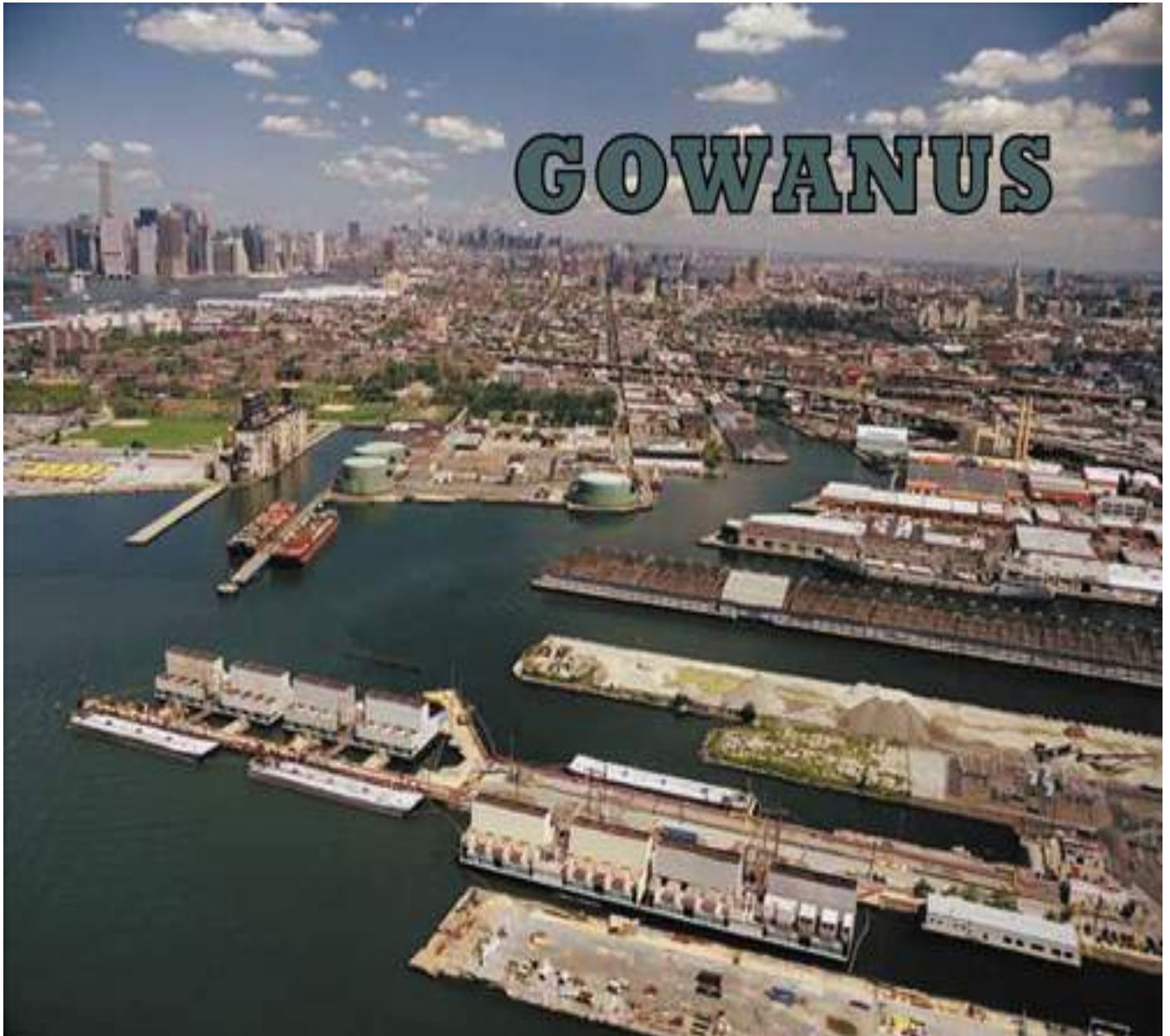


Learning Places Summer 2017

**SITE REPORT #1**

*Gowanus Canal*



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June 12, 2017

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06.12.2017

## **INTRODUCTION**

On June 5th and on date, we took a class trip to the Gowanus canal where we saw and understood a lot more things about the city that we currently live. Based on the movie: Citizen Jane: battle for the City and chapter 6 from the Death and Life of great American Cities written by Jane Jacobs, it was really interesting to see exactly what they were talking about. Below are a few things of what we learned in the Gowanus Canal. On June 00, we went around red hook Brooklyn to walk around and see some changes that happened due to rezoning. We were able to learn the history behind certain places and certain buildings.

## **SITE DOCUMENTATION (photos\*)**



On June 5th, we went around the Gowanus Canal by the Union St. Bridge in Brooklyn and we had a tour of the Gowanus Canal. We were able to learn certain things on the Gowanus Canal that we would not have known ourselves if there wasn't someone to tell us.



One thing that we saw is the bioswale (Picture on the left). “A bioswale is a linear, sloped retention area designed to capture and convey water, while allowing it to infiltrate the ground slowly over a 24 to 48-hour period. Bioswales are landscape elements designed to concentrate or remove silt and pollution from surface runoff water. They consist of a drainage course with gently sloped sides (less than 6%) and filled with vegetation and compost.”

A bioswale contains 5 layers containing soil, sands, stone, wood chip and pea gravel. All 5 layers are about 5 feet and holds about 2000 gallons. Any excess would go to another nearby bioswale. A bioswale is a little bit hard to spot but the easiest way to spot one is by identify the inlet and outlet. Those are where the water comes in and comes out. Other places, they only have grass, trees, weed coming out or anything else but they do not have an inlet and outlet so they are not called bioswale.



The bioswale does not waste water. A bioswale acts like an eco-sponge and as water pass through the five layers, it fills up. Should it ever be full, the excess water would flow to another nearby bioswale in the area therefore not overflow in one area.



365 Bond St.

By the Gowanus canal were this lovely apartment that were there but most of them are empty. Why? Well, these apartments would go up for about 3000 dollars for a studio and everyone who used to live in the area. Because of gentrification, people who used to live in the area would slowly move out because they could no longer afford the place.



These above three pictures are the new building currently at 365 Bond St. A studio starts at 3,000 dollars. There is a whole food store nearby. This is clearly gentrification. I wonder if it is on purpose that they choose to renovate only the street that it is currently on. The bottom pictures are the street across this building.



This picture is an esplanade. An esplanade is a long, open, level area, typically beside the sea, along which people may walk for pleasure. An esplanade is about 40 ft. wide where there is a building. This esplanade is next to the new building that they made.



We were walking around red hook and we saw this place. For me, I believe that since this house will eventually be taken down or be renovated, the owner decided to do that as a mean of protest

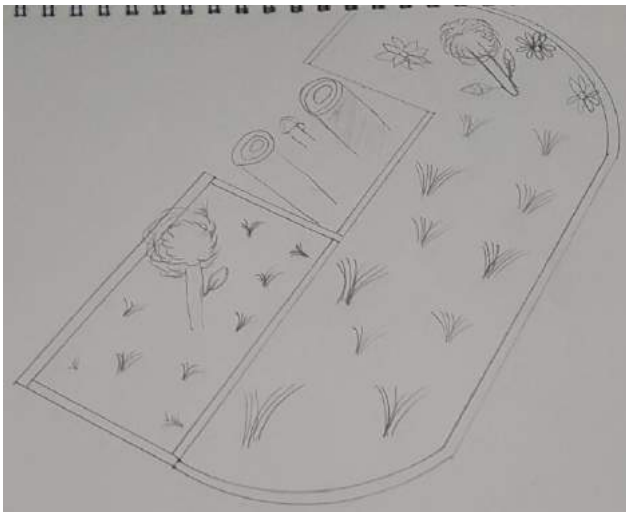


If you take a look at the 3 people seating down by the water, you'll see that it is probably nice but, it is used as a mean of advertisement so that people would come and buy the houses or rent apartment. No one in their right mind would actually put their feet in the toxic water and even be near it because of the smell.

Write description of photo here, explaining why it is important and what it shows.

SITE DOCUMENTATION (sketches\*)

\*2 sketches minimum required per site visit



Sketch #1

This sketch is a sketch of the bioswale that we spotted in the Gowanus canal. The bioswale is a place that contains water designed to concentrate or remove silt and pollution from surface runoff water. The water is going through 5 different layers.



### Sketch #2

This sketch shows the canal waters. There is a boat that was on the water and I is probably broken. There were a lot of trash in the water that is polluting the water more and more. Next to it on the right, there is a construction site where developers are building luxurious apartments that are driving the people that use to live in the area out of the neighborhood.

### GENERAL NOTES:

- We met with a tour guide to walk us around
- The canal is contaminated
- The canal can take up to 100 million gallons but the developers are not worried about it because they believe that it will never get 100 million gallons
- The Gowanus canal was flooded during hurricane Sandy
- We learned new vocabulary words

### INSIGHTS/DISCOVERIES

I learned new things about the Gowanus Canal, I learned about different renovation that Robert Moses made where he completely destroyed certain places to modernize them. From my point of view, people who lived in the place liked them but I do believe that they are fighting to even keep their rent because the rent will be higher and eventually they'll have to move out.

### KEYWORDS/VOCABULARY & DEFINITIONS

\*5 keywords minimum required per site visit

Boundaries: A line which marks the limits of an area; a dividing line.

Gentrification: The process of renovating and improving a house or district so that it conforms to middle-class taste.

Esplanades: A long, open, level area, typically beside the sea, along which people may walk for pleasure.

Pervious: (of a substance) allowing water to pass through; permeable.

Impervious: Not allowing fluid to pass through.

Blight: A plant disease, typically one caused by fungi such as mildews, rusts, and smuts.

Sponge Park: Giant bioswale that holds 1 million gallon of water

#### QUESTIONS for Further RESEARCH

1. Is gentrification partly a cause of homelessness?
2. For me, I think that a bioswale is important to have in certain places. Some people are opposed to the idea. But, Wouldn't it be better for the city if we had one in a lot of places?

#### Reference:

<https://www.grownyc.org/openspace/green-infrastructure-toolkit/bioswales>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bioswale>