

Learning Places Fall 2018

SITE REPORT #1A

name of site report



This image is of people enjoying the public space of Zuccotti Park. People have lunch, talk, get together, rest and take pictures at this park surrounded by trees.

STUDENT NAME: Azzall Monasser

INTRODUCTION

What were your expectations of the place, before arriving? Did your experience of the place match your expectations? How did it, or did it not, live up to your expectations? What did you notice about the place that you didn't already know from reading or previous visits?

This was my first time to notice Zuccotti Park, even though i've been to that area before and definitely passed by it at least once. To me, I would call it a public seating area rather than a park. Prior to arrival, my expectations were completely different to what i've seen. I imagined it being a huge, green gated area, with adults and kids; the image you think of when the word "Park" comes to mind. Upon arrival, I've noticed that the park is located in the middle of high rise projects, and contains two sculptures. Also, people visiting the park are either on their lunch break, passing through, selling, or just resting. Another notice, was that there was no entry sign with the name of the park, which wasn't expected due to the importance of the park.

SITE OBSERVATIONS

Insert 3 photographs and provide a title for each image. The title should be a word or short phrase that sums up the subject matter of the photo or a visual theme present in the photo.



Joie de Vivre



High Risers



Vendors

Why did you choose these images? Do they summarize a feeling you have for the place? Do they focus on prominent objects or features of the place? Explain.

I chose the images of the sculpture Joie de Vivre, the high risers surrounding the park and the vendors because they are the first things you notice as soon as you arrive near the park. The sculpture is huge and red which attracts the eye; the amount of beautiful architecture surrounding the park is indescribable. So, the vendors are lined up against the side of the park to sell food, snacks and drinks for the visitors. These three images encourage people to have a seat, pass by, buy a snack and enjoy the park.

Describe the sizes and shapes of buildings in this area. Is there general uniformity or heterogeneity among structures?

There's a variety in the architecture of the buildings around the park. Most of the buildings are modern high rise; more than 10 stories high. On the other hand, there are projects that are under construction, and other buildings, like on Trinity Pl, that are smaller in size and contain shopping centers/restaurants.

Describe the patterns, textures, colors, and ornamental features of the surfaces of the buildings and structures in and around the place.

The design of the buildings around the park have a **variance** colors and textures. The majority of the structures **can be considered** modern designed buildings. Some buildings stand out more than other, like One Liberty Plaza, which has black glazed glass windows surrounded by steel. The high rise buildings on the corner of Trinity pl and Liberty street have an outer surface of a curtain wall which act like reflectors. The building on Cedar street is finished with a smooth off-white brick stucco material and has arched styled windows which gives it a **gothic design**.

How is the natural world integrated into the built environment? Were trees, plants, lawns, and bodies of water established *around* existing architectures, or were the buildings and walkways built to observe preexisting "wild" areas? Describe patterns and methods of integration.

The natural world is integrated into the build environment by having trees along the tiled park to shade the users, a small gated garden with plants, and a perimeter of plants surrounding the outer side of the park. the area with most trees and nature in that same neighborhood.


Other than buildings, what are the functions of the designed / built structures (walkways, seating, etc)?

The seatings are designed from granite in the shape of squares with no back, which make it uncomfortable after sitting for a while. The walkway is narrow and leveled throughout the park. There are two red sculptures, Joie de Vivre and the Red Cube which **contrast to the colors of the surrounding buildings** attract the eye.

What public amenities are offered to users of the space (water fountains, wheelchair access and other supports for the disabled, public telephones, phone charging stations, WiFi, subway and bus stations, etc.)?


The park contains wheelchair accessibility, seatings, and is close to train and bus stations. Oddly, there was no water fountain, however, there were food/drink carts surrounding the park.

How have the planners and architects communicated the purpose of the place, via signage or design elements?

The planners and architects communicated the purpose of the place via design, materials used and signage. The park is intended for use by the public for passive recreation. The seatings are for the comfort of the public, however, the granite used is to prevent people from laying down, standing or sleeping on it. The signs tell us how to act in the space of the park. It's an open space with no gates which is a sign to show that it is open to the public and can be used as a shortcut to the other side. 

Are there any restrictions or rules (either explicit or implied) about how to use the space or interact with other people? Do you see anyone using the space in a manner that exceeds or violates the intentional design? Describe.



There are prohibited types of behaviour which are:

Feeding the birds, camping, lying down, erection of tents, placing tarps or sleeping bags, placement of personal property on the ground or seatings, use of bicycles, skateboards, rollerblades, and removal of objects from trash receptacles. I haven't seen any violations when visiting. 

How do people generally interact with the environment? Is this place crowded? Walkable? Easy to navigate? Comfortable?

People were interacting with the environment by walking by, taking pictures, eating or resting. The place a decent amount of people, however, was no crowded due to the large open space and the people walking by. It's also easy to navigate and walk to your destination through it.


What is your personal experience of the place? Think about sound/smell/touch, your body's movement, contact with the ground and physical comfort. How does the place make you feel?

Zuccotti Park isn't really a park to me. It was pretty humid and noisy with all the trees, closed off buildings and construction around. It's a convenient spot to have a quick bite while sitting, since all you can smell is the food carts, however, not for long due to the uncomfortable seatings.  

ANALYSIS/DISCOVERIES

Use this section to reflect on your observations. Remember to refer to your observations when drawing general conclusions.

Thinking about the neighborhood in which the place is embedded, who is this space designed for and for what general purpose?

The space is designed for the public, however, the neighborhood in which the park is embedded is an expensive, luxurious area for the upper class. It's also in the middle of companies, therefore, also the workers around are users of the space. It's also near The Oculus, which is a spot for tourists. I believe that the space was designed for the purpose of tourists and residents of the neighborhood. 


More specifically, what kinds of social interactions does the place encourage or support? How do noise and light affect social interaction? What about the proximity of design elements (walkways, benches, etc.)? Mention specific design elements in your answer.

The park is a welcoming space for the public. The proximity of the seatings and walkway encourages people to get together have a seat, conversation or even observe the surroundings. It's a loud and bright spot, with no rules of keeping quiet, which encourages people to be comfortable. It also has an accessibility for the handicapped which is an encouragement for all.

How might you use the space in a creative way that exceeds the intended use of the designers? Think about behavior, physical movement and organization, numbers of people, etc.

Since there's a decent amount of people passing by and visiting the park, I would organize important movements to attract listeners. Also, I would plan events for the public to attract them. As for the design, I would make the seating and atmosphere more comfortable for the public.

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. What were the intentions of the design and construction of Zuccotti park and why?
2. How do the owners of Zuccotti park make a profit out of the park? 
3. What are the things that have changed to the park after Occupy Wall Street protest?