

A GARDEN FOR EAST FLATBUSH

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A thesis submitted to the

Graduate School-New Brunswick

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

Master of Landscape Architecture

Graduate Program in the Landscape Architecture Department

Written under the direction of

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And approved by

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New Brunswick, New Jersey

May 2017

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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A redesign of the Wingate High School, located in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, New York is a project aimed at combating the effects of community violence and a desolate city landscape on a specific high school landscape. This project looks at theories about how community violence affects the personal identities of children in dense, urban inner city areas and how that violence alters and influences their view of themselves and the world around them. An in-depth report of the East Flatbush neighborhood and an examination of its community organizations is then followed by comprehensive examination of the George W. Wingate High School site. Exploring connections with nearby Kings County Hospital and the neighborhood surrounding two sides of the park. This design aims to create a friendlier, open therapeutic space that can be used as more than a retreat for the students who experience everyday violence but also patients, and hospital staff and the adjacent neighborhood. Through the use of unobtrusive observation, mapping, and photo documentation this project introduces many new ideas regarding how to think about the effects of violence on schools and the surrounding community.



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# Chapter 1: Introduction

If you don't live there, the inner city is not a real place. It is a term that is likely to be used for political agendas, described and reported on by the media, avoided by those who know nothing about it, and applied to a place that contains a certain demographic. Inner cities are perceived as: poor; urban; and black, when sociologists coined the term in the 1960s it was based on the migration trends that resulted from policy shifts in federal housing laws beginning in the 1930s . Today the term inner city is immediately associated with gangs, gun violence, unemployment, poverty, crime and AIDS. While many of these assumptions applied to poor, urban neighborhoods are sometimes true, oftentimes equally important side effects of living in these conditions like trauma on the individuals who live in these spaces are ignored. Because of the dense populations of these neighborhoods, children have a higher chance of being exposed to violence, resulting in them experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder at levels as debilitating as that of a war veteran by the age of five. The residents of these spaces can be plagued every day by traumatic memories that they may never fully process.

According to Freud, there are two ways that one can react to the aftermath of a traumatic event. Traumatic experiences are unassimilated, meaning they cannot be immediately worked through because we, consciously, do not understand their presence or their weight on our consciousness. This repression leads to a kind of repetition, whereby the traumatic experiences continue to haunt the present. Freud's essay "Remembering, Repeating and Working Through" outlines two different ways for people to experience the after effects of a traumatic experience: mourning and melancholia. The process of mourning allows the individual to move past the incident by facing and working through the

event, therefore releasing the body from the repetition of the traumatic memory. Melancholia, on the other hand, means that the trauma remains, repeating forever and haunting the individual. According to Freud, it is crucial for the victims to be able to discuss and reflect on their traumatic experiences in order for them to accept what has happened and to gain freedom from the effects the trauma can have on the mind. Considering the prevalence of violence-related trauma in the inner city raises the question of how this trauma can be addressed. This leads to a paradigm shift whereby inner city trauma can be viewed as a community health problem that needs to be addressed by the health professionals of the area. This can be facilitated by developing a relationship between the hospital and the neighborhood.

In the neighborhood of East Flatbush, there are programs run out of Kings County Hospital (KCH) that help the neighborhood deal with the violence within the neighborhood. KAVI (Kings Against Violence Initiative) was started by Dr. Robert Gore who works in the Emergency Room of the Kings County Hospital. Dr. Gore started the program several years ago after a childhood friend of his died from violence within the community. His response is a two-pronged program; a community violence program that engages directly with the hospital and with a youth program that works with the nearby Wingate High School to prevent violence. The hospital-based portion of the program is geared towards deescalating violent situations that have occurred in the area. When a stabbing or shooting victim is admitted into the hospital, KAVI is notified. They then sit with the victim and the victim's family and friends to talk through the incident and warn against retaliation. The youth programs mission statement is as follows, "... [o]ur programming provides youth with productive and safe alternatives to engaging in interpersonal violence. Through in-

creased self-awareness and by empowering youth, KAVI hopes to assist youth in cultivating their own untapped potential”. Programs like KAVI can have a large impact on helping students and children in an area go through the process of mourning, by allowing the students to talk about and, with counseling and mentoring, work through the traumatic events that they have lived through. Education is the strongest tool these students could have and these different forms of education could have a large impact on the student community. The program’s focus on teaching the students about self-worth and empowerment has the possibility of opening doors that the students thought were previously closed. Anger, about their current situations and the lives they see around them, is a symptom of the violence in the area, and this counseling can help alleviate that and have a large impact on overall student health.

Programs like KAVI are known as Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIPs), these programs have been so successful they have led to the design of the National Network of Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs. These programs have been shown to reduce the number of hospitalizations. Starting in the 1980s violence within the United States began to be seen and treated as an epidemic. Within the U.S, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention created the Violence Epidemiology Branch. These violence reduction programs have not only been adopted nationally, but internationally. The World Health Organization (WHO) adopted the Resolution WHA49.25 initiative in 1996. This initiative made violence a worldwide health problem, which created smaller initiatives to be completed by the WHO. These initiatives included documenting the burden of violence upon children, and studying the efficacy of programs based on helping women and children. Lastly, the WHO is dedicated to promoting activities that will target the prob-

lem of violence worldwide .

Within the U.S., we can see the effectiveness of these programs at the R. Adams Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore, MD which demonstrated that HVIPs are effective. In a study done on the recidivism of the patients, those who had contact with the program had only a 5% chance of recidivism; those who did not had a 36% chance of returning. Programs like these that have strongly established themselves within the hospital and the community have been able to save hospitals almost \$1 million dollars annually, and have been able to reduce neighborhood crime by 25%. These programs are primarily hospital based social outreach programs. Improving the outdoor conditions of the neighborhood could allow the counseling to be taken outside into the community.

Kings County Hospital and the Wingate Campus are physically adjacent to each other. They are linked programmatically, but spatially neither of the campuses recognize the other. Green spaces can have positive effects on the users of their spaces. In a study done by Frances Kuo and William Sullivan, it was found that residents who live in impoverished neighborhoods and housing projects and had small patches of grass and trees, were less aggressive and violent, formed positive relationships with their neighbors, had a better work ethic, and were more in control of their decisions and reactions in various situations. During my six-week internship with KAVI, I noticed that the children had no space nearby where they could find solace. My responsibility as a mentor was to introduce the students to Landscape Architecture. I spent time with the students, showing them different examples of what landscape architects do and how they have the power to influence their cityscapes. I spoke with them about different outdoor spaces where they could find solace and solitude from their everyday situations. They had interesting feelings about the Highline in Manhat-

tan, which has now become a tourist attraction. The Highline, to these students, was boring and uneventful. There was nothing to do until I introduced the idea of people watching to the kids. “Nah, that sounds way too boring, there’s nothing to do here” was a common sentiment amongst the students, but once they spent more time at the Highline the boys started to say, “I can see me coming here with a girl like on a date or something”. Another common sentiment from the students was the fear of Brooklyn Bridge Park as not being “safe for people like us”. This same feeling of discomfort was aimed at Wingate Park which shares the same campus as the high school. It is important to have programs like KAVI in the community to help with the overcoming of the traumatic event, but it is equally important for the residents and students to have a space within their community where they can go to reflect and relax in a safe space in a natural setting. This points to the importance of going beyond the provision of social programs inside the hospital to address issues of community violence. Addressing the related trauma must also be extended to the provision of designed spaces that can aid in the process of addressing community problems.

The ‘inner city’ is a place where people live and work, and it has taken a long time for the social relationships to form as well as the landscapes. Historically, large institutions have had direct and indirect ways of creating the landscapes of the “inner city”. Redlining is the “discriminatory pattern of disinvestment and obstructive lending practices that act as an impediment to home ownership among African Americans”. According to Jameele Bouie, a journalist for The Daily Beast, who wrote *How We Built the Ghettos*, redlining was, “almost exclusively a tool to force blacks (and other minorities) into particular geographic areas”. Other practices including, segregation, white flight and restrictive covenants affected poor, black neighborhoods, and led to urban disinvestment. Today, practices such as ur-



urban renewal cause the insertion of highways through primarily poor black neighborhoods. The tearing down of blighted areas and the concentration of poor communities in high rise public housing and the privatization of public spaces have left many historically black and immigrant neighborhoods divided and disconnected, and without safe outdoor spaces for social interaction.

Traces of these practices can be found in the East Flatbush neighborhood where KAVI is based. The high school uses Wingate Park for gym sessions. The entire school is fenced in, and the portion of the site that the park sits on is completely enclosed by six-foot-tall fences. Across the street, on Kingston Ave, the entire block is wrapped by various fences, all six feet high that enclose large parking lots for the nearby facilities. Winthrop Avenue is faced by the back of Kings County Hospital. The hospital takes up multiple city blocks in one long and uninterrupted structure that serves to disconnect the high school and the park from the other residential communities within the neighborhood. Walls, fences, abandoned buildings, large HVAC structures and construction work faces the school, the park, and this portion of the East Flatbush community. Although the hospital offers many opportunities to engage with the community such as KAVI or other outreach and education programs, it has physically turned its back on the community that it serves. This is expressed most strongly in the lack of even a single entrance along Winthrop Avenue. This neglected landscape provides no services to the users of the hospital or the community that composes much of its work force. A level-1 trauma center, Kings County Hospital contains one of the largest psychiatric wards in New York City, but what landscape does it provide to those afflicted patients? How does it physically serve the needs of the public who live with a lack of open space and green spaces? While the hospital clearly takes such mental

health issues seriously, considering its provision of multiple programs that address the needs of victims of community violence, it has neglected its public face and its impact on the neighborhood landscape. Improving this condition would have a positive impact on the community. Along with the redesign of the hospital landscape, a redesign of the school landscape is also imperative. The relationship between the high school and the rest of the neighborhood is important for creating strong relationships and for encouraging pride of place within all members of the public. For the redesign of this landscape, we need to look to case studies that cater to the very specific ailments of this community. The people are traumatized as well as the landscape and this design aims to address both problems.

For the purpose of this project, I have chosen case studies that have a close similarity to the conditions we find in the East Flatbush neighborhood. For example, the Sandy Hook Elementary School was subject to a tragic shooting that ended the lives of twenty children, six and seven years olds, and six adult members of the staff. This same gun violence is an epidemic that has plagued impoverished neighborhoods in the city for the entirety of my lifetime; this violence is no stranger in the East Flatbush neighborhood. With programs like Guns Down, Life Up, the gun epidemic is addressed socially with older members of the community, usually convicts whose lives have been affected one way or another by guns, giving advice and attempting to deter the children in the neighborhood away from gun violence. Although there are social programs put in place that attempt to deter gun violence, the design of these neighborhoods should be reconsidered in order to improve safety of residents and create spaces where people feel safe. It is important to consider design aspects such as providing sight lines, open-fluid spaces and multiple entrances and exits. The perception of safety is also important because otherwise, these implemented

open spaces will never be used.

My goal is to reframe the landscape of the East Flatbush neighborhood by creating safe outdoor spaces that encourage safe positive interactions between the hospital and the community-to open the school and to make the hospital have a friendlier presence in the neighborhood. The visible and invisible fences of the neighborhood do change the feel of the environment, and I believe that it is important to change the way that these institutions physically affect the area. This design will help the students be able to build their own reflection in the community. In these urban spaces, especially through the creation of areas in which time can be slowed down, people in the neighborhood will find a place to remove themselves from the environment and allow themselves to become a spectator as opposed to the actor in the area; this could change the way these students feel about their communities. Changing the ways that people view the community can also be influenced by different frames and directed views that permanently change the way that these residents view their community, promoting pride in their neighborhood.

## Chapter 2: Community Violence

### Introduction

Community violence, as defined by Kliwer and Sullivan, is the exposure to violence in any form that causes people in a community to experience adjustment difficulties. This exposure to violence can come in the form of firsthand experience, hearing about it from other members of the community, or hearing about it from afar<sup>1</sup>. This exposure to violence often follows children in the community to and from school, negatively affecting academic work, high school culture and most importantly, attitudes about school and life. Thinking in terms of what it's like to attend school in a hostile environment, many professionals forget that, schoolwork isn't a priority when walking home from it is dangerous<sup>2</sup>. Professionals in the field of psychology have determined that people living in the contentious areas of the inner-city experience a deeper form of post-traumatic stress disorder than those who have experienced war, it is more so because, "[the] trauma is on a continuous loop because the violence is happening outside the front door"<sup>3</sup>. Most inner cities have deployed tactics intended to reduce the amount of violence, but they do not take into account the significant psychological problems that have already been embedded in the minds of school children. How does this effect their everyday lives? Does it have a impact on how they view themselves and people who look like them?

There is no contesting that personalities are shaped by personal experiences, and these experiences make up a person's identity. To explain the ideas of memory and identity, I will use sociologist's Elizabeth Jelin's *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*. In her book, she states that, "memor[ies] are the present of the past...that define personal identity and the continuity of the self over time"<sup>4</sup>. The amalgamation of all of these personal

identities creates the collective, a group of people who share a space together, and its identity. The definition of the collective identity and -memory has been heavily debated over the history of sociology, but can be best represented as, "...a shared identity that unites a social group, be it family or a nation, whose members nonetheless have different interests and motivations"<sup>5</sup>. In the context of the inner city, the collective identity is comprised of witnesses. A witness is defined as someone who "...has lived through an experience or event and can, at a later moment narrate it or "give testimony"<sup>4</sup>. As opposed to being a witness, someone can also be an observer, which is someone who "was present at the moment of an event as an onlooker, who saw something but did not participate directly or was not directly involved in the event"<sup>4</sup>. In terms of community violence, everyone becomes a witness as well as an observer in most situations, shaping the culture of the inner city.

In this chapter, I will discuss the effects of community violence on children as it affects them as individuals, then a part of a community and also the broader effect on the city as a whole. I will discuss the idea of safe spaces, whether it be for mental or physical relief. The landscapes of inner cities inadvertently foster the traumatic lifestyles found in the inner city; how do we design a park or open space in a site that is afflicted by community violence? Can a landscape become a respite in a violent neighborhood? I want to take what happens psychologically in the individual, discuss how this effects the collective social aspects of the community and how, in response, we can shape a landscape that caters to improving these problems. Therapeutic spaces are usually used by persons stricken by post-traumatic stress disorder, which is found in the inner city, where it is known by a different name, "hood disease". Hood disease is described to be the level of post-traumatic stress disorder that is experienced by the people who live

in the “hood”<sup>3</sup>. Many people disagree with the name of “hood disease” claiming that it is both derogatory to the people it afflicts, reducing them only to the perceptions of people who do not live in the area with them. The term had been coined by Harvard doctors, diagnosing approximately 30% of inner city kids with, “a more complex form of the disorder”. A teacher from a school in Fremont, California claims that, “[it’s] depression, it’s stress, it’s withdrawal, it’s denial. It’s too many things that is encompassed and embodied in them”<sup>1</sup>. The neighborhood of Fremont, California is within the city of Oakland, California which just like the dense neighborhoods of New York experiences the same, if not more, violence within the neighborhoods and schools; “and when somebody pushes that one button...it can be like, ‘please go have a seat,’ and that can be the one thing that sets them off”<sup>1</sup> caused by the violence within the neighborhood, but when you look at it from the prospective of the student, “it does not matter...if we don’t survive the walk home”<sup>2</sup>.

## Community Violence and the Individual

Let us begin the query into the effects of community violence on inner city kids with the discussion of identity. As we know it, identity is a multi-faceted, immaterial object, “sustained by memories”<sup>4</sup>. Memories are the basis of our identities because, “the ability to recall or remember something from one’s own past is what sustains identity”<sup>4</sup>. Putting this idea into the context of children who experience violence in their everyday lives in one form or another creates a number of questions of how the children view themselves and how they view the people around them. In *Gang Leader for a Day*, written by Sudhir Venkatesh, his first experience with the prominent gang whose territory covered the Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago highlights how the people who live in these environments view themselves,

“He took the questionnaire from my hand, barely glanced at it, then handed it back. Everything he did, every move he made, was deliberate and forceful. I read him the same question that I had read the others. He didn’t laugh, but he smiled. How does it feel to be black and poor? “I’m not black,” he answered, looking around at the others knowingly. “Well, then, how does it feel to be African American and poor?” I tried to sound apologetic, worried that I had offended him. “I’m not African-American either. I’m a nigger.... Niggers are the ones who live in this building. African Americans live in the suburbs. African Americans wear ties to work. Niggers can’t find no work.”<sup>6</sup>

The identity of these adults is tied up in their ability to get work, because an inability to provide yourself and your family a decent place to live and food to eat can have a severe impact on how people view themselves. They are not able to identify with the label of “black” or “African American” because neither of those groups go through the struggles of living in the inner city. Children who live in these neighborhoods are then raised with the ideals that they are the “other”; they are a part of a sub-group of African Americans who experience different struggles. A very profound image of the inner city comes from Loic Waquant’s *Urban Outcasts*, who tells the story of the children who live in the Robert

Taylor Homes in Chicago who must sleep in the hallway during the summer months for fear of bullets striking them<sup>7</sup>. How does this affect how they feel about themselves? Before we begin to think about that, we have to think about the idea of memory and trauma.

According to Freud, trauma is defined as, “violent events that at the time when they occurred were ignored or disregarded-the individual mind cannot perceive the possibility of its own death”<sup>8</sup>. This definition completely disregards the experiences of those who live in areas that are war-torn, left to degrade or simply ignored by their local and state governments. In the inner city, the possibility of your death is very real because of the violence experienced on an everyday basis, and the question of whether you will die today is pondered daily. To continue the question of identity in the inner city, we move to memory.

According to Jelin, “everyday life is primarily made up of routines: patterns of behavior that are habitual, non-reflective, learned and repeated. The past of the learning process and the present of its memory turn into habit and tradition...”<sup>4</sup>. Continuing with the concept of sleeping in the hallway to survive, if we apply Jelin’s definition, does this yearly occurrence qualify as a traumatic experience or a way of life? If you are ten years old, and have been accustomed to the sounds of gun shots since birth, and sleeping in the hallways during the summer was always something you just did, it is a part of “normal” life. In her piece, Cathy Caruth, a sociologist who wrote *Trauma and Experience*, discusses Freud’s idea of latency and trauma being the, “successive movement from an event to its repression to its return”<sup>9</sup>, meaning once you’ve experienced an event, the trauma occurs after you have repressed it and the violent emotions come back, switching between both states of mind. How does this apply to an event such as the violent summers of inner city projects that reoccur every summer?



Jelin explains that memories that are repetitive are not special, only when something out of the norm occurs that results in “incident or failure of the learned routine...”<sup>4</sup> does the memory move from the mundane to the extraordinary. These two concepts both affirm and contradict each other, because they rely on experiences that are purely situational.

As mentioned previously, we all embody multiple identities. I am black, a woman, a millennial, a first generation American, and a graduate student etc.; all of these identities make up who I am. This, then, brings into question; which identity or identities are affected by community violence? According to the 2010 census, children who live in these conditions (poor, urban, inner city areas) are usually of color, poor, and in single parent households. Violence can be experienced within each of these spaces individually, or it can span across many of them. The memories made as a child are the ones that will influence our behavior for the rest of our lives; and is simultaneously “negotiated within” the identity of the collective<sup>10</sup> which Ron Eyerman explains in his piece *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and Formation of African American Identity*. This means that our memories make us who we are, defining our identity, but we also have the pressures of the outside community acting on us, making us think differently about our past and future. We must find who we are individually but also find our identity within the larger communities that have formed around us. The actions within these larger communities have a significant impact on us, especially something as traumatic as community violence.

There are several ways that community violence can span across different spaces within one’s life: experiencing domestic violence at home, hearing or seeing it in the streets and then being exposed to it in the school setting can skew the way that these kids view

the world. Children who live in areas where there is constant violence grow up with a very different view of the world than someone like me who has never experienced violence in multiple spaces of their lives. These children walk through life, “carry[ing] an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess”<sup>9</sup> as defined by German sociologist Dr. Bernhard Giesen. These walking, pained histories then come together to create the collective. As with many trauma survivors, these children do not realize that acts of everyday violence will impact them heavily in the wrong way because, “the events of the past, and the attachment of the person to that past, especially in cases of trauma, can involve a fixation or a constant return: the compulsion to repeat or to act out, the inability to detach oneself from the lost object”<sup>4</sup>, that lost object being the innocence of childhood that is unknowingly destroyed at the forced to speed up the learning of life and death. This collective group, participate in local customs and ways of life unaware of the fact that their past experiences are the reasons behind their customs, a sub-conscious effort in order to preserve their lives.

## Community Violence and the Collective

There are many different aspects of life that affect a collective, all being driven by the culture of the community. Collective and cultural memory; cultural trauma; collective trauma; social memory; and social learning are all affected by the individual acting out within the larger framework of the community. For the purpose of this paper, I will use Eyerman's definition of collective memory as, "recollections of a shared past that are retained by members of a group, large or small, that experienced it"<sup>10</sup>. Much like identities, one individual can be a part of many different groups, remembering many different histories, all of these acting on the individual to skew the way they think and act in different situations. All of these groups become self-aware through the events that take place within the community and become capable of, "reflection and re-creation of a distinctive shared memory"<sup>10</sup>. Individuals are then able to mold their thoughts and ideas to the way that the community handles traumatic experience.

Cultural memory, can be defined as, "the mechanisms by which public life operates not just in the political arena but in the production of cultural forms such as films, memorials and oral histories"<sup>11</sup>. An important piece of cultural memory, in terms of this definition, is music. Rap and Hip Hop music provide many resources for understanding what life is like growing up in the inner city and 'hood' areas. The first song to highlight the problems of the hood is called "The Message" written and performed by GrandMaster Flash in 1982. In the third episode of the documentary *Hip Hop Evolution*, rap artists such as Ice Cube, Ice T and other prominent rappers explain the importance of the song. For people who live outside of these inner city neighborhoods and, don't know what it is actually like, this song, "is like a window into urban America for people who have never been there or are

too scared to go in...”<sup>12</sup>. To some people the song was more powerful than politics, more powerful than religion, and [was more effective] than the news media...”<sup>12</sup>.

The custom of rapping about the hardships in the ‘hood’ hasn’t changed, as seen in Jay-Z’s song titled “Renegade”(2001). As an exploration of the struggles of ghetto life, in the first verse of the song he points out that many of the people who critique the rap industry know nothing about ‘hood’ life. He talks about the problems within the ‘hood’ such as unwatched teenagers who end up pregnant, dodging stray bullets, and how the people who comment on the problems of the ‘hood’ wouldn’t survive a day in the shoes of those who live there.

This verse is a perfect introduction to some of the rap that describes the hardships of living within the inner cities. Through these songs many people have a window to what it’s like living in these tumultuous spaces, but they also explain the decisions that are made in these spaces because of what has happened in the past. These decisions are a product of cultural trauma. Cultural trauma can be identified as a, “tear in the social fabric”<sup>10</sup> which is then sewn up with a different fabric, which means that the social customs which were once observed are now changed, and a new social custom replaces it, changing the everyday lives of the residents. Ron Eyerman also applies the “loss of identity” to cultural trauma, but in the case of the inner city, it is more of a change in the identity of a neighborhood, a change in the way people view their streets and landscapes and the people around them, making them more aware of their surroundings in a different light because of what has happened in the community. This is an example of social learning; when a community is impacted by a traumatic event, they mourn, learn and adapt. Social learning can also be defined as, “the diversity of adaptations, and the promotion of strong local social cohe-

sion...”<sup>10</sup>. Through rap music, we can see how people in the ghettos have adapted to life and how they have socially learned to deal with their surroundings. The plight of the people in the ‘hood’, is often forgotten or ignored by the media, this then changes normally happy occurrences. The start of summer is usually celebrated by children, but in dangerous areas the start of summer is a dark time, as we can see in Chance the Rappers bars,

“It just got warm out, this the shit I’ve been warned ‘bout  
 I hope that it storm in the mornin’, I hope that it’s pourin’ out  
 I hate crowded beaches, I hate the sound of fireworks  
 And I ponder what’s worse between knowing it’s over and dyin’ first  
 Cause everybody dies in the summer  
 Wanna say ya goodbyes, tell them while it’s spring  
 I heard everybody’s dying in the summer  
 So pray to God for a little more spring”<sup>13</sup>

In this verse, we can see the effects of trauma on the individual and how it could affect the collective. Collective trauma is defined where an, “unexpected event severs the ties that bind community members to one another”<sup>14</sup>. When we look at the inner city, many of the social norms and practices have come from people experiencing some sort of violence in their lives.

The affect of violence upon a person’s life, can be clearly illustrated by looking at my view of the world compared to my friend, Alex. I grew up in Jersey City’s version of the suburbs, on a well-established, stable street where my neighbors watched over me as I grew up. Alexander, 25, grew up three blocks from me, and in his lifetime has experienced fights, jumpings, stabbings and shootings, which I had never experienced. Alex’s experiences in Jersey City were substantially different than mine, and because of this he walks through life viewing people, places and social situations differently than I do. I once asked Alex, how his experiences with violence have affected the way that he acts in social situa-

tions. In today's world a common form of respect is to look at someone in the eye in passing and greetings. As a result of his experiences, Alex only makes eye contact with people he's made a strong social bond with; otherwise, in his experience, too much eye contact can cause arguments and fights. In his thoughts on the world and the violence around him, Alex feels that the world is just, "a shitty place...there is no amount of violence that can surprise me. No amount of school shootings or media coverage of killings is surprising. Like it sucks, but I'm not shocked by it at all because I'm so desensitized by violence". Alex's view of life and the world isn't only held by him, it can be shared by a whole group of kids who are, "distorted and disconnected in ways that could outlast even the effects of their individual psychological traumas. Socially, they [are] in a permanent state of shock". Kai Erickson also states that people who live in areas of strong collective trauma often lack strong social anchors. From Alex's point of view, growing up playing in the streets, his only social anchor was his group of friends. There was no adult, or leader in the community that gave him or his group of friends a positive role model. It was a group of kids who self-governed and kept each other in check, "[s]ince I was the youngest in the group, everyone always looked out for me, but as time went on everyone started doing drugs, which was where I stopped hanging out with them. Many times they got into fights protecting me and protecting each other". Not a sudden but a slow trickle of friends disappeared from his life, this to him created a loss of a social anchor.

When I asked Alex about his most violent experiences growing up, he told me two stories. His first story was about getting G-checked in a mall as a ten-year-old. To get G-checked means you are approached by a large group of gang members. You are then asked what gang you are affiliated with. If you reply that you are neutral, there are three

possible outcomes: the gang can decide to leave you alone, beat you up, or you get demanded to “run those colors” (you have to take off and give them whatever item of clothing you are wearing that represents the gang). If you say that you are affiliated with the gang in question, then you get an intense questioning about your affiliation with that gang, and if you do not pass the quiz, you are liable to get jumped or murdered, which is also the outcome if you reply you are from a rival gang. Alex’s experience was caused by his choice to wear red sneakers and a red hat to the mall. He was approached by ten, young males twice his age, and was asked, “are you Blood”. After he responded no, Alex tried to continue with his day and realized that the group of men began to follow him. He decided to start running after the men followed him and his friends out of the mall, their lucky escape coming from a local bus. He and his friends jumped on and closed the door to the bus, and screamed at the bus driver to leave. This ordeal had a lasting effect on Alex and his friend, deterring them from wearing the color red. They continued to fear being caught by the group of men, so they went to the mall with older friends the next day.

The next memory Alex shared with me was when he was 14 and heard a friend’s dad, Peter, get gunned down on the corner of his street. Peter’s car was stolen by someone in their neighborhood. After Peter told the police who he thought stole his car, an unknown assailant came and gunned him down at the end of the street. Alex was in his house when the shooting began, but then unknowingly walked down the block to see the man lying in a pool of his own blood, in a fetal position. When the paramedics rolled Peter over to put him in the ambulance, Alex remembers seeing holes all over the front of his torso. Standing in the crowd of bystanders, Alex’s father believes was the shooter, making sure that Peter was dead. He caught weeks later. A few days later, when Alex and his friends were hanging

out on their stoop, a car rolled up pointed at the group of children announced “you’re next” and sped off. The children all then went into the same house, scared for their lives. Events like these caused Alex to be hyper-vigilant and act paranoid walking home on the street he grew up on. A memorial to Peter still stands on the corner of Thorne St. today, forever a reminder of how easy it is to be lost to the world around you, these memories of violence and repression can appear in the attitudes of the residents<sup>15</sup>. In this way places can be tagged with violence, and these tags are embodied in those individuals who were close to the scene of crime. Although I did not see the violence, I saw the tags of them, the results of violent actions have a lasting affect on the landscape and affect everyone in the neighborhood.

Alex’s view of the world is so different than mine. When he sees street corners, he can imagine shot up bodies and crack-heads dying of an overdose. On his routine walk to work, he has stumbled upon bodies lying in a pools of their own blood, leaving him to wonder why this always happens to him. These events not only affected him but how he acts in a group, how he acts as a 25-year old male in a group with other 25-year old-males. They all avoid eye contact with each other, worry about the color of the clothing they wear on their bodies, and try not to attract attention from anyone. This kind of violence is one that is based around the social groups of the neighborhood, but there is also a violence that is inflicted onto the landscape by higher institutions within the neighborhood.



## Trauma's Affect on the Landscape

A field guide was created by Elliot Maltby and Gita Nandan, on the fences of Brooklyn. In this guide, the authors wrote about how many of the streets in the Bushwick neighborhood are plagued by tall and wide fences, that are unnecessary. This excessive installation of fences gives the feeling of impending danger, an attempt to keep people out because of the possibility of danger to themselves or their property. These fences inflict the idea that you are vulnerable in this space, that you are in danger. The environment is so harsh that it, gives off the notion that no one cares about the spaces found in these neighborhoods, which can have great impacts on people moving through it. The notion that at any moment you can be attacked, is an extreme one, and to carry it every day with you can have an effect on the way you view the world as illustrated by Alex. One thing that is learned, as a child of the inner city, is how to read the landscape. There is something other than common sense that is acquired when navigating through life in these dangerous spaces. There are two separate ways to experience trauma in the landscape. With or without the presence of people, the presence of unkempt buildings and large, empty lots creates an environment that is both uncomfortable and gives the visitor the belief that they are in an abandoned, dangerous area. This notion can be reinforced in ways that are, at first, subtle.

The first indication of danger and trauma can come from the absence of what makes a “safe” city, safe. When you think of a safe urban area, you see street trees, people in well maintained parks, active storefronts and bustling streets. Walking through the neighborhood of Crown Heights (next to East Flatbush) in Brooklyn, New York, instead, I see cracked sidewalks, a multitude of vacant buildings, trash on the sidewalks and glass from broken car windows. This connects to the notion of the “broken windows theory” devel-

oped by James W. Wilson and George Kelling in the early 1980s, as well as the hypothesis of eyes on the street created by Jane Jacobs. The broken windows theory is the notion that the, “prevalence of disorder creates fear in the minds of citizens who are convinced that the area is unsafe. This withdrawal from the community weakens social controls that previously kept criminals in check...disorder causes crime, and crime causes further disorder and crime”<sup>16</sup>. Wilson and Kelling define two separate types of disorder: physical and social.

Physical disorder can be viewed as what can be seen in a typical inner city. If someone walks past a broken window, they are likely to believe that no one cares about them in the neighborhood and will therefore to continue to break things within the neighborhood. They feel that if no one else cares about what happens here why should they, and from this comes the open neglect of neighborhoods. The landscape of the Crown Heights neighborhood, that I previously described can be seen as disordered because of its, “vacant buildings, broken windows, abandoned vehicles and vacant lots filled with trash”<sup>16</sup>. This view of the landscape only focuses on what the residents and the people who use the neighborhood have done to make it disorderly. Many people forget that the institutions that act upon these spaces also create a feeling of distrust for the residents and users of the spaces.

The second way to read trauma in the landscape is to look at how public authorities have constructed these spaces. The landscape of the inner city can quietly become oppressive. The implementation of certain structures can also add to the notion that the neighborhood is a derelict place. For instance, a six-foot-high fence around a community park does not give the impression that you are welcome in the space; it gives the idea that there are people within the neighborhood that need to be fenced out. Reminiscent of prison landscapes, high fences give the notion that there are people who need to be locked in or

locked out. Many people who do not live in these areas of high crime do not think much about the impression that tall fences give.

Large buildings with few windows on the ground level give the impression that if there are windows here, they can be broken into. Thus, physical structures can demonstrate that property owners and public institutions do not “trust” the people of the neighborhood. Sometimes pieces are placed in the landscape that cannot be destroyed, and restrict the activities of the public such as benches that don’t allow the homeless to sleep or relax on and skateboarders to use. Controlling a public space with a tall surrounding fence can imply that there is danger within the neighborhood which is a subtle reinforcement that the people who live in this area are dangerous. Likewise, the implementation of these fences demonstrate someone reinforcing who is in charge over the landscape, and demonstrate their mistrust for the neighborhood to take charge of the space themselves.

Although there are physical ways of keeping some people out of certain spaces like the fences mentioned above, there are also invisible barriers. These boundaries can come in many different forms. One of the largest invisible boundaries is the separation people of different races and class caused by U.S. housing policies. The creation of mostly white suburbs has affected the residents of these low-income neighborhoods significantly, taking the money out of these neighborhoods, and letting them fail. Red-lining and other racist practices kept people of color in these dense and uncared for neighborhoods. As jobs moved to the suburbs and manufacturing became increasingly automated, the lack of job options was, and is, a way to keep poor people in certain areas. There is also the preconception that there will be no resources put in place to care for it, so low-maintenance structures are usually implemented. A low-maintenance design is often concrete or hard-scaping with

very little greenery and little adornment.

## Safe Spaces to Combat ‘Hood Disease’

One of the most important resources any patient with a form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) could have is a safe space. PTSD has been defined as a, “condition of persistent mental and emotional stress occurring as a result of injury or severe psychological shock”. In an article for the New York Times Judith Shulevitz interviewed a college student who was in charge of providing safe spaces on her campus. She described a safe space as, “innocuous gatherings of like-minded people who agree to refrain from ridicule, criticism or what they term macroaggressions-subtle displays of racial and sexual bias-so that everyone can relax...”<sup>17</sup>. There should be an integration of physical safe spaces throughout the redesign and planning of every landscape, indoors and out. While this is very important for the sanity of PTSD patients, physical safe spaces in the inner city have a larger responsibility. Not only do they have to provide a space that is free of emotional triggers (specific words, sounds or actions that can send the inflicted into an anxiety attack) for the user, but they also must accommodate the physical and mental handicaps of the users. The implementation of these spaces is in no way a final treatment that will “cure” the users of their mental disorders; however, these spaces attempt to alleviate some of the stress that is caused by living in the inner city, to try to improve mental health.

An article written for the Chicago Tribune by Inger Burnett-Zeigler titled *Mental Health in the Black Community: A Matter of Life or Death* stipulates that there is a strong stigma within the black community against mental care and treatment. Much of this stigma comes from the people who believe that mental illness is only for “really crazy” people. In a look at the national averages of mental health in the state of Illinois, “suicide is the third leading cause of death among black youth ages 15 to 24 and sixth leading cause of

death among youth ages 10 to 14. The majority of adolescents do not receive mental illness treatment...poor black adolescents are especially unlikely to receive treatment...”<sup>18</sup>. This miseducation of black people is evident even within my own family. In a conversation with my grandmother about the struggles of life and depression, she said that she is glad no one in her family is like one of those “crazy people” meaning we are able to fully take care of ourselves, but proving that the only crazy she believes in is when people are physically unable to take care of themselves. Going to a doctor for mental health puts shame on the names of those who seek it, many of the people who do go for help often do so in secrecy<sup>18</sup>.

This thought coupled with the inadequacy of the police on how to handle people with mental disabilities usually ends up with lost lives. As we’ve seen in the news, “police behaviors often serve to incite and exacerbate, rather than de-escalate, the exhibited behavioral symptoms of mental illness., particularly among those who are psychotic or with poor impulse control” this followed by the perception that people afflicted with mental illness are violent and dangerous, it is often untrue and is what leads to the justification of overly aggressive attitudes from the police onto the afflicted. These individuals then often end up dead or in jail rather than receiving the proper mental care<sup>18</sup>.

The introduction of physical safe spaces in the neighborhoods, therefore, could have a strong impact on the large population of residents who would otherwise not receive proper mental care. Because veterans with PTSD are the closest ailment to the complex version of the disorder, I have decided to use the same tactics that comes with the territory of designing therapeutic spaces for veterans. There have been many studies done on how seeing natural settings can help the mental states of the people viewing them. Studies such as those with patients in the hospital with a view of nature, find that people with a view

of natural settings heal faster, need less pain medication and have significantly shorter post-operative stays<sup>19</sup>. This helps to further the hypothesis that natural settings can help the mental health of many different users. Although many veterans must go to therapy to help with their mental ailments many doctors agree that, “restorative natural environments, including outdoor gardens rehabilitation greenhouses, may be effective components of interdisciplinary treatment plans for veterans with multiple medical and psychiatric problems”<sup>20</sup>.

Therapeutic gardens have been proven to have a positive effect on the more than just the primary users. At the healing garden at the Mount Zion Clinical Cancer Center in San Francisco, the healing gardens have been found to be helpful to more than just the intended users, but also doctors, other patients, and staff and visitors of the center<sup>21</sup>. From this case study, we can see that there are four basic pieces to a therapeutic garden. Firstly, there must be a sense of control, the garden should be easily accessible to all users, with options of active and passive activities. There should be private corners, and a variety of different spaces to choose from to add to the sense of control. There has been research done that proves that spaces that are programmed for socializing will be more used than spaces not. However, there should be an emphasis on spaces that allow for personal respite. Designing the spaces with walking loops and play areas can encourage mild exercise for the users of the spaces. Suggestions for the plant palette of these spaces are medicinal and edible, and that encourage wildlife that is not perceived as dangerous. At the Lucas Gardens School in New South Wales, Australia there are gardens designed for a special education facility. Because of its nature, the school is designed to be handicap accessible, having to accommodate a large amount of wheelchairs and cots. In the space, there is a sensory gar-

den implemented to elicit a multitude of emotions for the users. This space is also used by the local community, disabled students who are visually and physically handicapped from other schools visit the space. It is also used by persons who are mildly, physically disabled who find work and job experience gardening. Claire Cooper Marcus, a known designer of therapeutic spaces, deems this space successful because it caters to a wide variety of uses and is therefore heavily used.

These spaces can provide a variety of opportunities for respite for the neighborhoods they are placed in. Since these gardens have been proven to help war veterans suffering from PTSD, they could have a positive effect on those who suffer from the same ailments. If we provided these kinds of spaces in neighborhood schools, community parks and other public spaces, this could change the whole ambiance of the neighborhood. The introduction of new green spaces into formerly hardscaped areas will allow for a gentler, softer feel and help enhance the lives of the people who live there.



## Conclusion

Violent neighborhoods have a negative impact on the individuals who live there. Growing up, residents live in constant states of terror that follow them through different aspects of their lives. People can experience violence at home, school, at the market and work, and any contact whatsoever can have a significant effect on the person who hears about it. The notion that memories are the basis of our identity is reason enough to believe that children who live in places with high levels of violence will have distorted views of the world, their actions and thoughts influenced by such negative past experiences. This child then must learn to navigate through small and larger social groups, who all share the same past experiences but whose traumas manifest differently within. Because of this, high levels of stress and violence occur in neighborhood schools where children suffer from depression with explosive and dissociative tendencies. These children then grow up in landscapes that are socially, as well as physically violent. Dirty sidewalks, vacant lots and traces of crime everywhere will have an impact on how the residents view their surroundings and the larger world ahead.

If therapeutic gardens were to be implemented they would provide beneficial environments for the people in these areas who normally do not receive the mental health-care they need. It would permanently change the environment of these neighborhoods and would change the perceptions of outsiders viewing these neighborhoods. Reading trauma in the landscape is a very effective way to see how the residents of these areas use their public spaces, and what damage has been done either physically or institutionally. This is important in understanding what positive changes could be made to further enhance the lives of the people who live there.

## Chapter 2: The East Flatbush Neighborhood

### Brief History and Background of East Flatbush

East Flatbush, Brooklyn, New York is located in the center of Brooklyn. The surrounding neighborhoods are: Crown Heights; Brownsville; Canarsie; and the Flatlands. East Flatbush was once a part of the larger Flatlands & Flatbush neighborhoods which were a part of the original six Brooklyn neighborhoods.

Brooklyn was settled by the Dutch in the early 1600s, who by the late 1680s had purchased all the Brooklyn land from the local Canarsie Indians. A few years later, in a land dispute the Dutch had to repurchase the same land from the Rock-

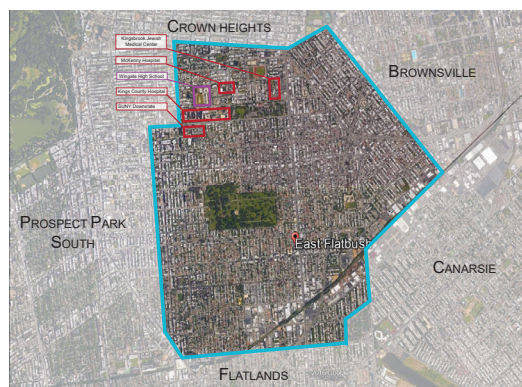


Figure 1: Map of East Flatbush, Hospitals & Wingate

away Indians who claimed that the Canarsie Indians had no rights to the land and therefore the previous purchase was void. Brooklyn, at the time, was a heavily wooded and lush landscape, therefore inspiring the Dutch to name it “middle woods”<sup>22</sup>. Although the area was already named, by the Native Americans and then the Dutch, residents in the Flatlands area began to call the area Vlachte Bos. The English took control, anglicized the names of the New York area, changing the name of the neighborhood to Flatbush. During English colonization, the six original Brooklyn neighborhoods were consolidated to form King’s County<sup>23</sup>.

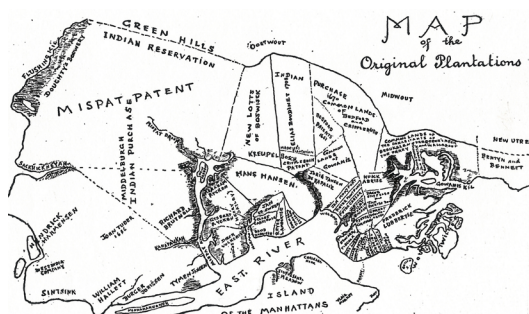


Figure 2: Map of Original Plantations  
Photo provided by the Queens Borough Library

A 1698 census of the Kings County neighborhoods shows that half of the residents were Dutch and, the other half were a mixture of: German, English, French, and Scandinavian and the large number of slaves owned by the white residents at the

time. Another census taken in 1771 before the start of the Revolutionary war revealed that the slave population represented approximately one-third of the population of Kings County<sup>24</sup>.

Today, three large medical and educational institutions: Kings County Hospital; the State University of New York's Downstate Medical Center; and the Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center comprise much of the institutional infrastructure in East Flatbush, and are all within blocks of each other. Kings County Hospital, one of the "largest municipal hospitals in the United States"<sup>26</sup> is located at 451 Clarkson Avenue. The institution has roots that tie it back to the 18th and 19th centuries, branching off from the original Almshouse institution. The land that the hospital sits on was bought for \$3,000 from the Martense family. Kings County Hospital (KCH) was officially established in 1831, the first building being finished in 1837<sup>27</sup>, and was intended to service the poor in the Brooklyn area. Kings County



Figure 3: Hospital Locations and Names

now serves the six nearby neighborhoods, providing healthcare to more than 800,000 people. KCH, in the neighborhood of Brooklyn is a: Level One Trauma Center for Adults and Pediatrics; designated stroke center, level three perinatal center, AIDs center, Parkinson's



Figure 4: First building of Kings County Hospital

Disease Center, Diabetes Education Center; it hosts a Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Center and a behavioral health center<sup>28</sup>. Kings County is officially run under the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation and runs in conjunction with the SUNY Downstate College of Medicine<sup>29</sup>.

Housed across the street from Kings County, the State University of New York's Downstate Medical Center (located at 450 Clarkson Ave) was originally established as the Long Island College Hospital in 1858. This was the first medical school to bring teaching into hospital wards and clinics, which mimicked the medical schools found in Europe. In the late 1950s, Long Island College, for financial reasons, was absorbed and created into the SUNY Downstate Medical Center. This institution works cooperatively with Kings County Hospital, many of the attending doctor's doubling as teachers at the medical school<sup>30</sup>.

Apart from both these public institutions, one of the more exclusive hospitals is the Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center, located at 585 Schenectady Ave in East Flatbush<sup>31</sup>. The hospital was created by a relief organization called the Daughters of Israel-Home for the Incurables, who wanted to create a safe space for all of the inflicted Jewish residents of Brooklyn. In 1926, the then appointed Deputy Attorney General M. Lerner, began to break ground for the Jewish Sanatorium for Incurables<sup>32</sup>. This institution was known as the first of its kind in Brooklyn at the time of its inception and was the largest driver in earning money for the local economy, allowing the residents to keep steady jobs. The name later changed to Kingsbrook Jewish Medical center in the late 1960s. This institution also works in conjunction with the SUNY Downstate Medical Center<sup>33</sup>.

Other important institutions in the neighborhood are the middle and high schools. East Flatbush is located within the 17th educational district which also serves Prospect and Crown Heights. Competing charter schools are putting many of the public schools out of business, because fewer families are interested in putting their children in the public school system<sup>34</sup>. The Education Department of New York has initiated a plan to phase out low performing public schools in order to create a series of smaller schools throughout the city<sup>35</sup>.



Schools like George W. Wingate High School were closed down because of low-performance, and the campus was altered to accommodate four smaller charter schools within it<sup>36</sup>.

Also located within East Flatbush is the 96-acre Holy Cross Cemetery at 3620 Tilden Ave in the middle of East Flatbush. During the early 1800s, “a church, a Pastor and a place for interment” (ccbklyn.org) was requested by the laity in Brooklyn. In June of 1849, the first burial took place in Holy Cross. The cemetery serves 15 different religious congregations. Bishop John Loughlin of The Saint John’s Cemetery runs all of the cemeteries owned by the Brooklyn Diocese<sup>37</sup>.

There are approximately six parks sprinkled throughout East Flatbush, all of them containing small gardens and are dominated by basketball courts, none of them larger than two acres. The city is bisected by two major roads: Kings Highway and Linden Blvd. The eastern end of King’s Highway, an eight-lane highway runs through East Flatbush, relatively in the north-south direction. In the early 1920s there were plans to destroy it but the then



Figure 5: Open Spaces in E.F. Neighborhood

Brooklyn Borough President Edward Rieglemann was able to save it from destruction. The path that the Kings Highway is built on can be traced back to the late 1770s, being named for King George III. Linden Blvd. runs in the east-west direction, cutting through the north-

ern section of East Flatbush. Since it runs through Queens and Brooklyn, the road size varies. In this section of the city, the road is a ten lane highway, making it the widest in the city<sup>38</sup>.

There once was a sense of pride in the East Flatbush neighborhood. An article written for the New York Times in 1979 highlighted that the residents of the neighborhood all packed into a small community meeting to contest a vote that would label East Flatbush an impoverished area. The proposition was created because over 20,800 residents in the neighborhood were on welfare at the time and although adopting this title would earn the neighborhood a portion of \$35 million dollars from the federal government, the vocal neighbors eagerly refused. The residents' economic statuses varied so widely at the time, and designating East Flatbush an impoverished area offended the well-off and wealthy residents of the neighborhood<sup>40</sup>. In order to prevent their neighborhood from being demoted in status, they banded together in order to preserve the health of their neighborhood.

One of the ways you can see diversity in the neighborhood is through the food that is sold there. An East Flatbush neighborhood resident has an entire blog post, dedicated to The Absolute Best Kosher in Brooklyn, if not the Entire World, which talks about how Brooklyn and especially East Flatbush had the best Kosher delis in the tristate area. There is a large range of West Indian and West African foods that could be found within the neighborhood making it an authentic experience<sup>41</sup>.

Streetadvisor.com ranks East Flatbush as the 40th best neighborhood in Brooklyn. There are a multitude of comments about the East Flatbush neighborhood. None of the comments rated the neighborhood beneath two stars. The first comment (which gave the lowest rating of two stars) starts off by mentioning that they would, "never want to live this far from civilization". The comment also states that, "besides a few Caribbean restaurants, your typical corner store air and the usual American fast food outposts, there isn't much going on down here that isn't residential...but properties here are cheap...". This comment

contradicts another (which gave a score of three stars) and felt that there was, “connectivity with the rest of New York City, East Flatbush is a desirable location for both residents and visitors”. Also in this comment is the vibrancy of the Caribbean culture on East Flatbush with the post highlighting how the, “culture of this neighborhood through music and expression is phenomenal”<sup>42</sup>.

## East Flatbush Statistics (2010 Census)

East Flatbush has a population of 156,151 who create a vibrant and mostly black neighborhood. 89% of the population identified as black on the last census, followed by Hispanic at 7%, followed by people who identified as Other. The Asian and White population are the lowest, both at 1%<sup>42</sup>. Much of the black population found in the neighborhood are made up of immigrants from the Caribbean. The highest immigrant population comes from Jamaica at almost 53% of the foreign-born population category <sup>42</sup>. Black population diversity is represented by residents from: Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, Guyana, Grenada, Barbados, St. Vincent, Panama. The smallest population sector is from the Dominican Republic with a presence of 1%. Approximately 20% of East Flatbush residents are estimated non-citizens, giving the undocumented immigrant population a strong presence in the neighborhood<sup>43</sup>.

The American-born residents of the neighborhood have reported that over half of the black population hail from the West Indies. Sub-Saharan- and African ancestry is noted at about 30% of the black population. In the Hispanic category, many of the residents ancestors hail from Central America at 30% of that population. 26% of the Hispanic population originated from Puerto Rico. In terms of Asian descent, 40% of that population is Indian, followed by Filipinos and Chinese<sup>44</sup>. Other than English, the census has identified twenty-one other languages that are spoken at home. The highest spoken foreign language is French Creole, at 8% of households. It is quickly followed by Spanish at 5.5%. Some of the other languages found are: French, Amharic, Twi, Yoruba, Bantu, Swahili and Somali.

The largest age range of the neighborhood are residents within the ages of 45-64 at 28%. At 27% is the population of 25-44, followed by 0-17 year olds. Seniors 65 and older



have a small presence of 14%, but it is larger than the 10% presence of 18-24 year olds. The life expectancy of people in the neighborhood is about 82 years. The population is dominated with a female presence at about 90,000, and

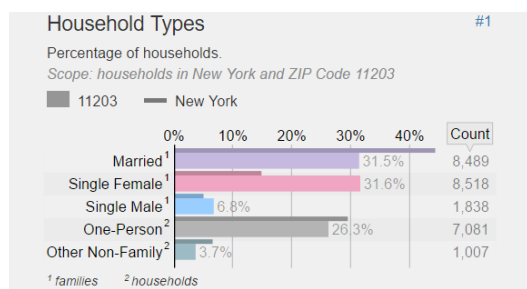


Figure 6: Household Types  
Photo provided by statistical atlas of NY

there are approximately 75,000 men. Single female-led households account for 31.6% of the household types, immediately followed with a .1% difference from married households. There are 26.3% one-person households, followed by the single male category at 6.8%. Concerning households with children under the age of 18, single mothers also lead in

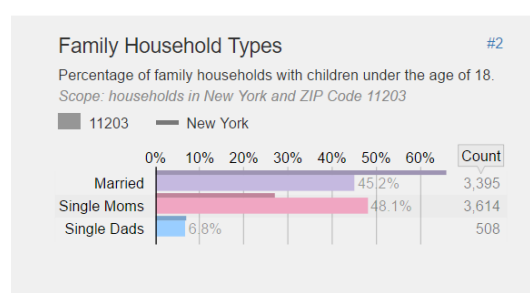


Figure 7: Family Household Types  
Photo provided by statistical atlas of NY

who do which is only 27.9% of the population.

that category at almost 50%, followed again by married households which is at 45%. The single dad with children under 18 is a small population of about 6.8%<sup>45</sup>. More households do not contain children at all as opposed to those

18% of the population of East Flatbush live in poverty, ranking 34th of all the Brooklyn neighborhoods. 12 % are unemployed, and 54% of the population live with rent burden, which is defined as households spending over 30% of the household income. Approximately one in eight adults from ages 16 and on are unemployed<sup>42</sup>. The median household income of the neighborhood is approximately \$48,000 a year. 79.3%

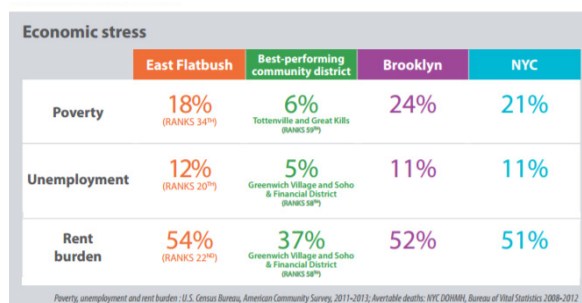


Figure 8: Economic Stress on the E.F. neighborhood  
Photo provided by East Flatbush Health Profile

of the neighborhood are in the 40th percentile, making about \$38,000 a year. The black population earns an average income of about \$50,000. The all-white category (including Hispanic whites) averages \$36,000 a year. Hispanic and Non-Hispanic whites both average around \$35,500 a year. Asian and Mixed population both make around \$28,000, and the American Indian makes about \$19,000<sup>44</sup>. The income levels of a neighborhood are important because they provide a view into the health of a community. By comparing death rates from the five nearby neighborhoods and taking into consideration the highest incomes achievable within these neighborhoods, 19% of the deaths that occur in the East Flatbush neighborhood could have been avoided.

The income of a neighborhood is directly linked to the level of education held by the residents in the neighborhood. Education levels in the neighborhood is low for the neighborhood, 29% of the population having a college degree. The high

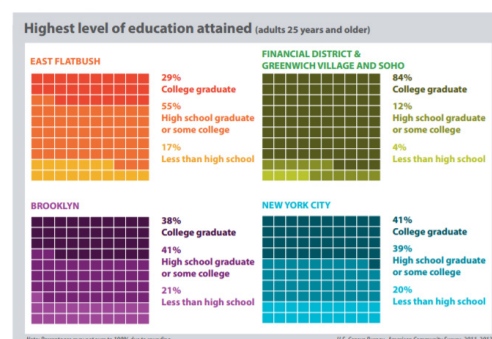


Figure 9: Highest level of education attained  
Photo provided by East Flatbush Health Profile

school graduate or some college group has the highest amount at 55%. One in six adults has not completed high school<sup>42</sup>. More females are registered in higher level education than men, accounting for more than half of the populations in graduate and undergraduate schools<sup>44</sup>. It has been proven that higher levels of education can be linked to better health for the individual as well as the communities. Because the level of education in the neighborhood is limited, so are the job opportunities.

As a result of the three large healthcare institutions in the small area of East Flatbush, the three largest reported occupations are: Administrative, Healthcare Support and Personal Care at the hospitals. Almost 8% of the population identifies that they are work-

ing in sales and the related field. More females are working than males, averaging about \$20,200 which is \$5,500 more than the males. More females are working in business and finance, social services, administration, education and science. More males are found in: production, food service and law enforcement<sup>44</sup>. Healthcare is the largest industry in East Flatbush at 32.9%. The next three largest industries are: retail (9%), transportation (8.4%) and education (8.3%). 63.9% of the population work in the private center. 16.6% of the population work

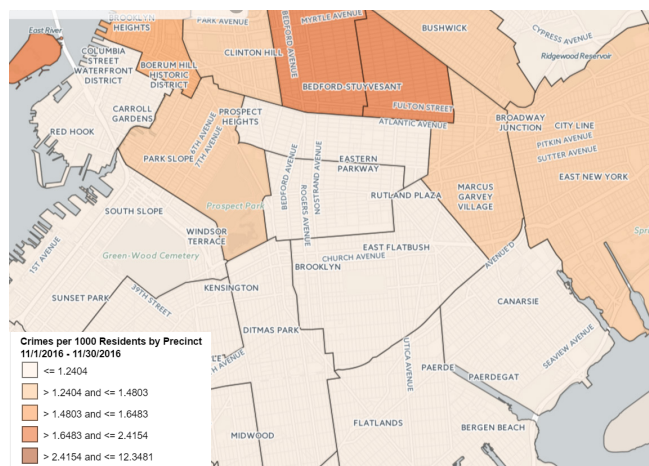


Figure 10: Crime Levels Map in Brooklyn  
Photo provided by NYC Crime Map

in the local government and interestingly, 7.5% of them work for Non-Profits.

#### Incarceration

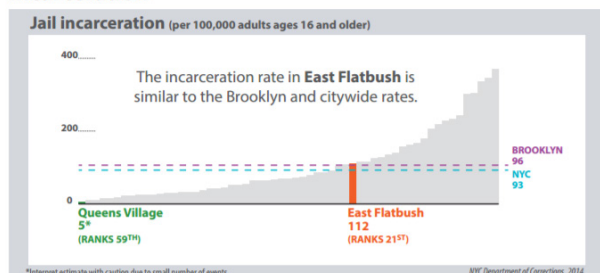


Figure 11: Incarceration Levels in the neighborhood  
Photo provided by East Flatbush Health Profile

Violence in Brooklyn has always been a concern, as it is still noted as one of the “bloodiest” boroughs in New York City by the Huffington Post<sup>46</sup>. In East

Flatbush, crime is above the national av-

erage in risks of: total crime, personal crime, murder, robbery and assault, even though the

neighborhood is ranked among the lowest

in crime rates. The risks of rape, property

crime, burglary, larceny and automotive

theft are all below the national average<sup>47</sup>.

Incarceration levels in the neighborhood

#### Violence

The injury assault rate in East Flatbush is higher than the citywide rate.

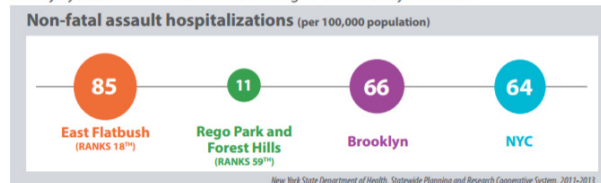


Figure 12: Non-fatal assault hospitalizations  
Photo provided by East Flatbush Health Profile

are on par with the entirety of Brooklyn and NYC rates, East Flatbush ranking 21st in the breakdown of incarceration levels. In the Community Health Profile, it is noted that the incarcerated residents of the neighborhood have the highest rates of “mental illness, drug and alcohol addictions...” East Flatbush ranks 18th in New York in the rates for non-fatal assault hospitalizations, while the surrounding neighborhood Rego Park ranks 59th<sup>42</sup>.

16% of the population of Brooklyn receives SNAP benefits from the government<sup>48</sup>. In East Flatbush there are 22,200 households that utilize these benefits from the government, which is roughly 21%

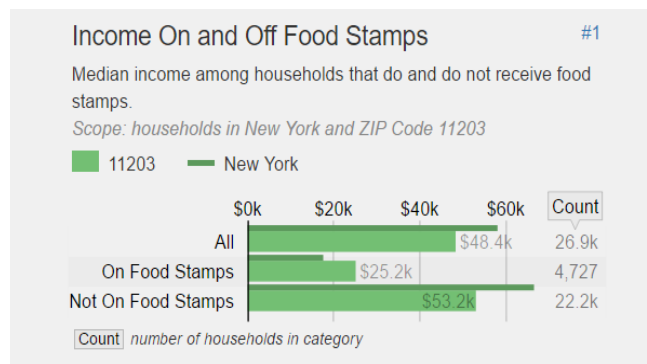


Figure 13: Income On and Off Food Stamps in E.F.  
Photo provided by Statistical Atlas

of the population. The families who receive support make on average \$25,200 a year; and 52% of households with children use these benefits to survive. Households with residents over age 60 is the second leading demographic in the use of food stamps, followed by

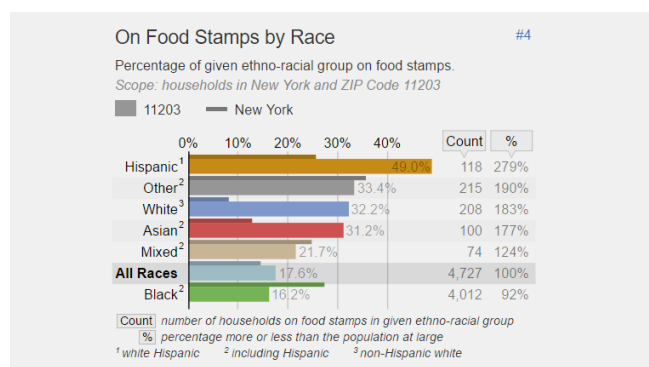


Figure 14: Food Stamps by Race in E.F.  
Photo provided by Statistical Atlas

food assistance the most appear in the “other” category, at 33.4%. Whites, Asians and Mixed populations all receive more food stamps than the residents who identify at black, who use only 16.2%. By borough, Kings County uses more food stamps than either New

households below the poverty level which is at 41%. Hispanics in the neighborhood receive the most food stamps, with about 50% of the Hispanic population relying on the benefits. The next demographic to need

York, New York City, the New York Area or the United States<sup>49</sup>. 6.4% of the households received cash assistance from the government, and this has been on the rise since 2009<sup>50</sup>.

There are such low levels of health insurance within the community which is a deciding factor for many of the health problems that occur within the neighborhood. 24% of the adults in East Flatbush are not covered by health insurance, 14% of the adults needed medical attention but went without because of this. According to the Community Health Profile, before the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was implemented, 20% of New York City adults did not have health insurance. After the ACA, those numbers dropped to 14%, and the East Flatbush government expects a similar drop of numbers in East Flatbush. In terms of prenatal care about 15% of the female population had late or no prenatal care at all<sup>42</sup>.

The health of the community depends on the health of the residents, and the East Flatbush neighborhood needs a lot of assistance when it

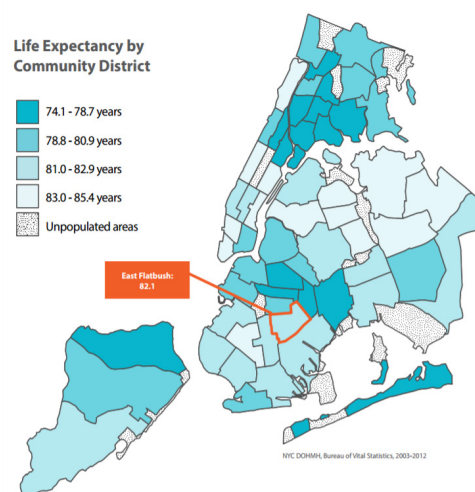


Figure 15: Life Expectancy by District Map  
Photo provided by East Flatbush Health Profile

comes to health. East Flatbush also has a problem with high blood pressure, the amount of strokes recorded in the city being on par with the rest of Brooklyn and NYC at 384 (per 100,000 adults) cases last year. Child asthma in the neighborhood is statistically very large, having 55 cases (per 10,000 children ages 5-14) as opposed to the 46 cases in Greenwich Village and Soho. Childhood asthma is related to housing-related exposures such as cockroaches, mice and second hand smoke. The rate of adult hospitalization is also very large in East Flatbush at 246 cases (per 100,000 adults). These rates are five times the rate of the

surrounding neighborhoods (which only have 46 cases per 100,000 adults), the Brooklyn and NYC rates for this are the same.

The health conditions of the residents vary, obesity being a very large problem within the neighborhood. 30% of the East Flatbush neighborhood is recorded as being obese which is four times more than any of the surrounding neighborhoods. 12% of the residents have diabetes (East Flatbush ranks

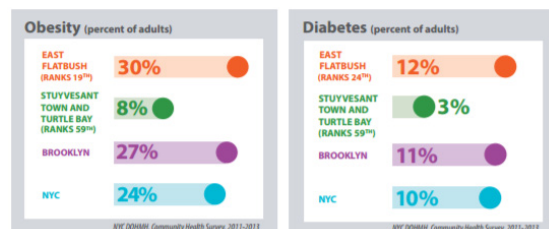


Figure 16: Adult Obesity and Diabetes in E.F.  
Photo provided by East Flatbush Health Profile

ly low in the neighborhood, lower than the overall rates of Brooklyn and NYC. Yet, the neighborhood had about 900 related cases of alcohol-related hospitalizations (per 100,000 adults), which is much larger than the surrounding neighborhoods of Bayside and Little Neck who both had only 233 (per 100,000) cases last year. Drug related hospitaliza-

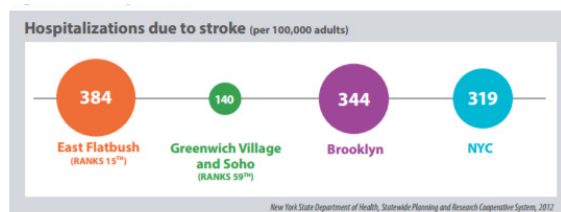


Figure 17: Adult hospitalizations due to stroke in E.F.  
Photo provided by East Flatbush Health Profile

tions, are much different. East Flatbush had drug-related hospitalizations on par with Brooklyn and NYC rates at around 930 cases (per 100,000 adults). Hospitalization for diabetes in the neighborhood are higher

than the overall Brooklyn and NYC rates at 404 cases (per 100,000). The leading cause of death in the neighborhood is heart disease, killing over 1,200 residents last year. The second leading cause is cancer which killed about 1,106 residents. The other leading cases which have deaths all below 240 are: diabetes, stroke, flu, hypertension, HIV, lower respiratory disease, homicides and accidents<sup>42</sup>.

The housing conditions in the neighborhood are poor; 70% of the houses have

maintenance defects. These numbers are higher than the Brooklyn and NYC rates. These maintenance defects include, “water leaks, cracks and hole, inadequate heating, presence of mice or rats, toilet breakdowns and peeling paint”<sup>42</sup>. In East Flatbush, 36.1% of the population live in fair to poor housing, which has been on a 4% rise since 2011. Overall, NYC rates of fair to poor housing is at about 23%, and has decreased 1.5% in the last 5 years<sup>51</sup>. In terms of overcrowded rental housing, East Flatbush ranks 27th out of 59 locations. 11.9% of the residents are currently living within these conditions, these numbers have been on the 4% rise since 2014. These numbers are on par with the overall NYC levels of overcrowded housing, their population being at 11.4%, and on a less than 1% rise since 2014<sup>52</sup>.

This information is important for designers working in this area because it provides crucial information about the people who will be affected by design projects. It describes the kinds of problems residents have and provides options that can be implemented into the design that can alleviate some of the stresses that these people have. The employment of these factors in my design will be described in the Chapter 3 which is on the redesign of the Kings County Hospital and Wingate Campus.

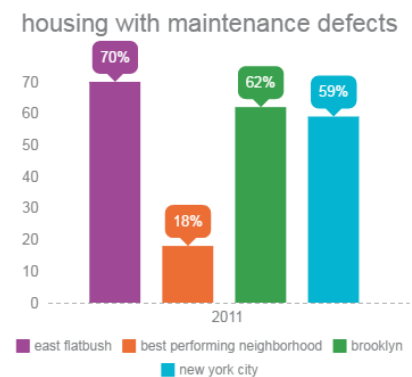


Figure 18: housing with maintenance defects  
Photo provided by East Flatbush Health Profile



## Inventory of Charitable Organizations

There are a multitude of organizations within the East Flatbush neighborhood that serve the residents of the community, the range being very large, including a variety of religious institutions and a fire prevention organization. Other organizations, although devoted to different causes, all seem to serve a select few with a very specific community they serve, whether it be toward the Jewish community or Caribbean immigrant community. This causes some groups to be left out entirely.

East Flatbush has a plethora of organizations within the social services sector. Academic Professional Counseling Community services began its services helping graduate students. It has now grown larger and incorporates other aspects of community needs, helping consult families with after school activities and mentoring for children, violence prevention, youth programs and help with dealing with HIV/Aids. They host activities such as the Caribbean Health Summit and Caribbean Heritage Celebration”<sup>53</sup>. In contrast to the mostly academic services of APC Community Service, the Brooklyn Center for Quality Life organization focuses on counseling for: “health, education, immigration laws, personal finances and disaster preparedness”<sup>54</sup>. There is also a non-profit corporation focused solely on assisting victims, the Empowerment Equals Courage to Heal Inc.

The Chance for Children Youth Information Center is focused solely on providing after school programs for the children in the East Flatbush neighborhood<sup>55</sup>, much like the Chans-atlife Organization which also focuses on child development. Despite its name, the Childrens Utopia Foundation is an online organization that focuses on building relationships within the community around the problems that plague it<sup>56</sup>. The success of this organization is questionable, because of its online basis and the need for building community



relationships. Although there are a few organizations based around the needs of individual residents and families, the amount of variety of organizations are still lacking.

The economic development organizations in the area are mostly centered on the universities in the area and their push for scientific development. The SUNY Downstate Medical Center created the largest economic development organization called Biobat, Inc. Their most recent project is developing the Brooklyn Army Terminal into a space for biotechnological expansion, focusing on manufacturing and research. This goal is to provide more jobs in the area and is also geared toward helping members of the community build their own technologically advanced companies within the borders of East Flatbush<sup>57</sup>. Similarly, Downstate Technology Center (which is also works on behalf on SUNY Downstate Medical Center) is focused on economically advancing the neighborhood through technological advancements. One of the main goals of the Center is to create medical advancements that can be sold to the public, and being an entity on which businesses could build their products<sup>58</sup>. The Economic Development for Cap-Haitien is built on spreading the “awareness of environmental, social, and economic conditions”<sup>59</sup>.

Community development organizations in the East Flatbush neighborhood all have different specialties. The goals of the Bergen Basin Community Development Corporation Inc. aim toward helping “empower” families and “challenge” youth. They want the adults in the neighborhood to become more active and to put more effort into neighborhood participation<sup>60</sup>. A corporation that is based on the real estate development of the neighborhood is the Brooklyn South District Council of Presidents Inc , Biobat Inc. also has a stake in the real estate development sector. The community development organizations are also supplemented by block associations such as the East 59th Street United Block Association

Inc<sup>61</sup>., which holds a lot of activities within the community celebrating the diversity and cultures that reside in East Flatbush. They do this by hosting neighborhood activities and block parties<sup>62</sup>. The organizations that make up the community and neighborhood development aspect of it are mostly centered on the familial and cultural relationships within the community.

The most important and influential aspect of East Flatbush is the diversity of the residents within it. Over 50% of the population are immigrants and much of the American-born residents come from parents who are immigrants. The immigrant community is strong and therefore, there have been a multitude of specialized ethnic and immigrant centers that have arisen within the community. The Community Concerns Network Inc. provides a center for neighborhood immigrants to join together and build relationships; correspondingly, there is the East Flatbush Jewish Community Center, which provides the same services for a different neighborhood demographic. There is also the Caribbean Women's Health Association Inc. which provides consultation for: Medicaid/ health insurance, maternal & child health, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, immigration and programs that focus on the teens in the neighborhood<sup>63</sup>. There are other organizations in the area such as Black Allegiance, Caribbean American Nurses Association, Dhaka Zila Association USA Inc. The vast array of these organizations are enough to serve the large population of East Flatbush and other residents in nearby neighborhoods of Brooklyn.

The assembly of agencies devoted to health have a heavy presence within the neighborhood. Like many of the economic development agencies, the presence of the Kings County Medical Hospital has influenced the creation of the Auxiliary of Kings County Hospital Center Inc., this auxiliary was created "to support the needy and poor patients by

providing them with medical life supporting supplies for their comfort”<sup>64</sup>. The Arthur Ashe Foundation which is also affiliated with the hospital has a mission to help the immigrant and poor members of the community. They also support faculty and staff research while working with members of the neighborhood through community interventions on how to learn about and change the health conditions that “disproportionately affect minorities”<sup>65</sup>. There are specialized organizations such as the Dorcas Medical Mission that is a faith-based, non-profit that goes on missions to developing countries and delivers medical supplies free of cost<sup>66</sup>, another faith based organization Beer Yitzhak Foundation Inc., which provides support for families in need with support on handling diseases and disorders<sup>67</sup>. The one has nothing to do with helping the community of East Flatbush, except providing a chance for the residents to volunteer in other countries, and the other only helps a specific demographic, both not serving the whole of the community. Similar to the Beer Yitzhak Foundation, the Brian Andrew Gewirtz Memorial Foundation provides support for families who have to handle family members or friends with mental disabilities<sup>68</sup>. Therefore, there are only two organizations in the neighborhood that have the capacity and mission to help the largest portion of the community with mental health issues.

Housing organizations are lacking in the neighborhood. There are only three organizations that concern living spaces: the Bethany Methodist Home Inc., which provides housing for seniors within the community. It is not subsidized by the government, so the residents have to pay out of pocket to live in the area. The Brooklyn Homeless Housing Development Corporation targets families who are homeless, allowing them to have a “secure and structured home-like environment where they can overcome poverty and homelessness”<sup>69</sup>. After leaving the shelter, the organization provides social support for the families

that are attempting to live on their own, in their own permanent residences. The main organization that provides tools and resources for people who need assistance with housing is the Neighborhood Housing Services of East Flatbush, Inc. They provide self-help tools on how to avoid foreclosures, money management courses, and offer an online course on buying a home. The organizations serve the largest variety of people in the neighborhood because they have different specialties but aren't exclusive based on religion or social affiliations<sup>70</sup>.

There are institutions devoted to adult education and youth development programs as well. In terms of adult education, the Barbados Nurses Association of America Inc., helps immigrant women. CAMBA is an adult basic education center to help with reading, writing and English learning for those who don't speak it. CAMBA also has a youth development program in conjunction with Always Our Kids Inc, Books Before Ball, Inc., Brooklyn Hurricanes, Inc., and the East Flatbush Village, Inc. Most of these organizations focus on getting kids off of the streets and into after school programs to promote education, get the kids into college, and help them to avoid and deal with violent situations and healthy lifestyles.

The existing non-profit agencies do not have the capacity to assist all the residents in need, with many of the organizations being religiously based, or specific to a small group of people who fit within their social and economic conditions. Although many of them provide self-service tools and advice, the organizations such as those developed to further economic development have the mission to help the future of the community, but not the existing community, therefore they are a stagnant entity waiting for some scientific breakthrough to further the economy of the neighborhood. The agencies although a wide array,

need to grow in order to further their assistance for the people within the community.

## Conclusion

The neighborhood of East Flatbush has a rich, diverse and long history, since colonization. The neighborhood has transformed from being a Lenni-Lenape settlement to being colonized by the Dutch than English<sup>22</sup>. Its history of being a safe place for immigrants hasn't changed, its present day population being over 50% immigrants. This population is made up of mostly West Indian and West African immigrants, the other highest percentage being first-and-second generation immigrants. East Flatbush is filled with residents, shops and stores all hailing from across the seas making the neighborhood a warm, colorful and loving. Because of this, a multitude of community organizations have been started in order to help those in the neighborhood live a better lifestyle.

Although vibrant and lively, East Flatbush is also subject to outsider perceptions of it. A quick Google search of the neighborhood will result in multiple links about the violence and brutal attacks that occur within the neighborhood, when in actuality it has one of the lowest crime rates in the city of Brooklyn and the City of New York<sup>71</sup>. Neighborhood comments vary from people loving it, because of its “connectivity with the rest of New York City, East Flatbush is a desirable location for both residents and visitors...the culture of this neighborhood through music and expression is phenomenal”<sup>41</sup>. In order to alleviate the amount of violence that is actually present within the neighborhood, organizations such as The Chance for Children Youth Information Center, Chansatlife and the Childrens Utopia Foundation, are all dedicated to getting children off of the streets and into activities in order to steer them away from the violent path that inner city life may sometimes lead them down.

The area is sprinkled with a few parks which mostly contain basketball courts and

paved playgrounds for the people of the neighborhood to use. The largest open, green space in the neighborhood is the 96-acre Holy Cross Cemetery. There are few open green spaces, and there are no community organizations dedicated to changing this aspect of the community. In town like Jersey City, there are organizations such as The Washington Parks Association and the Riverview Arts District Organization that are dedicated to the care and addition of public parks in the city<sup>72</sup>. There are no such organizations as this in East Flatbush. Public parks would give the people in the neighborhood a space to relieve stress.

There are a few very large institutions within the neighborhood that are the heart of its economic stability. Kings County Medical Hospital, Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center and the State University of New York's Downstate Medical Center. These three institutions provide the most jobs, the largest portion of the working population working in: administration, healthcare support and personal care<sup>44</sup>. They also provide the two largest economic development agencies, Biobab Inc. and Downstate Technology Center. These two agencies focus on the development of biomedical advances, and intend to use the new technology to create a better, more specialized economy for East Flatbush. These two agencies focus on the future, more than the present. They are waiting for a new technological invention to further the economy of the neighborhood.

The poverty level in the neighborhood is at 18%, slightly higher than the 2015 official poverty average of 13.5% with 12% of the population of working age adults being unemployed the neighborhood economy is stagnant<sup>42</sup>. There are a few community development agencies devoted to adult education to help prepare residents for higher level jobs. There are agencies such as CAMBA who are dedicated to help the many immigrants learn how to read and write English, and prepare for jobs in America. Community Concerns

Network and the East Flatbush Jewish Community Center are two agencies dedicated to helping adults find work. And because there is such a high poor population in the neighborhood, there have been agencies created to get kids off the street, into tutoring sessions and job preparation. These agencies include: Always Our Kids Inc., Books Before Ball Inc., Brooklyn Hurricanes Inc. and the East Flatbush Inc.. The amount of agencies that help with job preparation and assistance cannot have a very large impact with the population of East Flatbush. In order for there to be a larger economic boom, there should be more agencies that help those in need.

The housing conditions in the neighborhood are poor, 70% of the houses having maintenance defects (these numbers are higher than the Brooklyn and NYC rates). These maintenance defects include, “water leaks, cracks and hole, inadequate heating, presence of mice or rats, toilet breakdowns and peeling paint”<sup>42</sup>, and with these poor living conditions 54% of the population continue to live with rent burden. Much like the housing conditions, the number agencies dedicated to housing are also poor. One of the organizations, the Bethany Methodist Home Inc., is housing for seniors within the neighborhood. This organization is not subsidized by the government, and is the only agency for seniors who populate 14 % of the neighborhood<sup>43</sup>. The Brooklyn Homeless Housing Development Corporation assists families move from the homeless status into their own permanent residents. They help the adults with job searches, the children with school and check on them periodically after they are fully settled. Interestingly enough, during the late 1970s, the level off poverty within the neighborhood was enough to call it an impoverished neighborhood. Because of this poverty, East Flatbush had the chance to earn a portion of \$35 million dollars in order to help those in need with their living expenses. Just like today, there was a very large gap



between the economic statuses of all the residents and about 20, 8000 residents piled into a small community meeting in order to oppose the new status of poverty within the neighborhood<sup>39</sup>. These neighbors were mostly well off, and completely ignored the needs of the disadvantaged within the neighborhood. There are a few real estate agencies, but the only resource that is open to the full public for housing is the Neighborhood Housing Services of East Flatbush Inc.. They accomplish their mission statement by providing self-help tools on avoiding foreclosures and money managing. There needs to be more agencies in the neighborhood that provide services that help people with their living situations. There isn't one that helps people when they are in need of low-income housing and the other options. Although the housing situation is so poor, in some cases, poor housing situations can lead to health problems caused by the presence of, "water leaks, cracks and hole, inadequate heating, presence of mice or rats, toilet breakdowns and peeling paint"<sup>42</sup>.

With the presence of three large hospital institutions in the neighborhood, there are a plentiful amount of resources to help the people within the neighborhood. The Auxiliary of Kings County Hospital Center along with the Arthur Ashe Foundation serve the largest population of residents because they aren't specialized. The amount of specialized organizations are large and also important because they usually help minorities and specific groups of people whose medical needs would otherwise be overlooked. The healthcare portion of the neighborhood is very well taken care of, with the many resources available to the poor within the neighborhood. The hospitals are also an important space for employment, the three largest occupations being administrative, healthcare support and personal care.

East Flatbush is currently thought of as an "up and coming" neighborhood, mean-

ing that gentrifiers are moving in and will soon be pushing out the immigrant families that have found a home within the neighborhood. There are a wealth of resources on finding and buying the best homes in the neighborhood, written for white people who want to live in a more urbanized ethnic space. There are no resources for the residents who will have to deal with the effects of gentrification. Without any resources for this problem, the neighborhood may soon lose many of its ethnic residents that will change the dynamic of the neighborhood and it will lose its special identity. The needs of the neighborhood revolve around more open spaces, more resources for low-income housing situations and more help with economic development. With the increase in services in these fields, the neighborhood can better establish itself and become more vibrant and inclusive.

## Chapter 3: The Wingate Campus

### Observations of the Neighborhood, Park & Campus

On the corner of Kingston Avenue, in the East Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn sits the George W. Wingate High School Campus and Wingate Park. Wingate High School once a single high school was shut down due to the poor student behavior. Since then, it has been converted to house four different schools, mentioned earlier in Chapter 1.



Figure 19: Front of Wingate School

Directly behind the school campus sits Wingate Park which is under the control of the New York City Parks Department. Between the students and the streets sits an urban farm that is run by the school,

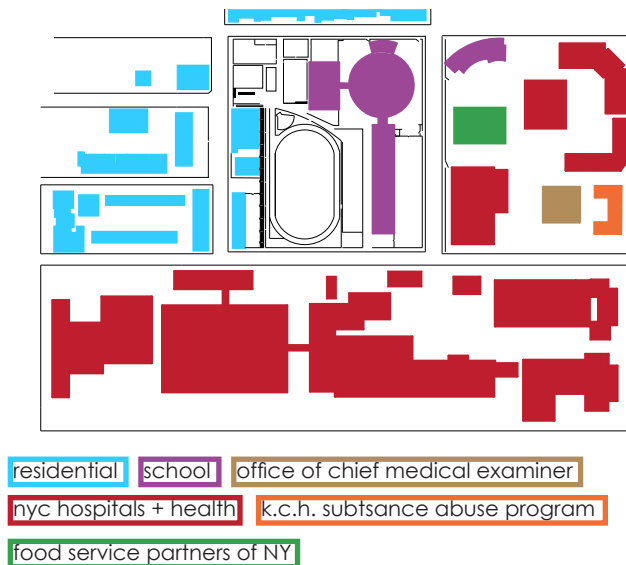


Figure 20: Neighborhood land use

growing vegetables and fruit that are used in the school cafeteria and sold on Wednesday's during the schools farmers market. Wingate Park, run by NYC Parks, houses: multiple basketball courts, two children's playgrounds, two handball courts, track,

football fields with bleachers, a storage and a bathroom house.

The campus and park sit behind Kings County Hospital, one of the largest hospitals in the Brooklyn area. A Level 1 trauma center, the front of the hospital is a well cared for

historic building with kempt low maintenance garden areas. The back of the hospital creates what is essentially a wall of buildings between it and the park. It feels scary and desolate looking at it from the park. Across the street from the front of the school, the desolate, empty and harscaped feel provided by the back of the hospital continues. In this section multiple buildings are used in order to service the hospital providing laundry services, meal prep etc. The service buildings also contain a large surface parking area that make the space seem emptier than it is lacking human scale and life on the streets.

The healthiest row of trees are located on the opposite side of the industrial landscapes. These trees



Figure 21: Different Paving Pattern

have remained healthy and large because they have not been planted in the sidewalk, but have been allowed to thrive with a semi-permeable brick paving. This side of the park is largely residential uses, accommodating houses and churches for the community to use.



Figure 22: Bleachers blocking major connection to park

The campus does not utilize the entirety of the block that it sits on, cut in half and separated from adjacent residents by a large concrete wall on its fourth side. Buildings include with apartment buildings, warehouses and garages which look abandoned and run down. A dead end street cuts through the neighborhood to the concrete

wall which separates the park and school from the rest of the neighborhood. This residen-



Figure 23: Photo essay of the streets facing the school on all sides

tial block is not connected to the park at this location. Furthermore, many of the entrances to the park on this side are placed in awkward areas, where potential users have to walk to the end of the block in order to get into the park.

I got to know the Wingate Campus during my summer working with the Kings Against Violence Initiative (KAVI). KAVI is dedicated to changing the lives of the children who live in the Brooklyn area, more specifically those who go to the schools that utilize the Wingate Campus. KAVI was created by Dr. Gore who was dedicated to changing the lives of children in Brooklyn after a close friend of his died from violence within the community. KAVI's mission statement is as follows, "...[o]ur programming provides youth with productive and safe alternatives to engaging in interpersonal violence. Through increase self awareness and by empowering youth, KAVI hopes to assist youth, KAVI hopes to assist youth in cultivating their own untapped potential"<sup>73</sup>. Their plan is to teach children within the neighborhood how to deal with the violence they come across in the community in healthy ways, giving them an outlet from all the negativity in their life, which in turn reduces the amount of community violence in the area. They also employ students from the Wingate Campus to keep them off the streets in the summer and to provide a mentor/



mentee relationship between the high school students and the elementary students who will soon be entering into Wingate High.

My role as an intern at KAVI was to educate students on the field of Landscape Architecture and to encourage the students to think differently about the spaces that they live and



Figure 24: Entrances into the park

hang out in. I held sessions on where to go when trying to deal with a stressful situation, such as the meditation garden provided by the hospital across the street that none of the students knew about, as well as how to read the landscape and begin to identify the safest spaces to be in. I also held sessions on the right to open space, conversing with the students about places they are legally allowed to occupy and what they could do if they saw physical changes with the community if they did not agree with the changes. The sessions with these students were very eye-opening, changing the way that I think about high school landscapes. Originally, I intended to redesign a housing complex run by the New York City Housing Authority. After spending so much time with the students as well as unobtrusively watching them, I learned that their high school landscape has the potential to, affect the way that the students act and think in their everyday life. It is a smaller community where everyday actions are dictated by the approval of your peers. The students have experienced many life altering incidents. This is what inspired me to change my project, and focus on the design of a space where students and faculty alike could go to find respite; even though they may experience violence in their communities they are still expected to learn and teach at high levels.

One of the most important aspects of working with KAVI was the potential I could see for Wingate Park. Because of New York City ordinances, school playgrounds and parks are available for the use of the public, which can make the students who use the park feel unsafe (especially being behind one of the largest psychiatric wards in Brooklyn whose patients frequently use the space). KCH has a very negative reputation because in recent years they have been caught in leaving their patients alone, allowing them to suffer and die on their own<sup>75</sup>. This may be one of the reasons the people in the neighborhood do not like the hospital. It



Figure 25: Meditation Space within KCH

has taken many years for the hospital as well as with the help of the government, to change the way they treat their psychological patients. Some of the users of the park can make the students uneasy during school times and after school because the park offers many amenities to the adults of the neighborhood such as an exercise area as well as an open paved space where they have installed a giant green tarp to provide shade, bringing their



Figure 26: Fences in the park, gathering space for residents

own tables to play dominoes and cards, with the smell of marijuana in the air. The space was uncomfortable for me to walk through. With the score of men smoking and playing, I immediately felt unsafe, so I cannot imagine how the female teenagers feel walking through the space, feeling the fear that was mentioned

in the first chapter of this thesis. The park is used for various activities, throughout differ-



Figure 27: Storage containers and make-shift hang out

ent times of the day. Well-used throughout the week, even in cold weather, the park is very popular in the community, being one of the only open spaces in the entire East Flatbush area.

Overall , there is a plethora of opportunities within this portion of the neighborhood for design interventions that can better the lives of the residents. Simple solutions could go a long way in changing the area, and it could have a more positive impact on the

lives of the people who use the space. In its current state, it is a grey and drab landscape, that offers nothing to the people who use the space. The park on the campus as well as the hospital next to it brings a lot of foot traffic into the neighborhood, making it a popular destination, so the redesign of the area would not go unnoticed. The neighborhood provides opportunities for programs like KAVI and the hospital to use the outdoor space to help fa-

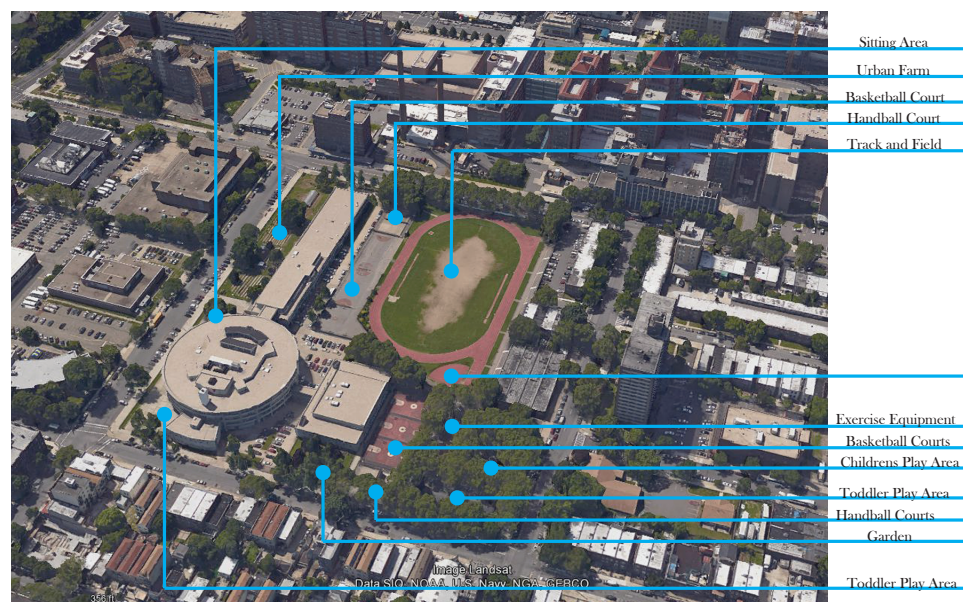


Figure 28: Programming in the park



cilitate group therapy sessions or one-on-one sessions in an outdoor and natural setting. I explore many of the possible design choices in my design, in which I hope to create a more welcoming, friendlier and therapeutic landscape for this community.

## Chapter 4: The Redesign Research into Case Studies

### *The New Sandy Hook School*

My research into case studies started with The New Sandy Hook Elementary School. As mentioned in Chapter 1, these case studies were selected because they all offer answers to particular aspects of my project. In the case of the elementary school, protection against gun violence and the safety of students was a high

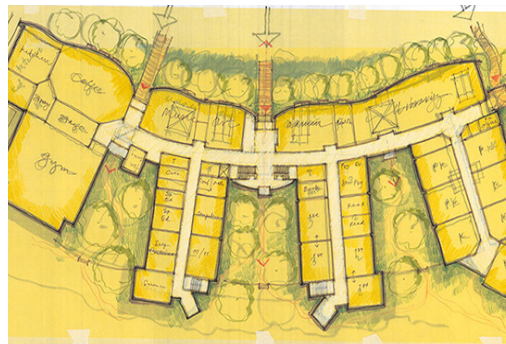


Figure 29: Sandy Hook School Main St. Scheme  
Photo provided by Town of Newtown

priority in the design of this project. The Sandy Hook Elementary School was completely shut down and destroyed, calling for a redesign of the school. In this redesign there are three separate designs for the building each having its own scheme. The design is broken up into: the Main Street Scheme, The Courtyard Scheme and the Hybrid Scheme. The Main Street scheme was designed in order to link various elements of the buildings and the programs within it together. This building is buffered by the surrounding forest, and provides a series of outdoor classrooms which utilize low stone-walls in order to provide a feeling of enclosure and safety, as well as a low plantings and large open spaces that allow



Figure 30: Sandy Hook School Courtyard Theme  
Photo provided by Town of Newtown

clear sight-lines around the entire campus. The Courtyard Scheme sports dual courtyards that create a series of outdoor classrooms that seem to be on the interior because they are flanked on both sides by buildings. Some classrooms face



different parts of the garden which frame different views off of the rooftop. This method makes each individual sitting area have a unique quality to it. Each of these spaces also have different plants so that the users can feel they are in a new space every time they use the garden. The garden is



Figure 33: View of one sitting area in Ulfelder Garden  
Photo provided by Ben Watkins

intended for the use of cancer patients and their families as a place for them to find respite from the harshness of clinic life. The planting choices chosen for the garden were chosen because they catered to the sensitivities of the chemotherapy patients who cannot stand strong smells, light and bright colors. The design incorporates a walking loop that the patients use for physical therapy. It offers many stops and resting points, allowing the patients to walk as much as they can, so they move further and reach small victories.



Figure 34: View off of rooftop garden  
Photo provided by Ben Watkins

From this case study, sensitivity to the needs of the users was most important. With the health problems that exist within the East Flatbush neighborhood, plant selection is important. Asthma and other breathing and health problems run rampant amongst the adults and children within the

neighborhood, so certain plants would exacerbate their health problems. This would force the residents to stay inside and not use the outdoor space. The thick, lush green plantings allow for the users of the space to find respite, and I will use this same tactic to allow the



users of the hospital to find a therapeutic space, but also serve the residents of the neighborhood. With the very little green space that is offered in East Flatbush, each new green space would be a large improvement to the entire area.



Figure 35: Mockup of Levy crack garden design  
Photo provided by Stacy Levy

Lastly, I combined two separate design ideas into the design of this area. David Seiter of Future Green Studio wrote *Spontaneous Urban Plants* (2016), which celebrates plant life that grows in the cracks and crevices of our cities. One of the negative aspects of inner cities like East Flatbush is that the neighborhood is considered unkempt. Cracked sidewalks, with weeds growing within them is one of these negative aspects. Seiter disagrees, his main premise is observing the variety of “weeds” that grow in these cracks and implementing them throughout his city designs. His designs encourage the multiple disciplines such as ecology, design and art to work together and fight the stigma against weeds and their usefulness in cities.



Figure 36: Beginning installation of garden  
Photo provided by art animal magazine

Seiter’s design principles align with Stacy Levy, an artist from Philadelphia. In her design proposal to the The Walton Center for the Arts in Northwest Arkansas, the main premise was to take the very hardscaped and impermeable surface of the park and allow for

the green aspects of the design to soak up the rainwater and allow water to permeate the soil. Levy removed asphalt strategically, creating planting beds filled with rainwater plants that will absorb the runoff water and reduce the impact on local sewer systems. These two designs were a major design inspiration for my proposal. These plays on cracked hardscapes within the neighborhood, changes their meaning to the neighborhood, possibly alleviating much of the stigma behind cracks and weeds in a sidewalk. The design of the crack gardens by Levy and the plant selection by Seiter create the ultimate design and art installation.

A combination of all these case study design solutions serves the three main goals of my design: reframe the neighborhood; allow for the students to build their own reflection within the neighborhood; and to have a space that slows down time for the residents.

## A Garden in East Flatbush



Figure 37: Plan

The overarching goal of my redesign was to create a stronger connection between the hospital, the school and the neighborhood. The design accomplishes this by creating spatial links between: the front of the school; the school and the park; the school and the hospital across the street from the park. Large, green planted areas and open green spaces give a unified look to this neighborhood that gives back to its residents. The planting selection was inspired by David Seiter's *Spontaneous Urban Plants*, where the presence of weeds in a neighborhood is challenged. In accordance with trying to change perceptions in a neighborhood, using weeds differently can change the way we see the plants that have learned to adapt to our dense urban cities. Because asthma and other health problems are prevalent within the neighborhood, all of the chosen plants are animal pollinated, taking



away high risks of asthma attacks, further ensuring that the community will use the space.

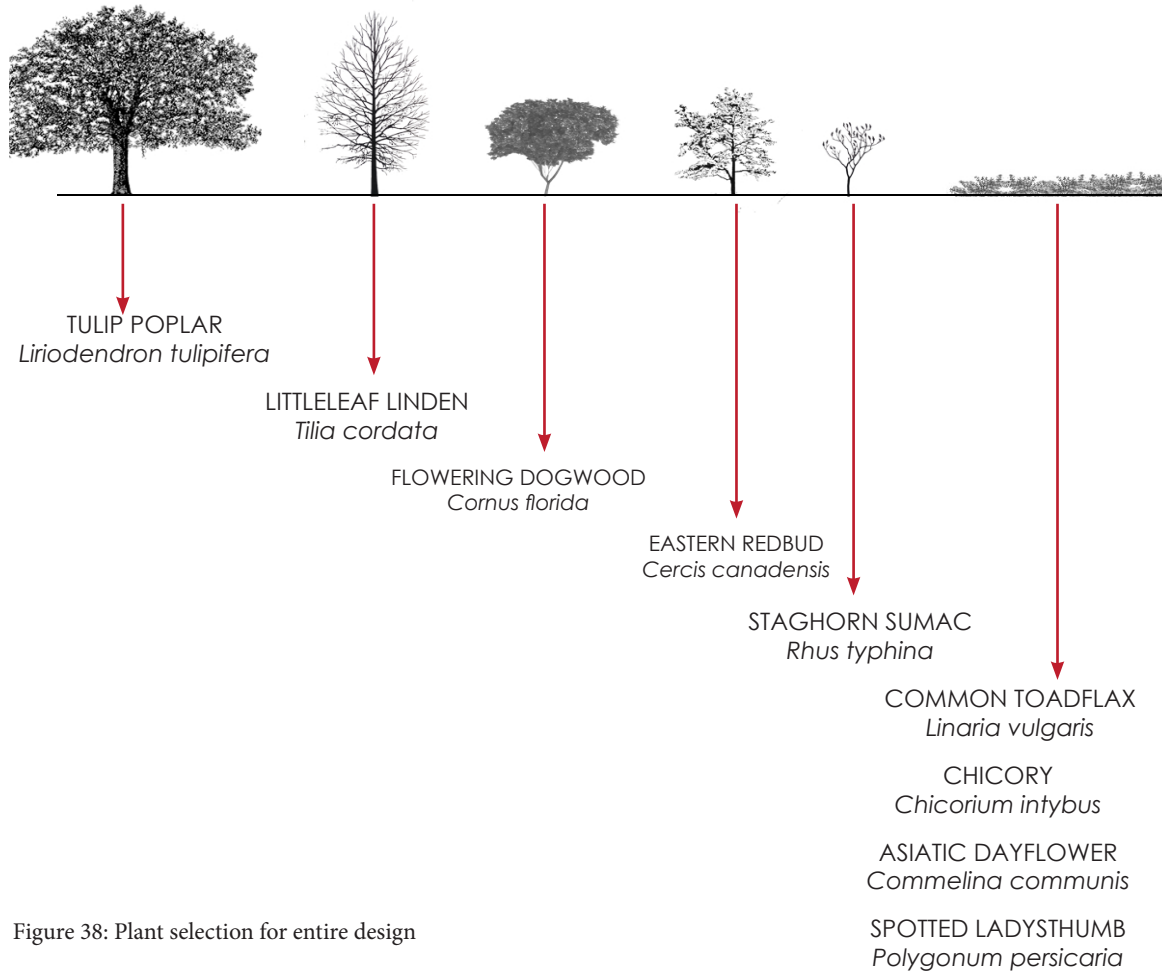


Figure 38: Plant selection for entire design

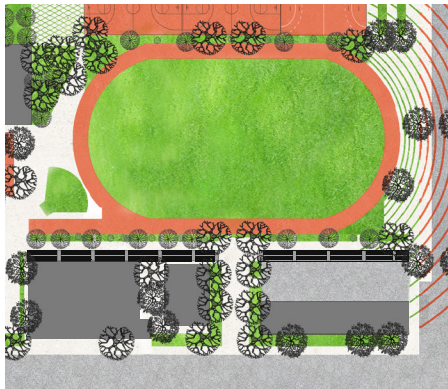


Figure 39: View of new entrance into the park

Overall design choices include a paving pattern that extends out into the neighborhood, both from the front of the school and from the track in the park.

Another aspect of this redesign is changing access to the park. Awkward entrances and exits through the site was one of the problems that I tried to solve that by removing the prevalent chain-link fences throughout

the site, as well as removing a wall that blocks an important access point from the neighborhood adjacent to the park.



## Front of the School

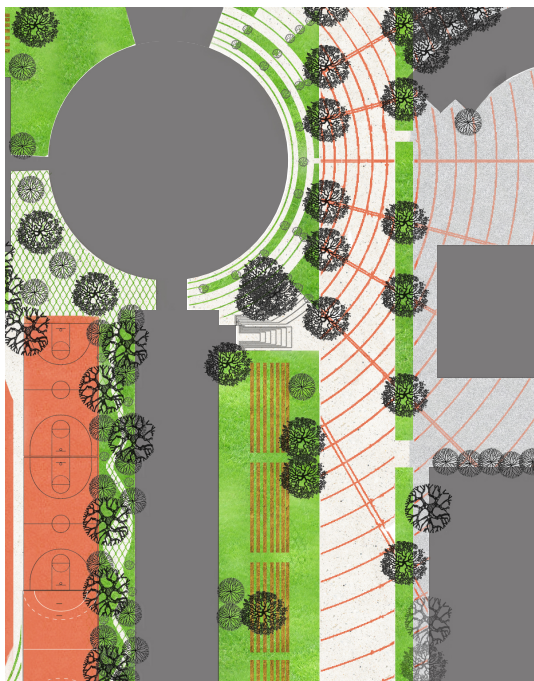


Figure 40: Zoom in to front of school portion

The front of the school was redesigned so that the school interacts directly with the neighborhood. In this redesign, I wanted to focus on how the school is perceived by the rest of the neighborhood and how to change the physical as well as the invisible barriers placed upon the site.

In changing the physical barriers the first thing I did was to reduce the amount of fencing surrounding the school, replacing them with soft, planted edges. These planted spaces will

provide the same barrier that the fence did without imposing creating a barrier between the school and the community. The security measures are the same, because I will keep the same entrances and exits of the site, that was used to maintain existing circulation and entry. Changing the street into a woonerf will further connect the school to the neighborhood no longer dividing the space.

One of my design principles was to provide a space for the community to see



Figure 41: Existing front of school



Figure 42: Section of front of school

themselves within it. I did this by changing the entrance steps to the school, so that there is a large plaza-like area for artists and local schools to showcase their work. It is wide enough for installations to be placed within the site that will not hinder movement and encourage artistic thinking in the users of the space. This will also provide a space for students to hang out like they normally would in a space that has a soft green edge.

Another aspect of the redesign was the introduction of more trees into the front of the school, to provide layering and interest. These trees are planted radially, based off of the grid of pillars from the building arcade. Horizontal and vertical clear paths for vision ensure the mental and physical safety of the user. Designed cracks in the pavement, filled

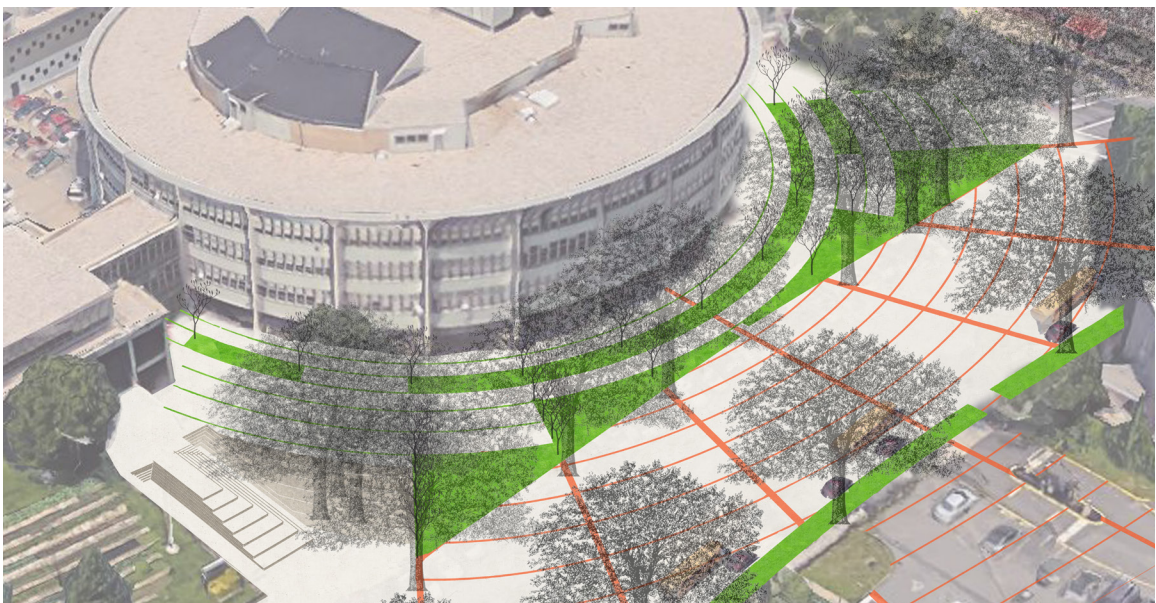


Figure 43: Redesigned front of school axon view



with groundcover that can easily be stepped on, continues the extension of the building out into the landscape but does not hinder movement throughout the school space. Trees radiate beyond the school site, following the same radial grid, bringing green further out into the neighborhood. The same trees also function to screen the neighborhood differently. Changing views on and off the site and making the overall look of the neighborhood feel different is an important tactic to allow the neighborhood to make new memories in the space that aren't associated with its desolate past. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, about Alex's experiences, certain corners and markers will forever be marked by a tragic memory that happened there. Changing the scenery and the way people see the neighborhood could

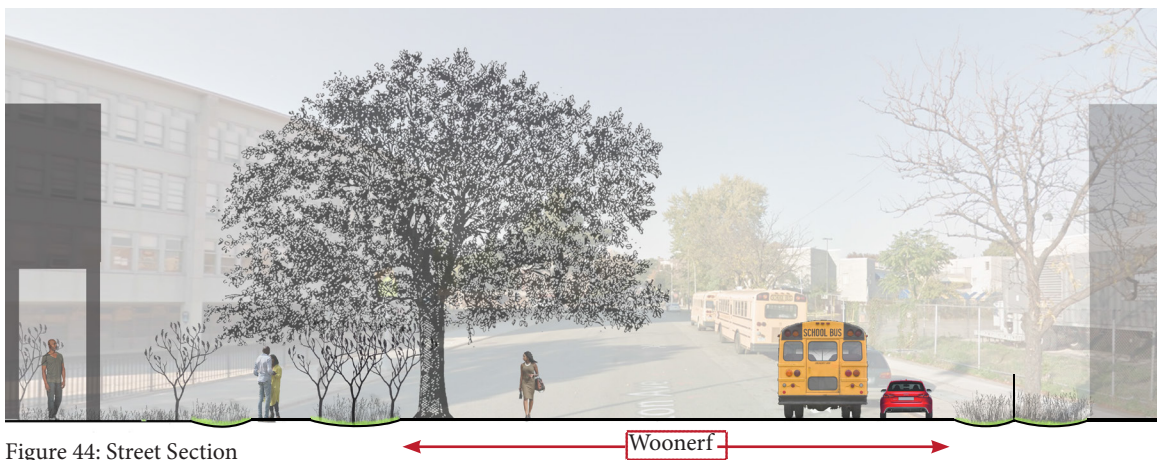


Figure 44: Street Section

## Meditation Walk

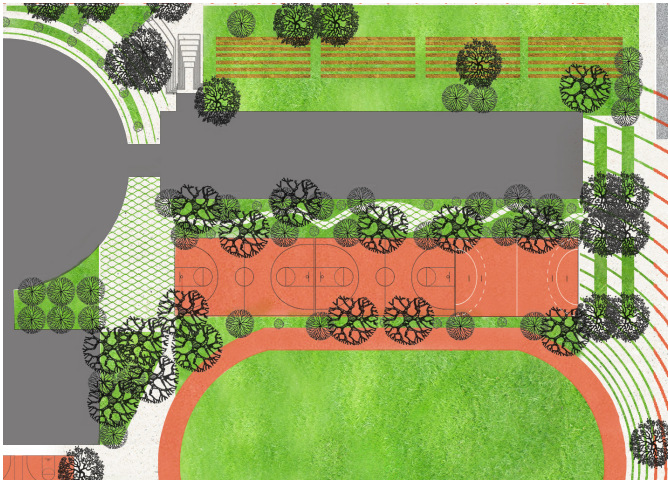


Figure 45: Meditation walk zoom in

The main purpose of the meditation walk located behind the school on the side of a former faculty parking lot was to slow down time for the users of the space. When students exit off the street, they will feel they are in a totally new space and state of mind. The long green

and semi-winding walk will serve to help the user stop being a user and to become a spectator, so they can step outside of themselves and think.

As with the front of the school, the heavy presence of fencing is replaced them with garden plots, increasing the fluidity of movement from the community through the park. At the end of the meditation walkway, a former parking lot becomes a community space. I introduced a plaza like space in order to provide space for artists to showcase their works. A bosque of trees to provide interest from the inside of the building outward but also vice versa. Originally, this space was used as a pass through space only so I kept true to this usage by not providing any permanent seating. The trees here will have to be sparsely planted

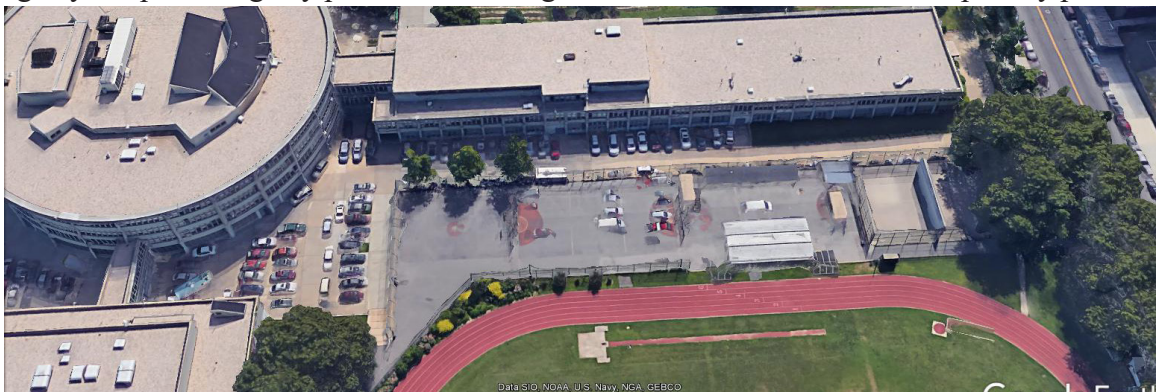


Figure 46: Existing view of space



in order for visibility to remain open.

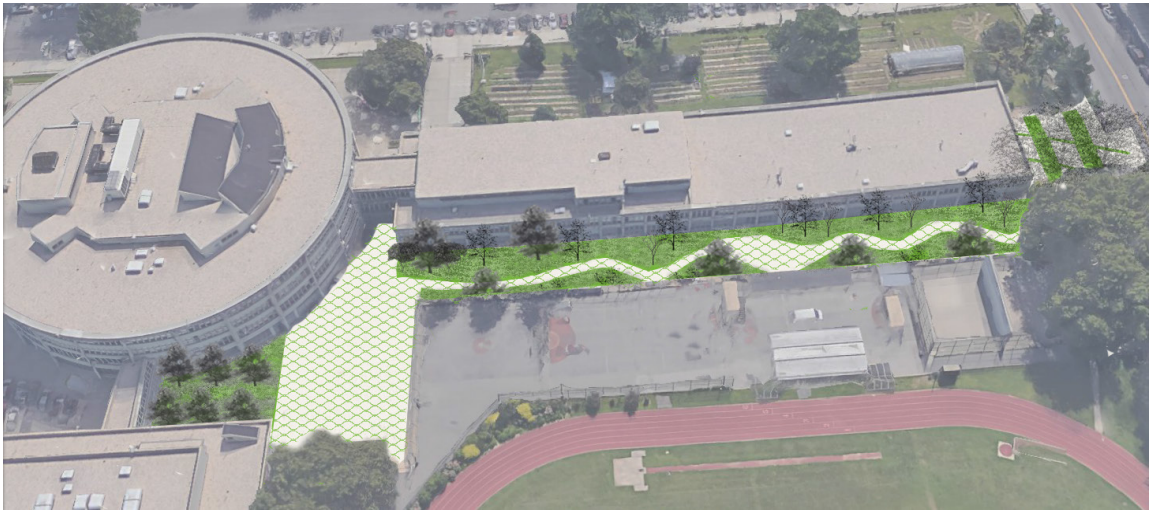


Figure 47: Redesigned axon view



Figure 48: Section looking into meditation walk from street



Figure 49: Street section showing extended sidewalk/woonerf



## Hospital Outreach

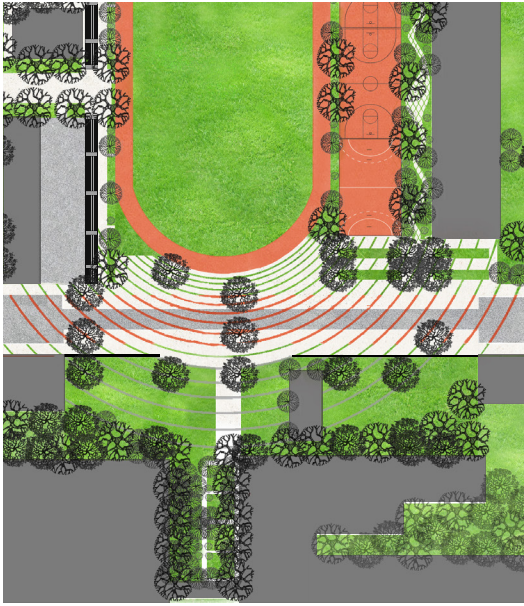


Figure 50: Hospital redesign zoom in

This portion of the design is more focused on the relationship between the community and the hospital. Currently, there are no spaces in the community for programs like KAVI or for the psychiatric hospital to have outdoor sessions where the users can have a calm, green space to open up in. This space is an opportunity for the hospital to have a strong impact on the community. East Flatbush has some of the highest counts of adult and child asthma in

Brooklyn. Also, many of the residents went without needed medical care and do not have health insurance.

Health trucks could have a large impact on the community, providing health opportunities and changing the presence that the hospital has on the neighborhood. Instead of making the street a full woonerf, I have extended the sidewalks out to accommodate two health buses on either side. Removing the fencing from the front of the park would open the space up to the community but also provide space for extra activities on the day the buses are there. Replacing 27 parking spaces from behind the hospital, I have created a large open

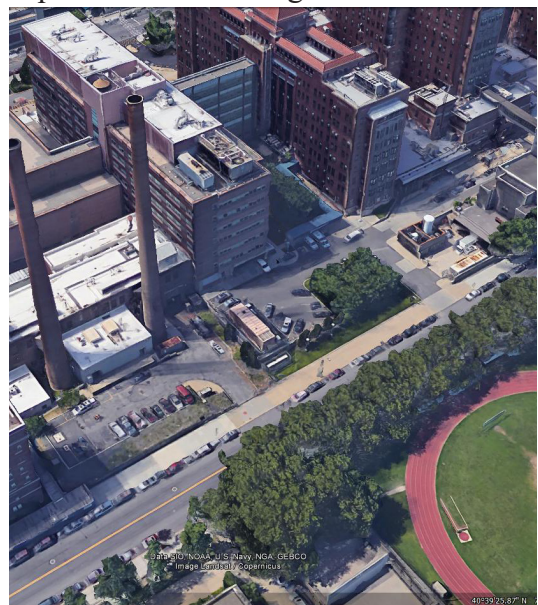


Figure 51: Existing back of hospital

and green space for the community to enjoy in many different ways. Special programming and public art exhibits could utilize the space. This green space would break up the monotony of hospital parking lots and tall buildings in the neighborhood.

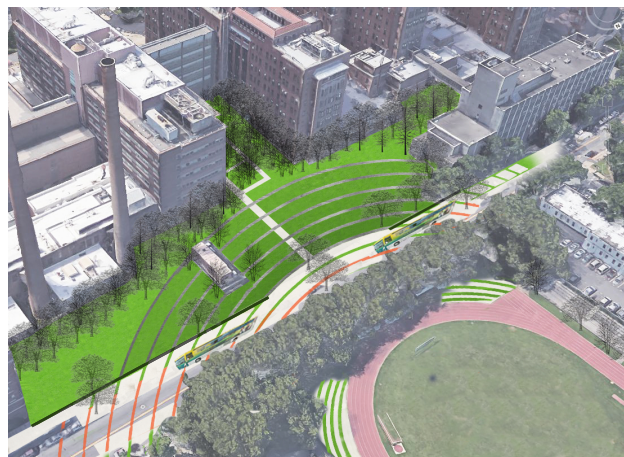


Figure 52: Back of hospital redesign

The hospital has a glass breezeway connecting two buildings that provides visibility but does not allow patients, visitors, or staff to utilize the park and athletic facilities across the street. In my redesign , I introduced a door in this annex to provide ease of access to the park and school. From the breezeway, there will be a series of meditative spaces where people could have quiet and private conversations. Each of these outdoor rooms looks into a garden that can provide a calming feelings for the users of the meditation spaces. A long ramp extends down an amphitheater space that steps down onto the sidewalk . The ramp is wide so that it is inviting for the neighborhood to use the space, and not only for the use of the hospital patrons. This space provides multiple spaces for multiple uses, and is easily adaptable for different



Figure 53: Section of meditative spaces



Figure 54: Section of amphitheater and extended sidewalk/woonerf programs with many potential positive outcomes for the community.



## Chapter 6: The Conclusion & Lasting Questions

Neglected landscapes like the one behind Kings County Hospital are found throughout the East Flatbush neighborhood. You can find expansive parking lots, high fences, garbage and cracked paving in many poor urban neighborhood. As a dominating anchor within the neighborhood,



Figure 55: Kids playing in Wingate Park

King's County Hospital's programs have a large effect on the social aspects of the Flatbush residents lives but this connection is not manifested physically. I believe it is the responsibility of such a dominating anchor to provide a landscape that can give back to the community it resides in.

On paper, the East Flatbush neighborhood has some of the highest levels of incarceration and injury-assault rate. My experience in the space is completely different, as I have had the pleasure of spending time with its residents. The teens I met try to live their lives as normally and happily as possible while experiencing high levels of community violence. Public outdoor spaces in the neighborhood do not express the liveliness of the people who live and play there, which is the largest contributing factor in the outsider perceptions of the neighborhood. The redesign of these spaces could destroy the presence of racist practices that took place in these neighborhoods, racist practices like urban renewal and red-lining which have been instrumental in creating poverty that create the inner city landscape.

Further research on the effects of community violence on the landscape should be



Figure 56: KAVI kids chalking “our lives matter”

conducted in order for designers to be able to design for dense neighborhoods that experience high levels of violence. My experiences at the American Landscape Architecture Society conferences, I have never seen sessions or projects focused on redesigning the landscapes of the inner city. It is my hope that a project like mine will inspire others to look into these landscapes that are so often forgotten. Programs like KAVI could have much more of an impact on the lives of residents if they could operate in a landscape

that could further promote neighborhood relations. We as designers need to stop believing that cities need plazas and paved spaces and cater to the basic human needs of having nature nearby, even the inner city’s version of it. Working with community groups to better understand their needs and desires for a space is a deciding factor, because it determines whether the implemented design would be used or not. In conclusion, I would like to quote Peter Del Tredici who says, “the critical question is not what plants grew there in the past but which will grow in the future”, which I also interpret as meaning the residents of a neighborhood.

## Annotated Bibliography

Anderson, Brock J. 2011. "An Exploration of the Potential Benefits of Healing Gardens on Veterans with PTSD." Master of Landscape Architecture, Utah: Utah State University.

This master's thesis is focused on the idea of supplying veterans with a new form of treatment. This thesis highlights the histories of gardens and their uses and then flows into the uses of gardens for people with various mental and physical diseases. In the thesis, Anderson highlights that people with PTSD, "often take great effort to avoid any thoughts, activities, places, and people associated with the traumatic event", but this wouldn't be the case with people who live in the environment where they are constantly stressed. This paper gives case studies of hospitals implementing the use of healing gardens on their PTSD patients and the results.

Anderson, Elijah. "2000. Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City." W.W. Norton & Company.

In this book, Anderson explores the unwritten set of rules that comes with living in the ghettos. Anderson fights the stereotypical idea of random violence occurring in the ghettos and replaces it with the regulation of the streets, the unspoken code that everyone follows whether they are conscious of it or not. Public spaces are then negotiated through this unspoken code. Anderson then uses this unspoken code and reasons it by applying unemployment, stigma of race, rampant drug use and the "alienation and lack of hope".

This book is relevant to my work because I will be working in areas where there is a lot of unemployment. Seeing how the people who live in these underdeveloped and abandoned landscapes negotiate their neighborhood spaces will be important when delineating where and what to design, including spaces are used the most by all the community and spaces that are often set a part for certain uses such as drug use and gang use.

Allen, Austin. 1996. "Claiming Open Spaces." Documentary.

This film highlights several parks throughout some major cities: Columbus, New Orleans, Detroit, Oakland and Montgomery. Throughout the film, the perspective of African Americans and other minorities is taken into account, with a focus on how these residents have used the park. The park in Columbus got a redesign without the concern of where the kids of the black community would go to socialize. This forced the kids into the streets which heightened the sense of danger and crime within the community. This can be found throughout the rest of the scenarios where ethnic groups feel pushed out of the open spaces they have claimed their whole lives based on others people's perceptions of them.

This is directly relevant to my thesis because it is concerned with how ethnic groups within communities feel about spaces they have naturally claimed and how it feels when they are pushed out. I will be designing spaces for multi-racial communities to use so seeing where they feel comfortable will add to the design. It also highlights how outsiders have shaped perceptions of space used by the underprivileged.

Bellafante, Ginia. 2016. "Public Housing, Private Donors." *New York Times*, February

This article by Bellafante is a discourse about the problems of getting funding for the projects in New York City. Around 700,000 people live in NYCHA-owned establishments, which she highlights is the same population found in the city of Atlanta. Bellafante introduced the idea of private donors giving their money in order to help NYCHA which has approximately \$17 billion in unmet needs. One of the projects that is trying to get approved for the NYCHA buildings, is an effort to get past residents who have become successful to donate to the public housing they were born and raised in.

This article gave me a glimpse into the politics behind public housing. Directly correlating with Wacquant's *Urban Outcasts*, Bellafante talks about the antipathy that the affluent residents of New York feel about public housing developments. Although mainly about policy and politics, the thoughts of the affluent about the projects are insightful and confirming of what I already believed.

Caruth, Cathy. 1995. "Trauma and Experience: Introduction." *In Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, 1sted., 288. John Hopkins University Press.

Based on the structure of the experience of trauma, this article highlights the different arguments that the effects of trauma have on people. Caruth is one of many sociologists that believe that trauma cannot be fully processed in the moment of infliction. It is only later, when the victim has time to think about the event, that the trauma can be fully understood. After this, the victim then becomes a "victim" of the traumatic event, even though they cannot fully recognize how the event has affected them. Caruth references the idea of Freud the most, bringing in his ideas of trauma and not only affirming them but providing research of her own to prove that his thoughts are correct.

The research of this project has proven that many of the ideas about the structure of the experience of trauma may be for the privileged. One of Freud's ideas that Caruth supports is the idea that the brain cannot understand the idea of its own death. I refute this idea by providing the example of people who live in areas that are in constant turmoil. These ideas do not coincide with people who face death in multiples instances, and are aware that their life is fully in danger and permanently change the way that people see different landscapes as well as viewed many different social interactions.

Crockett Jr., Stephen A. 2014. "PTSD in the Inner City Needs a Name That Respects Its Victims." *The Root*, May 20.

This article is based on the idea of "hood disease" which is a form of post-traumatic stress disorder that occurs within the inner cities of America. The article highlights the offensive name of the disorder and that it should be changed to better serve the people who suffer from it. In some ways, "hood disease" is a more intense form of PTSD, because there is no escape from the violence that occurs in their communities. War veterans go away and come back home, whereas this life is constant for the people who live in the neighborhoods and have no economical means of moving to a "better neighborhood".

Confino, Alon. 1997. “*Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method*.” *The American Historical Review* 102 (5): 1386–1403. doi:10.2307/2171069.

This article was written in order to highlight some of the problems that occur within the sociology community. It provides arguments on the idea of memory. Within the field there have been a number of different ideas about memory and what constitutes a legitimate retelling of the past. Confino argues that the study of collective memory is a view into the culture and history of a society that is often left out of technical history books and often lost because of the method of memory used to keep that information alive, such as storytelling, song etc. Confino also explains the power struggle that occurs in the field of memory, because the people who have the resources to write and preserve history have the power to skew the story, which we’ve seen happen with slavery and racism countless times in U.S. history books.

Alon Confino who is a full Professor of History at the University of Virginia, argues that collective memory is, “an exploration of a shared identity that unites a social group”. No matter the size of the group, they will have a specific dynamic because of what unites them together. Although this article focuses heavily on the political aspect of memory, it still provides an important viewpoint into the field of sociology and the basis of their research. The author provides many different sources to research and get various arguments and projects will expand the amount of knowledge on memory and culture.

Cvetkovich, Ann. 2003. “*The Everyday Life of Queer Trauma*.” *In An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality and Lesbian Public Cultures*, 368. Duke University Press Books.

This article focused on the way that public culture has had a traumatizing effect on the lesbian culture within America and the different ways that the collective had tried to fight stereotypes. The article also tells the story of multiple popular lesbians in the media and how they chose to represent themselves and their community. Representation is very important for people who identify with a certain group, Cvetkovich also talks about the damaging effect that capitalism has had on the queer community.

Although this piece focuses on a very different topic from my own, the very important idea about cultural memory is provided here. According to the article, cultural memory can be portrayed by representation within the media. The production of movies, songs, memories and storytelling are all forms that support cultural memory, which help a community or group of people with their identity. The article also plants the idea that violence does not always have to be seen or heard; there are more forms of violence that can have a lasting affect on the victim.

DeFilippis, James, and Susan Saegert. n.d. “What Community Supplies.” *In The Community Development Reader*, 2nded., 308–18. New York & London: Routledge.

Community development has been an integral part of the inner city since the early 60s. The movement to include more community development corporations has led the idea of “community” to become a source in need of intervention in order to improve the social context of neighborhoods. Strong neighborhoods are important because they help set up,



“common values and maintaining effective social controls...”(308). This chapter was an explanation about how community development helps the overall social environment and makes a better, more equipped community that helps its residents with basic survival tools.

Eden, Colin. 1992. “On the Nature of Cognitive Maps.” *Journal of Management Studies* 29 (3): 265.

This article is based on the theories and applications of cognitive mapping. Going back to the origin of its creation by Tolman in 1948. The article goes into clinical psychology and other aspects of mental sciences to highlight the significant uses of cognitive mapping. Cognitive mapping, “can be seen as a picture or visual aid in comprehending the mappers’ understanding of particular, and selective, elements of the thoughts (rather than thinking) of an individual group...”(Eden, 262). These exercises are very useful in understanding how people use their space. Typically, we find that people do not use their outdoor space as they are intending to be used.

Eyerman, Ron. n.d. “Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity.” *In Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, 61–111. University of California Press.

Ron Eyerman, a Swedish sociologist introduced a new theoretical idea by tracing the history of African Americans through collective memory, looking at the beginnings of African American identity. The chapter begins by defining how, “trauma is linked to the formation of collective identity and the construction of social memory”, not just for African Americans but entire groups of people. It then goes into how slavery is the beginning of black memory in America. Slavery, and, to Eyerman its impact from stories, arts and other modes of memory allowed for black people to stabilize their culture and form organizations such as the NAACP. The article then goes into the many different kinds of memory that have affected or been affected by the black community.

Most relevant to my topic is the idea on cultural trauma on the black community. Cultural trauma, according to this article, “the dramatic loss of identity” is one of the largest forms of cultural trauma and one that has largely affected the black community because they did not have the power or resources to preserve their version of history that could be institutionally recognized. National trauma also plays a large part in black identity which can be translated into collective memory.

Eyerman’s theory is carried forward in Michael Dawson’s *Black Visions: The Rooted of Contemporary African American Political Ideologies*. Since the East Flatbush neighborhood is mostly black, I thought it was interesting to look at how slavery and racism have changed the identity of the black community and applying it to children who live in the inner city.

Glave, Dianne D. 2003. “‘A Garden So Brilliant with Colors, So Original in Its Design’: Rural African American Women, Gardening, Progressive Reform, and the Foundation of an African American Environmental Perspective.” *Environmental History* 8 (3): 395–411.

This article is an explanation of the designs and uses of the gardens that the slaves used in the South in order to survive physically and mentally, and how this culture has carried through till now in the South. Slaves were given a plot of land in order to grow food to live on. They used the land for agriculture, but the women of the huts also planted small gardens to bring a sense of happiness to the home. They used these ornamental plants for more than just looks; they used them for medicine and other various uses. The slave gardens had a very open and flowing design, moving effortlessly between agricultural uses its decorative uses. These gardens also created a social life between the slaves. If one plant was doing well, someone would break it up and share it with others within the slave community.

Gonzalez, David. 2015. "In Fight to Save Young People, Brooklyn Doctor Treats." *New York Times*, November 1, sec. Side Street.

The Kings against Violence Initiative was started by Dr. Gore in a response to the death of his friend and colleague. KAVI is an initiative that works within the hospital to deescalate and calm down the victims and family members who have been assaulted in order to prevent retaliation efforts. This initiative has expanded to the nearby high school, enlisting children to learn how to deal with violence in their communities and to help them get into college and on to better lives. The initiative has spread to the larger health community in New York, invoking similar programs in Harlem and the Bronx.

Gross, Neil. 2016. "Are Americans Experiencing Collective Trauma ?" *New York Times*, December 16, sec. Sunday Review.

With a focus on collective trauma, this article goes into thorough explanation of the research on the Buffalo Creek flood of 1972 and the effects it had on the residents in the area, which was conducted by esteemed sociologists Kai Erikson. The idea of collective trauma was created by French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, who coined the idea that, "values and rituals were the linchpins of social order; they provided the basis for solidarity and social cohesion". When there is an outside event that negatively effects the community, the effect it has is traumatic effect and can change the way the people who've experienced this change feel and think about themselves and their surroundings.

This article was read for the sociological portion of the project I used it heavily in order to better understand what the children in the East Flatbush neighborhood experience on an everyday basis and how violence might change their perceptions of the world. The article also goes into how significant job loss within the community can have a negative impact on the community on individual as well as community level.

Guild, Joshua B. n.d. "They Were Truly African People, Just from Different Parts of the Planet": Black Migration and the Transformation of 20th Century Brooklyn."

This dissertation is centered on the migration of African Americans from around the world to Brooklyn. There are many events that have unfolded that have led many black people to migrate to and from Brooklyn.

This is important to my project because it talks about the history of Brooklyn. Un-

derstanding the history of why people choose to live there, could make the storytelling of the site more interesting.

Hurt, Byron. 2012. *Soul Food Junkies*.

A documentary film, this movie described the culture surrounded by Soul Food. Going back to the slave days and how soul food is derived from the food the slaves eat. This movie talks about the inflections that a lifetime of eating soul food has on the black community health wise. Hurt also goes through how soul food has had a direct impact on his life, being soul food is the partial reason for the sickness and death of his father. Soul food, is more than just about the food but the way that the food brings people together and creates inter-generational relationships.

Inter-generational houses have the best effects on the children who live there. Within the ghettos, there is a broad range of ages who live there but there are always the pillars of the community which everyone respects. Although my thesis isn't about food landscapes, the relationships that were explained through the documentary were very important for my work, and also relatable.

Jelin, Elizabeth. n.d. *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*. Vol. 18. University of Minnesota Press.

The effect of memory on the individual was the main premise of this book. According to Jelin, our memories are what make us who we are whether or not we remember specific moments. Each moment of intrusion or trauma on the individual will have a negative effect on how they view themselves and the social groups in which they find themselves. She goes into depth on how a traumatic effect can have on the individual, especially when it breaks a routine that the individual goes through on a daily basis. Jelin also highlights and arguments made by other sociologists in the field and refutes or agrees with their points using her own research.

For this project this book was important because it provided a basis for my understanding of memory and how it could affect our future personalities. I also applied her theories to the lives of the people and children who live in the East Flatbush neighborhood and attend their schools, and was able to refute her ideas with my own case studies. Her research relies heavily on Freud and ignores the plight of many people who live in hectic landscapes.

Kuo, Francis E., and William C. Sullivan. 2001. "Environment and Crime in the Inner City: Does Vegetation Reduce Crime?" 2001 Sage Publications, Inc. 33 (3): 343–67.

This article proposes and proves the argument that people living in cities who have a variety of open, green spaces live happier lives. There has been a misconception that parks in the city provide dangerous places for criminals to do their activity. The high bushes, lush trees and other aspects of a beautiful, typical Olmsted-ian park make areas seem unsafe because people cannot see what is around the corner. This paper gives examples of certain design tactics that will make parks safer and easily visible



to its user so they feel safe in their surroundings. Certain designs and other aspects of park maintenance allow for a dense urban area to become a city that serves its people.

Lawson, Laura. n.d. "Parks as Mirrors of Community: Design Discourse and Community Hopes for Parks in East St. Louis." *Landscape Journal* 26 (1): 116–33.

This article goes into detail about park design in disenfranchised communities. East St. Louis was subject to segregation, race riots, budget cuts and the corruption of politicians and was never allowed to flourish and return to its once semi-calm state. Throughout this paper, Lawson explores park designs in low income race charged areas and how to design for them. One can change the way that people react or respond to the community by the redesign of public spaces, but we as designers must listen to the people who live there before we decide what is best for the community.

Low-income neighborhoods are always a challenge to design for because you have so many ethnic cultures in the area. Finding a way to balance the needs for each ethnic group will need special attention. Whose needs and whose stories need to be represented in the landscape? This paper is especially important when trying to figure out how to represent the history of a neighborhood in the landscape, what to include and what to leave out. It raised a lot of questions about what needs to be represented in a landscape where people are all fighting for a piece of.

Lydon, Mike, and Anthony Garcia. 2015. *Tactical Urbanism*. Island Press.

This book is based around urban planning. Connecting the urban scale to the human scale, this book highlights that simple design can result in positive transformations of cities. The book offers solutions to a wide-range of problems that plague our cities today. In a way it is a how to guide when politics isn't helping and the neighborhood needs to tackle a problem on their own.

This book is an important resource because it will give me a set of solutions for a certain set of problems that plague all cities. I can use the solutions within this book and try and apply them to my project, and explore whether or not they would provide answers to the ghettos. They can be long or short term solutions but either way have a positive effect on the people who live in the afflicted neighborhoods.

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. 2015. "Community Health Profiles 2015 : East Flatbush." New York. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/data/2015chp-bk17.pdf>.

This profile gave an in depth report of the living situations in the East Flatbush neighborhood, and comparing its statistics to the surrounding neighborhoods. The report highlights living conditions, health concerns and the overall state of the neighborhood. Over half of the East Flatbush neighborhood are immigrants, and most of the U.S citizens are either first or second generation Americans. 18% of the East Flatbush population live in poverty, with 12% being unemployed and 54% living with rent burden. The leading cause of death in this neighborhood is heart disease, stroke being not too far behind. The overall lifestyle in East Flatbush is poor, many of the children suffering from environment induced asthma.

Venkatesh, Sudhir. 2008. *Gang Leader for A Day*. New York: Penguin Publishing Group.

This book was based on Venkatesh's seven year exploration of a specific gang who resided in the Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago when the buildings still stood. He highlighted the many different aspects of gang life that no one had seen before, the most important being that many of the gangs supported local community groups and events for the children within the community. The gangs mostly sold drugs to people who lived outside of the community and used to funds to help bring up the neighborhood that they lived in. The book also brought to light the true financial structure of a gang. The lowest ranking members who physically sell the drugs take the most risk with the least reward, making cents on the dollar.

Wacquant, Loic. 2009. *Prisons of Poverty*. Expanded Edition. University of Minnesota Press.

This book is centered on the extreme mass incarcerations that are inflicted upon the poor. Incarceration has become a way to control to the poor and underprivileged and has become one of the most profitable business in North America. This idea of profiting off of prisons is spreading to Europe and Asia and Wacquant highlights what aspects of it has made it desirable to other countries. Wacquant uses Guiliani's clean up the streets project which removed a lot of "crime" from the streets of New York which made it a poster board for how to control the populations.

One of the many ailments of living in poor neighborhoods is the rate of incarceration amongst the residents. Many of the people who live in these have no other choice but to engage into illegal activities in order to survive. This book will help me understand more of the psychological effect of living with these constant pressures on you from the outside have on people. I can use this information to further inform my design solutions which will be implemented in places like these.

Wacquant, Loic. 2007. *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality*. 1sted. Polity Press.

Wacquant, Loïc. *Urban Outcasts*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 02148.

In *Urban Outcasts* is a discourse about the living conditions of the residents of the ghettos of the South Side of Chicago and La Courneuve in France. Wacquant then explains how the ghettos became the ghettos. Introducing and explaining terms like: deindustrialization, de-proletarianization, stigmatization and hyper-ghettoization. This book highlights all of the political and sociological impacts these terms have on the ghettos in Chicago and France. He then explains that marginalization is different in different cities.

This book is important to me because a lot of what plagues the South Side of Chicago is similar to what plagues the ghettos in New York. The effects of living within the ghettos inflicts a plethora of psychological damage on the residents of these poor neighborhoods. Within my design, I can use the research findings by Wacquant to further the reasons why I place some features in my design.

Wheeler, Darby, Sam Dunn, and Scot McFadyen. n.d. *Hip-Hop Evolution*. Documentary.

This documentary followed the evolution of Hip Hop from its beginnings in the Bronx and its influence on black people, black culture and black community. It also talked about how black culture has influenced mainstream culture in America, even without directly attempting to. It was important to this essay because within the documentary, a portion spoke about how the genre of Hip Hop and Rap allow the members of that culture to release all of the problems that occur in the ghettos where they originate, and no one else would even go into the ghettos because they didn't know what happened within the "hood".

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