

Investigating Public Spaces in Yorkville

Issues/Questions/Needs/Potentials

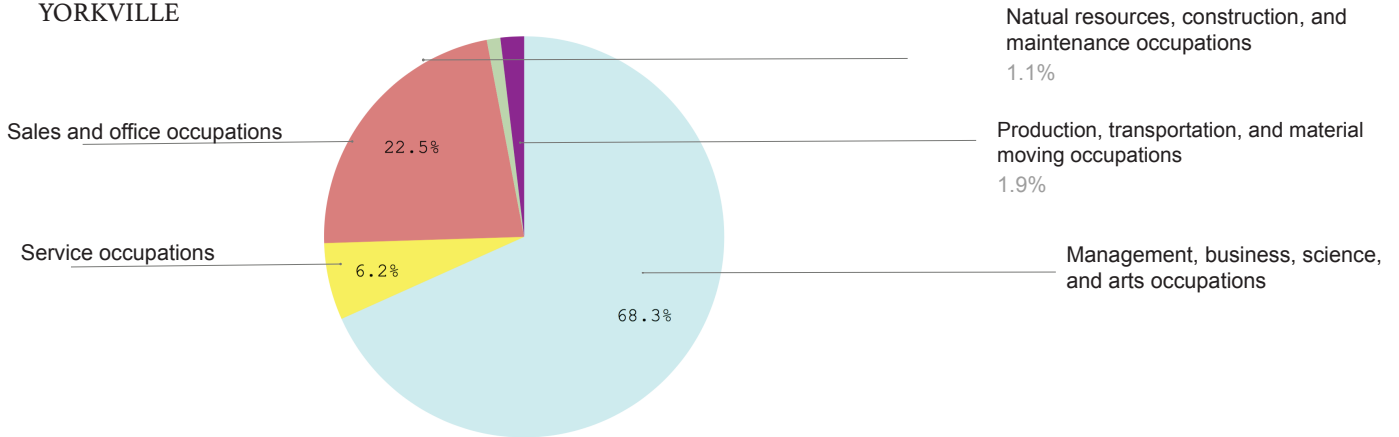
History of Yorkville

Yorkville is a neighborhood that is on Manhattan's Upper East Side expands from 72nd street to its northern East 96th street from third avenue to the East River. A beautiful and quiet neighborhood that is close to the riverside but also has its flaws. Yorkville has a high number of elderly and middle aged business people. Behind that, the history of the neighborhood is important to look into. Looking at the 19th and 20th centuries, Yorkville was popular with Czech, Slovak, Irish, Polish, German, Hungarian, and Lebanese immigrants. From other research, it was said that German had the higher population in the neighborhood and its influence still exists today on Second Avenue in the Heidelberg Restaurant and with Schaller and Weber, the maker and purveyor of German-style meats. Earlier in history, George Washington had an Continental army in Manhattan; installed half and left many troops in the Yorkville area, given the defensive positions along the East River side to protect the other half of his army in 1776. Eighty years ago, there were 12 German Catholic Churches in Manhattan. According to recorded data, the census extent that make up Yorkville says that the number of people claiming German ancestry dropped to 7,075 in 2000 from 9,714 in 1980. Reaching 1920, Yorkville started to decline in its ethnic diversity.

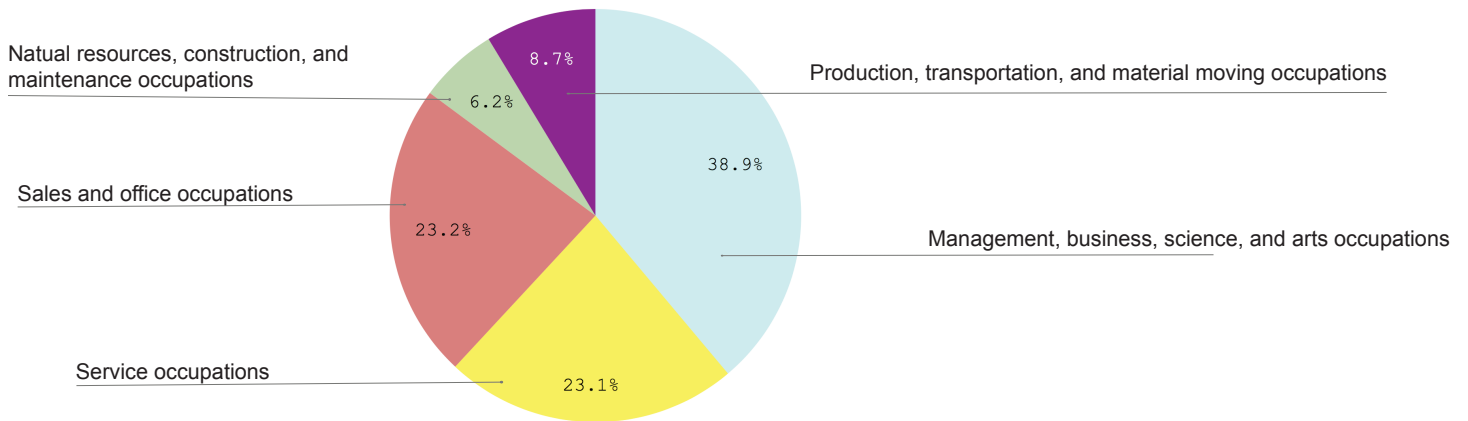
There were selected prints and photographs taken in 1971 and were appeared to be ordinary but influenced Yorkville. Yorkville has grown to be a working class neighborhood (explains why there are many businessmen living in that area) for 75 years. The apartment houses of 15 or 20 stories were built throughout the neighborhood starting from the late 1950's.

OCCUPANCY

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My Visit to Yorkville

14th street Union Square train station —> Q train uptown toward 96th street —> get off at 86th street.

What I noticed...

First visit:

- it was unusual to be at such a nice neighborhood like Yorkville because of the different atmosphere
- Huge difference between the city and the neighborhood (much more quiet and calm)
- Not a lot of interesting things to do around
- Place of interest was the Gracie Mansion, but when we visited it wasn't anything special

Second visit:

- Noticed that there was not much of a racial diversity
- People were a lot nicer/caring
- Family oriented neighborhood/residential area
- A LOT of garbage piled on streets
- Small businesses/boutiques and not a lot of big business in the area
- Mid-rise and high-rise buildings

Third visit:

- Noticed that there were a few popular museums
- A lot of dogs at the park and on the streets + dog hospitals
- There were still a lot of Italian restaurants
- Some German churches
- Many schools (elementary, middle, high, public, private schools)
- High-rise buildings were modern and new located by the riverside and Carl Schulz Park

Fourth visit: - Discovered Ruppert Park

- was a gloomy day
- (1741 2nd Ave, New York, NY 10128)
- Empty, dark and barely any movement

- Less interaction within the park compared to Carl Schulz Park

(Research on the the park - Reviews)

Rina Yoo: “There were too many pigeons roaming around making googol noises” “Humans were definitely outnumbered”

Joseph: “ Fenced shaded park, birds, dogs, humans enjoy it. Mostly for enjoying nature.”

Maje Danque: “Good for little kids”

According to these reviews of Ruppert Park, I have realized that this park was more suitable for younger kids and a quiet park for people to enjoy sitting and reading since there are less people in there.

Questions to ask:

- How can we improve the environment of the park?
- Do you see the culture behind this community?
- What are the thoughts of the draping trees? Like or dislike?
- Is there a way to bring a friendlier community to this place?
- Would the removal of the fence change your perception of this park?
- Should this park be redesigned?
- Is there a possibility for this park to be as popular as Carl Schulz Park?
- Could the homeless join the park?
- Accessible for the disabled?

Yorkville is much more of a residential neighborhood but there are also other aspects in the environment that create community. While I was exploring the neighborhood, I've come cross Carl Schulz Park, a park where many people come together to jog, walk their dogs, walk, and observe by the riverside. At this park, it felt like I belonged here because I saw the interaction between people and how everyone was so opened unlike what I have experienced in the city.

Coming from two very different parts of the world, Hong Kong and Victoria, Canada, I have experienced the culture diversity and what “makes” a community. Victoria sits on the southern end of Vancouver Island and is populated with a lot of elderlies. It is a quiet and small island where it is easy to bump into someone you know whenever and wherever you go. However, there are some parts in Victoria where you might find it busier. In contract to that, Hong Kong is probably one of the most densely populated places in the world. The city itself is busy from day to night, tourist coming in and out, people from all ages, and definitely a similar vibe like New York. These two places I lived are very different. When I got a chance to visit Yorkville, it made me feel like I was back in Victoria. The people were friendly enough to say hi to one another which is something I have never seen in lower Manhattan. Although, I have discovered a problem within this neighborhood...

Brainstorm/mindmap:



Design concept

Collage:



Approach #2: After critique

After studio class, I have come up with other ideas to improve the space. With the help from my peers, I received good feedback on my collage and how I can improve upon it.

Negative

- the swings may not be a good idea because of the design on it —> dangerous because people clash together.
- Removing some of the trees because it covers the park from getting sunlight —> but what should we do about them?
 - We can turn them into benches
 - Replant them
- Winter options —> what will keep the park busy during the season change; how can that effect the people. Including a pond for skating?

Positive

- The idea of the garden was smart and it can bring together a community and an effective way of bringing children to the park and harvest their own seeds. “community garden”
- Include a concession store

- Have a club/small building that allow people to come in and out to use restrooms, borrow chalk, etc.
- Engineering of the swings —> energy created from the swing can power up the heating system of the lights around the park/inside the park

What does the park need?

The park needs interaction. A type of interaction where people can connect with one another (person to person and person to nature). Since there is a lack of community in the park, the park needs movement and communication of some sort. A park needs to feel like a safe and friendly place where it feels welcoming for almost everyone. However, it is mostly for children, families, dogs, elderly, men and women. Although, it may not be available to the homeless people because of their universal stereotype.

Notes:

School curriculum - children keeping the garden clean and planting their own plants

“why” people of Yorkville refuses to go to Ruppert Park.

Seminar 2 Paper

Having a community in a neighborhood or any area is a huge influence on the people and city because as a group of individuals with the similar interests, the connection between these encouragers benefit in one’s behavior emotionally and mentally. In other words, creating a community provides a safe environment of encouragement, love and the impact on your life. The neighborhood that I focused on was Yorkville. It is on the Upper East Side of Manhattan expanding from east 79th Street to east 96th Street. The largest racial/ethnic groups are 92.3% of white along with 6.2% Hispanic and 5% of Asian. The median age is around 38.49 years old with a population of 133,800 people, 58,824 male residents and 74,976 female residents. After the decrease in German ancestry, it led to a decline in its ethnic diversity. The Germans started to move out of Yorkville and many luxury building is being built. The neighborhood is made up of shorter townhouses and home to the working class with their wealthy neighbors living closer to Central Park. One of the people I interviewed mentioned the many schools

around Yorkville and how there are always groups of students at the basketball court and parks. I asked her what brought her to Yorkville and she responded with “I come here every week because I just work here, just a few blocks up from Carl Schulz Park. With the little information I received, I was able to learn more about the area. According to an online source, Jared Grossman said that “There’s a loss of character, which is why I want to make this film before it’s too late” and “Yorkville has changed so much in the last 50 years that it will be really interesting to see how people of different ages and background perceive their own neighborhood.” This article supports the topic I will be focusing on, therefore the information provided will be useful. According an article, Shaoul said “It’s an up-and-coming neighborhood, and it hasn’t had its full “pop” yet.

Earlier in the process of studying Yorkville, it was difficult to identify a problem since there are less things to focus on. When I first arrived Yorkville, it seemed like a new city because of the environment and how it affected my mood, I felt happier. I set a specific location to visit which was The Gracie Mansion. The route to the destination included a walk through the Carl Schulz Park. However, according to the numerous times of visits, I have finally discovered that there was a lack of interaction in the neighborhood. Furthermore, I began asking questions and finally putting all the information together and realizing that there is less of a community in Ruppert Park. The visit to Ruppert Park was during the winter time, therefore, it seemed less populated and empty due to no movement. Following seasonal change, I believe that there will be different moods and activities occurring in the park. For example, the park is empty and gloomy because of less daylight during the winter season, but it is lively with children during the summer.

As an “investigator,” it was also a challenge to see different cultures and racial diversities in the neighborhood. It was ideal to dig deeper into this topic by collecting data and interviewing individuals within the area. Comparing the only two parks in Yorkville, Carl Schulz and Ruppert Park, it contrasts hugely because of the size of the park and the amenities. Many people have not heard of Ruppert Park

because it seems that Carl Schulz has been the dominant park and it attracts more people from around New York.

There are too many trees planted in the area, in this case the park will have less to no sunlight during the summer which mimics a shady and dangerous place during the dark hours. As a designer, it is essential for us to think of all the possibilities a community “needs” instead of “wants,” the functionality and the effectiveness. To redesign a park, it is important for us to know all the potentials and the purpose of creating a community. Since Yorkville is filled with many approachable and friendly people, it would seem like a simple solution to create a community. For example, all of the visits to Yorkville included myself speaking to a stranger. A man was guiding the driver in a truck as he was backing up but as he saw me approaching he immediately stopped the truck and patiently waiting for me to walk past the garage. This is something I have not experienced in the lower east side or the other places I have been to in New York City until I got to Yorkville. Another example is when I walked along Carl Schulz Park and On the other hand, not only residents of Yorkville interact within the neighborhood but. To organize the park in an effective and sustainable way, I have come up with the idea of creating a community garden for all users but especially for children because The garden may be reserved for educational purposes for students at schools or for other public activities. In order to find answers to the questions, there must be a strategy.

In Ruppert Park, there is a lack of movement during the winter season because the darker hours and longer than day which affects the business in the park. Seasonal and weather changes have impacts on people. In order to compare the different seasons, I have to visit my neighborhood again to investigate further in detail. A dull and an inactive space influences the others. In other words, if a place is empty which no motion, does that intrigue anyone to go interact with the space? To improve the park, there will be a system that is suitable for everyone. In order to satisfy the needs, there should be public events, entertainment, a dog park and more. Examples like these create a different atmosphere because of daily events. In other words, if people had a daily routing of visiting the park to attend public events or any occasion, this could create the community within. The purpose of the park is to engage residents of

Yorkville, tourists, students, dogs, homeless, and disabled with the use of a community garden. Schools around may use the area to teach their students about the growth of plants and sustainability. In this case, it is important to incorporate the educational aspect to the park. When I thought about the educational portion of the design, that was when I came up with the idea of also including a glass room that includes amenities and services and a shelter. Creating a community garden will enhance the image of a green garden and intrigue other people to join as well. This is important in Yorkville because there are many family households with children that are in elementary school. In order to make the system work is by proposing to all the schools in Yorkville and have the school validate whether or not they will help. Inside the glass room will be chairs, tables, concession stand, restrooms, water fountain and extra tools for people to use. There will also be a tool storage shed outside but there will be another one inside the glass room in case they are all in use.

The design approach for this project is focused on the “community” of the park. The design will be focused on a community garden where it may be reserved for educational purposes. The chosen materials will mostly be sustainable and recyclable. Overall, creating a community garden in Ruppert Park will attract users from the neighborhood to come together and function as a friendly and positive community with an educational purpose.

Final

