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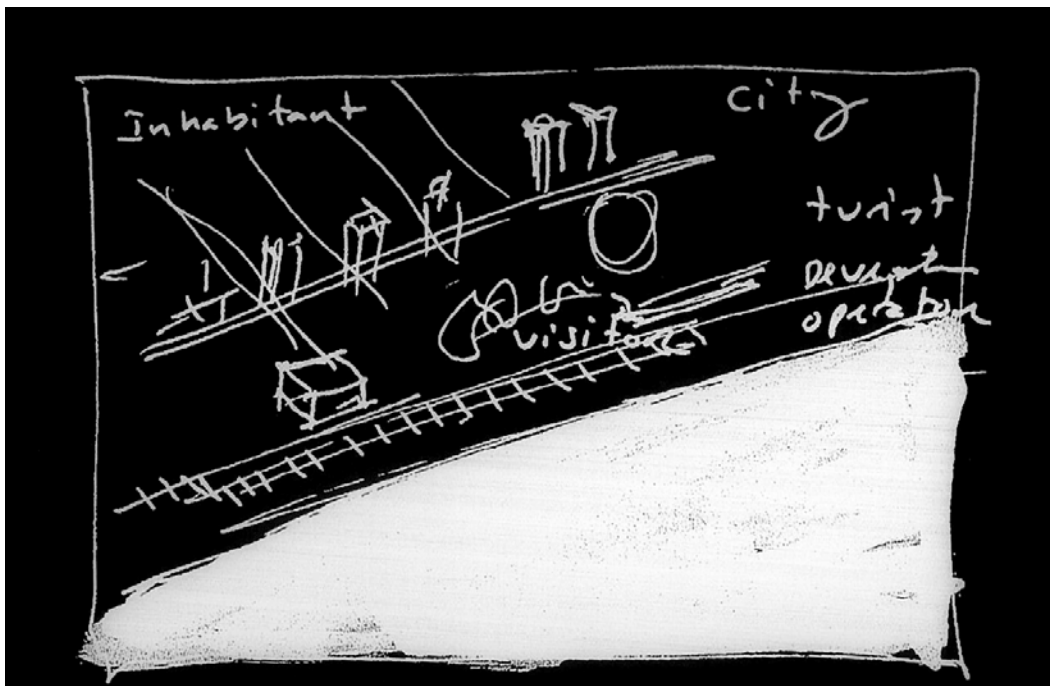
Copenhagen  
November 7, 2008

**Impressions from Coney Island & Briefing Day October 26 – 27, 2008 by Søren Robert Lund**

The following impressions are generated in immediate continuation of the tour of Coney Island and the Charrette Briefing Day. These impressions will be further elaborated during the Charrette Days November 13 – 14.

Impressions are seen from the perspective of a first time visitor to Coney Island who makes a dissection of the morphology of Coney Island in a present and perspective of the future.

The first thing that jumps to mind is the complexity of Coney Island:



The uses between the long-staying with the “hit-and-run” groups are split among the following sub-segments:

- The local residents (1 hour) & the commercial operator are the long-staying groups and essential for the success of a future Coney Island

- New York residents (2 hours) or in the New York region (+ 2 hours) are the next level in staying & using time
- Tourists, either on transit or short stay (depending on future accommodation facilities)
- The developer is the shortest staying group.

These combined groups can be split up in subcategories and given each a characterisation (spend, time, preferences, needs), but the key word is Coney Island authenticity and human presence.

Therefore the key planning issue is to create a satisfactory community, environment and creating a strong basis for the commercial operation. When this platform is created, New Yorkers and tourists will visit the Coney attractions.

The challenge is to find the needed tools (soft- and hardware) and planning strategy in order to create this environment.

The existing features at Coney Island provide, together with the historic Coney Island brand, a unique starting point but expectations are quickly let down upon visiting the worn-down area.

There is no energy or consistent image, design profile or operation at present Coney Island, at least out-of-season. Designs within the standard buildings of the boardwalk are trite and worn.

Seen as a backbone in the revitalization strategy are the following main features:

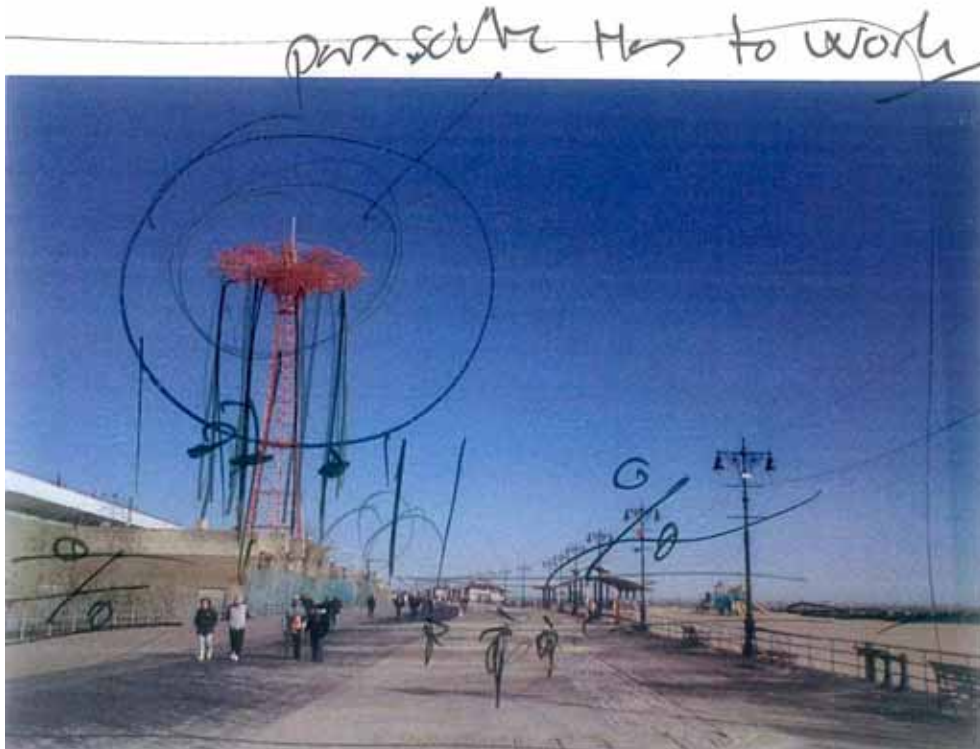
- The people in the surrounding community  
Gaining local support for development perspectives at Coney Island from recreational- and job creating point of view.
- The beach  
The beach will be Coney Island's major competitor and complementary activity. Essential will be to aim at a programming of Coney Island and beach activities that allow for optimum guest flow between the 2 areas across opening hours, days, months, season.
- The (existing) amusement rides  
Revitalization and (re)branding of selected rides will be essential for Coney Islands re-branding. At first sight 3 existing rides are worth salvaging for future use (either as active rides or iconic symbols for Coney Island).
- The neighbouring aquarium  
New York aquarium sustains in a dire state, hidden from the public. Investments in redesign (opening up enclosed facade) and entertainment facilities in addition to integrating business model (master plan) with rest of Coney Island amusement district is essential.
- The Keyspan stadium  
The stadium offers excessive capacity supply in terms of open air space (and seating) for concerts, exhibitions, events. To be programmed as part of Coney Island's revitalization. Potentially greater and alternating use in shoulder/colder seasons.

- Implementation of future attractions (e.g. rides parades, theatre, restaurants, landscaping features, concert venues, etc.)

One of the key reason-to-go success factors at Coney Island should be creating a notion of “being together”, which is the backbone for any amusement park/destination worldwide. Coney Island should on one hand impresses and fascinates visitors but also provides the setting for an enjoyable experience. The area should create interaction among visitors and through interaction establish a satisfactory setting for community between families and friends.

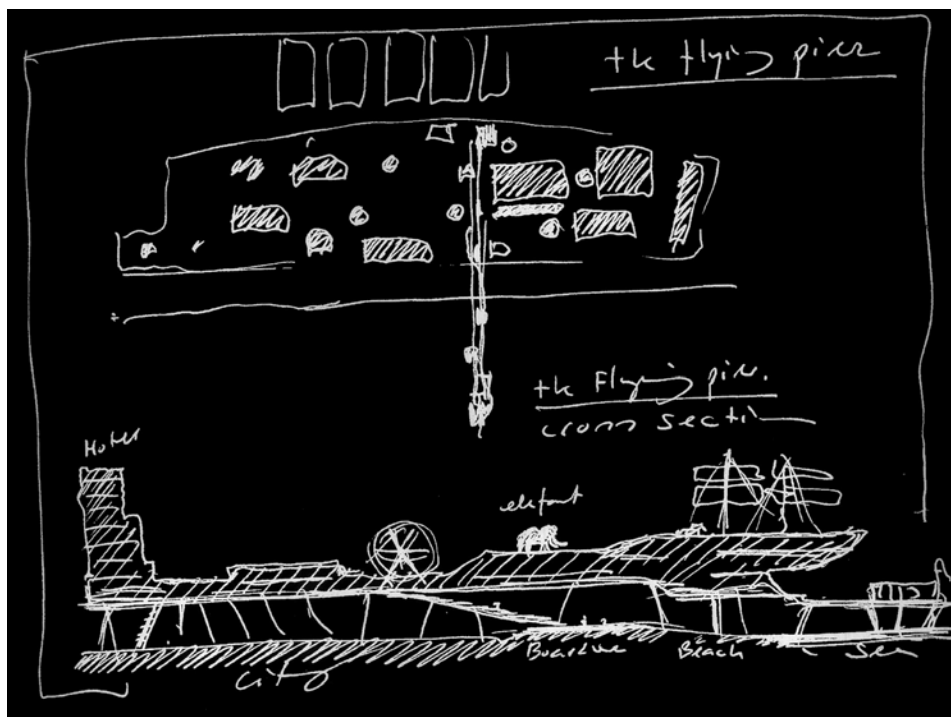
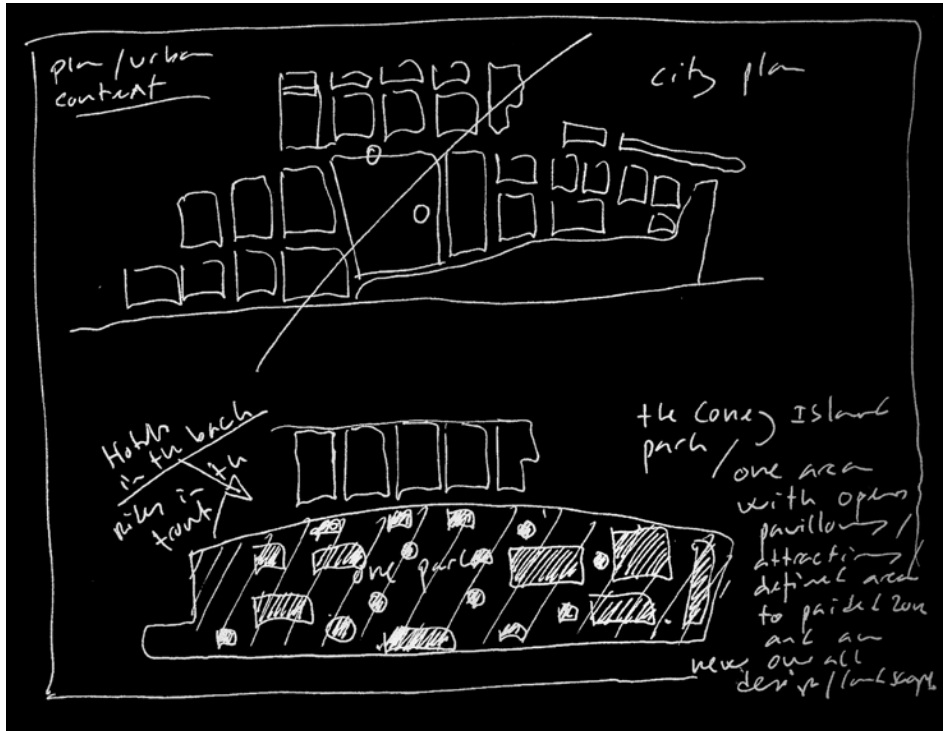
In the programming of the Coney Island the notion of “being together” should be reflected in all activities. E.g. the amusement rides and activities should facilitate that the family (or the visiting group) can be together, meaning that emphasis will be on rides where you can sit in larger groups. With rides that are not suited for the entire family, for example playgrounds, kiddie rides or larger coasters, it should be possible for the remaining part of the family to participate by viewing. This will mean open-air rather than enclosed rides, as well as rides that are surrounded by landscaped or otherwise manipulated surroundings.

The same approach should be used in selected entertainment areas. Coney Island should focus on entertainment where the family (or group) can enjoy entertainment together, for example a parade, though not excluding events that approach a narrower segment, for example rock concerts.



In historic days there were 3 large amusement parks at Coney Island. Today, we want to substitute these with smaller area rides (of higher quality in terms of production value and design), the historic elements & buildings, indoor attractions/malls/hotels.

In my opinion, these ideas are of course relevant but, put together with the City's zoning plan and the vision, they will not bring Coney Island into the league of world-class destinations. It is my firm belief that a zoning plan does not work. It needs to be generated by a local planning based on project, persuasion and possibilities for new developments.



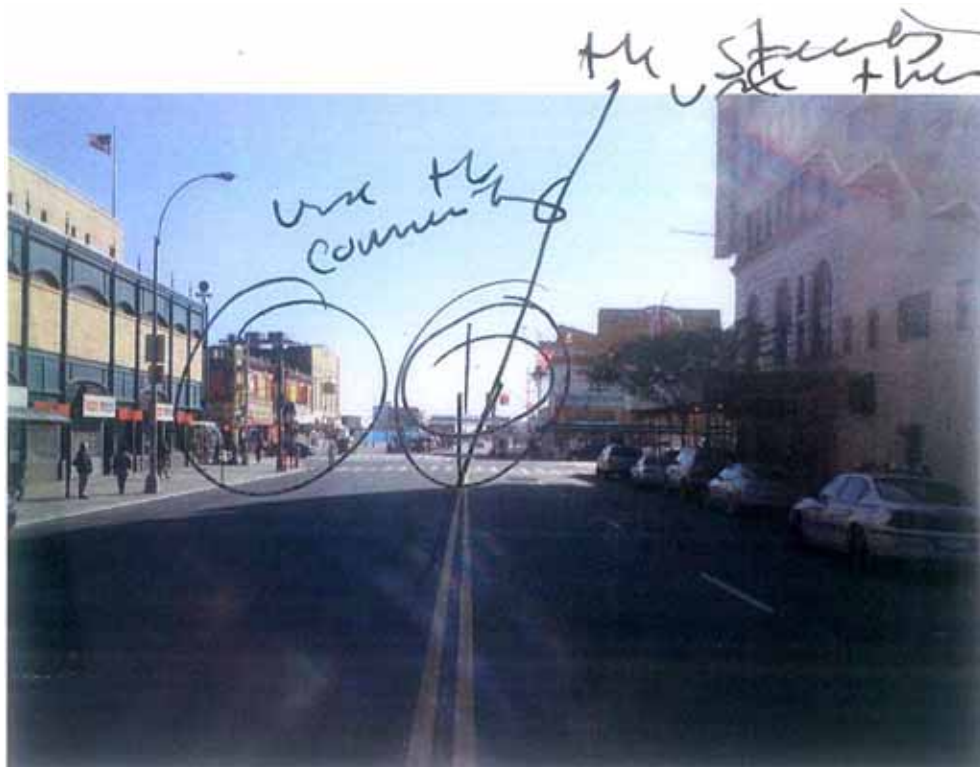
Some of the main impressions when visiting the site:

- Horizon
- Diversity
- Scale
- The horizontal of the sea/ island



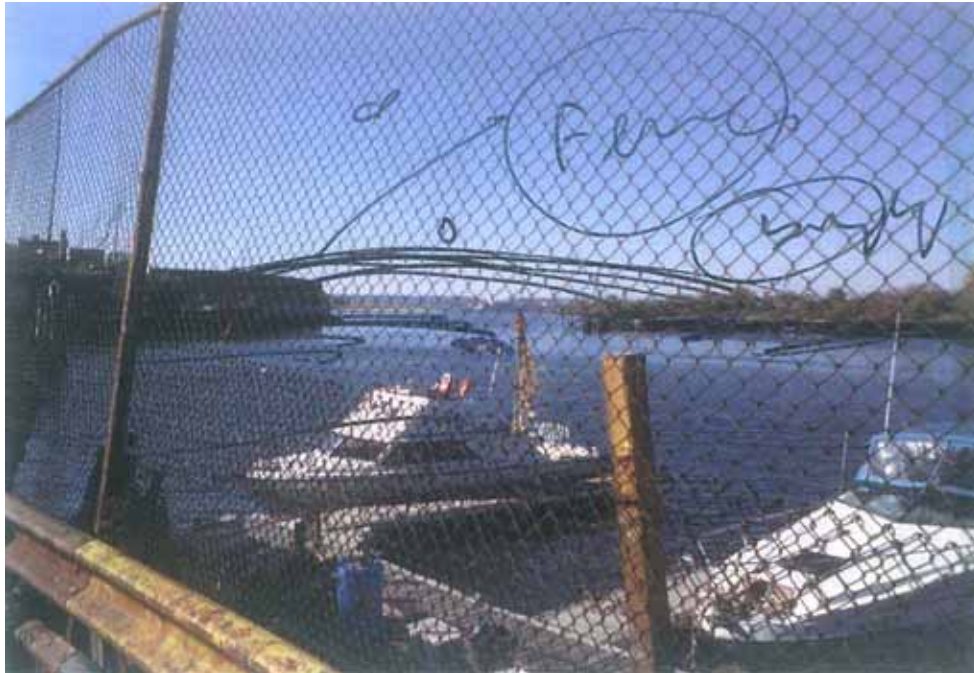


The potentials at Coney Island are present in many places. Below the streets and the creek are mentioned:



The houses and the street should be used more active.

Use the creek

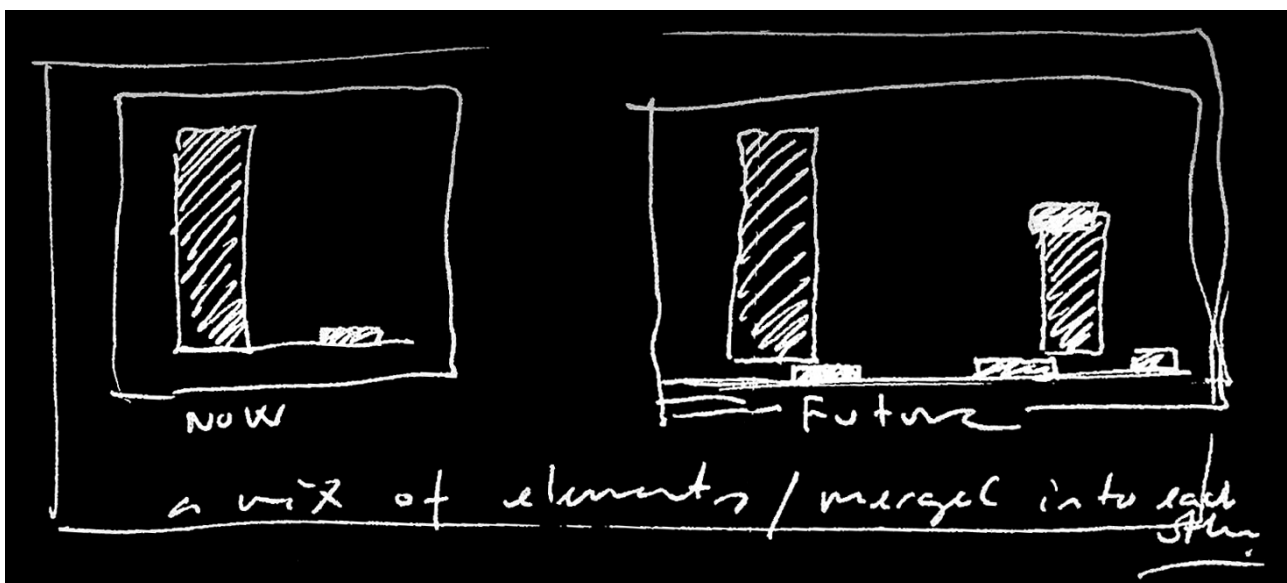


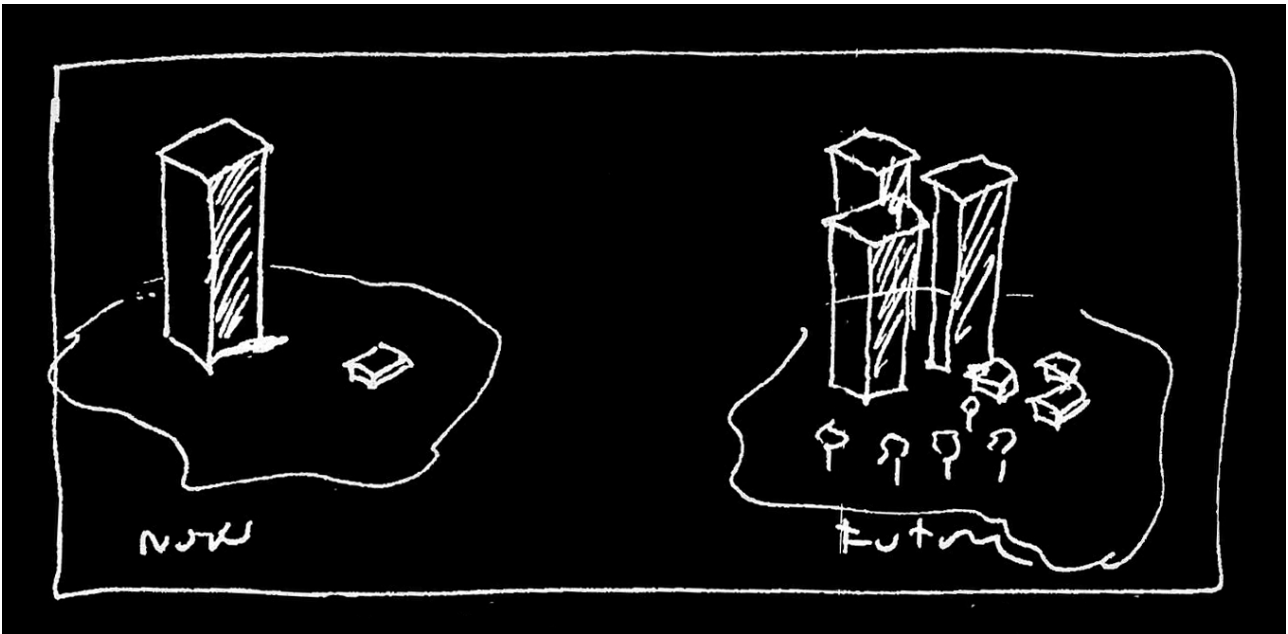
The potential of the creek as a recreational element is important.

So a planning tool could be a combination between scale and diversity.

The large jump in scale is a Coney Island feature and should be kept, but underlined in a much higher density and the clash between scales should be visible.

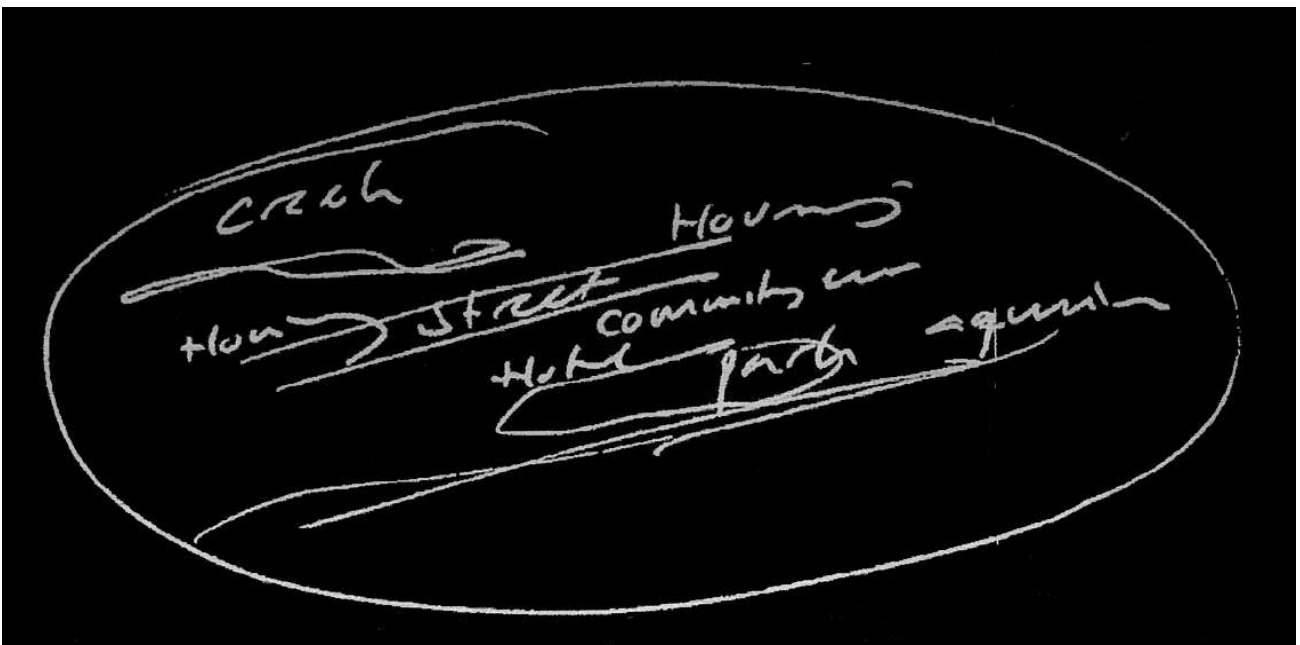
Design Feature



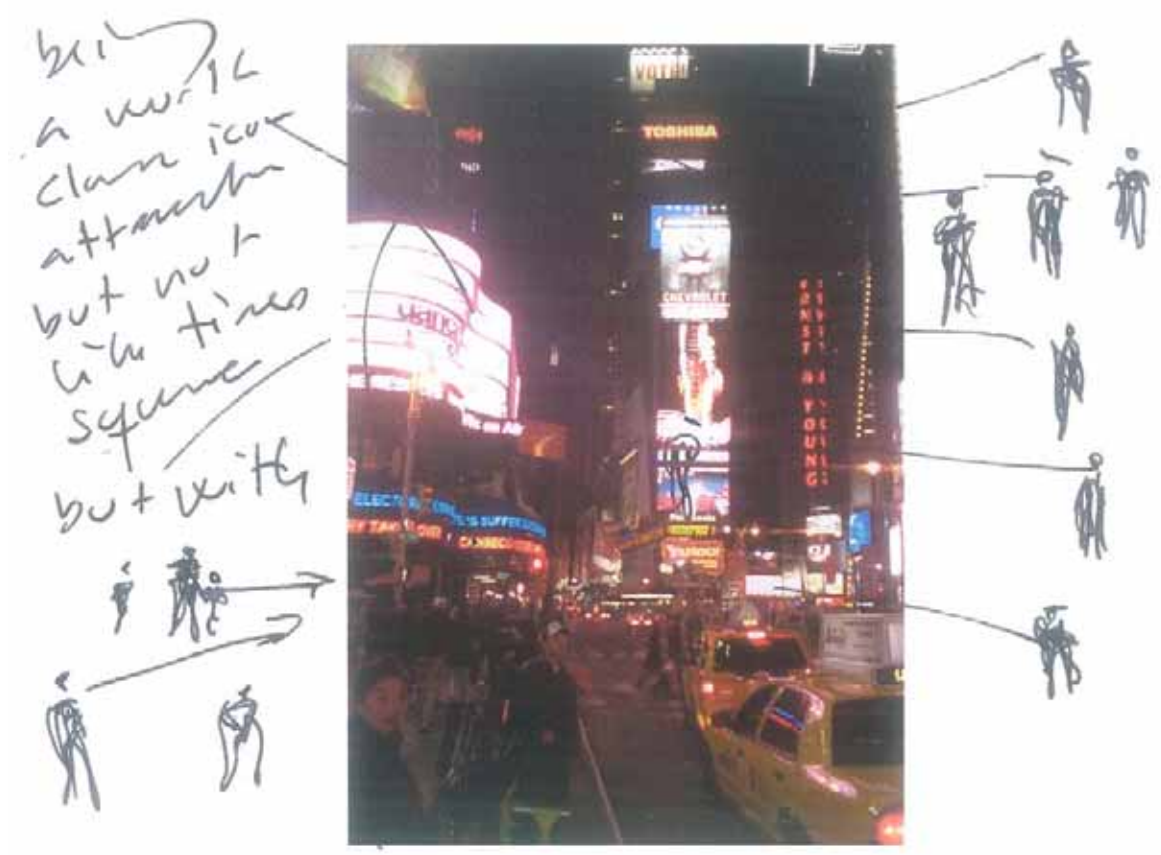


High density in the building mass so the horizontal Coney Park flows all over the island.

The master plan of Coney Island should be a community plan. The inhabitants are the owners and we are the guest

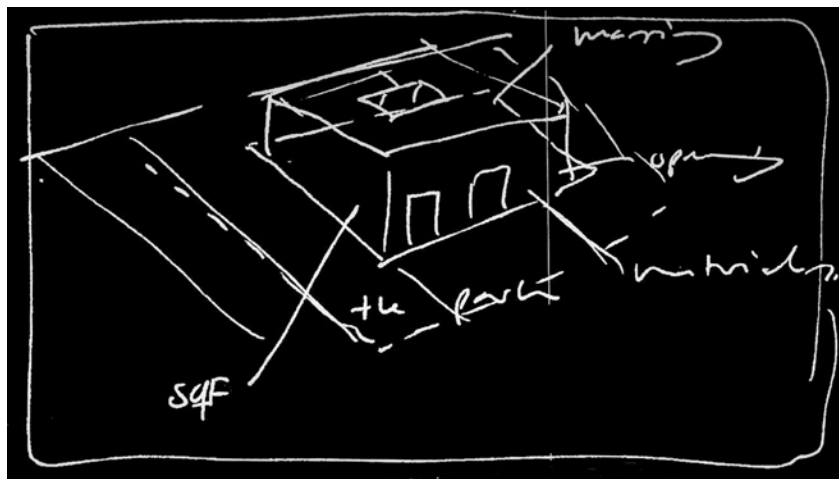


As a whole structure Coney needs to be the Coney horizontal park by the sea.

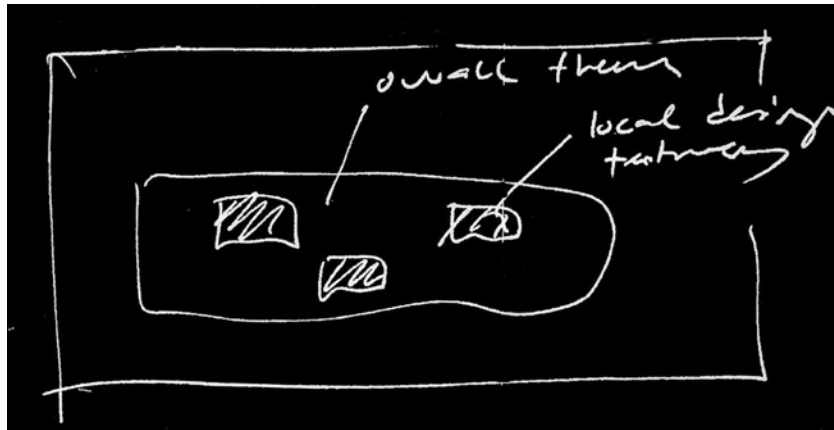


The local community as a drive

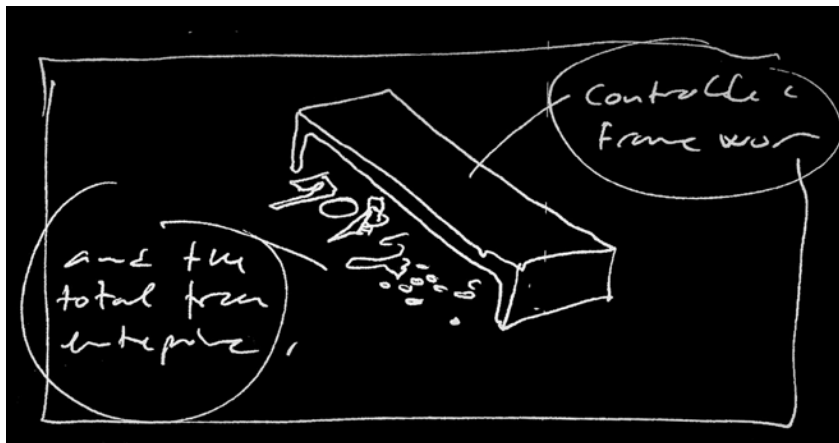
The planning tool should be a holistic approach.



Each parcel should do both, reflect the overall impression, but also be open to the diversity.



So it is a mix between control on the master plan level and free enterprise on the plot level. But the most important thing is that the perspective is a balance.



This balance will create a unique feature, not a theme park, but a park by the seashore and the boardwalk as the main structural element.

As previously stated, this structure does not work if local residents are forgotten. The community at Coney Island is a very strong and essential part of the strategy. By aiming at a strong relationship between the Coney Island amusement district and local residents, Coney Island will generate a vital support base in terms of employees and volunteers, suppliers, goodwill ambassadors.

Below a few examples of activities of community building activities:

- Community Building:
  - Parades
  - Music school
  - Artwork
  - Tool workshop
  
- Work in the Community:
  - Guides
  - Services
  - Craftsmen

- Performers
- Hosts

Therefore, in all plans of local park/centres/schools it is necessary to integrate these with the park.

The proposition is to make a development county which has shared ownership and this group press towards the plan and the demands of the area. The key word in this respect is loyalty – a (lifelong) affinity between Coney Island and local residents across age groups.



the long streets / broad area  
without rate density

