



Brooklyn's Bushwick - Urban Renewal in New York, USA: Community, Planning and Sustainable Environments

Raymond Charles Rauscher, Salim Momtaz

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This book offers an extended case study of the urban community of Bushwick, located in the Brooklyn borough of New York City. The authors begin with a broad review of the history of Bushwick and Brooklyn, from before the earliest European settlements of the 1600s, through the 18th and 19th centuries and up to the 1960s. Chapter Two begins by tracing the steep decline of the community, which culminated in catastrophic fires and looting in the wake of New York's electrical blackout of 1977 and goes on to describe the beginnings of urban planning and renewal efforts which launched the recovery of Bushwick in the 1980s to early 2000s. Chapter Three steps back from the immediacy of the community to discuss urban change from a theoretical perspective. The authors outline advances in 'sustainable urban planning' and describe how these apply to Bushwick and the wider Brooklyn community.

Chapter Four offers a detailed examination of the intent and function of New York's community board planning system, known as the Charter 197-a program. In Chapter Five the authors examine the 197-a planning process and its application in the areas of Bushwick, Williamsburg and Greenpoint in Northeast Brooklyn; Brooklyn Downtown and in Southeast Brooklyn including Coney Island. The following chapter examines a number of innovative Bushwick high schools that offer practical experience in urban planning. Drawing the urban planning experiences together, the book concludes with a look at future directions in city renewal. Emphasis here is placed on 'sustainable urban planning' and the lessons to be learned from the experience of Bushwick and Brooklyn.

The specifics of urban planning and renewal are illustrated with tables and figures. The details of planning are informed by an overarching sense of history, beginning with the dedication of the book to the memory of six Universalist writers associated with New York: Henry Thoreau, Helena Blavatsky, Henry George, Henry Miller, Arthur Miller and Walt Whitman. A rich trove of historical materials, ranging from family sketches to school rosters to rarely seen photographs, helps to keep the survey and analysis of urban planning grounded in the lives of Bushwick's residents, past, present and future.

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