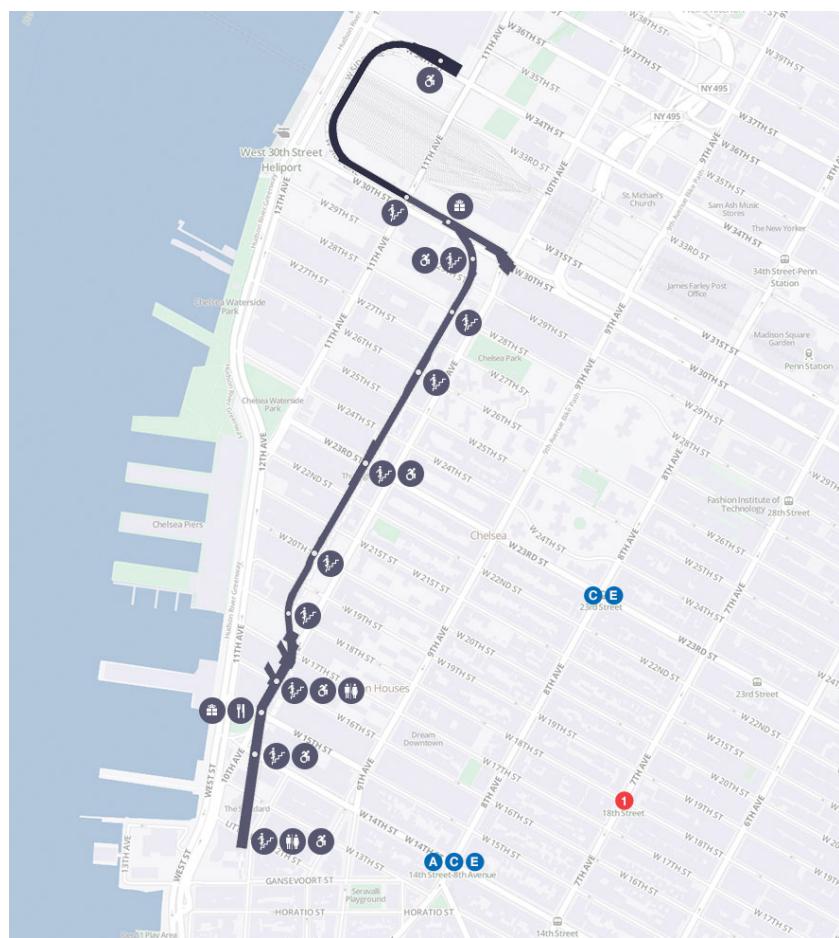


URBAN OBSERVATION: THE HIGHLINE

Background:

The High Line is an elevated public park stretching from Gansevoort street to 34th street, built on a historic freight rail line. The design for the project, which was split into three segments, is a collaboration between James Corner Field Operations, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, and Piet Oudolf and inspired by the 'Promenade Plantée', an abandoned rail line in Paris.¹

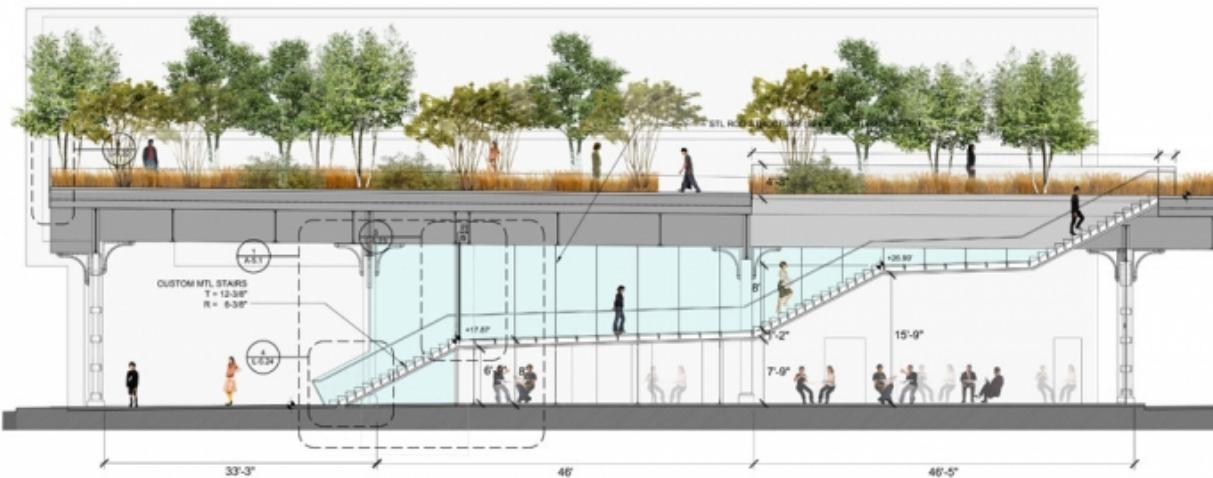


Part promenade, town square and botanical garden, the innovative and inviting space, 25 feet above the bustling Meatpacking and West Chelsea districts, connects to the street life below, as well as providing a sanctuary above. 1.45-miles

¹ Washburn, Alexandros. *The Nature of Urban Design: A New York Perspective on Resilience*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.

long, New York Magazine calls the highline 'a symbol of exactly what it means to be living in New York right now'.²

Carefully tended shrubbery surrounds you as you take in the best views of the sunset over the Hudson River or walk the old train lines beneath a mixture of stark modern condo's and old warehouses. There is a huge range of potential physical attributes to the highline as parks are thought to be the most 'didactic' of urban design projects³.



Far West Chelsea has a mixture of low and high-income housing. The Meatpacking district at the lower end of the Highline is surrounded by hot-spot restaurants and supersize clubs, whereas Chelsea plays host to more residential and small galleries, heading up towards 34th street is lower income housing and old warehouses, an area less populated by visitors.

The park, slim and stylish even commissions and produces site specific artworks/exhibitions/performances, inviting a response to the creation of the highline from various artists. Their events calendar caters mostly to family events, bringing a community dimension to the park.⁴

The Park is split into 3 segments but has various areas within those segments including: the chelsea market passage, Tiffany & Co foundation overlook, restaurant area ,Diller-Von Furstenberg sundeck and water feature, 14th st

² "The High Line: It Brings Good Things to Life." NYMag.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Feb. 2015.

³ *Designing the High Line: Gansevoort Street to 30th Street*. New York: Friends of the Highline, 2008. Print.

⁴ "The High Line | Friends of the High Line." *The High Line*. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Feb. 2015.

passage, northern spur preserve, 10th avenue square, 23rd st lawn, 26th st viewing spur and interim walkway.⁵

Use Patterns:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Intended/unintended use</u>
Families	Family walks, picnics (summer), many play areas for children- puzzles, climbing objects, introduction to flora and fauna and education of Manhattan ecology/climate change/nature conservation to children, family orientated events.
Couples	Dates & romantic walks - take in the views of the sunset, over the Hudson or of the Manhattan skyline.
Runners/Sports people	No need to worry about traffic, good space to run (not during peak hours)- motivational views. Easy to stretch on benches, water fountains., rest areas.
Groups of Friends/ People alone/ Tourists	By pass to traffic on pavements- cut through from meatpacking to chelsea, coffee spot (many coffee bars below), chill area- benches + views, cultures: art galleries of chelsea, shops, hotels and restaurants of meatpacking.

Observing the site on a cold sunday afternoon and a freezing bank holiday monday sunset, the sun definitely affected where people sat. Sheltered areas were also more popular as the narrow walkway can also act as a windtunnel.

Seating areas were less populated than usual due to ice and snow that hasn't all been cleared by park workers but the walkways were surprising pretty crowded, despite the cold temperatures. People were hovering around deck chairs near the 14th street stairwell but it became less heavily populated going towards stage 3 of the park. I think this is probably due to the uptown segment being a less popular area to walk around and people mainly sticking to walking between 23rd street and little 12th street on their way to shops, restaurants, hotels and galleries, etc.

⁵ Designing the High Line: Gansevoort Street to 30th Street. New York: Friends of the Highline, 2008. Print.

Teddy Silver
The Highline

This stretch is always reasonably busy as a pathway between Chelsea and meatpacking. There were many people alone or listening to music walking briskly on their way somewhere, or alternatively, there were a lot of couples on dates, a few runners and friends catching up. The restaurant areas which are more covered and sheltered from the elements were the most social, people were standing together in closer proximity to the rest of the park.

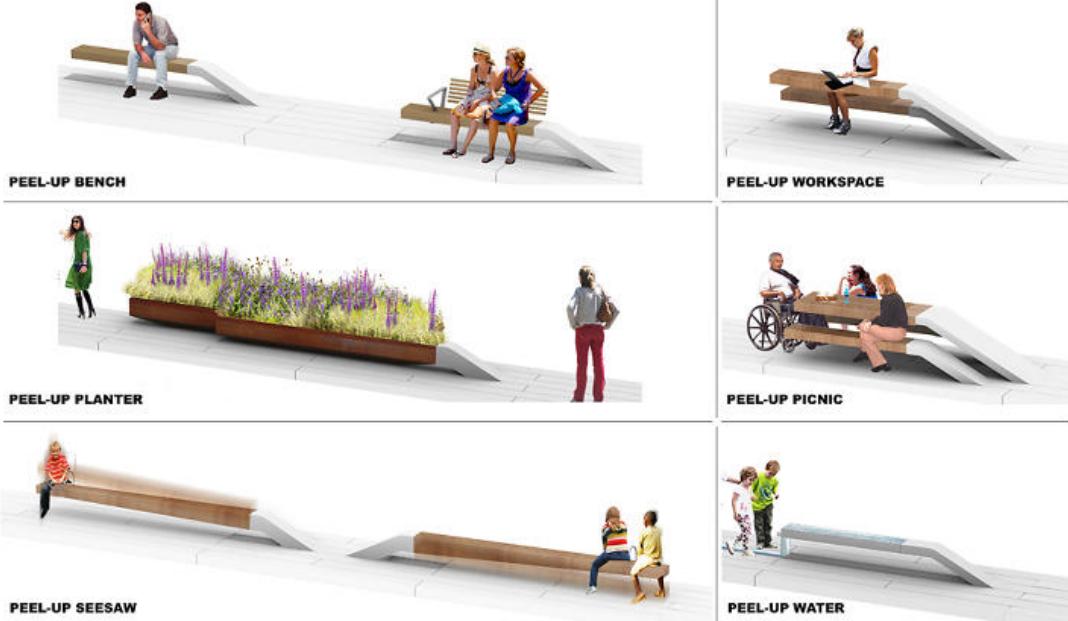
The weather definitely affects the activity pattern of the park. In the summer months, all segments of the park are packed with sunbathers, runners, families, friends and dates. This is aided by longer opening hours where people can grab a drink and meal at the restaurant area or have picnics on the grass. In the winter months it is more families with children, less runners but oddly, a lot of people observing other people.

There was a mix of millennials connected to various devices or with a partner. A mix of male and females aged between 20-40, mostly well dressed or 'trendy' people who had clearly come from the Meatpacking district.

The most social areas were where there was a variety of seating. I noticed a lot of people sharing benches and chatting about the views. There is also the opportunity for easy privacy due to the different forms of seating; the built in step benches people can sit or stand in various stances.



PEEL-UP TYPOLOGY

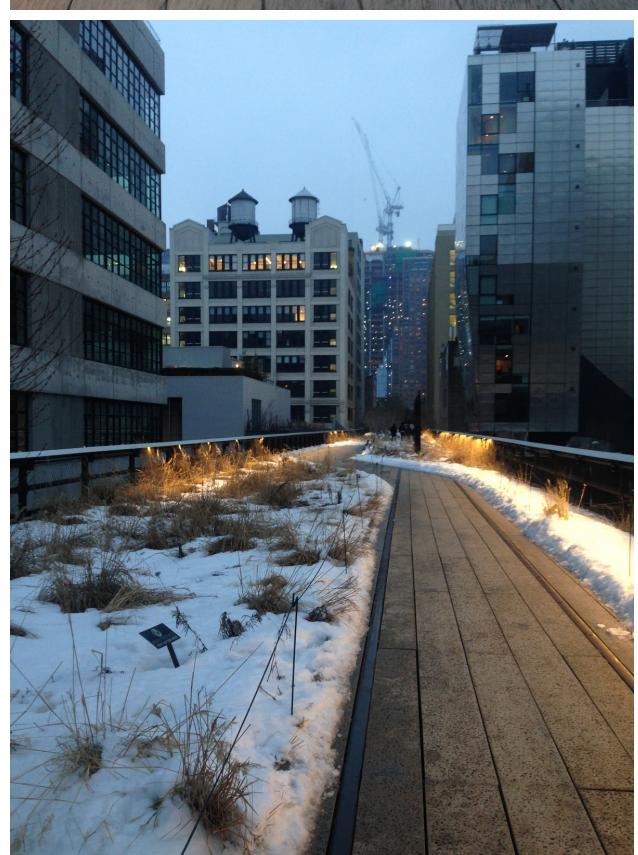
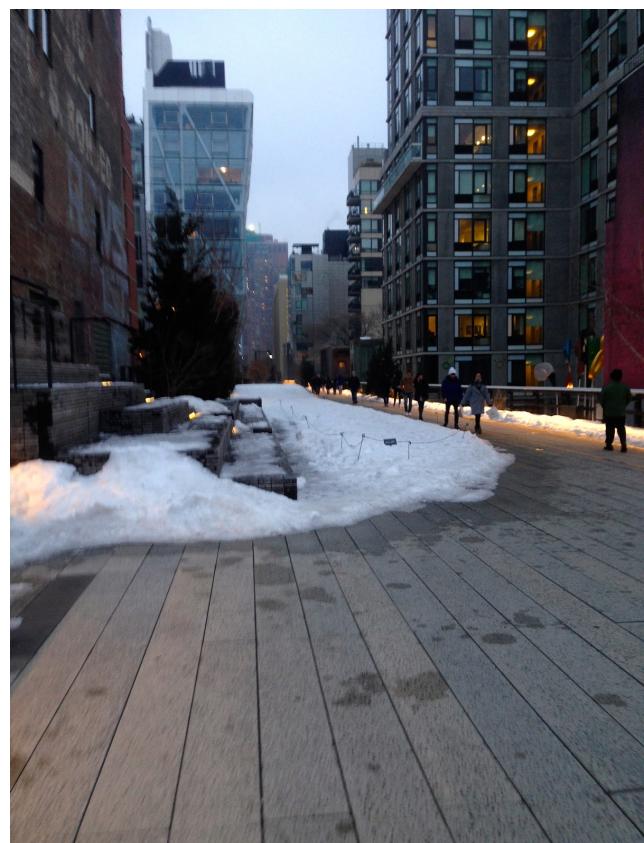


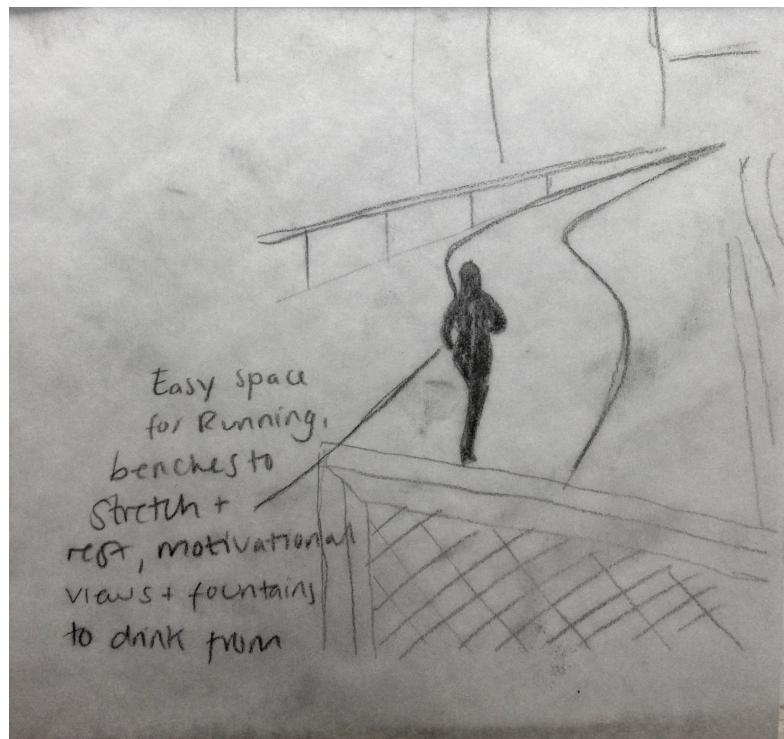
There was not that much interaction on the walkways between strangers apart from more narrow sections during congestion. Despite the large amounts of seating which was mostly on the sides or corners, people stopped in the middle of walkaways lingering and blocking pathways, especially taking pictures. There are stairwells and elevators every few blocks to get back down to the street. Oddly I noticed that the 14th st entrance, no one uses the elevator and choose to walk, however, at 23rd st, people use the elevator more than the stairs.



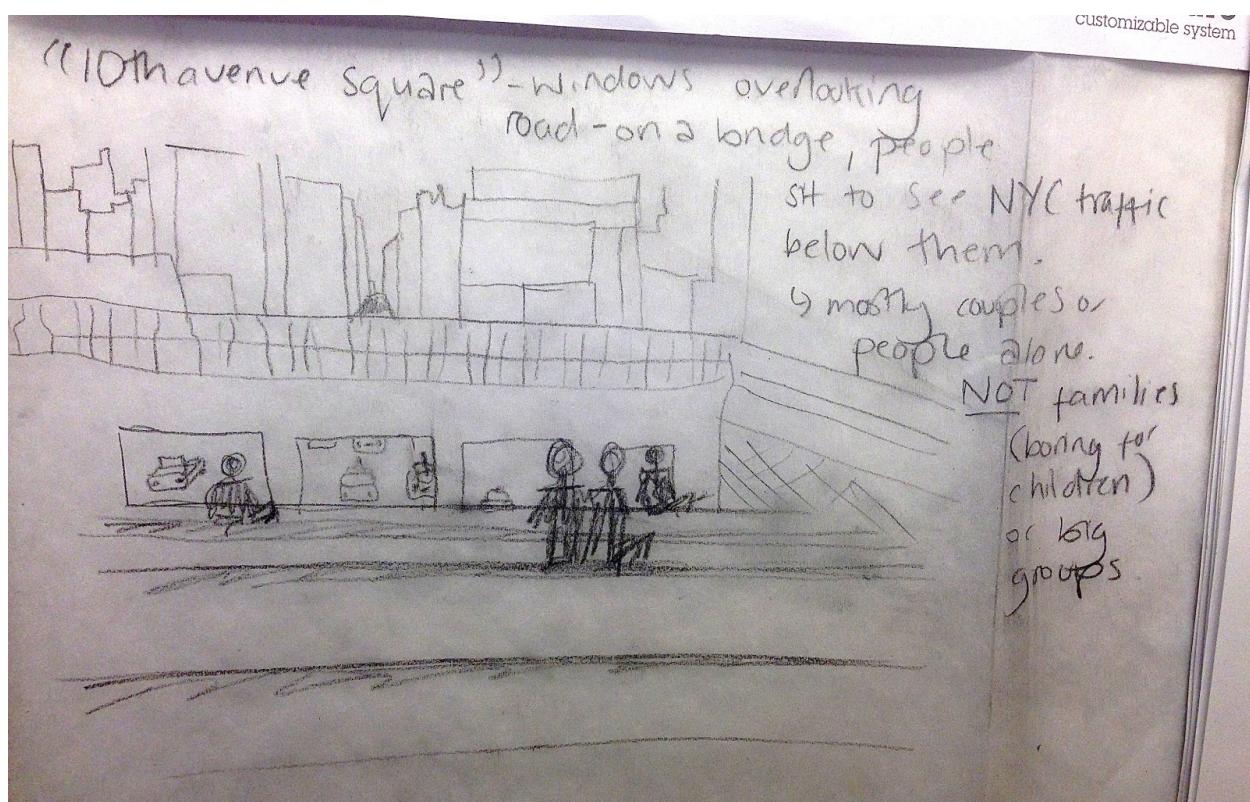
Due to the snow, many of the usually heavily populated and most popular spots to sit and gaze at the view were closed for safety precautions (ice +snow).

Teddy Silver
The Highline

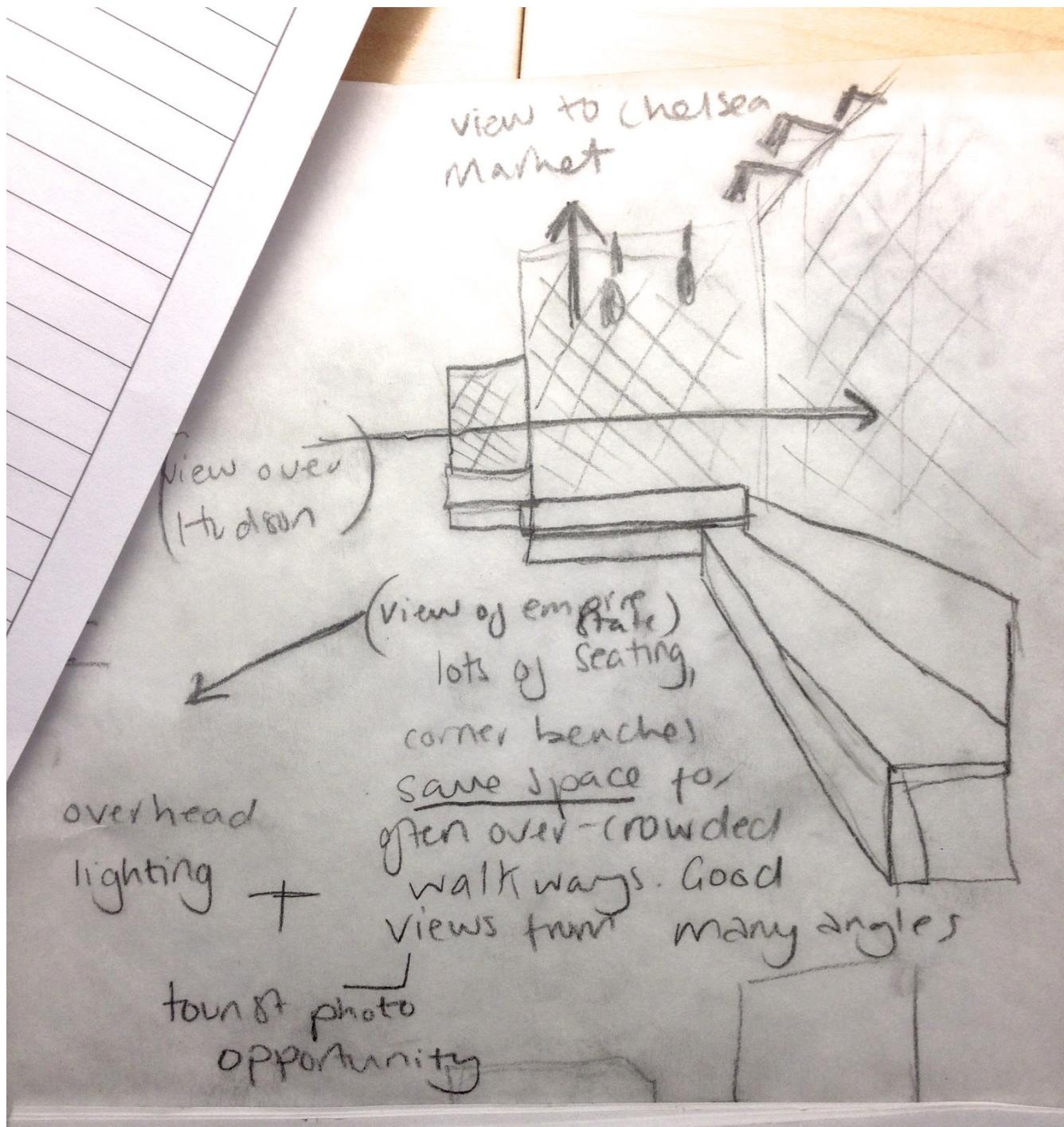




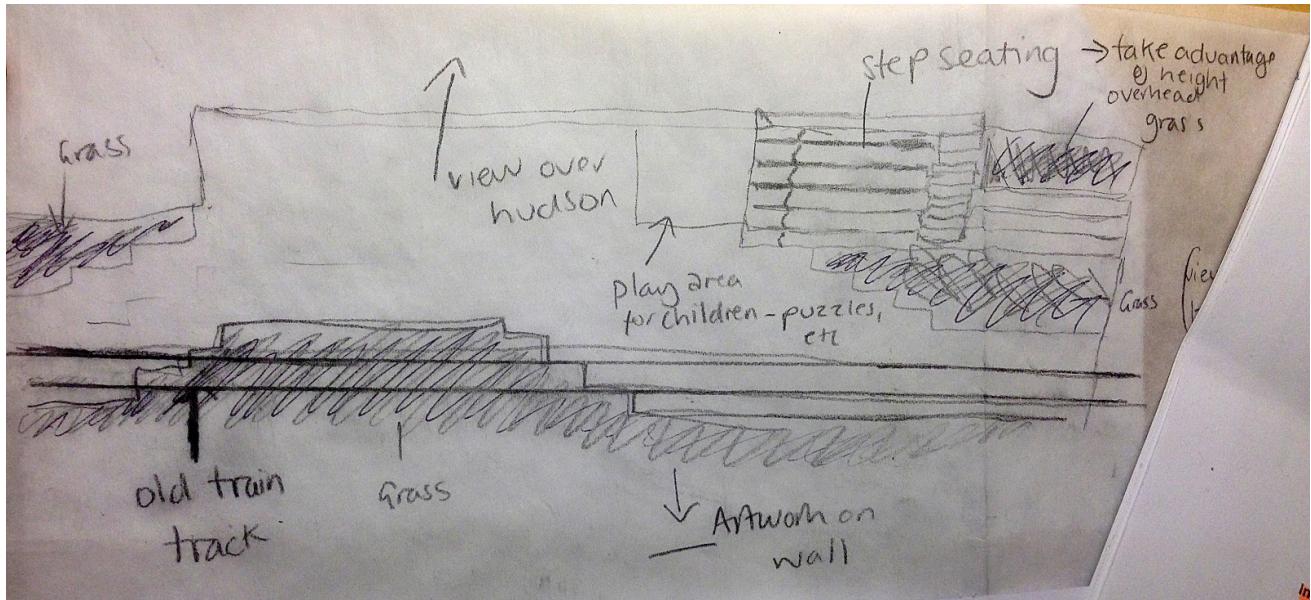
By 18th St stairwell - multiple runners went past on both sunday afternoon and bank holiday monday - wider paths, benches to stretch and rest, motivational views of Empire State building and Hudson, multiple fountains for drinking water.



10th ave sq- mostly couples and tourists- view of traffic underneath, wide seating. NOT families with children (boring for kids). Not very intimate- long bench seating.



^ more intimate corner seating popular for couples (romantic view over Hudson), tourist photo op for stopping in the middle of the pathway- view of Empire State building, Hudson and Chelsea market.



^ (Grass/play/seating area near 23rd st entrance) Popular for tourist groups - photo ops, families with children- play areas, groups of people- large amount of seating, wall of art (talking point) + view over Hudson + grass area

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