

TOURS



TOURS OF CROWN STREET

THE LONGEST WALK - 4.00p APRIL 17TH (MEET AT CROWN & HOWE)

TWO STEPS FORWARD, ONE STEP BACK - 4.30p APRIL 17TH (MEET AT CROWN & HOWE)

FIGURE-8 - 5.00p APRIL 17TH (START AT CROWN & HOWE OR CROWN & STATE)

STUDY OF THE STREET - 3.00p APRIL 20TH (MEET AT CROWN & HOWE)

SECRET LIVES OF OTHERS - 3.30p APRIL 20TH (MEET AT CROWN & HOWE)

INTRODUCTIONS - 4.00p APRIL 20TH (MEET AT CROWN & HOWE)



TOURS

INTRODUCTION

How to get to know Crown Street? Nine blocks long, this New Haven Street offers an impressive array of disparate conditions. Quietly residential at one end, nearly abandoned at the other, and bustling with various forms of commerce and nightlife in between, Crown Street is one of New Haven's most cosmopolitan streets. For this research project, we devised a collection of scripted tours that might encourage visitors to interact with the street in several unusual manners. Rather than simply visiting Crown Street to buy pizza, go to a club, or park the car, these tours call upon their participants to closely examine their environment on its own terms.

Inspired by Raymond Queneau's story, *Exercises in Style*, where an argument on a bus is recounted differently by each passenger, we came to understand Crown Street as an urban text with multiple interpretations—none complete on their own. Accepting this, we realized that to get to know Crown Street required interacting with it in a multitude of ways, from simply walking its length to crisscrossing its sidewalks, to circumnavigating its intersections.

Taken together, these tours are an invitation to question the modes whereby one confronts the street everyday. Disorienting by nature, the tours choreograph a simple but extra-ordinary trajectory through Crown Street. Thus, By defamiliarizing oneself from the city, we hope that these tours will allow their participants to understand what frames their perceptions of and scripts their interactions with the city.

TOURS

WALKING

The Longest Walk

Start: The Power Gas Station at Crown and Howe streets.

End: The unopened restaurant at Crown and Howe streets.

Instructions : Walk South East. Do not cross to the other side of the street until you reach State Street.

Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

Start: State and Crown streets

End: Crown and Howe streets

Instructions: Walk two blocks in any direction. Stop. Cross the street. Walk one block in the opposite direction. Stop. Walk two blocks forward. Stop. Cross the street. Stop. Walk one block back. Repeat.

Figure-eight Tour

Start: State and Crown streets (first participant), Howe and Crown streets (second participant)

End: Howe and Crown streets (first participant), State and Crown streets (second participant)

Instructions: First Participant: Head South East toward State Street on the Eastern sidewalk; Second Participant: head North West toward Howe Street on the Western sidewalk. When you reach the level of your partner, cross the street, and continue your trajectory on the opposite sidewalk.

Zig-Zag Tour

Start: Temple and Crown streets

End: Park and Crown streets.

Instructions: Pick a number one through ten. Cross the street at every building with an address ending in that number.

J-walking Tour

Start: Church and Crown streets

End: High and Crown streets

Instructions: Cross the street between each block but never at the intersection.

Skirting Crown Street

Start: Howe and Chapel streets

End: George and State streets

Instructions: Walk two blocks South West. Turn left. Walk one block. Turn left. Walk two blocks. Turn right. Walk one block. Turn Right. Repeat.

Visible Reseachers

Start: Refer to tours described above

End: Refer to tours described above

Instructions: As a team of two or more, don lab coats as you set out on one of the tours above.

DRIVING

Slow Drive

Start: Crown and Orange streets

End: Crown and York streets

Instructions: Locate a pedestrian before you reach Crown and church streets. Drive at his walking speed.

Wong Way Tour

Start: Crown and Howe streets

End: TBD

Instructions: From Howe Street, turn right onto Crown street. Drive the wrong way down Crown street for as far as possible.

Parallel Parking Tour

Start: State and Crown streets.

End: Howe and Crown streets

Instructions: Parallel park in every available curb-side parking space. Stay for no longer than two minutes in each spot.

Free Garage Tour

Start: Church and Crown streets

End: York and Crown streets

Instructions: Set your odometer to zero. Enter each parking garage along Crown Street. Drive to the top. Drive back down make note of the odometer reading.

Traffic Jam

Start: Church and Orange streets

End: Church and State streets

Instructions: Turn your car to cross both lanes of traffic. Stop your car. Get out. Walk away.

Public Speaker

Start: Temple and Crown streets

End: Temple and Crown streets

Instructions: Roll down your windows. Turn your speakers up. Tune in to your favorite radio station. Make 40 left turns.

SOCIAL HISTORY

Secret Lives of Others

Instructions: Identify several interior spaces visible from Crown Street. Imagine who the previous occupant was. Consider what sort of tenants used to live here. Next, consider what sort of future occupation the spaces might see. How will the building's exterior appearance change to accommodate its new tenants?

Introductions

Instructions : Introduce yourself to five different people on Crown Street

The Study of the Street

Instructions: Identify and catalog all anomalous pavement conditions on the Crown Street using photographs, drawings and rubbings.

Car Culture

Instructions: Examine the mechanic's shops, pumping stations, garages, car rental agencies on Crown Street. Make note of how these buildings contribute to or interfere with pedestrian life.

The Lowlights of Crown Street

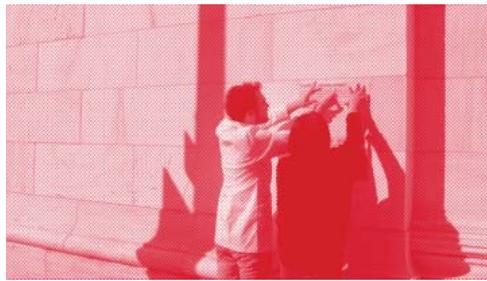
Instructions: Embark on a self- guided tour of the voids, parking lots, and shadows along Crown Street.

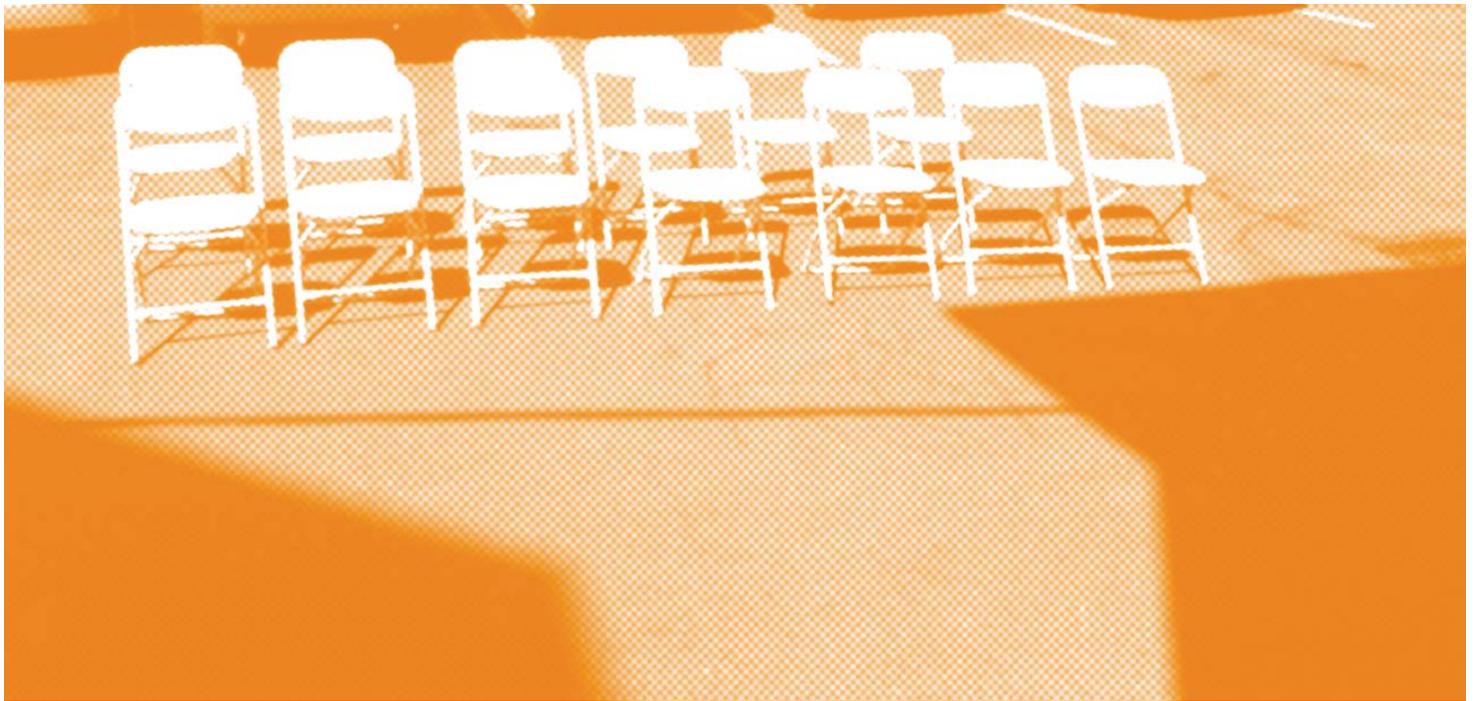
Unrealized Renewal

Instructions: Meet at Crown and Park streets for a guided anti-historical tour of Crown Street .

TOURS

REPORT





Sidewalk Conference

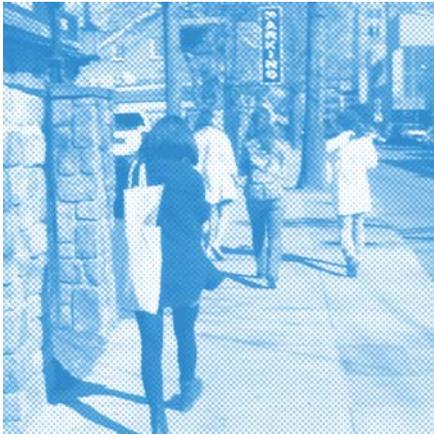
To kick off our project, we invited our classmates to attend the sidewalk conference. Once twelve folding chairs had been set up in the parking lot at 295 Crown Street, we set up a camera on a tripod and began filming.

Teo started by describing the objectives behind holding the tours. Conceived to create a range of experiences at odds with the typical pedestrian walk, these short trips (loosely based off of the French poet, Raymond Quesneau's *Exercices de Style*) aimed to undo the mechanisms of habit and efficiency which limit our apprehension of the street. The different scenarios sought to attune the "tourist" to breadth of activity and physical details which is typically tuned out.

Violette then addressed the demonstration aspect of the experiment. The tours were scripted to provide deliberately uncommon readings of the street and the researchers desired to manifest the experimental nature of this undertaking. Instead of masquerading as ordinary pedestrians, they donned a "scientific" look by wearing white lab coats—broadcasting their unusual activity on the street. Through this act, the researchers were eager to see whether and how their appearance would affect the passer-by.

Participants: Teo Quintana and Violette de la Selle (speakers), Elihu Rubin, Alice Tai, Alexander Sassarolli, Caroline VanAcker, Will Sheridan, Ivan Farr, Aisha Pasha, Brandon Hall, Antonia Devine, Henry Chan (in the public)

Duration: 3.30pm-3.45pm, April 17th



The Longest Walk

We set out from the parking lot at 295 Crown Street and first travelled up Crown Street to its terminus at Howe Street. Turning around at the Power Gas station, we headed back down towards State Street, returning eventually to our point of departure an hour after we left.

On this trip we became acquainted with the variegated whole of Crown Street. Far from being one thing or having one identity, this tour demonstrated that Crown Street morphs radically along its length from quiet residential blocks sprinkled with auto service shops, to ones dominated by urban renewal projects, then to a principally commercial street, next to a night club district, and finally to a lightly travelled side (secondary?) street. More than anything else, this walk called into question the possibility of asserting one identity over Crown Street or thinking of it as exclusively one thing. On our way back, we realized that to simply name a street forced an abstract idea over a set of spaces that oftentimes had little to do with one another. Indeed, we began to wonder why the stretch of Crown Street near the railroad tracks at 11 am should fall under the same designation as the swath by Louis Lunch as seen at 10 pm.

A number of significant encounters occurred during our walk. Near Orange Street, we had a conversation with an architect sitting beside his second floor window. Though he was not actually on the street itself, we were able to hold a conversation with him. To us, this demonstrated the sectional possibilities of a dense urban fabric. Later, at College Street, we encountered Saga Blane, who was cleaning up after opening an art space. Throughout our walk we also spotted other urban researchers interacting and influencing the natural street life.

Participants: Alice Tai, Caroline VanAcker, Will Sheridan, Violette de la Selle and Teo Quintana

Duration: 3.45pm-4.50pm, April 17th



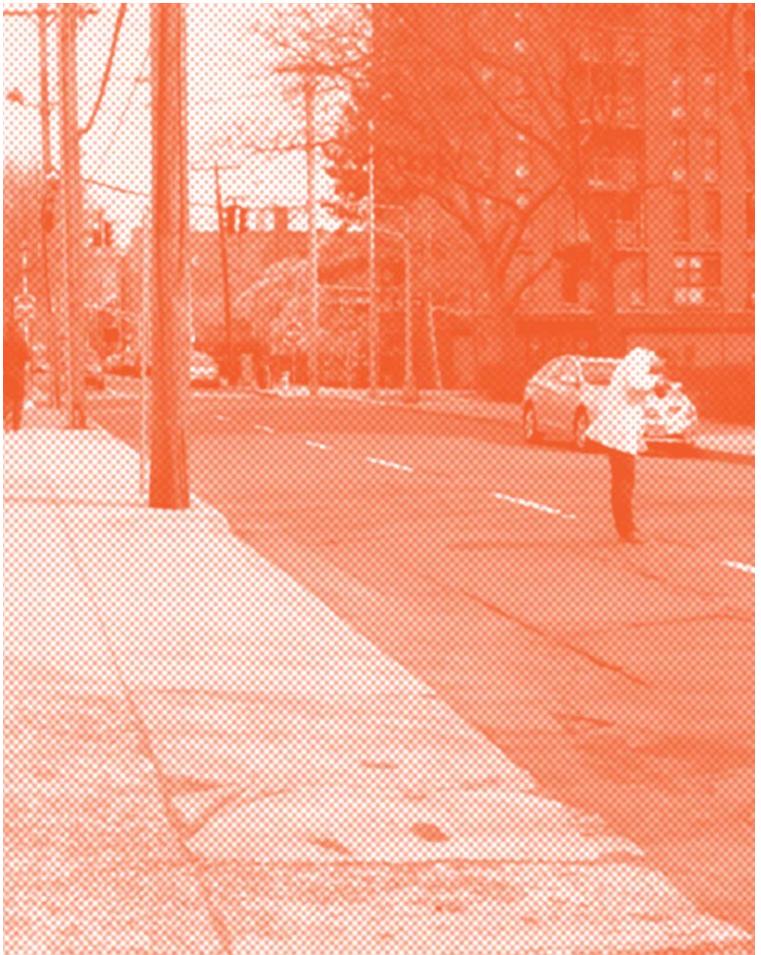
Figure-eight

Violette and I started at opposite ends of Crown Street and walked towards each other. When we crossed paths in front of the Lo Ricco Tower at 216 Crown Street we switched sides of the street. We each continued on our way until crossing paths again at 245 Crown. We crossed paths for a final time at 260 Crown Street.

The slow march of our three crossing points Westward along Crown Street demonstrates a peculiar psycho-geographical attribute of the street. The fact that the meeting point never stabilized but moved in the same direction up Crown Street reveals that it was neither the distance nor the individual that determined the walking speed but rather the urban environment. The stretch of Crown Street between college and York is the most heavily commercial portion of the street. There are more storefronts, restaurants, signs, and—at 5pm—pedestrians here than anywhere else. The subtle shift of our meeting location reveals that as the intensity of urban experience increases, one's celerity drops. As each of us walked we slowed down when there was more to see and sped up in areas with less urban content. Reflecting on this stretch of street, we both agreed that it draws an outsized proportion of the memorable locals along Crown—despite being just a short stretch of the street, it seemed like one of the largest territories of the street.

Participants: Violette de la Selle and Teo Quintana

Duration: 5.00pm-5.50pm, April 17th



Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

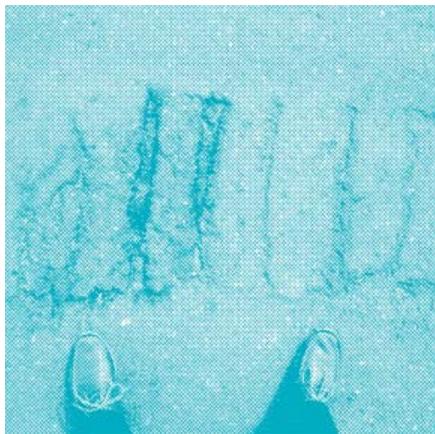
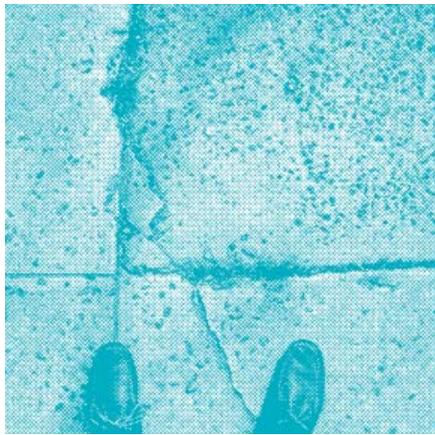
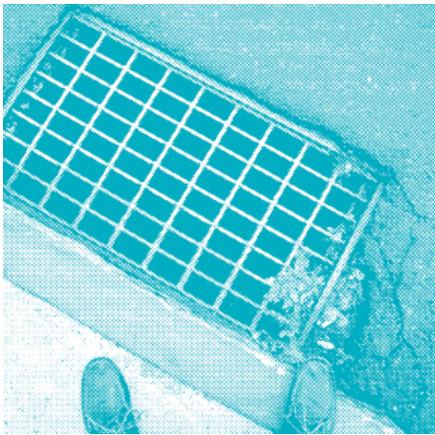
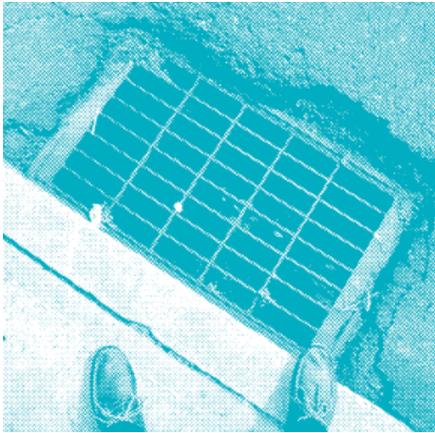
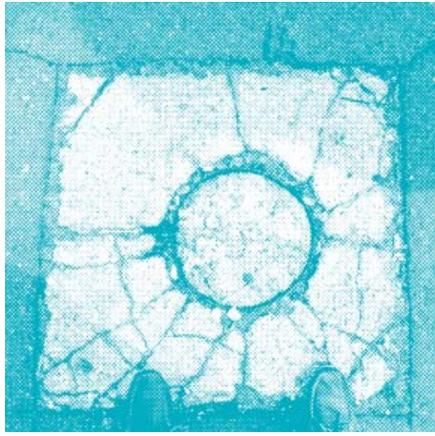
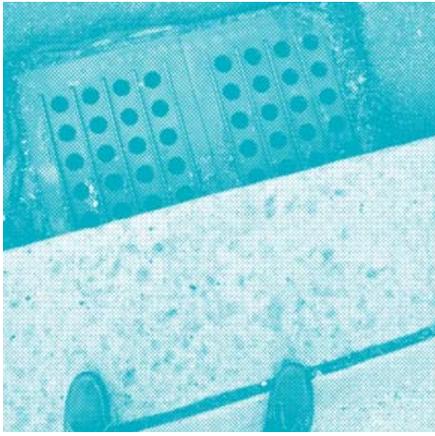
We left from High and Crown streets, walked two blocks South East on the eastern sidewalk to Temple Street. We crossed the street and walked back up to College Street, turned around and walked down to Church Street. We crossed the street and walked back up to Temple Street, turned around and walked down to Orange Street. We crossed the street, and walked back up to Church Street, turned around and walked down to State Street. We crossed the street and walked back up to Orange Street. We turned around and walked down to Sate Street.

By following the set choreography of this tour, we found our attention to be geared to very different elements. The frequent change in direction, and the repeated visit of one block allowed us to focus on what might otherwise have been considered a distraction. What is the story behind this half-eaten sandwich discarded on the sidewalk? How long has this planting bed been overgrown? Usually, a journey down Crown Street involves getting from departure point to destination, navigating between the other pedestrians and objects present on the Street to reach your goal. Here, we began to muse about the people, now absent, whose presence on the Street was still detectable through small clues.

Often the city is perceived in a state of distraction—the background to everyday life. By visiting each section of Crown Street multiple times in rapid succession, the street became much more noticeable. We noticed both what had escaped us on first blush or unreasonably occupied our attention. As a result we became both aware of our own qualities as observers and also critical of our perspective.

Participants: Violette de la Selle and Teo Quintana

Duration: 6.00pm-6.50pm, April 17th



Study of the Street

We left from the Power Gas Station at Howe and Crown streets, headed South East on the eastern sidewalk until we reached State Street. We crossed the street, turned around and walked back to Howe Street. Along the way, we stopped to photograph, sketch, and collect rubbings of conditions we found unusual along the way.

Looking down as we proceeded up the sidewalk provided for a very different reading of the street. Signs of its constant use and of the high volume of traffic that circulates upon it are reflected in the worn surfaces, the disappearing paint marks, the potholes. Many grates punctuate the roadbed and the sidewalks. Its materiality—the age and abuse it attests to are at once unique and totally ordinary. These call attention to the street's use as an artery for managing large quantities of rainfall and melting snow, and distributing power. These practical aspects of the street prevented us from understanding its particularities and localized condition. Without looking at the buildings, the businesses or the other pedestrians, we could distance ourselves from the specificities of Crown Street, which make it a place familiar to us, and appreciate its role as a vector in a networked system.

Participants: Violette de la Selle and Teo Quintana

Duration: 3.00pm-4.50pm, April 20th



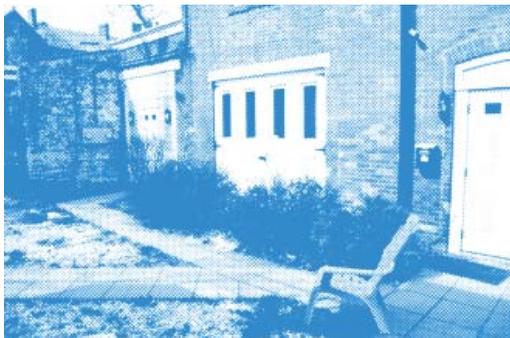
Introductions

Violette climbed the steps of the brownstone at 277 Crown Street, and rang the doorbell hoping to introduce herself to whomever would greet her. Several minutes later, having received no response, she walked back down the steps. A few moments later, in front of Geronimo's restaurant (271 Crown Street), Teo introduced himself to a man passing-by.

Attempting these introductions asked another level of extroversion from the participants. Though the researchers were already hoping to establish some communication to the greater public by wearing the lab coats, this verbal, direct interaction seem to confront the next level of street etiquette. When addressing a stranger on the street, one usually has a purposeful motivation to do so—indicating that someone's shoe lace has come undone, for instance. Either researcher had rehearsed a concise dialog to guide the eventual short conversation, in order to put the interlocutor (and himself) at ease, and render the experience less odd. While the tour only asked for the act of an introduction to be performed, Teo proceeded to ask the stranger how much he came to Crown Street and why, what his feelings toward the street were, and the distances he would typically travel on Crown Street. Similarly, without the justification to knock on someone's door which a solicitor or campaign worker might have was prepared to explain the project and lay out a few spurious "research questions" so as to not bewilder the eventual resident, or loose countenance.

Participants: Violette de la Selle and Teo Quintana

Duration: 5.00pm-5.15pm, April 20th



The Secret Lives of Others

Travelling down Crown Street, we identified three structures at numbers 401 ½, 277, and 254 and imagined both their past and future lives.

This tour's premise follows from the idea that to a large extent a building's importance is a product not of its actual history but of its apparent or even imagined history. Baseless or not, the speculation, lore, and tall tales that build up around unusual buildings can have a sensible impact on a particular part of a street.

401 ½ Crown Street.

Tucked away almost out of sight behind number 401, number 401 ½ is easily overlooked from the street. We encountered the house unexpectedly, noticing it only when we turned to investigate a particularly wide parking alley. As we got closer to this colonial curiosity, a few obvious facts about its being leapt to our attention. Set so far back from Crown Street, it must either have been attached to a house on Chapel Street or else predated the street entirely. Its brick façade, pedimented roof, and arched doorway were hallmarks of an uncommon era—certainly the house was much older than number 401, which blocked it from the street. Approaching closer, we noticed hooks in the eaves and infill brick around the windows. Given these factors we concluded that number 401 ½ must have been a carriage house for a barn building belonging to a now-demolished farmhouse in the near vicinity. This little curiosity allowed us to elaborate a preexisting spatial order on Crown Street.

Participants: Violette de la Selle and Teo Quintana

Duration: 5.30pm-6.15pm, April 20th



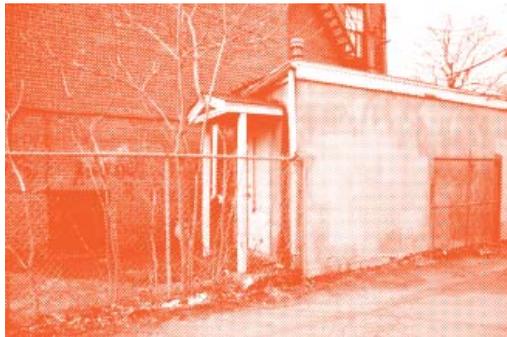
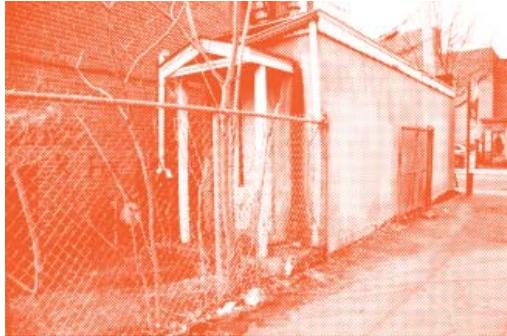
The Secret Lives of Others (cont'd)

277 Crown Street

The stained glass over the doorway of this baronial brownstone gives its former identity away. In reversed type Hebrew letters declare the dwelling to be the Shablai House. It would seem obvious then that the house must have been occupied for a time by a Jewish students union. The excessively off-kilter mezuzah implies that a Jewish organization might still reside within. Nonetheless, the house seems a little worse for wear. The carpets and lighting seem old while parts of the brownstone facing are beginning to peel off. Yet for the foreseeable future this building will likely be in the hands of its present owners. Thus 277 retains a mysterious aura. Does it remain a religious outpost on Crown Street? Does it offer its visitors a social gathering space or does it home to a hand-picked few?

Participants: Violette de la Selle and Teo Quintana

Duration: 5.30pm-6.15pm, April 20th



The Secret Lives of Others (cont'd)

254 Crown Street

This little shed has seen better days. With its Lilliputian cornice and classical motifs, it was once a proud outbuilding. Walking around back, an overgrowth of trees reinforces our belief that the structure has been long-abandoned. The boarded up storefront windows imply that it once housed a small shop, perhaps a luncheonette. Likely the shop closed down as businesses in downtown New Haven dwindled during the 1970s. In the future, it could easily return to being a lunch counter or a trinkets store. Its small stature though will forever limit its usefulness. At best it will always be a space for a business to grow out of.

Participants: Violette de la Selle and Teo Quintana

Duration: 5.30pm-6.15pm, April 20th

TOURS

REFLECTIONS

Visiting and re-visiting Crown Street on this series of tours gave us the opportunity to read the street in a myriad of ways. Collapsed together, these experiences indicate the breadth of activity and of phenomena and explain how Crown Street evades a single synthesized description.

With every visit our reading of Crown Street did not necessarily become more detailed, more complete, providing for the “zooming in” that might have been expected. Instead, as each tour drew our attention to another facet of Crown Street, it added another layer to the palimpsest. We came to appreciate how, in its present condition, the street carries the form of far-removed interventions and offers clues of recent activity. Additionally, while one journey prompted a deciphering of the various zones of the street, allowing it to be broken down into a series of districts, another tour turned our focus to the regional infrastructural network that this corridor belongs to.

In embarking on these tours, we immediately broke from the typical end-goal which warrants a walk down the street. Rather than walking in order to arrive somewhere, we were walking to perform the prescribed choreography. This marked the first rupture from habitual norms. Though the specific tours might have asked us for an additional level of unconventional behavior, from the beginning, we considered our comportment to be extravagant.

We meant for the uniforms—the lab coats we wore during these tours, to signal this unusual behavior. It is hard to tell however, whether these costumes were noticed by our fellow pedestrians. How were they to know, in fact, that we were not coming from the medical school? If the combination of lab coat and camera may have seemed odd, did they take the time to think about this? Ultimately, we can only be certain that by wearing the lab coats, we were operating in a more self-conscious manner, as we were expecting to be noticed.

We proceeded on Saturday’s tours in an even more self-aware manner, given that no outside participants showed up. As the authors of the scripts, we had to weigh whether our scripts were leading us to the sort of discoveries we had anticipated or not. In our report, we made every effort to be loyal to the experiences we shared, rather than those which we had expected.