

Commandant's House & Vinegar Hill

Built in 1807, this Federal-style mansion served as home to the Brooklyn Navy Yard's commanders. The first purpose-built structure at the Yard, the **Commandant's House** is no longer technically part of the Yard, as this National Historic Landmark was sold to a private buyer in 1979. Further down Hudson Ave you can find some of the oldest buildings in the **Vinegar Hill Landmark Historic District**. This area became a home to many Navy Yard workers in the 19th century, when it was known as "Irishtown." You can see the Yard's history depicted in a **mural along Navy St**, created by local students and the Groundswell Community Mural Project. Keep heading down Navy St and you can stop in at the Gatehouses, home of **Kings County Distillery**, which has continued the long tradition of whiskey distilling in this neighborhood.

Working Waterfront

If you come to the Brooklyn Navy Yard via the Astoria route of the NYC Ferry, you will see a very active waterfront in Wallabout Bay. Pier C is the **NYC Ferry Homeport**, where boats are docked, crewed, supplied, and maintained for the whole ferry system. You will also see the cranes and dry docks of **GMD Shipyard**, the largest ship repair facility in the harbor. **Dry Docks #1 (1851), #5 and #6 (1942)** are still used today to repair tugboats, barges, ferries, Coast Guard cutters, and more, and nearly all of the cranes still operate. You will also see fireboats of **FDNY Marine 6**, and over at **Piers J and K**, large bulk cargo ships bring in sand and gravel for making concrete at New York Sand and Stone and Lehigh Cement. If you take the ferry, follow signs past **Dock 72 (2018)** that will direct you to **Building 77** and the exit to Flushing Ave. You can also hitch a ride with **Optimus Ride**, who is testing self-driving vehicles in the Yard.

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Brooklyn Navy Yard Perimeter Guide

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The Brooklyn Navy Yard was founded in 1801 and for 165 years, in war and in peace, the Yard repaired, outfitted, and modernized thousands of Navy ships, developed one of the most skilled workforces in the nation, and launched sailing frigates, ironclads, aircraft carriers, and storied battleships such as USS *Arizona* and *Missouri*. The Yard grew over time, and the 300-acre campus you see today took its final shape in World War II, when they Yard doubled in size, expanded its workforce to 72,000, and became the busiest shipyard in the world. In 1966, the Navy closed the Yard and sold the property to the City of New York, and today it is managed by the non-profit Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation, who's mission is to create good-quality jobs for local people in manufacturing, technology, and creative industries. The Yard supports over 450 businesses and 11,000 jobs – more than the 9,600 when the shipyard closed – in sectors ranging from food manufacturing to ship repair, film production to 3D printing.

While much of the Yard is not accessible, there are many public spaces around the perimeter, and you can explore so much of the past and present of the Yard and the many neighborhoods it touches. Our team at Turnstile Tours has been developing and leading tours of the Yard since 2008 with BNVC, and we hope you will join us for a tour of the entire Yard when we are back up and running. The distance of this self-guided tour from Vinegar Hill to the Naval Cemetery is **1.5 miles**, plus many recommended detours.

Naval Hospital & Cemetery

When you pass the main gate of Steiner Studios at Washington Ave, the landscape of the Yard changes from brick and concrete to a dense forest. This is the **Naval Hospital**, established in 1838, it treated sailors and their families for 110 years. You can catch a glimpse of the marble colonnade of the grand hospital building if you look through the fence at Ryerson St. This New York City Landmark and the surrounding 24 acres is leased to Steiner Studios, who plan to preserve and repurpose the historic structures for film production. On the edge of the hospital grounds is a publicly-accessible green space, the **Naval Cemetery Landscape**. An active cemetery from 1831 to 1910, more than 2,000 people were buried there, yet when the remains were disinterred and relocated in 1926, fewer than half were moved. As a result, the site remains hallowed ground than cannot be built on, so the **Brooklyn Greenway Initiative** transformed the space into a memorial meadow, a haven for animals, birds, insects, and humans in a neighborhood where greenery is lacking.

Steiner Studios

The largest industry in the Yard today is film and television production. **Steiner Studios** opened in 2004, and it has since become the country's largest film studio outside California. The studio lot is a mixture of new sound stages and repurposed historic buildings. **25 Washington Ave (1942)**, topped by two radio towers connected by catenary wires, was part of the Naval Applied Sciences Lab, where they worked on projects ranging from sonar to missile guidance to heat- and cold-resistant materials, and today it houses various production departments and **Brooklyn College's Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema**. Next to it is the former **Foundry (1942)**, which is now a sound stage. If you peek through the fence right at the corner of Flushing Ave and Williamsburg St you can glimpse a little piece of movie history – that small brick building was once the **Motion Picture Exchange (1942)**, which distributed films to ships at sea from World War II through the 1980's. You also may see some of the Yard's feral cats, who also have an historical connection – an estimated 1,500 lived at the Yard when it closed in 1966, as they kept rodents off ships and out of warehouses.

Public Gateways: Buildings 77 & 92

While much of the Yard remains off-limits, the Brooklyn Navy Yard has worked to push back the fences and open up more areas to public use. The first such project was the **Brooklyn Navy Yard Center at BLDG 92 (2011)**, which houses the permanent exhibition on the Yard's past, present, and future, hosts school programs, tours, and public events, and is home to the Yard's **Employment Center**. The building is housed inside the historic **Marine Commandant's House (1857)** with a LEED Platinum-certified addition. Check out the exhibits inside, but also take a look in the forecourt at the **Tribute Wall**, which honors veterans of the Yard, including a memorial plaque to the 50 workers killed in the fire aboard the USS *Constellation* in 1960, the deadliest accident in the Yard's history. **Building 77** was constructed in 1941 as the nerve center of the Yard, a massive warehouse topped with offices that coordinated the activities of 72,000 workers in World War II. This building recently went through a major renovation, opening up the first floor for public access to the **Food Manufacturing Hub**, where you can find **Russ & Daughters, Transmitter Brewing, Grandchamps**, and more.

Much of the large-scale housing in the neighborhood was built for the Yard during World War II. The **Walt Whitman** and **R.V. Ingersoll Houses** opened in 1942 as the Fort Greene Houses, built for military personnel and essential workers and turned over to NYCHA after the war. Marking their military origins, the **Wallabout Houses** have two large eagles on the west cornice, and the nearby **Clinton Hill Co-Ops (Clinton Ave & Myrtle Ave)** are decorated with symbols of different US Navy services.

Admirals Row

Flushing Ave was once lined by stately homes for the Navy Yard's top brass, built between 1864 and 1901 and known as **Admirals Row**. When the Yard closed in 1966, the federal government retained this property, but the buildings were soon abandoned and fell into disrepair. In 2012, the City of New York got control of the site and set out to fulfill a promise to the community: to save two of the buildings, **Quarters B (1864)** and the **Timber Shed (1833)**, and to build a grocery store. **Wegmans** opened their doors in October 2019, but before they did, they focused on local hiring, recruiting hundreds of workers from the nearby **Farragut, Walt Whitman, and Ingersoll** public housing developments. But Wegmans is only part of the project: **Buildings 303 and 212** were also newly built to accommodate manufacturing and creative tenants.

Two Parks with Navy Yard History

Brooklyn's two oldest parks are just outside the Navy Yard. **Commodore Barry Park**, originally known as City Park, opened in 1836. During World War I, the Navy took it over to build temporary barracks, and in 1955, it was renamed in honor of Commodore John Barry, an Irish-born veteran of the Revolutionary War, who recommended in 1798 building a public shipyard along the Brooklyn shore. **Fort Greene Park** also has a connection to the Revolution, when prison ships of the occupying British moored in **Wallabout Bay**. More than 11,500 patriots died on those ships, and a memorial to them was built in Vinegar Hill in 1808, replaced by another in Fort Greene Park (then known as Washington Park) in 1873, and the current **Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument** was dedicated in 1908, the largest memorial to the Revolution in the US.

