

Orientation Dec. 1
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Sun effect
Crossing Harvard Bridge. Again facing a glaring sun; the skyline of Back Bay and Beacon Hill are very much silhouetted. No sense of color of facades or form of front planes. I start noticing other monuments as we approach, including the Customs House tower which I have been calling the clock tower, and some buildings in Copley Sq. which I have seen in looking up Huntington Ave. other than John Hancock. You see these monuments on the approach to Boston, and is very low sense of depth. Everything is left or right, but not front or back.

Crossing Commonwealth on Mass. Ave. I notice that to my right Commonwealth is of a somewhat different character, more limestone than to the left and commercial signs. About 2 1/2 or 3 blocks down the street the character seems to break down almost completely. This is true of Newbury St. which is a little broken down before it reaches Mass. Ave., but at Mass. Ave. the alignment changes and this further makes Mass. Ave. a boundary for Back Bay.

From Boylston or from Huntington St. the tremendous expanse of the railway yards is quite noticeable. But here on Mass. Ave. this sense of the railway yards is not present. From here, one has the sense of that there is continuous development between these two major east-west streets.

From Huntington Ave., looking south, one can already sense the approach of the South End, although Mass. Ave. is not strongly part of this area. Looking down Huntington, to my right, I see that the YMCA sign and the sky, which has acted as one pole of Huntington Ave., is 3 or 4 blocks west of Mass. Ave. I had thought that it would be east of Mass. Ave. before one reaches Symphony Hall.

Turning left from Mass. Ave. and doubling back to Boylston St., which we had intended to take. Going back up Mass. Ave. with the sun at our back, the impression is quite different. Color stands out much more strongly, and here one gets more of a sense of disorganization of the area because of this riot of colors, each distinctly expressed but none really distinct.

Turning right onto Boylston St., proceeding towards Copley. One block off Mass. Ave. we begin to sense the tremendous gash caused by the railway yards. On my left continuous development of a very inconsistent character, both in as to heights of buildings and material. Development picks up again on my right about 3 blocks down and 2 blocks from Copley Sq. Now I lose the sense of the area of Huntington St. and below, and my view is confined to more local matters.

Approaching Copley, I am struck by the contrast of the old church with the John Hancock Bldg. behind it, and by the sudden improvement in the character of the shops at my left.

Turning right now onto Huntington. Proceeding down Huntington, 2 blocks beyond Copley, at Exeter St., we pass through a new space with low buildings on my right, scattered like jagged teeth, behind which I can see the railway yards. Then the view is closed again and I get the feeling of Huntington St. itself, with some sense of a sort of artist's promenade but not as strongly as I used to think. Too many dinky stores. I see now, in depth, the relation of YMCA sign to Symphony Hall. I only wish the roof of Symphony Hall, which is the most prominent feature from here, were more significant. It looks like a Howard Johnson's.

Now passing on the right that wonderful depressed green area with the fanciful dome structure to the north, and a red brick wall to the west. The curving street facade of Mass. Ave. below Columbus is quite strong and interesting, with the bugged-out apartment houses being developed in elevation as against disappearing in perspective. This dog-leg occurs below Columbus which we have just turned on to the left. Now towards the Common which I can see by the church spire at Park and Tremont Streets.

color in windows, with the red brick facades. This turns what might be a sort of 'Hell-like' feeling into a very gay feeling. The oval square in the South End which I have commented on is by no means the only ones. There are others which are little more than widenings of the street with somewhat narrower grass and tree strips in the middle. One here between ~~Sturdevant~~ and Tremont has a wonderful stone church spire at its end. Very strong special feeling although it is only really two facades.

Turning left from Columbus onto Dartmouth we are approaching the Back Bay Station. Turning right now just beyond Back Bay and before we get to Copley, we approach a large open space with a great deal of parking in it, with John Hancock in front of us. Following along Stuart and crossing Clarendon, still it feels like it is part of the Back Bay grid, but it is certainly not related to Back Bay with the cold stone facades of John Hancock and the other tall buildings. Berkeley St., one block beyond ~~Dartmouth~~ ~~xxx~~ Clarendon, I am a little surprised to find here.

Passing through another triangular space with a little grass and an insignificant barn sculpture in the middle. I find it very hard to organize these many spaces between the _____ and Copley.

Now turning left and coming into Park Sq. and the barn sculpture which I have seen before. This is just down from the corner of the Common, and at Charles St. we turn up Charles. The first thing that struck my eye was the tall element on Beacon St. which stood out in profile and then began to stand out because of the colors in the windows and its narrowness.

Proceeding across Beacon St. now on Charles. Beacon Hill to my right. Charles St. in this area has a rather pleasant feeling, and one feels that it is in a commercial way related to Beacon Hill of a higher status, though the shops are not pretentious. The shops are old and in ~~xxx~~ many cases rather quaint in advertising practices.

Bridge
conf.

I discovered an ~~xxx~~ error that I made temporarily last time, that is that the subway from Cambridge does not cross beyond Longfellow. It crosses on Longfellow and passes through the traffic circle where we are now. Going now out of the traffic circle and along the river, to the north.

I am struck by the fanciful white domes on my left. These seem to be on an island or a very strong or confined peninsula which I didn't know existed. We have just passed under an elevated structure which gives me the impression it's a branch off of the artery; is north of North Station. The other elevated structure by North Station is a streetcar line. I had thought that the branch of the artery was further south.

Turning left now under the elevated subway with the North Station on my left, the Customs House Tower on my right. Am now passing under the artery which seems to head directly toward the Customs House Tower. Am now passing beyond the elevated subway which turns to my left, and am very highly confused. Ahead, slightly to my left, I see the cranes of the Navy Yard. We are now on Commercial St. which I know to run into Atlantic Ave.

Waterfront
disapp.

The waterfront, as such, does not exist up here by the Navy Yard. I have always it thus but I think it ends much further south. In this area there are large warehouses on both sides of the street and an occasional loose area which doesn't seem to have which doesn't seem to have any particular use, but allowing a glimpse of the Navy Yard. I have a conceptual waterfront which doesn't seem to display itself. Too many warehouses on my left of a tall and fat structure instead of the long, low buildings that I associate with the waterfront.

Now we are abreast of the market area which I first distinguish by the backs of the buildings drawn by the MIT students and now by the sense of the frame warehouses of the part I call _____ I am surprised to find that artery comes down tangent to Atlantic Ave., west of the Customs House Tower. This is where the active part of the artery ends and the new construction ~~xxxx~~ begins. The large vacant space left by the artery subs _____ the business district with its tall stone facades, in a very unpleasant way. A sense of Huxley's _____

the
turn

Now at South Station. I realize that Atlantic Ave. does not take a strong right turn jog; it simply turns right at a few angles. One of the reasons why the Boston office district seems to be more unpleasant than Manhattan are the large vacant spaces which allow one to see the building as a whole. This is rarely true in Manhattan. Here at South Station this is a very unpleasant feeling. The contrast of the smaller, older buildings makes them look all the more ridiculous.

Federal

Turning now from Atlantic up ~~High~~ St. towards the business district. Left onto High St. which seems to parallel Atlantic Ave.; I had thought of High St. as being perpendicular and running perpendicular to Washington. I see now the fallacy with which I have tried to discern the boundaries of the market area by making streets perpendicular from Washington St. down to Atlantic Ave. Summer St., which we are on, curves quite radically and it does not go straight from the Jordan-Filene area to South Station.

Approaching Washington St. I know I am in the heart of the business district by the sense of style in the windows in Jordans and Filenes and the tremendous number of people watching Santa Claus and other Christmas decorations.

Turning right onto Washington St. One of the first sights I see which is quite striking is the Old South Church, with its green steeple, red brick tower and white cupola. Turning left off of Washington St., heading up towards the Common, I am surprised to find another street paralleling Tremont and Washington between them. I realize now we were not heading for the Common on Bromfield St. but were heading for the cemetery back of the church which faces the Common on Park and Tremont. This tells me that the Summer intersection of Washington is very close to a projection of Park St. There is a very complex here, with opportunity to see even great facades beyond and a forest of stone monuments at the low level. Nice contrast of the trees with the wrought iron fence.

Turning right now onto Park St. My opinion that the State House is on the corner of Park and Beacon is confirmed now; I was a little uncertain of this. I see that Beacon St. ends 2 blocks beyond Park and starts on the way down before ending.

Turning left now _____ of the State House, with the large open space and parking in the middle. This part, on top of the hill, has very little relation to Beacon Hill. Turning left, going downhill on Pinckney St. or rather going uphill but I know we will soon go downhill. I'm a little bit surprised at this change of slope. Ahead, as we proceed downhill, we see the river, with MIT on the other side. This tells me that the streets that go up the long side of the slope are at a somewhat different angle from what I have been showing; they would be more nearly east and west. Going through Louisberg Sq. The gridiron of Beacon Hill is by no means as strongly rectilinear as I had thought. There are quite a number of changes, which in many cases help in a ~~spacial~~ ~~feeling~~ ~~well-~~ known spacial feeling of the hill. By turning, one gets the facades developed in elevation. One gets the feeling of scale from Beacon Hill by the experience of having to back down from a one-lane roadway on two-way traffic.

Turning right now from Irving St. on Beacon Hill to Cambridge St. Turning left onto Blossom St. and heading towards the general vicinity of Mass. General Hospital.

Turning left, and now right onto Storrow Drive. I find it extremely hard to conceptualize the street pattern of this area in to the north and in back of Beacon Hill. The area has a fairly describable character in its red brick facades of rather continuous heights and with a strong feeling of space because the streets are finite.

Turning right now onto ~~Y~~Everitt St. I have the sense that there are a couple of through streets in this area, but they don't read as major _____ when you're on them, except the only difference is that they are through, but they twist and wind. ~~Y~~Everitt St. parallels ~~the~~ what I think is the causeway because I see rather large vacant spaces, filling stations and some feeling of North Station. The cobblestone pavement in this area has received a slight topping of asphalt, is very unpleasant in the sun's glare.

Turning back to Cambridge, right back towards Beacon Hill. This area in the vicinity of the Mass. General and north of Beacon Hill has a rather strong consistency in materials and heights, but there are many very old discontinuities which are present, such as very fancy green wood and metal _____ that hang out over the sidewalk. Some of these give the impression of Chinese influence. Chinese influence is mostly a matter of the ornate carving and sense of detail as well as the upturned corners, cornices and _____ horses.

Turning now, right from Storrow Drive on Causeway St. and back toward Beacon Hill. This ~~xxxxxx~~ area has a strong feeling of age and gabled-roof forms of the buildings. This I associate with the early Americal and Georgian influences which are somewhat earlier than the Back Bay and South End type of architecture.

Sum

Turning left to Everitt again and proceeding towards Cambridge St. Turning right off of Cambridge onto Bowdoin St. to see some of that area between Beacon Hill and Cambridge St. which seems so confused to me. In the glare, facing the sun, it is difficult to assign any strong characters of color or of form. This area seems quite strange in the juxtaposition of very tall limestone office buildings and old brick structures. We are now at the top of the hill, just behind and to the side of the State House where the parking is. Proceeding toward the state capitol.

Wash
Scollay
Dock

Turning right from Beacon now and back down towards Washington and Tremont. Turning left now onto Washington St., we are now at the Boston Globe building. This tells me that the Boston Globe and these areas on Washington are further east than the projection of Park St. Turning left on Washington, entering Scollay Sq. I am surprised; I thought that Washington ran right into Scollay, instead Tremont. Scollay Sq. is distinguished by its vacancy and by the subway in the middle and the confusion of streets intersecting here. I don't see anything leading to Dock Sq. from here, which surprises me. Proceeding ~~from~~ to the left from Tremont in back of the Court House building. I now have the feeling from having driven up to the back of the Court " " that Tremont St. and Scollay Sq. are 3 or 4 blocks from the side of the State House. This tells me that Cambridge St. wraps itself pretty closely to the _____ of Beacon.

Following out Washington to clear up this confusion. I realize it doesn't come to Scollay Sq. but to Dock Sq. At this point Washington turns slightly right and then left, first towards Fanuel Hall and then away from it towards the east. I am surprised to find Hanover St. over here to the east of State St. I have always thought of State St. as the eastern boundary of the market area ~~xx~~ and that Hanover St. was between State and Commerce. I see now from going between ~~xxxxxx~~ Scollay and Dock Sq., between Tremont and Washington St. that they are about parallel to each other with respect to east and west. I see now with Boston Garden ahead of me that my east and west boundaries of the ~~xxxxxx~~ market area have just been reversed; State St. is the west boundary, Commerce is the east boundary; I knew that Commerce St. was close to the Boston Gardens. This explains the discrepancy of Hanover St.

Following Washington St. under the elevated highway which tells me that we must be going due east.

heading west

Proceeding on Causeway now, ~~mark~~, past North Station. I see now that the traffic circle which ~~one~~ runs into on Washington St., at the bend of the artery, has a straight street leading ^{out} slightly to the left and north, and turns onto Washington straight from North Station. This is a bit surprising also. I had thought North Station much further north of a tangent. The traffic circle is car-marked with ~~which~~ which I had heard of many times. In the market area of Salem it is easy to see that the distinction between this area and that in back of Beacon Hill has to do with the people and what one sees in the shops

distinct
qual. of
N End.
cont. w/
markets

This place has very much the animation of an Italian town which was lacking in that other area back of Beacon Hill. The other is stronger architecturally but not so strong in terms of its activity, spontaneous feeling. Here in the market area, where architecture is not so self-conscious but where you have this animation, there is a sort of a comfortable feeling or pleasant feeling.

Passing now Old North Church, I am very much surprised it was of brick. I had always thought it was of clapboards, painted white. I am also surprised to find in this area ~~As~~ moving back and forth across the market area between the streets paralleling the artery and Atlantic Ave. and Commercial St. I ^{have trouble} keeping 2 strong lines of Atlantic and the artery apart.

Ave. &
Artery

Harbor St. now is not the active center of the market; it is the traffic center; the straightest, most ~~street~~ street of the area, but Salem St., one block east, is the one where the greatest activity and produce is seen.

Climbing up now toward the artery and headed toward South Station. Passing the market area on my left which I identified by a rather dark, big, stone building with a mansard roof which I had seen from the ground level in the market area. The ~~part~~ part is too low to see from here. I know it's there ^{because} because there are no high buildings.

Lack ident.
hty. office
dist.

Turning off of the artery, proceeding west to ~~xx~~ Congress St./we turn right. Here we are suddenly in an unreal world of skyscrapers, characterless and faceless, tall and of stone. I feel like a bee must feel when he comes out of his small cell and sees the honeycomb as a whole and doesn't know which one to go into.

Attempt
to grid

Turning left off of Congress, we come to Federal St. which I had thought ran in a different direction, or across Congress. And I am confused by the twists and turning of these streets down here in the office district. I have an irresistible tendency to try to resolve them into a grid or into a geometric system.

Grad. to
Wash

Just now, as we turned north, I had the feeling of approaching Washington. I didn't know exactly why because there wasn't any strong change but I think it may be the ~~marked~~ ~~dist~~ subtle distinction of size of the lettering of the dead end of the street I'm on. Now I see I'm right beside Filene's, with Filene's to my left. The ~~the~~ the Liggett and the other signs here seem more pretentious than I found on the shops in the market district itself. This subtle distinction should be strengthened perhaps. One should see more clearly the difference between the retail area and the office area.

Turning right off of Washington, onto Milk St. We have been moving up Washington St. from Kneeland St., and it has been getting difficult to concentrate on the analysis of the city. Change occurs without any strong impression made on me. I think this is partly due to the disorganization and complexity of the area, so that I begin to filter out all of the discordant notes and let my mind wander or else to ~~fix~~ fix on some specific function within the area. If it has no specific function, it is extremely hard to be interested in the whole.

Poor
orient.
under
elevated

Riding along the boundaries of the market area, under the elevated artery. In this area, which is very closed in, it is very difficult to see out and to understand where you are, suggesting that ~~minimize~~ the possibility that this form of under-structure is not very good from the orientation point of view. The frequent ramps and other close-by

~~xxxxxxxx~~ things prevent a view of street facades beyond. The low height of the highway also cuts off the tops of buildings out to the side. An elevated traffic _____ should be used to pass under and cross, not to parallel under.

from Tremont

I have seen City Hall when passing down School St./to Washington. I have seen Kings Chapel when approaching _____

Lack
N-S
Lines

_____ Area with the cemetery behind which I have seen as we come up from Washington. We are now following long tangents to try to connect one part of the city with another, and it is beginning to be obvious that one of the weaknesses of Boston is that most of its strong lines run east and west. From these lines it is possible to relate points along the line or immediately to the south, but there is no feeling of relation of one line to another, or one point on one line to another point on another line. I am surprised to find that Kneeland St. runs right through Chinatown. We have been up and down Kneeland, but until we passed across it we did not see so many ~~six~~ evidences of it. Even so, there is not so much character to the area as I had imagined. The only clues are the signs of the restaurants.