

Tape Transcription

First Preliminary Orientation Test – Nov. 17 – Crane

Approaching Harvard Bridge. John Hancock tower looms up at about 35 degrees on the port bow. A wonderful profile of Back Bay and Beacon Hill are striking elements here. I can see the other bridge over to my left, and that gives me a clearer knowledge that I am going in the Mass. Ave. ----- (tape apparently damaged here).

Mass. Ave. looks nothing like Back Bay through which we are passing. It is grey, disorderly, profiles are varied.

Beacon and Marlborough seem very much alike. I'd get lost if it weren't for the river from Beacon. Mass. Ave. is a great change from Beacon and Marlborough.

Boylston is terrible, very disorganized, no uniformity of height, color, or materials. Here the gridiron breaks off, at Mass. Ave. and Belvedere St., 2 or 3 blocks from Back Bay.

I see Symphony Hall looming up in front of me at an angle and I know that Mass. Ave. turns here, and Back Bay is left far behind. On Mass. Ave., below Huntington, many bugged-out, red brick buildings, 3 or 4 stories uniform hit. (tape defective) _____ going down Mass. Ave. this character gets even stronger, with iron fences and little tracts of grass and planting in front of the buildings.

I now pass a court, where Mass. Ave. jogs, with the facades being stepped {?} off suddenly from the sides. Very nice feeling.

Wonderful trees down the middle of Mass. Ave. Just passing under Wash. St. E!

I like the rhythm of those bugged-out apartments; even nicer and stronger than on Beacon and Marlborough Streets. The building on my left has some and Mass. Ave. has a high brick wall in front with Colonial-design entrance; very striking in contrast to the uniformity we have just passed. Mass. Ave. does not seem like a boundary at this point, the same character both sides.

Larger buildings at Albany and Mass. Ave.; character breaks down.

See waterfront ahead. Turning now onto Albany.

Albany St. has no continuity of its street facades. Buildings are generally of red brick, but there are a lot of gray-black-looking things with some concrete walls; not very strong. Off to my left I see these bugged-out apartment buildings I was so

pleased with before. In the back yards, though, you see a lot of laundry and you know that that area is not as hoity-toity as Back Bay.

Now at Dedham St. on my left ____ (tape fuzzy) ____ and I see a lot of warehouse-looking structures – tall, tremendous buildings with almost no identity.

____ (tape again fuzzy) ____ in space. ____

Bus terminal not very pretty. Factories and warehouses. John Hancock over the building roofs.

Albany seems like a strong boundary between warehouses and red brick buildings on my left and rather vacant spaces on my right. A suggestion of the waterfront.

At Broadway and Albany we have two iron bridges. To my left front there is quite a complex of red brick buildings mixed with sandstone. John Hancock at my left as we proceed up Broadway.

Now we are coming in to Copley Sq. or very close to it. Crossing under an overhead rail structure, but I don't think it's Washington St.; not busy enough. Now going up Washington St., but not very busy. Stores very dilapidated. No uniformity of color, types, textures, but lots of yellow and red signs, some of them down two stories with vertical lettering. Very disorganized.

Kneeland St. which we are approaching seems to have some traffic. I think we are getting closer and closer to the business district. Turning right on Kneeland St. we see lots of office buildings, 7 or 8 stories tall, with some low buildings inbetween. Once in a while a gabled-roof structure which seems to go back much further than these larger buildings.

Wonderful Chinese Merchants Assoc. on my left; wonderful in the sense that it's different; not very sensitive (tape cut off too soon).

Albany St. House No. 2 on my right; low, gabled roof structure ____ (fuzzy tape).

Looking down to my left I see skyscrapers and whitish, limestone facades; that must be where the heart is. I see a Railroad Express Agency sign ahead of me; this must be South Station.

Turning left in front of the Railway Express. This must be South Station on my right-- a tremendously long, ugly structure. Yes, it is South Station because now I see

we're coming into the large, open space I associate with So. Station. {Space. Confirms SoSta} (tape fuzzy)

There are 4 or 5-story tenements on my left as we proceed down to the right. I think we're coming towards the Boston Army Post. Very tall skyscrapers and limestone facades (tape fuzzy) _____. I see a clock tower on my left now, I don't know where it is but I'd probably remember it if I saw it again (tape cut off too quickly).

Now expressway construction on my left, we are following. Lots of empty spaces here but a lot of large warehouses _____ association no more than 50 ft. away.

This looks like T-Wharf on my right, but {?} it could be any (tape cut off too quickly) _____ residential wharf. Now there is more land on my right and warehouses. Buildings have gotten low and residences mixed with warehouses and small shops, fishermen's stores. This area would be hard to describe -- not very strong, not much consistency.

Across the water I see another land projection. Don't know whether it's an island or peninsula. Buildings getting larger and more consistent in color.

Wonderful mechanistic profile of the Navy ships on my right, with cranes and towers in back of them.

This is Commercial St. an extension of Atlantic Ave., we have been following. We are turning left now. Big open space on my right with low temporary structures on it, but ahead very tall, old, red brick buildings, 5 or 6 stories tall -- must be warehouses and factories. Lots of causeways and steel-girder construction to my right leading over to what might be the Navy Yard.

This is the Mystic River Bridge which we are turning onto, to my right. That was Commercial St., correction from Causeway. I see a semi-freight, semi-passenger ship on my right, mixed in but some distance from the Navy ___ (tape cut off too quickly) -- very nice.

Passing under a very tall, overhead highway. Must be Storrow Drive. I see a sign that says Haymarket Sq. and North Station from Storrow Drive, but still don't know where I am.

Dead ahead I see the State Capitol with the gold dome. Following Storrow Drive; approaching Boston with State Capitol on my right but unseen now. This must be Beacon Hill on my left. It's a wonderful little pile-up out there with old red brick buildings. The side we're on must be _____

In general, Storrow Drive is too big and too complex to know where I'm going, except for an occasional glimpse. I have to follow the stream and look for signs.

Here is the bridge on my right towards Broadway and Cambridge. I know that I am not far from Beacon Hill, but I am too close to it to really see it. Now I see Beacon Hill towering up to my left. J. Hancock to my left, about 15 degrees on the port bow.

We just missed a turn, which is certainly understandable with the confusion of these traffic circles.
?
We're going into Cambridge and we'll have to return on the bridge.

{margin: P & S bridge character} I couldn't miss the bridge going in from Broadway towards Beacon Hill, with the funny stone towers at intervals along it, with the ugly iron fence and standards for the subway in the middle.

John Hancock is almost due West to my right. Beacon Hill towering up just a little bit off of my right now. I don't know what the tall limestone building ahead as we go into the traffic circle is. It's faceless, but because of its bulk, it may become a landmark for me.

Back on Storrow Drive now. Wonderful profile of Back Bay on my right now. John Hancock dead ahead. Can see M.I.T. over on my right on the other side of the river.

Passing the Music Shell on my right ___ (tape again seems to have been cut off too quickly).

Back Bay presents an interesting, if a little bit disorganized, front to the Storrow Drive. Not like Beacon or Marlborough Sts. but a little bit more interesting because of the low structures in front. This gives a sense of depth. Once in a while a modern building intrudes – modernistic, that is. Not very nice. Once in a while a blue, overhanging projection from the upper floors-appealing. (tape cut off).
?

We are approaching Mass. Ave. and the bridge from M.I.T. now. Going back down Mass. Ave. to our left. Look down Marlborough St.; very nice with a sense of status but not as strong architecturally as the area below Huntington on Mass. Ave. Mass. Ave. is hard to describe – somewhat commercial, somewhat theatrical, not really commercial and not really neighborhood, residential, mostly just traffic.
?

Forgot to say a very clear, bright day.

It's at St. Botolph St. that this nice character below Huntington really begins, a couple of blocks below Huntington.

phony architectural character. Tremont is not parallel to Beacon. Common on my right.

Now we're turning right on Boylston St., which I know is parallel to Commonwealth, and goes through Copley Square. Ahead of me I see a stone spire which must be on a church in Copley Sq.

Turning right again on Charles St. we see towards Beacon Hill.

We are at the foot of Beacon Hill now on Charles St. I can look up to my right and see the wonderful diminutive character of the red brick facades with very lacy-looking ___ trees (tape defective).

This area is very commercialized except that it looks like what I would associate with the neighborhood center for Beacon Hill.

Now in the traffic circle, going to our right. Now turning down to the right on Cambridge St. _____ Beacon doesn't look so appealing from this side. I don't see as far up. I see more cars, not so many trees. Cambridge St., through which we are passing, has a wide variety of sizes, widths, and heights. Ahead of me is a tall fattish skyscraper. On my left is a nice colonial building with a front lawn. It says, "Public Library"; has a wrought iron fence. This is Beacon Hill in the middle of very ugly commercial street.

I see that clock tower that I saw from South Station, ahead of me, so that I know I am heading with South Station approximately on my right bow, 15 degrees. I think it is still Cambridge St. The street we were following has turned gradually to the right. I'm not sure of its identity. Indefinite angles.

Turning to the left on Hanover St. This gives me a personal feeling of relief, although still
? disorganized and too many cars in the street to see the sidewalk on the south side. I think the relief came when we turned on Hanover St. because the buildings were so much lower and smaller than those I saw dead ahead of me, gray limestone, 8 to 10 stories tall, as we were going on Cambridge.

Ahead of me I see an elevated highway painted green. This must be the expressway which cuts across the east end of Boston. Turning right and paralleling the highway, the clock tower is still ahead of me. We're sort of wandering. It's understandable because the streets go in so many different directions, are of so
? many varying widths and strengths.

A strong architectural character.

At North St. and Richmond we just stumbled onto a little narrow street which is not too bad; somewhere near Prince St. We were on Fruit St.

Here we are at the waterfront. We are turning left. I always thought the Navy Yard was off the northeast tip of Boston, but now as I see it on my right it seems on the south- {margin: Disorient} east tip. _____ I'm really turned around. The sun is on my left; I don't know where I am.

Turning left on to Washington St. I see ahead of me the elevated. The area we are in seems to be a warehouse district -- lots of red brick but not organized. Passing under the highway, the highway alignment goes left toward the clock tower. In the confusing traffic circle we almost lost Washington St.; Washington St. didn't have a strong enough character or differentiation from the others. The slope seemed to go up to my right. I don't know whether Beacon Hill is very close on the right or not. We just discovered Washington St. is one-way coming against us, so now we're going to try to find Tremont St. Large paving space in front of it. Rather nice building but ugly surroundings.

Going up Brattle St. towards Tremont. Sort of slummy on my right. More commercial turning left on Tremont. This is Scollay Sq. but I certainly wouldn't have known it. Wonderful old stone church to my left with yard, cemetery and fence around it. Tremont Temple, ahead of me on my left, is interesting in this otherwise undistinguished area. Some shades of the surface texture _____ (tape defective)

Passing the Commons now. John Hancock on my right now.

Leaving the Garden now on our right, entering Tremont St. There doesn't seem to be any consistency of height – some very tall structures, 8 or 10 stories, some four; no consistency of materials. Rather hard to describe but a straight street. Not sure that I could distinguish it from any other commercial street in downtown Boston. Previously Tremont has had a strong feeling of status; now as we come to Stuart St. this breaks down. Lots and lots of cars turning left on Stuart now. This lower status seems evident from the hodge-podge of signs and the smaller size of buildings, poor maintenance.

Turning left on Washington St. In this area it doesn't seem to be classy as Tremont St. Lots of signs; can't read many of them. No consistency of materials. Heights are generally about 5 or 6 stories tall. The street slopes up ahead of us, and it seems

the usual experience of going up to the most important thing. We must be coming to the hot-spot on Washington St. – I see a sign that says Cinerama on it. The street turns slightly to the right and seems to get more narrow, more people, more cars, taller buildings, but still great disorganization of signs, flags, lights, colors, We are opposite R.H.White's. Not much sun on Washington St. but ahead I see some tall white stone buildings with the sun hitting them lightly. Streets to the left and right are less active, less garish. Opposite Jordan Marsh's it gets a little better. I see some bldg. material and a little bit more lacyness and detail, not so much of this commercial signs and rampant colors. Jordan's and Filene's look comparatively dignified, sincerely architectural. (tape cut off). Coming from Milk St. on the right is this big church with the spire mentioned before, very nice contrast with all this commercial development.

As we come to the offices-area more obscure signs and taller buildings, I see dead ahead of me, about 4 blocks away, what might be South Station, very large building. That wasn't South Station I saw ahead but the area I mentioned before. Sculpture, perhaps of Washington or Adams. (tape obscure)

Going on Kneeland St. Wandering around trying to find a way to cross the street east of the superhighway. We are not far from the waterfront but I'm so {?} that I can't _____

I see on my left a group of buildings which were photographed by M.I.T. students. I don't know what it's called, but composition of a rectangular building, with a gabled-roof building, all red brick, on the ends a gray and a yellow; a nice rhythm of windows on the back. My driver tells me that this is the Market Area.

Turning left now and paralleling the elevated. Turning right now on North St. The buildings are more organized; plane {?} ? facade, red brick, lots of green trim. Back now to the right. Ahead of me _____ (tape very confusing)

Turning to the right and going west. The Market-Area buildings seem interesting; 2 stories; red brick on the upper stories; lower stories are mostly wood with small glass surfaces with lots of ____ {?} area seems like a very small island which would be hard to find but which might be identified on the blindfold test.

Following Hanover St., going toward the water. Consistently following the waterfront around to the left and towards the north. The elevated structure ____ {?}

This must be North Station on our right, a rather imposing masonry building. _____ crossing under a funny arched bridge which must be going to Somerville. Another traffic circle which we have just circled; the other one at the end of bridge from Boston.
?

We are back on Storrow Drive. We are having a great deal of difficulty following any system of crossing the town from north to south.

We are following the elevated highway now, back to South Station, trying to find a way to cross the town, west of the highway. We are twisting and winding.

Now back on Cambridge St. which I know only because looking to the left I can see the slope up toward Beacon Hill. Otherwise it does not look familiar to me.

Now turning left and proceeding up Hancock St., see some gray buildings ahead which means the end of Beacon Hill to me. Turning right on Mt. Vernon St. Here Beacon Hill really comes into being, with the trees and the small brick houses. Everything is of low {?} tonal value. I used to think they had white window trim up here, but it's not; it's all dark. green and brown.

Turning left now, with the Common ahead of us, coming out toward Beacon St. Houses seem more pretentious along here. Turning left on Beacon with the Common below me. Nice wading pool. Wonderful white spire of church on my right. I'm facing Common on Park St.

Turning left off of Tremont St., heading towards Washington (tape cut off too quickly). Always thought Summer St. was parallel to Washington, but found it was perpendicular.

Turning right off of Washington onto Franklin St. Detail on some of these faceless buildings is noticeable by its foolishness, in this case, a very tall building with very ornate pilaster tops, 7 or 8 stories from our level. A lot of "modernistic", tall skyscrapers here, with neo-classicism or neo-fascism written all over the faces as they express their pilastering. Large smooth surfaces at eye level that are very cold and inhuman (tape cut off). Franklin St. becomes very narrow at Broad. Character changes markedly, with older structures, less consistency of total heights. We are approaching the elevated highway now.

Turning right under the highway. We are in shade. Off to the left is the waterfront, some older buildings of red brick, some with gabled roofs which suggest a pleasant change from the (tape cut off). A tall building some how should not also be large in ground

coverage. These buildings always suggest that it is complicated within, that there are {?} bees operating automatically, without any orientation within the building. The particular one I had in mind in the Sheraton building on the Waterfront.

Turning right along the waterfront, off to my right are many skyscrapers over near the business district, all with this very strong vertical expression and phony detail at the top. These buildings are seen as a strong profile because of the large space is the right foreground left by the construction of the highway. This view of the city off to my right suggests an other-worldliness – a vacant, nothing. (tape defective)

Our view of the city beyond is cut off now as we proceed along the waterfront and along South Station. The tall warehouse buildings on my right are very close and overpowering.

Turning right off of the waterfront, going up Kneeland St. ____ between some large buildings there is a low slum on my left, but the buildings are rather small and of good scale.

Crossing Harrison Ave., we are now getting back into more of a shopping area. Buildings are less uniform, less uniformly high. We are approaching Copley Sq. I see a spire in the far distance at the end of this street which suggests Copley Sq. It is dark stone with several needle points. Buildings don't seem such better here than they were a few blocks ____ back. I know we are approaching Copley Sq. from the sign I see in the sky above, Hotel Statler.

We cross Tremont St. which I know. ____ Big area with a lot of parked buses, etc. I catch a glimpse of Public Garden off to my right. This area seems more pretentious than anything we've seen today.

? around the windows. ____ or projections and textural feeling. This is the Statler Hotel. ____ (tape very poor here) The squire must be ____ the church ____ in disorganized spaces around here.

Right now John Hancock on my left as we turn right away from it onto Berkeley St. I see a wonderful church spire ahead of me, with lacy bare trees just in front of it; of stone, very old, weatherbeaten. Strong variation in colors around here -- some white limestone, some brick with red, white trim, and some black and dark green. I don't know what street we're turning right onto. It must be Boylston because I think it's going to go up and around along the side of the Common. It is Boylston, and we are with the Common on our left. Try to turn left on Boylston. Wonderful profile beyond the Common, over the trees even though I know the buildings are ugly.

Turning left and going down Boylston, the character of Back Bay seems about as I have described it before, except that I think the facades are more detailed with more edge qualities than I had remembered about them. Also, there are a larger number of bugged- out fronts than I had thought of before, but still not as rhythmical and as strongly expressed as on that lower area below Huntington. The profiles with the chimneys and the little needle points, TV arials, etc. are wonderful. {Skyline of BB.}

Turning left off of Beacon, just crossed Marlborough to Commonwealth St. which I know by the trees in the middle. This is Dartmouth St. and Commonwealth. Passing the Hotel Vendome, a familiar structure.

On the next street below Commonwealth the consistency of red brick is a little bit less strong than on Beacon and Marlborough. Here is Copley Sq. ahead of us. I had thought we had overshot it by at least 3 or 4 blocks. This seems like a cleaner approach to the area than the one we were following before. Here I see the form of the rectangular space ahead of me very strongly defined, with the diagonal traffic of Huntington Ave. Copley seems, if anything, to be characterized by grayish-white stone with about 5 or 6-story-height buildings, but there is a strong differentiation over on my left made by the church with its wonderful composition of cones and towers and the Romanesque portico. Very stately feeling in this square but not highly consistent from side to side.

Leaving the square now, with the Sheraton Plaza on my left, which I realize now was the Statler Hotel that I thought was on the square. Shops on my right across from the Sheraton Plaza don't look so fancy. But this area doesn't seem so insensitively commercial. There are little residential buildings here is back. Crossing the tracks, which I thought were the Boston and Albany tracks but must be the New Haven from the sign I just saw. Can't see much of the play of the engines down below . Don't get too much fun out of it.

Ahead of me I see my nice little area which I had seen before from below Huntington on Mass. Ave. Stopped at {?} Chandler St. which I think I have been on before because of the fact that my nice little area is on the right of it as I face toward the center of town. I think the street I call Chandler St. must be Columbus Ave. because that's the one I remember following. Ahead of me I see the spire which is on Park St. facing Common, and I see the trees on the Common. We are turning left now off of Columbus Ave. John Hancock building in my immediat

{Common as organizer}

foreground. Ahead of me I see the spire of the church which I know to be in Copley Sq. {margin: Copley as
impt. node}

We took a wrong turn trying to find a better approach to Copley Sq. ____ (tape again blurred) This
? makes about the third or fourth time we've relied on this focus. The smoke in the Public Garden on our
left looks very wonderful with the bare, lacy trees, might be a fog under other conditions. This is reminiscent
of the Isle St. Louis in Paris.

Turning right onto Commonwealth. Commonwealth seems chiefly distinguished from Beacon and
Marlborough by its width and the trees in the middle, though the buildings are less consistently red and less
consistently of the same height and width. Periodically there is a larger structure, a church or some other
_____.

Turning left on Clarendon, there were a couple of buildings which might have been _____
Ahead of me on my left ____ (tape blurred) Turning left off Clarendon into Copley Sq. I see the church
tower and the north-west corner ____ The church and the tower seem so much older than most buildings in
the square. To my right I see some ornately-carved clay frieze, and a red brick facade. I have left the
square now and am going up along Boylston St., going west. I know it mostly by the ____ Boylston
St. seems like a boundary, with the yards on my left and a mixed residential on the right, great
conglomeration of materials, colors, heights. On my left as we cross the steel girder bridge are a number of
? bugged-out fronts, many of them colored in variegated patterns.

Turning left off Boylston onto Mass. Ave. (tape cut off) Now at Symphony Hall. (tape very poor
here) This has some Romanesque construction, which doesn't give with my picture. Perhaps the front is
neo-classic. I see now, looking at the front, that my description of Symphony Hall came from the classical
Corinthian columns & portico.

Turning left off Mass. Ave. down St. Botolph St., this is a very interesting area. All of it is not red
brick. The same forms are repeated in yellow brick. Nice organization of facades, act-backs, and rhythmical
units of 3 or 4 at a time. I see John Hancock ahead of me and I know my ____ area is coming to an end.

I have just identified Huntington by its diagonal direction rather than a perpendicular direction from
the system I have just been _____. My driver thought it was Boylston St. The railroad yards in this area
_____.

{Lack identity of radials}

We have been trying to cross the area south of Boylston St. and north of St. Botolph St. between Mass. Ave. and Copley Sq. On Exeter St. we have crossed Boylston, Commonwealth, Marlborough and now have come to Beacon St. which we identify by the sight of the railroad beyond and the Westgate apartments.

Turning left off of Mass. Ave. 2 or 3 blocks below Boylston St., buildings here seem a little less personal, a little less human than other areas south of here. More white in the buildings. Less street furniture. No trees. Rather confused street pattern in ? square here, with red brick buildings at the end and on the right side ? , is a domed structure, don't know what they are. we've turned left onto Huntington Ave. now. Turning right off of Huntington now, we are approaching more railroad tracks. (rest of tape obscure)