

Spring 1955
Early sample tests

The general types of orientation means in the city, in their approximate importance in Boston:

1. Lines - Wash, Tremont, Boylston, Beacon, Mass Ave, Gas bridge
2. Spaces - Common & Garden
3. Barriers - River, harbor, expressway
6. Slopes - Beacon Hill.
5. Use-areas - Retail shopping, Back Bay
4. Points - State House, No & So. Stations
7. Grid - in Back Bay.

1. Lines should not turn subtly & continuously; should have dominant direction; should connect & not at ambiguous angles; should be reinforced with use and traffic & spatial cohesion.

2. Spaces must be distinctive; visible from distance and yet not spilling out broadly; furnish orientation for moving out; should interconnect; allow views of near & far landmarks.

3. Barriers can orient over a large area but may also make a sharp break; must prevent ambiguity of which side and on? or of a constantly turning enclosure; connect or identify end points

5. Use-areas must be distinctive in detail & texture & activity; should have sharp edges & gradations of intensity.
6. Loops should form a consistent overall system, & the paths have relation to their direction.
7. Grids should be regular in direction & to some extent in interval, but ~~it~~ need not be mechanically so, nor need all streets be perfectly continuous.
4. Points must be distinctive visually & functionally; be of functional or historical importance; be commonly seen or used; be visible from a distance; be well related to major system.

Also very commonly used is an anterior memory system, recording turns & distances & maintaining the desired direction (very common) & noting how far (perhaps used). This method weakens as time goes on without further clues, or if many shifts of direction are made, or if direction changes are subtle or ambiguous.

● = Strong

●● = Strongest

Spring, 1955

From available data, an orientation map of central Boston would show:

- The sense of the Gas R & the harbor side, a little uncertain at their joint.
- The expressway block across the Neck.
- The Common & Public Garden

Certain lines:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| ● Atlantic Ave | ● Boylston |
| ● Charles St | ● Beacon St |
| ● Washington | ● Hanover (cut) |
| ● Tremont | ● State |
| ● Mass. Ave | ● Commonwealth |
| ● Cambridge St | |

(with certain confusion points:

- the ~~Washington~~ - Tremont convergence
- the break in Hanover
- the gap at Scollay Square
- the turning of Atlantic Ave)

Certain use-areas:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| ● Chinatown | ● Financial district? |
| ● Wash St. shopping | ● P.O. district? |
| ● Faneuil Hall mts. | ● Back Bay |
| ● North End | |

Some reference spaces:

Sabollay Sq.
~~Faneuil~~ Dock Sq.
P.O. Sq.
Copley Sq.

Some reference points:

- State House
- South Station
- Staller
- Post Office?
- Faneuil Hall
- Old State House
- Summer tunnel
- Charles River bridges
- North Station
- Paul St. Church

? Custom House Tower

Court House Annex

~~Old South Church~~

King's Chapel

Parker House

- Jordan's & Filene's

- The slope down from Beacon Hill, & to the Docks.

Orientation confusions, Boston:

Breaks:

From the line Faneuil - Scollay - Cambridge St.

(or State - Court - Pemberton) to:

Haymarket - North Station

± this last from:

Hanover - North End (due to expressway)

Between Wash St - P.O. Square and:

So. Station - Atlantic Ave.

" Custom House - Atlantic Ave and:

Washington St. or S. Station.

" Back Bay & Tremont - Washington

(the Bay - Tremont confusion is involved)

" Back Bay & S. End systems

Major disorientations:

Peninsula outline & distortion of harbor side

Disorientation of Bay - Tremont

N-S directions

The turning of Atlantic Ave

Local confusions:

Scollay Sq, Park Sq, Park Sq, State - Court - Tremont

Shape of the Common

Separation of the Faneuil markets

Distinction of clusters & Leverett Circle

Confused areas: area S of Common, Haymarket area

N of Fort Sq.

The following major orientation systems appear,
{ due to the breaks:

No. Station - Haymarket - W. End.

No. End

Washington - Tremont - P.O. Sq. - State St - Scollay
Sq. Common, to which is attached not quite
so firmly: on one side Faneuil Hall, on the
other Beacon Hill - State House.

Beak Bay - Copley Sq. (hub w/ above the
Common, but this is ambiguous).

So. End

So. Station - Chatham - lower end Atlantic Ave.

General tendencies:

to relate in a chain of events, based on habitual
paths

to enlarge the known, diminish the unknown
(while the distance thru the unknown may
seem further)