

Pre-walk Interview: ~~(Hal)~~ HAL MYER - DEPT OF COMMERCE

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As you can see, walking down both sides of the street, between Berkeley and Arlington St., one side is completely covered from one end to the other with interesting shops, with varied window dressings which change quite frequently, whereas on the Charles River side of ~~Boylston~~ ^{Boylston} the shops are dull, with several offices on the ground floor, and they change their window dressings very infrequently, and generally, unless you're looking for something specific, do not have much eye appeal. There are several steamship and travel service companies here which have a rather standardized form of dressing without much imagination. The sidewalk, itself, is a little too large to be of much interest. The width is probably twice as wide on this side as on the other side. The stores have done nothing to try to reduce this void or encompass it by making it more interesting. The only place where you find any green is down near Arlington St. church and then on into the Public Gardens.

of the street
As I mentioned before, one side/has the obvious advantage, in the winter at least, of being warmer than the shady side.

Generally I would say that in walking in a direct line between Arlington and Berkeley St. these store fronts are possibly a little too far away from the/direct line of travel, and not only are the windows uninteresting but one does not pay as much attention to ~~1/2~~ them as you would on the opposite side.

there is
One of the obvious advantages of this section of town is ~~that~~ the fact that/the hurdy-gurdy operator on the corner generally at noontime. While he is somewhat of interest, over a period of years he becomes rather monotonous, with the same recordings day-in and day-out. He has about six of them and they repeat.

While we are passing this area I should mention the desirability of having churches in the city environment. It breaks up the sequence of glass and other store fronts, introducing stone. Being of sandstone, it has much richer character, really, than most stone buildings in this vicinity. I think one of the nicer characteristics of this section of Newbury St. is the Church of the Covenant, I believe it's called, with its tall spire which is easily visible from the Boylston side of Newbury St.

It seems to have much more character and individuality than Emmanuel Church which is here on the right, and is built in the center of the block against existing buildings. It is not free-standing as the other is; at least the other is free-standing on 3 sides, whereas Emmanuel Church is free-standing only on one.

Here, again, on Newbury St. I think there is a noticeable difference in the width of the sidewalks. There is not as much pedestrian traffic as there is on Boylston St., but the sidewalk itself is much too large really for somebody walking in a direct line to see with any clarity or facility the store fronts which are really quite

It is also necessary to mention right now the wealth of uniformity in the old buildings the ground floor and the basement floor for commercial purposes. The buildings themselves originally were quite handsome and quite rich in most places, but they improved with the attendant signs, etc. which have all focused to break it up and make it much more jazzy (the best word at the moment).

As we approach the Church of the Covenant, we begin to appreciate more the texture of the stone which is Roxbury puddingstone, I believe, building stone which was used quite extensively around the turn of the century.

Here on the corner of Berkeley and Newbury you see Bonwit Teller's which was one of two buildings originally built on the site. Both buildings were identical; one was used by M.I.T. until about 1914. The building is old, quite handsome. It is of rich-colored red brick, well landscaped, and is one shrewdest places of merchandising in the Boston area.

~~From the standpoint of smell and filth, this alley is~~ From the standpoint of smell and filth, this alley is probably in better shape than most around Boston. There is the usual amount of trash waiting to be picked up; it doesn't seem to be terribly unsanitary otherwise, just unsightly. I think if you look in the other direction, you will see the tower of New England Mutual Hall which is probably the only advantageous sight to be seen from the alley as much as it shuts off the proportions of the buildings and only shows the tower which is particularly striking at night as you come along, to see the tower lighted as you glance up the alley. This is the only advantage; there may

one also on the side, looking up toward ~~Dartmouth~~ ^{B-ext.} Dartmouth; from Dartmouth St. you would probably see the same thing. You notice that this truck up ahead has a great deal of trouble getting into this narrow/opening, there being only 10 or 12 ft. from side to side. There is also quite a problem getting onto ^T Arlington St. or trucks turning in, as they have to swing from the second or third lane to get into the alley. Down here, as we approach the Public ^S Gardens again from this alley, you notice that in back of these buildings you have more red ^C brick which was quite common in Boston at one time, particularly in the last 19th century; it certainly is a much richer color. I don't think that brick is being made today, not quite that quality -- I don't know why. It's very hard. It may possibly be brittle as a result. ¶ You can see by looking up how the facade has been changed for commercial ^B purposes. You can see on the right the statue of Dr. Channing who was the founder ^{SP} of Unitarianism, and I'm sure most people who pass here have no idea who he is or what he was or when he lived. They may not take time to even read the inscription.

As we are walking toward the Public Gardens now, the obvious reaction is that ^N it is green, open, with trees, in contrast to the area we have just covered. There certainly is a large variety, although I wish they didn't relegate it to various nuclei throughout the city. I wish it was continued over ~~4~~ stretches between the areas which the original concept of the MDC park system where you have large recreation centers with parkways inbetween. If you notice the walks here, ^{now} ~~originally~~ ^{and} they ~~were~~ ^P paved with asphalt. Although some people object/^{ed} to it initially, I think it is an improvement in that it provides a clean surface regardless of the time of year or the weather. It also reduces the problem of maintenance of putting out boardwalks in the winter which was formerly the custom of the Park Department. The unfortunate reaction that I have is that/^{when} the paths were asphalted ~~4~~ no study or ~~real~~ ^{landscape} redesign of the area was made. The paths merely followed those laid down by the/architects of the 19th century, providing for nice little flower beds and that sort of thing. In some cases that introduces some degree of artificiality.