1. Description of tour: with a driver, an auto, and tape recorder, traversed area east of Mass. Ave., between the Charles River & waterfront (Albany Street). First circled area, then intersected it in 2 lines east-west, then north-south at intervals of 4-5 blocks. Occasionally circled and entered smaller areas within, described by the major traverses. Starting at 9:30 a.m., took leave of driver at 2:30 p.m. (1 hr. for lunch & tape change) and spent 2 more hours walking along 8-10 block tangents, 3 or 4 blocks apart, in "South End", stopping to look more closely at certain parts. Tape elogged as I began walking. Before this, had been using tape for impressions of boundary, change, strength of character, sense of position & direction. (Route to be indicated on map at later date.) The weather was fair, very cold, the latter affecting my concentration while walking.

2. Description of sub-areas: Subareas which stand out for me are of several types: well-defined physical qualities and sense of organization (incl. boundaries); and strong physical impressions without a sense of plan or boundaries; and areas where confusion is in itself an identifying characteristic.

a. South End: this, the area of my walks, is the strongest in physical qualities, though I am less sure
of its boundaries than for Back Bay and Beacon Hill. Its buildings are of a consistent sort (3-4 floors); continuous street front form, projecting bays; redbrick facades (not many white mortar joints); fenestration pattern and dark wood or stone trim; front step, entry scheme, etc. The area has a strong sense of spatial structuring (short, finite streets & residential courts & including interest back courts etc.) Baldwin Hills w/ garages/driveways/ squares & wonderful old trees along or clowk middle of streets. There is a strong differentiation in its gridiron street system: N-S streets are residential, narrow, lightly-travelled; E-W streets are more commercial, have fewer of the apt. blocks mentioned above, and are very heavily-travelled. The latter are each distinctive from the others -- or nearly so -- whereas N-S streets are more alike in obvious detail, varying in a thousand little ways. As I walked thru this area it seemed like the ideal example of a livable symphony: a theme and constant beat, or rhythm, with a thousand variations within the theme. The stronger variations are expressed in groups of 5-15 houses (for example: [diagram]) suggesting the periods by different builders involved. Other variations, like brightly-painted doors, individualistic planting, etc. are expressive of the people who live in each house. To me, this is the ideal of urban neighborhoods: an
imposed discipline & order, strong enough to bind together but not so strong as to blot out the individuals' self-expression. I noticed a number of details where the discipline might better have been relaxed in favor of even greater individual participation.

There doesn't seem to be as much edge quality, or line, in South End as in Back Bay, but there is more robustness in shapes & profiles—this suggests that South End isn't as high-toned but is more flat-bred, human.

The boundaries of South End are characterized by a change from the huddled-out block fronts; greater bulk in free-standing blocks; fewer trees; larger vacant or waste spaces; and change of color & material of some newer blocks. The change along street fronts of e-w streets is not so strong, but one can readily look down side sts. & miss the pleasant qualities of the short, finite stts. described above. The boundary of which I am least sure is the west—how far beyond Morse Ave?

In Back Bay which for me has distinct flavors A, B, C, and D. As nearly as I can remember, my first description of Back Bay, part A could be described in the same way except that detail around openings.
is not white but dark brown or green wood or grey stone.

Backley A, B, and C have some of the same huddled-out
buildings fronts as in South End, but not so consistent.

Commonwealth Ave., or Back Bay B, is chiefly distinguished
from A and C by its breadth, no. of trees,
and less consistency in red-brick facades. But, in form
of buildings and continuous facades, and in the suggestive
expression of style, it belongs with A and C. Backley
C, or Newbury St. is a poor man's version of A - fewer
trees, older, more delegated, noisier, dirtier. This differen-
tiation disappears near Copley. The Copley Sq. area, or
Back Bay D, belongs with the others because of its
pretentious style and monumental buildings expressing the
Back Bay class status. It is a confusing area in plan and its buildings are not consistent except in
use of limestone and in architectural pretension of
one sort or another. There seem to be many jagged,
wide spaces outside Copley itself.

C. Beacon Hill. My concept of this area hasn't
changed much since the 1st description except that
total area is dark, not white. This area
has a definable quality where strength is somewhere
between that of South End & Back Bay. Its diminu-
tive scale & the greater enclosure & fineness of site
make it even more pleasant than South End to be
in. The sense of boundary is strongest of all because
of the hill, though the line between Beacon Hill A and B is not easy to draw.

- d. Common Public Garden same as for 1st description except that it has even more meaning to me now as a memory. As a dismemberment of the office building skyline with feathery, ethereal trees at the base, it is now one of my most pleasant pictures of Boston. The shape seems more clear to me now— at least I know the street names bounding it. Functionally speaking, this area is perhaps the best known turning point or orientation reference, since it is at center of many others.

- e. Huntington. This area, or line, stands out because of a sense of use and associations (art & music shops, theatres & halls, restaurants & night clubs; Boston’s answer to Greenwich Village w/respect to people seen) and because of a nice, smoky, aged look. Buildings seem to have some consistency of weather-beaten limestone, though form & size variations are great. The age, weathered aspects, and uses make this area.

- f. Office-Retail Core. The picture which first comes to mind of this area is of the profile when seen...
from near South Station—tall; unreal; white stone; mechanistic & inhuman; cold; absurdly detailed at
the tops of infinitely-tall pilasters & columnation. Inside the area, there is no one strong feeling present except
lack of sunlight & excessive and confusing signs and color patterns. Building materials, when they can
be seen & distinguished from signs, banners, st. furniture, objects in windows, etc., are of white or grey stone
& glass. Occasional red-brick buildings, particularly delightful surprises such as the old church on
the east end of Wash. St., are the only connecting link to Boston. Plane organization of the area is
unclear except the location & direction of Wash. & Tremont. The boundary is unclear, but must be strong
because, when seen from South Station, the area has strong contrast of height and feeling of compactness.

- q. Market Area. Was in and out of this area so
fast that I have no sense of its extent, boundaries
or street plan. I have a distinct impression of 2-
story, shed-like structures, with leading docks covered
by wood-structured overhangs at 2d floor level. Facades & severe rectangular fenestration. Facades are
of red brick or weathered clapboard.
I would guess the pattern is a modified grid:

\[ \text{Diagram of grid pattern} \]

In any case, leading its seem short & have nice spatial feeling. Trucks and variety of produce give area a very active feeling.

\hspace{1cm}

h. The Waterfront. This, too, is uncertain in organization of plan and the boundaries other than water. The strongest quality is the sight & smell of the sea & all its accoutrements - boats, tugs, ships, docks, etc. Warehouses on docks are long, low, flat, abstract elements, not unpleasant in feeling, particularly where there is habitation. Back of Atlantic Ave., however, are large, gross warehouses, factories, & office buildings. These are freestanding, towering over lower, discreet apt. buildings, stores, etc. Once in a while, in the spaces between these large structures, one sees some groups of very old brick or clapboard structures, often with gabled roofs & bearing commercial signs in simple lettering. These suggest the early beginnings of Boston, as do occasional sculptures & their surrounding bits of grass (Dock Square). There are a lot of jagged spaces here, a thousand street tangents, and construction upheaval everywhere.

i. The Navy Yard - this is a vast complex of grey
warships, towering steel cranes, & drydocks—no sense of boundary; unsure location.

3. Description of centers: as in my first description, before tours began, centers stand out for their activity contract more than for any other single reason. However, some are so breathtaking in a visual sense—i.e., in strong visual contrast to what has gone before—that the sense of activity comes later. This is true of the large square in South End bordered by Wash. St., Copley Square, and Dock Square. The latter is less obvious; I always saw it (3 or 4 times) after proceeding through the unpleasant, commercial streets, Washington or Cambridge; it came as a strong sense of relief from a distasteful emotional experience. The other 2 of these 3 had powerful spatial contrast with surrounding area; plus other qualities of visual interest.

   1. South End square & park—this large, rectangular space is delightful for its size—large enough to have a park-like sense of retreat, small enough to “read” all 4 sides in terms of definite building heights, materials etc. It has a measurability & depth reference in the raised es of Washington St., which also gives a nice integration of quiet with noise, activity with passivity. The large, widespread trees are of a wonderful form, delicate branches, heavy trunks. Strong activity is sensed along

   Franklin Sq.
all sides & Wash. St. — people, vehicles, etc. Buildings, taller & flatter than surrounding areas, have the area—qualities of color, material, fenestration patterns, etc.

— b. Copley Square. Less strong as a unit of blocks & common space, Copley offers an interesting juxtaposition of architectural dissimilarities, each clearly set off from the others: the church, the library, the Sheraton Plaza, and the other side of many, smaller and continuous shops & agencies. Heavy traffic on all 4 sides & diagonally, plus pedestrians, are a keynote. Copley is pretentious (Public Library), ridiculously fun (church); and snobbish (hotel, fine shops). It is grey or weather-beaten-brown.

— c. Faneuil Square. Faneuil Square is not a well-enclosed space, but there is openness contrast, setting off a nice early-American brick structure, now used for commercial purposes on lower floors. In front, in a little grassy island, is a sculpture of Adams, Revere, or someone of our heroes. This center, throwing one back into the past after the garish, modern experience of Wash. St., has a wonderful impact — simple, rooted in deeper values, etc.
d. Park. Tremont - the visual impact of this point is not marked because of long previews of the church and the dominating & all pervading - impression of the park. This is simply an activity core - people & vehicles, subway entrance, etc - where one's pulse quickens with the crowd.

e. Mass Station - ditto, without any visual interest.

f. Symphony Hall - ditto, with only interest coming from Symphony Hall itself and the long view up Huntington & sense of Copley Sq. at its end.

g. Traffic Circle at Longfellow Bridge - the pulse quickens, but only with dread & confusion - which turn to take?

h. Jordan-Fiskere - ditto above, but visual & sensual interest is in displays & in people.

i. South Station - this point has a strong and unpleasant visual impact, mostly of pavement & the endless South Station bldg. This also inspires dread - all the people are hidden behind warlike armor on 4 wheels.

j. The Market Area - included here because I don't know extent of this area. I can feel the hit of an intensity peak, but don't know its gradients.
4. Recognition places & structure. The lowest order of element is a point which can only be identified with prior experience but from which only vague notions of positions and no sense of directions (other than sun) are possible. Such are the natures of
a) Dock Square; b) facades photographed for Kevin's classes; c) the Market Area; d) So. Station; e) the Clock Tower; f) John Hancock (up close); g) a sculpture south of Boylston.

In most of these cases, I have experienced them and remembered them because of a distinct emotional impact they made; few, if any were approached and viewed continuously from far to near; none occur along lines of travel I normally use while in Boston.

The next higher order of element is a point giving identity & direction (implies location because direction is dependent on it). This is of lower order because it is static, discontinuous, & may be overlooked more easily in travel. In some cases (e.g. Washington) a series of such points in capable of giving direction and specific location along a line which is otherwise weak and directionless. These points, with their directional clues are as follows:

a) Traffic circle at Longfellow Bridge - sight of Beacon Hill
b) Shell - relative position of Longfellow Bridge
c) Louisburg Sq., direction of slope on 2 ends of rectangle.

d) State House rel position of Beacon St. & Common.

e) Church at Park Tremont slope of Park St. & Beacon Hill.

f) Church on Wash. memorized right side of Washington St.

G) Radio shack: ditto left side going east.

h) Jordan-Filene rel positions of the 2 stores (Filene's east of Jordan's).

I) Small Square between Shawmut & Tremont in South End sight of Tremont street cars vs. Shawmut (less commercial).

j) Court square on Mass. Ave., slight slope up toward Symphony Hall.

k) Symphony Hall; underpass on Huntington, difference in side & front facades of Hall.


Another order of recognition element is the line, recognized as a line without a sense of specific location along the line, nor a sense of where other direction leads. Most of these, for me, require knowledge of context; i.e., what general area of Boston am I operating within. This suggests that their recognition stems from contrast rather and rate of change with
respect to surrounding areas of known quality. These include Tremont (in South End); Shawmut; Albany (in South End); Washington Street (where no elevated structure); part of Atlantic Ave; and the elevated superhighway east of the core. The latter is not a matter of local contrast, however; it is the only such elevated structure in Boston. Having several legs and curving amorphously, it is an uncertain line, as against, for example, Washington Street.

Such uncertain lines are brought closer to the category of universally identifiable by having a sense of direction. This can come from a view of known end goals – but if these aren’t completely obvious, the line is still weak (e.g. Tremont St.). Or from a memorized sequence of known points on the line (as against a general street or line quality). Or from a known sequence of differences from one side of the line to the other (e.g. Albany St., development on north, vacant spaces on south). Or, as a corollary of the last 2, the relation of the line to an area of known and visible structure (Wash. & Shawmut as related to the South End park). Or from slope.

A line may have unmistakable general quality, without directional or specific-locational sense, even if the general area context is not known. (e.g. Wash. St. with elevated structure). This type may
have strong directional sense & somewhat for weaker line quality. This would include Columbus Ave.
(view of State House & relation of skewed streets);

St. Botolph St. and other paralleling & across the tracks, (with footbridges between Botolph being a dead end for N-S streets); Atlantic Ave. (relation to water); Cambridge St. (relation to Beacon Hill); Beacon St. (view of Charles River).

A certain and directional line may give sense of specific locations on the line. This comes from relation to points not on the line; memorized locations of known points on the line; relative position from 2 known ends; and relation of the line to an area of known and visible structure (e.g., anywhere along streets bounding the Common).

An area of identity which gives also a sense of direction (implying sense of position of at least a general nature) from any position within it (requiring substantial ability of the whole unless tremendous memory exercise has developed an infinite system of known points) lies of the highest recognition order. This
is due to its immediacy (as against a line which requires some traverse to set direction); its ease of "intersection" of movement (e.g., \[\text{2-DIRECTIONAL TRAVEL}\])

This strength of value, of course, depends on the recognition value of the area itself and the manner in which direction is sensed. The Common, unmistakable as a visual experience, is less clear than my 2 smaller areas of identity; the slope goes up to Park and Beacon. The smaller areas have differentiated sides (not easily discernible from middle of the Common) and a penetrating line (Huntington Ave., Washington elevated).