Mrs. Peterson
Street Interview

I like the openness, I like the width of the sidewalks, I like the feeling of uncluttered space (no matter how many people are here, you can still have space to walk). I like the buildings with signs that are on the wall and not at right angles to the wall, even when they're marginal. I like the clock sitting out in the middle of the sidewalk like a for you to stumble over. I like Mr. North's clothes shop over there, which is very pleasant. In general, I like the simple and undecorated facade. I think there are another nice building, maybe the IBM building, over there. Unfortunately, the store sign spoils the front of it. I don't like tall buildings particularly; I think there are high enough for a feeling of space. Of course, from here there's always the Common, which is nice — it's trees, lawns, and again the feeling of openness. Of course, you get that at both ends of this, with the Copley Square here and the library, so you never can feel at the bottom of a well on this spot.

Arlington St. Church, which I would like a lot better if it weren't of red sandstone that peels. It discolors, peeled, chips off and flakes. It's a nice old church. Very nicely situated, and again, on the corner it doesn't give you the feeling of being too cramped.

I think it's the hodge-podge of our streets, like down ahead of us, that is so sort of discouraging. Any city. It seems to me that, in Boston, more consistent because it's still has lots of stores that are still approximately the same age, more consistent than a lot of other cities whose downtown areas are as — look at this block. Every building is different in scale, in detail and material. That's alright; nobody wants to go to a factory with everything just alike, but there should be some effort at coordination of effects and not with curved windows in a brick building next door to a modern Kodak or whatever that plane is there. There are two rectangular windows on the one building; the windows on the trees are all rectangular, then you get curved, then you get modern rectangles with horizontal stripes, then you get more rectangles. So, altogether it doesn't add up to much.

There's very little around here, except the church. You see what I mean by peeling up there — that light patch on the column. It would be much better if it were made of material that stood up. This doesn't allow very well. It's partly pigeons, too, I expect. These, again, are our worse period buildings probably. The Ritz is alright. The top building, at least it's simple. That's a very nice iron railing, very lovely. But that probably was an addition.

I think looking down the street here, where the sun hits the buildings two blocks or so down, is a sort of unified loveliness. At least, all are approximately the same height, all built at approximately the same time, all having certain characteristics very definitely in common. Of course, I'm still in love with Boston chimneys — I think they're the most fascinating things in the world. And I like the punctuation marks of church steeples here and there, particularly when they really are steeples like they are against buildings like this block.

This is a really nice area; you suppose it's been redone on this side. By and large, the top windows are so fascinating, I can't throw them away on this block. On this whole block there's only one sign that sticks out, except down at the end.

nicely designed. It's not as completely dull as and yes there are no great expressions. Rather nice architecture. All fairly consistent. I imagine they must have all been redone at about the same time, because they do give a sort of unified effect. Lovely walks and sidewalks. But I think the main thing is the fact that they aren't any old signs sticking out. Look across the street at the difference — you have bow windows, bay windows and recesses, signs cut off all over the place. I should say that probably these buildings were of the same age but they had new fronts. That's a guess,
I don't know. They look much older, so I just wondered if maybe there had been a face-lifting and those hadn't. These do look like insipient alums. Someday they could be, like various sections of New York and other sections, the old brownstones have gone to pot. They just seem to have the seeds of decay. It's amusing that there is a right side and a wrong side, a good side and a bad side to a street. It is a fact. And how much the fact is influenced by the architectural unity or the beauty or anything else of the shops on the street, I don't know. Whether that's a result or cause. But that's kind of on the hideous side, the church.

It's rather passable. Not big enough to carry big points. And I think the color is hideous, the stone and the trim. Although I do like — and I do like Mr. Pond's. I like it largely because of space, the effect of non-crowding. I know it was an old MIT building at one time. I've seen a lot of it, Gaetano. Its front windows have been remodelled at a later time, I presume, and ruined, but even so it's gray and distinguished, it's done with taste, and mainly it isn't space, I think, that makes it largely attractive. If the steps were level with the sidewalk and there were a building on each side, it would just be something else, another rather lonely spot.

Looking at the alley) Don't you mind because heaven knows we're going to get into, in the way of rats and trash. This is really Boston, I suppose. It's a back alley, and they should all be done away with, I don't know how. This sort of trash, garbage cans, discarded restaurant stuff, sort of thing should definitely not be allowed on sidewalks and places through the city. They're horrible eyesores. People have to have back doors and they haven't to have ways to dispose of garbage, but they should have adequate containers. There's really no excuse for things scattered around on the ground with no attempt to put them into anything, no way. But there they are and they always are. I drive my car up this way very frequently and that's how I know about the rats. There are enough cars and enough trucking up here so that they keep going out of the alley. That's amazing about the only thing that's out of the alley; everything else is right with us.

Trunks have to be there, but cars park along and line and the — can't get through.

Very dirty. The whole city is not really a very clean one. I suspect we've been walking around just about as clean looking a block as there is in Boston.

Back end of everything. Ritz parking lot.

(walk around the front of the church again) I'm glad it's not as cold as it was the day before yesterday or we wouldn't have done much strolling. (talk about the weather)

It's hard to

A wonderful job of post-hurricane repair work here. I've been remember where the big trees were. Right after the hurricane, you thought the Garden was ruined and would never be useful again, and now you can remember where the trees were. There were hazards on most of the walks last winter. I think the hazards are much better. I used to walk across frequently in the winter time, on and off the mud and the walks they had, and they were no fun.