

Post-walk interview. w. E Siegel

Beginning on the corner of Boylston and Berkley. The pavement was so wide... we noticed that...and we talked about the difference between ^{Space} the oldish styles of architecture and the more modern ones that exist, and that none of them are particularly too outstanding in either direction...neither too old nor too terribly modern...

You don't get the feeling you have in New York with the Lever building on Park Ave.

The particular shops that exist around here cater to the more well-to-do people and try to reach that trade. In addition to the shops you have mainly the travel type agencies around here, the shipping lines, with the big windows and the decorative kind of things...

It's an attractive, but, what my husband calls an overcommercialized area, one which could have been much more beautiful if it hadn't got so commercial.

The Bonwit building makes an impressive area although it's somewhat overpompous.

^{Space} Turning down towards Commonwealth, the nicest thing of course is the park and its different shades of seasons....the particular relief it gives from the city atmosphere, the crowded ~~parking areas~~ clutteredness of certain areas, which fortunately we don't have much of around here, except perhaps the alleys which are always the ironic, always the tragedy of the city that in back of every front there must be that....the mess, the garbage, the smell. ^{smell}

On the other hand the occasional relief of the seamstress^{shop}, but, again those are overcrowded places.... they seem to be up to the business man, I suppose, what he can't afford, he can't afford.

^{Space} Down Newbury, again a wide street...the pavements aren't quite so wide, but they're ...the street is broad and it's a very not busy street, except for certain hours when a lot of cars go down there, but you almost always don't get very many people walking around there except the few who come for specific things. They know which shops are there and go to them, because it's not question of---let's go to a sale at Jordan's or anything of that sort...It's kind of an exclusive area.

Coming up Newbury towards Berkley there is the particular interest of the Church, I think St. John the Divine, and its lovely (Covenant)...I love that building, I think it's beautiful with its free lines shooting up. I guess I've covered it backwards, haven't I. (not partic.) What else?

(the alley) the piles of junk and nails and garbage...what's left over is there. If somebody threw it away, it's there. I have the feeling that they don't ever clean these places up...It's much the same in back of this building. ...always filled with oversized trucks having to scrape their way thru...What a dreadful way for deliveries to have to be made. ...and at the same time those trucks block up the streets if they do it from the fronts. ...It leaves almost no solution except deliver by helicopter.

(How about buildings you may not have mentioned so far), or stores) Would it be of any interest if..the corner from Arlington down Commonwealth.. I mentioned that horrible monster about three buildings wide that's going to complete waste.

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we doubt very much whether anyone been in it for years, and something ought to be done about it...sold or cleaned up.. and how funny it is to come by number 18 which is remodled into a very plain but very modern front. It's all cleaned up but its got the big chromium plated 18 out front or somtinh like that. and on down to the typical brownstones of the area.

(Stores)

You thinking of FAO Schwarz^B for instance. That's quite an attractive place. very simple, a always well lighted, decorated with nice warm and of course brooks bros with its well controlled pomposity always the sophisticated window with the evening clothes

There's a little shop on Berkley^B....bet neb and boyls...a tailor shop that's sort of a mess and not particularly anything except a basement. a guy decided to o-en a shop and so he put in a glass front. and next to it is a tidbit^B shop which sells apples at ten cents a piece, you know that kind of thing. and it's so crowded, you get the feeling you can't turn around ~~xxxxxx~~ If somebody else walks in there while you're in the store, you're just sunk you just have to wait...til they leave. for his prices it's not worth it.

Next to that's a Jewlery shop which has been remade with a glass front. handmade silver stuff. That's kind of pretty. ^B The usual subway entrance next with not too much of anything except a stairway .

The area has a great deal of charm, and loveliness and a lot of temptation for a woman shopper. But on the other hand, as I said before, it lacks anything in practicality ... People in this area, and I've talked to a lot of them, complain because they're so hard put to buy their household weekly food. The people go shopping over at Stop and Shop and have to lug their bundles home and lug them to the elveator, and it's kind of mess.

And there's the parking problem. ^T Fortunately we found we're not in the tow^{er} area...but it's usually almost impossible to find a place to put your car.

And in addition there's the traffic sounds, because this (Berkley) is the main artery to the Storrow drive from the downtown section . Right about now if the windows were open, for about an hour the horns go crazy around here...they pick up a rhythm,,,back and forth.

Then every sunday morning about 11 oclock all the churches start sounding with their carillonc bells ..and they carry on...ooh, I shouldn't have said that.

(People) Course unfortunately, living as you do in this honeycombed world you don't ge to meet some of the othr bees . If you want to know anybody you have to knobck on your apartment neighbors door or go to some other kind of social organization because so many of these people have so few things in common with us^x that ...many of them older women and older couples. The students don't live too much in this area, I think, because the rents are ~~xxx~~high out of their reach.

The people who tend to frequent the streets tare those students who do attend classes around here on the one hand...and on the other those befurred, bejeweled women who inhabit the shops around here. And I always get a kick out of the falseness of it all. They're dressed to kill, and when they open

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their mouths they come out with these horrible accents. and they screech down the streets at their neighbors.... "See ya later maizie."

(signs)

What Not too much off hand...the Otis Clappish kind of thing, the vitamin ads, they have a kind of attractive treatment some times, they play up the blue, sort of violet they use in their jars, but sometimes they overdo it too. I remember a particular ad they're featuring now, a million dollar fashion show.

Off hand the only thing I can mention is that if you stand at the corner of Boylston and Berkley and try to cross in the direction of Stuart St. there isn't one light you can see that does you any good, because they're all red. You're facing in a direction which has a lot of one-way streets, and every light you see is red and doesn't change, so it's almost impossible for the pedestrian to find out what's going on in the traffic unless he watches to see what cars are moving. , but if you were to depend on the light you couldn't do it.

(areas)

There is no great contrast in the area. There is a uniformity in spaciousness, in the type of shop. It's a little more sophist. on Newbury and a lot quieter of course, not as much trafficked as Boylston. There is a uniformity ~~but~~ nowhere nearly like certain sections of this town you could mention. Going from Copley Sq. to two or three blocks behind it, and Copley sq with its grandeur of the Library, and you know the mall in there the churches.... which is quiet and beautiful as far as the architecture, though there's a lot of trafficand the hot jazz section.

The same thing happens, ...It's not quite so true downtown going from the Garden into the Filenes section. but down in back there of the State St. Fed St. where you get that sudden and complete catacomb and can't find your way around.

No I don't ~~think~~

/I think it has a certain sense of uniformity, more than those areas. And it's nice, not an unpleasant sort of area, except of course through the back alleys. They exist. You really can't talk about them when you discuss things that everybody sees most of the time. How many people walk down them? How many less people look down them, you know? They're there...if a truck comes out you try and cross them...that's about all.

(order and character)

It seems to be one of proper Bostonianism if anything. As I mentioned it's what I think of as being pretty much Boston...It means more than the downtown shopping area ...because that can exist in any city and look pretty much the same. Yes, this area, particularly around Commonwealth Ave and Newbury St area has an extreme amount of individualism. It's New Englandy. It's certainly not Atlanta or Washington D.C. and, well, It's hard to say whether you could find this somewhere else if you looked hard enough for it, but there is a certain quiet Bostonianism about it that you can't take away. ~~It~~

It doesn't exist in the Newton kind of area of course, or in Cambridge... those are things by themselves.

.....(was it archit?) No. It can't be just the architecture because a similar kind of Brownstone exists in New York. Well, I guess the Commonwealth Mall leading to the Garden is a great contribution. That's something I stand firm on from what I know of this area. That's a hard question to answer, it's something you can't come by easily.

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It certainly doesn't smell much different.

(smell) the garbage ^{Smell} in the back alley.

(sounds) ofcourse the wind robbed one of most of that. Some. Fortunately you don't here trolleys. ~~or~~ You get the usual crashing ^{of tin cans} in back alleys...that kind of thing ^{car noises}...crowd of people ^{passing} on the street occasionally .. It's kind of typical, doesn't make any difference from anywhere else.

(at ease) I do. Of course, I know it so well now. I know exactly where I can find each store. Course...you can take an elevator in any one of these bldg. and find dozens of shops you didn't know existed. which you couldn't know existed.. which is unfort. for both shops and shoppers.....unless you go directly for information or go to the yellow pages of a telephone book. on Boylston, but think it's probably the case elsewhere in city.

I don't think so much on Newbury...there's some, but they don't seem to be quite the same kind of shops...Berlitz School, a secretarial school, several architects and interior decorator kind of shops---but they advertize over the radio now . ~~Ymx~~ Actually the only way I found out about many of those shops on Boylston was by going up looking for employment agencies which happen to exist there as well.

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