

Scouty male
3/11/47

In general, the area had a certain feeling of character, a well-polished character. All the stores, all the facades in the general area, although they were not all similar, gave a similar impression, stability, a certain amount of quiet character, gave you the feeling of being permanent. In their similarity, the fact that there was no real contrast in the line of stores, except perhaps the changing of color combinations in the windows or the way was cut to shape their show windows, seemed to be the only distinction, and one seemed to flow into the other even though they might differ a little bit. They all seemed to be appealing to the same sort of thing, the quiet conservatism. There were one or two exceptions but even they were not violently exceptional. One or two stores had a more liberal type of advertising technique in the store front, differing from the rest of them.

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Then, of course, Bonwit's seemed to be the criteria or the pace setter of the whole area. It was the dominant thing. It filled your eye - both of them - in almost entirety, and it set the mood for the whole place, I think. The only little bit of variance that seemed out of character was that little store beneath the surface of the ground. This seemed to be another world, another type of store, a little out of its element in this area. Although the parking lot was, in a sense, not aesthetically pleasing, the type of automobile that was in it gave you the same impression that one of the store fronts did.

It seems to represent not so much Boston but it represents a particular part of every city, I think. However, its architecture seemed to indicate that it was an integral part of Boston. Whether the merchants or people who were doing business there were using the architecture of the buildings, and so on, to give you that affect or to merely represent the fact that this was a part of Boston escapes me - I don't know whether that's true or not. It certainly seemed to fit in with the rest of what I have seen of downtown Boston, Metropolitan Boston. The whole area around the Public Garden and the Commons seemed to be of the same general nature, and this seemed to be as much a part of it as anything along the entire rectangle.

(What would be the general nature?) I think a rather staid, somewhat ultra-conservative feeling. A little bit too conservative. In a sense, a lacking of freedom in the continual view of the same color and type of building, the feeling that there was almost a real pressure to imitate this, just keep on doing the same thing, a sort of ingrowth. There were no real, at least in my idea, expression of freedom in the buildings right around there. There were some places over on the other side of Beacon Hill that gave me a feeling of individual integrity, some buildings here and there -- a place like Fanuel Hall seemed to have a sense of integrity and unity all of its own, a product of an individual's imagination or certainly in a different way than the old brownstones that surround/or the old type of buildings that surrounded it. Here and there an old house

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where the brick-work was a little imperfect yet it seemed to have its own integrity, with a dash of color, a white facade or a blue trim, or an oddly shaped chimney or something like that. This indifference to the great bulk of reddish-brown that seemed to prevail over the rest of it.

----- self-confident there, not particularly at ease. I felt no sense of communication with the area. It didn't appeal to me particularly. The one appealing thing, I think, was the quiet .

Automobiles there which caught the eye, the big Cadillacs, the gaudy colors, the bright chrome. Then we sort of got away from that and passed it, and it was behind us. Then we continued walking down the street, and as I recall the cement pattern changed. It changed from a wide square to a rather small square, and there were little patches here and there. Then we went around again and came down an alley which I thought was interesting, ~~though~~ it was dark and dank in a sense and really offered none of the bite and

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attractiveness of the outside street, it seemed an interesting place. It seemed a more intimate place. Perhaps it was the fact that it obviously was older but it had a little more character. Looking in the windows of the alley you could see people working without the advantage of a facade. There was none of the main street ~~xxx~~ salesmanish type smile; these were just the people ~~xxx~~ actually doing -- the artisans and the craftsmen actually doing something which would eventually find its way out into the main street, but this is where it actually was being created, made and so on. As we walked out toward the end of the alley I noticed the fire escapes which were the classical sort of fire escape, ~~very~~ painted black, and sort of ominous color, and yet they broke up the sky or the space in their own peculiar way -- the fact that they were not solid structures but made of strips of metal which broke up the light in different patterns. The way the refuse was piled at different stages in the alley, at different locations; they sort of all represented the peculiar attitude of the particular individual who had the job of putting the stuff out, and in some places it was neatly stacked and in some places it was just heaved out; in some places the garbage cans were covered, in some places they weren't.

As we left the alley and came out once more into the street, the sun was very nice, very brilliant. Then the walk we took into the park was nice. Crossing that street from where the church was into the park was like walking from one whole attitude into a completely different one, and it became a lot more personal area, or an area which was easier to feel comfortable in, so to speak. A sense of freedom, really; no mechanical, -at least looking at the trees and grass without looking at the fence, any area which was not mechanically or arbitrarily set off by any mechanical limits. There was no fences to say walk there or walk here, although the path was delineated. Just looking, you seemed to have a greater freedom of vision.