

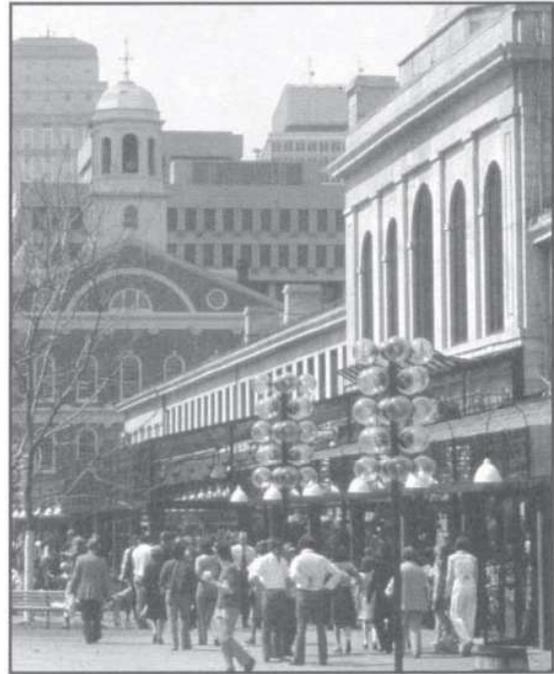
Kevin Lynch

Summary

In 1960, Kevin Lynch prefaced his seminal book, *The Image of the City*, as follows, which serves both to introduce and succinctly encompass the content of his work: “This [book] is about the look of cities and whether this look is of any importance, and whether it can be changed. The urban landscape, among its many roles, is also something to be seen, to be remembered, and to delight in. Giving visual form to the city is a special kind of design problem, and a rather new one at that.”

Key words

analysis method, districts, edges, image, landmark, nodes, paths, planning, urban design, way finding



Faneuil Hall Market Place, Boston, MA.

The city image and its elements

There seems to be a public image of any given city which is the overlap of many individual images. Or perhaps there is a series of public images, each held by some significant number of citizens. Such group images are necessary if an individual is to operate successfully within his environment and to cooperate with his fellows. Each individual picture is unique, with some content that is rarely or never communicated, yet it approximates the public image, which, in different environments, is more or less compelling, more or less embracing.

This analysis limits itself to the effects of physical, perceptible objects. There are other influences of imageability, such as the social meaning of an area, its function, its history, or even its name. These will be glossed over, since the objective here is to uncover the role of form itself. It is taken for granted that in actual design form should be used to reinforce meaning, and not to negate it.

The contents of the city images, which are referable to physical forms, can conveniently be classified into five types of elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. Indeed, these elements may be of more general application, since they seem to reappear in many types of environmental images. These elements may be defined as follows:

1 Paths. Paths are the channels along which the observer customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves. They may be streets, walkways, transit lines, canals, railroads. For many people, these are the predominant elements in their image. People observe the city while moving through

it, and along these paths the other environmental elements are arranged and related.

2 Edges. Edges are the linear elements not used or considered as paths by the observer. They are the boundaries between two phases, linear breaks in continuity: shores, railroad cuts, edges of development, walls. They are lateral references rather than coordinate axes. Such edges may be barriers, more or less penetrable, which close one region off from another; or they may be seams, lines along which two regions are related and joined together. These edge elements, although probably not as dominant as paths, are for many people important organizing features, particularly in the role of holding together generalized areas, as in the outline of a city by water or wall.

3 Districts. Districts are the medium-to-large sections of the city, conceived of as having two-dimensional extent, which the observer mentally enters “inside of,” and which are recognizable as having some common, identifying character. Always identifiable from the inside, they are also used for exterior reference if visible from the outside. Most people structure their city to some extent in this way, with individual differences as to whether paths or districts are the dominant elements. It seems to depend not only upon the individual but also upon the given city.

4 Nodes. Nodes are points, the strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is traveling. They may be primarily junctions, places of a break in

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transportation, a crossing or convergence of paths, moments of shift from one structure to another. Or the nodes may be simply concentrations, which gain their importance from being the condensation of some use or physical character, as a street corner hangout or an enclosed square. Some of these concentration nodes are the focus and epitome of a district, over which their influence radiates and of which they stand as a symbol. They may be called cores. Many nodes, of course, partake of the nature of both junctions and concentrations. The concept of node is related to the concept of path, since junctions are typically the convergence of paths, events on the journey. It is similarly related to the concept of district, since cores are typically the intensive foci of districts, their polarizing center. In any event, some nodal points are to be found in almost every image, and in certain cases they may be the dominant feature.

5 Landmarks. Landmarks are another type of point-reference, but in this case the observer does not enter within them, they are external. They are usually a rather simply defined physical object: building, sign, store, or mountain. Their use involves the singling out of one element from a host of possibilities. Some landmarks are distant ones, typically seen from many angles and distances, over the tops of smaller elements, and used as radial references. They may be within the city or at such a distance that for all practical purposes they symbolize a constant direction. Such are isolated towers; golden domes, great hills. Even a mobile point, like the sun, whose motion is sufficiently slow and regular, may be employed. Other landmarks are primarily local, being visible only in restricted localities and from certain approaches. These are the innumerable signs, store fronts, trees, door-knobs, and other urban detail, which fill in the image of most observers. They are frequently used clues of identity and even of structure, and seem to be increasingly relied upon, as a journey becomes more and more familiar.

The image of a given physical reality may occasionally shift its type with different circumstances of viewing. Thus an expressway may be a path for the driver, an edge for the pedestrian. Or a central area may be a district when a city is organized on a medium scale, and a node when the entire metropolitan area is considered. But the categories seem to have stability for a given observer when he is operating at a given level.

None of the element types isolated above exist in isolation in the real case. Districts are structured with nodes, defined by edges, penetrated by paths, and sprinkled with landmarks. Elements regularly overlap and piece one another. If this analysis begins with the differentiation of the data into categories, it must end with their reintegration into the whole image. Our studies have furnished much information about the visual character of the element types. This will be discussed below. Only to a lesser extent, unfortunately, did the work make revelations about the interrelations between elements, or about image levels, image qualities, or the development of the image.

I PATHS

For most people interviewed, paths were the predominant city elements, although their importance varied according to the degree of familiarity with the city. People with least knowledge of Boston tended to think of the city in terms of topography, large regions, generalized characteristics, and broad directional relationships. Subjects who knew the city better had usually mastered part of the path structure; these

people thought more in terms of specific paths and their interrelationships. A tendency also appeared for the people who knew the city best of all to rely more upon small landmarks and less upon either regions or paths.

Particular paths may become important features in a number of ways. Customary travel will of course be one of the strongest influences, so that major access lines, such as Boylston Street, Storrow Drive, or Tremont Street in Boston, Hudson Boulevard in Jersey City, or the freeways in Los Angeles, are all key image features. Obstacles to traffic, which often complicate the structure, may in other cases clarify it by concentrating cross flow into fewer channels, which thus become conceptually dominant. Beacon Hill, acting as a giant rotary, raises the importance of Cambridge and Charles Streets; the Public Garden strengthens Beacon Street. The Charles River, by confining traffic to a few highly visible bridges, all of individual shape, undoubtedly clarifies the path structure. Quite similarly, the Palisades in Jersey City focus attention on the three streets that successfully surmount it.

Concentration of special use or activity along a street may give it prominence in the minds of observers. Washington Street is the outstanding Boston example: subjects consistently associated it with shopping and theaters. Some people extended these characteristics to parts of Washington Street that are quite different (*e.g.*, near State Street); many people seemed not to know that Washington extends beyond the entertainment segment, and thought it ended near Essex or Stuart Streets. Los Angeles has many examples—Broadway, Spring Street, Skid Row, 7th Street—where the use concentrations are prominent enough to make linear districts. People seemed to be sensitive to variations in the amount of activity they encountered, and sometimes guided themselves largely by following the main stream of traffic. Los Angeles' Broadway was recognized by its crowds and its streetcars; Washington Street in Boston was marked by a torrent of pedestrians. Other kinds of activity at ground level also seemed to make places memorable, such as construction work near South Station, or the bustle of the food markets.

Special façade characteristics were also important for path identity. Beacon Street and Commonwealth Avenue were distinctive partly because of the building facades that line them. Pavement texture seemed to be less important, except in special cases such as Olvera Street in Los Angeles. Details of planting seemed also to be relatively unimportant, but a great deal of planting, like that on Commonwealth Avenue, could reinforce a path image very effectively.

Proximity to special features of the city could also endow a path with increased importance. In this case the path would be acting secondarily as an edge. Occasionally, paths were important largely for structural

Where major paths lacked identity, or were easily confused one for the other, the entire city image was in difficulty. That the paths, once identifiable, have continuity as well, is an obvious functional necessity. People regularly depended upon this quality. The fundamental requirement is that the actual track, or bed of the pavement, go through; the continuity of other characteristics is less important. Paths which simply have a satisfactory degree of track continuity were selected as the dependable ones in an environment like Jersey City. They can be followed by the stranger, even if with difficulty. People often generalized that other kinds of characteristics along a continuous track were also continuous, despite actual changes.

Paths may not only be identifiable and continuous, but have directional quality as well: one direction along the line can easily be distinguished from the reverse. This can be done by a gradient, a regular change in some quality, which is cumulative in one direction. Most frequently sensed were the topographic gradients: in Boston, particularly on Cambridge Street, Beacon Street, and Beacon Hill.

People tended to think of path destinations and origin points: they liked to know where paths came from and where they led. Paths with clear and well-known origins and destinations had stronger identities, helped tie the city together, and gave the observer a sense of his bearings whenever he crossed them. Some subjects thought of general destinations for paths, to a section of the city, for example, while others thought of specific places.

This same kind of end-from-end differentiation, which is conferred by termini, can be created by other elements that may be visible near the end, or apparent end, of a path. The Common near one end of Charles Street acted this way, as did the State House for Beacon Street.

Once a path has directional quality, it may have the further attribute of being scaled: one may be able to sense one's position along the total length, to grasp the distance traversed or yet to go. Features which facilitate scaling, of course, usually confer a sense of direction as well, except for the simple technique of counting blocks, which is directionless but can be used to compute distances. Many subjects referred to this latter clue, but by no means all. It was most commonly used in the regular pattern of Los Angeles.

Given a directional quality in a path, we may next inquire if it is aligned, that is, if its direction is referable to some larger system. In Boston, there were many examples of unaligned paths. One common cause was the subtle, misleading curve. Most people missed the curve in Massachusetts Avenue at Falmouth Street, and confused their total map of Boston as a result.

At the same time more abrupt directional shifts may enhance visual clarity by limiting the spatial corridor, and by providing prominent sites for distinctive structures. The second common cause of misalignment to the rest of the city was the sharp separation of a path from surrounding elements. Paths in the Boston Common, for example, caused much confusion: people were uncertain which walkways to use in order to arrive at particular destinations outside the Common. Their view of these outside destinations was blocked, and the paths of the Common failed to tie to outside paths. In Los Angeles as well, the freeways were not felt to be "in" the rest of the city, and coming off an exit ramp was typically a moment of severe disorientation.

Research on the problems of erecting directional signs on the new freeways has shown that this disassociation from the surroundings causes each turning decision to be made under pressure and without adequate preparation. Even familiar drivers showed a surprising lack of knowledge of the freeway system and its connections. General orientation to the total landscape was the greatest need of these motorists.

The railroad lines and the subway are other examples of detachment. The buried paths of the Boston subway could not be related to the rest of the environment except where they come up for air, as in crossing the river. The surface entrances of the stations may be strategic nodes in the city, but they are related along invisible conceptual linkages. The



Downtown Boston commercial district.



The State House, Boston.



The Boston Common.

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subway is a disconnected nether world, and it is intriguing to speculate what means might be used to mesh it into the structure of the whole.

Quite similarly, in the subway system, the successive branching of main lines was a problem, since it was hard to keep distinct the images of two slightly divergent branches and hard to remember where the branch occurred.

A few important paths may be imaged together as a simple structure, despite any minor irregularities, as long as they have a consistent general relationship to one another. A large number of paths may be seen as a total network, when repeating relationships are sufficiently regular and predictable. The Los Angeles grid is a good example. Almost every subject could easily put down some twenty major paths in correct relation to each other. At the same time, this very regularity made it difficult for them to distinguish one path from another.

2 EDGES

Edges are the linear elements not considered as paths: they are usually, but not quite always, the boundaries between two kinds of areas. They act as lateral references. They are strong in Boston and Jersey City but weaker in Los Angeles. Those edges seem strongest which are not only visually prominent, but also continuous in form and impenetrable to cross movement. The Charles River in Boston is the best example and has all of these qualities.

In Jersey City, the waterfront was also a strong edge, but a rather forbidding one. It was a no-man's land, a region beyond the barbed wire. Edges, whether of railroads, topography, throughways, or district boundaries, are a very typical feature of this environment and tend to fragment it. Some of the most unpleasant edges, such as the bank of the Hackensack River with its burning dump areas, seemed to be mentally erased.

While continuity and visibility are crucial, strong edges are not necessarily impenetrable. Many edges are uniting seams, rather than isolating barriers, and it is interesting to see the differences in effect.

Edges are often paths as well. Where this was so, and where the ordinary observer was not shut off from moving on the path, then the circulation image seemed to be the dominant one. The element was usually pictured as a path, reinforced by boundary characteristics.

The elevated railways of Jersey City and Boston are examples of what might be called overhead edges. Yet high overhead edges, which would not be barriers at the ground level, might in the future by very effective orientation elements in a city.

Edges may also, like paths, have directional qualities. The Charles River edge, for example, has the obvious side-from-side differentiation of water and city, and the end-from-end distinction provided by Beacon Hill. Most edges had little of this quality, however.

3 DISTRICTS

Districts are the relatively large city areas which the observer can mentally go inside of, and which have some common character. They can be recognized internally, and occasionally can be used as external

reference as a person goes by or toward them. Many persons interviewed took care to point out that Boston, while confusing in its path pattern even to the experienced inhabitant, has a quality that quite makes up for it.

Subjects, when asked which city they felt to be a well-oriented one, mentioned several, but New York (meaning Manhattan) was unanimously cited. And this city was cited not so much for its grid, which Los Angeles has as well, but because it has a number of well-defined characteristic districts, set in an ordered frame of rivers and streets.

The physical characteristics that determine districts are thematic continuities which may consist of an endless variety of components: texture, space, form, detail, symbol, building type, use, activity, inhabitants, degree of maintenance, topography. In a closely built city such as Boston, homogeneities of façade—material, modeling, ornament, color, skyline, especially fenestration—were all basic clues in identifying major districts. Beacon Hill and Commonwealth Avenue are both examples. The clues were not only visual ones: noise was important as well. At times, indeed, confusion itself might be a clue, as it was for the woman who remarked that she knows she is in the North End as soon as she feels she is getting lost.

Usually, the typical features were imaged and recognized in a characteristic cluster, the thematic unit. The Beacon Hill image, for example, included steep narrow streets; old brick row houses of intimate scale; inset, highly maintained, white doorways; black trim; cobblestones and brick walks, quiet; and upper-class pedestrians. The resulting thematic unit was distinctive by contrast to the rest of the city and could be recognized immediately. In other parts of central Boston, there was some thematic confusion. It was not uncommon to group the Back Bay with the South End, despite their very different use, status, and pattern. This was probably the result of a certain architectural homogeneity, plus some similarity of historical background. Such likenesses tend to blur the city image.

A certain reinforcement of clues is needed to produce a strong image. All too often, there are a few distinctive signs, but not enough for a full thematic unit. Then the region may be recognizable to someone familiar with the city, but it lacks any visual strength or impact.

Yet social connotations are quite significant in building regions. A series of street interviews indicated the class overtones that many people associate with different districts. District names also help to give identity to districts even when the thematic unit does not establish a striking contrast with other parts of the city, and traditional associations can play a similar role.

Districts have various kinds of boundaries. Some are hard, definite, precise. Such is the boundary of the Back Bay at the Charles River or at the Public Garden. All agreed on this exact location. Other boundaries may be soft or uncertain, such as the limit between downtown shopping and the office district, to whose existence and approximate location most people would testify. Still other regions have no boundaries at all, as did the South End for many of our subjects.

These edges seem to play a secondary role: they may set limits to a district, and may reinforce its identity, but they apparently have less to do with constituting it. Edges may augment the tendency of districts to fragment the city in a disorganizing way.

4 NODES

Nodes are the strategic foci into which the observer can enter, typically either junctions of paths, or concentrations of some characteristic. But although conceptually they are small points in the city image, they may in reality be large squares, or somewhat extended linear shapes, or even entire central districts when the city is being considered at a large enough level. Indeed, when conceiving the environment at a national or international level, then the whole city itself may become a node.

The junction, or place of a break in transportation, has compelling importance for the city observer. Because decisions must be made at junctions, people heighten their attention at such places and perceive nearby elements with more than normal clarity. This tendency was confirmed so repeatedly that elements located at junctions may automatically be assumed to derive special prominence from their location. The perceptual importance of such locations shows in another way as well. When subjects were asked where on a habitual trip they first felt a sense of arrival in downtown Boston, a large number of people singled out break-points of transportation as the key places. The transition from one transportation channel to another seems to mark the transition between major structural units.

The subway stations, strung along their invisible path systems, are strategic junction nodes. The stations themselves have many individual characteristics: some are easy to recognize, like Charles Street, others difficult, like Mechanics. A detailed analysis of the imageability of subway systems, or of transit systems in general, would be both useful and fascinating.

Major railroad stations are almost always important city nodes, although their importance may be declining. The same might have been said for airports, had our study areas included them. In theory, even ordinary street intersections are nodes, but generally they are not of sufficient prominence to be imaged as more than the incidental crossing of paths. The image cannot carry too many nodal centers.

The other type of node, the thematic concentration, also appeared frequently. Pershing Square in Los Angeles was a strong example, being perhaps the sharpest point of the city image, characterized by highly typical space, planting, and activity. The Jordan-Filene corner acts secondarily as a junction between Washington Street and Summer Street, and it is associated with a subway stop, but primarily it was recognized as being the very center of the center of the city. It is the "100 percent" commercial corner, epitomized to a degree rarely seen in a large American city, but culturally very familiar to Americans. It is a core: the focus and symbol of an important region.

Louisburg Square is another thematic concentration, a well-known quiet residential open space, redolent of the upper-class themes of the Hill, with a highly recognizable fenced park. It is a purer example of concentration than is the Jordan-Filene corner, since it is not a transfer point at all, and was only remembered as being "somewhere inside" Beacon Hill. Its importance as a node was out of all proportion to its function.

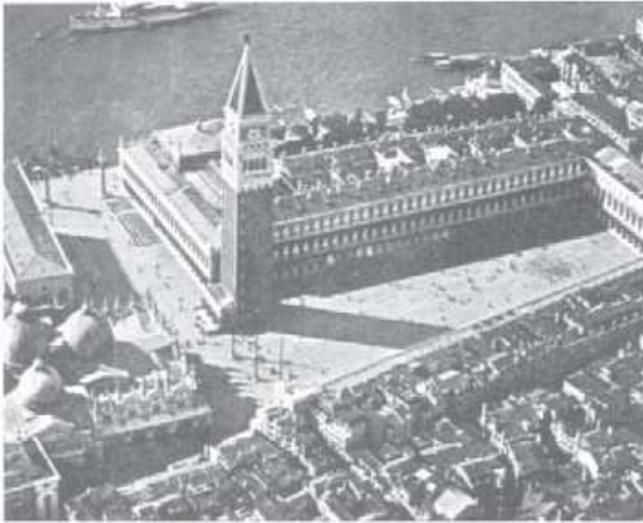
A strong physical form is not absolutely essential to the recognition of a node: witness Journal Square and Scollay Square. But where the space has some form, the impact is much stronger. The node becomes memorable.



Commonwealth Avenue, Boston.



Louisburg Square, Beacon Hill, Boston.



Piazza San Marco, Venice.

A node like Copley Square, on the contrary, which is of less functional importance and has to handle the angled intersection of Huntington Avenue, was very sharply imaged, and the connections of various paths were eminently clear. It was easily identified, principally in terms of its unique individual buildings: the Public Library, Trinity Church, the Copley Plaza Hotel, the sight of the John Hancock Building. It was less of a spatial whole than a concentration of activity and of some uniquely contrasting buildings.

Nodes, like districts, may be introvert or extrovert. Scollay Square is introverted, it gives little directional sense when one is in it or its environs. The principal direction in its surroundings is toward or away from it; the principal locational sensation on arrival is simply "here I am."

Many of these qualities may be summed up by the example of a famous Italian node: the *Piazza San Marco* in Venice. Highly differentiated, rich and intricate, it stands in sharp contrast to the general character of the city and to the narrow, twisting spaces of its immediate approaches. Yet it ties firmly to the major feature of the city, the Grand Canal, and has an oriented shape that clarifies the direction from which one enters. It is within itself highly differentiated and structured: into two spaces (*Piazza* and *Piazzetta*) and with many distinctive landmarks (*Duomo*, *Palazzo Ducale*, *Campanile*, *Libreria*). Inside, one feels always in clear relation to it, precisely micro-located, as it were. So distinctive is this space that many people who have never been to Venice will recognize its photograph immediately.

5 LANDMARKS

Landmarks, the point references considered to be external to the observer, are simple physical elements that may vary widely in scale. There seemed to be a tendency for those more familiar with a city to rely increasingly on systems of landmarks for their guides—to enjoy uniqueness and specialization, in place of the continuities used earlier.

Since the use of landmarks involves the singling out of one element from a host of possibilities, the key physical characteristic of this class is singularity, some aspect that is unique or memorable in the context. Landmarks become more easily identifiable, more likely to be chosen as significant, if they have a clear form; if they contrast with their background; and if there is some prominence of spatial location. Figure-background contrast seems to be the principal factor. The background against which an element stands out need not be limited to immediate surroundings: the grasshopper weathervane of Faneuil Hall, the gold dome of the State House, or the peak of the Los Angeles City Hall are landmarks that are unique against the background of the entire city.

Spatial prominence can establish elements as landmarks in either of two ways: by making the element visible from many locations (the John Hancock Building in Boston, the Richfield Oil Building in Los Angeles), or by setting up a local contrast with nearby elements, *i.e.*, a variation in setback and height.

Location at a junction involving path decisions strengthens a landmark. Historical associations, or other meanings, are powerful reinforcements, as they are for Faneuil Hall or the State House in Boston. Once a history, a sign, or a meaning attaches to an object, its value as a landmark rises.

Distant landmarks, prominent points visible from many positions, were often well known, but only people unfamiliar with Boston seemed to use them to any great extent in organizing the city and selecting routes for trips.

Few people had an accurate sense of where these distant landmarks were and how to make one's way to the base of either building. Most of Boston's distant landmarks, in fact, were "bottomless;" they had a peculiar floating quality. The John Hancock Building, the Custom House, and the Court House are all dominant on the general skyline, but the location and identity of their base is by no means as significant as that of their top.

The gold dome of Boston's State House seems to be one of the few exceptions to this elusiveness. Its unique shape and function, its location at the hill crest and its exposure to the Common, the visibility from long distances of its bright gold dome, all make it a key sign for central Boston. It has the satisfying qualities of recognizability at many levels of reference, and of coincidence of symbolic with visual importance.

The *Duomo* of Florence is a prime example of a distant landmark: visible from near and far, by day or night; unmistakable; dominant by size and contour; closely related to the city's traditions; coincident with the religious and transit center; paired with its campanile in such a way that the direction of view can be gauged from a distance. It is difficult to conceive of the city without having this great edifice come to mind.

But local landmarks, visible only in restricted localities, were much more frequently employed in the three cities studied. They ran the full range of objects available. The number of local elements that become landmarks appears to depend as much upon how familiar the observer is with his surroundings as upon the elements themselves. Unfamiliar subjects usually mentioned only a few landmarks in office interviews, although they managed to find many more when they went on field trips. Sounds and smells sometimes reinforced visual landmarks, although they did not seem to constitute landmarks by themselves.

Landmarks may be isolated, single events without reinforcement. Except for large or very singular marks, these are weak references, since they are easy to miss and require sustained searching. The single traffic light or street name demands concentration to find. More often, local points were remembered as clusters, in which they reinforced each other by repetition, and were recognizable, partly by context.

A sequential series of landmarks, in which one detail calls up anticipation of the next and key details trigger specific moves of the observer, appeared to be a standard way in which these people traveled through the city. In such sequences, there were trigger cues whenever turning decisions must be made and reassuring cues that confirmed the observer in decisions gone by. Additional details often helped to give a sense of nearness to the final destination or to intermediate goals. For emotional security as well as functional efficiency, it is important that such sequences be fairly continuous, with no long gaps, although there may be a thickening of detail at nodes. The sequence facilitates recognition and memorization. Familiar observers can store up a vast quantity of point images in familiar sequences, although recognition may break down when the sequence is reversed or scrambled.

Element interrelations

The elements are simply the raw material of the environmental image at the city scale. They must be patterned together to provide a satisfying form. The preceding discussions have gone as far as groups of similar elements (nets of paths, cluster of landmarks, mosaics of regions). The next logical step is to consider the interaction of pairs of unlike elements.

Such pairs may reinforce one another, resonate so that they enhance each other's power; or they may conflict and destroy themselves. A great landmark may dwarf and throw out of scale a small region at its base. Properly located, another landmark may fix and strengthen a core; placed off center, it may only mislead, as does the John Hancock Building in relation to Boston's Copley Square. A large street, with its ambiguous character of both edge and path, may penetrate and thus expose a region to view, while at the same time disrupting it. A landmark feature may be so alien to the character of a district as to dissolve the regional continuity, or it may, on the other hand, stand in just the contrast that intensifies that continuity.

Districts in particular, which tend to be of larger size than the other elements, contain within themselves, and are thus related to, various paths, nodes, and landmarks. These other elements not only structure the region internally, they also intensify the identity of the whole by enriching and deepening its character. Beacon Hill in Boston is one example of this effect. In fact, the components of structure and identity (which are the parts of the image in which we are interested) seem to leapfrog as the observer moves up from level to level. The identity of a window may be structured into a pattern of windows, which is the cue for the identification of a building. The buildings themselves are interrelated so as to form an identifiable space, and so on.

Paths, which are dominant in many individual images, and which may be a principal resource in organization at the metropolitan scale, have intimate interrelations with other element types. Junction nodes occur automatically at major intersections and termini, and by their form should reinforce those critical moments in a journey. These nodes, in turn, are not only strengthened by the presence of landmarks (as is Copley Square) but provide a setting which almost guarantees attention for any such mark. The paths, again, are given identity and tempo not only by their own form, or by their nodal junctions, but by the regions they pass through, the edges they move along, and the landmarks distributed along their length.

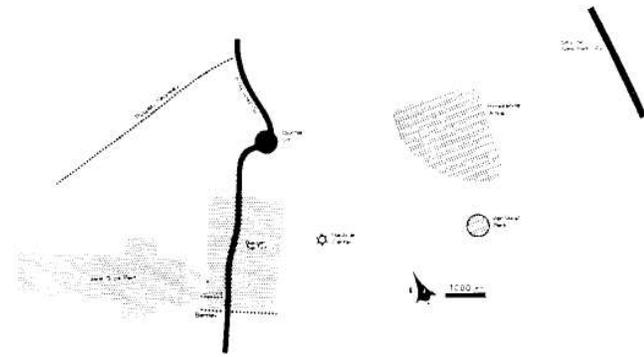
All these elements operate together, in a context. It would be interesting to study the characteristics of various pairings: landmark-region, node-path, etc. Eventually, one should try to go beyond such pairings to consider total patterns.

Most observers seem to group their elements into intermediate organizations, which might be called complexes. The observer senses the complex as a whole whose parts are interdependent and are relatively fixed in relation to each other.

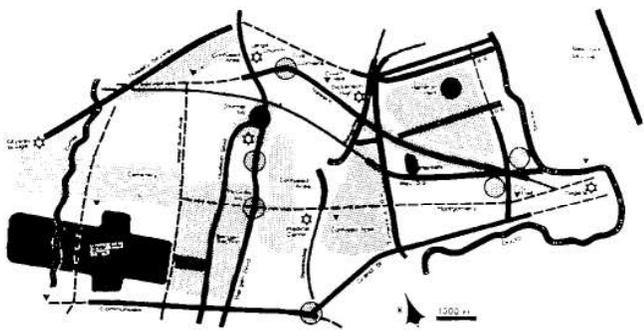
The method as the basis for design

Perhaps the best way of summarizing the method is to recommend a technique of image analysis developed as the basis of a plan for the future visual form of any given city.

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The distinctive elements of Jersey City.



The visual form of Jersey City as seen in the field.

Legend	PATH	EDGE	NODE	DISTRICT	LANDMARK
major element					
minor element					

The procedure might begin with two studies. The first would be a generalized field reconnaissance by two or three trained observers, systematically covering the city both on foot and by vehicle, by night and day, and supplementing this coverage by several "problem" trips, as described above. This would culminate in a field analysis map and brief report, which would deal with strengths and weaknesses, and with general pattern as well as parts.

A parallel step would be the mass interview of a large sample, balanced to match the general population characteristics. This group, which could be interviewed simultaneously or in several parts, would be asked to do four things:

1. Draw a quick sketch map of the area in question, showing the most interesting and important features, and giving a stranger enough knowledge to move about without too much difficulty.
2. Make a similar sketch of the route and events along one or two imaginary trips, trips chosen to expose the length and breadth of the area.
3. Make a written list of the parts of the city felt to be most distinctive, the examiner explaining the meaning of "parts" and "distinctive."
4. Put down brief written answers to a few questions of the type: "Where is _____ located?"

The tests would be analyzed for frequency of mention of elements and their connections, for sequence of drawing, and for vivid elements, sense of structure, and composite image.

The field reconnaissance and the mass interview would then be compared for the relation of public image to visual form, to make a first-round analysis of the visual strengths and weakness of the whole area, and to identify the critical points, sequences, or patterns which are worth further attention.

Second-round investigation of these critical problems would then begin. Using a small sample, subjects would be asked individual interviews to locate selected critical elements, to operate with them in brief imaginary trips, to describe them, to make sketches of them, to discuss their feelings and memories about them. A few subjects might be taken out to these special locations, making brief field trips involving them, and describing and discussing them on the spot. Direction inquiries to the element from various origins might also be made of a random sample of persons in the street.

When these second-round studies had been analyzed for content and problems, equally intensive field reconnaissance of these same elements would then be carried out. Detailed studies of identity and structure under many different field conditions of light, distance, activity, and movement would follow. These studies would use the interview results, but would be by no means limited to them.

All this material would finally be synthesized in a series of maps and reports which would give the basic image of the area, the general visual problems and strengths, the critical elements and element interrelations, with their detailed qualities and possibilities for change. On such an analysis, continuously modified and kept up to date, a plan for the future visual form of the region could be based. ■