This part of Boston is seeing much construction as four new office, retail and residential buildings are nearing completion at this time. They have been designed within the guidelines that were established by the Boston Redevelopment Authority which required them to allow for public pedestrian access along the water’s edge. It is hoped by the BRA that in the future the development of the harbor in the Waterfront area will expand into the vicinity of Fort Point Channel and then across the channel into South Boston. This shifting of functions from industry and large-scale shipping to retail and residential space shows the growth of Boston as a positive step in the direction toward providing it’s inhabitants with a livable urban environment.
The C.B.D. after redevelopment.
Fort Point Channel with block forms showing public access to the channel.
SITE ANALYSIS

Take note of the following:
- The change in building scale from one end of the site to the other.
- The differing sizes of open space between buildings.
- The long span of years between individual buildings (this part of the city has been built upon for more than three hundred and fifty years).
- Noteworthy buildings designed by famous (and not famous) architects.
- The complete complement of building styles.
- The seemingly haphazard street layout.
- The continuity of new open space provided by the removal of the Central Artery.
Major Pedestrian and Automobile Traffic.
Building Scale
Figure/Ground Study
Major Open Areas
Site Sections
SITE DEVELOPMENT

Once the Elevated Highway has been removed, the site will serve as a series of open spaces connected by the site. Whether the site is built upon or left open, this can be reinforced so that it is experienced by pedestrians as an undulating path that periodically opens up to spaces defined by prominent landmarks. In this way the Central Artery site is much like the Waterfront area that surrounds the harbor as a visually and spatially defined path that is separated from automobile traffic.
This drawing shows the six major defined spaces. South Station, the bus terminal and the Federal Reserve Bank make up the first, the Grain Exchange building is prominent in the second, then the Marriot Hotel and the warehouse buildings define Waterfront Park, the Blackstone District and the Police Academy building face the fourth square, the Government Center garage and the buildings of the North End define a small open space in the fifth, and the Boston Gardens building faces the last.
Defined spaces on the site.
In this example the site has been fully developed but still has a continuous pedestrian path through the site. Note again the six squares.
The site fully developed.
As a second option the site is left open to continue the Charles River Park. Much like Commonwealth Boulevard (also by F.L. Olmsted) the site could be developed as an "urban" park with periodic automobile crossings. In this way the pedestrian and automobile are only partially separated.
The site as an "urban" park.
In this plan the site is almost completely separated from the automobile by reducing the crossings to a minimum. Unlike the previous example, this one is much less urban in character, and is more similar to the Charles River Park rather than Commonwealth Boulevard.
The site as a "rural" park.
A hypothetical resolution of the previous plan.
As this would be the end of the site from the Charles River, the linear park would wrap around the entire city ending at this point in the Central Business District. Commuters coming into the city from the south, and Amtrak trains from Washington and New York would arrive at South Station and so this part of the site serves as a major entrance to the city; therefore, special emphasis is placed on the view from this point looking up the site.
The end of the site in the Central Business District.
This drawing shows the extremely vital connection to the Charles River Park. This part would also take on importance as the beginning of the new site and the transition between water/land and the "rural" park and urban environment.
A connection to the Charles River Park.
PARCEL DEVELOPMENT

In choosing which particular parcel of land to further develop, many criteria were addressed such as selecting a parcel that:

1). Has a strong and varied physical context.
2). Has the potential for many different building functions.
3). Encompasses both automobile and pedestrian traffic.
4). Borders several districts of the city.

More than any other part of the site, the parcel in the North End from Hannover street to Waterfront Park meets these criteria. The physical context is largely four to six story brick multi-use buildings built in the mid-nineteenth century. It is surrounded by residential, retail office and commercial businesses as it borders three separate districts (the North End, Waterfront Park and the Blackstone District). The most important reason for selecting this parcel was, however, the impact its design would have on the residents of the North End which is the city’s most densely populated area.

In the future when the site is really a candidate for development, this parcel will be the most difficult with which to work because of the many (and sometimes contradictory) factors that will determine its success. Rightly so, the
The North End parcel and its relation to the overall site.
people of the North End have already shown interest in the outcome of the Central Artery project as it will greatly affect their quality of living.

As the site relates to the rest of the city, the most critical concern is the maintenance of some kind of separation or definition after the removal of the highway. This can be accomplished by limiting large scale entrances into the North End to Hannover street (which is the main street of this area) and establishing the new southbound three lane street as the boundary of the district. This means that the parcel selected for development would be an implied "wall" on one side and an entrance to the North End on Hannover street on the other. The remaining edge of the site would serve as a predominantly pedestrian path by closing the northbound three lane street to almost all automobile traffic. As shown in the analysis of the North End in chapter three, this pedestrian street would start at Waterfront Park and end at Causeway street in Bulfinch Triangle, therefore continuing the pedestrian path along the entire Central Artery site.
The boulevard: to see and be seen.

The functions support each other.

This one walks and experiences the façade/shop/people—the space changes as he walks.

This one gets the the space contains the movement within.
Since the parcel of land selected gets increasingly wider as one travels north, there is the opportunity for providing a semi-private "alley" within the parcel that would serve the residents of the site. This could widen into a more public interior square that has facilities appropriate for a public gathering space. The space would then reach its peak of activity where it borders Hannover street thus making this area the central focus of the North End.

Functions for the site would include those that promote a high level of activity, including those that are omitted in the design of commercialized redevelopment projects such as Quincy Market: office space, restaurants, public meeting halls, residential areas, retail shops and even such practical businesses as auto repair shops and produce markets. While less glamorous than those of Quincy Market, the real attraction to the preceding functions would be the continuation of the diversities of the city, for better or worse, into the new site.

In order to stay within the character of the North End, a rigid and predictable design solution was to be avoided. As with the design process followed throughout the year, rather
Conceptual design scenarios.
than approaching the design holistically, a small segment was established on the site and allowed to grow. By writing several scenarios of possible user activities (making efforts to vary the users' ages, social backgrounds, times of day, etc.) a sequence of spaces and building functions would develop. At the end of this exercise a preliminary layout of the site could then be further developed into a completed design.

On the right is the total of the preceding scenarios and how it relates to the surrounding context. The small end of the site begins as a predominantly residential and office/retail area much like the other buildings in the North End. As the site gets wider toward Hannover street it develops into more public functions such as those mentioned previously. At this point the specific functions and actual design of each structure are not as important as the conceptual layout of the site.

The emphasis here has been placed on studying the spaces around the buildings rather than the buildings themselves. Note the different types of spaces: 1) The small scaled semi-private "alley" between the residential structures at the small end of
the site. This space would be used primarily by the occupants of these buildings. 2) The larger scaled public pedestrian street that parallels the straight facade on the site. This leads one from Waterfront Park, past the small Police Academy Building square and finally crosses Hannover street. 3) The very public space enclosed by the many structures on the site, and finally, 4) The curving "wall" that separates and defines the North End. This helps to direct pedestrians to the major and minor entrances into this part of the city.
The following sketches show impressions and the character of spaces rather than the specific design of buildings or their imagery. Note especially the change in scale of spaces from one drawing to the next. In this drawing of the pedestrian street, existing buildings face toward the new facade across the boulevard scaled new street.
Scale of the pedestrian street.
A semi-private alley.
These drawings show the change in scale of the inner alley as it becomes progressively more public and larger in scale as it approaches the large end of the site.

The inner alley as it opens into the square.
The boundary of the site (the structure on the right side of this drawing) is established as an implied wall thus controlling and directing access to the North End. The produce merchants of the Blackstone District (on the left) could extend their business into the North End on Hannover street where it could serve as a focal point of activity when they sell their produce on weekends.
The "wall" facing the Blackstone District.
In order to provide some sense of structure and containment to the many varied forms held within the site, an ordering device in the form of a structural facade system can be used. This would unify the facades that surround the site and also provide space for an outer circulation system. The concrete bay system could be used fully, partially, or not at all, depending on the use of each building and the preference of the designer. Therefore a consistent facade can be established in front of the varied structures behind the wall system. This would allow greater flexibility in the design of the buildings while maintaining a visually cohesive image for the site.
This part of the site (in the middle between the more private residential area and the public space) the wall system is left open and so serves as a primary entrance to the site. The structural system could be used in the apartments (to the left) as an organizing system for individual spaces.
A partial plan of the central portion of the site.
Resolution of the structural facade system.
Behind the structural system a restaurant/cafe building stands as the centerpiece of an elevated platform which looks over the inner square. Beyond this the square could be depressed to the top of the tunnel below, thus further containing the square and providing a change in elevation for the site.
The relationship between the structural frame and the apartment buildings is shown in this section. At street level the frame serves as a transitional zone between the pedestrian street and the retail shops and offices in the lower floors of the structure. The frame above supports the various spaces of the apartments. There are three apartments in this drawing and they are shown only as examples rather than fixed and consistent approaches. Access to the apartment is from an enclosed exterior stair that leads up to the third level. At this point a public corridor serves the two lower apartments and the exterior stair leads up to the last on the roof.
Section through the apartments.
This section shows the restaurant in relation to the structural frame. The frame is clear of any building at this point in order to allow public access into the site and to visually suggest an opening. The column spacing and beam heights of the frame are repeated in the design of the restaurant building and this frame is filled in with brick therefore staying within the established range of natural materials of the North End. The form of the building is reminiscent of the industrial and warehouse structures in the area. Note also the raised platform that looks over the interior square of the site.
CONCLUSION

Since the goal of this project was to develop possibilities for the Central Artery site rather than one fixed solution, the only conclusions would be the very broad planning issues addressed in the text. For example, should the site become an extension of the Charles River Park or should it be developed as a continuation of the urban context? I chose to pursue the latter only because it presented a more challenging and appropriate problem for me as an architecture student rather than a landscape architect. In reality, I think the former solution is at least as valid and would provide a very unique environment for the inhabitants of Boston.

Perhaps the most important conclusion I have reached concerns the design process rather than the actual design outcome. It is ironic that some of the world's best cities were not planned at all but were designed piece by piece, each building relating to its context in a broad way rather than the whole being designed with an all encompassing "plan". Super-blocks such as the Prudential Center rarely have the unique and sometimes accidental spaces that are common in the rest of the city (the Rockefeller Center in New York is perhaps the exception to the rule as it adds a great deal to the
quality of space in that city). While in the Rockefeller Center one is not aware that he is in a planned environment as the spaces seem to blend into their contexts very comfortably. This is hopefully what will happen to the Central Artery site when it is developed, and that the only trace of the elevated highway would be a path through the city of thoughtfully designed buildings and urban spaces that add to, rather than detract from, the quality of life in Boston.
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