

THE
Boulevard Book

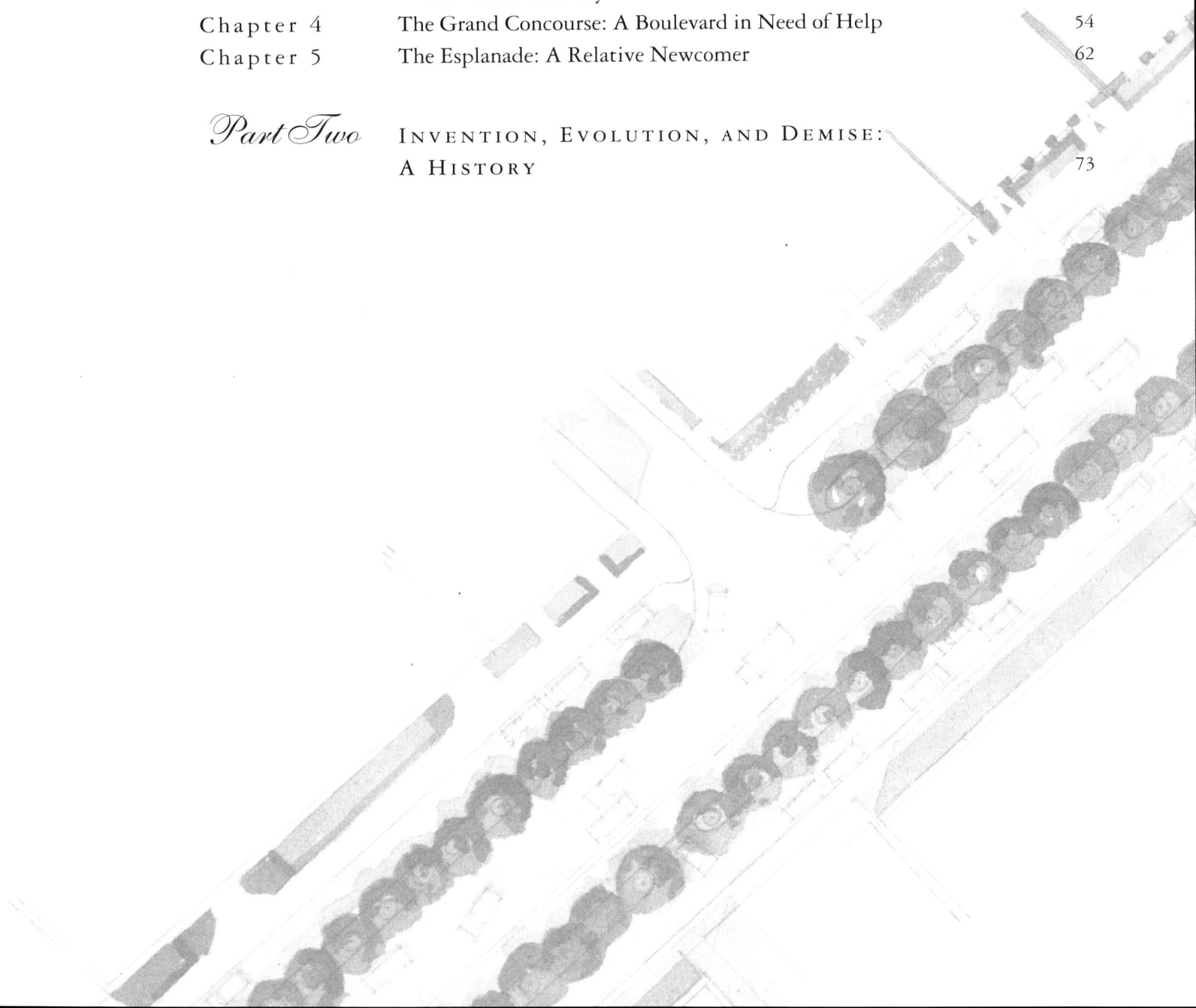
HISTORY, EVOLUTION,
DESIGN OF
MULTIWAY BOULEVARDS

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THE
Boulevard Book

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		viii
INTRODUCTION		2
<i>Part One</i>	EXPERIENCING BOULEVARDS	9
Chapter 1	Paris Boulevards, A Grand Variety	11
Chapter 2	Barcelona's Elegant but Threatened Boulevards	32
Chapter 3	Brooklyn's Classic Suburban Boulevards—Eastern Parkway and Ocean Parkway	44
Chapter 4	The Grand Concourse: A Boulevard in Need of Help	54
Chapter 5	The Esplanade: A Relative Newcomer	62
<i>Part Two</i>	INVENTION, EVOLUTION, AND DEMISE: A HISTORY	73



Part Three SAFETY, PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS, AND
THE IMPORTANCE OF PEDESTRIAN REALMS 95

Chapter 1 The Relative Safety of Multiway Boulevards 96

Chapter 2 Professional and Bureaucratic Constraints 112

Part Four A COMPENDIUM OF MULTIWAY BOULEVARDS 123

Part Five BUILDING BOULEVARDS 203

Chapter 1 Design and Policy Guidelines 206

Chapter 2 Conclusions 234

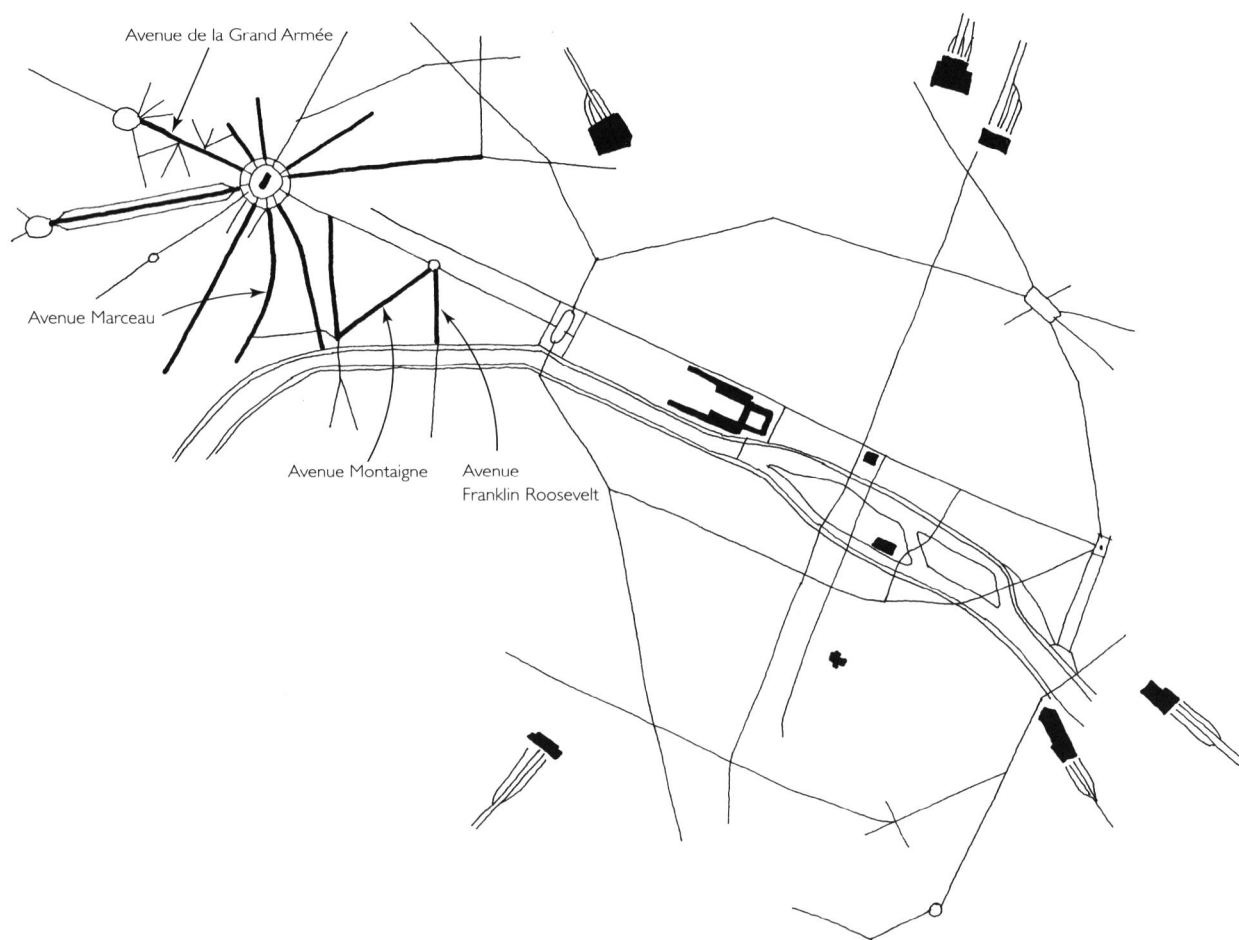
NOTES 244

INDEX 252

Think about Paris and sooner, rather than later, the word *boulevard* will come to mind. Boulevards—the word itself, perhaps as much as their physical reality—define this city. The word conjures up images of broad tree-lined sidewalks, elegant buildings, attractive stores, corner cafes, crowds of people, and the warm light of street lamps.

Paris has many boulevards, and they have great variety. All are wide compared to other streets in the city and have regularly spaced trees and buildings that generally complement each other in height, materials, and architectural details and that define their edges. Elegant and beckoning as most of them are, however, not all are multiway boulevards—our concern here.

Although some Paris boulevards date from the seventeenth century, most were built in the mid-nineteenth century under the direction of Baron Georges Eugène Haussmann, Napoleon III's prefect of the Seine. Many of the latter, including some of the most impressive ones, were multiway boulevards. These streets established the basic form of the multiway boulevard used worldwide. In Paris, many retain their original form, and all are in

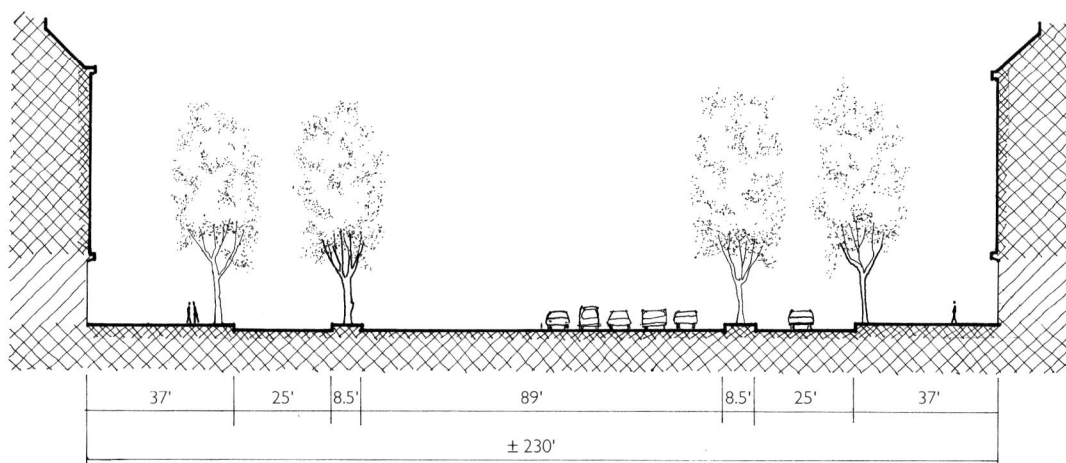
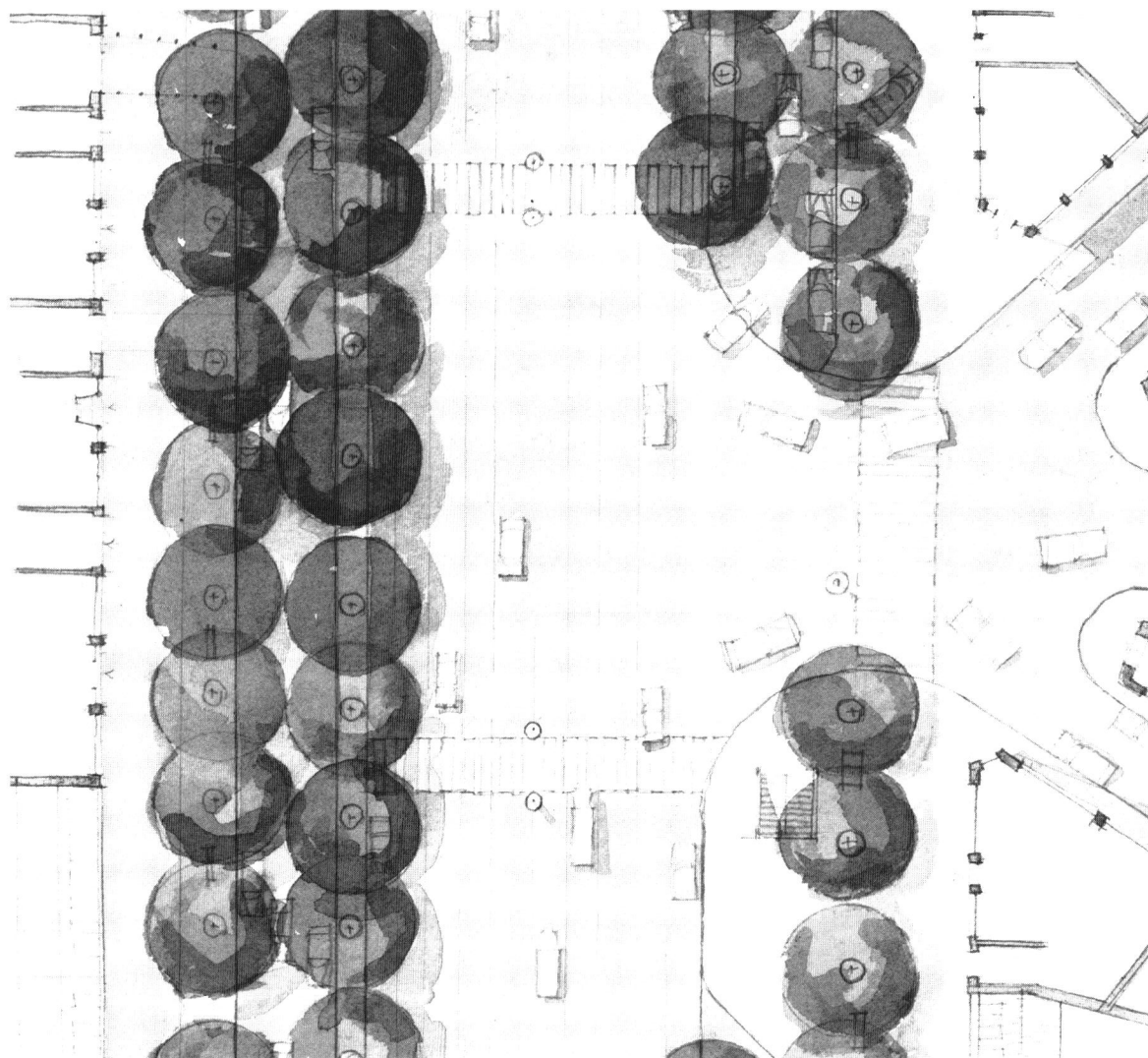


The Etoile Boulevards



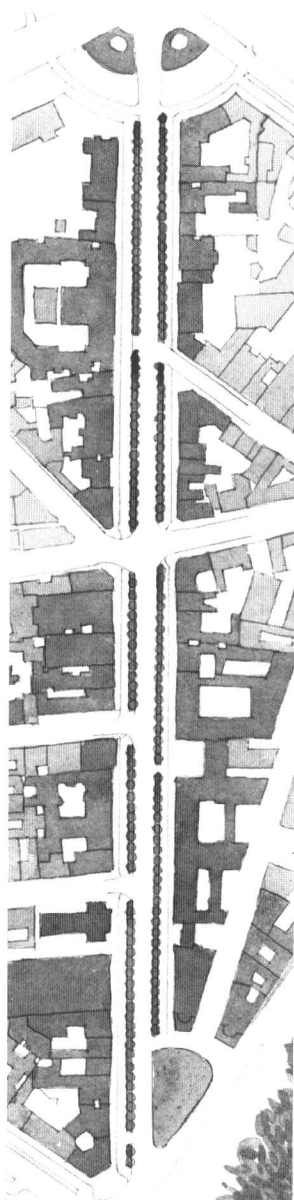
Avenue de la Grand Armée:
street and building context

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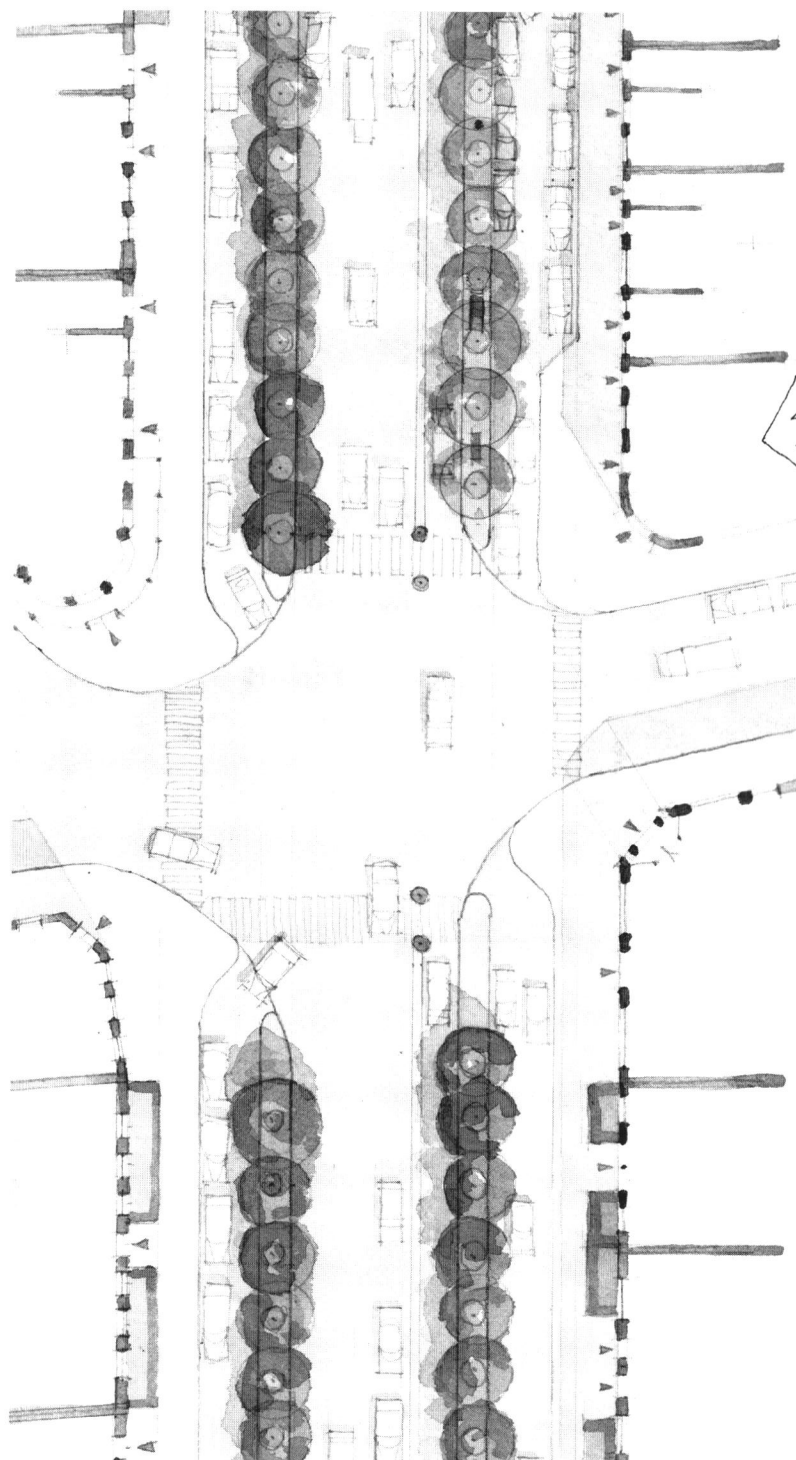
Avenue de la Grande Armée: section and plan

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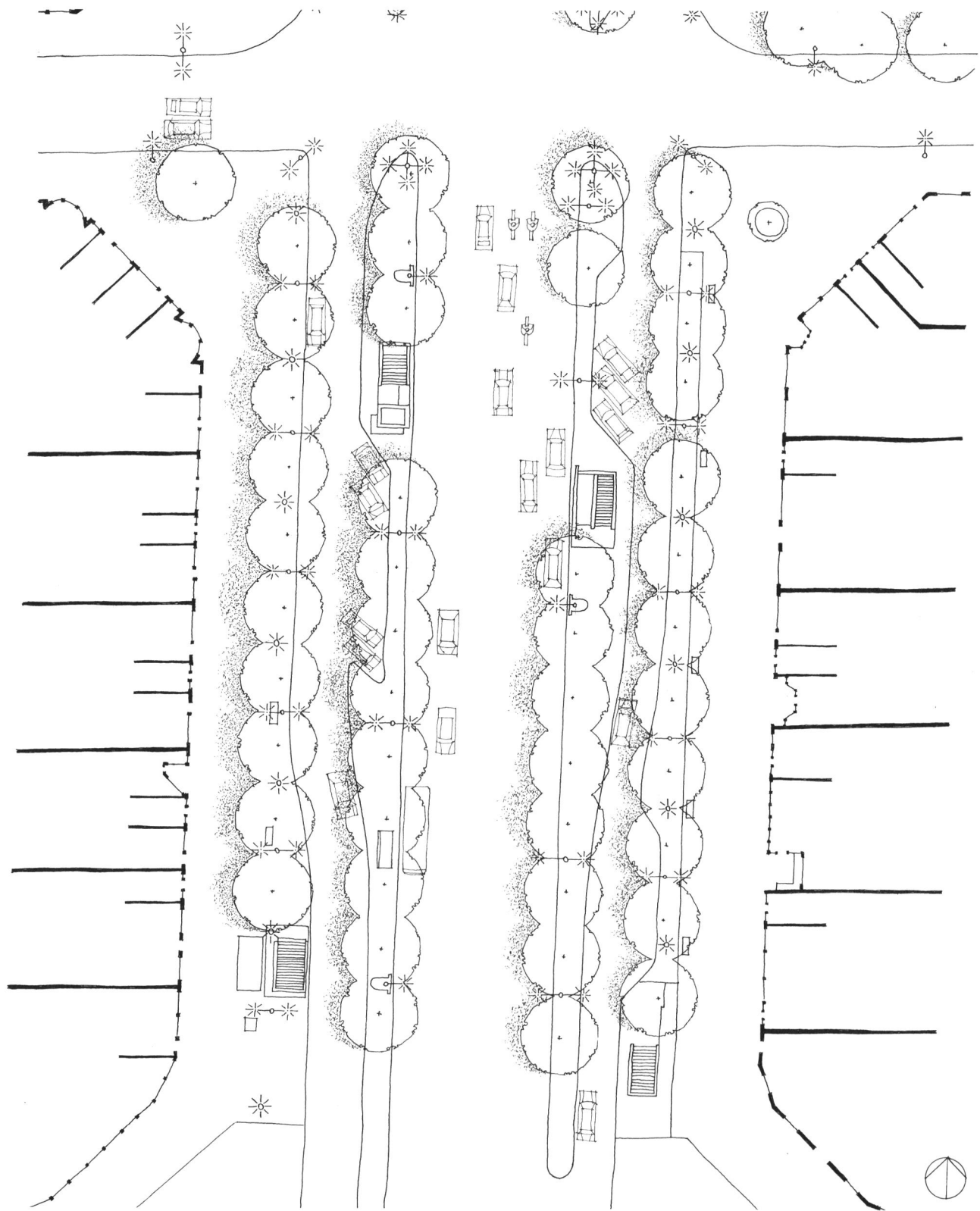
Avenue Montaigne: street and building context

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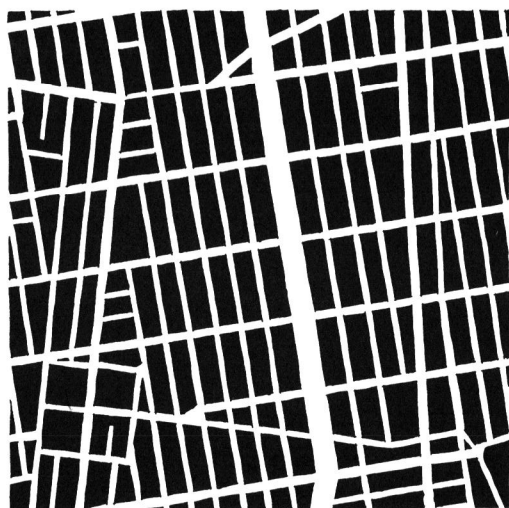
Avenue Montaigne: plan

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Passeig de Gràcia: plan

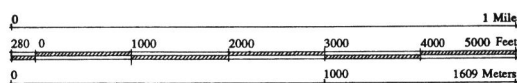
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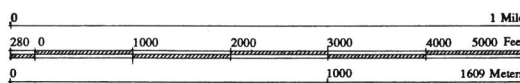
Ocean Parkway



Eastern Parkway



Ocean Parkway, square mile map

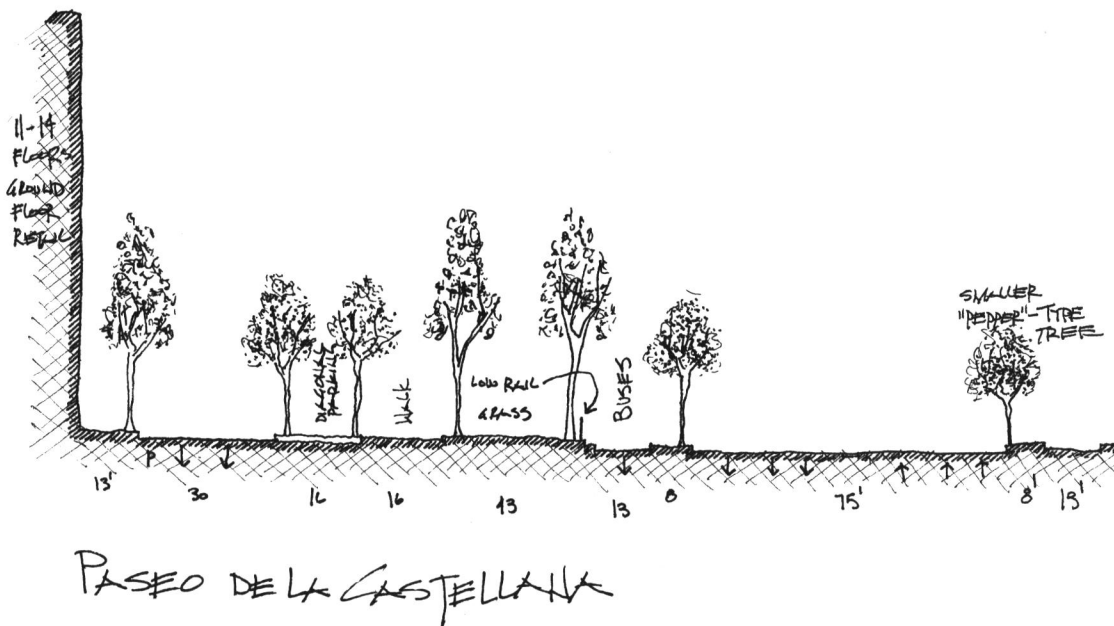
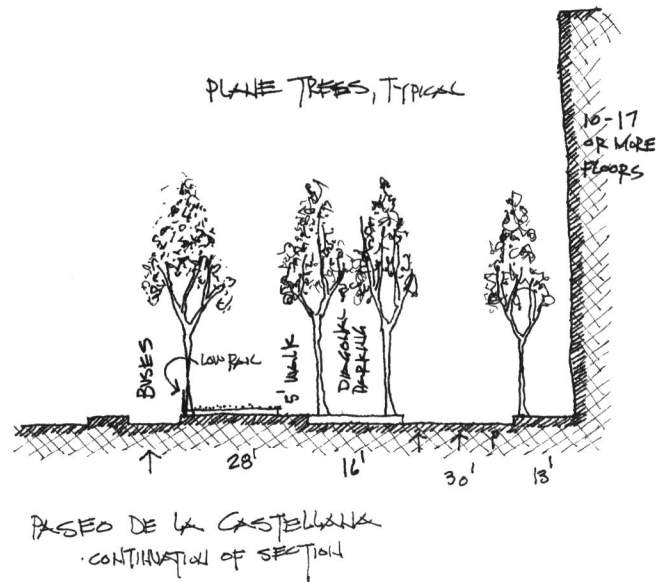
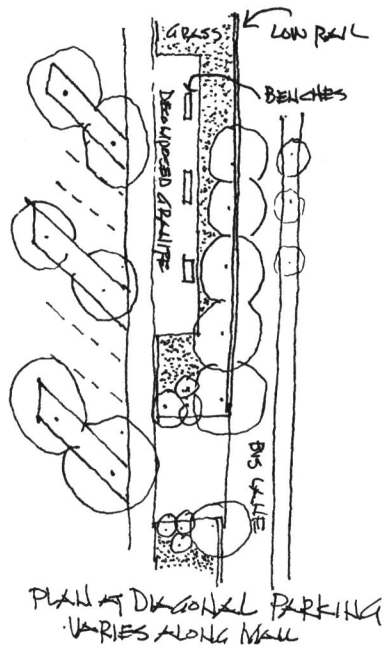


Eastern Parkway, square mile map

the center by tree-planted medians—successfully mitigates the impact of heavy traffic.⁶ Residents rated all three of these boulevards as more livable than neighboring, conventionally designed streets with medium traffic volumes.

Ocean Parkway and Eastern Parkway are remarkable streets. They are remarkable because they have retained their complex form in spite of the fact that for years they have been major carriers of traffic and are classified as arterial streets by city traffic engineers. Yet in spite of the heavy traffic, they are highly valued streets on which to live and spend time. Their community value is further attested to by successful local resistance to federally generated reconstruction and repaving proposals for Ocean Parkway in the 1960s—changes that would have widened lane widths in the central roadway and decreased the widths of the medians. Moreover, designation of these boulevards as historic landmarks, which protects their basic designs, would not have happened without community support. These are not bucolic, meandering parkways; nor are they settings for displaying the homes and gardens of the wealthy. They are working multiway boulevards that carry a lot of vehicular traffic at the same time as they provide gracious focuses for local life, including everyday recreation and neighborhood meetings. They both shape their local communities and give structure to a large part of Brooklyn. They are boulevards for everyone.

Part Four A COMPENDIUM OF MULTIWAY BOULEVARDS



Chelmsford Road

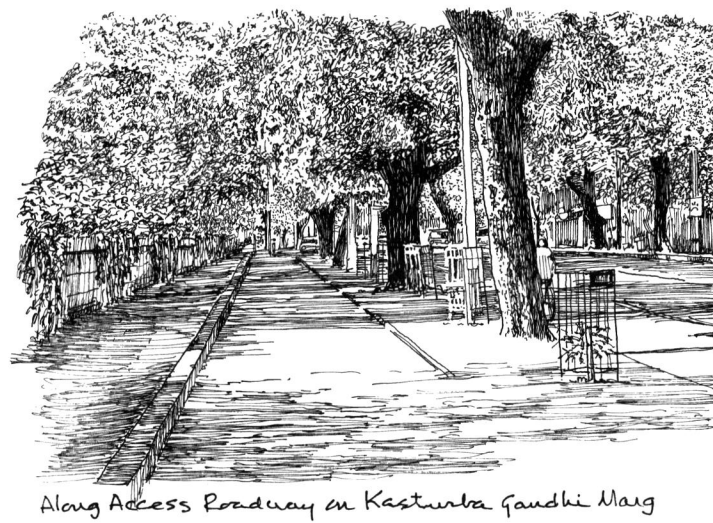
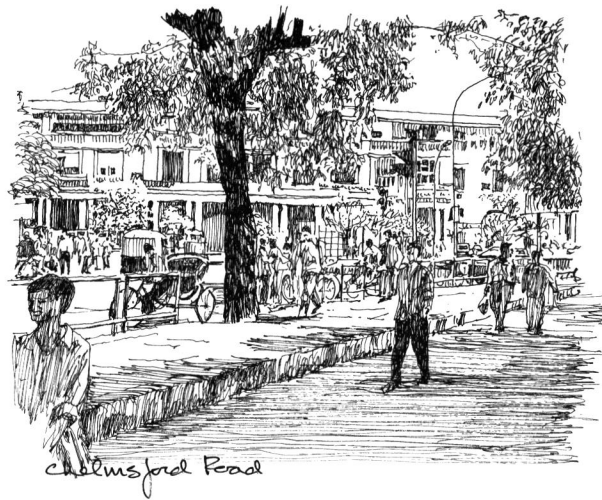
- This boulevard approximately 0.8 of a kilometer long connects the New Delhi railway station with Connaught Place.
- It is heavily used by buses, auto-rickshaws, bicycles, and pedestrians, although only pedestrians seem to use the side lanes.
- The medians are planted with either *jamun* or *ashupal* trees.
- High walls flank both sides.
- The side medians may have been installed after the trees matured because they are built around the trunks, half of which jut into the central roadway.
- Generally, this is a well-kept street.

Dr. Zakir Hussain Road

- This boulevard of approximately 2 kilometers connects India Gate to Humayun's Tomb.
- At its northern end, adjacent to the National Gallery of Modern Art, the side access lanes do not appear to be used by vehicles.
- Along another stretch of the road there is some vehicular traffic on the side access lanes, along with increased foot and bicycle traffic.
- The trees are the same as on the other boulevards, the *jamun* and *ashupal*.
- Vehicles move in both directions along the side access roads, although they are not designed as two-way streets.
- Medians are considerably wider near the southern end of the street—approximately 40 feet—to account for changes in topography.
- Too many signs obscure an otherwise pleasing scene.

Kasturba Gandhi Marg

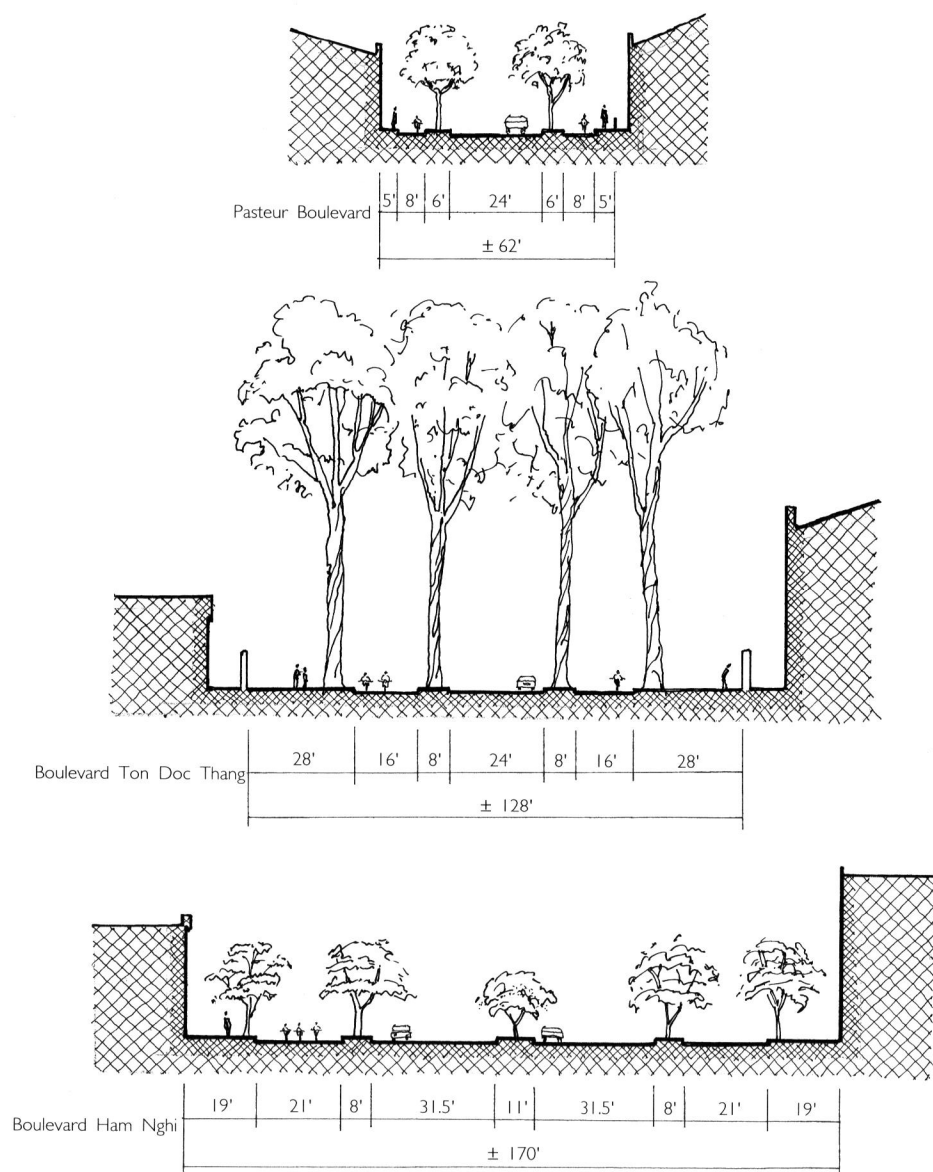
- Approximately 1.8 kilometers long, it connects Connaught Place with India Gate.
- Medians are wide, at 22 feet, but many bus and taxi pullouts, 10 feet deep, are located in the medians.
- Very few drivers or pedestrians use the side access lanes, although in certain spots there is a concentration of pedestrian activity (usually around public restrooms).
- Nearer Connaught Place the old bungalows have long since been replaced by office buildings and hotels. Nearer India Gate, though, the bungalows, built for officials and bureaucrats and surrounded by large lawns, remain.
- This appears to be a "hanging-out" street for chauffeurs whose employers are otherwise occupied.
- The side access lanes abut the defining walls of the boulevard without benefit of sidewalks.
- Private front yards tend to be overgrown so that passersby cannot see inside.
- Trees on the median are a mixture of *jamun* and *ashupal*.



Vietnam

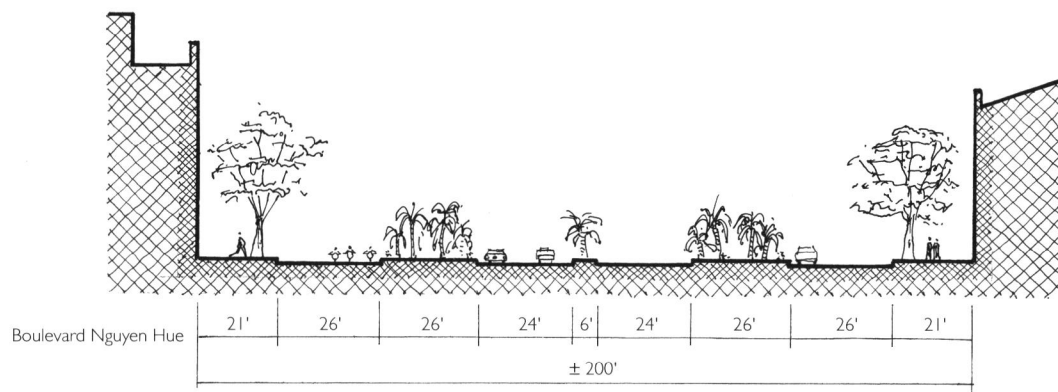
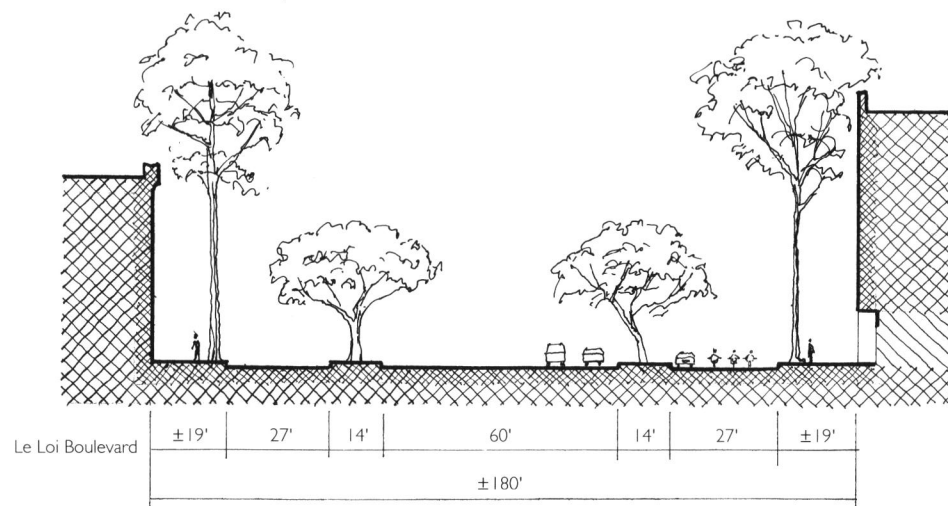
Ho Chi Minh City

The French left the Vietnamese a significant collection of multiway boulevards. As a group, the Ho Chi Minh City boulevards demonstrate the adaptability of the road type and its ability to sort out many different types of movement, speeds of travel, and varieties of vehicle. One of them, Pasteur Boulevard, is among the narrowest we have encountered. Some extremely tall trees found on these boulevards reach as high as 120 feet.



Sections of three Ho Chi Minh Boulevards

Approximate scale: 1" = 50' or 1:600



Sections of two Ho Chi Minh Boulevards

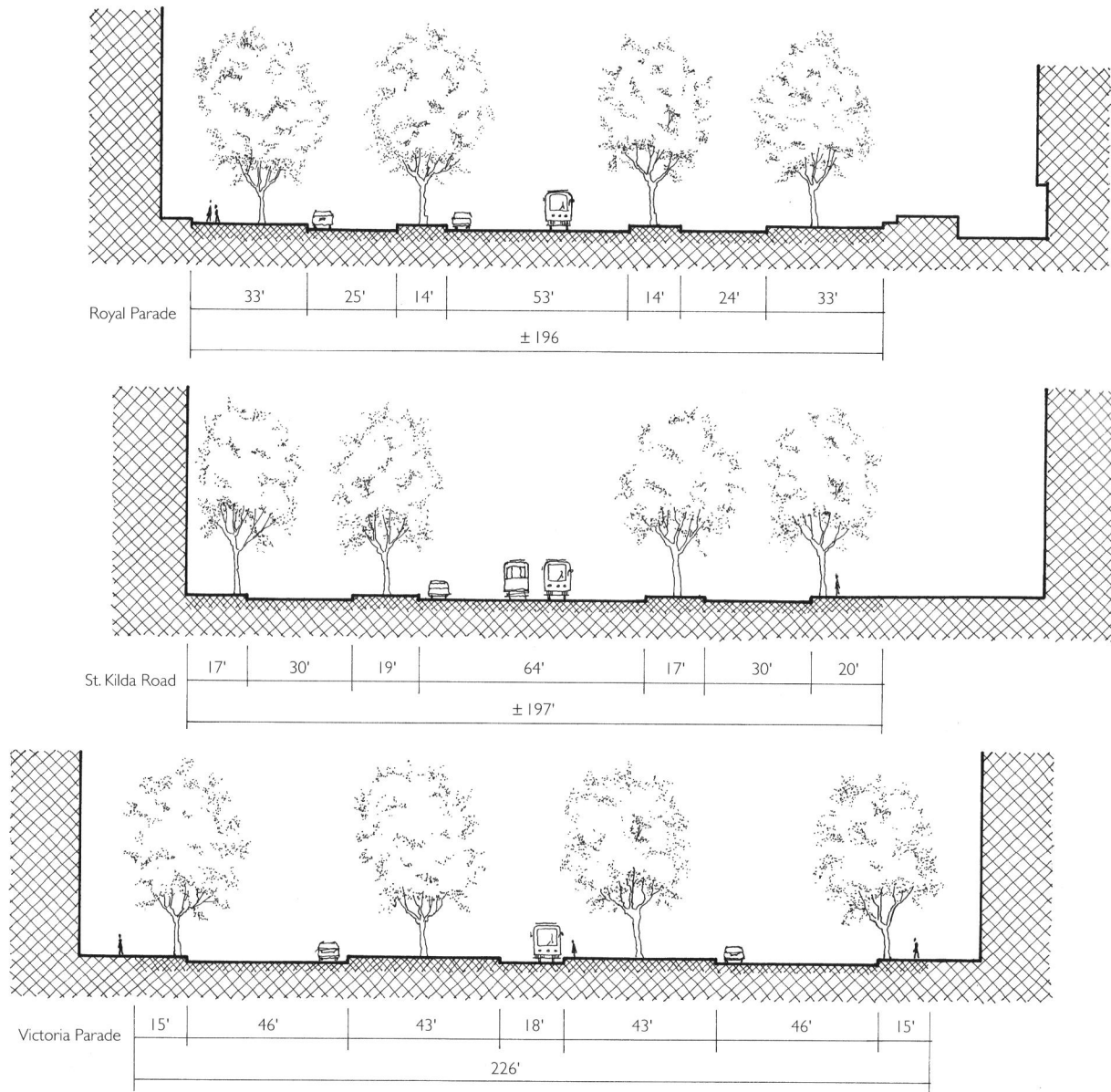
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AUSTRALIA

Melbourne

Royal Parade, St. Kilda Road, Victoria Parade It seems to be generally agreed that the “great” multiway boulevards radiating from the center of Melbourne to the north, east, and south are among the most memorable components of the city and provide a physical framework for understanding its structure.² Dating from the 1850s, they were part of a large-scale city expansion effort. All of them combine a major traffic-carrying function with grand and highly formalized designs.

- All have tram services that run on tracks in the center of each right-of-way. As such, they differ from most other multiway boulevards studied.
- All are wide, from 195 feet for Royal Parade to 225 feet for Victoria Parade.
- All have four rows of shade trees that run uninterrupted along them—for as long as three miles on St. Kilda Road. Clearly, the trees are the most compelling feature of these roadways.
- Royal Parade accommodates a bicycle lane on its 25-foot-wide access road as well as one moving and one parking lane.
- St. Kilda Road has wide side access lanes (30 feet) that permit two moving lanes as well as parking.
- Victoria Parade, the widest, is really an adaptation of the multiway boulevard form: the central lanes are for trams only, no autos. The medians are quite wide, at 43 feet, as are the side lanes, at 46 feet; the latter provide for three lanes of moving, and presumably fast, traffic plus a parking lane.
- Flemington Road, a fourth multiway boulevard, has access lanes wide enough to accommodate two moving lanes. It also has tram service in its central realm.
- Safety along these boulevards became an issue in the 1970s; it was concluded that through traffic on the access roads was the problem. Solutions considered at the time involved prohibiting certain movements through a variety of physical devices but not, apparently, reducing the traffic lanes on the access roads from two or three to one.³
- Today, Melbourne planners seem more concerned with “limiting traffic engineering measures to these streets, thereby maintaining their character.”⁴
- Width of the tree-lined medians varies considerably, and none appear designed for major pedestrian use.
- Sidewalk areas are also generous, and all the boulevards but Victoria Parade have continuous planting strips along the curbs holding rows of trees.
- Many buildings along the boulevards are set some distance back from the right-of-way.



Melbourne, boulevard sections

Approximate scale: 1" = 50' or 1:600

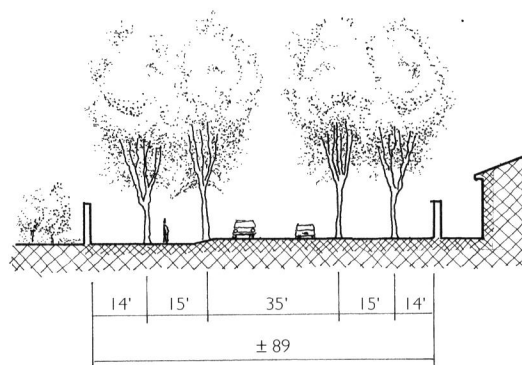
EUROPE

France

L'Isle sur La Sorgue

Route to Fontaine de Vaucluse A wonderful unexpected boulevard leads into and out of this elegant Provençal village, which is full of canals and tree-lined streets.

- It leaves the village center and heads in the direction of Fontaine de Vaucluse, a deep natural well that is the source of the waterways. It has a boulevard form for several long blocks, then turns into a narrow rural road lined along one side by an impressive row of plane trees that continue, unbroken, for many miles.
- The boulevard segment is delightful to behold, because of its narrow cross-section and the four rows of tall plane trees that line it.
- The center roadway is marked for one through lane in each direction, although it is wide enough to squeeze in four moving lanes when traffic is heavy.
- The narrow side lanes, which run between lines of trees spaced only 15 feet apart, are intended for bicycles only. Nonetheless, motorcyclists use them and a few drivers park cars there.
- Not many buildings front onto the street; instead there are mostly gardens surrounded by low walls and overhung with vegetation.



Route to Fontaine de Vaucluse

Approximate scale: 1" = 50' or 1:600



Isle Sur la Sorgue, Provence
The pedestrian - bicycle road

Paris

All (or at least most) of the Paris multiway boulevards have something special about them. We visit two of them here, because each has features that expand the normal possibilities of the street type. Boulevard Beaumarchais has a pedestrian realm where sidewalks are at the same level as access-way vehicles; Boulevard Courcelles, besides being a very elegant and beautiful boulevard, is one-sided, runs along a major park, and embraces a variety of parking and intersection arrangements.

Boulevard Beaumarchais

- Reconstructed in the 1980s from a street with broad sidewalks, it is now a multiway boulevard—of sorts!
- Boulevard Beaumarchais is one segment of the original Grands Boulevards—which were built on the raised ramparts of the city walls in the seventeenth century and have long since been lowered and integrated into the general city street system. Today they serve as an inner circumferential ring around the northern part of the city. From the Place de la Bastille, Boulevard Beaumarchais runs in a northwesterly direction for approximately 1,800 feet.
- A relatively narrow boulevard, at 116 feet, it is a major bus route and carries considerable vehicular traffic in its 52-foot central roadway.



Pedestrian Realm on Boulevard Beaumarchais