

Post Alley

City of Seattle
Seattle, WA , USA
prepared by Erin Berg and Megan Schoch



left: entrance to Post Alley from
Seattle Public Market

below left: covered storefront in the
alley

below: further inside the entrance
from Pike Place Market

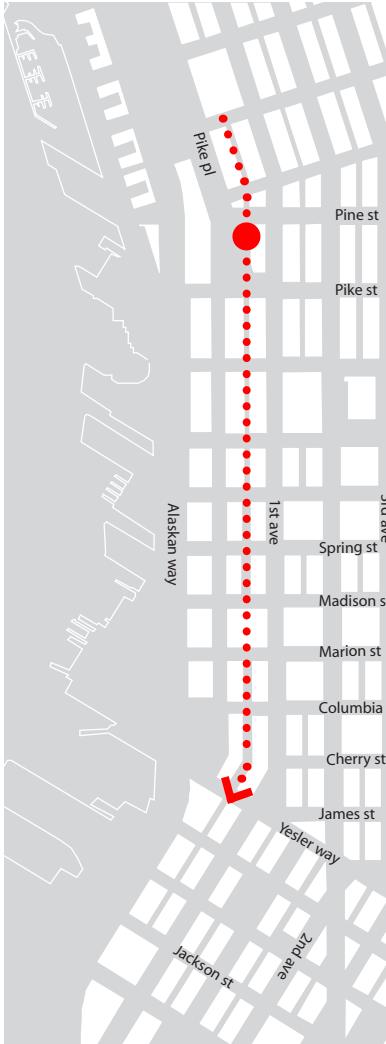
photo credit: Megan Schoch



"The design of Post Alley has been eclectic and piecemeal, growing organically for the past 25 years,"
Lyle Bicknell, urban designer, CityDesign

Main Entrance to Post Alley

Western and Post Ave



Above: signage and layering in the alley

Below: public seating in the alley

Far right: textures found in this section of the alley

Bottom mid: plan view of alley entrance and seating

Bottom right: cafe seating in front of a past service door

Post Alley

Gehl's 12 Quality Criteria

Protection

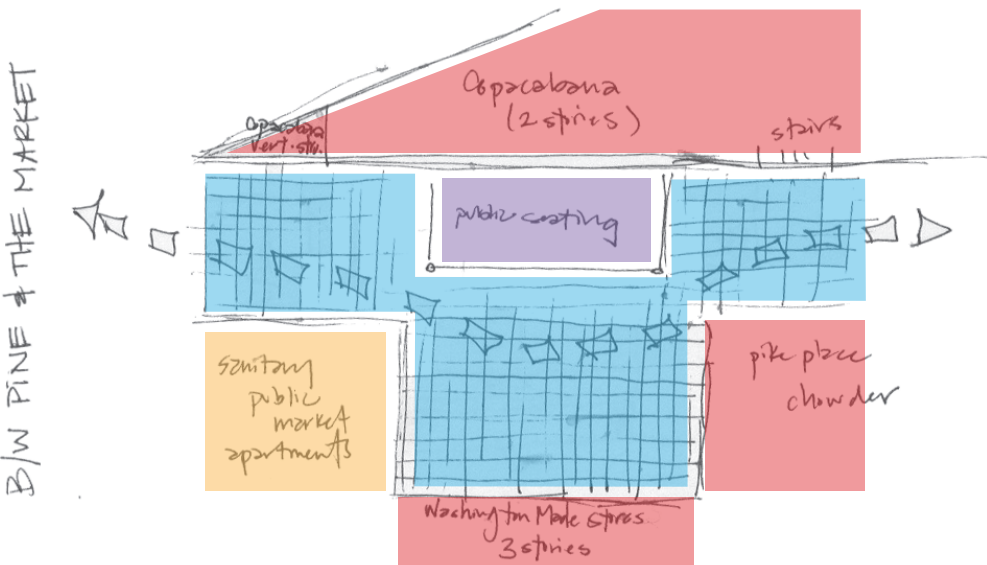
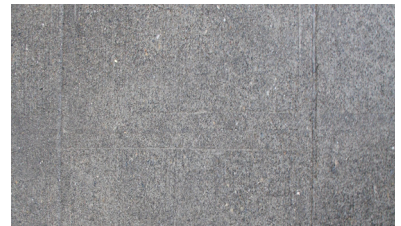
- Traffic: deliveries orchestrated to take place prior to heavily trafficked periods.
- Pollution, fumes, noise: most services have been moved out of the alley.
- Visibility: good as the space is straight, narrow and free of obstacles.
- Unpleasant sensory experience: lack of rain shelter.

Invitation

- Walking: correct sectional proportion for walking, generally quality materials to create interesting facades, and mostly free of obstacles.
- Standing and Staying: storefront entrances provide sheltered standing.
- Sitting: public seating provided allows good for communication.
- Visual Contact: alley views are pleasant, coherent way-finding.
- Play: space restrictions prevent many of these types of activities.
- Day, Evening, and Night Activity: mixed-use residential, bars, cafes, etc.

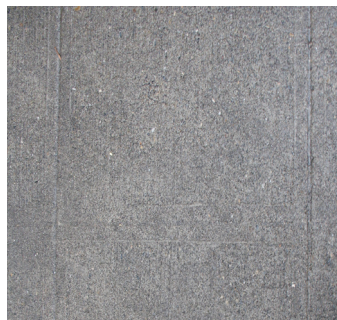
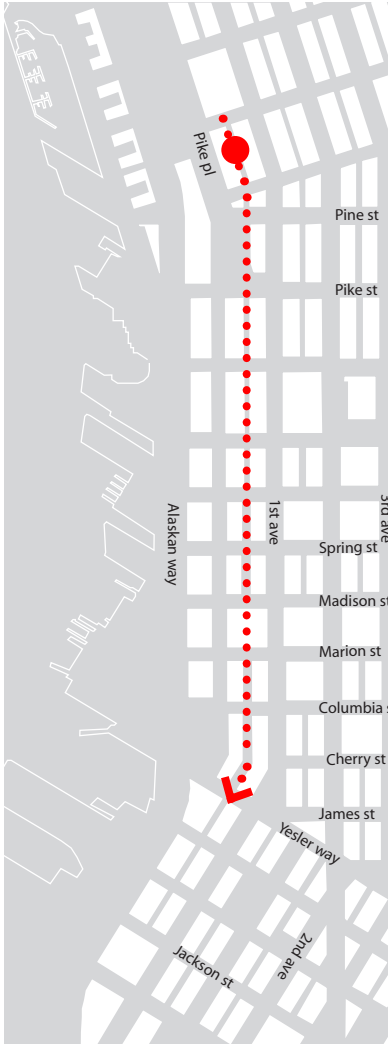
Delight

- Dimensioned at Human Scale: scale is digestible for most pedestrians.
- Climate: needs more rain shelter, N-S orientation allows sunlight, opportunity for shade in warmer months.
- Aesthetic & Sensory: the cafes smell great.



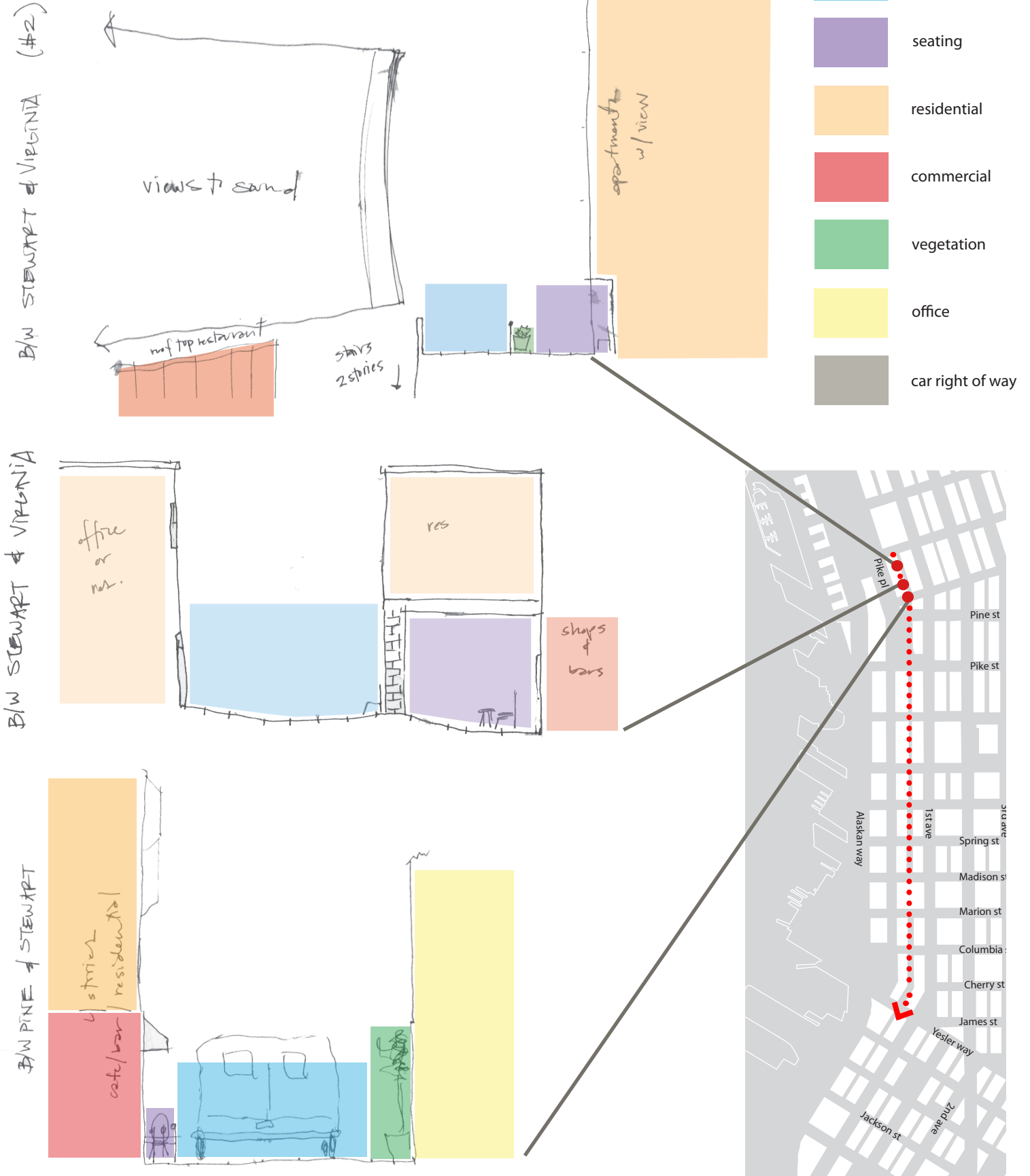
Upper Alley

northern terminus of the alley



Upper Alley

Between Virginia and Pine



Post Alley

Gehl's 12 Quality Criteria

Protection

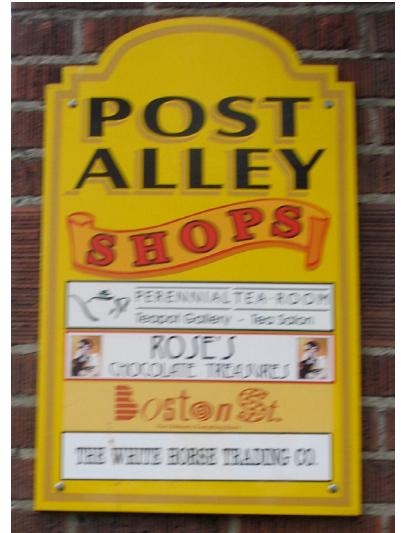
- Traffic: deliveries orchestrated to take place prior to heavily trafficked periods.
- Pollution, fumes, noise: most services have been moved out of the alley.
- Visibility: good as the space is straight, narrow and free of obstacles.

Invitation

- Walking: correct sectional proportion for walking, generally quality materials to create interesting facades, and mostly free of obstacles. Feels a little more privatized.
- Standing and Staying: storefront entrances provide sheltered standing.
- Sitting: less space provided for public seating, many cafes/bars present.
- Visual Contact: limited views to sound, alley views are pleasant, coherent way-finding.
- Play: space restrictions prevent many of these types of activities.
- Day, Evening, and Night Activity: mixed-use residential, bars, cafes, etc.

Delight

- Dimensioned at Human Scale: taller buildings and dramatic sectional changes provide a different type of experience.
- Climate: needs more protection from rain and wind.
- Aesthetic & Sensory: different levels and views to sound enrich the experience.



Above left: Alley functions as a service alley in the morning and then transforms into a pedestrian zone for the rest of the day.

Below far left: shops and residential animate the area at all times of the day

Left: outdoor seating and sectional change provide an interesting pedestrian experience

Above: signage helps with way-finding



Harbor Steps

intersection with the Seattle Art Museum

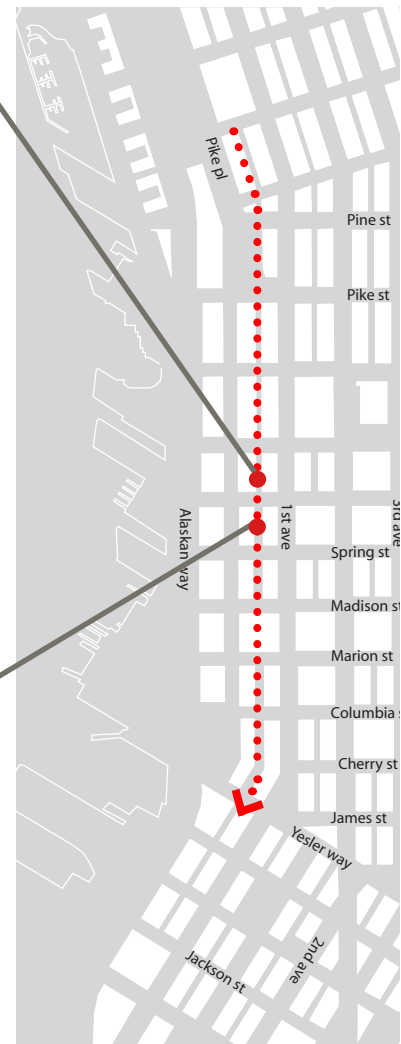
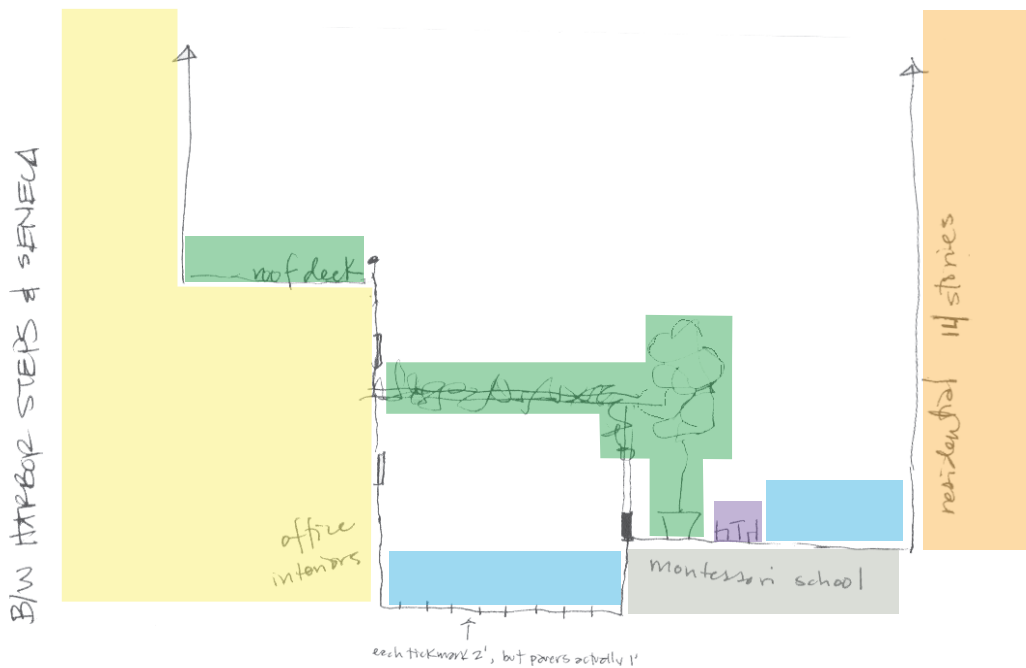
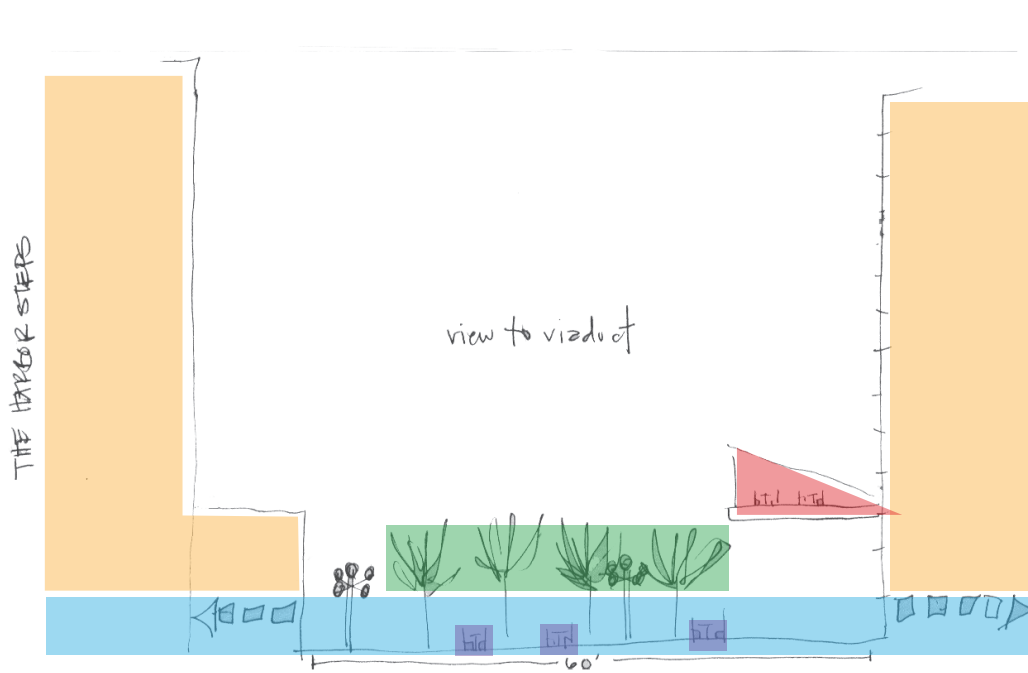


Above right: view up the Harbor Steps to 1st Ave

Right: view down the pergola at the Southern end of Harbor Steps



Harbor Steps



Gehl's 12 Quality Criteria

Protection

- Traffic: isolated from the bustle of first, perhaps too much.
- Pollution, fumes, noise: quiet in comparison to 1st Ave, well-lit.
- Visibility: can't see the vehicles because of level change.

Invitation

- Walking: abundance of steps create an accessibility issue, alley is pleasant due to pergolas.
- Standing and Staying: not many places provided, perhaps landings?
- Sitting: cafe chairs provided, stairs also useful, lack of people.
- Visual Contact: via-duct blocks view to water, stairs are over-whelming.
- Play: abundance of space without program, Lil' Tikes public art is not for play.
- Day, Evening, and Night Activity: high-rise residential removed from public realm.

Delight

- Dimensioned at Human Scale: not to human scale, too large.
- Climate: insufficient amount of shelter from rain.
- Aesthetic & Sensory: not enough variation in building material or form.

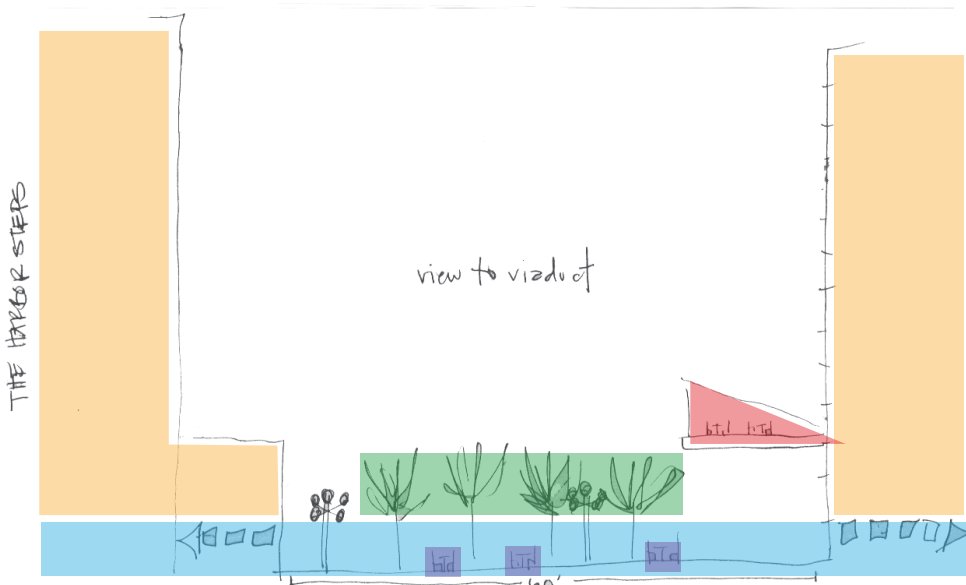


Far above: view of Upper Post Alley from Harbor Steps.

Above: public seating at Harbor Steps

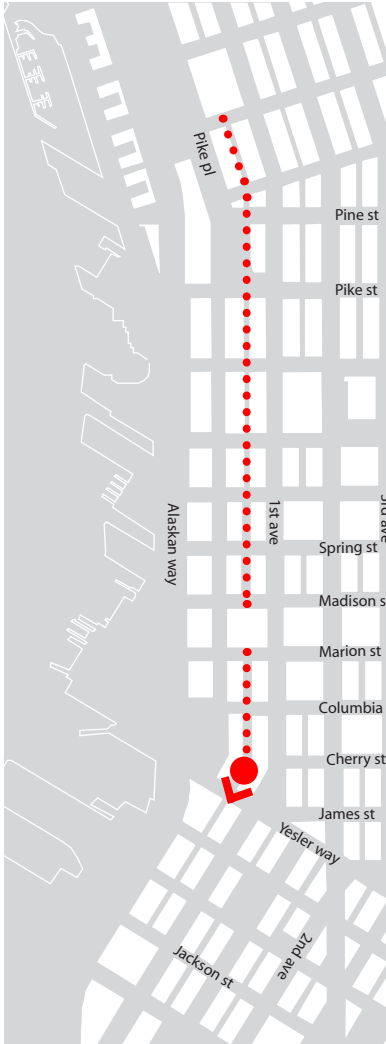
Left: N-S section cut through Harbor Steps.

Far Left: Harbor Step sections



Terminus of Post Alley

intersection with Pioneer Square

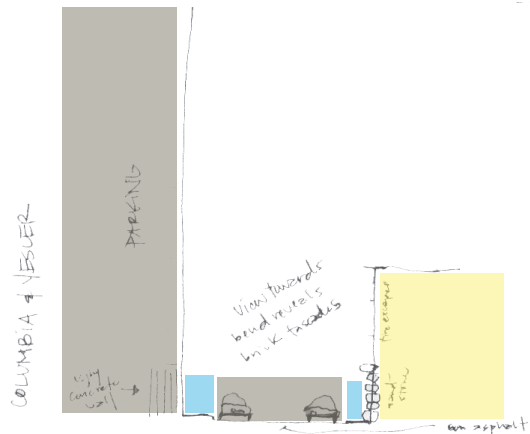
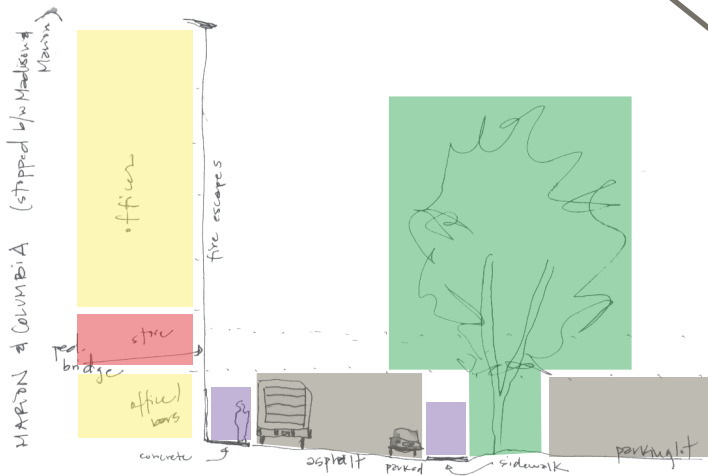
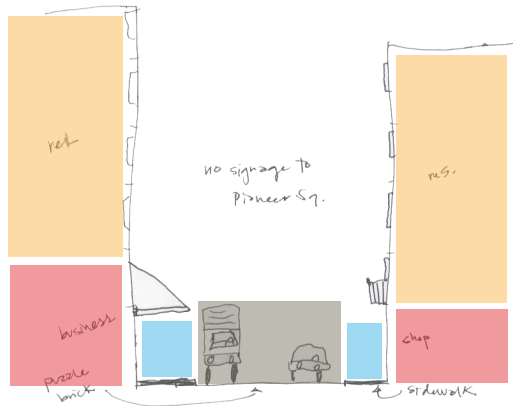
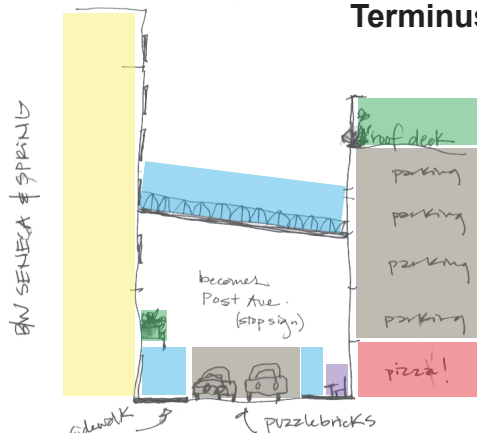


Above Right: Southern end of Post Ave

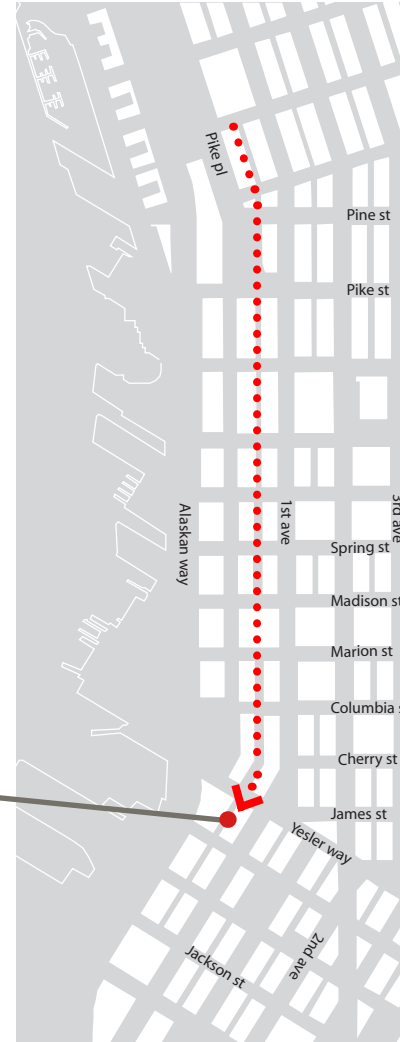
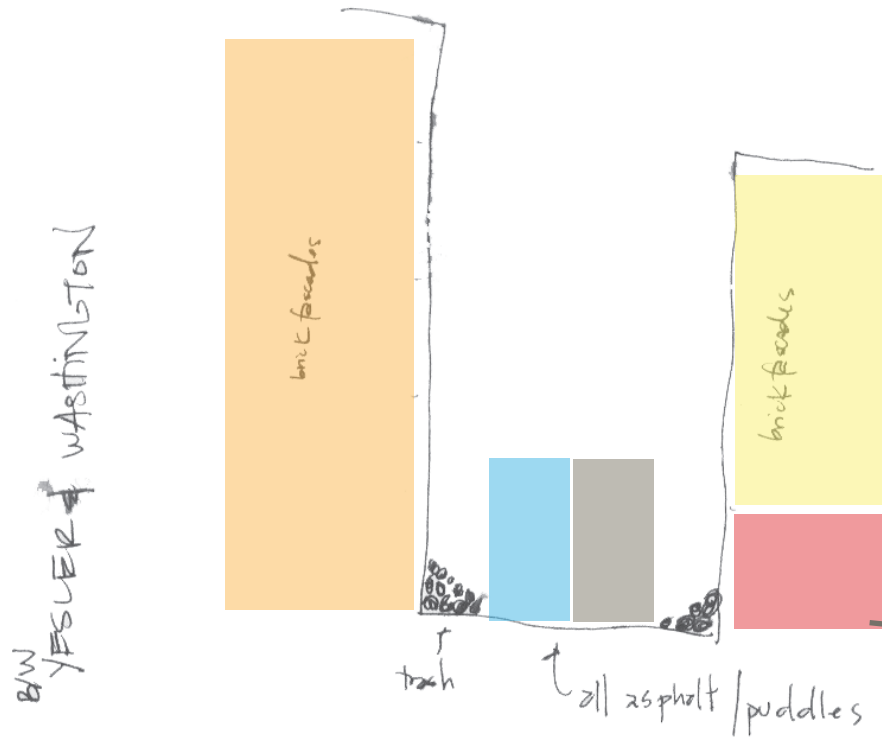
Right: link from Post into Pioneer Square

Far Right: Sections approaching the Post Alley Terminus.

Terminus of Post Alley



Terminus of Post Alley



Above: section of Post Alley
Terminus
Far right: building and paving
texture

Bottom right: scale of storefront

Gehl's 12 Quality Criteria

Protection

- Traffic: not as protected from vehicles, sidewalks could be wider.
- Violence: could use more lighting.
- Pollution, fumes, noise: services still in the alley, large trucks not pleasant.
- Visibility: dumpsters and parking limit views.

Invitation

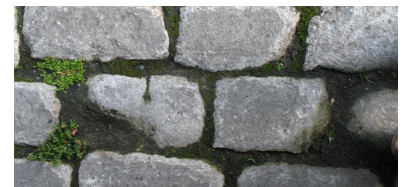
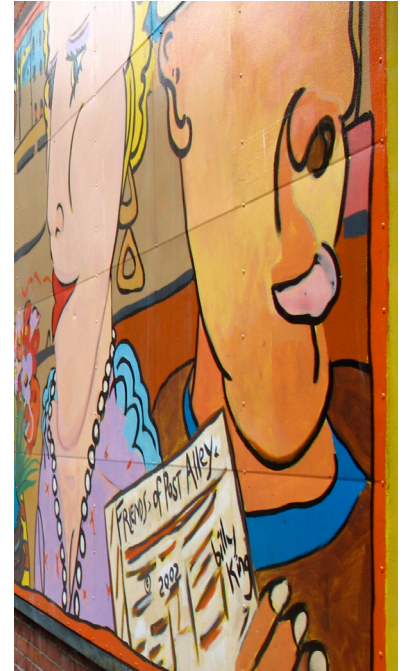
- Walking: generally quality materials to create interesting facades, dumpsters and cars provide obstacles.
- Standing and Staying: not many places to lean against facade.
- Sitting: no seating provided.
- Visual Contact: not many people or traffic passing through.
- Play: lack of programmed space.
- Day, Evening, and Night Activity: not many night-time functions.

Delight

- Dimensioned at Human Scale: sectional proportion can feel tunnel-like, dimensioned for cars.
- Climate: no shelter provided.
- Aesthetic & Sensory: materials and buildings are interesting, needs maintenance and varied uses.

Conclusions

- Conceptual link from Pike's Market to Pioneer Square.
- Potential link to stations, stadium, ferry, etc.
- Potential bicycle and pedestrian network through downtown Seattle.
- Northern section is heavily trafficked probably due to influx from the market. The Southern end is not, but has potential with its proximity to Pioneer Square and as a crossroads to the Ferry Terminal.
- Cars utilized to animate Pike Place Market, but inefficient in the Southern end of the alley.
- The elements of mystery and discovery are important; finding one's way through is an adventure.
- Pairing the sectionally tighter spaces of the alley with unexpected expansive views of the sound or dramatic elevation changes makes the experience unique.



Resources

Wendy Beattie and Al Zelinka, "How to Turn Alleys into Allies." Planning 69, no. 10 (2003): 26-27.