

The Big Dig:
Who forgot to put “Design” into the Tunnels?
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Who Forgot to Put Design Into The Tunnel Tubes?

I’ve always enjoyed the varied views of the city and waterfront when driving on the elevated Central Artery, so I appreciated your letter declaring that “nostalgia for the Central Artery – its views of the city, its glimpses of the harbor – is due to set in any day now” (“Letter from the Editor,” January/February 2004).

These views are now going to be lost forever for the average motorist. But more importantly, who forgot to put design into the tunnel tubes? Has anyone noticed how dull and gloomy the submerged central highway is? The walls, ceilings and lighting feel as though they were designed in the 1950’s and ‘60’s. The drive through the submerged Central Artery is an awful experience. Not only are there no view, there is no daylight-no relief by the introduction of natural light from skylights-and no color or design to the walls, ceiling and poor uninspired lighting.

Was the idea of submerging the Central Artery to hide the city from motorists driving through Boston? All pedestrians morph into motorists and their driving experience should be given equal billing with their walking experience.

Traveling through the submerged Central Artery should be a pleasant visual experience and a delight, as is driving over the Leonard Zakim Bridge. Pity the poor motorists trapped in those subterranean passages.

Constantine L. Tsomides, NCARB, AIA

Follow up: July 23, 2006

To: Sam Allis, The Boston Globe

Once the structural safety of the Tunnels is resolved w can again (has it ever been questioned?) turn our attention to a much overlooked issue: Who forgot to include “Design” in the Tunnels?

