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FAILURE & SUCCESS ON BOSTON'S EL

Whereby We Lose a Station But Gain a Tower

New England continues to be the seat, paradoxically, for some of the most staggering IA losses and stunning, innovative IA preservation schemes. With the dismantling of Boston Elevated's Charlestown line, we noted in SIAN Mar/May 75:7 a variety of proposals for salvage of parts of the structure and some of its buildings. The update provides both grief and joy. None of the structure itself was, in fact, preserved, which is too bad but not too surprising. The plan to preserve the copper-clad, heavy-timber Thompson Sq. Station, though, nearly succeeded. Standing at Main St., Charlestown, it was a

handsome rectangular building with steep hipped roof and an ornate cupola, its copper sheathing heavily paneled, built as an element of the original system in 1901. It had been lowered to the ground intact and stored pending removal to a nearby site where it was to have been converted to a small restaurant by a local tavern owner. The new foundations had even been prepared. On 19 April it was burned beyond any hope of restoration in a fire set by three boys.

Much better it went with Tower C, the interlocking tower that stood at Keany Sq. near the Boston approach of the drawbridge that carried the line across the arm of the Inner Harbor to Charlestown. Stylistically identical to Thompson Sq. Station, it stands two stories and is smaller in plan. Well before the wrecker was to have reached that spot, last fall, the Seashore Trolley Museum arranged for its donation by the Mass. Bay Transportation Auth. Then by a complex series of negotiations with riggers, construction firms, barge and tug operators, truckers, and various of its own members, STM planned for the tower's journey to its property at Kennebunkport, Maine.

The move was a difficult and complicated undertaking, the more so with the necessity for lifting the tower off the elevated structure intact, moving it by lowboy to waterside, lifting it onto a barge, and getting the barge away from the scene, in one afternoon. All that was accomplished on 7 Sept,



Thompson Square Station, 1901, before removal from the Elevated structure. *Richard J. Brillante photograph.*



The Reincarnation of Tower "C". (L) The Liftoff at Keany Square. (C) "C" at sea, dead steady. (R) The new home (temporary site near entrance) at Seashore Trolley Museum. *L and C: Brillante photographs.*

1977 SIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE! Under the able direction of one of the finest groups of technical museologists in N. America, the Hagley Museum staff. In addition to the rebuilt DuPont powder mills along the Brandywine that are the Hagley nucleus, and their newest pride, The New Century Powerhouse — an 1899 hydroelectric plant recently restored and *put back on stream* — there will be inspection of a wide variety of other noteworthy IA in the area, including the earliest American steam engines on their original foundations. An outstanding program of papers and other events as well. **28 April-1 May.** Hold that date. *Other organizations please note to avoid conflict.*

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