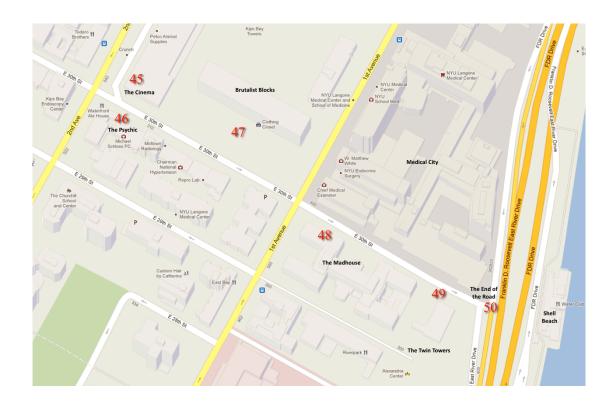
Bellevue, 2231 (2nd Avenue to FDR Drive)



Crossing the street at 2nd Avenue from the verdant oasis of Rose Hill into the stark modernism of Kips Bay is rather daunting. This vast area on the eastern waterfront of Manhattan is *the* culmination and highlight of the 30th Street Walk, containing its most significant landmarks. It is a vista straight out of *Blade Runner*: a space-age, totalitarian dystopia somewhere in Los Angeles, or in this case, Manhattan's distant future.

The area is dominated by the hulking apparition that is *Kips Bay Towers*: two gigantic residential tower blocks designed by American architect I. M. Pei. The towers were originally built to provide middle-income rental housing, but they were subsequently converted, with much controversy, into a condominium in the 1980s. They are an epic example of the "brutalist" style, a style that flourished in the 1950s and '60s, and channels Soviet-style apartment blocks in Moscow. The name "brutalist" is apt. *Kips Bay Towers* is brutally ugly; a ghastly piece of misplaced-utopian architecture.

Past 1st Avenue sits another complex of buildings that are less of an assault on the eye, but are no less sinister. These are the towers of Medical City – comprising *NYU's Medical Center and School of Medicine*, and the gleaming glass towers of the brand-new *Alexandria Center for Life Sciences*. These towers house the research and development facilities for major pharmaceutical and bio-tech companies; laboratories where scientists test out the latest medicines, medical technologies, and who knows, probably even chemical weapons and genetically-engineered humanoids.

Finally, at the heart of Medical City sits the old *Bellevue Hospital*, from which this micro-world draws it name. Bellevue, founded in 1736, is the oldest public hospital in New York, famously referenced in literature, film and television as a hospital for the insane. Put in simpler terms, Bellevue is Bedlam. The Victorian building certainly looks the part, brooding like an apparition straight out of a Dickens novel.

Past Bellevue, there is nothing but the hulking, rust-stained grey-green expanse of the FDR Drive elevated highway, reminding us of the grand industrial desolation in Gotham back when we began this journey. The waterfront is a Shell Beach – inaccessible, unattainable, possibly non-existent.

Our fantastic tale of 30th Street, a tale of totems and time-travel, bookended by desolation and dystopia, and propelled by magic and madness, ends here, with the merest of a half-whimper, beneath the shadow of rusting, hulking epic infrastructure.

* * * * *



45 – Fading cinematographic posters on the grim façade of *Kips Bay Cinema*.



46 – Psychic in residence.



47 – One of the brutalist blocks of *Kips Bay Towers*, with a glimpse of *NYU Medical Center* to the right.



48 – The infamous and forbiddingly Dickensian *Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital*.



49 – Twin totems to bio-technology: the gleaming towers of *Alexandria Center for Life Sciences*.



50 – The rust-streaked hulk of the *FDR Drive Elevated Highway*. Beneath it, a makeshift parking garage. To the right, another dystopian, brutalist apartment block.