Hitherto you have been exploring a closed world, sufficient to itself. Only for a moment, when looking down the length of the concourse, were you aware of an older London in the shape of a distant romantic skyline. Now you are brought close up to it—or rather it (the panorama of London) is brought close up to you. You are reminded that this newly laid out town is part of a larger city, with which it shares a busy river highway. The exhibition planners have made magnificent use of a site in the geographical heart of London from which, among other groups of famous buildings, the towers of the Palace of Westminster make a better composed group than from any other viewpoint. These have been skilfully woven into the exhibition scene. They can be admired in the open, as in 21, a view from the terrace of the 21 Bar, or framed by exhibition architecture as in the sketch above, where they are seen beneath the projecting wing of the riverside Sea and Ships building.

The Sea and Ships building, 25, 26, 27, sums up in miniature the multi-level internal-external type of planning in which the exhibition specializes. Strung along the river front, a sequence of galleries, ramps and staircases leads you in and out among the exhibits—model ships and full-size parts of ships; marine objects of all kinds; diving gear and fishing gear—sometimes spanning over pools of water, sometimes under cover and sometimes in the open air (the coloured areas in the sketch plan above are those which are roofed over). The visitor views them from all levels and at the same time sees, as an appropriate background to them, the busy life on the river itself and hears the sound of breaking waves simulated by the mobile water-sculpture that stands in front.

On leaving the Sea and Ships display you turn your back on the river,