



PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Last year more than 15 million Americans visited Washington. At least five of them did not like what they found. They are the task force which did most of the work on this special issue about Washington, D.C.; Managing Editor Peter Blake, Senior Editors Donald Canty and David Carlson, Researcher Anne LeCrenier, and a former Associate Editor, Warren Cox (three of whom have been sometime residents of the District). Together or separately they held some 75 personal interviews with presidential advisers, district commissioners, agency heads, architects, economists, businessmen, sociologists—and a few highly vocal cab drivers. Their findings are on pages 43-106.

Renewal, planning, and the business and Negro communities were probed by Senior Editor Carlson, who also played a major role in FORUM's special issue on Chicago (May '62).



The city's power structure and its resulting architecture were covered by the newest member of the staff, Senior Editor Donald Canty (photo above). A native Californian (University of Santa Clara, '50), Canty took his master's degree in journalism at Northwestern University, later became editor of *Western Architect and Engineer* (where he took on both Sacramento, in a fight to get



the state to use private architects, and San Francisco, in a special issue not unlike this one on Washington). Most recently he was Director of Public Information of the American Institute of Architects, headquartered in the capital.

Keeping an eye on the capital is a major responsibility of Associate Editor Richard Saunders (photo above), who is permanently based in Washington. Since FDR's first administration, Saunders has worked 12 months a year taking the national pulse on Capitol Hill. He has covered countless building developments under four Presidents, 28 sessions of Congress, and various changing government activities, from the Subsistence Homestead Division of NRA in 1934 to the antibias housing order late in 1962.

* * *

In forthcoming issues, FORUM will continue one of its most asked-for features: the listing of the 100 biggest U.S. architectural firms, contractors, and corporate clients. Several thousand firms will receive a questionnaire about the amount of building volume they did in 1962, including all whose volume is believed to have exceeded \$5 million. If your firm qualifies but has not appeared in previous tabulations, please drop us a note to make sure you are included on the list. —J.C.H., JR.

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the U.S. in which to get something done. For this hotbed of American politics is a political no man's land, with a decision-making structure that is straight out of Alice in Wonderland.

The sources of real power in Washington are Congress and the White House; and for both of these, the capital is a part-time worry, far down on their lists of global concerns. The part-time worry has been delegated to an all-but-incomprehensible maze of agencies and commissions, each with a small, sharply limited, jealously guarded bit of authority—each with the power to say “no,” none with the power to say “yes.”

Congress seems to like it this way, and the White House didn't seem to care, one way or another, until recently.

But since Mr. Kennedy assumed office, his administration has made a series of appointments and policy statements indicating that Washington may be in for some drastic changes. The forceful leadership thus far exerted, together with the promise of more to come, is the most hopeful sign in the capital today.

Most of the moves made by the White House to date have to do with the rebeautification of Washington. This is fine, but rebeautification alone will not solve many of the city's fundamental problems. Most of these are the product of the District's labyrinthine structure. Some are economic, such as the steady fiscal strangulation of the District by an often hostile Congress. Some are social, such as the headlong stampede of the white middle class into the suburbs.

In short, Washington's troubles, like those of every other large U.S. city, are too deep seated to be solved by expert cosmetics.

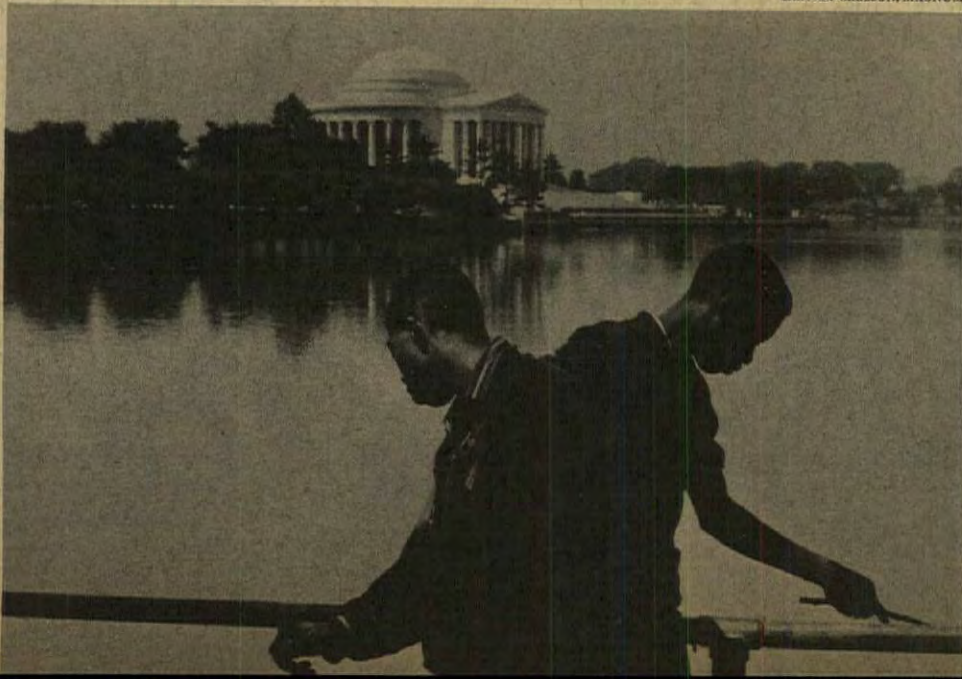
This special issue of FORUM is an attempt to pinpoint some of these troubles and to suggest solutions. If some of the diagnosis seems harsh, perhaps the reason is that Washington has been hiding too long behind its picture-postcard monuments—that it has become a kind of “Potemkin Village” behind whose brightly scrubbed façades are concealed outrages of urban living and urban planning that disgrace all of us.

For Washington is our town. It is the biggest company town in the world—and we happen to own the company. What goes on here is every American's business.

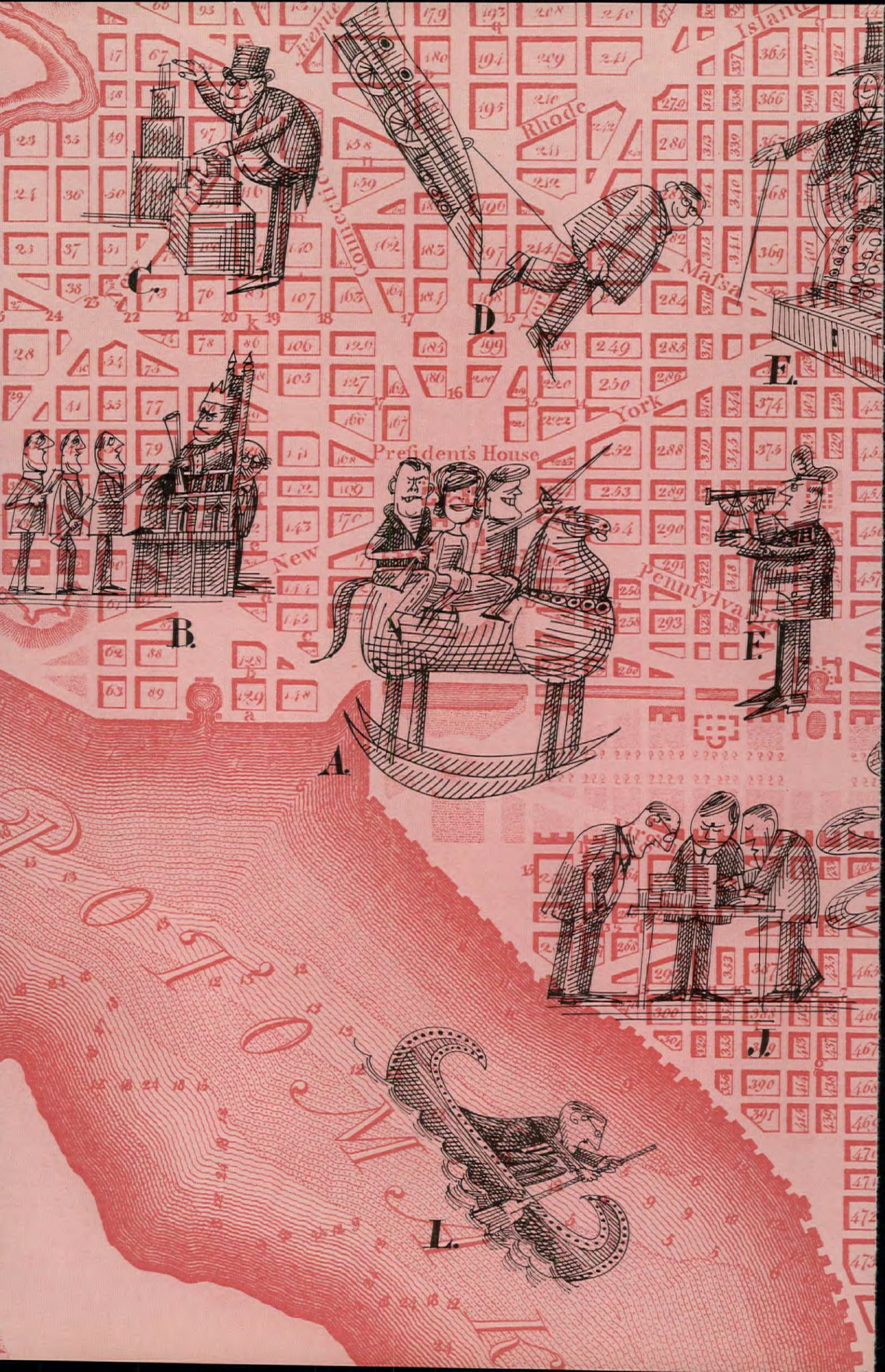
Washington is also a symbol. If it were to become a symbol of the best in urban planning and urban design—as it could and as it should—then the impact of such leadership upon the rest of urban America might be enormous.

The need for this kind of symbolic demonstration is great and immediate. The challenge in Washington and the rest of urban America has never been more serious—but the will to meet that challenge with forceful leadership has rarely been stronger.

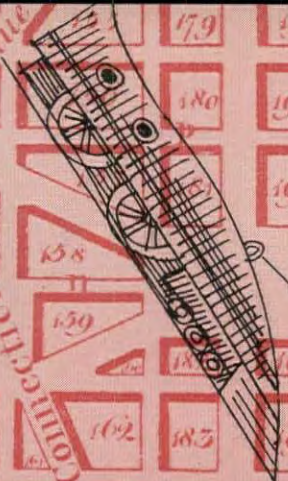
CARTIER-BRESSON/MAGNUM







C



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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

—or who runs what

Here are some of the people who shape the character of the Nation's Capital: Sallying forth to battle for a City Beautiful are the President, his First Lady, and their favorite Advisor on the Arts (A). The favorite Advisor is actually an artist, very poor form in a city run mostly by laymen who only know what they like. The President's housekeeper, called the General Services Administrator, interviews architects who want to design General Services (B). The eagle-eyed gent watching him is an Elected Representative of the People (except, of course, the Non-People who live in Washington). The Elected Representative keeps an eye on who gets what, or doesn't.

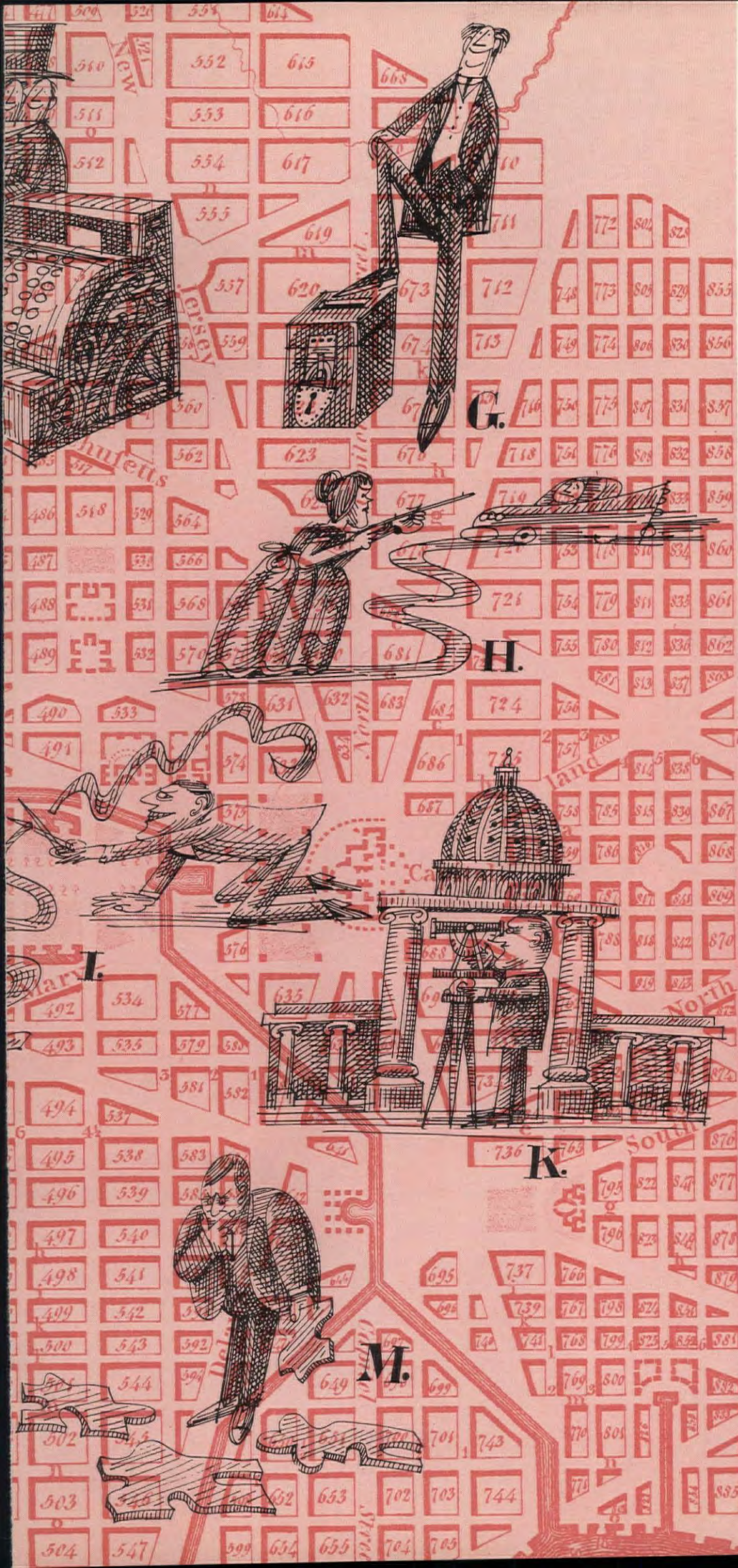
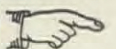
The top-hatted sport above (C) is a Private Investor, who plots new buildings into the city pretty much at random. Next to him (D), pulling a futuristic choo-choo, is the Transportation Czar who likes mass-transport and hates highways. (There is also a man who hates mass-transport and likes highways, but he is not shown.) The hydra-headed burgher (E) represents the Board of Trade which guards the cash register against the tax assessors. The General (F) is Engineer Commissioner of the city. He knows how to get things done, a curious specialty in a place notable for not doing things.

The Solon (G), who passes the laws that govern the city, keeps the ballot box padlocked so the Non-People who live in Washington won't steal the vote, which would upset everything. The lady with the shotgun (H) is actually a very kindly Planning Expert; it's just that she also hates highways. The man with the scissors (I) is head of the Federal City Council. He likes to cut red tape.

The dignified gentlemen around the table (J) are members of the Fine Arts Commission. Their function is to discourage the Fine Arts. The function of the man under the dome (K) is to architect the Capitol. He is not an architect.

Paddling down the river is the former Planning Director for the city (L), leaving for places where planning is more fun. Finally, there is the Redevelopment Czar (M), working on the Southwest picture puzzle. Alas, the pieces don't quite seem to fit together.

As the curtain rises, the scene is one of utter confusion





HOW WASHINGTON IS RUN: AN UNGOVERNMENT WITHOUT TOP OR BOTTOM

"This is the capital of a leading country of the Free World, and it will be to our disgrace if we have any situation develop in the city of Washington—this rather beautiful city, in some ways—which is not a credit to all of our people. . . ."

JOHN F. KENNEDY, December 12, 1962

The drawings at left depict some, but by no means all, of the people currently at work fixing up the face of our nation's capital. Note that each is busily concentrating on his own particular task, paying little heed to what is going on around him. Note, too, that each moves in a different direction. Note, finally, that there seems to be no discernible pattern to the whole.

If you look closely enough you will find here the reasons why Washington boasts the most sterile civic architecture yet built on such a grand scale; why the great Mall is an empty meadow spotted with shacks and surrounded by mediocrity; why downtown Washington is a spectacularly unimposing place; why the great avenues are clogged with traffic and the open spaces filled to overflowing with parked cars; why the wide Potomac remains an open sewer; why there are never enough schools or libraries or social services.

There is still beauty here, of course. It is composed of generous green spaces, profuse trees, a pervasive order of basic outline, noble works of past architectural eras, and emotive symbols of democracy. But this beauty, a heritage of the past, is being rapidly eroded by the misdirected present.

Conceived in grandeur, Washington is being executed in poverty of means and spirit.

Plenty of ideas—but little accomplishment

No one really wants it that way. Our cast of principal characters is composed almost (but not quite) entirely of men of good will. Nor is there a shortage of ideas. More planning and design thought has been lavished on Washington than on any other American city. The difficulty is that precious few of these ideas are ever realized.

The basic reason is Washington's nightmarish structure for the making of decisions. Any understanding of the present state of the nation's capital—and the hopes for its future—must begin with an understanding of how Washington is run.

In theory, the formal structure is quite simple. Congress

has the constitutional power "to exclusively legislate" over the District of Columbia, and acts as Washington's city council. It has delegated some administrative powers to a three-man Board of Commissioners appointed by the President. In practice, the system has bred prodigious complexity and frequent injustice. Two political scientists have recently studied the results, and arrived at similarly distressing conclusions.

"There is neither top nor bottom to the structure of government in the District of Columbia," says Martha Derthick in *City Politics in Washington, D.C.* "Authority does not come to a peak, in a single individual or agency, nor does it rest on the broad foundation of a voting public. It is distributed not vertically, but horizontally. . . ."

Royce Hanson of American University, in his dissertation on *The Process of Governing Metropolitan Washington*, states flatly that "there is no general government as such in the federal city. . . . This 'ungovernment,' unparalleled in any other major city, has no common root or base of political power or legislative authority."



The engineer commissioner always wears a star

One of the engaging peculiarities of the District government is that, by law, one of the commissioners must come from the Army Corps of Engineers. Engineer commissioners automatically become generals and usually go on to be chief of the corps, so the job is something of a plum. To find civilian commissioners, however, the President usually has to use all of his powers of persuasion. Their lot is frustration. Not only are they dependent on Congress for money, but many of the normal functions of municipal government are scattered throughout Washington in agencies whose loyalties are primarily federal.

There can also be trouble at the back door. The District's administrative departments (popularly lumped under the title of "the District Building") form an unusually stable bureaucracy. Hanson calls them "petty principalities," bulwarked by Congressional patronage, friendly special-interest groups, and the fact that everyone from the department head down is under civil service. One commissioner said at his farewell banquet that not once in 12 years on the board did he reverse a decision by a department head.

The commissioners' influence on the face of Washington, then, is a sharply limited one. What little there is falls exclusively to the engineer commissioner, and consists primarily of zoning power, partial control over the highway program, and construction of the District's own buildings.

The incumbent is Brigadier General Frederic J. Clarke, a brisk activist who is generally regarded as the most enlightened corpsman to hold the post in recent memory. Past engineer commissioners have been noted for their friendliness toward the most conservative Washington business interests, as represented in the Board of Trade. Clarke is widely felt to take a broader view of Washington's problems. He and Highway Director Harold Aiken have regularly engaged architectural consultants on freeway design, for example (and now have a plan to bring them in ahead of the engineers so their function can be more than cosmetic).

The record on District buildings, however, is dismal. The schools and libraries which could be focal points of Washington neighborhoods are instead bleak mediocrities; Amidon School in the Southwest Redevelopment Area, for example, drably belies its venturesome educational program and positive architectural context. The District plans a \$291 million building program in the five years beginning in 1964. It would be shameful if the result were a new crop of eyesores.

Confusing battle of the agencies

The primary battleground of ideas about Washington's development is in the middle area of the power structure, inhabited by myriad agencies, boards, committees, and commissions. It is a hazy and confused no man's land indeed: areas of conflict are continually shifting, today's combatants may become tomorrow's allies, and the sounds of battle are often muffled by smoke screens of official secrecy.

The lines of authority and responsibility that link these groups to each other and to the District's formal governmental structure make an intriguing web. The National Park Service is a creature of the federal executive, administering Washington's 7,000 acres of parkland as a part-time adjunct to its national concerns. The General Services Administration, another executive agency, oversees design and construction of all federal buildings in Washington (and throughout the country)—except for those on the imprecisely defined "Capitol grounds," which are the responsibility of the so-called Architect of the Capitol, who is an agent of Congress but appointed by the President.

The Redevelopment Land Agency, whose province is urban renewal in Washington, has five members, three appointed

by the District commissioners and two by the President. It is an independent corporation that does not even have to go to Congress for project funds. The Commission on Fine Arts, which exercises an odd sort of architectural control over the monumental core of Washington, consists of seven "well-qualified judges" appointed by the President.

The National Capital Planning Commission is far and away the most fascinating in its make-up. It has five Presidentially appointed citizen members, only two of whom need be Washington residents, but one of these two must be chosen from three nominees of the District commissioners. The commission is also stacked with seven voting ex-officio members representing federal agencies and Congress.

To these must be added the temporary and/or advisory private-interest groups, some quite influential, which pervade Washington. The resulting construction is the framework in which plans and projects for the city are conceived—and often lost. It would be heartening to say that all of this is not so confusing as it sounds, but such is not the case. The processes of Washington's development can best be described as the bringing of chaos out of chaos.

How Washington's buildings get that way

The particular kinds of chaos in which each of these groups specializes are not delineated with any notable clarity. The quality of federal architecture in Washington, for example, is primarily the responsibility of the General Services Administration, the Fine Arts Commission, and the Architect of the Capitol. The National Capital Planning Commission acts "in lieu of zoning" on the siting and general massing of federal buildings, however, and, in William Finley's reign, has had plenty of advice to offer on their design. And the presences of Congress and the White House are always felt.



GSA's Public Buildings Service, once a design agency, now functions as a professional client, an expert programmer and supervisor of federal work. But GSA's most crucial role in the shaping of Washington is in the selection of architects.

HEDRICH-BLESSING



JOHN BURWELL



These before and after views are of a building that has been "Fine Artsed," Washington architectural parlance for redesign by the Fine Arts Commission. This is how it happened:

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, a quasi-federal agency, retained Perkins & Will and Chatelain, Gauger & Nolan to design a new headquarters on a site just opposite the old War, State, and Navy building. Preliminary drawings were submitted to the Fine Arts Commission on January 20, 1960. These preliminaries showed a seven-story building with exterior columns strongly emphasized. The Commission ruled this feature "out of place," and the design "lumpish, brutal, and too much of a box." It advised the architects to "think less about the future and more about the present."

Somewhat stunned, the architects went back to the boards. In their second submission (above left), they had suppressed the offending columns and made the façade an interesting composition of overlapping marble planes. The Commission was unsatisfied, and said the building should have

"greater dignity" and be "more monumental."

At this point FDIC decided it had taken enough advice, and told the architects to go ahead with working drawings. But Commission Chairman Finley went to the White House with the case that since FDIC was not completely a federal agency, it needed Commission approval to proceed (nongovernmental buildings in key locations must have the Commission's blessing to get a building permit). Finley won.

On October 5, with working drawings 90 per cent finished, the Commission got down to the fine grain of redesigning the building. It told the architects to make the exterior material darker; to use bronze instead of stone around the windows; to redo the top "more in classical proportions"; to eliminate the vertical rows of windows at the corners; and to "change the lower story to give the effect that the columns are carried into the second story, in order to put greater emphasis on the height of the base." The result is shown in the photo of the redesigned building (above right), now approaching completion.

Until very recently, its choices have shown no great degree of enlightenment. For years, the list of architects of federal buildings in Washington showed a remarkable parallel to the architect-members, past and present, of the Fine Arts Commission. Both contained the same old names with old reputations built on old ideas.

Lately some new names have been appearing: Perkins & Will; Curtis & Davis; Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum; John Carl Warnecke. "There is more concern than ever before with design topside at GSA," says Bernard L. Boutin, a realtor and twice Democratic candidate for governor of New Hampshire who became the Agency's chief in November, 1961. A hopeful sign was the appointment of Karel Yasko, Wisconsin's well-regarded state architect, as assistant commissioner of the Public Buildings Service for design and construction (see "News," page 13). Yasko's office sends recommendations of architects to Robert T. Daly, chief of PBS, and from these they go to Boutin for final selection.

The choice is not made in a vacuum. "The Administrator gets some fierce pressure from Capitol Hill," says one of his aides. A happier form of pressure was contained in the Presidential directive of last spring that "major emphasis should be on choice of designs that embody the finest contemporary architectural thought."

The quest for better federal architecture does not end with selection of the right architect, although it is a *sine qua non* of quality. He and his work must still run a rather frightening gauntlet: the client agency, perhaps some GSA boys to whom the President's message may not have filtered down, the Planning Commission, sometimes a Congressional committee, and finally—the term causes even the stoutest modernist to tremble—the Commission on Fine Arts.



Fine Arts Commission: misunderstood, misguided

There are some who hold a conspiratorial view of the history of Washington's official architecture. The capital, they feel with some justification, has been the last remaining bastion of those who believe that the main stream of architectural thought in the twentieth century has been entirely in the wrong direction. The Fine Arts Commission has, in their

view, conducted a largely successful crusade to keep modern architecture out of official Washington.

This contention is vigorously and resentfully denied by David E. Finley, 72, the Commission's long-time chairman and former director of the National Gallery of Art. Finley is a tiny sparrow of a man with a will of high-strength steel. His defense goes something like this: The Commission has taken many positive steps toward the beautification of the capital; its first significant act was support of the Lincoln Memorial in 1911, and in the years since it has worked steadfastly to clear the great space that is today the Mall. Many of the projects that it has rejected were monstrosities, and many of the worst of those built either did not come under jurisdiction or went up over its objections.

True, the scope of the Commission's authority is often misunderstood: paradoxically, it has life or death power over private buildings on strategic sites but only advisory power over federal buildings (although its advice carries great weight in some sectors of Congress). But neither this misunderstanding nor the Commission's accomplishments explain away the fact that it is out of kilter with the great architectural world past the Mall. Its membership list reads like a roster of the architectural Establishment; with few exceptions, the Commissioners have been notoriously conservative purveyors of the visual *status quo*. As presently constituted, the Commission is one of the principal anachronisms in an architecturally anachronistic city.



The Architect of the Capitol: eyes west

Since Washington's governmental structure is basically undemocratic, it should not be surprising that secrecy is one of its most consistent characteristics. The District Building is a virtual fortress of secrecy; the District commissioners also often find it more convenient to conduct their affairs in confidence; GSA is notably coy about releasing information on federal buildings; and the Fine Arts Commission does not really get down to business until the doors are closed.

Even in this setting, the record of J. George Stewart, who has held the title of Architect of the Capitol since 1954, is remarkable. Stewart's door is not only closed, it is hermetically sealed against the prying press and public. He is

Washington's acknowledged master of the *fait accompli*.

Stewart, of course, is no architect at all. Prior to his appointment, he was a builder, a surveyor, a one-term Congressman from Delaware, chief clerk to the Senate District Committee, and an engineering consultant. He is, however, an accomplished politician who knows precisely how the bread gets buttered on Capitol Hill. Stewart's chief monuments are the pompous new Senate and House office buildings and the "improved" East Front of the Capitol, remodeled over the collective dead body of the American architectural profession. He does not make a move until sure of solid support in the right places, as the architects found in the East Front fight.

It is worth keeping in mind, therefore, that Stewart is determined to remodel the West Front of the Capitol as well. At budget hearings for fiscal 1963, in fact, he suggested that the West Front be extended as soon as possible. He estimated the cost of the work at \$18.2 million.

More than any other building in Washington, Benjamin Latrobe's marvelous wedding cake of a Capitol belongs to all the people of the nation—not just to Congress and certainly not just to J. George Stewart. It deserves to be in better hands, perhaps even the hands of an architect. Moreover, the Capitol's immediate setting, increasingly blighted by obese monumentality, deserves a more orderly and sensitive treatment. At the moment, there is no such thing as a plan for the future development of the Capitol grounds.

The Capital Planning Commission: help wanted

At the moment, in fact, there is no such thing as a comprehensive plan for the city of Washington. Its absence is more symptom than cause of the design problems which beset Washington on a scale far larger than the individual building.

There is the heralded Year 2000 Plan, but it is general in nature, remote in time, and regional in outlook. "As a rough-sketch statement of goals toward which we may grow over the next four decades, it isn't bad," *Washington Post* President Philip Graham told the local Building Congress in October. But Graham sees the Year 2000 being used "as an opiate" by both planners and obstructionists. It treats Washington, he says, "as a sort of hole in the doughnut."

As a prodigious feat of achieving a consensus of sorts about Washington's development, Year 2000 was one of the chief ornaments of the reign of William E. Finley, who resigned in November as director of the National Capital Planning Commission to take a lucrative offer from Baltimore Investment Banker James Rouse. "Actually," Finley said recently, "Year 2000 is not much more than an experiment in leadership." Finley's departure left unfinished a more detailed

R. C. MCGRATH

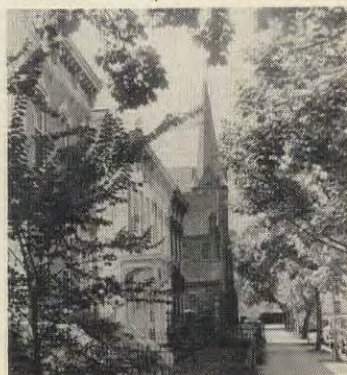


The Capitol, whose imperiled West Front is shown above, is not the limit of J. George Stewart's domain as its "Architect." He also holds sway over any land around it which Congress chooses to take over. Some time ago, Congress chose a two-block plot south of the Library of Congress as a possible future building site. Recently, this plot was cleared with no word as to its intended use. Then, in the last session of Congress, a bill was introduced to make it the location of a \$39 million memorial to James Madison.

About the same time, a report of a citizens' group revealed that Stewart and Congress had their eyes on another two blocks east of the Library of Congress for a new \$65 million library annex. The leak, reluctantly confirmed by Stewart's office, was the first the residents of the area knew of the threatened condemnation. Many had thoroughly rehabilitated their fine old row houses; as a result, Capitol Hill is fast

becoming a second Georgetown (see photo below).

In the last days of the session, a move developed to combine the Madison Memorial with the library annex and put them both on the land already cleared—some Congressmen seeming to feel the last thing Washington needed was another monument. Nonetheless, Stewart and his Congressional patrons probably will have their way. The effect on Capitol Hill's spontaneous renewal can only be discouraging.



WASHINGTON POST PHOTO

20-year development plan for Washington, but he sees little hope for its effectiveness without a major rebuilding of the decision-making structure. "It's just too easy in this town to get nothing done," he said in valedictory.



The rebuilding might well begin within the Planning Commission itself. As previously noted, it is loaded with ex-officio representatives of federal agencies, each with a vote equal to those of the citizen members. In practice, the parks, public buildings, public roads, and army engineer chiefs usually send underlings (the House and Senate District Committee chairmen simply don't show up). Nevertheless, the built-in presence of special pleaders sharply reduces the Commission's independence and objectivity.

But the National Capital Planning Commission's most persistent problem is external, and involves us once again in Washington's tangled web of diffuse strands of authority. Here the planners' arts of persuasion must be spread thin over the previously mentioned maze of agencies, many of whom have as much or more power as they do. And most of the final decisions are made by a Congress that is gloriously free of accountability to the citizenry of Washington and grandly unconcerned with technical or professional advice.

Curiously, William Finley and the bright, aggressive staff he assembled seemed to thrive in this environment. "Everybody has his own access in this town," he told Miss Derthick. He keenly felt the frustrations of Washington's topless and bottomless government, but he made full use of the latitude it afforded to goad, to cajole, and sometimes to lead. The Planning Commission was once regarded as little more than another arm of the Department of the Interior. In the past few years it—or more precisely, its staff—has become the most persistent and effective voice for progressive concepts of urban design in Washington.

To some, however, the voice occasionally became strident. Resentment of the persuasive efforts of Finley and his aides formed in two groups: those who had no use for progressive design concepts; and those who considered themselves at least as enlightened as Finley but disagreed with him on substantive planning issues. Into the latter category fell Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe, President Kennedy's choice to chair the Planning Commission. Mrs. Rowe, a former Washington head of the International Labour Office and cochairman of the Kennedy inaugural parade, is an impressive lady with a bent to-

ward iconoclasm and ideas of her own. She felt, not entirely without reason, that Finley too often crossed the line separating administration and the making of policy. Exit Finley.

This feeling has given rise to the fear that she will replace Finley with a housekeeper rather than an aggressive planner. She emphatically denies this, however, insisting that she wants a strong director for the Commission, pointedly praising the staff which Finley built, and firmly pledging to maintain the Commission's role as advocate of quality in urban design. A good deal will depend on her choice.

One test of the constancy of the Commission's design consciousness will be how hard it fights to keep its present role in Washington redevelopment projects. It now has the power of review, but there is an energetic move afoot to make its function purely advisory to the Redevelopment Land Agency. The outcome will also provide an indication of the real strength of the Federal City Council, latest contender for the title of Washington's most influential private organization

Federal City Council: soft sell for progress

The Federal City Council came into being in 1954, largely at the behest of the *Post's* Philip Graham. Its purpose: "To develop, stimulate, and encourage civic leadership in community development in the National Capital." Its director is G. Yates Cook, originator of the Baltimore Plan for slum rehabilitation and subsequently head of the National Association of Home Builders' antiblight program.

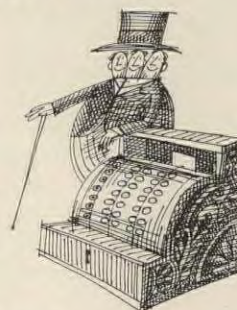
Cook and the Council have quietly gone about building prestige by carefully choosing their shots, avoiding public name calling, and taking a determinedly positive attitude toward problems of Washington's development. The 95-man Board of Trustees includes local businessmen on the chairman-of-the-board level, prominent national figures (to encourage more widespread recognition around the country of the capital's problems), and, as of this year, the entire Kennedy Cabinet. It is a notably constructive and selfless exception



among businessmen's organizations. "The Federal City Council is about the first outfit of its kind I've ever seen operate on another basis than the private interest of its members," says Phil Doyle, director of the Redevelopment Land Agency.

The Council raised \$900,000 to start Downtown Progress, and give it an impressively professional staff. Otherwise, however, its impact has been felt principally in the redevelopment field. In 1955, President Eisenhower asked the Council's first president to act as an expediter in getting the Southwest project off dead center. Later it helped arrange financing for one Southwest developer, and was asked by Congress to study the entire urban renewal setup in Washington. It was this study that contained the recommendation to trim the Planning Commission's authority over redevelopment.

Congress has not yet bought the Federal City Council package, whatever its merits. (Representative Howard Smith approvingly interpreted its recommendations as the relegation of urban renewal to just another department in the District Building, which drew an anguished disclaimer from the Council.) As this indicates, the influence of the Council on Congress is still to be demonstrated. "We really haven't found a lever on the Hill," Cook admits.



This fact leads some to believe that the Washington Board of Trade, the local chamber of commerce equivalent, remains far stronger than the Council where it counts most. The Board cannot be termed an outstandingly liberal group: its primary aim is keeping taxes down; it opposes home rule for Washington, and it remains noticeably cool to racial integration. Perhaps the reason why the Board and Congress get along so well is that both think so much alike.

Congress: short shrift for the big black city

Each year, just after the adjournment of Congress, *The Washington Post* runs a lengthy editorial on actions affecting the District of Columbia. It is an exercise in despair.

In the 87th Congress, said the *Post* this fall, "controversy among the Commissioners and confusion within the city's bureaucracy gave the city's opponents the opportunity for obstruction. The most serious setback was the District's failure to obtain authorization for new construction loans. The demise of that bill was principally owed to the malevolent non-cooperation of the House District Committee. . . . The city's



Within the Federal Triangle

is an open area intended to be its Great Plaza, to be landscaped and dotted with fountains. Instead, it has been leased to a private operator as a parking lot.

In 1961, District Engineer Commissioner Clarke, the General Services Administration, and the Planning Commission decided to ask Congress for \$60,000 to study the possibility of freeing the Plaza for greenery and putting the cars underground. Then came an emphatic letter of protest from House District Committee Chairman McMillan. The idea died less than 10 days after conception.

The instance was one of many cited by *The Washington Post* in a series of eight articles on the city's parking woes. Said the *Post*, "The barons of Washington's parking industry have devoted allies on Capitol Hill. . . . Regularly, the House District Committee has wielded its legislative hatchet at proposed public action to meet downtown parking needs."

The heftiest stroke was aimed

at the city's Motor Vehicle Parking Agency. Formed in 1942, it had built up a fund of \$4.3 million in meter money. McMillan introduced a bill to give the money to the Highway Department—and prohibit the Agency from acquiring land for parking. Joel Broyhill of Virginia, ranking Republican on the District committee, tacked it onto the city's badly needed revenue bill as a rider, and thus rammed it through. Said McMillan serenely, "Private funds seem to have solved the parking problem in downtown Washington." A report by Consultants Edwards & Kelcey, however, predicted a shortage of 11,000 parking spaces in downtown Washington by 1971, requiring 21 new public garages.

The *Post* series prompted a rash of studies, demands, and proposals for action on parking (including clearing of the Federal Triangle's Great Plaza). It will be interesting to watch their fate at the tender hands of Chairman McMillan and the House Committee.

budget contains less than the city needs and wants, but rather more than the District Building's performance deserves."

There was a somewhat untypical note of hope in this year's summary, however. "The highway program has fallen into disarray," the editorial continued, "but for a much more interesting reason. The expressways have run into widespread public protest that, remarkably, has actually had an affect upon public policy."

But then the *Post* resumed a more familiar tone. "A group of House and Senate conferees in a hurry to get home, not primarily interested in the District of Columbia anyway, and without any particular competence in education, decreed the other day that the children in Washington's elementary schools should get along for another year without school libraries. . . . There is no appeal from this casual, careless verdict. . . . It affords a fresh demonstration of why taxation without representation is always tyranny."

Washington's sufferings at the hands of Congress are, again, basically matters of structural confusion, but in this case intensified by the negative and often punitive attitudes of those who man the structure. The Constitution gives Congress the power to legislate for Washington. This power is exercised by the House and Senate District Committees, but it is the House group which has traditionally run the town.

The House and Senate District Committees are the low rungs on the Congressional ladder. They are the places where freshmen Congressmen are put until they accumulate enough seniority to get out; the Senate District Committee was the Siberia to which Wayne Morse was exiled when he changed parties in mid-Congress. Said one member of the House group, "This committee gets the dregs."



There are, however, two categories of Congressmen who find the House District Committee a useful base of operations. The first are representatives of adjacent districts in Maryland and Virginia, who sit on the Committee to see that Washington is not allowed to do anything that would harm their suburban constituents (e.g., institute a sales tax). The second are Congressmen from the Deep South, who delight in using the *Post*'s frequent attacks as campaign material. For this reason,

the actions of the House District Committee can never be considered separately from the fact that Washington is the only major American city with a Negro majority. "Back home those boys get a lot of mileage out of kicking the big black city around," said the head of one citizen group.

The constituencies of key House District Committee members are not only far away, they are also preponderantly rural. Chairman John L. McMillan of South Carolina and members Thomas G. Abernethy of Mississippi and Howard Smith of Virginia all come from districts which are remote from any urban center. Congress, Political Scientist Hanson says, "cannot be held accountable by the population for whom it legislates. . . . Congress is incredibly inept and cantankerous as a local legislature. It acts often irresponsibly and it is not susceptible to any form of control."

Congress, or more particularly, the House District Committee, is also determined to keep it that way. Five times since 1949, the Senate has passed legislation to give Washington some form of home rule. Five times the bills have died in the House District Committee.



The White House: uses of massive power

Only one office in Washington has the power to cut through the tangled lines of authority in Washington. Only one office can exercise sufficient leadership to counteract the dead hand of Congress on Washington's development. That office is the White House.

The problem, of course, is that the White House has a few other things on its mind. The massive global preoccupations of the office have largely kept the Presidents of the U. S. from having much to do with running an entity so small as a city. Somehow, however, John F. Kennedy has found the time to take a series of sharp, constructive actions whose effect should be a marked improvement in Washington's physical character. He has, as one observer **noted**, taken more interest

in the face of the capital than any President since Jefferson.

The most important of these actions have been in the form of two policy directives to federal agencies. The first was the aforementioned statement of architectural policy on government buildings, drafted by the Ad Hoc Committee on Federal Office Space under then Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg. This directive also set in motion the current study of redevelopment along Pennsylvania Avenue between the White House and Capitol Hill, the messy stretch sometimes called the nation's Main Street. The second key Presidential order came six weeks ago, directing federal agencies to observe the guidelines set forth in the Year 2000 Plan.

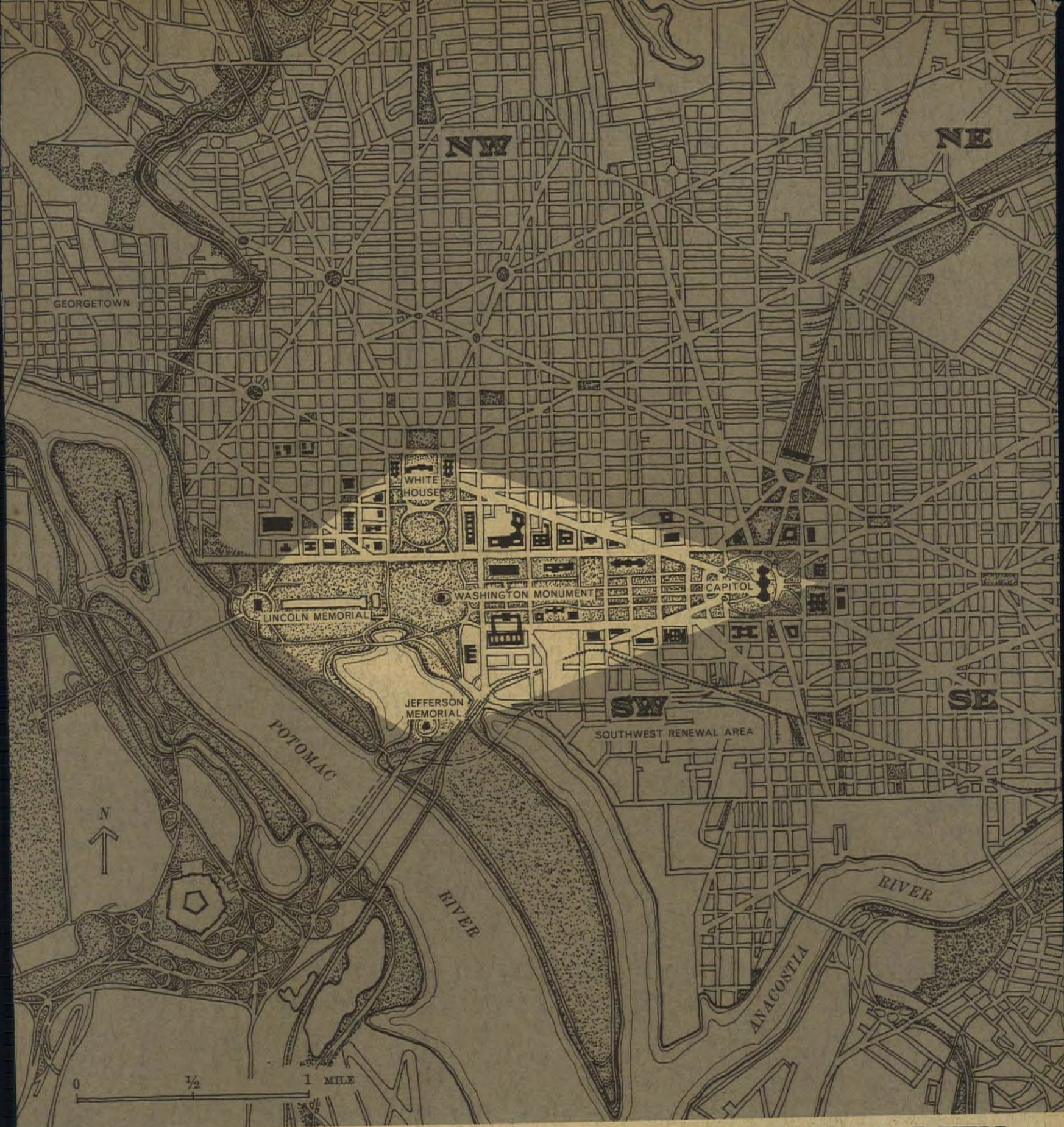
Informed concern has also shown itself in Presidential appointments. Charles L. Horsky, a highly respected Washington attorney who was a chief spokesman for the progressive Washington Planning and Housing Association, has been named the first Presidential advisor for District affairs. Landscape Architect Hideo Sasaki is bringing fresh air into the Fine Arts Commission (and the President will have the chance to make further appointments to the Commission this spring). The advisory committee for the Pennsylvania Avenue project—left without expense money by Congress, incidentally—is a highly qualified and representative group.

All of this evidences both good taste and good advice. Much of the latter, by all reports, is coming from William Walton, a former newspaperman turned artist. Among other things, Walton is credited with a major role in the redesign of Lafayette Square, which involved direct—and effective—White House intervention.

President Kennedy has earned the gratitude of (and a high award from) the architectural profession. But it would be possible to overestimate the degree to which he can shape Washington's development. If anything, he has less time than his predecessors to devote to the city. Presidential leadership in Washington is both heartening and indispensable, but it must be accompanied by basic structural change for the permanent solution of the city's mounting problems.

Virginia Attorney Augustus Woodward, writing under the pen name Epaminondas, had this to say in 1800, when Congress was considering a bill to leave the residents of Washington without self-government: "No policy can be worse than to mingle great and small concerns. The latter become absorbed in the former; are neglected and forgotten. It will impair the dignity of the national legislative, executive, and judicial authorities to be occupied with all the local concerns of the District of Columbia." Epaminondas was a better prophet than he knew, for the present state of the capital impairs the dignity of the entire nation.

DONALD CANTY



1

THE MONUMENTAL CITY

The 15 million tourists who visit Washington each year cluster in the 850-acre diamond shown on the map above. This is the picture-postcard city, the green-carpeted symbol of our democracy, monumental Washington. It is an impressive place, as bigness is always impressive.

Unhappily, the reality of monumental Washington is not quite as breath taking as the postcards make it appear. The brightly colored pictures do not show the squalor of row upon row of "temporary" buildings, the seemingly indestructible residue of two World Wars. Nor do they show the bloated mediocrity of most recent government architecture—an architecture of timidity and meanness, produced by decades of negativism and insipid nostalgia.

This is the story of the postcard city—the bad and the good, the forgotten buildings of a more adventurous era, and the recent buildings that had better be forgotten. It is also the story of some new concepts offered by a new generation of architects—concepts that hold a hope for urban design and architecture in our capital.



THE MONUMENTAL CITY: SYMBOLISM, BANALITY, AND A NEW DIRECTION

From the mighty Capitol, the Mall rolls like a great green carpet to the base of the Washington Monument. On either side are thick rows of trees, above which can be seen the shadowy outlines of important buildings. The mood is one of quiet magnificence, enhanced by the ideals which this place is meant to symbolize. It is of such views that the image of monumental Washington is made. They are, to say the least, highly selective.

The Mall and its still majestic symbols are marred by a dispiriting accumulation of decades of mistakes. Some are matters of unimaginative landscape design, of prolix and uninspired statuary, of the massing and placement of buildings in relation to the green open spaces (see page 64); some are matters of official indifference or bad taste (or both—see photo, right). But the biggest mistakes of all are architectural. The rows of trees almost—but, alas, not quite—conceal some of America's bleakest buildings.

It is not just that these buildings fail to match the greatness of their setting, although the context does make them all the more offensive. It is that they are uniquely and outstandingly bad. Through a dismaying combination of timidity and wrongheadedness, they have taken on a special kind of self-important ugliness that is all their own.

This ugliness came about through an evolutionary process which Jane Jacobs once described on these pages as "creation by subtraction." Monumental Washington was conceived in the classic mold. But over the years, classic architecture became too expensive and too difficult to execute. Had a creative, countervailing force been brought to bear at this point, the result might have been a new kind of monumentality, expressive of twentieth-century America and its mounting architectural leadership. Instead, classic conceptions were stripped of all distinction, leaving only gross and faceless blocks.

A brand-new batch of buildings is now taking shape. With one notable exception—the work being done by the Architect of the Capitol—these new structures are part of a five-year federal building program intended to rid the Mall of its temporaries (it won't). Some of these new buildings carry the "architecture of subtraction" close to its barren conclusion. But others are beginning to show hopeful signs of imagination—and of response to the welcome and positive architectural leadership now emanating from the White House.

JOHN BURWELL



A child's garden of missiles stands before the west spires of the Smithsonian Institution's venerable red brick Arts and Industries Building. The weapons are surprisingly similar in form, if not in spirit, to the

great obelisk a short distance down the Mall. Some of the sprawling Smithsonian's other recent contributions to the character of Washington's monumental core are displayed on the following page.



PHOTOS: JOHN BURWELL

The monsters of the Mall are formidable beasts: huge, heavy, sternly grandiose. They command attention, their placement and posture being such that it is next to impossible to ignore them. They are, moreover, a hardy and prolific breed. Fathered by the Federal Triangle—that massive clump of office buildings running from the Treasury to the convergence of Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues—they are now to be found all over Washington's monumental core.

The latest generation consists of the \$78 million Third House Office Building (top left) named for the late Sam Rayburn; new additions to the Smithsonian Museum, and the aforementioned crop of office buildings for federal departments. The latter are fondly known as FOBs, and numbered in case the client agency changes during construction. The current group of FOBs runs from Nos. 5 through 10.

Even in this odd company, the Rayburn Building, nearing completion in the Capitol's front yard, stands out—though not, perhaps, in the manner intended by the designers. John F. Harbeson, one of its architects, appeared before a House committee in opposition to the Roosevelt Memorial, and Representative Frank Thompson Jr. of New Jersey took the opportunity to express his opinion of the Rayburn Building's design. "That, sir, is a massive, ugly building," he said. "It destroys the beauty of the Capitol by its enormity."

The Smithsonian, which started life in a wonderfully whimsical red brick castle, has devoted itself ever since to seeing just how different each of its buildings could be from the last. The most recent is the \$23.7 million Museum of History and Technology (photo second from top), whose vast exterior is composed of a series of blank, staggered (and seemingly scaleless) planes of white marble. It could scarcely look less like the huge Natural History Museum next door, but then the new \$7.7 million east wing of the Natural History Museum (photo third from top) does not look much like the original building either. Word that there can be a harmonious relationship between new forms and old apparently has not filtered up to the attic of American history.

The Rayburn Building's stepfather was the Architect of the Capitol, and the Smithsonian is also a special case. But the FOBs are the direct responsibility of the GSA, and thus, happily, fall squarely under the new federal architectural policy.

Probably the nadir among what might be called pre-Kennedy FOBs is No. 10, actually two buildings (A and B) along Independence Avenue (bottom photo). About 75 per cent complete, they already dominate the south side of the Mall. Their seemingly endless walls are utterly flat graph-paper compositions of marble and glass. Obviously, the new architectural policy came none too soon.



FOB No. 5 was born in controversy, but it is a sign of progress that the controversy was not between "tradition" and "modernism." Instead, it was a clash between two decidedly contemporary solutions to a knotty problem that went beyond architecture into the broader realm of urban design.

The site of FOB 5 is on Independence Avenue across from Smithsonian's Renwick building, at the head of the 10th Street mall leading to William Zecken-

dorf's projected L'Enfant Plaza development. The client agency is the Defense Department.

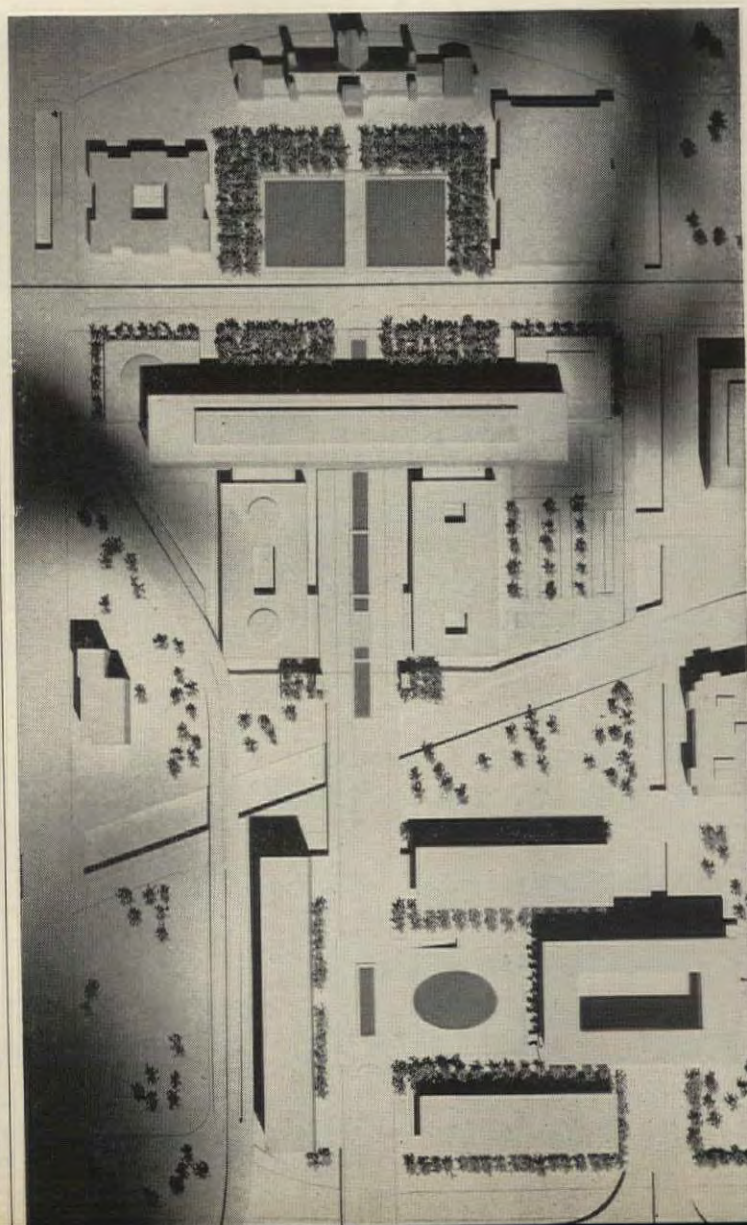
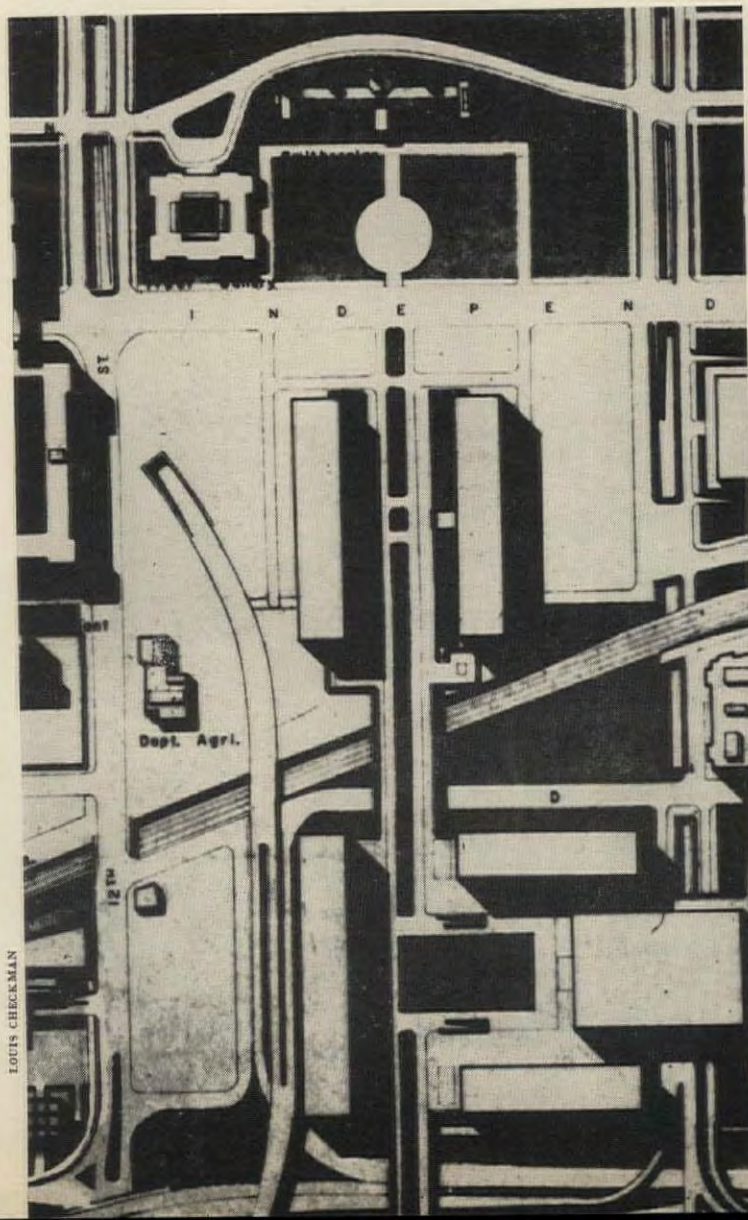
Zeckendorf Architect I. M. Pei wanted Defense's space needs met in two buildings flanking the mall (below left), making a symbolic gateway to L'Enfant Plaza and the Southwest (now cut off from the rest of Washington by railroad tracks, highways, and an industrial belt). But FOB 5's architects—Curtis & Davis, Fordyce & Hamby, Frank Grad & Sons—in-

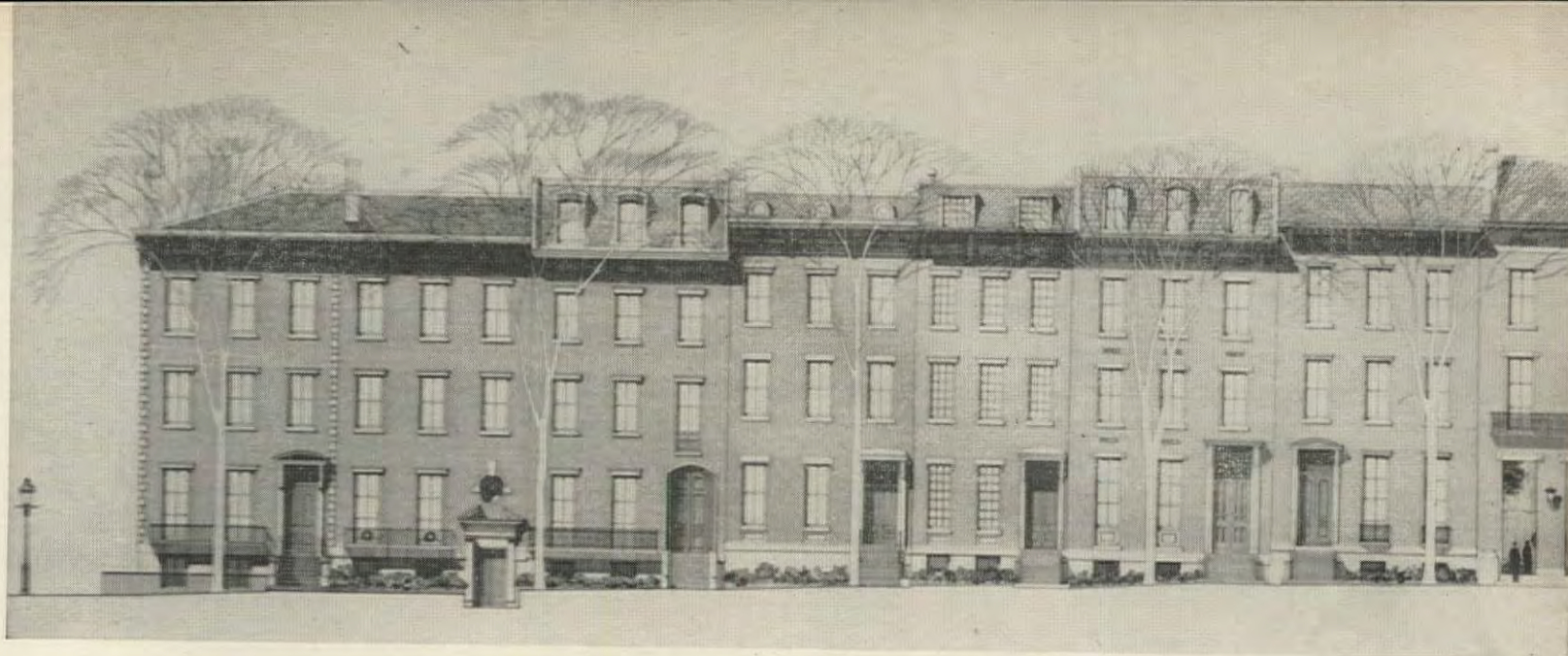
stead designed a six-story slab 780 feet long (above and right) with four smaller wings matching the Smithsonian's massing. The slab will bridge 10th Street, and the gateway will become a 36-foot-high portal beneath the bridge.

Pei objected on grounds of urban design, contending that such a building would block the views of and from the 10th Street mall—that it would be a barrier rather than an enticement. The FOB 5 architects have so far avoided

public reply, but are known to feel that the Pei scheme did not squarely face the program: his two buildings would have grown quite tall to satisfy it, making 10th Street "a canyon."

Much will depend on FOB 5's long, low elevations, only now being studied. They are intended to be "light and airy," but a slick curtain wall is one piece of modernism that would be disastrously out of place in Washington's monumental core.





Lafayette Square's special character is established by its surroundings. Across Pennsylvania Avenue is the White House, and on either side short, pleasant streets—Jackson and Madison—lined with handsome and historic houses. The result is a quiet atmosphere of detachment found nowhere else in monumental Washington. This atmosphere has now been given a last-minute reprieve through Presidential intervention—and by an intriguing, if somewhat disquieting, plan.

In 1958, GSA contracted with two Boston architectural firms to design a huge new executive office building, FOB No. 7, on Jackson Place and a federal courts building on Madison. Their preliminary plans showed heavily monumental structures requiring demolition of several of the historic houses. Protests stalled the project, and when Mr. Kennedy took office he decided these links to the past should be preserved. The design contract was cancelled and a new one drawn with Architect John

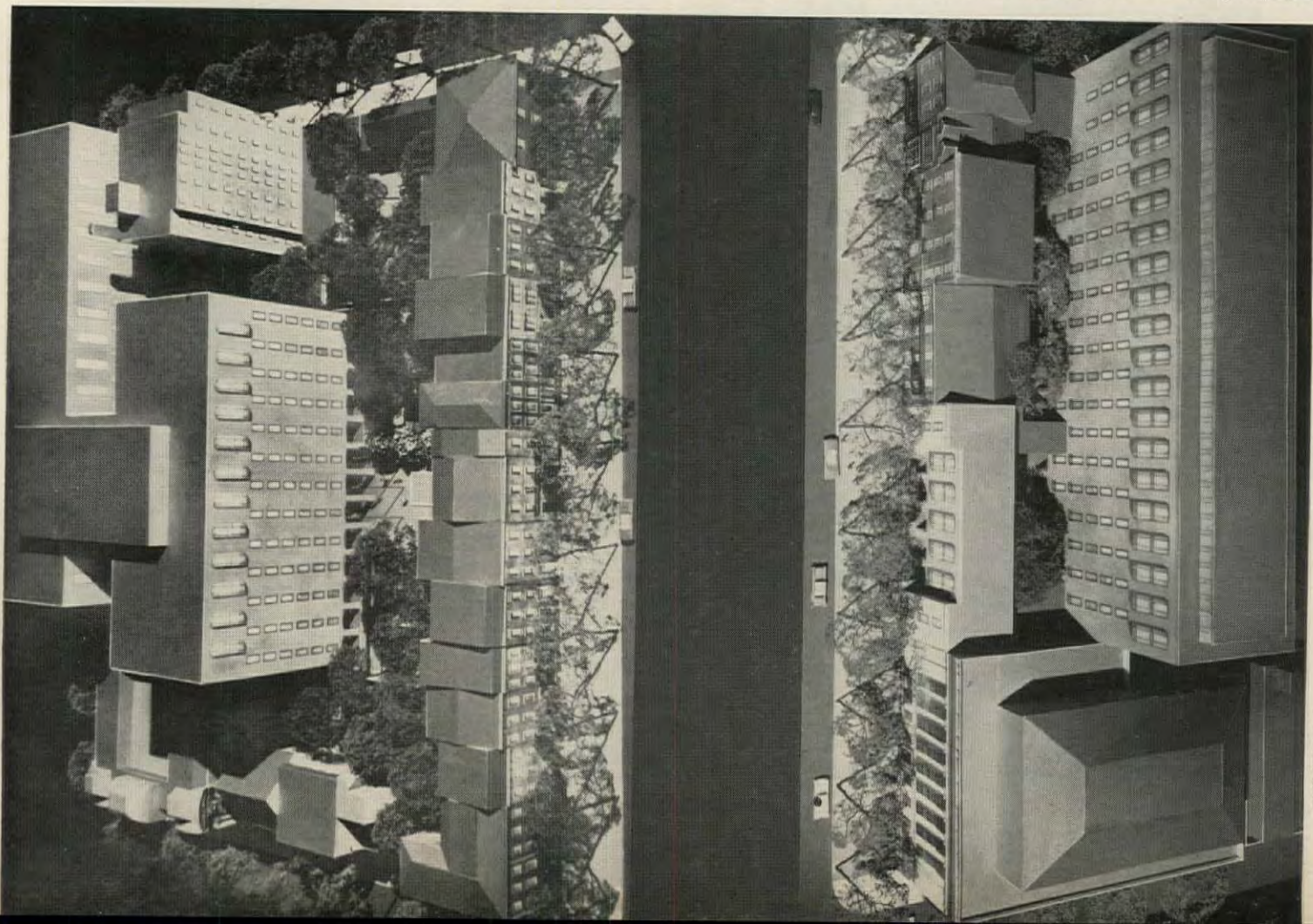
Carl Warnecke of San Francisco.

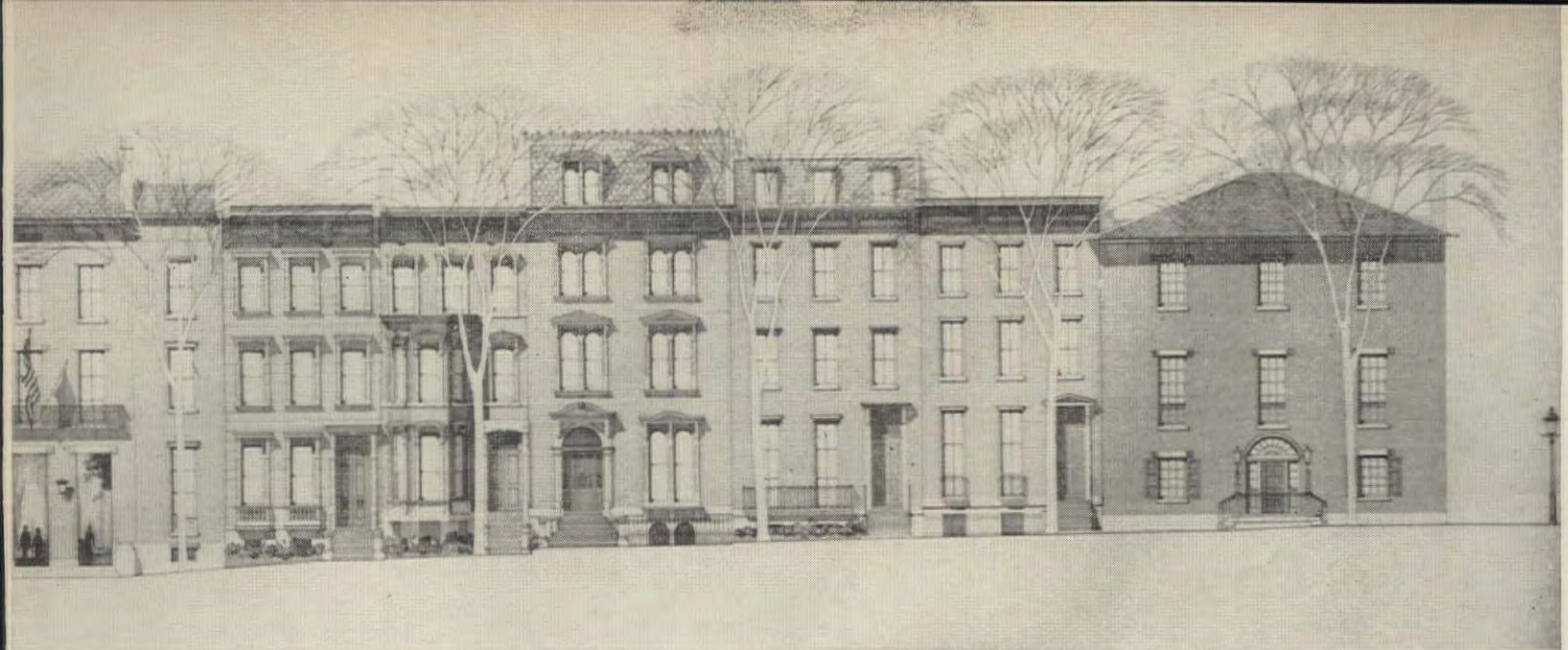
The Warnecke scheme, unveiled in October to the First Lady's applause, places the two buildings behind a screen of both genuine and instant history. The best of the houses will be kept, some of the unsuitable buildings will be torn down, and the resulting gaps will be filled by small new office buildings disguised as early nineteenth-century houses. Except for the 17th Street façade of FOB 7, the big buildings will only be seen as background; between them and

the street-facing rows will be sheltered inner courts. These buildings will be quiet in form and color, so as to retain the visual dominance of the White House over the square.

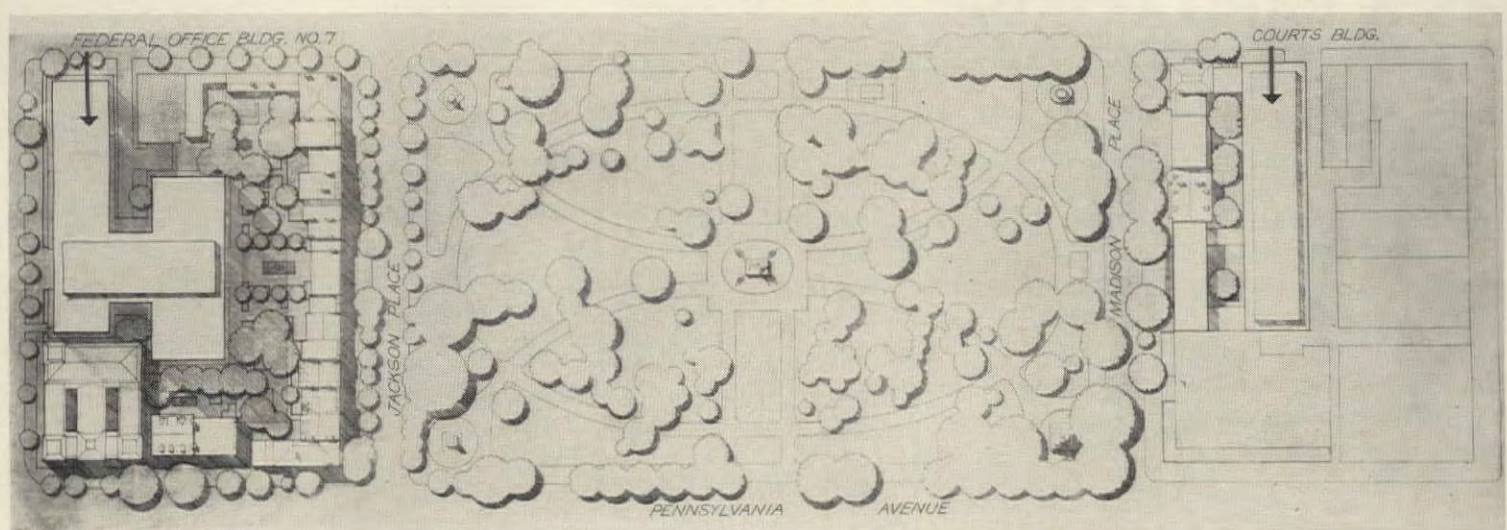
The false-front treatment of the Jackson and Madison façades might seem to belie the contention that new and old can coexist. On a larger scale, however, the Warnecke plan demonstrates that contemporary architecture in Washington is capable of respect as well as boldness.

Lafayette Square's new neighbors: FOB No. 7, left below, and the courts building. The bay-windowed elevations shown here are now being restudied.

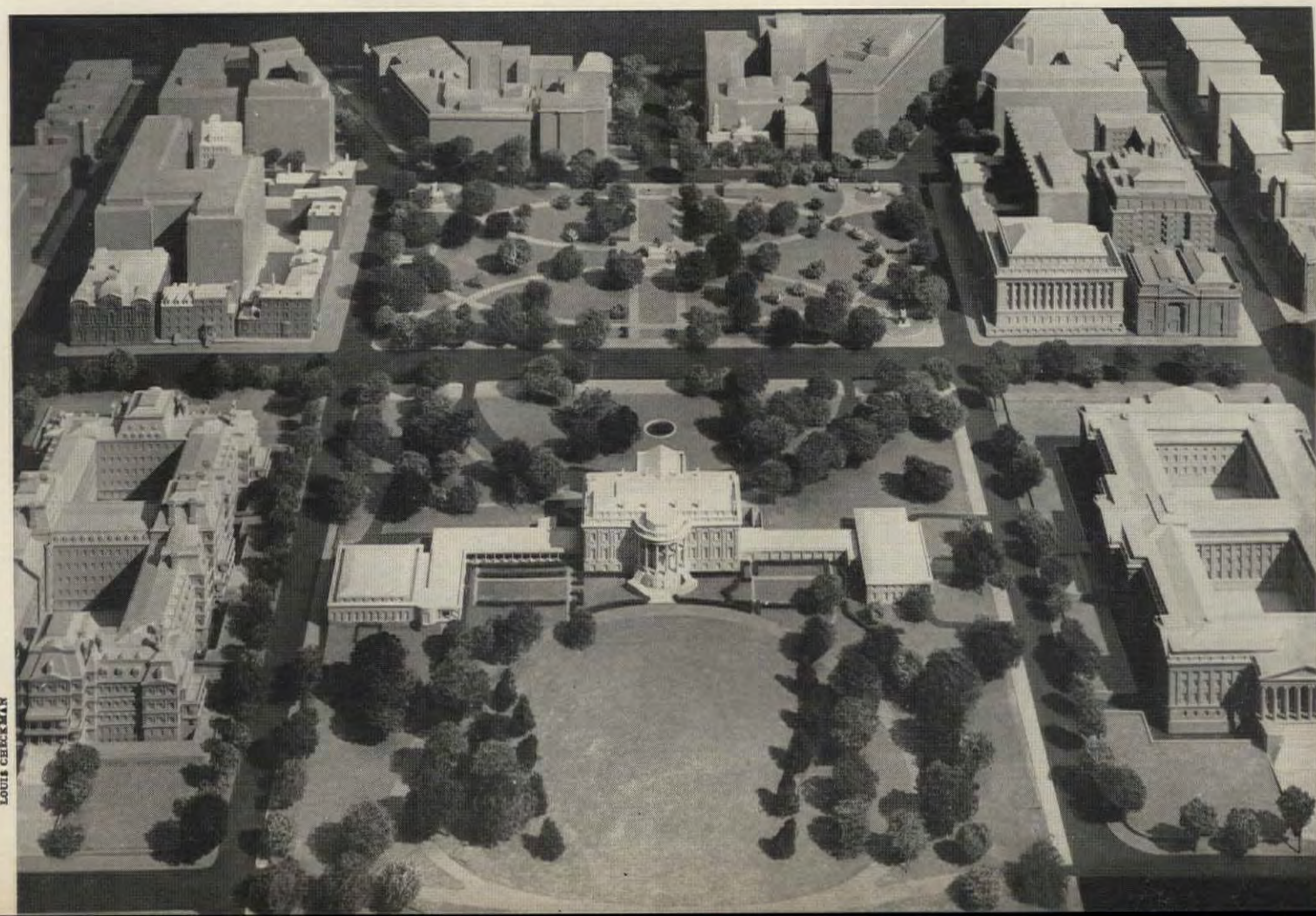




Above, the projected façade of Jackson Place. The original of this drawing is 12 feet long, shows every brick of the old (and new-old) houses.



Rather than extending the square laterally, Warnecke's plan gives it new definition. Jackson Place is to left in plan and model, Madison to right.



A VIEW OF WASHINGTON AS A CAPITAL — OR WHAT IS CIVIC DESIGN?

The one, distinguishing characteristic of Washington architecture and civic design is "monumental dullness"—a term applied not long ago by a certain magazine to a certain Washington building.

One cure for dullness is criticism; and one of the most outspoken critics in the U.S. is **PAUL RUDOLPH**, chairman of the Department of Architecture at Yale, and the architect for some of the finest modern buildings of the postwar years. Here, in brief, are some of his suggestions for Washington:

▶ The Supreme Court is clearly in the wrong place. It should move.

▶ Washington's open spaces are much too open—and much too formless.

▶ The Mall is a mess: its space "leaks out" in all directions, and its flow is interrupted by cross streets.

▶ The Washington Monument, our finest symbol, is surrounded by piles of junk.

▶ Pennsylvania Avenue, the most important street in the country, has no beginning and no end.

▶ Washington's squares are dotted with mediocre and underscaled sculpture, and are generally unusable anyway.

▶ Washington, though neo-Renaissance in its buildings, violates all Renaissance principles in its outdoor spaces.

▶ And most new Washington architecture is ridiculous.

The next words are those of Mr. Rudolph:



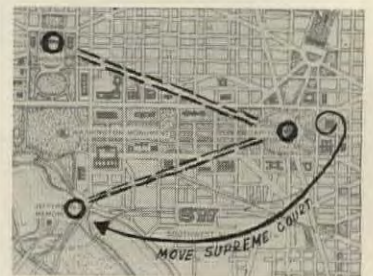
The nation's Capitol—majestic, dominating Washington—vistas, vistas, vistas from everywhere to the Hill and its light-catching dome. *Mr. Washington's monu-*

ment—the best in the world—pivoting you to the House of White shrouded in its Sea of Green; not intended to be, but nevertheless the reverse of the Capitol.

But where is the *Supreme Court*—isn't this a government of three?

Somehow the Supreme Court ended up, not as an integral part of a great plan, but merely at the back door of the Capitol, with no relationship to the Capitol itself. Even more insulting, it parodies the Capitol buildings in a ridiculous way.

A new Supreme Court Building should be placed on great terraces over the complex of vehicular and rail bridges entering the city from the south. (The Southerners could always use the northern gateway if they did not like the idea of entering via the Supreme Court entrance.)



This placing of the third great arm of our government at the southwest terminus of Maryland Avenue will help reclaim that neglected thoroughfare. It would be a site worthy of the Supreme Court—a building that would be reflected in both the Tidal Basin and the Washington Channel.

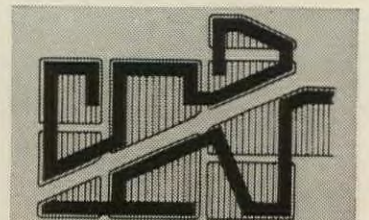
Pennsylvania Avenue today is not significant because 1) its flanking buildings are not sufficiently "dense" to define the space of the street; 2) there is no defined beginning or end; 3) the diagonal intersections with the north-south-east-west gridiron call for special forms of buildings which have not yet been evolved; 4) the height of buildings is often not great enough for the present width of the Avenue; and 5) the Avenue acts as a barrier rather than a connection between the commercial and the federal city.

Pitiful attempts to form plazas at the various diagonal intersections have failed—because these plazas are generally rectangular and Pennsylvania Avenue is allowed to bisect them diagonally. So the plazas end up being two meager triangles of nothingness.

Rome handled this much better, by allowing the pedestrian plazas to be on one side of the street only, with the buildings on one side of the avenue forming an "alcove" of comprehensible space (right). Structures on the opposite side of

the avenue then close off the "alcove" visually. By alternating such "alcoves" on opposite sides of the street (as shown in the sketch), Pennsylvania Avenue would gain meaningful pedestrian plazas that would also tend to make the Avenue a link rather than a barrier between the commercial and the federal city.

All this can be achieved by constructing buildings over north-south streets to avoid excessive space-leakage, and to emphasize the processional quality of the space leading from Capitol to White House. *The configuration of buildings does not necessarily have to conform to the street pattern*—buildings can easily be made to bridge streets. But the vista from Capitol to White House must always be framed.



Washington is a city of ragged edges, gaping holes, free-standing buildings which should be walls defining exterior spaces. The notion that important buildings should stand in a park is unrealistic and an offense to L'Enfant's concept.

The National Capital Planning Commission in its "Plan for the Year 2000" states as a key premise that "the major open spaces of a monumental scale . . . should not be extended or encroached upon." Fix it? Freeze it? Is it sacred? Nonsense!!! There is no hope for Washington if the present ragged, undefined relationship between the "major open spaces" and buildings is to be regarded as fixed.

The deplorable "no man's land" north and south of the Capitol is an excellent case in point. This area is hopelessly confused, fit for neither car nor pedestrian. The miscellaneous collection of sculpture, fountains, and other niggardly efforts mocks the Capitol, for this bric-a-brac is a collection of isolated events not properly scaled (see below).

This space should properly be a transition area between the Capitol and the various avenues that radiate from it. For instance, Pennsylvania Avenue sorely needs a beginning, an announcement that this is the most important single avenue in the land. Yet the Avenue does not start or end.

The north boundary of Capitol Square should be defined with buildings stepping down the Hill. Instead, the space in which the Capitol sits "leaks out" toward the north.

The Taft Memorial is a travesty—it doesn't know what to do with all that space. And Union Station is much too far away to close the space—Burnham knew very well that his station could never support such a wide vista, and therefore proposed a forecourt to the south of the station.

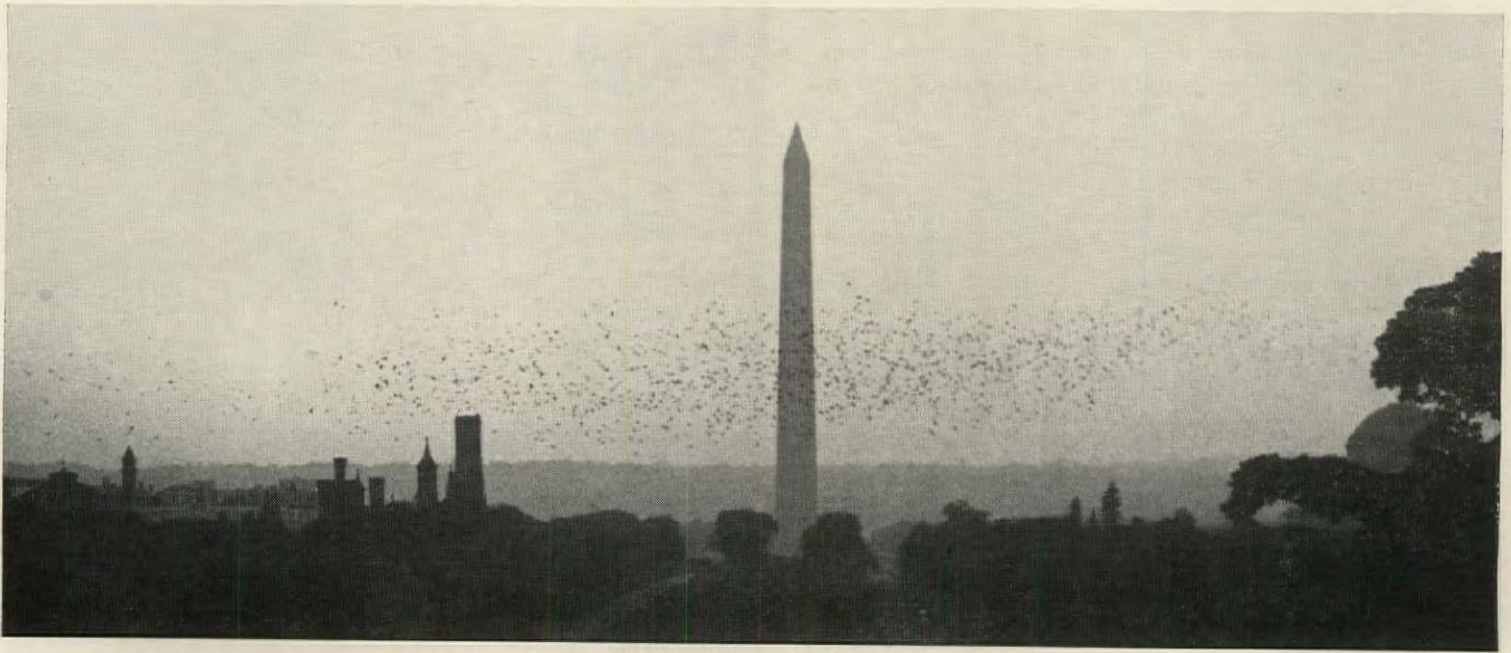


The Mall is in similar trouble: the sides of the Mall are not defined architecturally, because the space leaks out badly between the internal freestanding buildings. It is essential to plug the gaping holes between these freestanding structures with connecting buildings that could be raised (or opened up in places) to permit north-south streets to pass through and under them. This would create a series of gates to the great Mall. The Museum of History and Technology, the Natural History Building, and the National Gallery should be joined almost continuously with buildings and arcades to define the northern boundary of the Mall. The southern boundary needs to be defined similarly.

The city that lies to the north and south of the Mall should be revealed occasionally through this screen of "defining buildings"—never at the expense of the directional quality of the Mall itself.

The automobile and bus must be purged from the Mall itself. The flow of the Mall from the Capitol to the Washington Monument is drastically compromised by the many automobile crossings in the north-south direction. The 12th Street underpass (above) is a sordid scandal, and the rise of the Mall at 12th Street to make way for the underpass is a deplorable expediency: the Washington Monument is made to look (from the east) as if it were coming up for air—rather than sitting serenely on its hill.





The Washington Monument was placed 100 feet off the north-south axis, for engineering reasons. Congratulations to the engineers: the White House should not be split down the middle!

But why is the great monument surrounded by spalling concrete, cracked macadam, hideous, scraggly grass, cheap wire wastepaper baskets, pseudo-Victorian signs saying "NO," unneeded, unpainted steel fences, factory-like steel hatches to something smack on the axis to the Capitol, left-over lighting standards that conflict with the circle of flags—and, worst of all, a little classical outhouse at the base of the Monument's hill (see far right)?

Suggestion: clean it up. Another suggestion: a parking lot should not form the base to our one, great monument.



Washington's official architecture is usually a six- or eight-storied building treated as a single, monumental one-story structure—large scaled, heavily modelled, light catching, nonreflective, pavilion-like, often symmetrical. Usually, too, it is an overly pretty version of a Roman temple.

Washington's twentieth-century architecture should not be a sheathed steel frame, but have the integral, sculptural quality of concrete.

To say that "monumental struc-

tures can be reserved for true monumental purposes [and] a new business-like form can emerge to house operational governmental activities" (as the National Capital Planning Commission has put it) is completely to misunderstand architecture, civic design, and, indeed, the human spirit.

At least 95 per cent of the federal city's new building will be for operational governmental activities. How can Washington become more noble, more glorious, indeed more monumental if

its Planning Commission believes that most of its buildings should be merely "business-like"?

The capital of democracy must be more, much more. Every government worker must be reminded that he serves the nation in a special way. No big business here.

The closest existing twentieth-century equivalent to Washington's bureaucratic buildings is Le Corbusier's governmental complex at Chandigarh, in India. The High Court Building (85 per cent offices) reads from a distance as a one-story high building with a great roof; only upon closer inspection does it reveal the several floors behind the screen of *brises-soleil* (below).

The principle at Chandigarh is, fundamentally, the same as that frequently followed in Washington; but the means of carrying it out renders the High Court and the General Assembly (right) great works of architecture—while the means so often employed in Washington are banal, meaningless, and, indeed, suggestive of Hollywood.

Wedding cakes and World's Fair valentines are equally imminent—and equally ridiculous and inappropriate. Virility, strength, spirit, and the dynamic—these are the qualities to be sought in the capital of democracy, not prettiness.



Pershing Square (and its area) has within it the seeds of the greatest plaza in the land, for people gather there in times of crises, for celebrations, ceremonies, or other events in the national life.

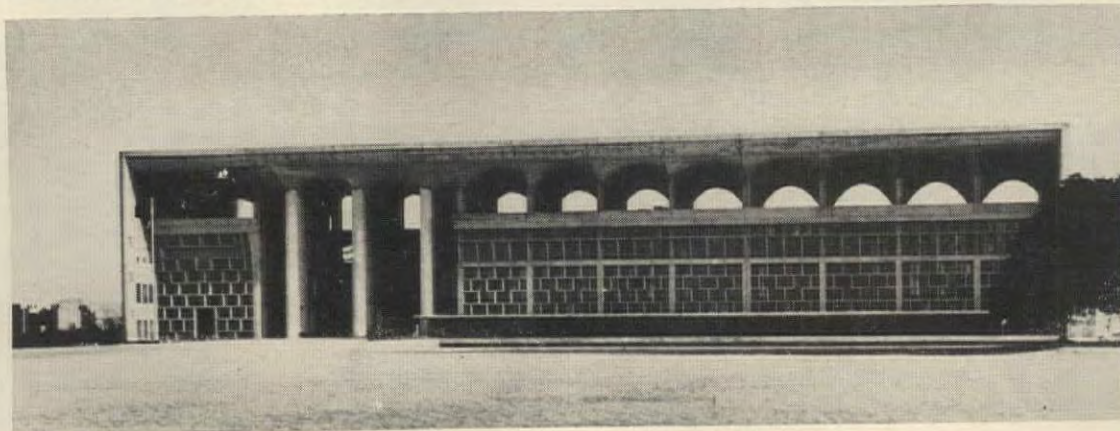
Unhappily, the existing streets divide the area into five meaningless subareas, each attempting to command attention.

Washington has this insane compulsion to take every little area, find its center of gravity, and build underscaled and mediocre sculpture on that spot.



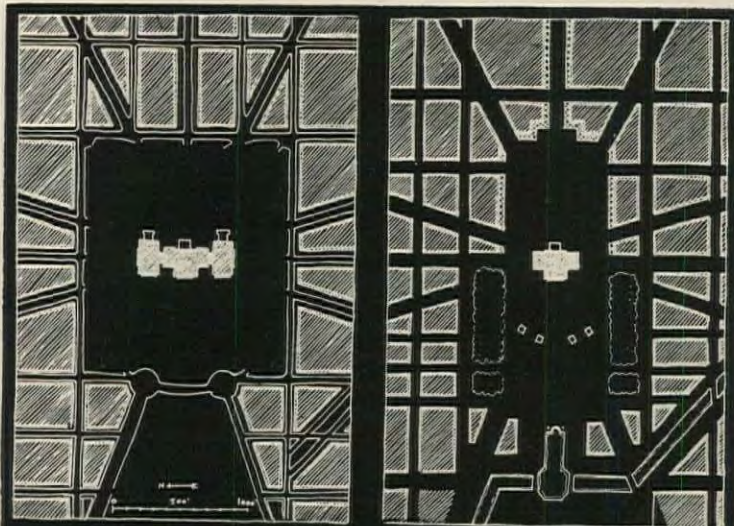
The Pershing Square area should become a single space. Fortunately, the land slopes toward the southeast; therefore it would be possible to make one great plaza (perhaps on many different levels) with all vehicular traffic below the pedestrian ways.

A unified design should be adopted for the north, south, and east walls of Pershing Square, following more or less the present building lines. But only Pennsylvania Avenue should enter the plaza without any obstructions; the other streets should enter the square only through arcades or under buildings that bridge the street. The west side of Pershing Square is of utmost importance for here the Square becomes, simultaneously, a terminus to Pennsylvania Avenue and a forecourt to the White House.



L'Enfant called for a much smaller colonnaded forecourt on the east side of the Capitol (which is its actual entrance), keeping in mind that the Capitol stands some 80 feet above the Mall. It is obvious that L'Enfant's east forecourt is superior in imagination, plasticity of design, and adaptability to the site to the current chaos of parking lots, bus and tourist unloading, dignitary greeting ground, incomprehensible geometry combined with a semitropical jungle, miscellaneous markers, sculptures, fences, and signs.

What a mess! It's too small to be a park and too large to be a plaza. It is twice the width of the Piazza di San Pietro or the Place de la Concorde; and the ratio of height of building to width of plaza is so great that there is, in fact, no forecourt, no plaza; nor is it truly a group of buildings in a park—nor, indeed, anything comprehensible to anyone.

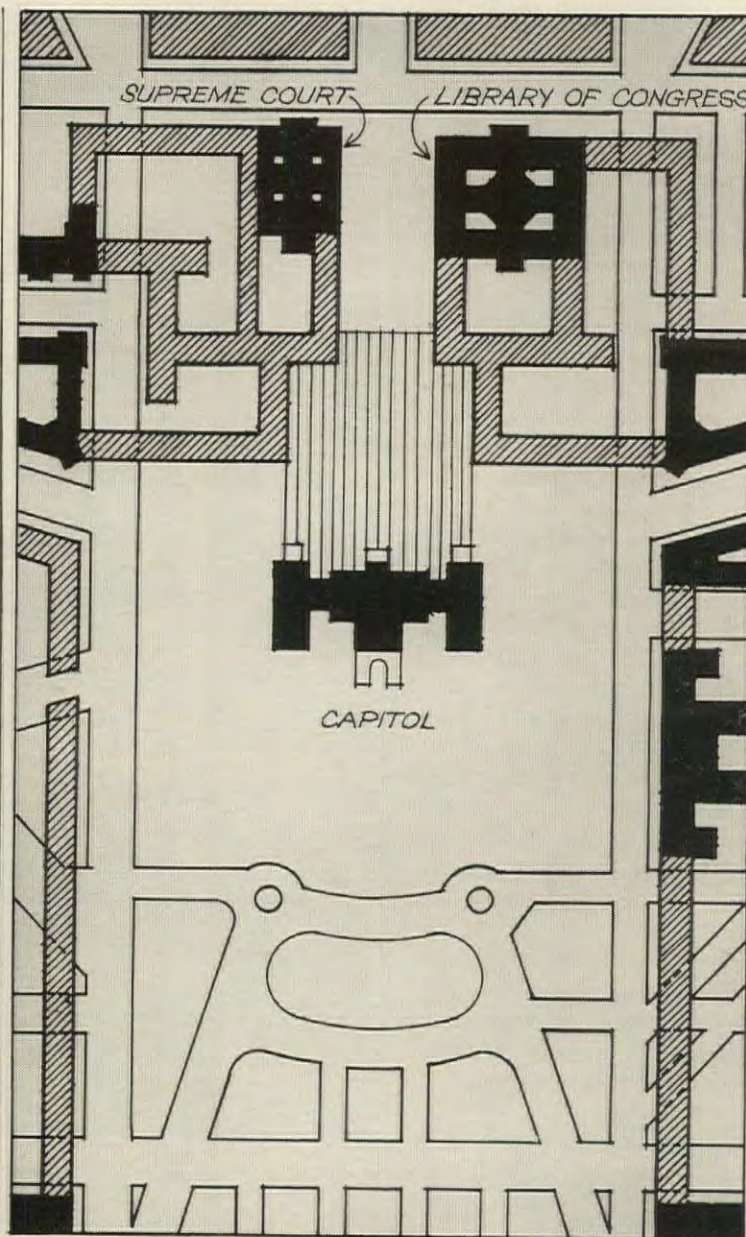


At the left is the block plan as it stands, restored to symmetry by ignoring the Congressional Library; at the right is an enlargement of L'Enfant's plan, at the same scale, with street-arcades indicated in accordance with his note. Omitting from consideration the present great extent of the Capitol, but keeping in mind the fact that the Capitol stands at a sharp break in grade, it seems obvious the L'Enfant's plan is the superior in imagination, plasticity of design, and adaptability to the site.

Washington's squares are generally unsuccessful. Horizontal distances between the buildings are far too great. Although Washington is based on classical and Renaissance concepts for the buildings themselves, these concepts have been ignored in creating the spaces *between* the actual buildings.

Werner Hegemann and Elbert

Peets, in their almost-forgotten book, *The Architect's Handbook of Civic Art* (above), have a remarkable section devoted to the size of Renaissance plazas. They point out, for example, that "a plaza larger than three times the height of the surrounding buildings is . . . in danger of being of imperfect value as a setting for monumental buildings."

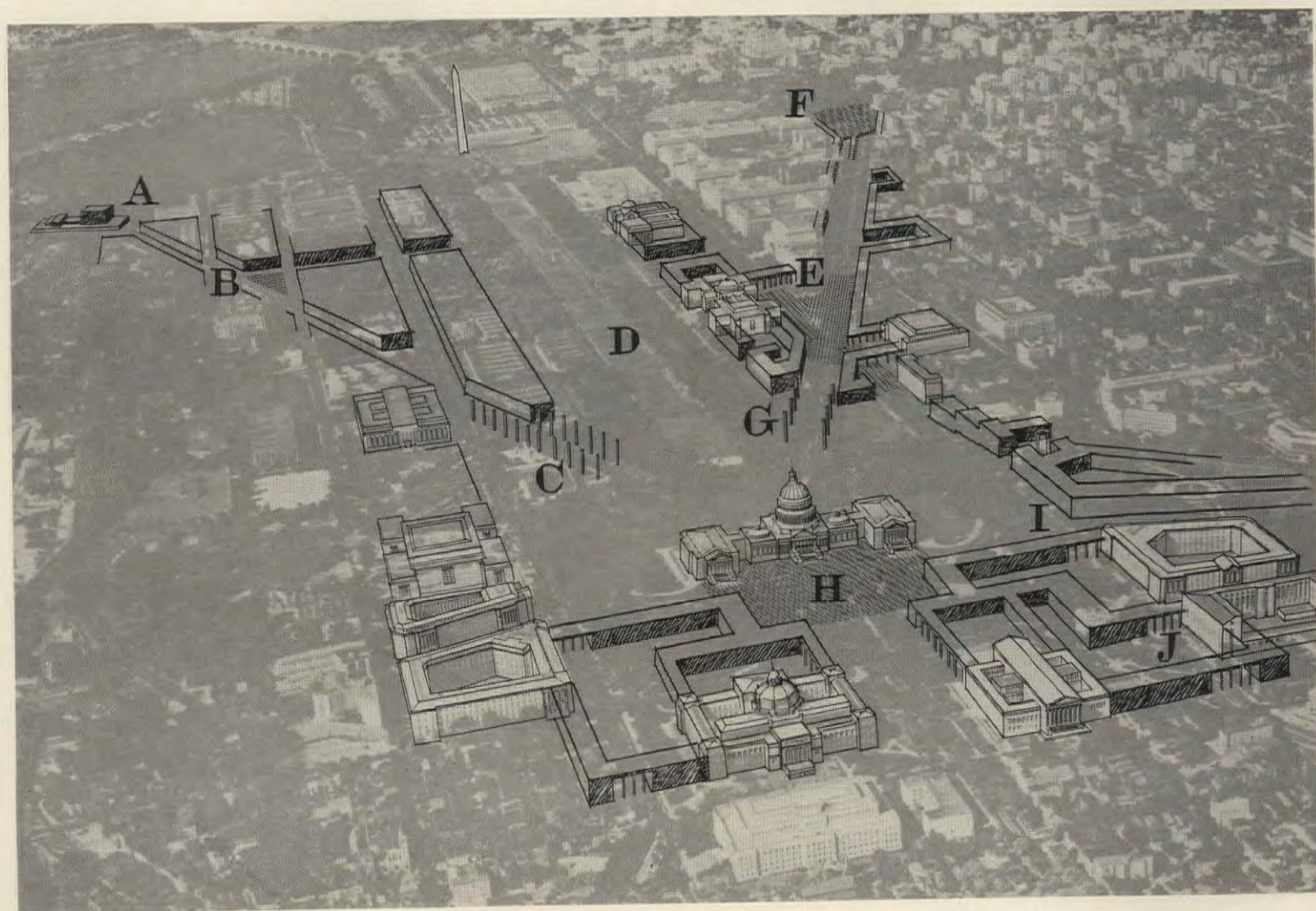


The new multi-storied buildings, the new scale given by the automobile, the sheer bulk of twentieth century buildings—all this makes Renaissance rules obsolete *for the most part*. But not for Washington: it should not have towering blocks, it must find its own ways of keeping and augmenting existing compositions. The human eye does not change.

Civic design is the art of assigning various roles to every element of a city; coordinating them so that they form the total environment; providing a three-dimensional framework for continuously adding and subtracting in such a way that every act respects, augments, enhances, and allows the original great idea to fulfill itself. Civic art, not planning.

Applying these principles, Mr. Rudolph has roughed out (below) some of the possible results: **(A)** The Supreme Court is relocated and placed over existing bridges, to form terminus for Maryland Avenue and a Southern entrance to the city. **(B)** Maryland Avenue is architecturally defined, and given a "Madison Memorial Gateway" **(C)** at its Capitol end. **(D)** The Mall is also given more decisive form. **(E)** Pennsylvania Avenue is defined by buildings of uniform height, with plazas forming alcoves on alternating sides. **(F)**

Pershing Square becomes an important terminus, the other one, at the Capitol end **(G)**, being a proposed "FDR Memorial Gateway." The entire area around the Capitol **(H)** has been scaled down and defined with buildings that link existing structures and spatial sequences that add drama to the approach to the Capitol. The gaping hole **(I)** toward Union Station has been closed off, but vistas remain toward the station. Gateways and plazas **(J)** around the Supreme Court and the Library of Congress are scaled to fit those existing structures.



What roles do buildings play

in the cityscape? Clearly, every building must play its part in the whole if civic design is to become eloquent. Traditionally, these roles were well defined by content as well as by dimensions. Today none of this is clear: a building advertising whisky is much larger (and more expensive) than a church.

The various roles for buildings might be defined as follows:

1) *The Focal Building* — in Washington, this is, obviously, the nation's Capitol.

2) A building or an element which forms a defined open space for an important building—the loggia of St. Peter's, for example.



3) Flanking buildings that form an enclosure—as Michelangelo's Piazza del Campidoglio.

4) A building which acts as a pivot—like San Antonio di Padova.

5) A building which acts as a transition from one scale or style to another—the group that forms the Piazza Navona in relationship to the church, for example.

6) Buildings that serve as gateways from one space to another—like the Admiralty Arch between Trafalgar Square and The Mall.



7) A building which acts as a bridge—like the Rialto Bridge.

8) A building which acts as a barrier shielding one space from another—in the manner in which the Palazzo Montecitorio separates the Piazza Colonna from the Piazza Montecitorio.

9) Buildings which are essentially encrustations, sculpture, or eruptions on a plane—as at Chandigarh.

10) Buildings that act as free-standing sculptures and are placed in such a way as to create tensions in the space between them—as in the case of the Acropolis.



11) Buildings which act as a counterbalance to each other—as at Pisa.

12) Buildings which vary in scale when seen from varying distances—like the Hôtel des Invalides.

13) Buildings which turn a corner—like the Doge's Palace in Venice.

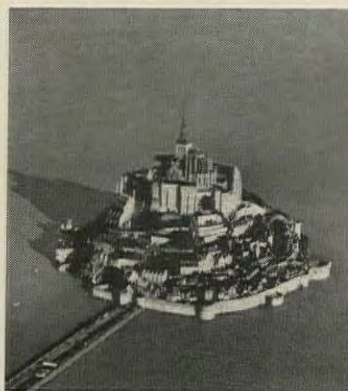
14) A building which deflects and gives direction to an exterior space—as at Campo San Polo, in Venice.

15) Buildings formed to create an alcove of space as a transition to a dominant space—the Admiralty Building and the Horse Guards Barracks in London, for example.

16) The low, freestanding building which serves as a focal point in a space defined by taller and neutral buildings—like St. Martin's in the Fields.

17) Buildings that produce an enclosure—like Windsor Castle.

And 18) a group of buildings which forms a base for another building—as at Mont St. Michel.



A hierarchy of buildings, like the one I have attempted above, and a clear understanding of the civic design role played by each building, memorial, sculpture, fountain, loggia, vehicular way, bridge, walk, park, etc., is a prerequisite for welding Washington—or any city—into a whole, rather than a series of isolated, unrelated parts.

The planner's approach is insufficient to accomplish that which is worthwhile.

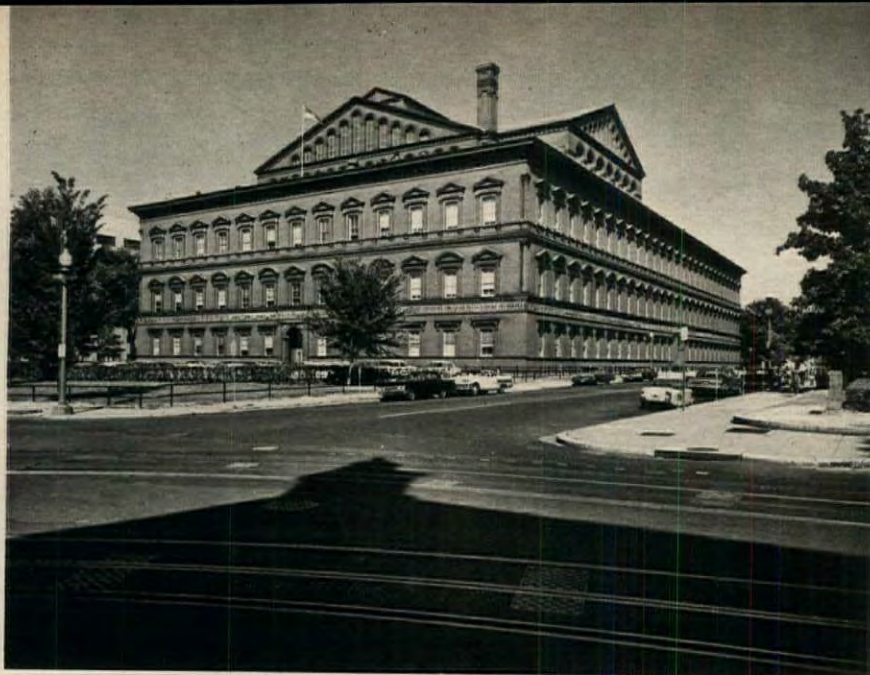
Finally, only art can move men to significant action.

—PAUL RUDOLPH.

Photo credits: Page 64, Bettman Archive; 65, Capitol Airview, John Burwell; 66, Yoichi R. Okamoto, Robert C. Lautman, John Burwell; 67, Vernon Gibberd, Rondal Partridge, Courtesy National Park Service; 70, AP, Guy Dike—Life, James Whitmore—Life, Courtesy Time, N. R. Farbman—Life.



WASHINGTON'S FORGOTTEN ARCHITECTURE



Scattered unevenly about the city, easily overlooked among more monumental neighbors, the buildings on these pages have little to do with the familiar images of present-day Washington. Taken together, in fact, they and others like them make up another Washington of their own: the capital of the small, still-struggling 19th century America. Designed with more bravado than confidence, they are buildings of definite personality, expressed most strongly in lofty and exuberant interior spaces. Those whose image of Washington is composed of Beaux Arts temples in parklike settings tend to find this individuality disconcerting.

As a result, all of these buildings have been in and out of trouble over the years. A downtown business group has agitated to have the Patent Office, shown on the preceding page, replaced with a parking lot. Schemes have been put forth for camouflaging the Pension Building (above) and the State, War, and Navy building with Beaux Arts shrouds. The Walsh mansion is in the path of a proposed eight-lane expressway. The railroads cannot even give away Union Station—the city will not take it.

It is inaction more than action that has prevented this Washington from vanishing. Most of the buildings are governmental or closely related to government, and the mood of Congress, at least where appropriations for Washington architecture are concerned, seems to alternate between lethargy and petulance. It takes money even to tear down a building.

As time passes, these buildings simply become less and less a part of the living city. Various agencies take turns trying to use the stubbornly impressive spaces, and then move on. Few have ever looked at them as architecture.

WARREN COX

PHOTOGRAPHED FOR FORUM BY GEORGE CSERNA



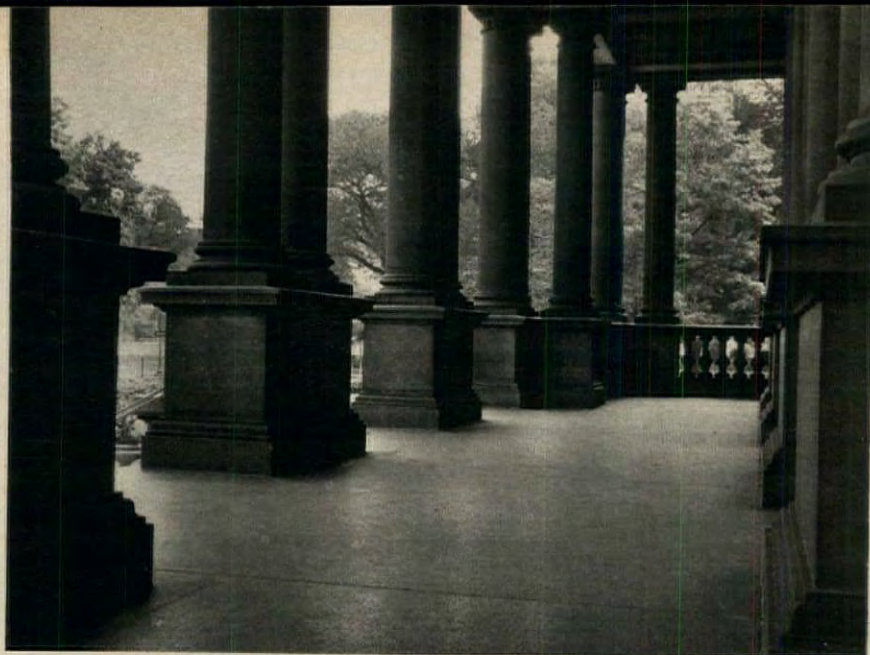


Tucked away on a side street in the monumental city is Washington's version of the Palazzo Farnese: the Pension Building. Around it runs a frieze, not unlike that of the Parthenon in cowboy garb, depicting various aspects of life in the Union Army (left). The interior is essentially one room 300 feet long, 100 feet wide, and 120 feet high (above) that was scene of the inaugural balls of Presidents Cleveland, Harrison, McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and Taft. The building, designed by Gen. M. C. Meigs, was constructed in 1883 for the dispensing of pensions to widows and orphans of Union veterans. The Pension Office merged with the Veterans' Administration and moved out in 1926, and the great hall was tried for a while by the General Accounting Office and the Defense Production Administration. Now, cut into cubicles beneath a lighting grid, it houses part of the Civil Service Commission.





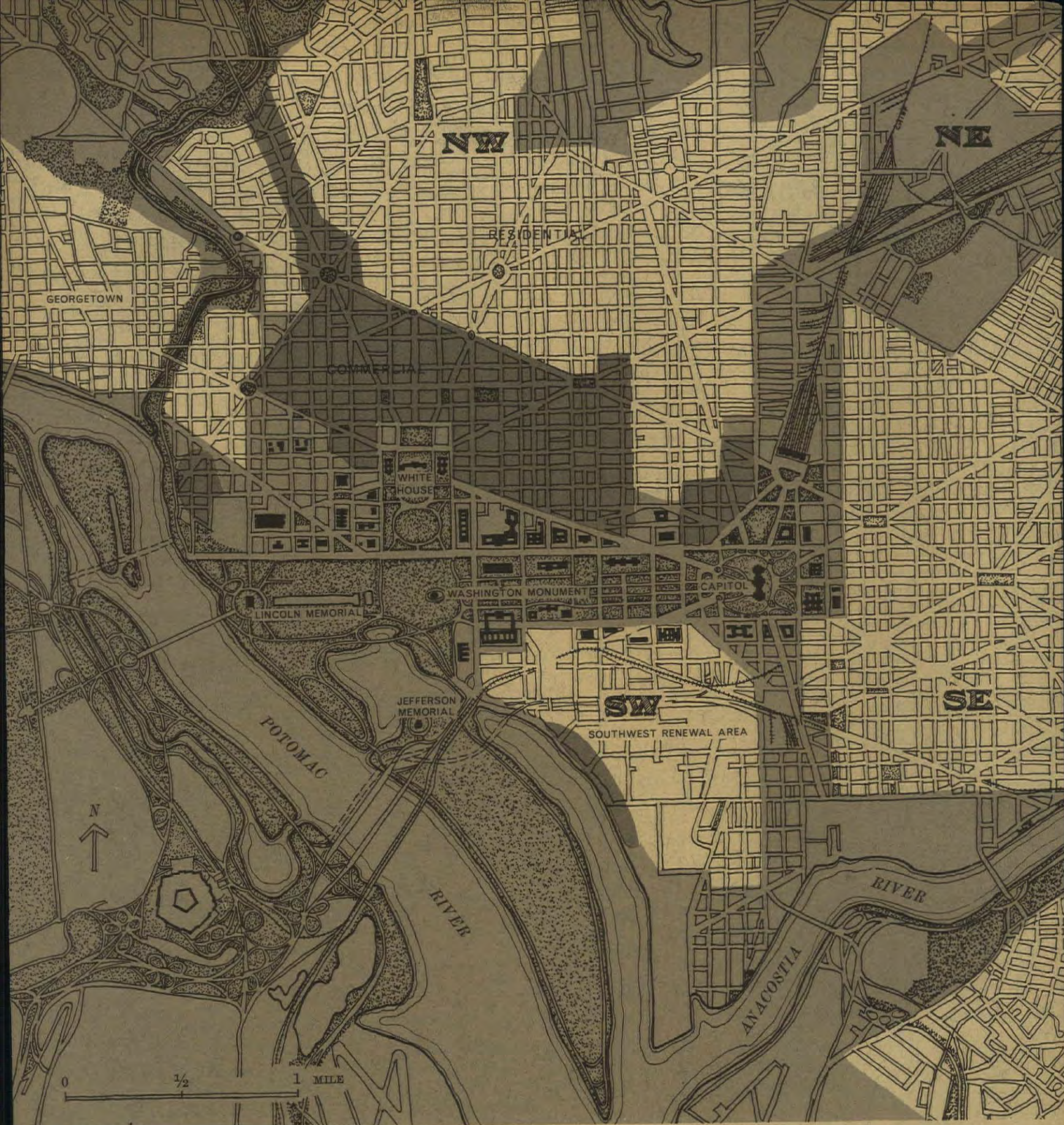
The Walsh Mansion (above) and the Court of Claims (left) exemplify two kinds of luck. When Thomas Francis Walsh, a poor Irish carpenter, had the good luck to strike gold in Colorado, he built what was reputedly the most expensive house in Washington. Sixty rooms are piled around the vast stair hall, and a slab of gold ore is buried in the front porch. Designed by Henry Andersen in 1885, it is now the chancery of the Indonesian Embassy. The luck of the Court of Claims building was all bad. James Renwick designed it for the Corcoran Art Gallery in 1859, but the government moved in when the Civil War broke out. By the time Corcoran got the building back 14 years later, it was too small for the collection and was shortly made the Court of Claims. Even now the building is only temporarily under reprieve from demolition: its wood-framed mansard roof, not fireproof, may prove its downfall.





It took 22 years to build the old State, War and Navy Building, and when finally completed in 1893 it was for a brief time the largest office building in the world. Even so it has persistently proved too small for its occupants: Navy, War, and finally the State Department each in turn has moved out for lack of space. Regularly threatened with destruction, it has survived to become the Executive Office Building. The exterior, somewhat pale after a recent scouring, is a familiar sight on Pennsylvania Avenue, but behind the 900 Doric columns are some surprises. At each corner a heroic cantilevered stairway spirals down from the oculus of a coffered dome (left), and, buried within the vastness of the old interior, is a library (above), a perforated fantasy of cast iron. On the following page is D. H. Burnham's mighty Union Station, its facade a great loggia flanked by seemingly never ending arcades.





THE OTHER CITY

2

To the 764,000 people who live in Washington, the picture-postcard city known to tourists is a far cry from reality. "This city," said the League of Women Voters last June, "is the distress of its residents and the frustration of its officials." No other city in the U.S. is experiencing so massive an exodus of whites to the suburbs (the Negro population has jumped from 35 per cent to 56 per cent in a decade). And Southern Congressmen, who function as the city's council, exploit this potentially explosive situation: they have kept municipal services to a minimum (the federal government, which owns half the land in the District, supplies only 10 per cent of the city's budget); they have managed to stifle most rational planning; and they have helped to reinforce residential segregation.

Despite all this, the city has, somehow, come up with one of the nation's best urban renewal projects (see map), and seems determined, at last, to dress up its shabby downtown area. Moreover, the White House has begun to exert some effective leadership. All this is good news; it would be better news if there were some evidence of massive support from Congress.



THE OTHER WASHINGTON: A NEGRO MAJORITY IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY

The best-known fact about Washington is no longer the height of the Washington Monument (555 feet) or the year that the Senators last won the pennant (1933). As any Washington school child can tell you, the best-known fact is that Washington is the nation's largest city with a Negro majority—about 56 per cent of the city's population. Public school children are particularly apt to know this, for over 83 per cent of them are Negroes.

Washington's Negro majority was created largely by the departure of 172,000 white persons from the city between 1950 and 1960, and the coincident growth of the Negro population by about 131,000. Nearly 60 per cent of this latter growth was from natural increase, the rest from in-migration mostly from the Deep South. The white population, for its part, fled to the suburbs, where the Negro population declined in the decade from 9 per cent of the total to 6 per cent.

Despite the dispersion of the Negro population throughout the central area of the city as a result of this change in residence, and despite a decade of court decisions, legislation, and regulations designed to end various types of segregation, it has been said that "the decade concluded with a more rigid pattern of racial separation than when it began." This is particularly true of the housing pattern, although Negroes themselves believe there has not been much progress in job opportunities either, outside the federal government.

But housing segregation is the most obvious physical manifestation of a city divided by race, and it is the toughest remaining problem in the drive for equal opportunities.

Washington, as one Negro leader puts it, is "desegregated but not integrated." White families have left just about every section of the city—except the vast area west of Rock Creek Park, and a few sections just to the east of the park. The "great white wedge," as it might be called today (see map, page 82), has a population that is less than 3 per cent Negro, in a city where almost every other census tract is at least one-third Negro and many are over 90 per cent Negro. And it is kept white not only because it has a concentration of high-priced homes (Negroes have already moved into some formerly white areas in other parts of the city where housing was just as expensive).

Early in 1962, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights heard evidence proving that the white wedge is kept white by restrictive covenants, even though illegal and unenforceable,

and through the concerted efforts of real estate brokers and mortgage bankers. As the committee's final report said, "One thing seems certain: Without cooperation by and among the members of the housing industry, there could be little discrimination in housing."

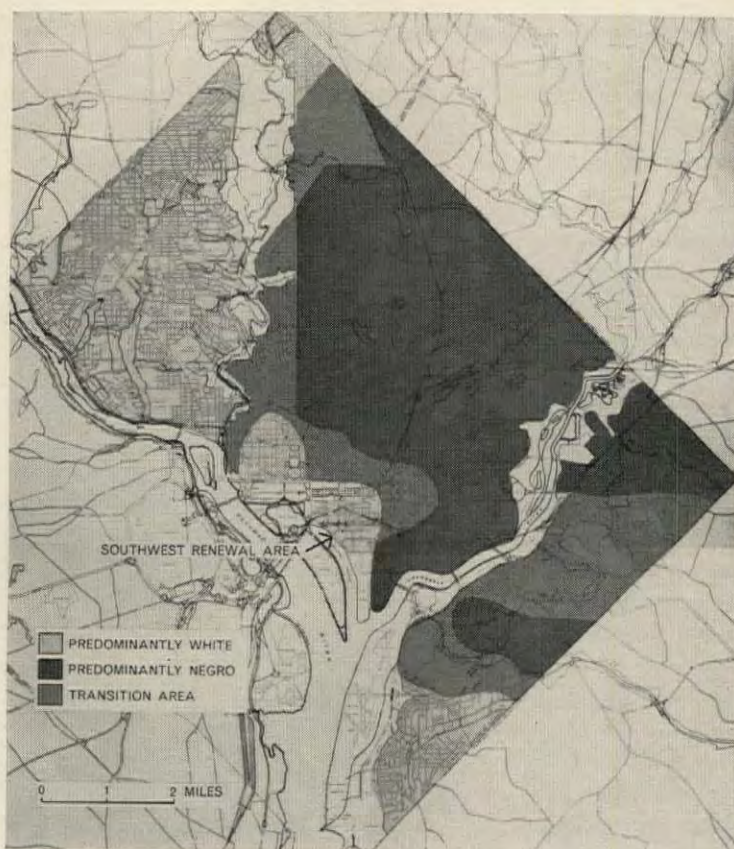
The Commission's hearings turned up much other evidence of housing bias in the District—and in its suburbs.

It cited surveys made in connection with the search for housing for nonwhite diplomats: a canvass of apartments, for example, turned up only eight out of 211 owners who would definitely accept African diplomats. And a later survey indicated that resistance to Africans had actually increased. State Department officials testified that this sort of resistance did great damage to the U.S. image, particularly because the city involved was the capital. The most telling testimony came from an African diplomat: "There is something about American policy which cannot be explained. It cuts through all your policy—it is the contradiction between what you say and what you do. . . . On the one hand, ideals are pitched very high, while on the other, behavior is pitched very low. With never ending talk of equality there is flagrant racial discrimination—we don't trust this country."

The Commission found that housing opportunities for Negroes had expanded vastly in the District (while they had simultaneously declined in the suburbs). However, the Commission added that "free housing choice does not exist in the District and nonwhites are largely confined to the least desirable housing." There has been little building of new housing for Negroes in the city; and mortgage credit is plentiful for Negroes only if they intend to buy in Negro neighborhoods, or where there is evidence that the racial character of the neighborhood has already changed—generally because of the flight of whites. The Commission found, also, that this flight was accelerated through "blockbusting" by some realtors.

Perhaps the most important conclusion that emerged from the Commission's work is that Washington's housing segregation problem is basically a metropolitan or regional problem, rather than one that the city proper can handle alone. As Housing and Home Finance Administrator Robert Weaver put it: "Until suburban areas are also opened up to all elements of the population, we shall continue to suffer from too great concentrations of ethnic groups in too small a sector of the metropolitan area."

Unhappily, Washington's suburbs bristle with all the safeguards that protect the white wedge of Northwest and, in addition, have a much greater proportion of Southern whites, many of whom have left the District because of "the Negro invasion." Counties such as Arlington and Fairfax, in Virginia,



are bulwarks of racist sentiment, which is reflected in the Congressional committees having jurisdiction over the city.

To help create open occupancy throughout the region, the Civil Rights Commission recommended that the National Capital Regional Planning Council "establish a standing committee on minority housing problems to assure that the rights of minority groups are protected in regional plans. . . ." Aside from many other considerations, city leaders consider it imperative to provide a metropolitan-wide open-occupancy policy to help in the securing of further public housing sites. The District has little vacant land, and the housing authority plans to build only 1,100 more dwelling units, while it has demand for over 7,500 more. As Urban League Executive Director Sterling Tucker says, "It is foolish to consider any planning that does not take into consideration the closed housing market of the suburbs."

The Civil Rights Commission also recommended that the District Commission issue an order banning all discrimination in housing, and that they enforce this by revoking real estate brokers' licenses if necessary. Last month, the District Commissioners held open hearings on the issuance of such an order, after their City Counsel had ruled that they had the au-

thority to do so. However, the order probably will not be issued until some means can be found to mollify the members of the House District Committee, who reportedly have instructed the Commissioners not to pass such a regulation.

The power of a minority of rurally oriented Southern Congressmen who run the House District Committee is the chief force for the preservation of segregation and prejudice in the District. Their only local support has been a consistently dwindling group, headed by the Board of Trade. This group, representing the conservative business interests of the city, has battled against all proposals for giving the District's citizens a chance to elect their own representatives. Despite a strong majority—including the Negro community—in favor of home rule, the House District Committee has entombed every such measure, including this year's, which had passed the Senate. The Committee has also prevented the appointment of more judges to the Juvenile Court, and generally worked to keep federal payments toward the District budget at a minimum. On practically every issue that comes before them, the Southern bloc controlling the Committee seems to act from segregationist motives. This is why John B. Duncan, Washington's first Negro District Commissioner, says wearily, "The race problem pervades practically every issue that arises in the city."

Despite the obstacles erected by the House District Committee, and the difficulties imposed by housing discrimination, Washington's Negro community is gradually emerging as a strong force for city leadership. As Commissioner Duncan says, "There has been, in recent years, a great increase in citizen activity and interest in city affairs among Negroes." Duncan himself is perhaps the prime example—a long-time civil servant, resident of the city, and leader in urban affairs. He is credited with generating a relatively high degree of Negro participation in the United Fund, in the face of some truculence that the fund did not do enough for Negroes. He has won the respect of the white community, yet he is not regarded as a "white man's Negro."

Race relations in Washington have generally been peaceful in the period of the great population shift, much more so than in northern cities like Detroit or New York. Howard University Sociologist G. Franklin Edwards has suggested some reasons for this "soft" pattern:

1. There are no strong industrial unions in the city, and government is the largest employer. ("There was no aggressive organization in which workers could become identified in fighting for rights and benefits . . . thus, one source of conflict was absent," says Professor Edwards.)

2. "The absence of home rule has meant that political pressures could not be applied effectively to advance minority

interests." With no possibility of political pressures, race relations have been "dominated and controlled by the committees of Congress, which in effect govern the District."

3. And the "Negro middle class did not produce extremely race-conscious leaders." This has been due to a high degree of social mobility and to the fact that the Washington Negro middle class "is a very conservative group."

Washington's Negro community is generally richer (its median income is \$4,800 vs. \$3,000 nationwide), has a lower job turnover, and is generally better educated than Negro communities in other cities. It also has a rich tradition, stretching back to the days when Benjamin Banneker, a Negro mathematician, helped L'Enfant lay out the city.

The generally conservative nature of the Negro community has not prevented the emergence of strong Negro leadership, and a growing awareness of its potential political strength. As Professor Edwards says, "the Negro has become more aggressive as gains in civil rights are experienced." Negroes are well represented in both political parties in the District, and Edwards says that "it is not unreasonable to predict that an even larger number will become involved in the future." This trend has been accelerated by the chance to vote in Presidential elections (in 1964) and will grow greatly with home rule.

Professor Edwards believes the very fact that Negroes want to be involved is important, and that politics provides a key meeting ground for Negroes and whites. Without the aid of white liberal groups, Edwards does not believe that the Negro community could have made nearly the progress it has.

Edwards obviously believes that the "soft" image of Washington's Negro leadership will soon harden up. "Pressures are building up," he says, "for more forthright attacks on equal employment opportunities and for open occupancy in housing," and he adds that "even with its background of success in avoiding violence, it is too much to hope that this community can continue to do so without some conflict." The Thanksgiving Day riot at a high-school football game might be a manifestation of long-suppressed emotions.

There is little doubt that Washington still has a long way to go before it becomes a truly integrated city, either in its physical living pattern or in its social fabric. If some observers, like Edwards, foresee violence, there is also encouraging evidence that nonviolent progress is still being made in the city. For instance, the new Southwest community is Washington's first truly integrated neighborhood. Developers have stuck to an open-occupancy policy, even though rentals were slow at first. Now Town Center has 27 per cent Negro occupancy, and 10 per cent of the Capitol Park townhouses,

expensive by District standards, are occupied by Negroes.

There are other hopeful signs in housing. In the Northwest, near the very area where the blockbusters contributed most to the flight of white families, a group called Neighbors, Inc. is trying valiantly to maintain a racially balanced neighborhood. And there are already areas near Rock Creek Park which have received Negro home owners without the coincident departure of white families in the numbers previously experienced.

A study of future housing patterns by the Urban League indicates that the areas immediately east of the Park could become truly integrated by 1980 (at which time the Negro population is expected to have stabilized at about two-thirds of the total). And another survey, by George Nesbitt and Marian P. Yankauer, indicates that the city has considerable potential for completely desegregating housing within the next decade or so. Their reasons are that: 1) Washington's Negro middle class is gaining in income, education, and job opportunities; 2) there are already many units within the economic reach of these families; 3) the area has a high mobility, with persons constantly on the move; 4) despite reluctance to make loans to Negroes for housing in predominantly white areas, bankers are nevertheless making more loans in transition areas, some of which could be truly integrated; and 5) government, local and federal, can use much greater influence to promote housing integration.

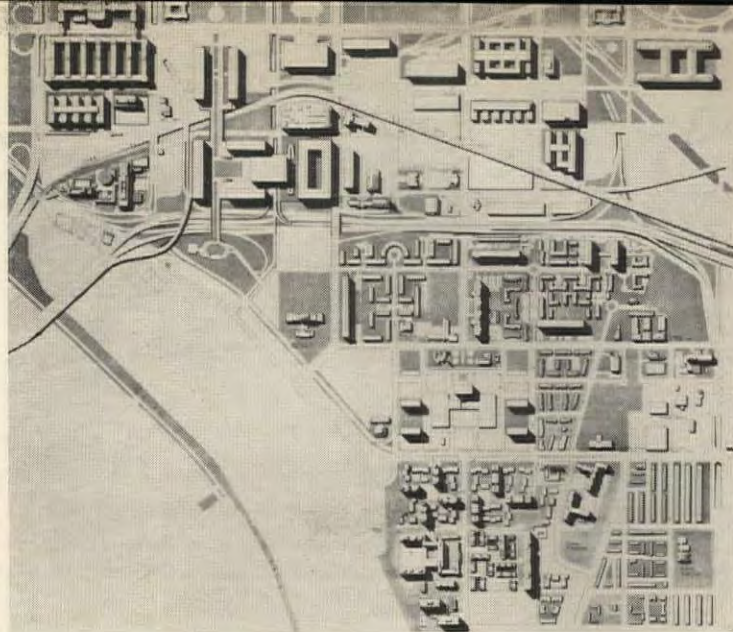
Even aside from the possible effects of the President's order banning bias in federally aided housing (and much of the District's suburban housing is FHA financed), the survey makes clear that other governmental devices, such as planning for integrated communities within the framework of the Year 2000 Plan, and the urban renewal operations of the Redevelopment Land Agency, can be helpful in this regard.

Progress in the Southwest and elsewhere, plus this sort of "potential," are encouraging indeed for Washington's future. But most encouraging is the growing awareness in the city that, as Historian Oscar Handlin says, "the genuine problems of social disorder in which Negroes are involved can best be solved through the development of communal institutions under responsible leadership, that will give order and purpose to their lives."

Washington's Negro community is already developing communal institutions, with responsible leadership. It needs to be matched by more responsibility on the part of Congress, the executive branch, and the white community of the whole metropolitan area in the total realization that there are no "Negro" problems—there are really only the human problems which affect them all.

DAVID B. CARLSON





SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON: FINEST URBAN RENEWAL EFFORT IN THE COUNTRY

The single most surprising fact about the 552-acre urban renewal project shown at left is that it ever got started at all. For in a city as erratically administered as Washington, D.C., such efforts seem inevitably doomed to failure.

But the Southwest not only got started, it is now about one-fifth complete in its projected residential facilities, and it will, unquestionably, be 100 per cent complete in another four or five years. Moreover, the project is a success by any number of standards—architectural, social, and economic. (And there are over twenty Congressmen already living there.) All of which adds up to one of the most unlikely, and most hopeful, stories in Washington's history.

Those slums in the shadow of the Capitol

As the nation's capital, Washington has always had a bad conscience about its slums. In 1934, the Alley Dwelling Authority was created to clean out the 200 alleys cluttered with the poorest elements of the Negro population. A few years later, *The Washington Post* ran the famous photograph that some people credit with doing more to spur redevelopment than any other event. It showed a shabby collection of shacks and outhouses in the very shadow of the U.S. Capitol. The picture was taken in the Southwest, about where the handsome Capitol Park Towers stand today (page 87).

After the end of World War II, Congress passed the District of Columbia Redevelopment Act which declared that "conditions existing in the District of Columbia with respect to substandard housing and blighted area . . . are injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and welfare" and established the Redevelopment Land Agency (RLA) to acquire slum land either by purchase or condemnation.

But, as so often happens in the District, good intentions got lost through bad administration. RLA had trouble getting started, largely because the impetus for any redevelopment

The new buildings of Southwest are already giving form to the area, despite many empty lots still to be filled. Architect Charles Goodman's nearly completed River Park project (foreground), with barrel-vault roofed townhouses and a single high-rise apartment, marks the southeastern corner of the area.

To the north (right) are I. M. Pei's graceful concrete-frame Town Center apartments, with a low, flat shopping center. Just beyond (top right) are Satterlee & Smith's Capitol Park Apartments. On the opposite page, Pei's western pair of towers loom above Harry Weese's Arena Stage (seen at the far left).

CAPITOL AIRVIEWS

project had to originate elsewhere. For unclear reasons, Congress gave the power to select redevelopment areas to the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (later the National Capital Planning Commission), which at the time was occupied with whatever it is that occupies Washington's bureaucracy when it is intent on not doing the job at hand. (In fact, the only redevelopment plans proposed by NCPPC, for two areas in the Southeast, were so vigorously opposed by residents that Congress was pressured into exempting those two areas specifically from *any* redevelopment.) This dichotomy of authority gave rise to conflicts between NCPC and RLA that exist to the present day.

RLA finally came to life with the passage of the 1949 Act, which gave it access to federal urban renewal funds without having to go through Congress. And the Planning Commission finally trained its sights on what was the most obvious choice for redevelopment in the whole city—the decayed Southwest, for over one hundred years the home of the District's poorest Negro families. By 1951, RLA finally had a staff, headed by John R. Searles, Jr., who became, more than any other single person, the force behind Southwest redevelopment.

Studies of the area proved what everyone had suspected: nearly half the dwelling units had no baths, over 20 per cent no electricity, and 43 per cent had outside toilets. More than three-quarters of all the homes in the area were classified substandard in some respect. Nearly 80 per cent of the area's residents were Negro, with the poorest of these jammed into the area which became the site of Capitol Park.

A decision in favor of beauty

Under Searles' leadership, RLA from the outset showed a strong orientation toward sound planning and good design. To obtain a plan for land use as a guide for final renewal plans, RLA hired as consultants Architects Louis Justement and Chloethiel W. Smith. The architects suggested a new residential community, a refurbished water front, and an esplanade leading from Tenth Street as the link between the new community and the rest of the city.

At about the time Architects Justement and Smith were preparing their land-use program, the planning commission was having its own consultants work on the area. Their plan called for rehabilitation of the grimy brick row houses, with a minimum of clearance—while the plan put forth by the architects, and later backed by Planner Harland Bartholomew, called for almost complete clearance and the erection of at least 5,000 new homes and apartments. This was, basically, the proposal followed, although the actual planning changed greatly over the years that followed.

The area to be cleared first was the worst in Southwest, a 77-acre slum where 5,000 persons, almost all Negro, lived in abysmal squalor. But before RLA could start to acquire land, two small department-store owners from the area tried to block the entire renewal program, and made RLA battle them all the way to the Supreme Court.

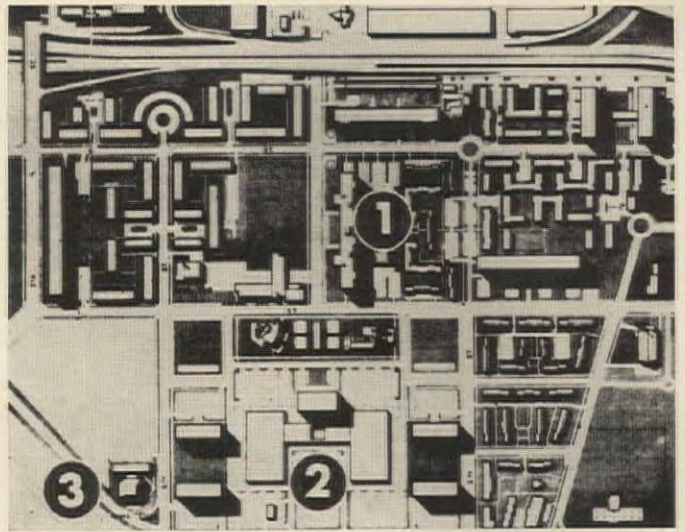
RLA won its case: in one of the most crucial decisions of its history (*Berman v. Parker*), the Court ruled that "it is within the power of the legislature to determine that the community should be beautiful as well as healthy, spacious as well as clean, well-balanced as well as carefully patrolled. . . . If those who govern the District of Columbia decide that the Nation's Capital should be beautiful as well as sanitary, there is nothing in the Fifth Amendment that stands in the way. . . ." And Justice Douglas, in the majority opinion, provided the foundation for all subsequent redevelopment: "The entire area needed redesigning so that a balanced, integrated plan could be developed for the region. . . . In this way it was hoped that the cycle of decay could be controlled and the birth of future slums prevented."

A plan appears—with a developer

Despite Justice Douglas' trenchant remarks, the Southwest at this time did not really have a "balanced, integrated plan." In fact, RLA had been proceeding, through most of 1953, without any overall sort of plan at all. And, local architects, builders, and businessmen were already getting leery of going further without some sort of plan; in November of that year they called for "bolder and more imaginative planning in Southwest to accommodate the highest and best use of the area."

Shortly thereafter, a plan appeared, prepared by Architect I. M. Pei for Developer William Zeckendorf, who had already put in a bid for the 77-acre Area B site. It was a formidable plan, encompassing the whole 427 acres not included in Area B; and it elaborated in great detail on the earlier notions of Justement and Smith. For one thing, Pei turned the Tenth Street Esplanade into a grand 300-foot-wide mall, with an open space to be called L'Enfant Plaza, fronting new office buildings. The mall would provide access to Southwest, and would also serve to bring the public uses of the Mall into the Southwest area, providing, among other things, a strong basis for intensive commercial development.

The width of the mall, plus trees which would line its edges, also visually overcame one of the toughest problems in Southwest—the 30-foot-high railroad embankment that separates the area from the rest of the city. (This has since been joined by a freeway, and these two arteries now form a great barrier



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ROBERT C. LAUTMAN



Southwest's pioneer buildings, Capitol Park towers (above) and townhouses (right) by Satterlee & Smith, and Town Center (left) by I. M. Pei & Associates, are the first new housing to be finished. Another 319 townhouses and 328 apartment units will be built within the next 18 months in Capitol Park, and Town Center's four towers will be joined by at least one high-rise office-apartment building. Southwest's most unusual building, the Arena Stage (below) by Harry Weese, leads the way toward a new urbanity for Southwest—and for the District of Columbia.

1.

ROBERT C. LAUTMAN



NORMAN MCCRATH

2.



3.

between Southwest and the city proper. Pei's Tenth Street mall, unhappily, seems to have been severely compromised by the placement of FOB #5 on the Mall—see page 61.

Pei also proposed a cultural center, but that has since been shifted to the Potomac river front in Foggy Bottom. The mall was also tied strongly into a revitalized water-front area, as had been proposed by Justement and Smith. Formal residential squares, with high-rise apartments and townhouses, were laid out in the Pei plan.

The Pei plan was as close to a really comprehensive development plan as the Southwest has ever had. It became the basis for future Southwest development, even when it was not followed in its entirety, and even when its urbane principles were lost in a concern with "variety" and economies.

An understanding and a controversy

Zeckendorf's bold proposal to redevelop almost all of Southwest so impressed the RLA that they signed the famous "Memorandum of Understanding" with Webb & Knapp. Under the terms of this, Webb & Knapp would pursue its studies of land use, traffic, and site planning for Area C, as the area was called, for another year (which was later extended by six more months). In return, RLA committed itself to the Tenth Street mall idea, with L'Enfant Plaza, no matter what other plans it might adopt. It also agreed not to negotiate with any other developer for Area C over the full 18-month period. Webb & Knapp would get first crack at half of Area C, at least, and be in a prime position to negotiate for the whole parcel.

The deal with Zeckendorf, whatever its merits in terms of comprehensive planning by a single responsible developer, caused quite a stir in the city. Local developers claimed they were being discriminated against, although none of them had ever appeared willing to do the sort of planning done by Webb & Knapp. When the time finally came to sell the first chunk of Area C real estate, Builder Morris Cafritz, who had not previously displayed an interest in Southwest, unexpectedly offered \$3 per square foot for the land after RLA had agreed to accept \$2.50 from Zeckendorf. RLA rejected the Cafritz bid, and Zeckendorf bought the land for Town Center. Town Center was to contain four apartment buildings of 128 units each, plus townhouses. The center is now built, and contains the only major shopping facilities in the whole Southwest. (Zeckendorf's total monopoly on shopping has broken down somewhat, however, because the Town Center shopping center was not finished in time to serve James Scheuer's Capitol Park Towers. These opened in the summer of 1959 with several small shops in the basement.) It is already

obvious, however, that more shopping will be needed south of M Street. And the RLA is currently pressing Zeckendorf to build more apartments and offices in Town Center.

Land disposition by design competition

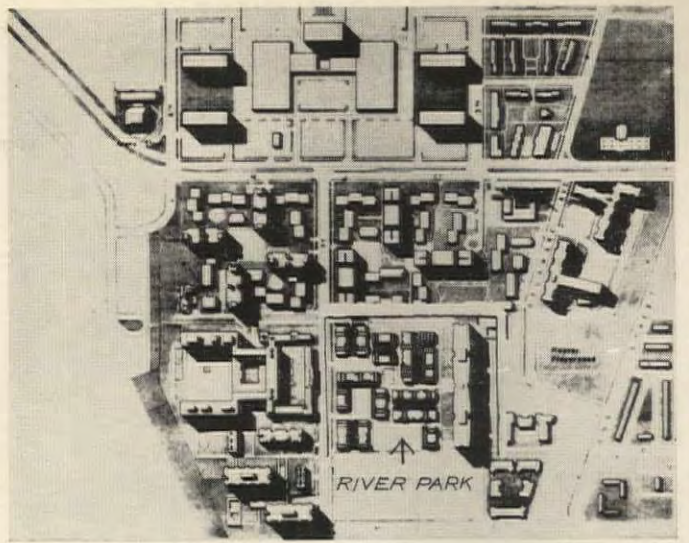
With major segments of Southwest spoken for, RLA went back to one of its early guides, Architect Chloethiel Smith, for a plan of the land south of M Street. Mrs. Smith delineated eight major project areas, saving several historic houses in the area, and RLA embarked on what is, in many respects, the most significant aspect of its Southwest activity.

Under Searles' leadership, RLA decided to dispose of as much of this land as possible by means of design competitions, with the land price taken out of consideration entirely. RLA simply set a land price, based upon its own appraisals, and then invited proposals from all qualified developers. Juries, operating under AIA competition regulations, selected winners of four projects in this fashion, including the Portal Site project, a commercial development for a triangular parcel near L'Enfant Plaza (see map). These competitions may represent the most successful attempts yet made to insure first-rate architecture under an urban renewal program, and they have excited a great deal of local builder interest.

Needed: more centralization of authority

The success of Southwest has not come easily, nor is it yet completely assured. Getting anything built at all has been tremendously difficult. The Capitol Park development took two and a half years to get under construction, after the first developer selected by RLA had to be replaced because FHA refused his request for mortgage insurance. Like other urban renewal projects, Southwest has been plagued by paper wars with FHA, HHFA, and other agencies, involving mortgage financing, loans and grants, and planning. The securing of mortgage insurance for Capitol Park consumed two years, and a dispute over the townhouses held up their construction an additional ten months. Nearly ten years elapsed between the time Area B was originally designated for clearance, and the opening of the first unit. Despite his acumen, Zeckendorf, too, got entangled in red tape, as his mortgage insurance negotiations with FHA took four years.

Delays like this, coupled with local criticism and the continuing tangle of RLA with the District Commissioners, NCPC, and Congress, led to a special study of the renewal program by the Federal City Council in 1961. This study was prompted in part by Congressional criticism of the Southwest program, which culminated in a bill which would have prevented any further renewal action anywhere in the city



ROBERT C. LAUTMAN



HAY KOMAI



Southwest's newest housing, the River Park cooperatives, already have some families living in the barrel-vault roofed townhouses. These are aimed at middle-income families (the houses cost \$1,300 down plus \$167 a month for two bedrooms). Designed by Charles Goodman for Reynolds Aluminum Service Corp., River Park's metal grills clash somewhat with the masonry façades that mark present and future projects to be built nearby (see page 91). The black-framed high-rise tower bulks over the houses, with their intricately patterned aluminum façades (see detail, right). The tower has 384 units, and there are 134 houses, with small yards. Some of the houses have balconies and there are even alleys, somewhat reminiscent of those of the old Southwest.

NORMAN MCGRATH



until at least half of Southwest was finished. In any effort to preserve the overall program by streamlining its administration, FCC recommended that renewal be directly controlled by the District Commissioners. FCC also recommended that NCPC's role be limited to an advisory one, as in most cities, and that RLA be merged with the public housing authority of the city, so that all phases of slum clearance would be consolidated in a single agency. Finally, FCC stressed that Congress should amend the city's redevelopment act to take into account recent revisions of federal law.

This effort at streamlining has not borne fruit to date, but there is considerable local support for it. As with most such attempts at simplifying the bureaucratic machinery, the final word will come from Congress, where there has been less than wholehearted support for the District renewal effort.

In the face of this obstruction, and in the light of a general indifference by the District commissioners themselves, it is indeed remarkable that there is a new Southwest, and even more remarkable that it has considerable architectural significance. Much credit for the latter must go to Searles himself, now the executive director of the Metropolitan Development Corp. of Syracuse, N.Y., and to the work of local architects like Chloethiel Smith, who did so much to shape the area. Fortunately, Searles' successor, Phil A. Doyle, former head of Chicago's Land Clearance Agency, shows a similar respect for good architecture. Doyle last month announced that he had appointed a panel of three architects (including Hideo Sasaki, a recent appointee to the Fine Arts Commission) to "be used as advisors on siting and design problems." The panel will review plans for several sites in the northern portion

of Southwest, and for the remainder of Town Center. One of its functions will be to assure a higher degree of architectural unity than has been achieved to date.

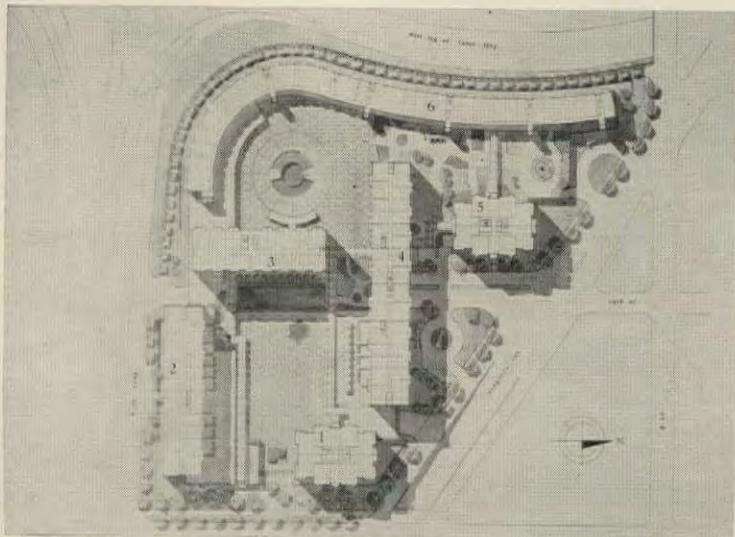
The newly appointed architectural panel was established partly to answer the criticism that many of the new projects in Southwest are not very well related to one another. As Planner Carl Feiss, a juror of one competition, has said, "Southwest is the most dramatic grouping of unrelated residential architecture in the U.S." Feiss believes, as do others, that the Southwest's chief drawback is that it never had a formal, cohesive plan for overall development, with each parcel designed in relation specifically to its neighbors. Pei himself says flatly that the area's greatest failing is "its total lack of any urban design controls."

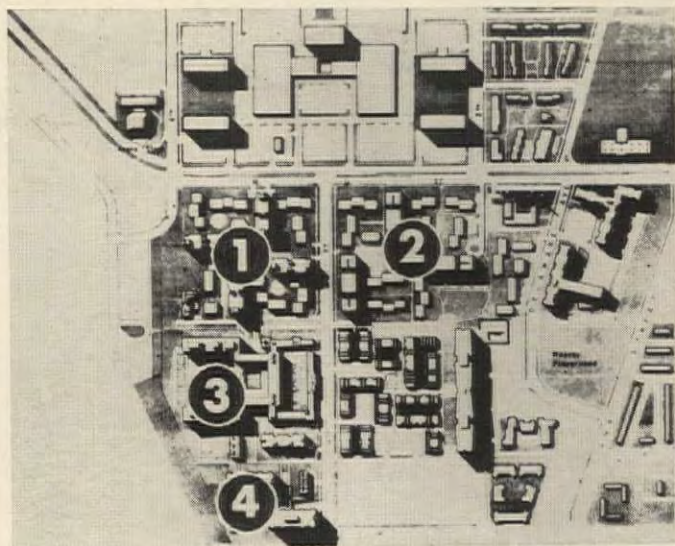
The focus shifts from Southwest

Until recently, practically all of Washington's urban renewal effort has been in the Southwest. Now, RLA must begin to take a much closer look at the rest of the city. This will mean changes in RLA attitudes: for one thing, there will probably not be another clearance effort even approaching the scope of the Southwest. The Adams-Morgan project, in a peculiarly mixed area of Northwest, will involve no more than 20 per cent clearance; the rest will be rehabilitation. The Columbia Plaza project, all that is left of an ambitious scheme to redevelop Foggy Bottom, will be clearance, but the site is small. Columbia Plaza will contain a hotel and apartments (see plan, left). Two of the city's worst areas, flanking North Capitol Street, are in varying stages of relocation, acquisition and planning.

In the shift in emphasis from Southwest to other parts of the city, and from clearance to rehabilitation and conservation, Washington is in an enviable position. It has cleared its worst slums, and will soon be realizing tax revenues from Southwest eight times greater than what the area used to return. Its housing inventory is generally in good shape, although there is a desperate need for more public housing.

What is most needed, however, is the sort of administrative overhaul recommended by FCC—the centralization of authority to make renewal technique more flexible in terms of the city's current needs. The city is now preparing a comprehensive Community Renewal Program, which represents a first opportunity to develop a city-wide renewal plan. One obvious job to be done: press for Congressional action on the bill to earmark the whole downtown area for redevelopment (see page 96), so that the city's skilled group of renewal technicians can help upgrade what is fast becoming Washington's worst slum.





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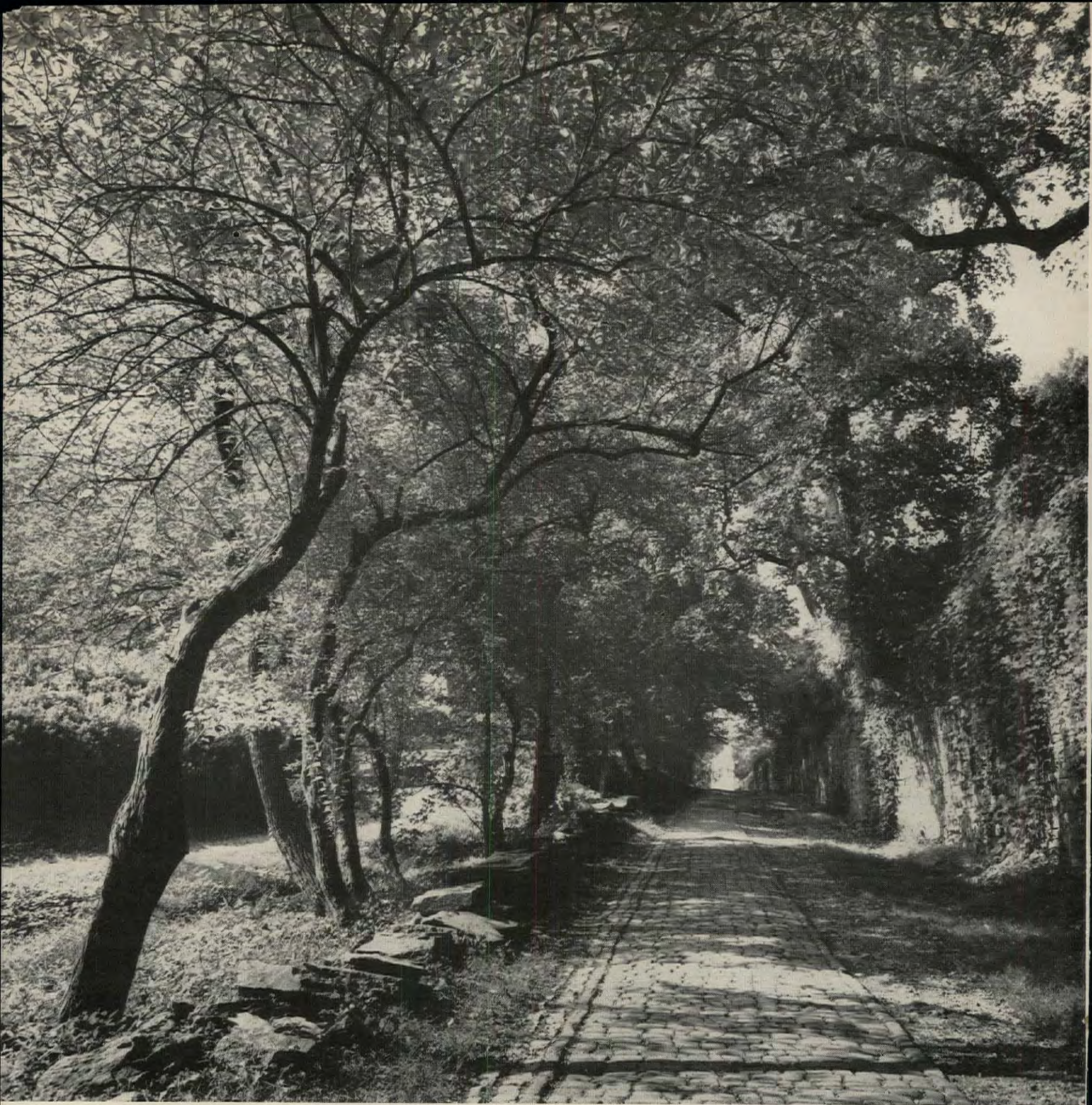
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Southwest's future buildings comprise new housing for the area south of M Street and a hotel-office building complex (lower right) designed by Morris Lapidus, Harle & Liebman for a site at the District end of 14th Street bridge. Like three of the other four shown here, it is the winner in a design competition. The two designs above, for 752 apartments and 214 townhouses, are by Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon, while the smaller (246 apartments, 44 houses) project (right) was also won by the Lapidus group. At left is Satterlee & Smith's design for a cooperative project (totaling 447 units) for a site near the waterfront, which will also be redeveloped. The project will be built around three existing old houses.





GEORGE CBERNA

"One of these days this will be a very great city if nothing happens to it. Even now it is a beautiful one, and its situation is superb."

—Henry Adams in 1877.

WASHINGTON: OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

It is still a beautiful city. If the architecture is often sadly lacking in quality, the city is more than redeemed by its greenery, for the final impression of Washington is not so much of buildings as of leaves, branches, and grass—a place where seasons change visibly. Here, the architecture is background; a building counts for less when filtered through a tree.

Washington is both a city in a park and an enormous and varied collection of parks in a city. The raw farmland of the site, and the generous allotment of boulevards and lawns in L'Enfant's original plan were the beginning. The slow and often nurtured growth of the city (with more municipal money spent on trees, probably, than on public transport), the low density of population, the lack of industry, have all helped. And, probably most important of all, nothing too disastrous has happened to Washington yet.

Lover's Lane (left), as it is officially known, separates Montrose Park, an English Romantic landscape, from Dumbarton Oaks, a formal Renaissance garden. Here Georgetown falls off into the forest of Rock Creek Park.

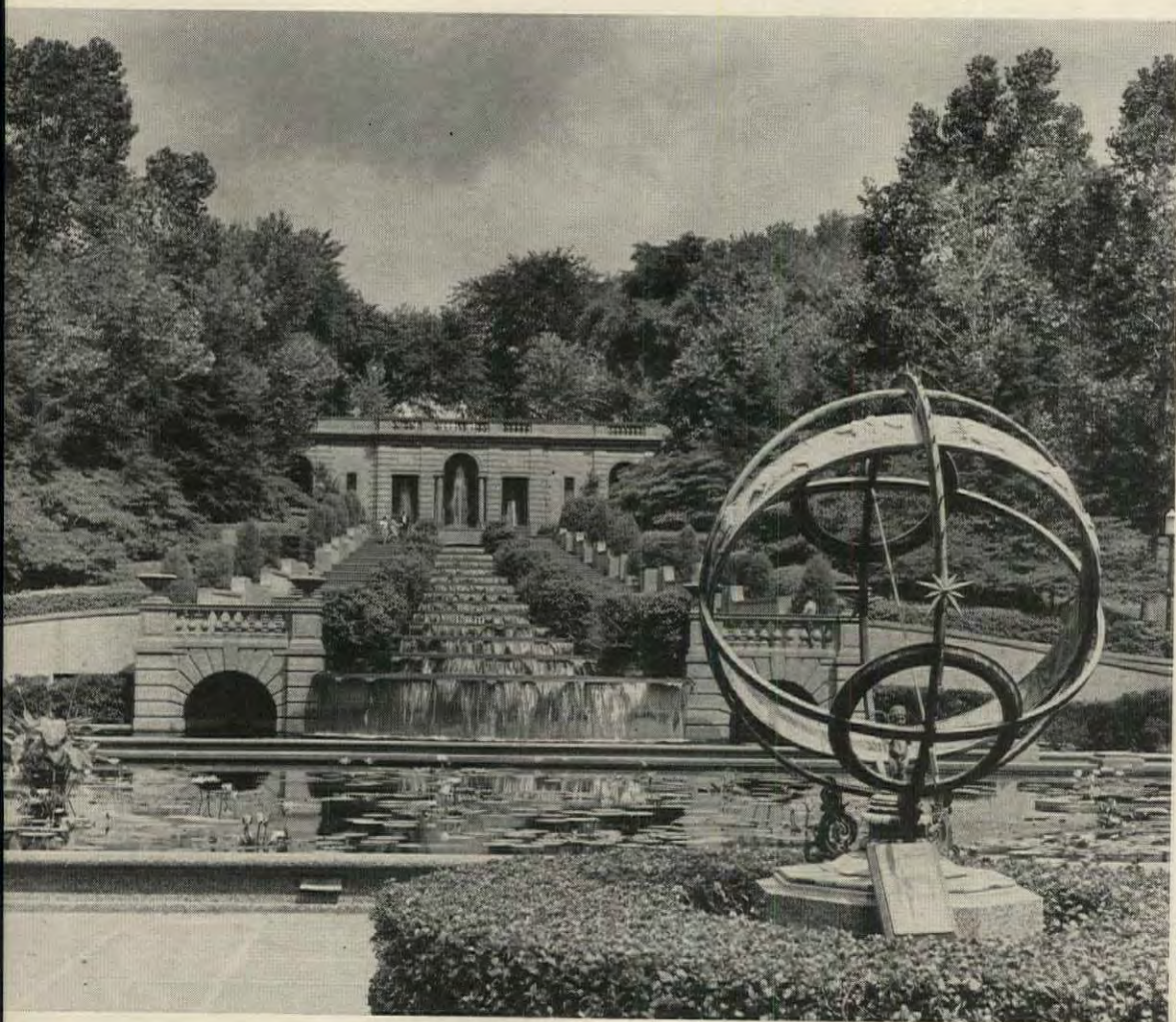


NOELMAN E. C. MCCRAY

Georgetown streets (above and right) are gardens in themselves: arcades and cloisters of leaves in the summer, and red, yellow, and orange carpets in the autumn. These are streets of flickering shadows on pastel planes. In spite of its reputation for formidable Georgian and Federal houses, Georgetown consists in the main of simple and anonymous architecture. But, when seen with its foliage, it becomes an area of great character and intimacy.



WALTER SANDER—BLACK STAR



GEORGE CRINA

Meridian Hill Park (left), Washington's Baroque garden, is a by-product of the efforts early in this century of Mrs. John B. Henderson to turn the Meridian Hill district into a center for embassies. This park and some dozen Beaux-Arts palazzos near it—many flying foreign flags—attest to the mark this good lady left on the city.



J. BURWELL

Sheridan Circle (left) is one of the intersections stemming from the radial overlay of avenues in L'Enfant's Plan. Each of these delightful traffic hazards seems—invariably and almost perversely—to corral at least one pigeon-plagued, sword-brandishing hero on horseback. Washington is one of those rare U.S. cities where taking walks is still a really widespread custom. Pedestrianism is not only possible, but popular, and there are plenty of benches on which to pause.



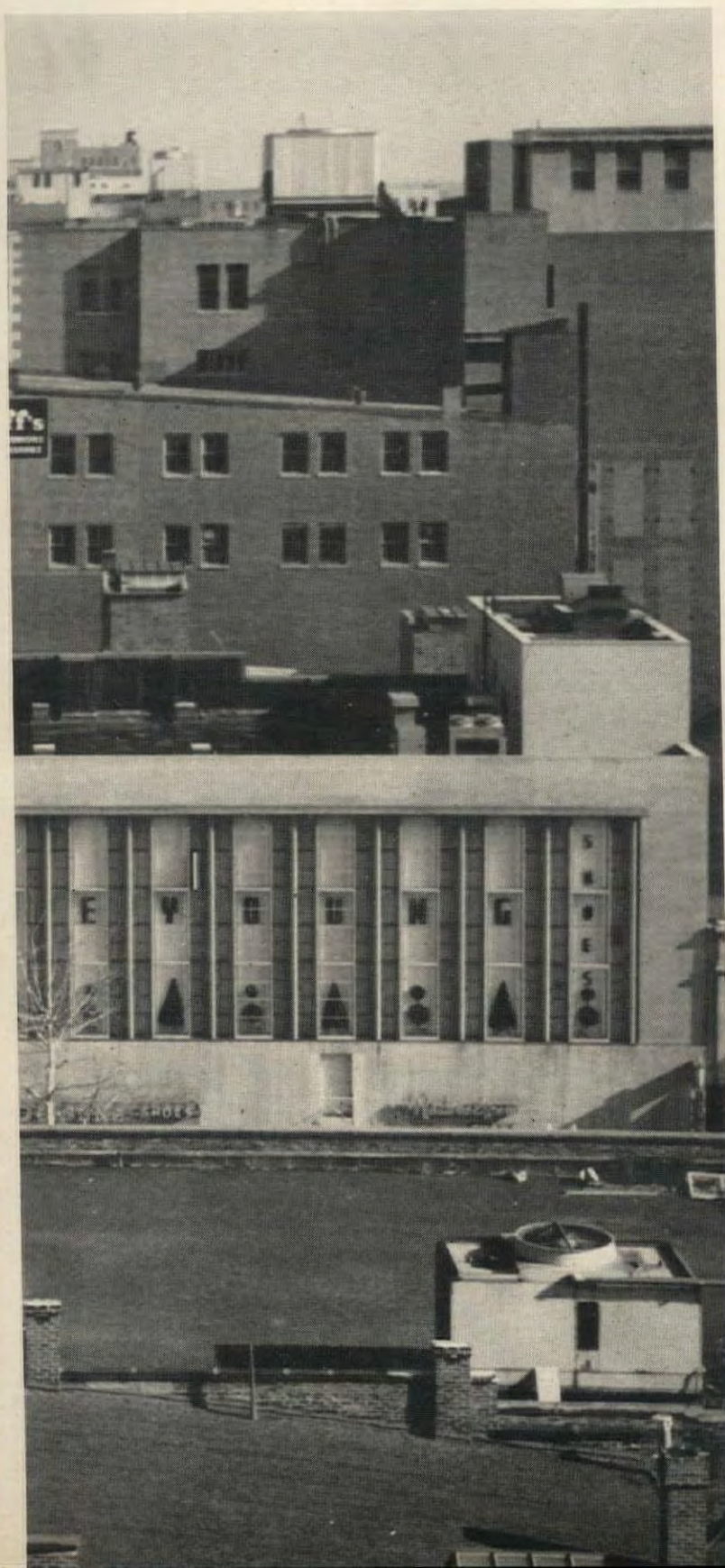
GEORGE CHERNA

The C. & O. Canal (above and right) runs from Cumberland, Md., to Washington where it slips quietly in the back door at Georgetown. Out of service since 1924, it is now a haven for canoeists, bicyclists, hikers, solitary fishermen—and, of course, for the few fortunate Washingtonians who live on its banks. Only a short section at the District end is still navigable; at \$1.25 the barge trip along the canal is well worth it.



WARREN COX





DOWNTOWN WASHINGTON: FROM ANY ANGLE, IT LOOKS LIKE NOWHERE

One of the most grievous disappointments to Washington's planners and businessmen was the failure of the Senate District Committee to approve a bill at its last session which would have made all downtown an urban renewal area. The bill was killed by fusty Senator Wayne Morse, who railed against having such a measure come along at the bitter end of the session. Obviously Morse had not been downtown lately, or he would have welcomed the measure with open arms.

The fact is that Washington's downtown is not only unworthy of the nation's capital; it would be just as unworthy of any of the state capitals, which is saying a great deal. It is a rather grubby collection of honky-tonk façades hung on the lower edges of heavy masonry structures, most of which had neither distinction nor character in the first place. "Downtown" runs only a dozen blocks or so, split up between two "major" streets, F Street and G Street. Its physical defects reflect the fact that it is declining fast as a strong retailing center—its share of metropolitan-area retail sales has dropped from 75 per cent in 1950 to 45 per cent in 1960.

By 1980, Washington's "downtown" will not sell more than 30 per cent of the region's goods.

A \$500 million plan for the future

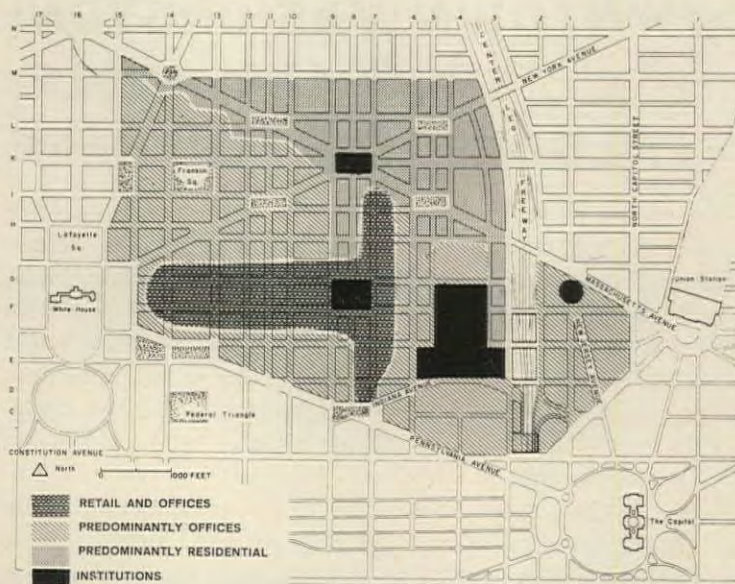
Washington's downtown businessmen have been concerned about the condition of the area and its prospects for some time. Working through a young organization called Downtown Progress, Inc., they have sponsored a move to declare the area an urban renewal site so that they will be able to use public methods of land acquisition and clearance. Downtown Progress, with its own planning staff, has already evolved a redevelopment plan for a vast 632-acre tract (see map, page 98). The plan foresees such new construction as:

► *Office space*, some 9.4 million square feet of it, over half for private employment, the rest for the 20,000 to 25,000 additional federal jobholders expected in the area by 1980.

► *Retail space*, although it will not represent a net addition, is needed mostly to replace obsolete facilities. About 2.3 million square feet additional are foreseen.

► *Hotel and motor-hotel space*, to accommodate a visitor flood expected to more than double today's 15 million annual total. About 6,400 new rooms are predicted.

► *Apartments*, now almost nonexistent in the downtown



Downtown stretches in a rough "T" from 15th Street to 7th Street (above). Downtown Progress, Inc. prescribes new construction not only in the "T" itself but throughout the shaded area, and new apartment building to the north, around Mt. Vernon Square. Below, F Street, still the "main drag," looking toward the Treasury Building.

section, will become important with public encouragement to develop 9,100 new units around Mt. Vernon Square.

The total cost of the Downtown Progress program: more than \$500 million for 143 new buildings.

To reinforce the economic potential of the plan, Downtown Progress has asked Architect-Planner Constantinos Doxiadis to redesign downtown's shopping center. Preliminary studies call for the retail area to function pretty much as a traditional suburban shopping center, with through-traffic tunneling underneath the F Street-G Street complex and parking on the center's fringes. An off-beat note is provision for a special system of internal circulation vehicles—small buses, not too unlike those that usually show up at world's fairs. One of the obvious weaknesses of the shopping center: downtown Washington has no retail "magnets" at its western boundary, and thus no means of maintaining shopper traffic along the whole length of the shopping malls.

Anything that gets people thinking is good

Downtown Progress, despite the setback suffered over the renewal bill, is optimistic, vigorous, and well-heeled (it has a kitty of \$900,000). Started as an offshoot of the powerful Federal City Council, it was initially bankrolled by the city's two largest downtown retailers, Robert Levi of the Hecht Co. and Andrew Parker of Woodward & Lothrop, Inc. There are today over 40 members of the group's board, all influential in business, politics, or both. With a first-rate planning staff and a canny and experienced executive director (Knox Banner, formerly director of Little Rock's urban renewal agency), Downtown Progress has so far excited a great deal of interest—and, as one Washington planner says, "anything that gets people thinking about downtown is good."

The trouble is, just thinking about downtown isn't going to be enough. Downtown Progress not only needs all the tools of urban renewal, it also needs more than that to induce an economic viability into the area which it has not recently had. The group is more aware of this than anyone. It recently noted that while some \$228 million of new construction had occurred in the area west of 15th Street all the way to Rock Creek Park, there has been only \$32 million worth of new building east of 15th Street—i.e., in the downtown area.

Peculiarly enough, one of the biggest obstacles to the realization of Downtown Progress' goals is Washington's incredible building boom. From 1946 to 1960 more than 6 million square feet of private office space were built in the city, almost none of it, however, in the downtown area. Since 1960, another 2.3 million square feet have come on the market, and an additional 1 million square feet are planned.





Downtown has been shifting toward the northwest, with new office building complexes at Farragut Square (above) and just west of the White House, at 17th and Pennsylvania Avenue. In this area, the critical problem is parking—as the federal government drags its feet on plans, while new building construction soaks up potential parking sites.



PHOTOS: DAVIS STUDIO

But downtown has had only one new office building since 1956 and that one is just being finished. It is relatively small—and leased (at \$5.56 per square foot) entirely to the General Services Administration. So the question is: With all this construction already up, will there be demand for another 9.4 million square feet?

A good part of the answer depends on the federal government. GSA has been a tremendous factor in Washington's boom. In the first place, the federal government owns buildings containing over 23 million square feet, and leases another 2.2 million square feet in the city itself. Much of this leased space is in old, relatively obsolete buildings in marginal locations. Therefore GSA is constantly on the prowl for space, and, needless to say, Washington office builders know it.

One market study, done for a private developer, indicates that GSA, despite its own heavy office construction program (page 60), will need at least an additional half a million square feet in the next two years.

A boom in offices and hotels

Besides the effects of GSA on office building, a great force for new construction has been the need for space by corporations and trade associations wanting to be near government. So far, at least, these groups have shown a decided preference for location on K Street, Connecticut Avenue, or around Farragut Square (see photos, left). The main reasons for their building in these areas is that land is cheaper than it is downtown (around \$60 per square foot vs. over \$100 per square foot for land on F Street), and easier to assemble. This is why Downtown Progress wants to use urban renewal land acquisition and write-down techniques; these would make downtown land more readily available.

Washington has also been experiencing a boom in new hotel and motel space, although little has been done in the downtown section until very recently, when the Madison Hotel was built at 12th and K Streets. The city continues to have one of the strongest markets for hotel space in the U.S., with an overall occupancy rate of 77 per cent.

Downtown Washington's development will depend on other factors besides a possible shift in direction of the building boom from the burgeoning Northwest. A major problem is parking, both in downtown proper and in the rest of the central city. There have been many surveys made showing various deficiencies in parking space in the city. The latest survey, by GSA, indicated that there is a shortage of at least 15,300 spaces for federal employees alone right now, and said that this shortage would grow to over 23,000 by 1971 if no action is taken. Desperate, GSA is asking for federal

JOHN BURWELL



Two of Washington's finest new structures are the Forest Industries Building (above, by Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon) and the National Geographic Society headquarters (below, by Edward Durrell Stone), both near Scott Circle. They illustrate a growing concern for architecture, a concern not yet evident among private builders.



NORMAN H. C. MCGRATH

construction to meet the need, but it is not likely to get it until the attitude of the House District Committee changes.

The committee has not only adamantly insisted that private parking interests are meeting the city's needs, but last year it destroyed the effectiveness (which was not much) of the Motor Vehicle Parking Authority, established 20 years ago to provide adequate parking for the city.

Despite problems, downtown is coming fast

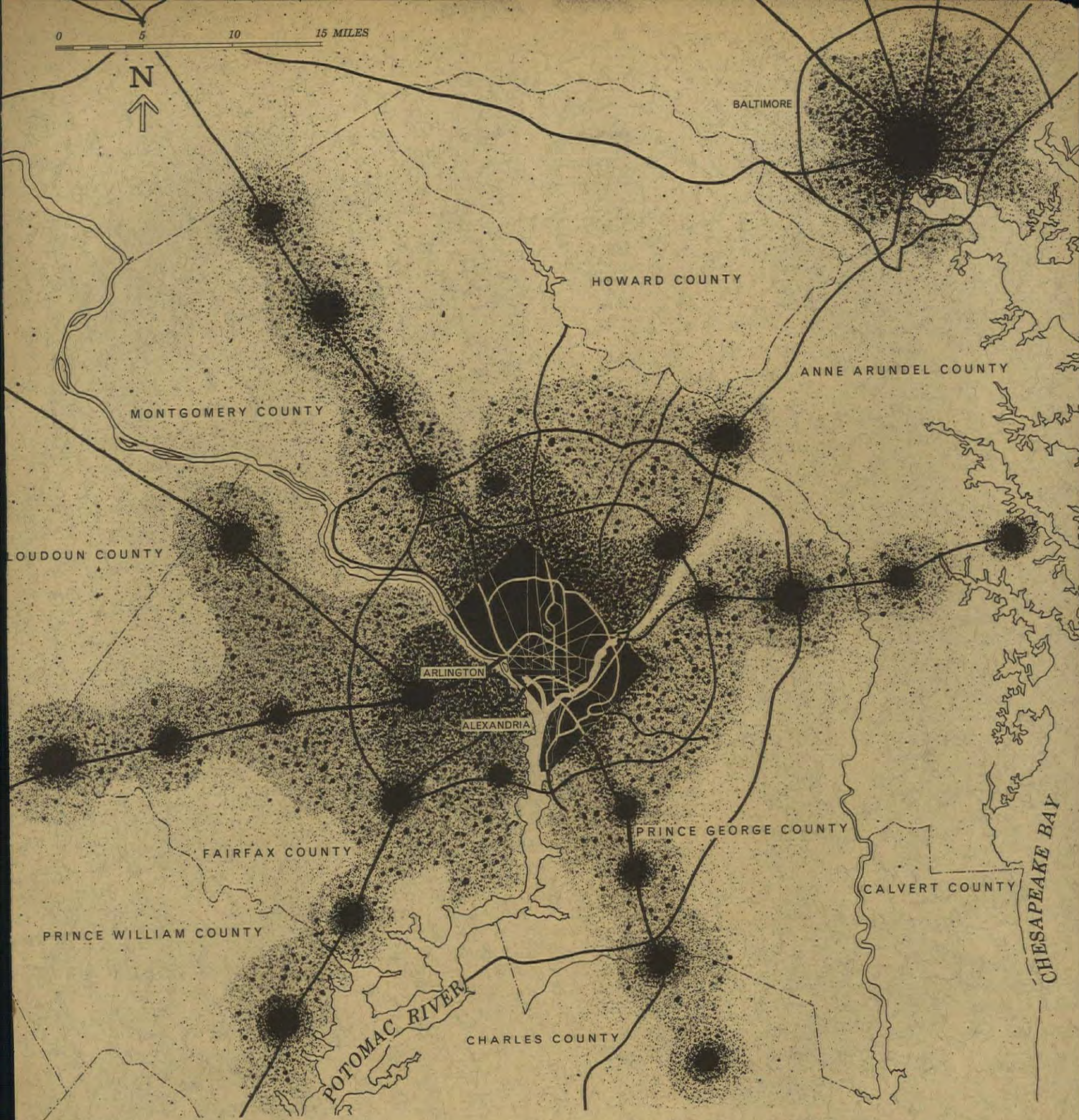
Much as it depends on a quick solution to the parking problem, the future health of downtown also depends on more efficient mass transit. Downtown Progress Chief Knox Banner hopes for a system in which 75 per cent of all trips would be via mass transit. The plan proposed by his group is dependent, in fact, on the construction of the proposed—and controversial—subway system (page 105).

Despite the mess in parking, transit, and urban renewal efforts, there is progress being made in downtown, though it is still slow. A few new projects are underway (besides the aforementioned office building, there is a new airlines terminal building). Perhaps more encouraging, builders like Morris Cafritz are showing interest. Cafritz, although a member of the Downtown Progress board, has not built anything in the area. (He has probably built 2 million square feet of office space in other areas of the city.) Now, however, he is a downtown booster and is proposing to build a large new building on the site of the RKO Keith's Theater. Cafritz is even buying land on 7th Street north of Hecht's, for years a rundown retailing area of small Negro shops and wholesale furniture dealers. Cafritz says confidently, "The downtown plan will be realized before you know it—it's coming fast now."

A crushing handicap: lack of leadership

Great effort by investors like Cafritz can help, but the future of downtown, like everything else in the capital, is in the hands of the federal government. Although the Administration's plans for developing the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue are helpful to downtown's future, this alone is not enough—parking, transit, urban renewal, and other difficulties all wait on the federal government for resolution.

When faced with these issues, the great Washington leadership vacuum is most painful. As Knox Banner says, "the lack of effective political leadership, with the responsibility for solving the problems of the federal city, seems an almost insoluble problem. This . . . crushing handicap is borne by no other city. . . ." But Banner, and the downtown merchants, are in there, still unshaken in the belief that if that leadership ever emerges, Washington's downtown can be as great as befits a great capital. And they might even do it without Uncle.



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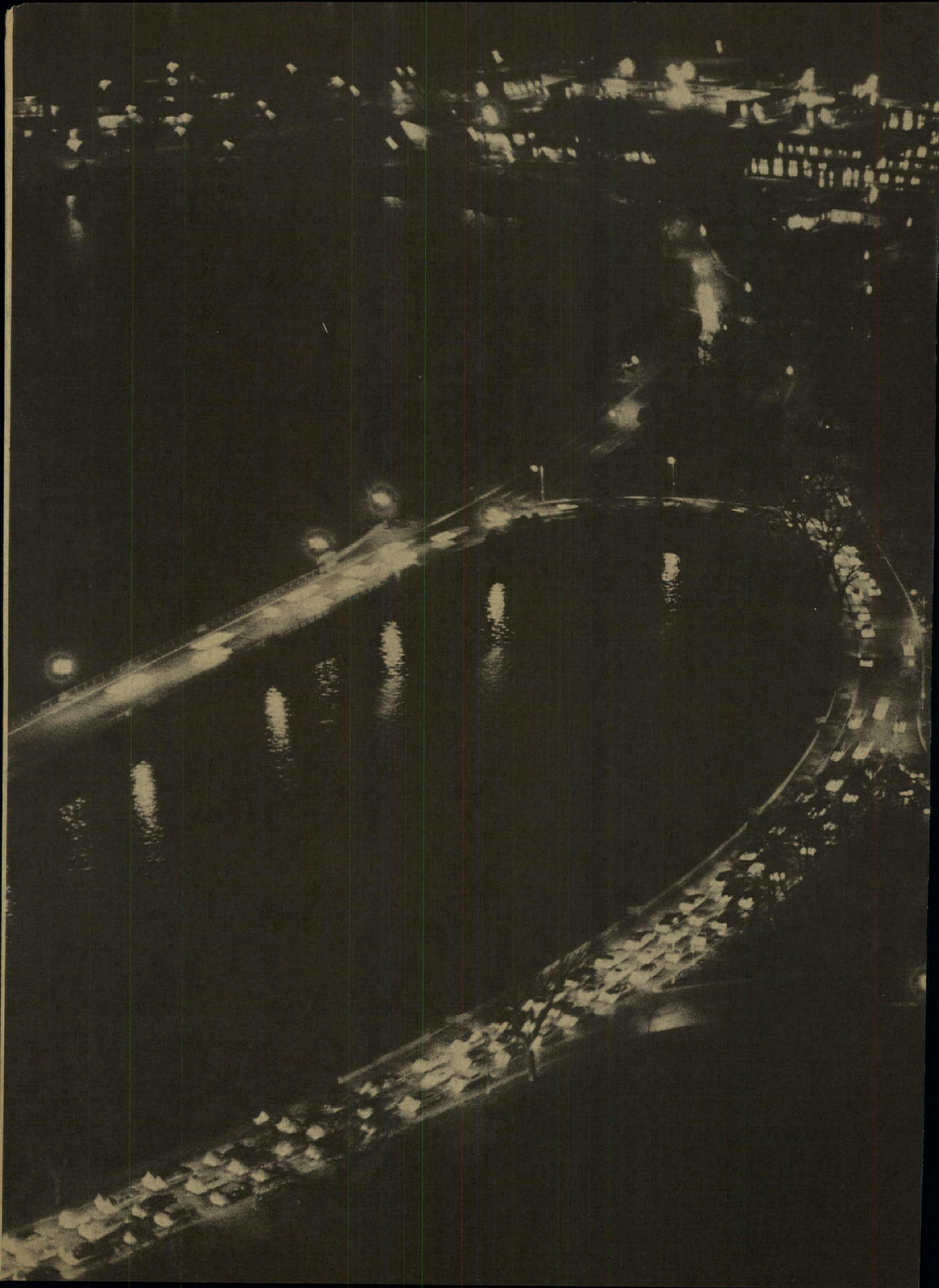
THE FUTURE CITY

By the year 2,000 A.D., the Washington region will house some 5 million people (see map). Most of these people will live in suburban communities, and the District itself will be little more than a service core—and focal point—for what will be one of the largest metropolitan regions in the nation.

These facts seem to be little understood by those who, today, are still making basic decisions in the context of the District alone, or of this suburb or that. They are certainly not understood by those prosperous suburbanites who delight in adding to the District's problems: for without a healthy District at its core, tomorrow's region will have little reason for existence.

Still, it is encouraging that the region now has a recommendation for future development; that most suburbs have recently committed themselves to it; and that the White House, a month ago, gave its backing, too.

The future of the region depends upon how much leadership the federal government is willing to exert. For the executive and legislative branches of the government are, after all, the major forces behind the fantastic growth of the region; and it is their responsibility to help shape that growth.



THE FUTURE WASHINGTON: NEW LEADERSHIP, A NEW PLAN—AND DEMOCRACY

Washington, one of its planners said recently, is an *ad hoc* city. It likes to take its problems one at a time, study each exhaustively, and then create a whole new governmental superstructure to seek a solution. This system keeps everyone cheerfully occupied, but it has one imposing flaw: it doesn't work.

As the game goes on, the problems increase. Many of them have been enumerated on the foregoing pages: insipid buildings, insensitively designed and wrongly placed; clogged traffic arteries and inadequate parking facilities; a shopping core that is seriously ill; the bitter fruits of racial imbalance and injustice; the chronic starvation of schools and social agencies at the hands of Congress. "It is not simply an array of problems that face metropolitan Washington," said Philip Graham of the *Post* recently. "It is a full-blown crisis."

There are whole lists of proposed solutions to match each problem. But there is only one solution to the crisis, and that is a general overhauling of the capital's decision-making structure. It is not a matter of what is to be done but rather how to do it. Here are some suggestions:

1. Washington needs the machinery to deal with its problems on a region-wide basis.

Every metropolis has trouble with its suburbs, but once again, Washington is a special case. Cross the line, and you are in one of the jealously sovereign states of Maryland or Virginia—subject to all of the laws, customs, and prejudices thereof. These are the suburbs of the capital, of course. But while in most metropolitan regions the core city is a political dynamo, the care of the Washington region is a political vacuum. Those who run Washington's suburbs look for guidance and/or patronage to Annapolis and Richmond. They do not often look to Washington.

The only compensating virtue of Washington's suburbs is that there are not very many of them. New York has more than 1,400 separate political entities within its region. Washington has, by some counts, less than 70. In quality of government, however, they are much like suburbs anywhere, which is to say fractious, feuding, devoid of any deep commitment to

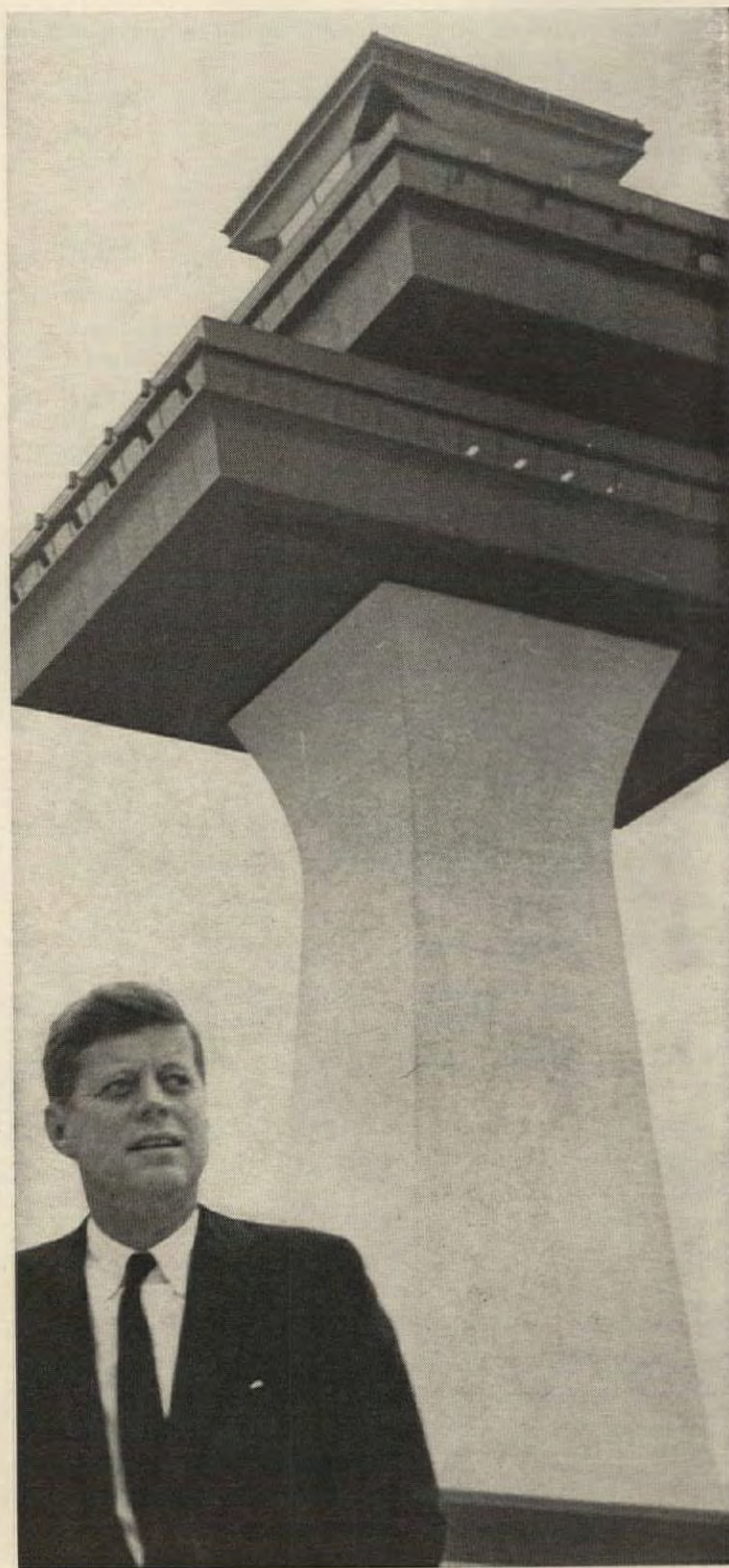


PHOTO OFF. I. NCTA

long-range planning, and markedly friendly to the speculative developer of land.

Without the unifying force of a politically strong core city, therefore, they have done pretty much as they pleased. The result is that the region's growth has been largely uncontrolled, and those things which require common agreement have simply gone undone.

After several years of study, the Joint Committee on Washington Metropolitan Problems, consisting of Congressmen from the District Committees and the suburbs, gave up on any attempt to reshuffle governmental powers. Instead, the Committee carefully steered away from "controversial problems," and recommended the creation of "a network of regional public works and services to support the estimated metropolitan growth."

Such a program would at least promote action on some of the region's ills—and heaven knows action is badly needed. But it hardly seems to go far enough. It might lend itself well to cleaning up the polluted Potomac and to supplying better water, for example, but it would do nothing to preserve the river's banks from slipshod development. The latter would take an entirely new form of political coordination among the suburbs, with the federal government playing a strong role.

2. Washington and its region need a specific plan for development.

On Thanksgiving, the President issued a directive which, for the first time in history, committed the executive branch of the nation's government to a leading role in the future development of the entire Washington region. The specifics of the directive precisely paralleled the recommendations of the Year 2000 Plan.

The most striking proposal in the Year 2000 Plan is that the region's development follow a pattern of six radial corridors extending from Washington like spokes of a wheel. Spines of the corridors would be rapid transit lines and expressways, and between them would be green wedges of open space.

The Year 2000 Plan has won the unanimous approval of Washington's suburbs—in general principle, at least. Yet Year 2000 is a vision rather than a plan. It proceeds directly from fine-grain urban design "policies" for the city to the vast concept of radial corridors. Its intentional vagueness—there are no indications of where the satellite cities along the corridors are to come from, nor any specific suggestions as to how the green wedges are to be preserved—is probably the

principal reason why it has been so widely accepted.

In the absence of a more specific plan, the elements that will give form to the city and the region are evolved piecemeal, and the decisions are fought out in the familiar battleground of official Washington. By far the biggest fight, at the moment, concerns transportation.

In November, the National Capital Transportation Agency released its long-anticipated report. It called for a \$739 million rapid transit network, with 19 of its 83 miles a downtown subway. It also called for construction of 50 additional miles of freeways in Washington—a far cry from the 125 additional miles in the District's 1959 highway plan (see maps, page 105). Even before the report came out, NCTA Director C. Darwin Stoltzenbach had sought to halt freeway appropriations until the rapid transit plan could be aired. The effect on the District Highway Department and related interests was like the waving of a red flag.

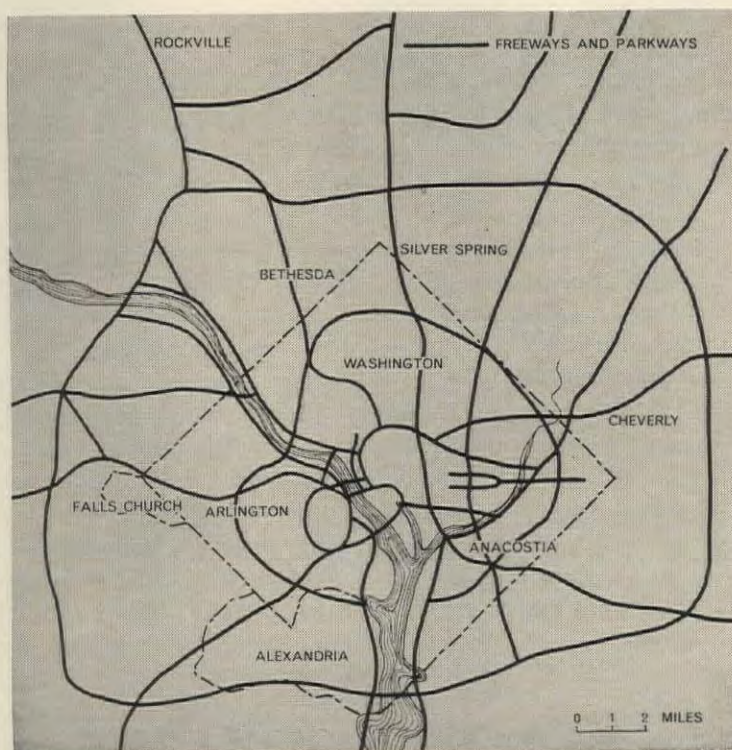
Stoltzenbach claims his system would be \$367 million cheaper than the 1959 highway program, would eventually pay for itself, and would require far less displacement of homes and businesses, leaving more land on the District's dwindling tax rolls. His backers include many who fear the impact of great highways running smack through the city's core. Highways have a great many friends in Washington, however.

Whatever the final decision, one fact stands out: the single most significant factor in the shaping of a modern city—the factor of traffic—will have been determined through a many-sided and violent tug of war. Having a plan (in place of a tug of war) may be no panacea, but other metropolitan areas have found that it helps.

3. Washington needs a better definition of the federal interest and local interests.

The federal government employs over one-third of all metropolitan Washington's wage earners, owns almost half of the land in the city, and has filled it with enormous buildings. Washington is, in truth, a company town. The company isn't doing well by it.

When, say, Olivetti builds a town for its workers, it houses them comfortably, provides ample recreational and cultural facilities, and generally attempts to look out for their welfare. The interests of such a corporation are partly, but not entirely, altruistic. It knows that its employees produce more if treated well, and that recruitment is less of a problem in a town that happens to be a pleasant place in which to live, as well as work.



The form of the future Washington will depend on whether highways (above, the 1959 plan) or rapid transit dominate (below, the NCTA plan).



In Washington, the government has consistently exercised the prerogatives of a proprietor but has shamefully neglected the proprietor's responsibilities. Congress takes a great deal more than it is willing to give. Even federal agencies sometimes seem to look on the capital more as a place to put their buildings than as a functioning and fast-growing metropolis with problems they have helped to create. Washington is still being treated as if it were not much bigger than the Mall.

To build the National Cultural Center—and give the city its first truly adequate cultural facilities—the citizens of Washington and the nation are being asked to put up \$30 million. Congress did donate the site, but it is very possibly the wrong one: instead of being in the heart of the city, where it could give an added dimension to a revitalized downtown, the Center (by Edward Durell Stone) will sit on the Foggy Bottom river front next to a projected maze of freeways. Meanwhile, farther downstream, plans are underway for a giant aquarium that will be a monument of sorts to the power and persistence of Representative Michael J. Kirwan of Ohio, head of the House committee which decides who gets how much in Democratic campaign funds. Relentlessly pushed by Kirwan, Congress, which could not find the money to increase its niggardly contribution to neglected Washington, found \$10 million for fish.

In his foreword to the Year 2000 Plan, President Kennedy had this to say about Washington: "More than any other city—more than any other region—the nation's capital should represent the finest living environment which America can plan and build." Early this year, his entire Cabinet was given symbolic trusteeship in the Federal City Council. These and other signs, mentioned earlier, point to a new acceptance by the executive of responsibility for the fate of Washington.

A similar acceptance of responsibility by the Congress is still awaited—and Congress has long been far and away the more derelict of the two branches. A good many of Washington's problems are money problems, and they cannot be met until the federal financial contribution comes closer to matching the federal impact on the city.

4. Washington needs democracy.

In *The Federalist* papers, James Madison said that citizens of the District of Columbia should "have their voice in the election of the government which is to exercise authority over them. . . . A municipal legislature for local purposes, derived from their own suffrage, will of course be allowed them." That was nearly 200 years ago, and little has happened since to implement Madison's confident expectation. Indeed,

Washington is today America's only colonial possession.

The re-enfranchisement of Washington's citizens (they had the vote, but lost it in the maelstrom of Reconstruction) will not automatically solve all of the city's problems, nor should it absolve the federal government of its responsibilities. But there are at least four good reasons why it should be tried.

The first is a matter of simple justice. In Madison's time, people meant what they said about taxation without representation. For accuracy's sake, today's speeches about the glories of our democracy should always be followed by the words, "except in Washington." The fact that those who live in the seat of democracy do not enjoy its basic prerogative is, quite literally, incredible.

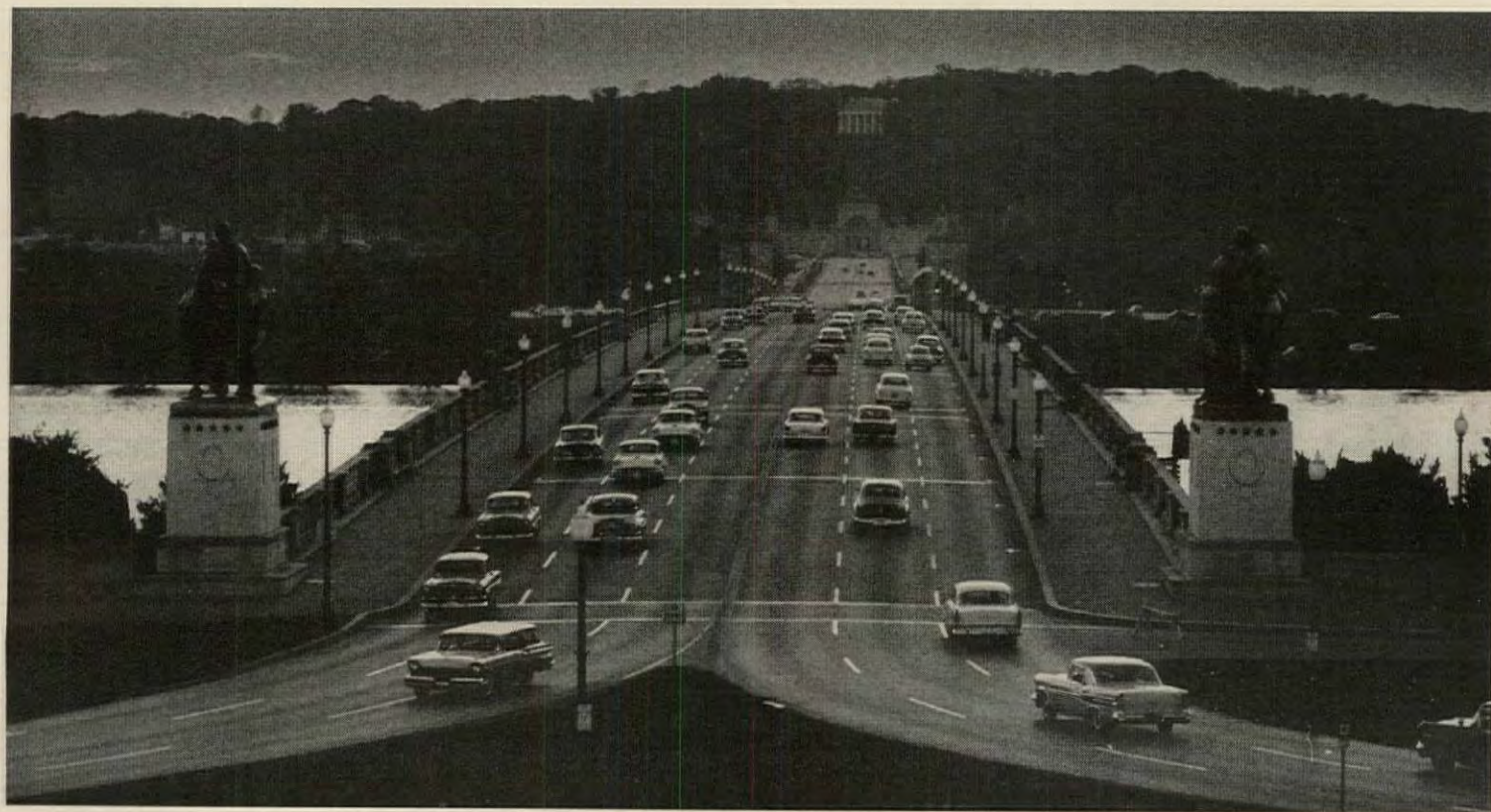
The second reason, closely allied to the first, is that the people want the vote. Washington is a quiet city; until recently not many people have campaigned very loudly for representation. That is changing now, however. The Negro majority, in particular, is not likely to forget that the quest for freedom and equality begins at home.

The third reason is that Congress has proven itself incompetent to run the city. Washington is a hapless pawn in the

struggle between a die-hard group of rural segregationists and the executive branch of government. The more responsible members of Congress must share the blame; they apparently have more concern for the seniority system than they do for the nation's capital.

The fourth and final reason is pragmatic: Washington is a textbook example of the fact that municipal government cannot be made to work without political accountability. The entire decision-making structure in Washington is fatally weakened because those who make the decisions do not have to answer to those who must live with them. No sound direction can be brought to Washington's development until its leaders are responsible to a fully franchised citizenry.

Until that day comes, it is up to us—the more fortunate first-class citizens of America, who live in places where we are allowed to vote. We are the clients for Washington's monstrous buildings, we pay the price of its structural deficiencies, and we are the constituents of its 535-man city council, the Congress of the U. S. It comes back to the fact that Washington is the biggest company town in the world, and we own the company. Washington's future is our responsibility. END.



YOUNG R. OKAMOTO

THE EVOLUTION OF AN ARCHITECT. By Edward Durell Stone. Published by Horizon Press, 156 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 288 pp. 8" x 10". Illus. \$15.

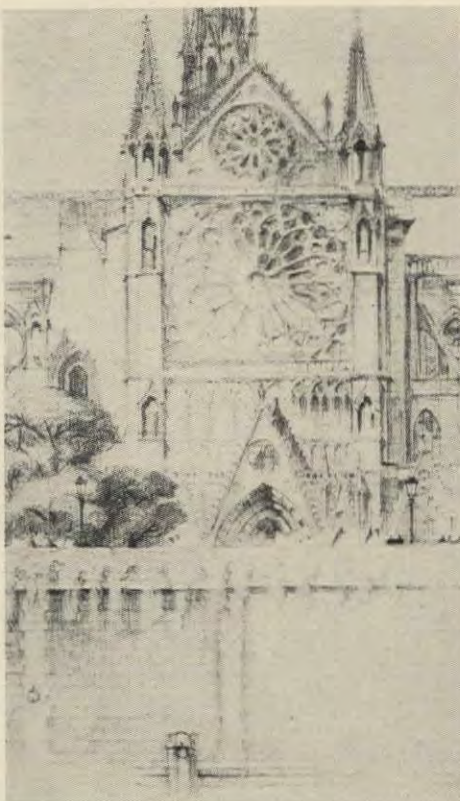
Many artists, Mr. Stone begins, "cloud simple intent by exercises in abstruse metaphysics. This is not my purpose here. At my age, however, one may be entitled to some nostalgic, highly personal recollections."

Stone does indeed make the intent seem simple. The works which illustrate these relaxed memoirs are described only in the broadest terms. The only discussion of architectural philosophy is in an epilogue addressed to "the young," which urges beginners to avoid plagiarism, to resist dogmatic standards of style, and to travel widely.

There is a great deal of warmth, especially in the opening section on Stone's early days. "I was raised in a relaxed atmosphere among the lotus eaters," he relates. "Someone has described my environment as a hotbed of tranquility." He dates his interest in architecture from the winning of a \$2.50 competition for design of a birdhouse, sponsored by the Fayetteville, Ark., newspaper and a local lumber dealer. "It was a very functional job with rustic charm," he says. "The design might have been influenced by Maybeck or Greene & Greene or some of the very early Wright houses. I was not aware of their existence, although they were in their heyday just at that time, so the spirit must have been in the air."

The book, like the author's career, is divided into three parts. The first takes Stone through these placid early days, then through his art studies at the University of Arkansas, his early architectural training in Boston, the winning of the Rotch scholarship at M.I.T. and subsequent travels in Europe, and finally his early practice in New York. "Architects at this time were beginning to feel their oats and were dancing around the corpse of eclecticism," Stone recalls. He became a firm and prolific apostle of the International Style, producing a series of white cube and cylinder houses and, as the culmination of this period, the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan, designed in association with Philip Goodwin.

The second section describes Stone's brief flirtation with a Bay Region version of organic architecture. In 1940, he took a fateful drive across the country. He stopped at Taliesin East; from that time on, Frank Lloyd Wright "occupied a dual role as my friend and personal hero." He visited Yellowstone Park, finding its great wooden hotel more impressive than Old Faithful. He stood in awe among the towering redwoods of a California forest, examined the "ease and cultivation" of Bay Area buildings, then returned by way of Taliesin West and the Pennsylvania Dutch country. There followed a group of broad-roofed, mostly wooden houses which he felt to be "more indigenous and therefore more at home in this country



than my earlier houses inspired by European architecture."

In 1953 Stone's life took "a new and—as it turned out—highly significant turn," he points out in the opening of the book's third part, dealing with the New Delhi Embassy ("The Taj Maria") to the present. The milestone was his meeting on an airplane with Fashion Writer Maria Elena Torchio, whom he married 11 months later. "I had gone through the hair shirt period of solid lumber, rough brickwork and stone. Maria's fine Italian hand began to show in my attire and my work: both began to move toward elegance." The buildings and projects in this final section, the largest, show the movement to be continuing at full speed.

Probably the book's greatest value lies in presenting virtually all of Stone's work in one place—the forgotten and the new along with the familiar. The buildings, more than the text, give rise to the feeling that the development of his architecture has been through a series of sharp revolutions, rather than through a single, consistent evolution. The jump from the International Style to "hair shirt" architecture is fairly well documented. The second, sharper jump—the one that has brought widespread public acclaim—is explained only by the single statement quoted above. One looks in vain for the deeper roots of the consistent classic symmetry of plan, the characteristic filigree surfaces, and the occasional flights of exotic form.

This is perhaps the book's greatest mystery. The buildings become increasingly romantic and complex, but the text, for all of its charm, is not architecturally very informative. The reader is presented with a body of work that is highly interesting—whatever his judgment of it may be—but given only hints of how it got that way.—D.C.

Left: evolution of an architect, as seen in some of Stone's lesser-known work: a sketch of Notre Dame (top), one of many fine drawings from student days; the coolly cubistic Mandel house (1933); the warmly Wrightian Thurnauer house (1949); and current projects, romantic and classical, for a Pakistani government building, and an enlisted men's barracks at the U.S. Naval Academy (below).



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