

Pennsylvania Avenue Plan Calls for Vast Renovation

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

One of the most ambitious architectural plans ever prepared for a major part of a capital city has just been released by the White House. The report of the President's

Council on Pennsylvania Avenue, an 18-month study of the avenue and its environs, is a sweeping proposal for the dramatic remodeling of the street that is the nation's traditional grand axis, historic boulevard and ceremonial thoroughfare.

The Pennsylvania Avenue plan would involve restyling and rebuilding the street over a 40-year period at an estimated cost of \$500 million.

Intended to restore the avenue to the state of grandeur for which it was marked in L'Enfant's original plan for Washington in 1791, and from which it has slipped markedly in recent years, the plan goes far beyond redesigning the appearance of the route that links the White House and the Capitol.

It deals with the larger problems of traffic circulation, land use and zoning that reach out into the rest of the city.

Galleried Streets Mapped

The plan is actually a massive redevelopment program for both the avenue and its surroundings. It proposes multi-level construction above and below ground separating pedestrians, automobile traffic and parking; important cross-axes connecting the avenue with other areas, and a mixture of public and private building for Governmental, commercial and cultural uses.

This would include the rehabilitation of old structures for opera and art, and the construction of new Government and business offices, hotels, galleried shopping streets, pedestrian malls and outdoor cafes on the avenue and in its immediate vicinity.

Initiated by President Kennedy, the study has been carried out by a special commission that he appointed in 1962. It worked under his personal sponsorship and in response to an official Presidential directive.

Its members are Nathaniel A. Owings, architect, chairman; Frederick Gutheim, president,

Continued on Page 64, Column 1

40-YEAR PROJECT
URGED IN CAPITAL

Cost Put at \$500 Million—
Study's Proposals Extend
to Major City Problems

Continued From Page 1, Col. 3

Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies; Douglas Haskell, editor, The Architectural Forum; Frederick L. Holborn, special assistant in the White House; Daniel U. Kiley, landscape architect; Daniel P. Moynihan, Assistant Secretary of Labor; Chloethiel Woodard Smith, architect; Paul Thiry, member, National Capital Planning Commission; Ralph Walker, architect; William Walton, chairman, Washington Commission of Fine Arts.

If the plan goes through, and this depends on the support of President Johnson and the reactions of Congress, the rehabilitation of Pennsylvania Avenue could be the most substantial and long-lasting legacy of the Kennedy Administration.

The style of the new Avenue would be as grand as its aim. The present mixture of Government offices, shabby business buildings, hotels past their prime, honkytonk commercial enterprises and flashy new construction would be transformed into a majestic, tree-shaded boulevard lined with arched buildings and monumental plazas.

Its scale would be equally impressive. The street would lead from a new National Square to be created at the White House end, approximating the Place de la Concorde in size and grandeur, to a huge reflecting pool and public plaza at the Capitol end, where the Capitol dome would be mirrored in the water.

The plan deals in a kind of dignity and expansive elegance unsurpassed since Sixtus V created Rome's great vistas in the 1580's, and Baron Hausmann cut through Paris's lavish boulevards in the 1870's.

The design is formal, classic and conservative, emphasizing processional spaces and grand vistas reminiscent of Parisian boulevards. It suggests the traditional French school of architecture called Beaux Arts, based on classic French precedents, that was taught and practiced universally around the turn of the century. This is the same style in which Washington was designed a century earlier, and which still gives the city its distinguishing stamp.

'Lively' Buildings Visioned

The buildings, which are only suggested schematically and are yet to be designed, would be modern, "lively, friendly and inviting as well as dignified and formal," and carefully studied to suit the Washington scene.

The council's recommendation is to continue the best of the past and combine it with the best of the present, for a tradition-oriented, but vital contemporary capital.

The Avenue itself would be "a boulevard deep in trees, with a rich pavement like a welcoming carpet, its broad sidewalk stepped up in three stages like a grandstand designed for viewing parades and celebrations." The street would be repaved for a distinctive color and surface, "rich, but subdued"; the report suggests brick with a granite center strip.

On the south side of the Avenue, where the existing Federal Triangle built in the 1930's houses the Departments of Labor, Justice and Commerce, the Archives Building, Internal Revenue Service and Post Office, the recommendation is simply to finish the buildings as planned. Where they are incomplete, they have been filled in with disfiguring parking lots.

The District Building at 14th Street is suggested for re-use as an opera house; the Coast Guard Building at 13th Street would be demolished. The old post office would go, too, except for the tower, which would be kept as a lookout point.

On the north side, there would be a new "Northern Triangle," to balance and continue the Federal Triangle, replacing the present shoddy mixture. It would be bounded by the Avenue, E Street and 6th Street.

New F. B. I. Quarters

This group of buildings, which would provide new quarters for the Department of Labor and the Federal Bureau of Investigation on the Avenue, would also include private and commercial uses as well as services and facilities for both. It would be zoned to keep building heights low, similar to the south side, limited to eight stories or 110 feet, all with open arcades along the street. Large buildings necessary for office blocks would be zoned back to E Street.

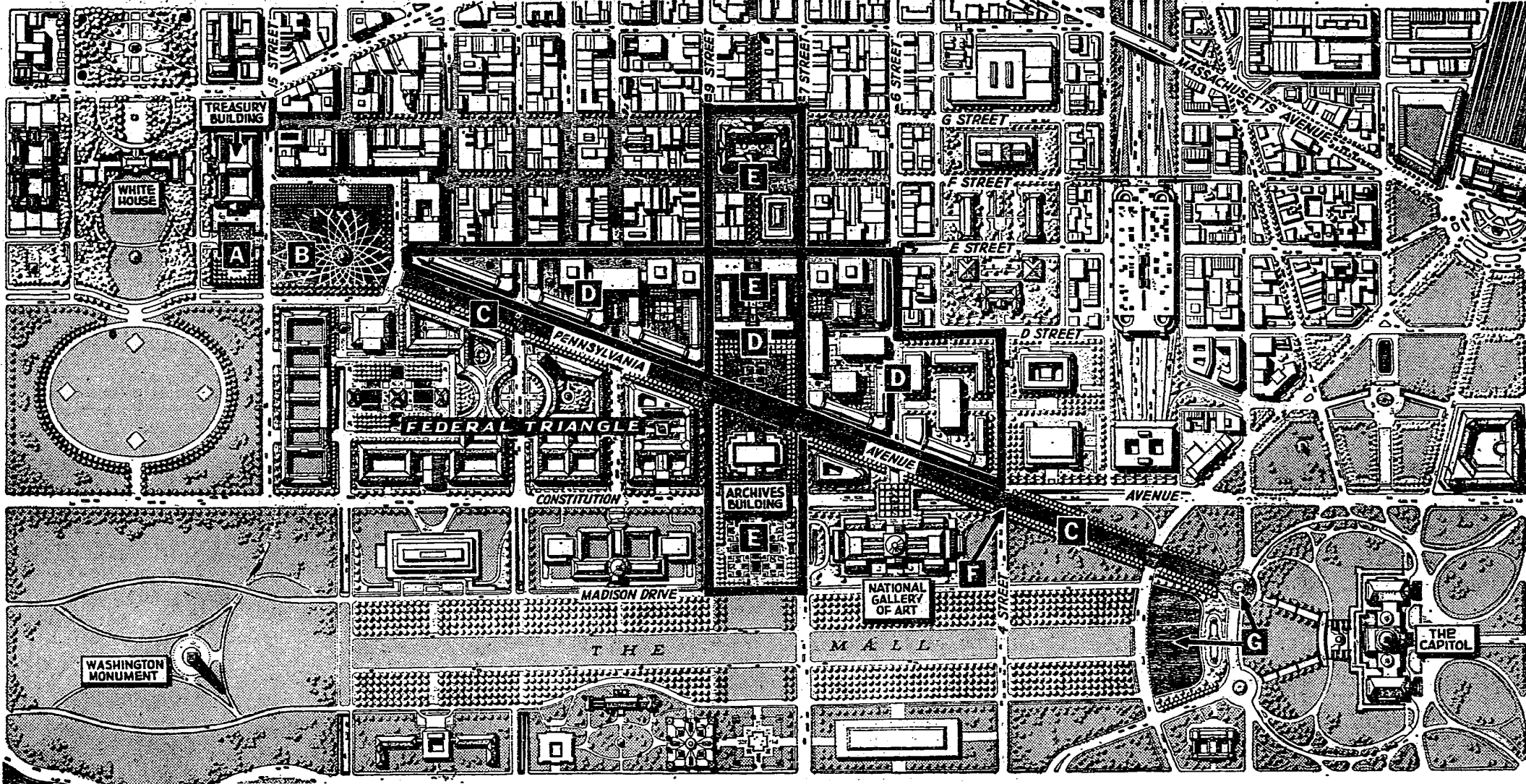
The most striking single change is the treatment of the White House and of the Avenue. The executive mansion has always been blocked by the Treasury Building, which must be skirted awkwardly by any route around it.

Instead of petering out at this point, Pennsylvania Avenue would empty into an immense public plaza, the new National Square, 800 by 900 feet, bounded by F Street on the north, 15th Street on the east, E Street on the south and 15th Street on the west.

It would have patterned paving, a 150-foot diameter fountain and a 200-foot-wide raised "belvedere" or lookout portion on the plaza's north side, with trees, seats, restaurants and tourist facilities.

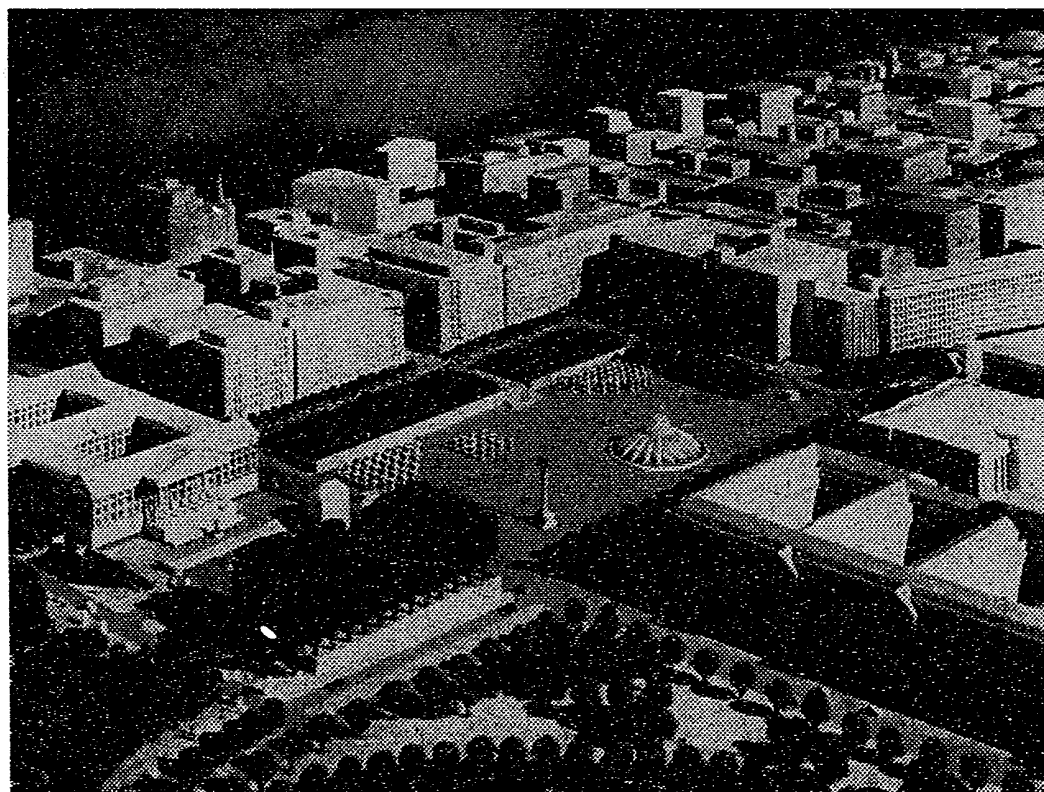
Just beyond, between F and

Presidential Council Proposes Reconstruction of Washington's Pennsylvania Avenue in a Grand Style



This historic area in Washington is the subject of a report in which the President's Council on Pennsylvania Avenue proposes a 40-year program of restyling and rebuilding for Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington's main ceremonial boulevard. Depicted here are: (A) A new, elaborate White House Gate and Treasury Place, providing access to White House grounds from (B) A new National Square, with fountain, trees and seating, all

forming a grand setting for the start or completion of processions along (C) Pennsylvania Avenue; (D) A proposed Northern Triangle, with commercial and government buildings, would balance the existing Federal Triangle across Pennsylvania Avenue; (E) Overlapping both triangles, a pedestrian promenade; (F) Constitution Avenue underpass for National Gallery of Art area; (G) Capitol Plaza area, ending Pennsylvania Avenue.



This is a model showing, generally, how the northwest end of the development would be, with Treasury Building at left and proposed fountain (B on map above), at the center.



The promenade indicated on map at D and E. Other pictures of project are in today's New York Times Magazine.

G Streets, commercial buildings are suggested, with a glass-covered Galleria of shops. This would connect with the commercial development zone under study by Washington's Downtown Progress group.

Hotels Would Be Razed

To create the plaza, the Washington and Willard Hotels and the National Press Club would have to be demolished. The council suggests a new and "more splendid" press club on the east side of the square, with other buildings for communications services.

The entire plaza would be pedestrian, with traffic and parking for 600 cars on underground levels. It would serve as "a truly national square," to quote the report, for ceremonial events, as well as providing a forecourt to the White House for tourists and visitors, who come to the White House on an average of 6,000 per day when it is open to the public.

At the west end of the square there would be a special, monumental White House Gate. This would lead through a smaller Treasury Place, in front of the Treasury Building, which would serve as a direct entrance to the White House grounds, bringing them into a straight boundary along 15th Street.

At the midway point on the Avenue, the planners have indicated a large new axis crossing Pennsylvania Avenue from north to south, from G Street to the Mall. It ties in with the commercial redevelopment zone proposed by Downtown Progress, bounded by E, G and 6th to 15th Street.

This cross axis focuses on the Archives Building on the south side of the avenue and forms a pedestrian promenade, centered on 8th Street, which would be closed, for its full length.

Outdoor Sculpture Garden

It starts in the Mall as a south forecourt to the Archives Building in a now-empty space between 7th and 9th Streets, which would become an outdoor sculpture garden adjoining the neighboring National Gallery of Art. There would be a 980-car parking lot underneath.

The axis then moves north through the Archives Building, across Pennsylvania Avenue into a new Market Square, through a smaller plaza surrounded by new hotels and office buildings plentifully supplied with terraces and cafes, and ends in front of the new National Portrait Gallery that is currently being remodeled from the old Patent Office Building.

A good part of this new pedestrian mall would be built on a three-level "platform," the top for pedestrians, the lower levels for cars. Throughout the plan, E Street becomes a "feeder street and parking distribu-

tor system," with ramps to underground garages serving the entire area.

Just beyond the Archives axis, where Pennsylvania Avenue crosses Constitution Avenue east of the National Gallery, the plan calls for carrying Constitution Avenue under Pennsylvania Avenue, eliminating a six-way traffic crossing and a scissors intersection.

The climax of the avenue, and of the plan, is the Capitol, and to emphasize this the council would establish a Capitol Plaza area. Pennsylvania Avenue would terminate in an enlarged circle, and where the Mall ends parallel to it, there would be a large reflecting pool surrounded by a paved, pedestrian plaza. Here, also, intersections would be eliminated and underpasses provided for traffic.

An Earlier Plan

Only once since the original L'Enfant plan was drawn up has a study been projected for the development of Washington on a similar scale.

The McMillan report, in 1901, proposed to restore much of the L'Enfant plan that had subsequently been mutilated. It succeeded in redeeming a large part of the Mall, and one of its most substantial recommendations was carried out with the building of the Federal Triangle 30 years later.

The fate of the present plan rests with the President and Congress. President Johnson has approved its publication, but is still to be given a thorough briefing on its complexities by the council.

Congressional hostility to ambitious architectural schemes is traditional and has been demonstrated in recent years by opposition to the State Department program of award-winning overseas embassies. On the other hand, Congress voted \$24 million for the extension and refacing of the east front of the Capitol. But civic beautification is a particularly vulnerable "extra" when budgets are being pared.

To carry out the plan, it will be necessary for Congress to appropriate funds, which can be done in stages, and establish an administrator, agency or authority to implement it.

There are many conflicts of jurisdiction in the area, from the National Capital Planning Commission and the Department of Highways and Traffic of the District of Columbia to the private interests of Downtown Progress.

Assuming that funds, authority and cooperation are obtained, the problem of assembling land remains, with speculation raising prices; a process that began almost as soon as planning was reported to be in progress.

The practicality of the plan has been endorsed by the council's realty consultants, Larry Smith & Co., who have called it

basically sound in terms of private investment and construction for the Washington market. The program anticipates approximately 5.2 million square feet of private building and 5.1 million square feet of Government construction.

The council also predicts that better-organized use of land will result in more revenues and a one-fifth higher tax return in spite of tax losses through increased open space.

A major share of the new construction and facilities would be expected to be revenue-producing and self-liquidating. The greatest public costs, which are estimated at less than half of the \$500 million total, would be the acquisition of land—some of which would be leased or resold—and the non-revenue-producing public improvements.

If some portion of the road development is eligible for funds under the Federal highway program, it would cut down the need for appropriations. Buildings like the F.B.I. headquarters already have their budgets.

Because of its size and complexity, the project would have to be "phased," or constructed in parts, which would help financially. At the same time, the council cautions, the Avenue can only be reclaimed and redeveloped as a unified whole, with careful staging of the parts.

According to the report, the Pennsylvania Avenue plan is designed to do justice to the Avenue's "lofty destinations." What the plan's own destination will be—historic archives or history-making public improvement—may hang in the balance for some time.

Innocent Teen-Ager Is Shot
In Aftermath of a Brawl

John Wojcik, 18 years old, of 510 West 179th Street, was shot in the stomach early yesterday in what was said to be the aftermath of a brawl between white and Puerto Rican youths.

The shooting took place at 189th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue. The police said that Mr. Wojcik had apparently not been involved in the brawl.

They said he had been shot with a pistol after another youth told him: "One of our boys got hurt, now you're going to get hurt."

The police later picked up two teen-agers and charged them with felonious assault and violation of the Sullivan Law. They were identified as Juan Montalbo, 19, of 894 Prospect Avenue, and Francisco Vasquez, 16, of 844 East 163d Street, both in the Bronx.

Mr. Wojcik was in fair condition in Jewish Memorial Hospital.