

Kennedy Adopts Buildings Plan To Give Capital a Modern Look

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

President Kennedy directed nation's capital and throughout the Government yesterday to the country.

proceed with a large Federal office-building program according to the most advanced principles of modern architectural design, and to make Pennsylvania Avenue a model of the new policy.

These plans are included in a Report to the President on Federal Office Space, approved by the President in Washington and passed on to Government departments for immediate action.

The report prepares the way for a record amount of new Federal building, calls specifically for the improvement of Federal architectural standards and endorses the use of the best modern architecture for all major new construction. Its provisions will have substantial and far-reaching effects on official building in the

The President's directive, however, does not assure smooth sailing for the program. Although his order makes it obligatory for Government departments to follow the new policy in new construction, Congress, which controls appropriations, can still be a stumbling block to its realization. Members of Congress have not been notably hospitable to modern design programs in the past, and have cut back a program of the State Department's Office of Foreign Buildings for contemporary embassies by withholding funds.

Even with these difficulties, however, two parts of the proposal will bring a sweeping new look to Government architec-

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ture. The first is a statement of architectural policy, in the form of a set of guiding principles and standards for Federal building. The second is a plan for the large-scale redevelopment of Pennsylvania Avenue, the traditional Grand Axis from the Capitol to the White House.

Together they represent decisive action toward establishing a contemporary architectural image for the United States. They also mark the assumption of responsible Government leadership in architectural design. In terms of the amount and kind of building that will be affected, this is the Administration's most sizeable and significant esthetic venture.

Construction Decaying

The new policy assumes particular importance in view of the Administration's announcement of plans for the redevelopment of Pennsylvania Avenue. This work is to be done by the Federal Government, in cooperation with the District Government. It will be directed by the National Capital Planning Commission and carried out by the General Services Administration, with the help of other capital agencies.

Its purpose is to redesign the 1.7 miles of avenue from the Capitol to the White House "so that it may resume its rightful place as the principal thoroughfare of the nation's capital."

The statement points out that the present mixed, decaying construction along Pennsylvania Avenue is about to be replaced by individual public and private buildings, and that this presents an unparalleled opportunity for integrated redesign of the entire avenue that "will not come again for half a century or more."