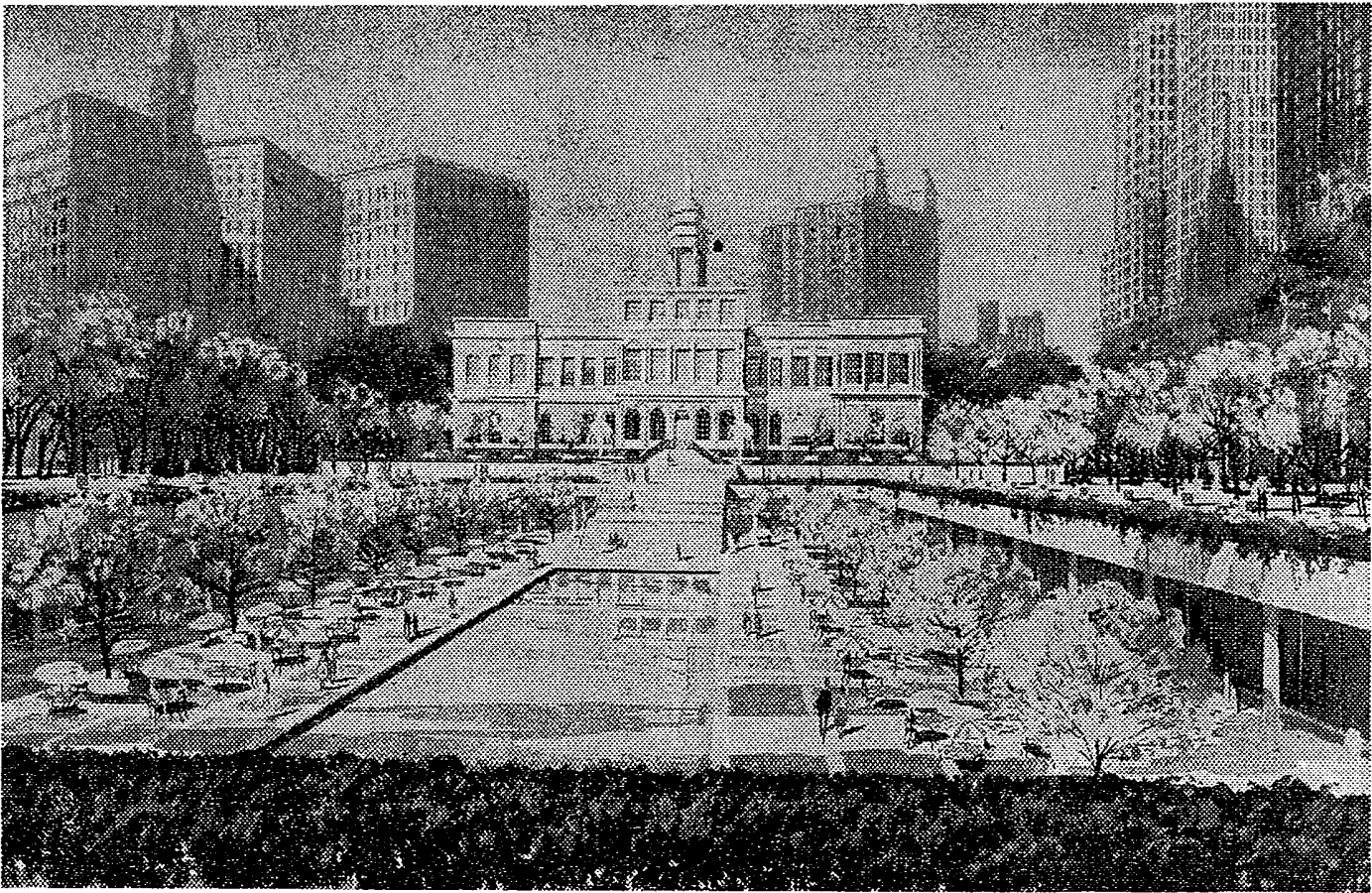


54-Story Building Planned for Civic Center: New Proposal Urges Single ...

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

New York Times (1923-Current file); Apr 21, 1964; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times pg. 39

54-Story Building Planned for Civic Center



Plan now calls for a plaza, with restaurants and shops and a reflecting pool, to be set between City Hall and . . .

New Proposal Urges Single Skyscraper With Plazas

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

Plans for New York's controversial Civic Center have changed again. The latest plans, about to be announced by Mayor Wagner, will add a spectacular new skyscraper to the Manhattan skyline.

The new design, by Edward Durell Stone and Eggers & Higgins, calls for a 54-story skyscraper. The functions of several proposed buildings will be consolidated into this one huge structure surrounded by a vastly increased area of landscaped parks and plazas.

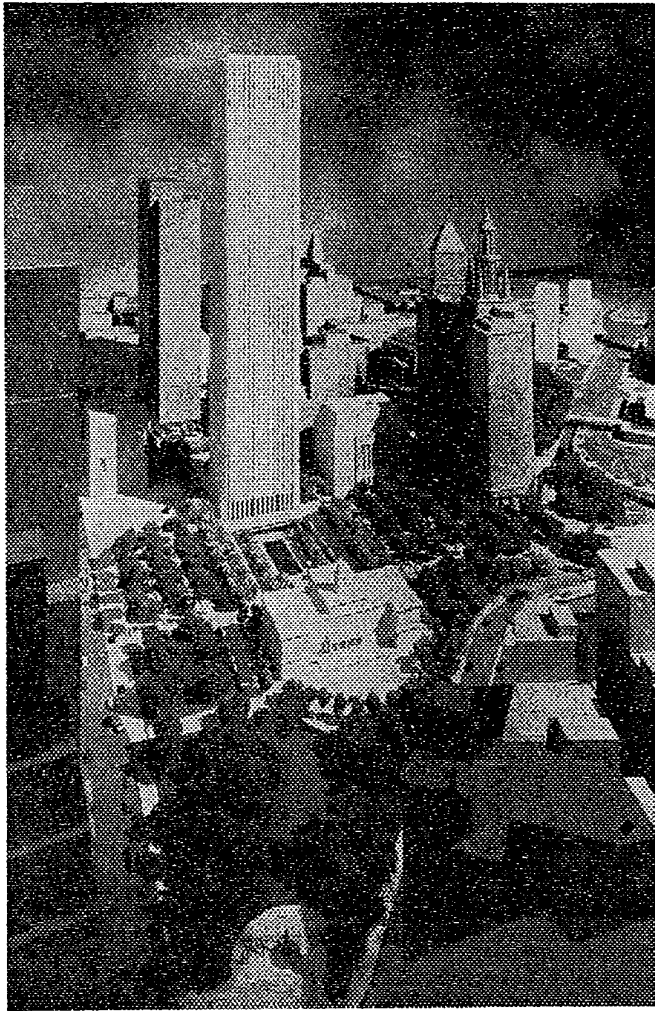
The new plan follows the basic recommendations of the earlier study in dealing with traffic, services and general placement of buildings and plazas. But it makes several significant changes.

Once Planned as Annex

The skyscraper, originally planned as a Municipal Building annex, is now planned for a site a block south on Chambers Street. Both the annex and the proposed executive office building will be incorporated into the single skyscraper.

The change in plans will not alter the city's need to acquire property at Broadway and Chambers Street, however—a move that has been strongly protested by local businessmen whose buildings would be demolished for an entrance plaza on the Broadway side.

Since the separate executive office building had been planned to balance the existing Hall of Records to the east, the architects recommend the eventual demolition of that building. This would leave the new municipal-executive skyscraper as a solitary, dominating structure in a large park, on a direct axis with City Hall. Chambers Street would be eliminated be-



Ezra Stoller Associates

. . . a 54-story tower to be surrounded by landscaped plots

tween Broadway and Centre Street.

The small, historic City Hall and the giant modern office building would be joined by a three-level landscaped platform with a long reflecting pool.

On the ground level, a pedestrian plaza would include a park, restaurants and shops. Two underground levels would provide parking for 1,400 cars, as well as additional offices and shops and connections to subways. This platform-park would extend north to Duane Street and west to Broadway.

The building would be faced in slender panels of white marble aggregate, with gently curved surfaces, alternating with gray glass. The delicacy of scale of this surface treatment is meant to lessen the impact of its size in relationship to the diminutive 19th-century City Hall.

The plan also proposes changes in the Brooklyn Bridge traffic pattern, which now cuts off the Municipal Building from City Hall. The roadlines would be simplified and an additional circular plaza would be built at

City Will Still Need Land on Broadway and Chambers

the entrance to the bridge. Highways Commissioner John T. Carroll is reported to have expressed interest, although construction on approaches to the bridge is already under way.

According to the architects, the plans have been received warmly by members of city departments involved, including Borough President Edward R. Dudley and the City Planning Commission. The plans are expected to be released by Mayor Wagner with the city's official approval—after they have been seen by the Board of Estimate.

Money has been appropriated in the capital budget for the initial stages of construction of the Civic Center, but the Site Selection Board must first act to make the land available.

Subject for Controversy

The \$150 million Civic Center proposal has been a controversial subject ever since it was first announced in the fall of 1962 and approved by the Mayor and the Civic Center Committee.

Known as the ABC plan, for the New York architects who donated their services for the study—Max Abramovitz, Simon Breines and Robert Cutler—it has been attacked by younger architects and leaders as not bold or imaginative enough for a city of New York's stature. It is also under constant fire by the Architect's Council of New York, headed by Nathan R. Ginsburg, which has called for a more comprehensive study.

The city signed a contract with the Stone and the Eggers & Higgins firms in the fall of 1963, to implement the general guidelines of the plan.

Building the proposed skyscraper farther south and combining the functions of several structures in one building are expected to save more than \$1 million in foundation and construction costs.