

# RENEWAL PROJECT SPLITS CLEVELAND

## Opponents Continue Battle as Sonstruction Nears

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

Work is about to begin on a project that has divided Cleveland into angry factions over its planning and urban renewal program.

The controversy concerns the future of University Circle, a 488-acre complex of about 30 institutions and parks about four miles from downtown Cleveland. It includes museums, concert halls, historical societies, hospitals and Western Reserve University, which form the city's cultural and educational heart.

The disputed project, among several causing lively arguments in the area, is a \$500,000 Garden Center to be constructed on city-owned land in Wade Park.

A citizens' organization called The Friends of the Circle, drawn largely from the neighboring institutions, charges that the building will destroy a natural ravine of picturesque beauty. This accusation is not without a touch of irony.

### Plan Begun in 1957

The Garden Center controversy is the latest in a series of protests and charges by Friends, all concerned with the execution of a 20-year, \$175 million master plan for the University Circle area. The plan was instituted in 1957, and drawn by the Boston firm of Adams, Howard & Greeley.

The problems involved are representative of the disruptive effects of growth and change plaguing most American cities. At issue are new buildings versus preservation and parks; the automobile versus the pedestrian and nature, and the elimination of amenities to accommodate expanding requirements.

In Cleveland everything has erupted simultaneously in one spot.

In addition to the Garden Center, The Friends point to the construction of a highway that will bisect the Western Reserve campus, destroying trees and introducing express traffic through it; the erection of privately sponsored housing under urban renewal meant to favor university personnel, but scheduled to be priced above middle-income rentals, and the demolition of landmark buildings to make way for the new cultural institutions.

### Private Organization

Accusations are leveled at the University Circle Development Foundation, a private, nonprofit administrative organization representing all the cooperating institutions in the area.

The foundation is authorized to execute provisions of the 1957 master plan in cooperation with the institutions and the city.

Under its president, Neil J. Carothers, the foundation believes it has done an exemplary job in the first five years of the plan.

It points to \$74 million worth of new construction in the area, including a parking garage; the removal of parking lots from the center to landscaped, peripheral locations; the addition of several small parks; the acquisition of 60 acres for institutional expansion, and the maintenance of open areas by razing ugly old buildings.

The Friends retort, however, that the foundation is sponsoring ugly new buildings, many of which, it is charged, ignore the spirit and requirements of the plan, even when placed as originally indicated.

Opposition to the highway through the circle is the bitterest part of the controversy. The city contends that is the only feasible route.

The Friends, supported by Western Reserve faculty members and students, have obtained a statement from John Howard, an architect of the master plan, saying that the street was indicated as a local convenience road and never meant for through traffic.

Mr. Carothers suggested recently that the foundation would try to find a less controversial route.

As for the Garden Center, the foundation says that the ravine has been a trouble spot for the city and that new landscaping will replace trees and natural features destroyed with the filling of the ravine.

The architects are William Platt for the building and Clarke & Rapuano for the landscaping, both of New York. Work is to begin immediately.

The ravine and its wooded area are considered by many residents the one natural beauty

of Cleveland's otherwise flat territory. It has remained undisturbed because its difficult topography is not conducive to speculative development.

The Friends also protest plans for an automobile and aircraft museum that will encroach on an area landmark, the Hanna house a turn-of-the-century, Florentine-style mansion. The house now serves as a wing of the Western Reserve Historical Society.

At the heart of the general controversy is each group's definition of progress, and its interpretation of the master plan.

The Foundation stresses more new construction and automobile accommodation. Opponents terpretation of the master plan. so as to preserve what remains of the area's best natural features and older structures, providing unifying landscaping to tie disparate buildings together, maintaining architectural standards.