

community and security for a small group in the big city. And it is vulnerable. The show is the story of its vulnerability. It is also a quietly penetrating indictment of New York's practices of public and private urban renewal.

The direct, low-key account demonstrates how a particular neighborhood, as a human and architectural entity of wide social, ethnic and economic variety ("we have brownstone personalities," says one house owner) is being disrupted and destroyed by profitable new building activities. It tells of small people, small businesses and small homes caught in the trend toward standardized, depersonalized, large-scale construction and chain stores and services. It is the contrast of Trinacria, an aromatic import store of city-wide fame, with an antiseptic A.&P., the made-to-order hero sandwich against vacuum-packed bologna, the neighbor on the stoop against project anonymity.

This is all told quietly, with the kind of artful control of material that looks like artless simplicity, largely in the puzzled but unprotesting words of the block's residents set against film of family-run shops and houses marked for demolition. It is not the usual pompous tract. The script by Ray Siphard is intelligent and even occasionally poetic; the music is not just noise, but light, evocative background.

The new buildings that will replace the block and its irreplaceable features, says the narrator, for once mercifully unseen, "are better in safety and sanitation." And that, he concludes, "is the end of that."

ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE.

'The Block'

IT'S hard to understand why architecture has been a dud on television, but it is a subject consistently marked by heavy-handed good intentions and ponderous superficiality. It is therefore a pleasure to report that one show, at least, is an unqualified success.

This architecture buff has seen a half-hour program called "The Block" three times—the most recent repeat was last night from 7:30 to 8:00 on Channel 13—just for the delight of watching it. Part of a series called "The City," this production by Jack Landau is an account of the midtown block between Second and Third Avenues from 29th to 30th Street, as a neighborhood in terms of its people, businesses and buildings.

"The Block" is home, haven,