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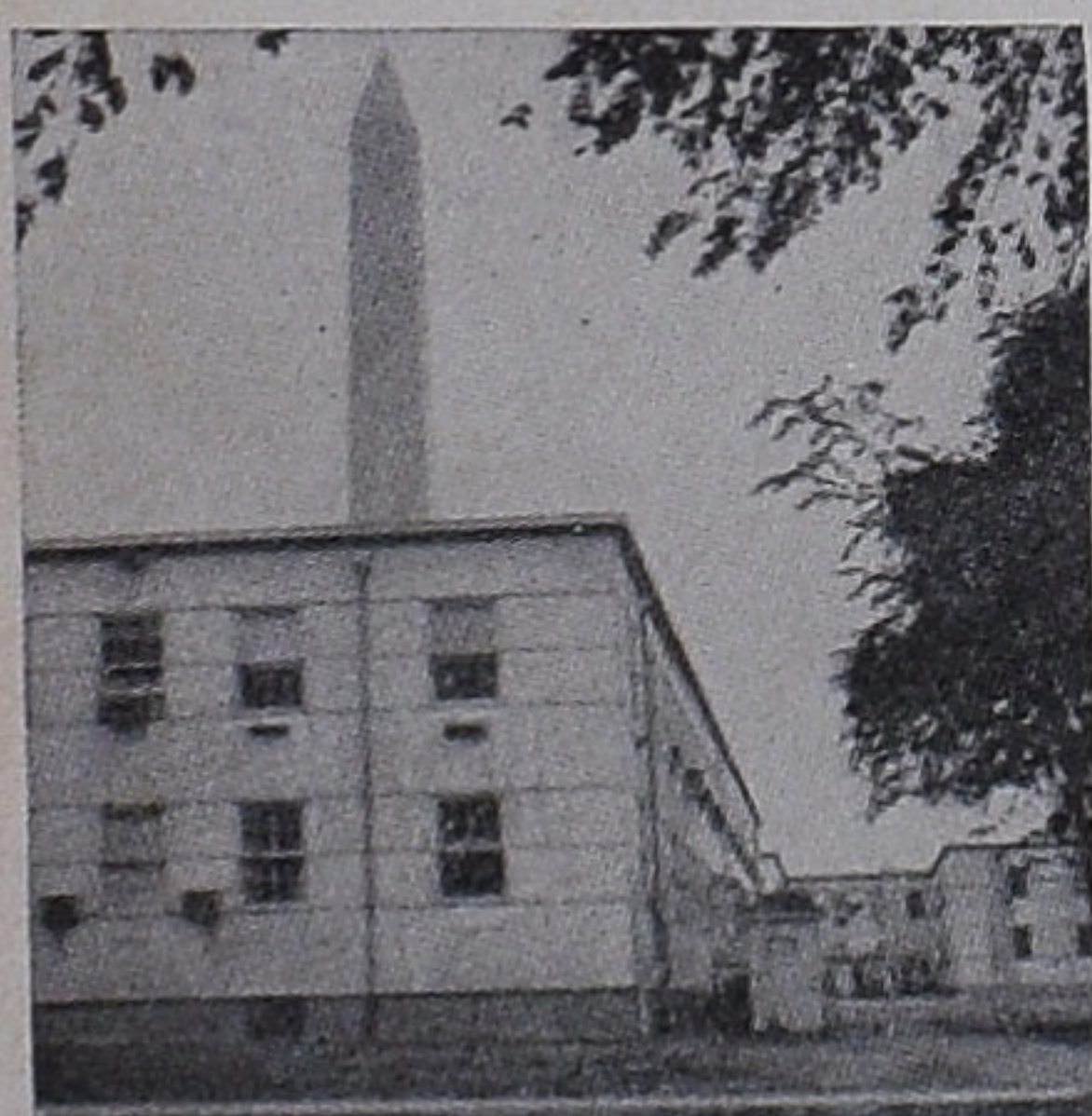


# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

In their December editorial, the editors paid tribute to "the best friend the arts in America, including architecture, (have) had in the White House since Thomas Jefferson." Apparently, John F. Kennedy was also the most interested reader of FORUM ever to occupy the presidential mansion.

This became clear on December 1 when Artist William Walton wrote for the *Washington Post* a full page account of the late President's love for his city. A close personal friend of Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy, Walton was the President's unofficial counselor on art and architecture and for six months has been head of Washington's Fine Arts Commission. The introductory paragraph of his account and his references to our magazine are of particular interest to other FORUM readers:

"One of John F. Kennedy's many radiant faces was turned toward architecture. Of all the arts this was the one closest to



his heart. His interest was not that of a dilettante trying to design buildings which professionals would later put into rational shape. His was the interest of a cultivated man who recognized in architecture the true expression of his age and who realized that as President he could influence architecture and thus the face of the land he loved. . . .

"The January 1963 issue of the ARCHITECTURAL FORUM devoted

all its pages to a critique of Washington architecture, a good deal of it very unfavorable. I knew he would be interested. His voracious appetite for reading is well known. The only problem always was to get his devoted and wise secretary, Evelyn Lincoln, to put it in one of the many reading piles that stood beside his various operation posts—his office desk, his rocking chair, his bedside table. She slipped the ARCHITECTURAL FORUM into a strategic place.

"Within 24 hours he had read it from cover to cover and phoned me. 'What are we going to do about the Washington Monument Grounds,' he said without introduction.

"'What do you mean,' I asked. 'You know what I mean. I've read your magazine and I've looked out at the Monument Grounds and I think they're right. I'm telling Connie Wirth [National Park Service head] to consult with you and get that cleaned up. And let's get those "tempos" off the Mall right away.' (General Services Administration has already scheduled the first demolition of these unsightly World War II buildings—seen at left.

"These were quick details that he could clean up immediately. And next day he insisted on talking about the deeper criticisms the magazine had made of architecture in Washington. . . . His taste was broad enough to recognize that Saarinen's Dulles Airport is one of the great beauties of our time. He also thought and said that glass curtain façades were not for the heart of Washington's federal area."

Would that all of FORUM's readers reacted as positively to the editors' criticism as did the late John F. Kennedy. The building of a better America would come more quickly if they did.

—J.C.H. JR.

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