

historic element and assigned to its every side executive department buildings only.

"It is hard to believe it, but this was approved. More difficult of belief was the advocacy of the design shown to surround the three sides of the square with the columns of the Treasury. This was actually begun in 1919 with the construction of the Treasury Annex, the first section of a proposed single building the length of Madison Place. The deed was done. Goodby to the Benjamin Tayloe and Dolly Madison houses, St. John's Church, Daniel Webster and George Bancroft, the Decatur and all other buildings on the west. With its mind on planning alone the AIA approved the plan and soon did the National Commission of Fine Arts. No little plan had been made here—nor one with even a little consideration for historic values.

"In line with this pronouncement the Government soon bought all remaining property on Madison Place. The occupants were allowed to remain on short notice to vacate. More recently the Government has completed purchase of all property in the block between Jackson Place and 17th Street, except the Decatur House and the National Grange—an organization politically too difficult to move except to a site around the corner where it has built itself a new office building. On Jackson Place the Grange, the Brookings Institution, and others had built so as to change much of the old character. On H Street, the Government has done nothing and all ideas as to maintaining residential character have been lost, commerce has taken over and it is no longer a real part of the square. The first offender was the 10-story Veterans' Administration building that in 1919 took over the site of the Arlington Hotel. Little of the old will remain—St. John's Church, saved by the grace of God, and the adjoining Ashburton House, by the militant ownership of two elderly gentlewomen who wished to live in their ancestral home and more recently by its acquisition by the church. The Decatur House was saved by the same militant ownership and resistance to Government pressure and now by its ownership by the National Trust. Finally, we shall apparently always have the White House, by grace of the efforts of the Institute's resident Secretary Glenn Brown and his influence with President Theodore Roosevelt, as well as the talents of Charles Follen McKim, when during that administration the building was threatened by designs of a Government agency with many extended wings and columns. That is not all the danger it has faced. In the McMillan Commission report of 1902, three methods were considered for its greatest use: First, additions at the east and west ends (not advised). Second, to give it up entirely to public business and build a residence for the President 'on one of the commanding hills overlooking the city' (not recommended as being unpopular). Third, remove all Executive Office and devote the President's house entirely to residence purposes. ('Favored by the present Chief Executive; and to the Commission it seems to be the best solution of the problem possible at this time.')

"But the square was treated roughly: 'The location of the building to contain the Executive Office is a more difficult matter; but the Commission is of the opinion that while temporary quarters may well be constructed in the grounds of the White House, a building sufficient in size to accommodate those offices may best be located in the center of Lafayette Square. This suggestion must be taken in connection with the full development of the plan outlined below.'

"Here in a long paragraph is a statement of departments that needed quarters, ending, 'The proper solution of the grouping of the executive departments undoubtedly is to be found in the construction of a series of edifices facing Lafayette Square.' It had been previously written that these should be convenient to the White House, 'which is their common center.'

"The die has been cast. Since the plan of 1901 there apparently has been no hope of preserving the old square, so now it must be seen to that the buildings facing it on the east and west complement in every way the President's House, so that the square remains as its beautiful foreground and visual approach. Some very bad designs have been proposed for these areas and wisely abandoned. Under the present program, much better results can be expected. Recent acts of Congress have directed that on the complete block west, there be a building for the Executive Offices of the President, and on the east, a building for U.S. courts. Franklin Floete, former Administrator of the General Services Administration, the Government agency responsible for nonmilitary Federal building, with two Washington members of the institute, Leonard L. Hunter and J. Rowland Snyder, in charge of architectural design, engaged two well-known