

FOGGY BOTTOM



Published from time to time for the Foggy Bottom Restoration Association
January 1962

WATER GATE TOWN

The President of the Foggy Bottom Restoration Association delegated your editor to represent the organization at the October hearing of the District Zoning Commission on the proposed Watergate Development. The Association at its October meeting had passed a motion which took the position of "not opposing" the zoning appeal requested by Island Vista, Inc., of Washington, which is associated in the project with Societa Generale Immobiliare of Rome.

At the hearing, a group of spokesmen for the project covered many phases of the proposal -- its legal and physical aspects, its advantages to the District and to Foggy Bottom, its esthetic appeal. They showed models and charts that depicted both the development as it would appear if zoning exceptions were allowed, and the structures that the corporation could build under present zoning restrictions, if the exceptions requested were not allowed.

The 10-acre plot is bounded by Virginia Avenue, New Hampshire Avenue, F Street, and Rock Creek Parkway. Plans call for the expenditure of about \$65 million in creating a unique residential development with its adjunct hotel, office, commercial space, and underground parking for 1,250 cars. The Zoning Commission was requested to waive the present 90-foot height limit and the present limit on allowable number of stories, permitting a maximum height of 130 feet. The proposed plans for the development are drawn to harmonize with those of the projected Cultural Center, which will adjoin it on the south. The area, if developed as planned, is to be called "Water Gate Town."
(continued on page 2)



(Continued from page 1)

All of the space in existing streets within the development area and a third of the space owned by the corporation will be devoted to an open park area available to the public. It will be landscaped with reflecting and spray pools and other decorative features.

Action on the Corporation's appeal has been deferred, primarily because of the objection of the chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission, Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe, a resident of Georgetown, who believes that all of the land should be reserved for use as a public park.

All three of the Washington daily newspapers, seldom in agreement on any public question, have endorsed the proposed development editorially. We quote briefly from the News, which summarizes the position expressed in the Post and the Evening Star.

The land is owned by Societa Generale Immobiliare of Rome, a publicly owned company which bought it for cash.

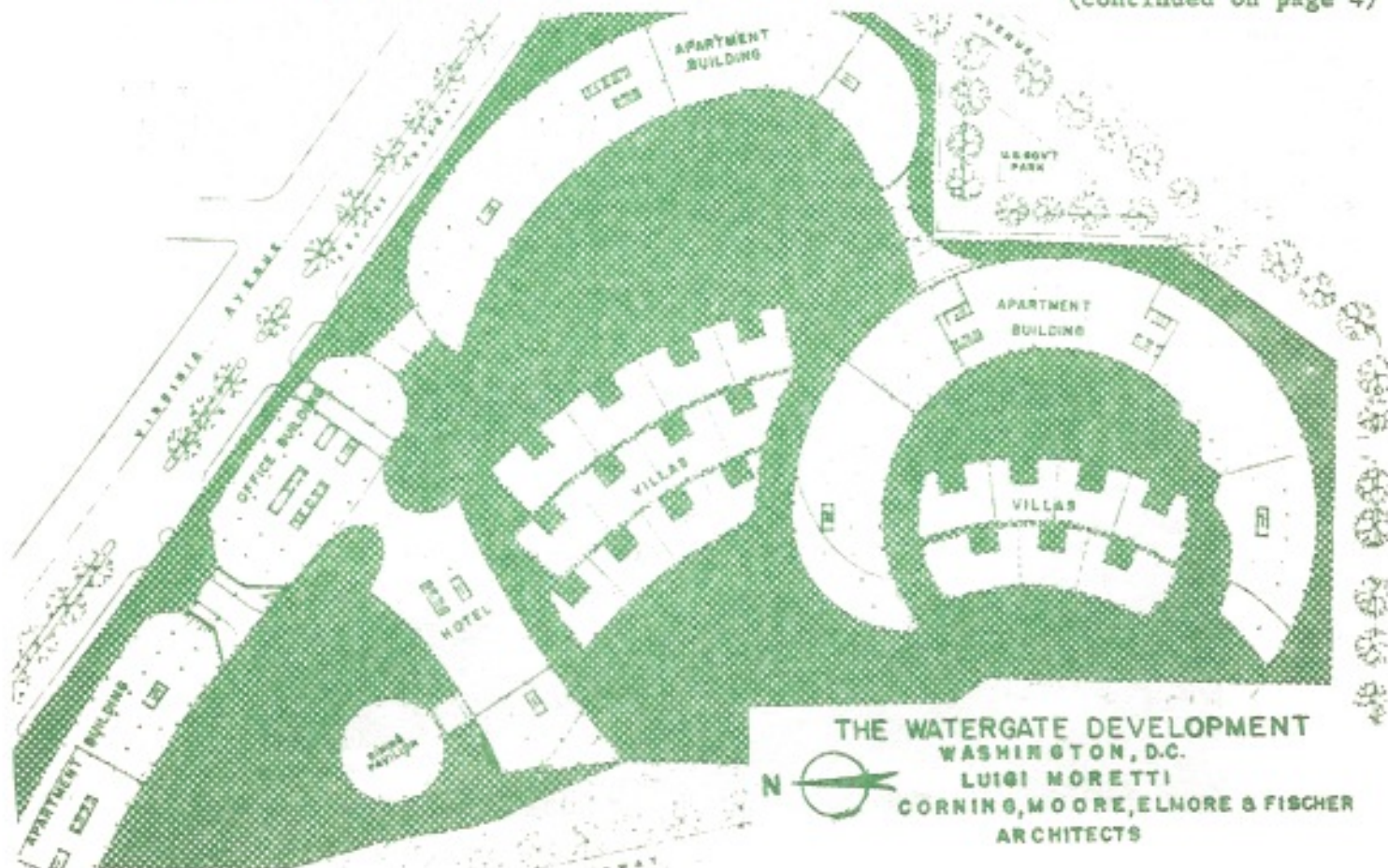
The construction will be financed entirely by private capital. No Government help is asked.

Only 45 percent of the 10-acre tract will be covered by buildings -- and these will be constructed on columns, or stilts, permitting a clear view across the river from the ground.

The entire area will be closed to surface traffic and opened to pedestrians -- those who live there and everybody else as well. Underground parking will be provided for at least 1250 cars.

The buildings, themselves, have been designed to complement the proposed National Cultural Center which -- if it's ever built -- will be built next door.

(continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 2)

The fact that the public doesn't own the land -- and that the chances Congress would ever appropriate the money to buy it and improve it are dim at best -- apparently didn't occur to Mrs. Rowe.

The project will turn a piece of city wasteland into a complex of interesting buildings which should bring the District more than \$1 million a year in real estate taxes alone. That it also will stimulate the economy of Downtown Washington and make this town a pleasanter one in which to live seems obvious.

We can hardly afford to trifle with a solid plan for the practical use of city land.
