



# OUR NATIONAL CAPITOL

AN ARCHITECT PROPOSES ADDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

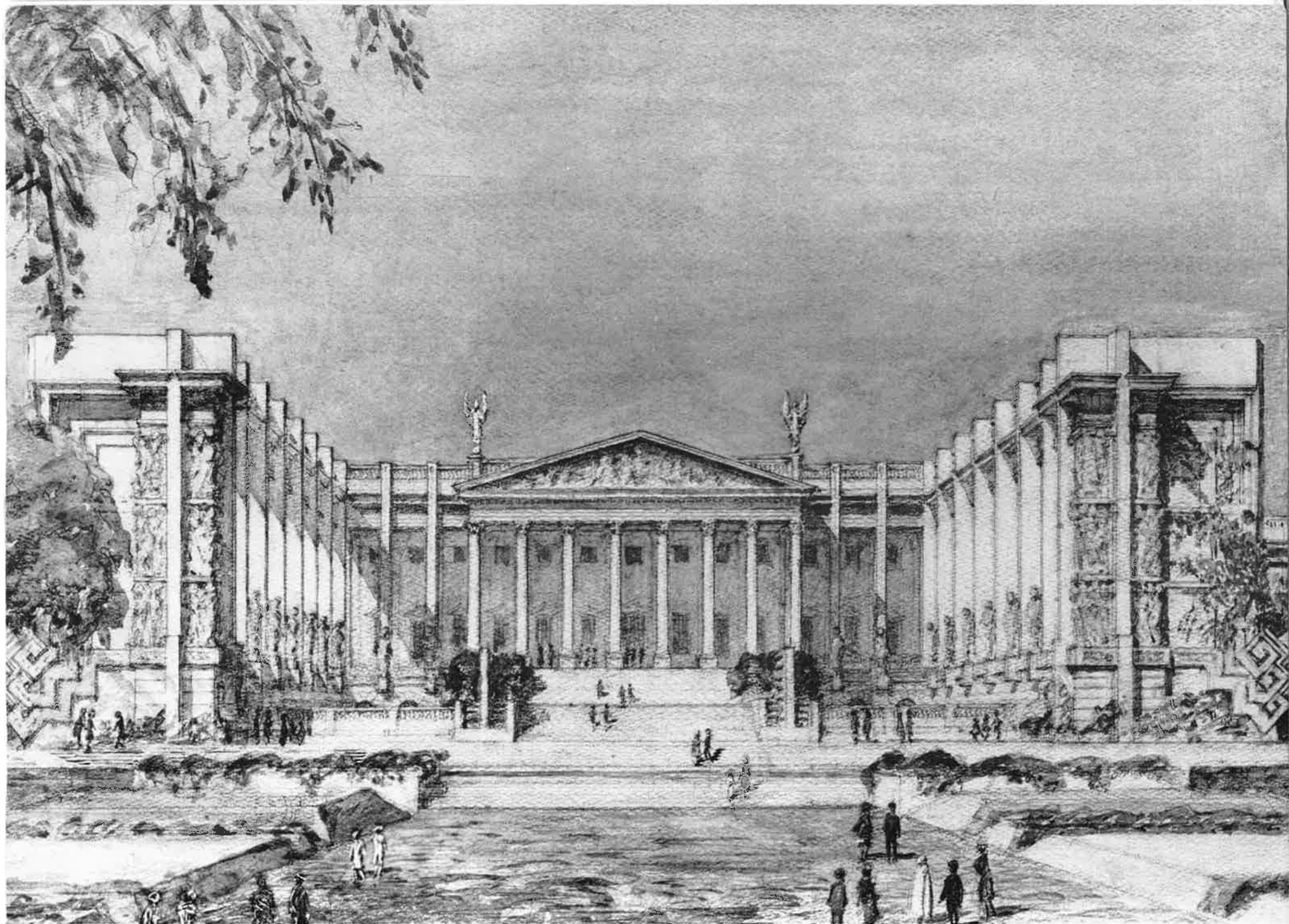
BY WILLIAM DRUMMOND

# OUR NATIONAL CAPITOL

AN ARCHITECT PROPOSES MINOR  
ADDITIONS TO CAPITOL AND  
EXTENSIVE CHANGES WITHIN  
ITS ENVIRONING AREA



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WILLIAM DRUMMOND



## INTRODUCTORY EXPLANATION



It is from the east that our Capitol shows most clearly the original portion, the cornerstone of which was laid by our first president. With deep appreciation we look on this small and modest edifice in which the growth of our nation has centered.

Of rectangular shape, its northern portion was divided into chambers for Senate and Supreme Court usage, the southern, undivided, served for meetings of the "House"; all three being connected at the center by the relatively large circular lobby or "Rotunda." These are on the main floor. The first floor was used for offices, entrance and other utilitarian purposes.

By the 1850's work had begun which resulted in the large "wing" additions for both Senate and "House," the library addition on the West and the tower consisting of peristyle and dome. The tower, formed and painted in imitation of solid stone, was constructed of relatively light cast iron sections bolted together, using the roof-high walls of the Rotunda for support. The dome, as a symbol of authority reaching high above surrounding buildings, was intended to emphasize the importance of our Capitol in relation to the growing city. It can be seen from all of the twelve avenues leading outward from it, the Mall being counted as one.

Later, the broad terraces along North, South and West Facades were added to give the building a much needed spread of base atop the "Hill."

It will be recalled that The Congress, at the turn of the century, appointed a commission of distinguished men who were to plan the development of the central area of Washington. In this undertaking the commission sought to realize, or to properly reestablish, one of the principal features of President Washington's L'Enfant plan, that of a formal gardened promenade-way

stretching from the Capitol to the west on the lower land so as to provide a feature both fine for use and rich in interest that would make for beauty of views to be had both from and toward the hill-top setting.

Through their recommendations, railway yards, warehouses and all other buildings, except the Smithsonian Museum, were swept out of what is now the Mall. The rails from Virginia and Southern points were passed underground around the Capitol so as to join with others at a location suitable for a single (union) station.

Imbued with the spirit of the earlier planners they boldly drew the lines of the Mall across the city to center on Washington Monument and thence, reaching clear to the Potomac, they sketched the new Lincoln Court with sites for pool and monument. Soon to come were the buildings of The National Museum, The Freer Galleries and many government office buildings so that this portion of the city began to take shape somewhat in accord with the original plans.

Ever since working with the architect-chairman of that commission on plans for the Union Station here we had been dimly conscious of certain shortcomings in the scope of the commission's planning. There seemed to be a serious let-down in the relation of the Capitol with its environs. However, no opportunity came to admit of careful investigation of this angle of the problem until these recent war years — then the awakening!

Was it not fated that the enquiring and venturesome spirit of our day would come abreast of the national problems here posed and give intensive study to the architectural expression of our Capitol, to essential features required in its setting and to improvement in the means of approach, in short, try to pull it out of the unfinished aspect of its present condition?

One way seemed to be open whereby to start such a move. Why not write a treatise showing a step by step approach to the problems much in the manner in which an architect would study them and then illustrate how the proposed changes would compare with existing conditions.

Study was seriously undertaken and continued. Much that at first seemed to be involved awaited examination and simplifi-

cation. It was seen that each part of an acceptable plan must have considerable appeal to a wide variety of studiously critical citizens and that all must add up to such increase of utility and attractiveness in our Capitol and its surroundings as to win approval through its comprehensive scope.



## ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE CAPITOL AND DESIGNS FOR ADDED FEATURES

**THE WEST FACADE.** To one who studies this broad front from an airplane view, such as is seen on page 9, it is evident that the several deep-set courts lend to the Capitol an air of un repose. In devising a way to serve the need we draw across each of the upper courts a colonnade which screens but does not too much obscure the recessed parts.

With this drawn, it is seen that the central part needs mass-emphasis in order not only to give more body from which the "wings" may seem to spread but also to give the appearance of a more adequate support to the tower. To serve this need we first draw the parapet as though increased in height around the central portion and, in this connection, we introduce massive piers to flank the too-delicate portico and supplement its mass. Secondly we place a fill of stepped seating between the broad stairways that stretch down to the lower terrace. This covers the deep cut of the lower court and also provides seating space now lacking, where visiting throngs may rest while looking out over the Mall and toward the Monument, the Potomac and the wide spread of the city against the green hills of Virginia.

Having noted by trial that the lower terrace does not afford good views at the existing level, either toward or away from the facade, we draw it as though built up to a higher level and show it enriched with fountain pools from which carved obelisks rise to give echo, in a minor note, to that struck by the great shaft of the Monument.

The terrace would have a front wall comparable in effect to that of the long upper terrace which would aid in making the central mass more important while serving still another purpose.

**"THE HILL."** Sloping gently upward from the Mall and crowned by the Capitol, as seen on page 16, the breast of the "Hill" might be regarded as the most outstanding opportunity for landscaping in our planning. To grace the Capitol with a more spacious foreground and to afford a more harmonious merging with the Mall we would extend and fill out the base of the "Hill." A part of this added space together with areas leading up to the lower terrace would be devoted to a circlet of gardens. These might be called the "Garden of The States" to symbolize our union of states as the basis of national government.

The lower terrace, described above, would lead to and overlook these gardens and thus we should have a delightful center in seating, terrace and gardens which on occasions might be peculiarly attractive to casual visitors, especially on some of the many moonlit evenings when music might be rendered.

**PERISTYLE and DOME.** Looking now to study the effect of our relatively small additions, we may say that the western front has gained in unity of composition. The central mass builds up to more ably support the towering dome. An ordered rhythm of light and shade is cast by the colonnades which, drawing the building's frontal masses into harmonious alignment, also break into pleasing pattern the foil of the deep-set courts.

Critical attention now centers on the peristyle and dome. We weigh the impress of the peristyle, whose great circle of deep set windows gives universal outlook, its columned structure a pleasing repetition of parts seen in portico and colonnade.

But the dome — nodulated, ribbed, ring-bound, much cut with its seventy-two windows, topped with clumsy cupola, tipped with heavy figure — is loaded with too many features to be able to give the finishing touch that we require.

Manifestly built to draw attention, it should appear to be the sum and symbol of the whole ensemble.

With intent to serve this end we draw the dome as though

faced in durable, untarnishable metal which would harmonize with the light grey marble in the walls below. We would smooth the troubled surface, give to it unbroken sweep from base to tip and thus enable it to lift more lightly to the figure of Freedom at its summit.

In order to provide the rimming mass required to set off upthrust character in the dome, we show a broadened parapet above the peristyle. This might bear a sculptural decoration appropriate to our purposes.

Given free hand in the decor of parapet and dome, the modern spirit, youthful and vigorous, would quickly consign to oblivion the facial character of our imitative shell of painted iron.

In place thereof we might have the delicate and graceful lines of leaf and stem and flower wrought to surfaces and moulded parts or given flair in silhouetted masses.

**THE EAST FACADE.** Critics have long cited faults that mark our Capitol's East front. As will be seen on page 60<sup>13</sup>, there is a lack of good supporting mass beneath the tower. The fronts of House and Senate wings are ordinary; they seem to be much encumbered with great stairways, and the lack of level grounding impairs the whole facade.

With relatively little change, these and other faults would disappear. We indicate a way in which this can be done.

**ROAD ACCESS.** It will be observed that through careless planning, or lack of planning, a large auto parking lot with street runways has been made at the very steps of our Capitol. Blowing auto horns, racing motors and the ever present danger of being run down while trying to contemplate this historic spot are abominations that should hardly be regarded complacently.

To serve the need in this extremity, how simple it would be to first remove the necessary roadway to a somewhat lower level beneath the great stair and portico construction and thus preserve adequate access to the building? By so doing we could provide ample underground parking space with connections to the new roadway.

We would then be free to transform the foreground of the building appropriately with terraces and gardens and, therewith,



provide an entrance approach which all would recognize as more modernly fitting than that existing.

**NEW TOWER WALLS.** At times our Capitol's entrance front has been changed, mostly to realize the original design, but now, with the peristyle support resting partly on the roof of the portico, an unbalanced effect is quite evident. Other existing features also tend to emphasize this disturbing effect.

To offset this condition we draw high walls to solidly flank the gabled portion of the portico. These would extend around the tower so as to give the four-square effect of supporting, in monumental uplift, the peristyle and dome. They would be partly built upon and partly extended well forward of the existing walls.

**HOUSE AND SENATE ENTRANCES.** Not only to distinguish the entrances to House and Senate chambers but also to provide variety of design for the entire building, we would again use colonnades but differently from the manner suggested for the West Facade.

Here, somewhat in conformity with ancient origin, they would form open courtways. With columns backed against plain interior piers, the structure would extend straightly from the building's sidewalls and terminate at such a line as would permit of clearance for the roadway beneath, the termination being signalized by piers of marble rising in monumental proportions to flank the open side of each of the courtways.

These piers are so designed as to capitalize on the very prominent positions which they would occupy in the composition of the Capitol's front. While framing the two stairways pleasingly and partly concealing the roadway, the colonnaded courtways would give a satisfying and much needed forward thrust

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OPPOSITE PAGE: WEST FRONT, BEFORE — AFTER. *Below:* Photo of the Capitol. Shows, in foreground, the Lower Terrace with long stairways leading up to the Main Terrace and the court between them. At center, the "old library" wing with portico, then the tower with peristyle and dome. At top, fronting on First Street East is the Congressional Library Building (partly obscured). It stands beside East Capitol Street — blocks Pennsylvania Avenue. Right, part of the "House" Office Building. *Above:* The same photo as that below, altered to show changes. In foreground the lower terrace is raised — leads down to "circler gardens" — up to stepped seating placed so as to cover court between shortened stairs. At center, the wall at roof (parapet) is raised and the portico is changed so as to attain a more massive effect. Colonnades screen the deep courts, tie the frontal portions in line. The dome is simplified, a higher parapet on the tower peristyle gives it more uplift. Beyond are seen portions of "forecourts," "forum" and "plaza."



to the wings of the building and, as will later be seen, they would also function in a way to meet other purposes.

**PARTERRE AND PLATFORM.** In order to provide not only for a covered entrance from the driveway to the building's first floor but also to provide a broadened entrance above, there would be an elevated parterre at the central portico. From it would rise the main stairway, much shortened in number of steps and extended the full width of the portico. The parterre would open onto a long platform extending lengthwise of the building, which would link our proposed courtways and connect the three great stairways for ceremonial occasions.

Steps would extend along the platform to join it to a wide parade way. The steps and platform, combining with other parts, would fill the need of base-work and level grounding for the entire facade and would also overcome the effect of too much height in the first story walls of the building.

**AT THE STEPS OF THE CAPITOL.** In our various views are drawn the simple changes and additions above described. The forecourts to "House" and Senate balance pleasingly as they reach boldly forward and abruptly terminate. Figures of illustrious members might be mounted at the base of the piers in these courts and their four great terminal piers are suitable for sculptural decoration that would harmonize in scale with that existing in the pediments over the respective entrances.

The older central portion gains in repose, the tower — no longer unbalanced — serenely embodies some measure of symbolic character. With tower and entrance additions and with the tie-together of parterre and platform, an appearance of large-scale unity definitely replaces that of three buildings casually set in a row.

Taking advantage of the fact that the entrance to the Supreme Court Building is opposite to that of the Senate, we connect them with a broad walkway across the grounds. We draw a similar walkway extending from the "House" entrance toward the Congressional Library Building. These, together with the paradeway along the Capitol's front and the adjacent street,

would form a large promenade square which would mark the important relation which these buildings have in the functioning of our government.

It will now be apparent how our design for the East Front has been conceived with intent to emphasize the character of the forefront grounds as our most important national gathering place.

With commotion of traffic removed, with sod-set stone terraces and formal planting to embellish our foreground, and with a permanent speaker's dais to center attention, tranquility and beauty should be more in evidence especially for meetings which are held, traditionally, at the steps of our capitol.

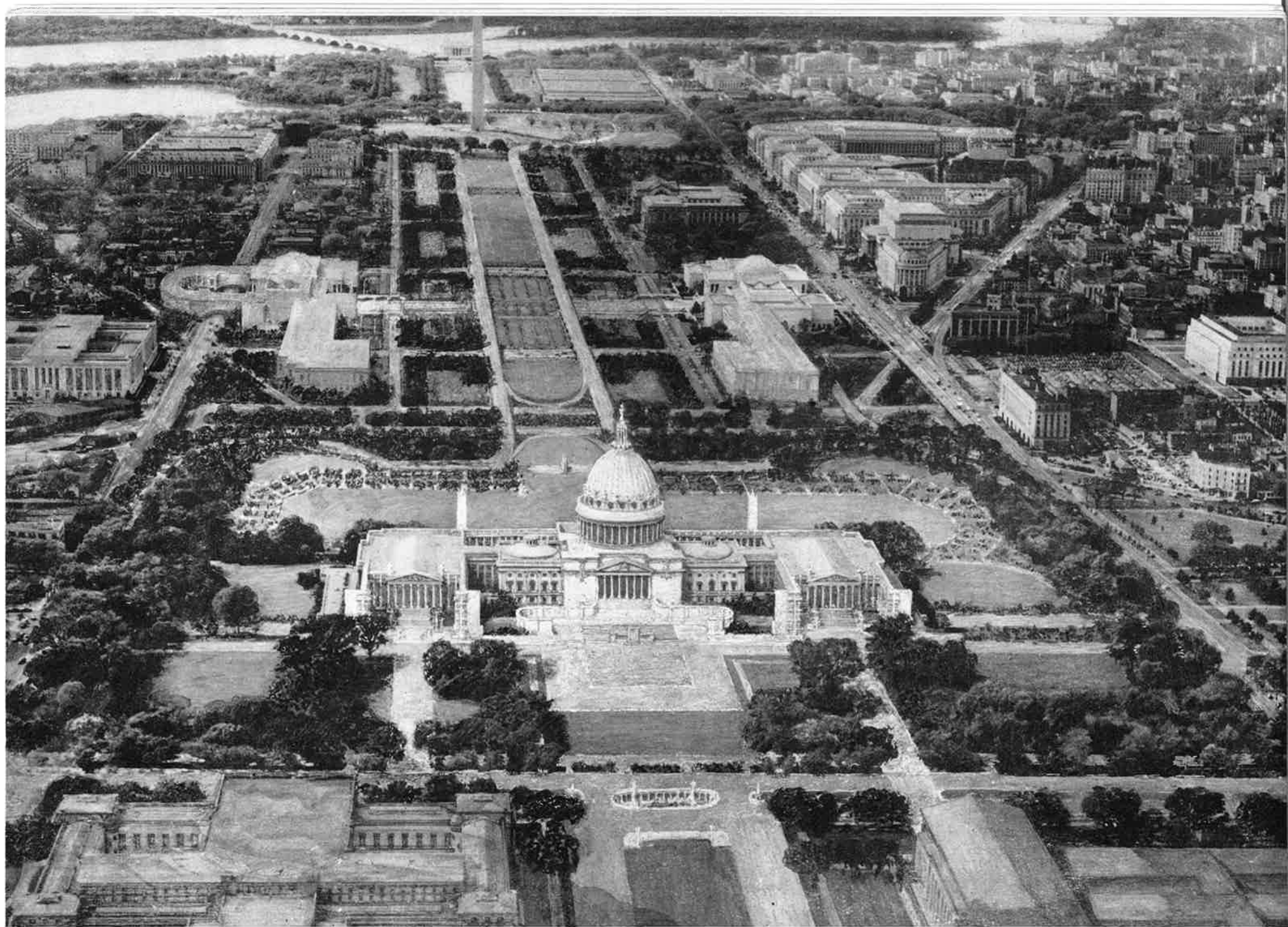
**THE ROTUNDA.** The Capitol's steps lead one within its walls to the great Rotunda which, through the generations, has been trod by millions of our citizens and by countless visitors from other lands. The axes of Washington strike through its center, a point from which the mind's eye looks to the East, whence we came, and to the once endless stretches of the West, wherein we have spread to the farther ocean.

With the removal of official activities to more remote parts and with the separate establishment of government agencies that now occupy many buildings widely spread, this lobby serves relatively less official use while it receives increasing numbers of visitors.

Before the change to the higher dome, top lighting may have provided pleasing illumination. Now, however, one enters an austere and somewhat gloomy interior at the base of a room whose height is truly impressive. Looking up and up one sees a curious or minced agglomeration of classic forms that appear to be too high-set and too far out of the ordinary range of vision to be of interest in design.

Below the peristyle windows there are ordinary brown marble wall facings. Famous paintings are inappropriately set at the base of the wall.

How can the Rotunda be better adapted to the formal office in which it serves such numbers? When entering, should not a subdued richness of beauty in form and color surround the beholder?



VIEW FROM EAST—BEFORE AND AFTER: CAPITOL AT CENTER WITH ENVIRONS

*Below*—In foreground, approaching the Capitol, is East Capitol Street and, extending beyond it, the Mall. At upper right is diagonal Pennsylvania Ave. which, in crossing Constitution, passes National Galleries on left and marks point of "The Triangle" (big Gov't offices). At upper left and lower right is diagonal Maryland Ave. At top left corner is Jefferson Monument and exactly opposite (right) the White House. Lower right, Supreme Court (white) Building, left, Congressional Library—roofs of "Annex" and "Folger" showing. At right and left of "Grounds," Senate and "House" Offices. In the background, "the Shaft," Lincoln Monument, Pool, the Potomac River and Virginia. (Our Capitol should survive the ages. The obvious threat is, first, neglect, then wrecking to replace, perhaps in glinting white marble.)

*Above*—Same photo as below, marginally cut away and altered to show the Capitol with support walls and tower and simplified dome, House and Senate "forecourts" and at forefront center, the "forum"—the latter having the wide parterred entrance, to portico and lateral extensions to streets as "parade way." Street widening forms the "plaza" in foreground which, with forum and broad connecting walkways, give the Capitol, the "Court" and the "Library" a group setting indicative of their importance. Beyond the Capitol, the "circler" gardens, the lateral "traffic way," the Mall's "connected" roadways and "border gardens" together with the "mate" to pair with National Galleries complete the "changes." (The "Library" is shown domeless, the "Court" without its south wing, free-standing in true temple style.)

Fairchild Aerial Surveys



One way to accomplish this would be to first pierce the Rotunda's wall so as to expand the floor area into the surrounding top-lighted area, made available with our proposed offset tower walls; thus with pleasing vistas we would banish gloom — give breadth to balance height. On the great sweep of the circular wall we could have, in paint or mosaics, a wealth of decorative color giving, let us say, some trace of the majesty of Niagara, Grand Canyon or the charm of mountain vale or prairie harvest scenes.



## STUDY OF THE CAPITOL'S NEIGHBORING BUILDINGS AND APPROACHES AND CHANGES INHERENTLY REQUIRED THEREIN

**CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY BUILDING.** Group planning did not characterize the growth of construction around the Capitol until the erection of the Congressional Library building. In recent years, as this began to bulge with accumulating documents, plans were worked out for an "annex" which was located eastwardly and diagonally across Second Street which intervenes. Instead of being faced in the "Capitol Grey" of the main edifice, the "annex" came forth in glinting white marble and, to add to the discord, was of a totally different style.

Adjoining this and facing East Capitol Street, the relatively small, one story, white marble Folger Shakespeare Library was built. Thus we have three single-purpose buildings on a site appropriate for the occupation of only the one, or the joined-three, that should be located there.

We draw a central reference room which, reaching from and being more particularly a part of the main building, would be opposite to and directly approached from our promenade way extending from the House entrance of the Capitol. This room would extend over Second Street for a main floor connection between the three libraries.

In any such construction the removal of the incongruous and pretentious dome which roofs the existing reading room would be imperative, that is, if an architectural composition at

all appropriate is to result. Ever since its erection critics have not ceased to deplore the effect of this massive object perched aloft and so much out of place as to be the only high construction ever permitted to be placed so near to and in competition with the Capitol's dome.

**SUPREME COURT BUILDING.** Due to the necessity of widening East Capitol Street the South wing of the Supreme Court Building would have to be removed. The higher main part of the building having the impressive long roof of Greek origin would then be adapted, by means of a remodeled facing, to form a much more imposing facade disposed southwardly than is presently the case.

With this change, large windows or perhaps windows combined interestingly with latticed apertures would permit the now somber antechamber, chief large feature of the interior, to be flooded with the light of day. In making the alteration, minor changes could be effected which, in no small measure, would bring more of harmony into play where, under existing conditions, that quality is lacking in the relation of the "Court" to "Library" and Capitol.

**CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES.** In the recent past the House and Senate Office Buildings were built in block-type, closed-court style on the southeast and northeast sides of the Capitol grounds respectively. In effect they balance well, are subordinate to the Capitol, are unobtrusive and in good taste. They are built in the "Capitol Grey" marble.

But the more recently built House Annex office building is less fortunate in effect. Its ill chosen location, lack of conformity of design and near-white color are regrettable. As when white marble was used for Supreme Court, and the "Annex" and Folger Libraries, there was no evident regard for unity or harmony in the over-all sense of group planning. The white, glaring in Washington's bright sunlight, looms to blind one; sometimes unwashed and soil streaked, it seems, like snow, to be unstable and ill adapted, whereas the cool, light grey, absorbing much light, relaxes one's vision — seems to be more reposeful and substantial — gives impress of comfortable age and durability.





THE MALL AND  
"GARDENS"

ABOVE: THE GALLERIES  
BELOW: "MATE," "LINK GARDENS"

THIRD STREET "TRAFFIC-  
WAY" AND DIAGONALS

CONSTITUTION  
INDEPENDENCE

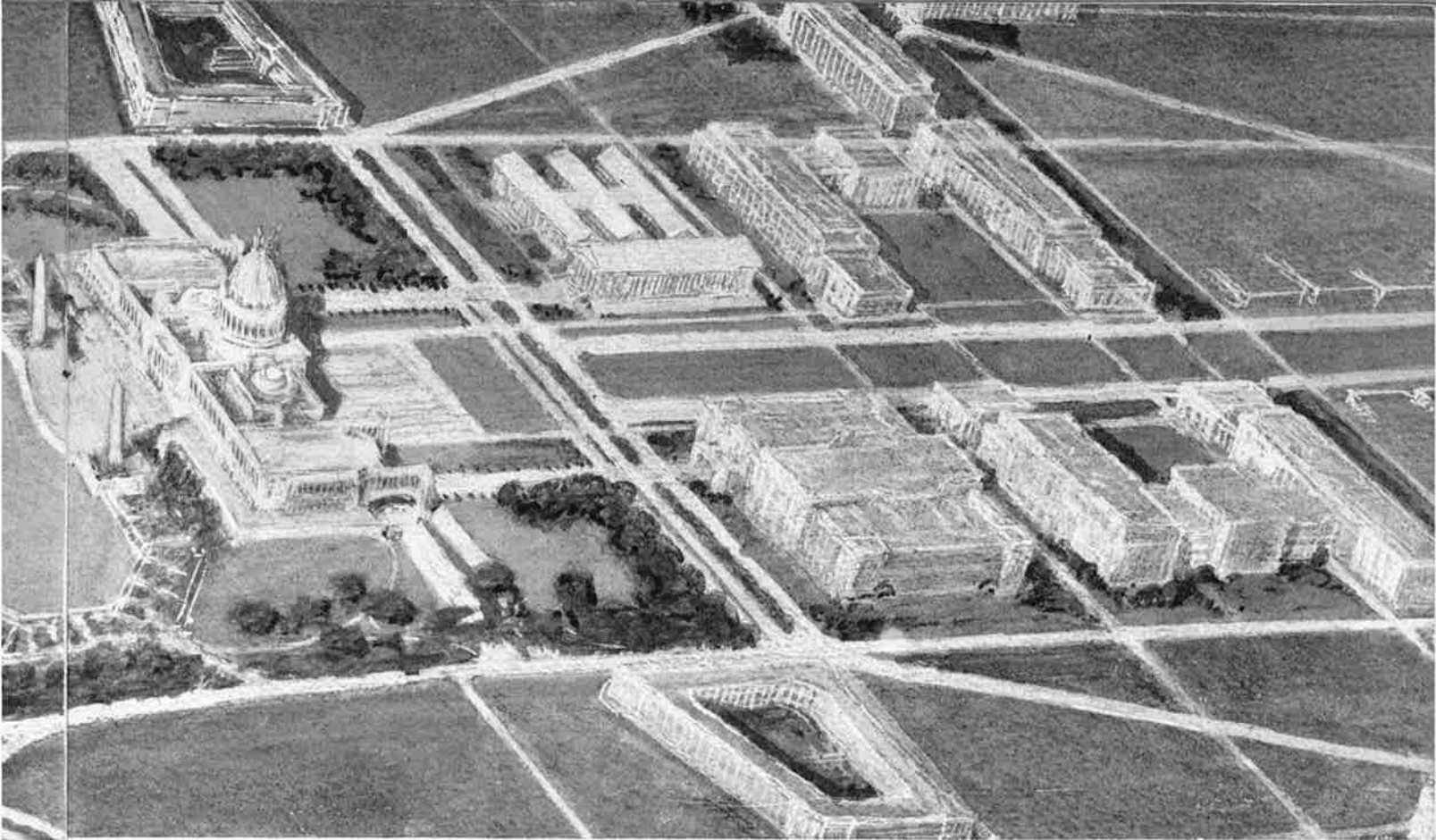
THE CAPITOL AND SURROUNDINGS

**EAST CAPITOL STREET.** Since views of the Capitol are almost wholly obscured by trees lining this, the only direct approach from the East, an open setting for the building could be provided only by greatly widening East Capitol Street.

Although by far the more important of the building's longer fronts, the Easterly has been decidedly the more neglected in its setting.

L'Enfant, who planned the city, intended that our more important public buildings should be erected along the slight rise of East Capitol. Our widening, as illustrated, would prepare the way for using it thus in the coming years.

In order to provide an effect of spaciousness unattainable by other means and required as a build-up or introductory feature to appropriately set off our capitol group as approached from the East, we draw building extensions reaching to Fifth Street for possible future use by "Court" and "Library" (or other government usage) such as would form a large courtway



CAPITOL AND GROUNDS  
"CIRCLE GARDENS"—"FORUM"

"PLAZA"—SENATE AND  
HOUSE OFFICES

SUPREME COURT AND GROUP  
CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY AND GROUP

AS THEY WOULD APPEAR—LOOKING NORTH

balancing across East Capitol. The "Folger" and the "Annex" would form part of this building group which is intended to be symmetrical and uncrowded in effect.

**FIRST STREET—EAST.** Since the widened East Capitol, taken with other changes, would throw an enlarged traffic movement on and greatly increase the importance of First Street—East, we draw this street also greatly widened but only between Constitution and Independence. The two widened streets would form a T-shaped plaza.

The plaza would serve to more intimately relate our inner group of buildings, give House and Senate Offices, "Court" and "Library" each a setting more appropriate to its character. The removal of the "Court's" wing and the "Library's" dome are now seen to be imperatively required. Therewith a new facade on the "Court" would face East Capitol with reserve and dignity to be pleasingly opposed by the informally joined library buildings opposite.

To the openness of effect created by the plaza would be added that of the promenade square or national forum or whatever the area at the forefront of the Capitol might be named. With the approaches thus opened the Capitol would at last be able to stand forth in its woodland setting in a manner more appropriate to its office than is now the case.

Diagonal streets radiating from it tend to concentrate traffic at the Capitol. The climate's frequent humid heat and long rainy season oblige one to consider the travelling public in planning for improved traffic conditions. So, for those thousands whom the Capitol group houses and the tens of thousands it attracts, there seems to be every reason to provide ample auto parking, public transit facilities and walkways in subways which should interconnect these important buildings. Probably the transit subways should be continued quite extensively under adjacent streets.

As drawn, the projected street widenings show openings for light and air to serve a subway along First Street—East.

**PENNSYLVANIA AND MARYLAND AVENUES.** The near end of Maryland Avenue has long been shorn of its significance as one of the pleasingly balanced avenues that once approached the Capitol from the northeast and southeast before the building of the Congressional Library blocked Pennsylvania Avenue.

In our drawing we have indicated how part of its area might be used for "wing" additions to the Supreme Court Building to compensate for the wing removed, and have shown how both Maryland and Pennsylvania Avenues can be restored to good balance. We draw these avenues straightly from their intersections with Fifth Street East so as to deviate and intersect with Constitution and Independence respectively at First Street East.

**CONSTITUTION AND INDEPENDENCE AVENUES.** In planning to raise the base of the "Hill" for our garden extension we would include elevating therewith the adjacent parts of its stately bordering avenues: Constitution — which connects the Capitol grounds with the business and more populous north-

ern portions—and, parallel, Independence — which connects it more particularly to the industrial harbor front, the river bridges and the southern portions of Washington.

**NEW TRAFFIC WAY.** With the local elevation of these two East-West main arteries, long needed relief for heavy diagonal traffic along Pennsylvania and Maryland Avenues through the Mall would be obtained. Relief would also be effected for the other two diagonals, Louisiana and Canal, intersecting with them at Third Street West.

Intense traffic, difficult to clear at any city's center, must here be passed around the "Hill" grounds and be so tangled by the diagonals as to unduly inconvenience many thousands daily.

Uninterrupted movement of the heavier streams here, to be affected by our traffic way, would doubtless also effect a relatively early acceptance of other features of our proposals.

We draw this portion of Third Street to show the aesthetic and practical values of the engineering involved in our plan. Inclined approaches and separation by overpasses combined with two roadways would accomplish order without traffic signals.

**THE MALL.** To the city planner the long slump seen in the Mall as one approaches the "Hill" must seem to be a grave fault. Were he on any one of the Mall's four roadways, he would find the situation worse when, after having passed much interfering traffic at each cross street, he suddenly came to the road's end, and was compelled to detour for any further approach to the Capitol. To him or to anyone at all informed, it must seem obvious that by far the most important function of the Mall should be provision for direct and unimpeded access to the environs of the Capitol.

We draw certain blocks in the middle or channel portion of the eastern or "slump" end of the Mall as though built up to the higher level and show its two bordering roadways overpassing the cross-trafficways so as to ascend the "Hill" without interruption. Thus we dispel all of the deleterious effects of the "slump" and cause the "channel" to appear like a broad green ribbon stretching from our gardened slope at the one end to the rise of Monument Hill at the other. The border roads would

be "one-way" with observation stands for looking up toward the west front and gardens. They would be routed to pass "right," the one from Independence, the other into Constitution.

A circuit would thus be established which would lead around both Monument and Capitol with a minimum of interruption and thus tend to segregate "sight-seeing" traffic and dispel it at points remote from congested areas.

**THE NATIONAL GALLERIES.** Situated at the foot of the "Hill" and placed so prominently in the Capitol's foreground as to be linked with it by visual association, it must be evident to all that the well designed National Galleries Building should have a mate of similar design across the Mall oppositely disposed. Without the balanced symmetry thus to be provided in this important location, an appearance of pronounced incongruity in our group arrangement would result.

We draw to show how a mate, similar in frontal form and silhouette to the "Galleries," would combine with the latter in the suggested arrangement. We show formal gardens extending across the Mall to link them. These gardens should present outstanding opportunities for landscaping and architectural development, little of which need be lost to the view of countless travellers streaming past on the elevated highways above.

An asymmetrical extension of the "Galleries" is shown which might serve the enlarged needs of a future day. This is placed at the near side and so as to effect a pulling together of parallel broken masses across the Mall such as would tend to draw the pair into closer visual association with the Capitol.

Seen from the "Hill" the pair, merely by their balanced masses, would contribute impressively to the picture wherein, with buildings of many kinds, no symmetry exists. Reversely, they would appear to be not less impressive as they framed the view uphill toward the Capitol and its gardened forefront area.

**L'ENFANT GARDENS.** The character of that portion of the Mall that extends between the "Hill" and the Monument seems to require a landscape treatment differing from that which is being developed. Here are elms, only elms, all in rows, many still quite small, with trunks stark stiff in line, so that of grace-

ful swaying foliage so natural to the solitary elm, mostly all must disappear in the ever thickening mass.

Beneath those whose branches are interwoven with maturity of growth, caked earth and weeds in summer, mud in spring and fall avert all goodly purpose. To devote our Mall to more exalted usage should manifestly be our aim! Such large areas should serve the need of thousands for recreation or diversion.

There's a call in spring and summer for flowers, song birds, grass plots and arbored walks. In winter there's need of the color of evergreens—pine, laurel, and magnolia. There's virtue to be discovered daily in the tangle of thorny twigs or the knarly branching of sturdy oaks.

In those gardens that L'Enfant asked us to prepare, all might be ours in measureless perennial values.

In our drawing we have indicated open squares bordered informally with the lower-growing, less thickly foliated trees so that, with control of sunlight, we can be assured of growth for grass and shrubs. We would not conceal the finest of buildings with dense tree-growth. We would endeavor to give them appropriate landscape settings. The effect that we seek, which was clearly intended by the designers of the Mall, would be retained — a straightly channeled approach secluded and remote from commonly distractive scenes and one that would be so disposed as to unforgettably guide the eye toward either Monument or Capitol.



#### L'ENVOI

One purpose frankly sought is to prepare the way for Congress, or its appointed commission, to carry the work along through the technical operations of engineering, planning and having blue prints made available for appraisal and discussion.

For this part, costs would be insignificant. Only with this work accomplished could full investigation of practical advantages be had.

\* \* \* \*

We have done the best kind of a job that we know how to do with the many problems that seemed to be just waiting for someone to come along and take care of them. Strange indeed it is that to us should come the opportunity of seeing them and the pleasure of trying to solve them.

Just when our proposals may be adopted is anybody's guess. Time alone can give answer to that question.

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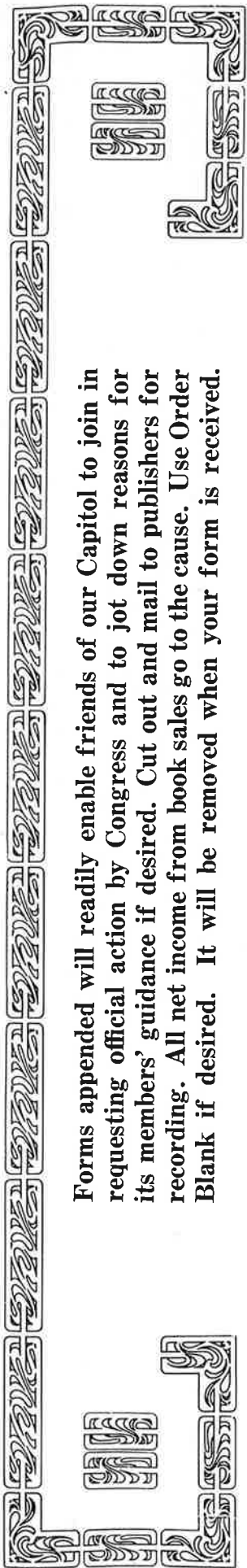
May we not now indicate how many a reader may take pleasure with pen and pencil — make this job his very own by giving shape to ideas that may be of value to the further progress of the work when it is undertaken by Congress? It will be surprising to see how many variations in design are obtainable. All that are received by the publishers will be presented in an orderly manner. All respondents should retain copies of their work as none may be returned.

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For information concerning the following books, write to Supt. of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL, Glenn Brown — 2 vols.

WASHINGTON, THE NATIONAL CAPITAL, H. P. Caemmerer.



Forms appended will readily enable friends of our Capitol to join in requesting official action by Congress and to jot down reasons for its members' guidance if desired. Cut out and mail to publishers for recording. All net income from book sales go to the cause. Use Order Blank if desired. It will be removed when your form is received.

(Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Addressing the Honourable Senators and Representatives of The Congress of The United States of America: I, the undersigned, request that you procure comprehensive plans for the more complete finishing of our Capitol and certain features in its surrounding area; and I direct NATIONAL CAPITOL PUBLISHERS to advise you of this request.

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