

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Depository Controversy Lingers

Kennedy Assassination Site Visioned as Museum, Library

By HUGH AYNESWORTH
Newsweek Feature Service

Eight years ago this Nov. 22, a sick young self-styled Marxist named Lee Harvey Oswald sneaked up to the sixth floor of a drab, red brick building in downtown Dallas. There he waited until 12:30 p.m. when he fired three rifle shots that rang 'round the world and took the life of President John F. Kennedy.

In the years since that awful moment, there have been countless controversies about the assassination. Most of them have by now faded away—all, that is, except one.

Now the city of Dallas is up in arms again—not about the tragedy itself—but about what should happen to the Texas School Book Depository, the building from which Oswald fired his shots.

UNTIL LAST YEAR, there was no reason to assume that the building would ever again be the focus of any uproar. Granted, it had become one of the world's most photographed structures with 3,000 to 4,000 tourists a day snapping shots from every conceivable exterior angle. But the Depository's principal owner, oilman D. Harold Byrd, kept it open and ran it quietly as it had always been run—as a storehouse for school books an office for several book publishers.

Then in April of 1970, Byrd put the building on the auction block and it was snapped up for the bargain price of \$650,000—by a colorful Nashville, Tenn., record company executive and ardent Kennedy buff named Aubrey Mayhew.

Mayhew quickly shut the building down and barred all visitors. But even before he could utter a word about his own plans for the Depository, citizens' groups and state legislators suddenly became very concerned.

Some wanted to tear it down; others envisioned a museum. But everyone was worried that Mayhew, who is known to have a collection of 20,000 items of Kennediana, would turn the building into a honky-tonk tourist trap.

"What I want," he says, "is a tasteful, meaningful museum and library." Some sections would contain his items of memorabilia. Others would store microfilms, books and newspapers about the assassination, providing facilities for what Mayhew calls "a continuing study of what happened here that day."

But Mayhew's plans do not impress State Sen. Mike McKool, who has been trying to get the state legislature to appropriate funds to reclaim the building from Mayhew.

McKool's vision of the "great museum" doesn't differ markedly from Mayhew's except that he says "people

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

"The Dallas
Morning News"
Dallas, Texas

Date: 11-18-71

Edition:

Author:

Editor: Jack B. Kruger

Title:

Character:

or

Classification:

Submitting Office: Dallas

Being Investigated

ENCLOSURE

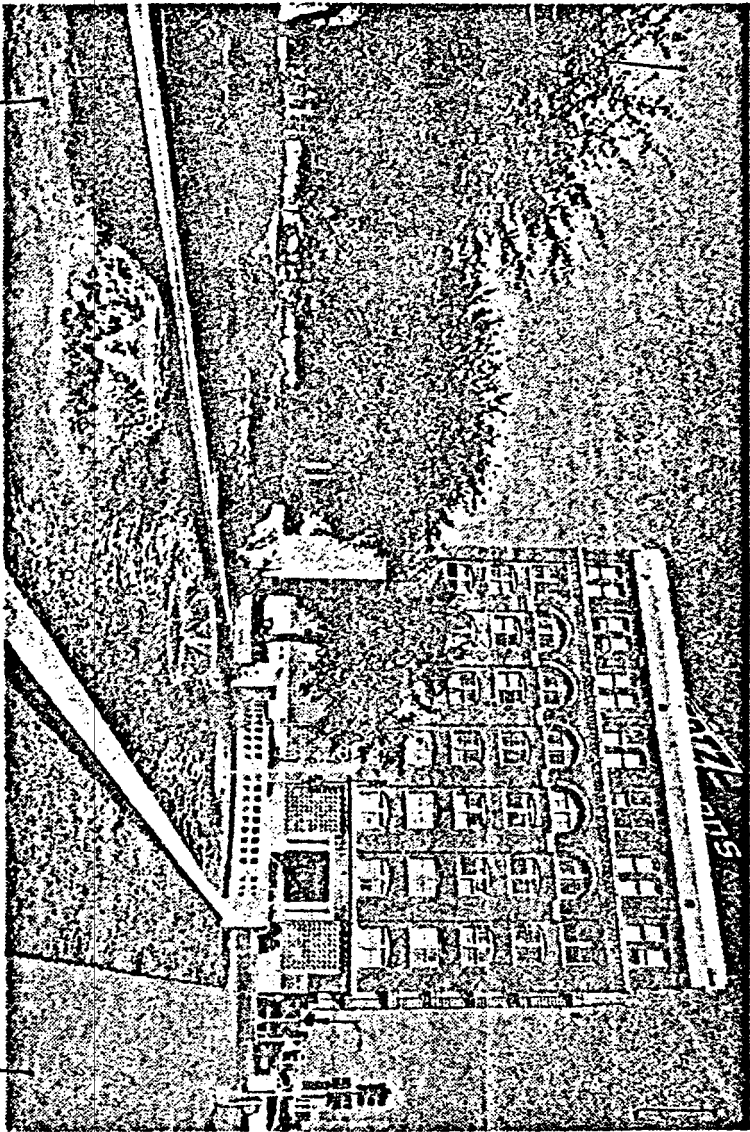
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and organizations would be willing to make gifts to the State of Texas whereas they wouldn't to a private organization or one for profit. The U.S. government has many items, such as the death weapons, that they would probably be willing to give to the state because this is the proper place for them."

Still another approach has been suggested by Raymond D. Nasher, the respected Dallas developer and cultural leader who heads the nine-member state commission set up to recommend how best the state could memorialize President Kennedy. At the moment, Nasher seems to favor tearing down the building.

"It is a very, very difficult problem to remodel properly," he says. "It isn't in very good condition. What you'd have to do, basically, is gut the thing and keep the exterior as it is. My personal feeling is that the site is important, a national landmark.

"BUT IF YOU COULD create something on the site which would be a working, living type of operation that was helping the state sociologically—in the name of the President—it would be much more meaningful than just keeping that red brick building as a landmark."



The Texas School Book Depository with a Dealey Plaza fountain in the foreground.

—Newspaper Feature Service Photo by Clint Grant.