

Texas Book Building Will Be Left as Is, Its New Owner Says

Nashville Collector of Kennedy Memorabilia Mulls Entry Fee, Calls Preservation Only Aim

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DALLAS—The Texas School Book Depository Building, from which the rifle shots that killed President Kennedy were allegedly fired on Nov. 22, 1963, will soon become "another Ford's Theater."

That's the plan of the building's new owner, Aubrey Mayhew, a Nashville, Tenn., business executive, who paid \$250,000 for the seven-story structure at a carnival-like auction here last week. In an interview, he said he "hopes to preserve the building just as it is so that day will always be remembered."

Accomplishing that goal without turning the building into a garish tourist trap (as many local residents fear) will be difficult, Mr. Mayhew contends. Already, he has rejected—and turned down—an offer to buy the sixth floor windows and frame where the alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, set up his sniper's post. Similar offers were advanced even before the building was sold. Its former owner, Col. D. B. Byrd, a local oil and real estate executive, says one group offered to buy the building so it could market the structure as a museum for 11 years.

Mr. Mayhew insists he hasn't adopted any such plan. He's not buying, however, a policy that would allow tourists to view through the building a \$100,000 site for analysis and memorabilia of groups.

"I don't like any kind of reconstruction, either past or present," Mr. Mayhew says. "That would be too commercial—and I'm not in this for the money." He certainly didn't pay

much for the 67-year-old building, auction observers said. Mr. Byrd, for example, called the winning bid "a great disappointment." Mr. Byrd's estimates had placed the building's value at between \$350,000 and \$1,500,000.

Friends and business associates of Mr. Mayhew say his intentions are serious. "I know he'll keep the building as an attractive memorial to J.F.K. His heart is with the Kennedy's," says a Nashville acquaintance. "He's an honest, sincere human being." He is Dr. Gerald Stambler, a Silver Spring, Md., dentist who is a Kennedy buff.

Oddly enough, sources close to Mr. Mayhew believe he doesn't think the fatal shots were fired from the depository, or that Oswald was the sniper. What's more, though Mr. Mayhew says he isn't actively interested in politics, he calls himself a conservative Republican who "didn't think much of President Kennedy's policies."

The slightly built, modestly dressed Mr. Mayhew says his interest in the late Mr. Kennedy stems from the fact that "J.F.K. is the only President who's been assassinated in my lifetime." He says the interest may have a personal motivation as well. A cousin served in the Secret Service detail protecting the President the day of the assassination.

Since the assassination, Mr. Mayhew has been amassing material on Mr. Kennedy. He says he owns about 50,000 items connected with the President's life (including a reference book he wrote in 1966 called "The World's Tribute to John F. Kennedy in Metallic Arts," which he says has sold 15,000 copies). One part of the collection keeps him particularly busy. He's gathering autographs of persons who were associated with the president.

He lists his duties as director of the Nashville record division of Gearton Corp., an Anaheim, Calif., manufacturer of magnetic tapes and production plants. Mr. Mayhew also operates a memorial center in Nashville where his Kennedy memorabilia is displayed. The admission he charges at the center is the same as the one he plans for the depository proceeds from the admission help to finance his burgeoning collection, he says.

Though he admits he's been criticized as "a nut" for his activity, Mr. Mayhew insists he has no other motive than to preserve the mem-