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HEADLINE: Dallas, Stone spar over JFK movie set

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DALLAS - Director Oliver Stone's plans to turn the old Texas School Book Depository building into a movie set are expected to be curtailed today when Dallas County lawmakers vote on their own script to govern location shooting for a Stone film linking the CIA to the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

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Officials and residents aired concerns at a public meeting last week over Mr. Stone's original plans to remodel part of the historic building and shut down a popular exhibit on the infamous sixth floor.

Since then, lawyers for the director and the Dallas County commissioners have met privately to work out a deal allowing Mr. Stone to start filming the tentatively titled "JFK" on schedule, around April 1.

The agreement, slated for a vote today, was expected to allow Mr. Stone access to the seventh, or top, floor of the building instead. The Dallas County commissioners also may require the director to pay substantially more than the \$300 a day he originally proposed for use of the structure - one commissioner called that fee "a joke" - and deny the production exclusive use of a parking lot for two months.

Mr. Stone remains tight-lipped about his script for "JFK," which is set to star Kevin Costner. In some interviews, however, both the director and former New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison have said the film will promote a conspiracy theory similar to Mr. Garrison's claim that far-right elements of the CIA and other government agencies planned and executed the murder of President Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963.

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That theory resulted in Mr. Garrison's losing the most publicized conspiracy case in recent history (against New Orleans businessman Clay Shaw in 1969). But it has gained credence as hundreds of conspiracy books on the JFK assassination continue to flood the market.

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Mr. Stone also has let it leak out that Mr. Garrison will play former Chief Justice Earl Warren, head of the commission that studied the assassination and determined that Oswald acted alone.

While those asked to read for parts in the past week or so often were given only a single page, Dallas County Administrator Allen Clemson says the director's representatives "have agreed to let us see those pages which relate to shooting in the county building."

The book depository became a Dallas County administration building after renovations in the late 1970s.

Mr. Stone, in preproduction stages for the film while putting the finishing touches on "The Doors," which opened March 1, has spent considerable time in Dallas during the past few months.

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The award-winning filmmaker, whose previous films include "Platoon" and "Born on the Fourth of July," donated to a fund last year that saved the 60-year-old Texas Theater, where accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald was captured. He has promised to use Dallas residents heavily not only in production but also in casting.

An estimated 10,000 hopefuls turned out for a casting call four weeks

ago. In the past few days, Mr. Stone's production firm, Camelot Productions Co., has advertised in Dallas papers for 99 models of vintage cars from 1960 to 1963.

Clayton Townsend, representing the director, last Tuesday tried to convince the five Dallas County commissioners to give the movie-makers free run of much of the building.

Several days earlier, Mr. Stone's people had suggested that the popular exhibit "The Sixth Floor" be packed up and stored for two months while his crew used the building's sixth floor, where it generally is agreed that Oswald waited for the president's motorcade and fired his shots. That suggestion brought sharp public retorts from some commissioners.

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"I do not want the exhibit closed for any period of time for them or anyone else," said commissioner Chris Semos, who has accompanied Mr. Stone on many social appearances in the area.

"The exhibit," Mr. Semos said, "is open every day but Christmas, and that's the way it should be. People come from all over the world, and they don't need to find it closed."

"The Sixth Floor" has been a smashing success, drawing more than 900 visitors daily since its opening in 1989.

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But by last Tuesday the emphasis of Mr. Stone's representatives had moved to use of the seventh floor. "I told them I thought the subject was controversial enough even without asking for the use of the sixth floor," Mr. Clemson said.

Mr. Stone also wants to change the appearance of the building's facade to make it look as it did in 1963.

"It's only a magic act," producer Alex Ho said last week. "It's not going to damage the building."

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Fake plastic-foam bricks and other cosmetic changes would not hurt the edifice, he said, and Mr. Stone promises to do whatever it takes to return the building to its current appearance.

"Do you think they'd let him mess around with Ford's Theater?" snapped Lamar Bucey, 58, a typesetter sitting in the packed commission chamber last week. "This is a straight money-making deal. And will the county do the same thing the next time a movie-maker comes up with another JFK idea?"

One commissioner said privately that officials probably will require an escrow account to make sure the exterior is restored, as well as change parking and leasing arrangements.

"We want to work something out," the commissioner said. "We know that the movie could regenerate interest in this area, but we have to be careful."

Dallas filmmaker Martin Jurow, producer of "Breakfast at Tiffany's" and a short movie that screens as part of "The Sixth Floor" exhibit, told commissioners they should get a script from Mr. Stone before they give him special treatment.

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Censorship isn't the goal, Mr. Jurow said. "But you should know what he is going to do, so at least you may want to make certain recommendations, certain suggestions."

GRAPHIC: Photo (color). Oliver Stone wants to change the facade of the Texas Book Depository. ; Photo, The Texas Book Depository in 1963: Residents say it's not a movie set., By UPI