

# The Rambler

... Wants a Penthouse

By JOHN MCKELWAY

In some ways at least, the most dramatic change in Washington has taken place down in old Foggy Bottom.

The Rambler dropped by the other day after an invitation to tour the unfinished Watergate East—a massive pile of concrete that just barely manages at this stage anyway to escape the heavy, depressing lines of some of the new apartment houses as well as those of the past.

The architect is an Italian, Luigi Moretti, and he seems to be a man who likes sweeping curves in big buildings. There are interesting angles all over the place. Watergate East is a massive fish hook.

Today, of course, the place is an incredible mess. It taxes the imagination if you try to picture the finished product, the landscaping, the pools and fountains, the shops, the super market, the sun bathers and the roof gardens.

The Rambler has always suspected workmen of intentionally messing up a new building while they're working on it so as to make the grand opening that much more impressive.

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**TOURING WATERGATE** East today you have to be careful of mud puddles, stones, nails and a bulldozer coming in and out of the future lobby loaded down with dirt for the landscaping.

The first occupants are expected to take up residence in the \$66 million project by the end of next month. By 1968, they might become lecturers in the art of architecture and construction.

During their stay, possibly from a balcony or picture window, they will be able to watch the steady rise of:

Two more cooperative apartment houses.

A residential hotel and something called an "executive" office building.

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Highway construction, here, there and everywhere.

It may be people will start having construction-watching parties.

Picking his way through the rubble, the Rambler could not help remembering the old, gaunt gas tanks that used to stand there on either side of Virginia Avenue disturbing the skyline and, if the mind serves correctly, lending a gentle, sweet odor to the place.

Then the tanks disappeared one day and the dump trucks began rumbling and Foggy Bottom has been shaking ever since.

Watergate East will have something like 240 apartments—the first of about 1,000 which will comprise the complex.

The living room in the model apartment is a spacious thing, surrounded on two sides by a balcony where one could sit and sun and watch all the construction.

The foyer had a marble floor, very attractive, but the Rambler had to wonder what would happen if someone dropped a small fire engine on it. And in the bathroom, there was a strange faucet. Apparently, you just pull it out a ways and you get either hot or cold water by turning it to the right or left.

We got in an elevator and went up to have a look at one of the penthouses. It was barely taking shape, but the Rambler felt an immediate desire to be very rich.

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**THE PENTHOUSES** range in price and are located on the 12th and 14th floors — no 13th floor. You could pick up one for around \$220,000 or so.

This particular one had a glorious view looking out over Roosevelt Island and up the river towards Key Bridge.

The penthouse will have a roof garden on top of it. One would walk up to the garden normally. But in this particular apartment, the owner has asked for a small elevator to ease the trip to the great outdoors.

The roof should be a great place for parties, particularly at night, so long as the workmen remember to put a fence around it. In any direction, the view is magnificent—except, possibly, for the Georgetown waterfront and the gravel factory.

On the way out, the Rambler was handed a brochure about the development. To get an apartment, you would simply buy it, as you do a home. The cheapest, an efficiency, sells for around \$20,000.

Perhaps even more appealing than the view, the location, the easy-to-reach stores and shops and restaurants, is the fact that, in the words of the brochure "you enjoy the benefits of home ownership without the disadvantages of grass cutting, snow shoveling, exterior painting, and the thousand - and - one details of maintenance."

The Rambler also gathers that at Watergate East, if someone down the hall starts cooking cabbage for dinner, you will not be aware of it.

Quite a spot.