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# City Life

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## Development of Watergate Towne Gets Go-Ahead on Ground Breaking

The long-snarled Watergate Towne project, a \$60 million apartment-office building-hotel proposed for Washington, appeared to be unsnarled yesterday.

The District Department of Licenses and Inspections issued a "digging" permit, and Hoyce F. Ward, executive vice president of Watergate Improvements Inc., said ground breaking may start the end of next week.

Julian P. Green Jr., assistant superintendent of licenses, said the permit to excavate and build the foundation of the first stage of the project was granted after the developers agreed to conditions imposed by the Fine Arts Commission.

The agreement, set forth in a Jan. 10 letter from the developers, was that the buildings will be no higher than

140 feet, or 10 inches shorter than the nearby Lincoln Memorial.

The developers also agreed to eliminate villas which would have been erected between some of the taller buildings.

The development, to be built in four stages, should take five years to complete, Ward said. Financed by the Rome-based Societa Generale Immobiliare, one of Europe's largest real estate companies, the project will be on a 10-acre Potomac riverfront site between Virginia and New Hampshire aves.

William Walton, chairman of the Fine Arts Commission, said the developers have promised to bring their revised building plans before the Commission Feb. 18. "We have said we would look favorably on any plan where the

buildings are not over 140 feet above water level," Walton said.

The project has been through three years of hearings and reviews. Yesterday's permit will allow builders to put in a foundation up to 7 feet above water level, which still will be below ground.

Cost of the first building, excluding decoration, electricity, and plumbing, will be \$12,164,376. Ward said the building will have 13 instead of 14 stories and a setback penthouse above the 140-foot limit. It will have fewer than 300 cooperative apartments in the scaled-down version.

Four other buildings for apartments, a hotel, and offices will be built in the three succeeding stages.

Ward said, "We're delighted that everyone finally got together."