

F L U S H I N G



Preserving The Relics Of the Fairs

The New York World's Fairs once heralded "the world of tomorrow" and "something for everyone." Now, slightly more than 30 years after the gates at Flushing Meadows-Corona Park closed on the 1964-65 extravaganza, the cash-strapped city can only watch as the theme park crumbles and millions of pieces of memorabilia are gobbled up by other museums, slip into the hands of private collectors or simply disappear.

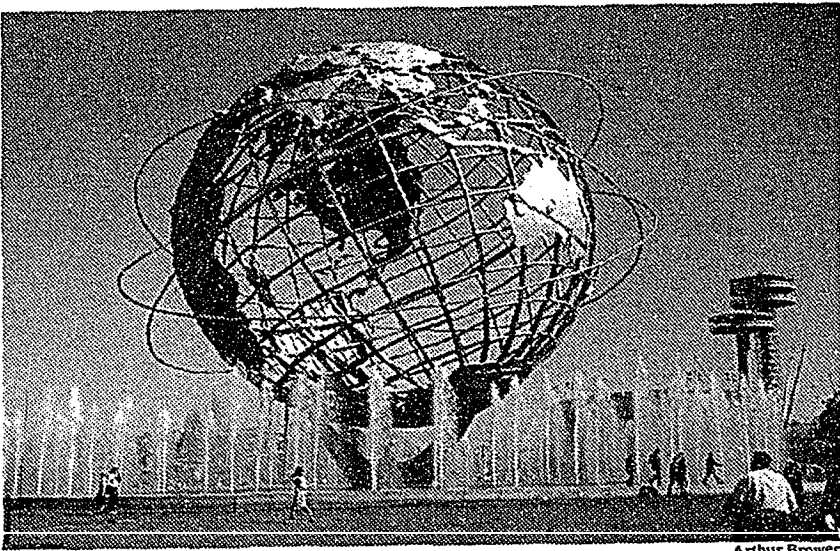
Concerned that the remnants of the 1938-39 and 1964-65 fairs are quickly vanishing, the Flushing Council on Culture and the Arts is working toward creating a permanent museum of World's Fair history.

"The World's Fair is an icon for a generation of people in this city," said Marc Miller, the former curator of the Queens Museum and director of "Something for Everyone: The 1964-65 New York World's Fair," a retrospective showing at Flushing Town Hall through June 15. "If we don't start paying attention, an entire New York history could disappear."

The 140-foot Unisphere — the steel globe encircled by the orbits of the first satellites, which celebrates the dawn of the space age — was granted landmark status by the city last year. But the Aquacade is scheduled to be scrapped; the rockets from the space park are dilapidated, and the Queens Museum houses little memorabilia apart from photos of the two fairs.

Mr. Miller said that the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, had thousands of pieces of World's Fair memorabilia, but that most were stored in boxes, collecting dust. The 1964-65 fair retrospective at Flushing Town Hall includes samples of parts from the first business computers and a large pop art piece by Robert Indiana.

A possible site for a new museum is the Passarelle Building on the old fairgrounds, Mr. Miller said. A study funded by the Borough President's



Arthur Brower

A cash-strapped city is losing pieces of the 1964-65 World's Fair.

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office is under way.

The World's Fairs were designed for companies and nations to introduce products and technologies. At the 1964-65 fair, Tappan previewed its microwave oven, and Ford unveiled the Mustang. While World's Fairs continue to be held, the 1964 fair was the last great spectacle, said Terri Marlow, co-producer of

the documentary "Peace Through Understanding: The 1964-65 World's Fair."

"The fair is an important historical marker," Ms. Marlow said. "It was originally designed to look toward the future, but if we look back, 1964 was, for America, the end of an age of innocence."

CHARLIE LEDUFF