

# Paley Park: A Corner of Quiet Delights Amid City's Bustle

## 53d St. Haven Has Something for Everyone

By MAURICE CARROLL

Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Heath were looking in store windows on East 53d Street when they heard a sound behind them like a waterfall.

They turned around. They blinked. Set back from the north side of the street, spotlighted and shimmering in the mid-evening darkness, there was a waterfall.

"My God, what's this?" Mr. Heath asked.

Diffidently, wonderingly, they walked across the street, the latest among thousands to be dazzled by William Paley's park.

William S. Paley, chairman of the Columbia Broadcasting System, donated about \$1-million to build and operate the tiny park on the old Stork Club site a few steps east of Fifth on 53d Street. It has been open daily since May 23.

### Routine Develops

The park's operation has settled down to a routine now.

Jasper Greene, the guard, knows that every now and then one of the teetery, white metal tables will tip over on the uneven surface of paving blocks. Norman Appell knows that when he closes the refreshment stand to the right of the entrance, he will have sold 250 to 300 "pampered" hot dogs and at least 14 dozen Danish pastries.

Elizabeth Sorell, 2½ years old, solemnly sipping a Coke, was there the other night with her mother and her doll Lizzy. Peter Franconeri and his date, Miss Nancy Zuckerberg, sped up in a Triumph convertible to spend a few minutes sitting in the filmy shadows from the honey locust trees. Frank Colapinto, his arms waving, practiced conducting music on a chair that he pulled close to the 20-foot waterfall at the rear of the 42-by-100-foot park.

Howard Bovers from the William Paley Foundation, which oversees operation of the park, stops by for coffee and Danish soon after the park opens at 8 A.M. to see that all is spick and span.

The daytime crowds are massive—shoppers, tourists, workers from the nearby offices.

"I took a friend over to see the place the other noon," said Robert Zion of Zion & Breen, the firm that designed the park, "and we had to wait in the bar next door until it emptied out."

At night, the park draws more of a neighborhood crowd, and it is not so full. Two gray-haired sisters, Frances Kleeblatt and Estelle

Levinson, who live on 54th Street, said that they stop by several times a week. Until the park opened, the only place to sit outside in that East Side area was at busy Rockefeller Center, they said.

The Paley Foundation files contain at least 150 queries, Mr. Bovers said, from persons who would like to see similar vest-pocket parks set up elsewhere. One aim of setting up the park was to prompt similar ventures elsewhere.

On a more modest scale, the city has set up 18 vest-pocket parks in the last year and a half and plans 10 more.

### Even the Ivy Obligated

The impact of the Paley Park on park design is not yet measurable, but the park itself worked out almost precisely as planned. "It was uncanny," said a man at C.B.S. "Even the ivy grew to the precise height they figured." Kudzu vines climb 20 feet up the side walls.

The only change in the initial plans stemmed from the only untoward event in the park's brief history. A

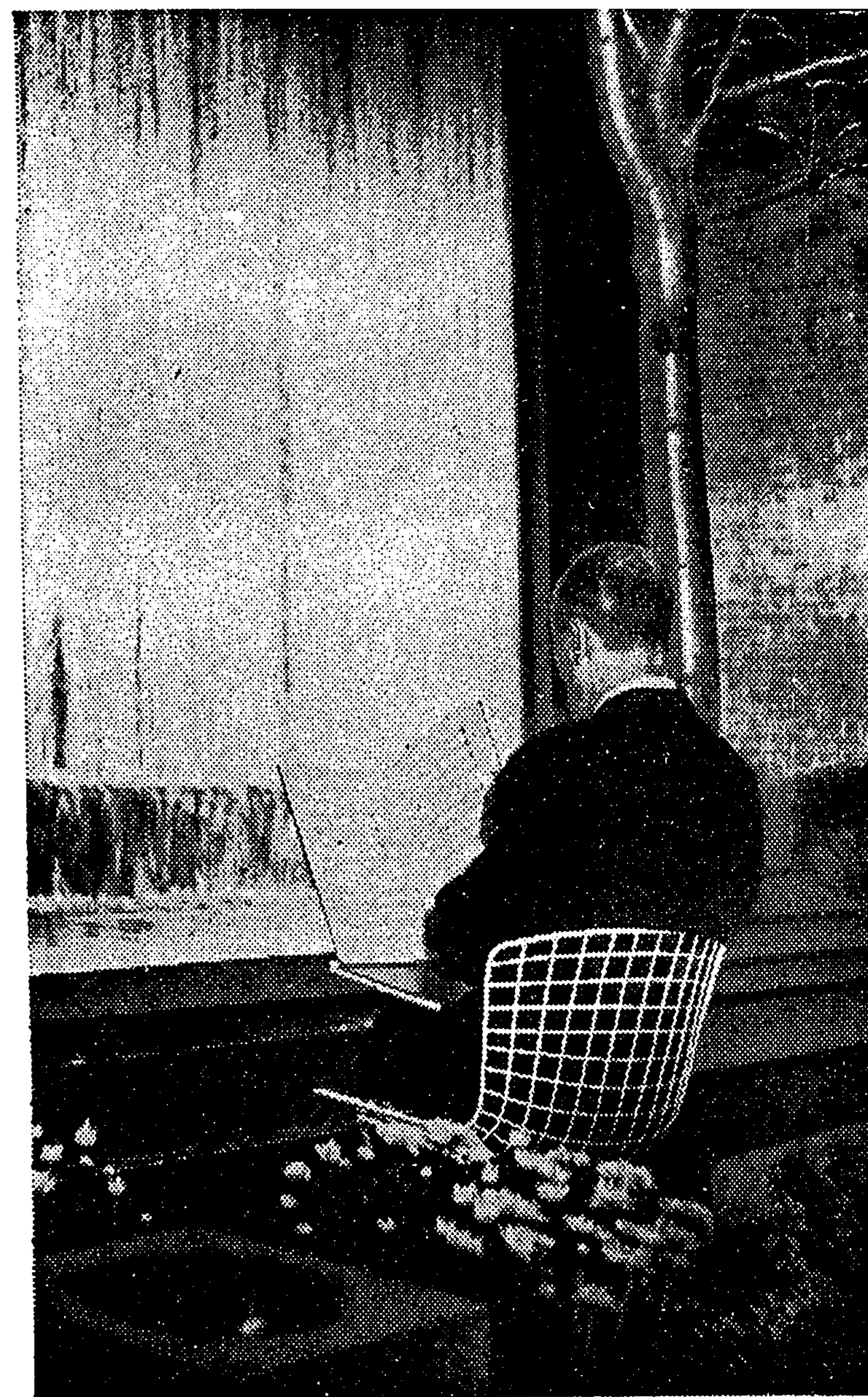
few nights after the opening, someone stole one of the tubs used for shrubbery.

So now Mr. Greene rolls the tubs inside before he closes the gray grill gates at 10 P.M. (closing time will be 6 P.M. from Nov. 2 through April 30).

"Everyone's been so nice," he said. "They treat this just like it was their backyard. Nothing's been broken on purpose and almost everyone puts their litter in the baskets."

Most of the visitors the other night had planned to stop in after dinner nearby. A few, like Mr. and Mrs. Heath, who live in Queens, simply had the park's splendor burst upon them as they walked by. They stayed long, "just contemplating the sound of the water," said Mr. Heath. "It's like a breath of fresh air," said Mrs. Heath, "such a perfect idea."

The rush of the water absorbed the city noises. A visitor glanced out to 53d Street and saw a yellow tow-truck lumber by, its warning light flashing. No one else in the park seemed to notice.



Park donated by William S. Paley is on the Stork Club's old site, on 53d Street east of Fifth Avenue.

The inviting sound of the waterfall has attracted many, including man who scans his musical scores.

Barney Ingolia for The New York Times

The park is a haven of relaxation, but discussion—in discreet tones—also thrives in the quiet glade.

