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Barbara Torman
*Indiana Daily Student*

Christopher Cokinos
*Indiana Daily Student*

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Trustees approve addition plan

By Barbara Toman and Christopher Cokinos
Ids Staff Writers

INDIANAPOLIS — The IU Board of Trustees approved new plans Saturday for the law school addition, but it wasn't apparent if everyone involved in the three-month controversy was satisfied.

The plans, a revision of ones the trustees approved in December, remove the addition from the section of the Old Crescent listed on the National Register of Historic Places. An undetermined number of trees would have to be removed directly behind the law school.

The plans also include provisions for minimizing heat and light pollution that could make Kirkwood Observatory useless.

The trustees' action came at their monthly meeting at IU-Purdue University at Indianapolis, but most of the discussion occurred Friday before the board's architectural committee.

Law school Dean Sheldon Plager told the committee the new plan meets all the law school's program requirements. "It gets us out of the woods — literally and figuratively."

No one from Save the Woods, an organization formed to fight the law school expansion, was at the meeting. A spokesman said Sunday that no one in the group had seen the plans, but they would be discussed at a meeting at 7 tonight in Lindley 115.

The astronomy department, however, was represented. Associate astronomy professor Martin Burkhead said he was "shocked" to see a major entrance to the proposed addition on the northeast end, opposite Kirkwood Observatory.

"There is no way you are going to draw shades on (the lighted entrance) at night," Burkhead said.

But one of the project's New York architects, Robert Welz, said the entrance will be hidden behind arched openings with pillars that block the light. Welz said the lights will shine directly down, and he noted that the entrance will be on the addition's ground level, below the observatory's base.

To block light from the windows, Welz said venetian blinds or shades can be installed that would automatically shut at night.

And to help prevent heat "shimmers," which distort astronomers' viewing, Welz said the roof can be covered with heat-reflecting white marble chips.

When Burkhead protested that he wasn't sure the chips would be adequate, Welz said he didn't think the shimmers would reach the observatory's line of sight and that the shimmers would be broken up with recessed windows, and protruding stairways. "It's very much in conformity with the spirit and feeling of the existing law school and Bryan Hall," Welz said.

Now the trustees' major concern is cost. Welz said each month's delay raises the addition's cost 0.8 percent — or $264,000 added in the past three months to the original estimate of $11 million.

IU has received only $5 million for the addition from the General Assembly; the balance must be

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the IU physics department could help determine that.

The plans accepted Saturday still must be approved by the Indiana Higher Education Commission and the State Budget Agency. IU officials hope bids can be let and construction begun by late fall.

IU officials also had asked the architects to study the possibility of building the addition across Indiana Avenue from the law school. University Physical Facilities Director Terry Clapacs said the architects found that plan would cost 15 to 20 percent more than G2.

The main difference between the original Plan G and G2 is that G2 has about 4,500 fewer square feet on the main floor. That's because the reading room in G that jutted out into the woods was pulled back. But Welz said the total area in both plans is about 60,000 square feet.

The building's height will recede from the woods to Indiana Avenue. The exterior of the limestone-and-glass building also will be