Barnes unveils plans for Student Center

Center plans receive praise

By Craig Gordon

Schine Student Center architect Edward Larrabee Barnes showed off his baby two times Monday.

He showed a model and plans for the center once at a press conference and later for the members of the National Campaign Committee for Fundraising who had assembled at Syracuse University's Lubin House in New York City.

Barnes said the facility would have a "pinwheel design," with four glass and brick structures arranged around an indoor square that would be topped with a glass pyramid pavilion. Walkways would lead under the central area, which would be decorated with trees.

Design conflicts arose because of the shape of the bookstore located on the site, Barnes said. As a result, the bookstore annex will be removed and an addition will be made to the bookstore to make it more compatible with the rest of the facility, he said.

"What we really have to do was to assimilate the bookstore," Barnes said. "The main entrance of the bookstore will be relocated into the interior square."

Barnes said the various entrances leading from the interior square to other parts of the facility would serve to break down the Center's organizations into separate areas.

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Student Center

A large recreation room and the Jabberwocky will occupy the basement of this unit and "will be by choice, mostly underground, facing the action part of town," Barnes said.

The Center's design leaves space for a future "concert hall" with a 1,800 to 2,000 seat capacity, Barnes said.

There would be an acoustics problem with any size over that," Barnes said, adding the auditorium was "designed to get the right volume."

In keeping with the pinwheel design, access to the covered pavilion will be through three walkways or "streets," Barnes said, referring to the center of the complex as the "crossroads."

Town square

"Everyone will meet here, so in a very real sense it'll be like a town square," Barnes said.

The building will be accentuated with a "ribbon of glass" which will run around the building as an "organizing line," Barnes said.

The brick and red sandstone exterior will serve to tie in the building with the older buildings on campus, Barnes said, referring to the red sandstone of Crouse College. "The texture certainly ties in with the past," he said.

Alistair MacFarlane Bevington, Barnes' partner, said the New Jersey quarries where the Crouse College stone originated have been depleted. "We'll have to look for it," Bevington said, adding similar quarries can be found in England and Germany.

"We thought it would be too much to build a "wall" of precast," Barnes said, referring to the poured-concrete exteriors of Bird Library and Newhouse I and II. "We want to have some sort of dialogue with the older buildings."

Barnes said the pinwheel design would activate a "peekaboo" effect for visitors entering the building. "People will walk around and want to come in," he said. This is because the walkways do not go straight through the interior square; students will have to circulate around under the pavilion.

Receptive to hotel

"The entrance is very important," Barnes said, adding the facility's entrance on Waverly Avenue will have to make it receptive to the future hotel and the Marshall Street area.

"We've broken down the mass into smaller buildings," Barnes said. "Maximizing the crossroads is a distinctive part of the design," he said.

Harvey Kais, vice president of facilities administration, said Barnes' design has both clarity and scale.

"He's maintained a level so you'd feel comfortable inside it," Kaiser said. "I think Barnes has done an excellent job interpreting the space. They haven't tried to compete or emulate other buildings on campus, yet they've made it harmonize with the campus."