

Neighbors object to glass, steel addition at Denison

Granville will decide plan's fate after critics, university failed to smooth out differences

By Nick Wright

THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

GRANVILLE, Ohio — Denison University cannot reach a compromise with five residents who say proposed renovations to the century-old art building are too modern. Now, the Village Council will make a decision for them.

The council plans to decide at 7:30 tonight whether to uphold the village planning commission's approval of a \$14 million facelift and expansion of Cleveland Hall, which is located on W. College Street among residences.

The council postponed the decision in May because the two sides said they would try to settle their differences about the glass and zinc-coated-steel siding addition instead of going to the council.

Either side can take the issue to Licking County Common

Pleas Court if they do not like the council's decision.

Denison President Dale Knobel said that the Granville planning commission approved the original proposal in February despite objections by nearby residents.

"We sat down with our architect and the appellants, listened to their concerns and suggested some ways in which we might alter the design to meet them," Knobel said via e-mail. "But they did not find our suggested changes acceptable."

The critics say the renovations do not follow historical guidelines to preserve the Victorian architecture of Cleveland Hall. The addition includes an all-glass facade art studio on the building's east side, as well as additions for classrooms and offices on the north side.

One of the university's critics, Jack Thornborough, said he talked to Denison adminis-



An architect's drawing shows one portion of the proposed renovation to 103-year-old Cleveland Hall. Critics of the proposal get their say at the Granville Village Council tonight.

trators and Jack Beyer, a Denison grad and founding partner of Beyer Blinder Belle, the New York architecture firm that drew up the renovations.

"I expected (a) few changes to the original plans to retain some of Cleveland Hall's historical style," Thornborough said. "When we had a conference call on May 23, Jack presented just

one instead of several alternatives."

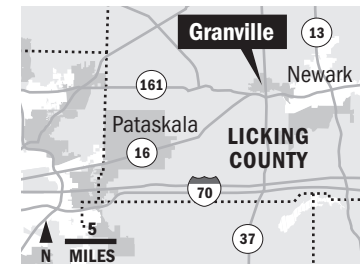
He said he and the other critics welcomed modern styles as long as they complemented the existing architecture of the building and the village.

"The alternative was starkly modern," Thornborough said. "Instead of all glass, it was glass windows with vertical steel

siding."

When it was built in 1904, the stalwart brick, white-columned edifice contained a men's gymnasium, library and various meeting rooms. At one point, Cleveland Hall had a swimming pool. Most recently, it has served mainly as the art department's classrooms and offices.

Denison spokesman Jack Hire



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said construction would have started right after commencement on May 13.

"They should start building as soon as this is all figured out," he said.

nwright@dispatch.com