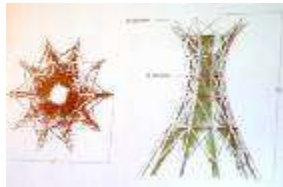


Artist adjusts look of Scioto sculpture

By Robert Vitale



RENDERING FROM BRIAN TOLLE STUDIOS

Brian Tolle now intends for the Columbiad to be built out of stainless steel, instead of mirrored glass. He also plans to plant vegetation inside it that would change color with the seasons.

The cooling-tower shape of a proposed six-story artwork for Columbus' Downtown riverfront has been tweaked in new designs unveiled yesterday by artist Brian Tolle.

The 75-foot structure he wants to build is still a hyperboloid — a wider top and bottom, curving toward a narrower middle — but changes in materials and the design of its base and crown make power-plant comparisons less obvious.

Tolle also scrapped plans to use mirrored glass, opting instead for an open frame of stainless steel that would host vegetation that changes color with the seasons.

He said his revisions make the piece more economical to build and more elegant to view.

Tolle also said these changes were in the works well before his earlier design received a chilly public reception two weeks ago when it was first posted at Dispatch.com.

Tolle, who calls his work *Columbiad*, was chosen by Downtown leaders from among 40 artists to create a sculpture that will be placed along the new Scioto Mile riverfront park at Town Street.

“I don't feel that the changes I've made to the *Columbiad* are compromises,” he said during a lunchtime talk yesterday at the Columbus Metropolitan Club.

“It’s actually far more beautiful to me, far more interesting to me.”

Developer and modern-art collector Ron Pizzuti, who is on the panel that chose Tolle, said he’s a fan of the design. Mayor Michael B. Coleman supports the project and likes the design, said spokesman Dan Williamson, but he has said it must be funded with private dollars.

Pizzuti, chairman and CEO of the Pizzuti Companies, is seeking donors to pay for the work, whose price tag hasn’t been disclosed. Rebecca Ibel, curator of Pizzuti’s art collection, said supporters once hoped the piece could be built in time for Columbus’ bicentennial next year.

The timetable is uncertain, though, she said.

The most noticeable changes in the design are at its base and crown. The bottom of the structure would be anchored to the ground at 10 points, not raised up on piers as earlier versions proposed. The top would rise in peaks, creating a crownlike effect.

A structure inside the steel frame would support vegetation for what Tolle called a vertical garden. Among the possibilities, he said, is an ivy called Virginia creeper, which grows green in spring and turns red in the fall.

It also grows berries, which would attract birds. Critics of the earlier, mirrored-glass design said they feared the reflective surface would cause birds to crash into the sculpture.

The structure would be 57 feet in diameter at its base and 36 feet in diameter at its crown. LED lights on the frame would be illuminated at night and could change colors.

During his talk at the Metropolitan Club, Tolle said he was unfazed by criticism of his earlier design.

His proposed work “plays on the idea” of cooling towers — his father once designed them for American Electric Power — but he said some scientists also believe a hyperboloid is the shape of the universe.

rvitale@dispatch.com