

PROPOSAL

Stalker Hall Sunwork and Garden

A large outdoor sculpture and garden space

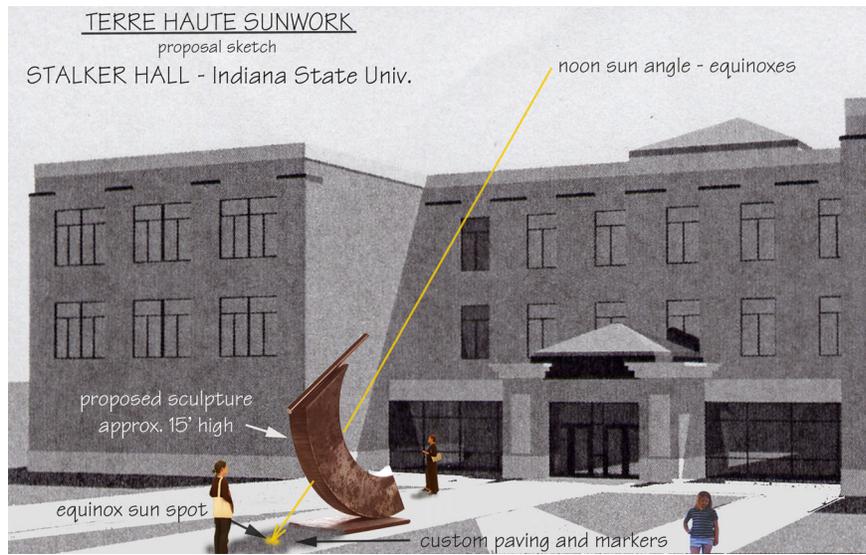
FOR: Indiana State University, Terre Haute, College of Arts and Sciences
North entrance - newly renovated Stalker Hall

PRESENTED BY:

John Van Alstine
January 2005

OBJECTIVE: create a contemplative gathering space centered around the proposed "broad based" public sculpture / solar calendar, "SUNWORK"

MATERIALS: bronze, stainless steel, granite paving, Sunlight



GENERAL NOTES: making public art public

One of the many challenges inherent in designing artwork for a public site is creating a piece that operates on enough levels that it has meaning and interest for the community it addresses and still maintains a high level of artistic integrity. A successful public work engages viewers by providing "points of access" relevant to their interests and at the same time challenges them to consider new ideas. The proposed piece, **Stalker Hall Sunwork and Garden**, which successfully welds the character of large scale contemporary sculpture with the tradition and function of humankind's oldest scientific instrument, the *calendar* - has special relevance in a university setting passionately interested in the relationship between the arts and sciences.

With its impressive scale, placement and design, the work simultaneously combines aspects of astronomy, physical science, and contemporary art. It will create an important destination on campus, engaging, educating and challenging the university and local communities long into the future.

PROPOSAL SPECIFICS: how the calendar works.

Terra Haute is located at 39.5 degrees N latitude and 87.5 degrees W longitude. This means that the altitude of the sun (its angle above the horizon at solar noon*) on the spring and fall equinox is 50.5 degrees and changes from 74 degrees on the summer solstice to 27 degrees on the winter solstice. Each day this change would be marked on the sculpture by a dramatic moving shadow which would graphically locate that specific day's position in the yearly cycle. (see figure 1 - below)

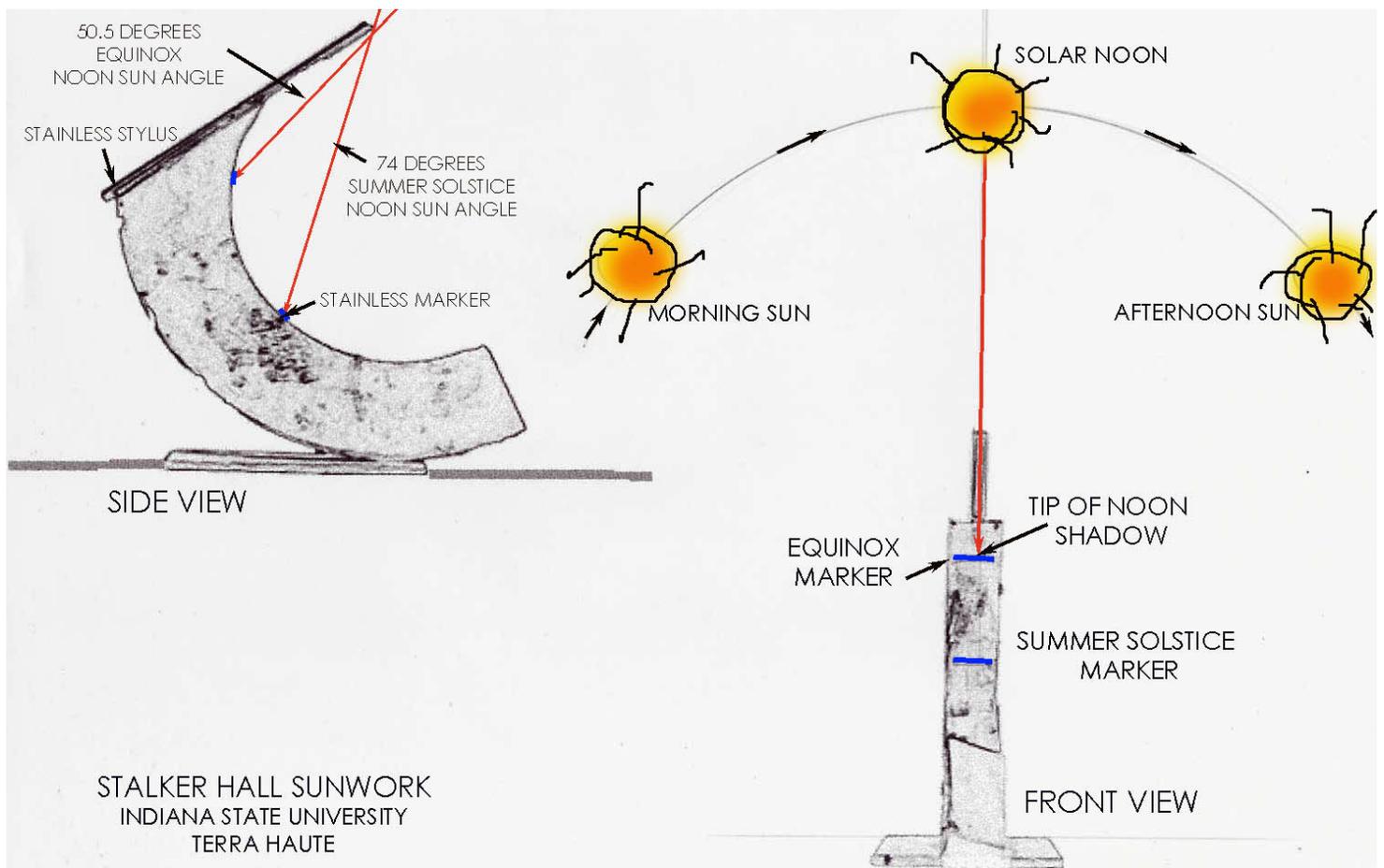
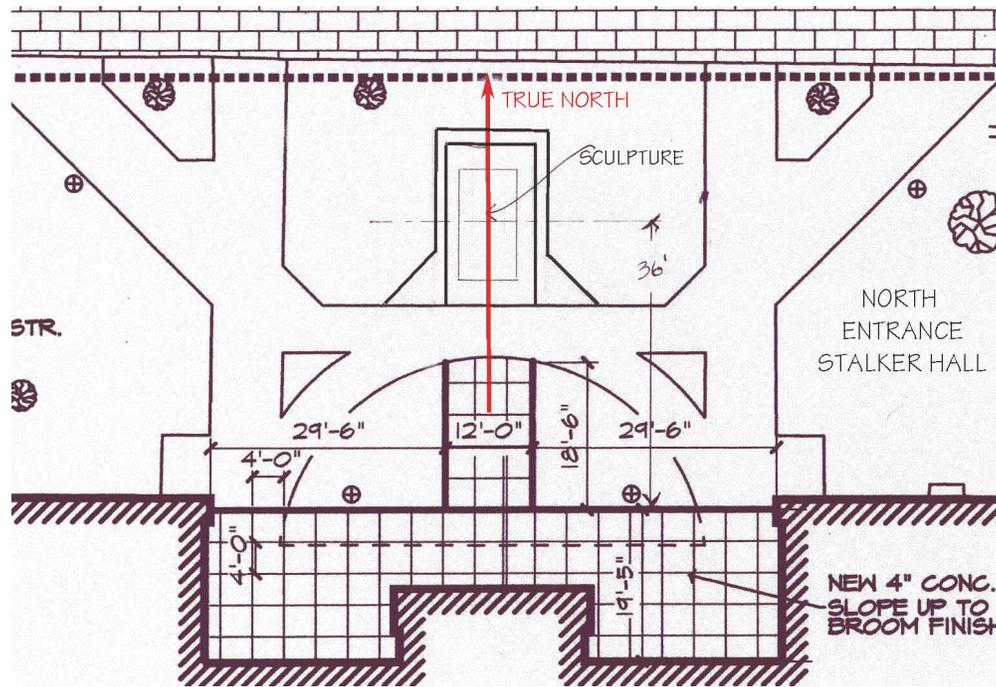


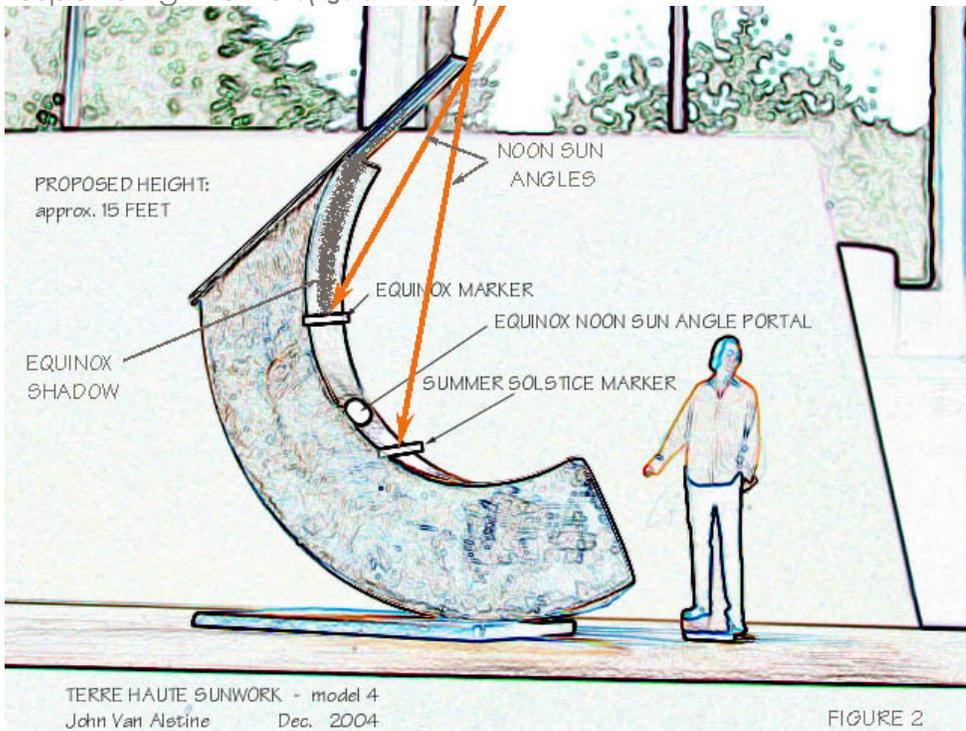
figure 1

Solar Noon* is the time of day when the sun reaches its highest point in the southern sky as it moves from east to west. On the Equinoxes in Terra Haute, this occurs about 12:50 eastern standard time. It is determined by site location within the local time zone (i.e. Terra Haute is on the far west side of the eastern time zone), time of year, and Daylight Savings Time - which pushes it ahead one hour.



ORIENTATION: exactly true north / south

The sculpture will be positioned so that its central axis is aligned exactly north / south. (figure - above) Each day at noon* the stainless steel stylus, located at the top of the piece, casts a shadow onto the arching bronze lower front face. At solar noon* on the summer solstice (when the sun is at its highest angle and the length of the shadow is at its longest), the tip of the shadow crosses the stainless steel summer solstice marking bar. Each day following the sun is a little lower in the sky, casting a slightly shorter noon shadow until it reaches the equinox and aligns with its corresponding marker. (figure 2- below)



EQUINOX SUN SPOT: special feature

In addition to the functions described above the **Sunwork** also has an EQUINOX SUN SPOT feature. When the sun's noon angle reaches 50.5 degrees it aligns with the parallel angle of the sun tunnel. Sunlight passes through the tunnel illuminating a marker located on the paving below, signaling the moment in the yearly cycle when the length of day and night are of equal duration. (see figures 4, 3 & 5 below)

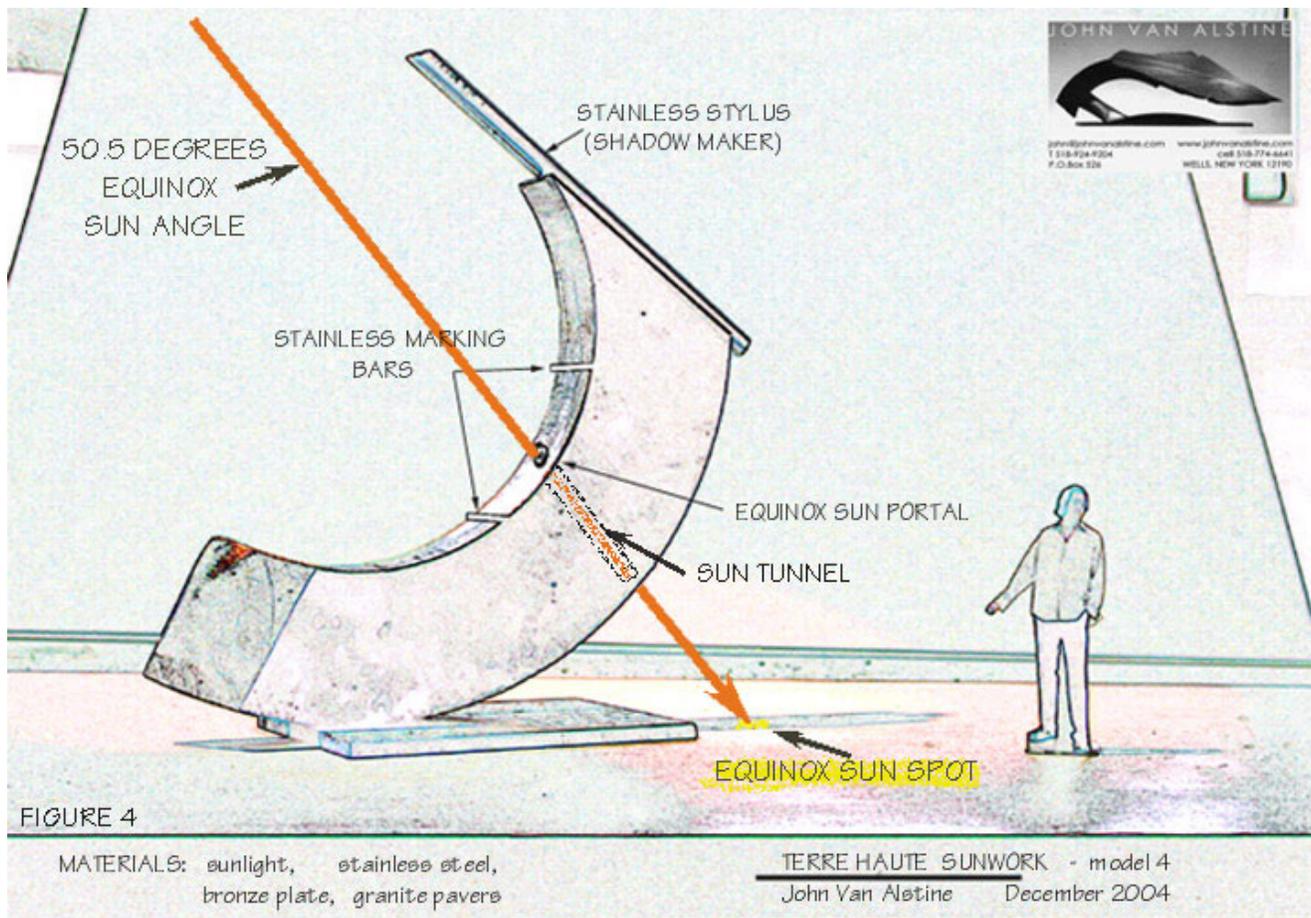
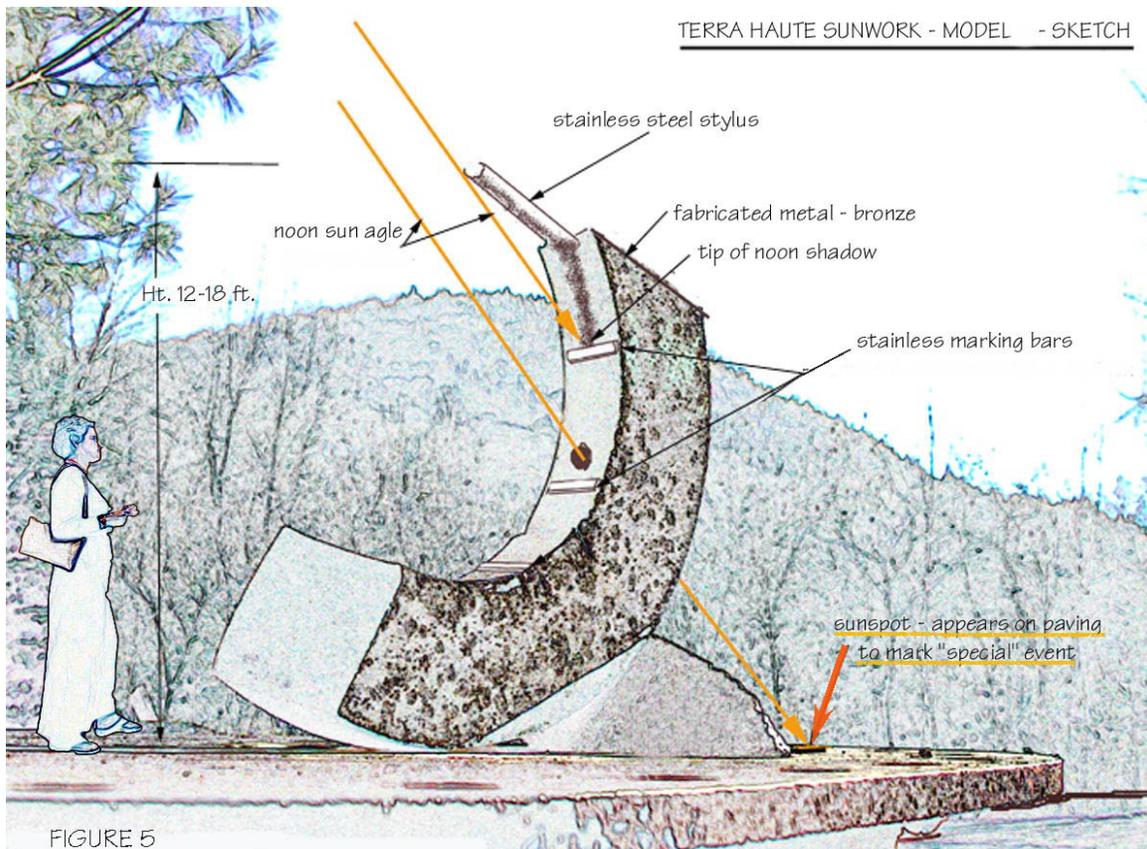
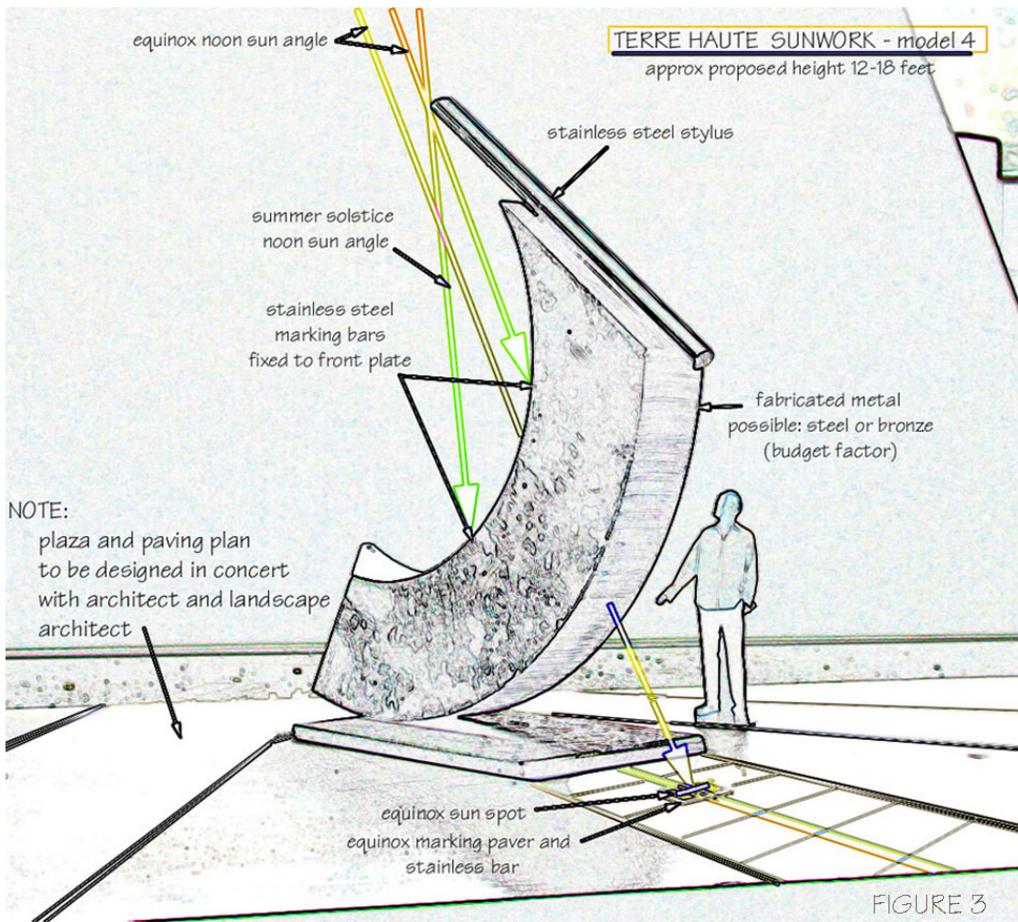


Figure 4

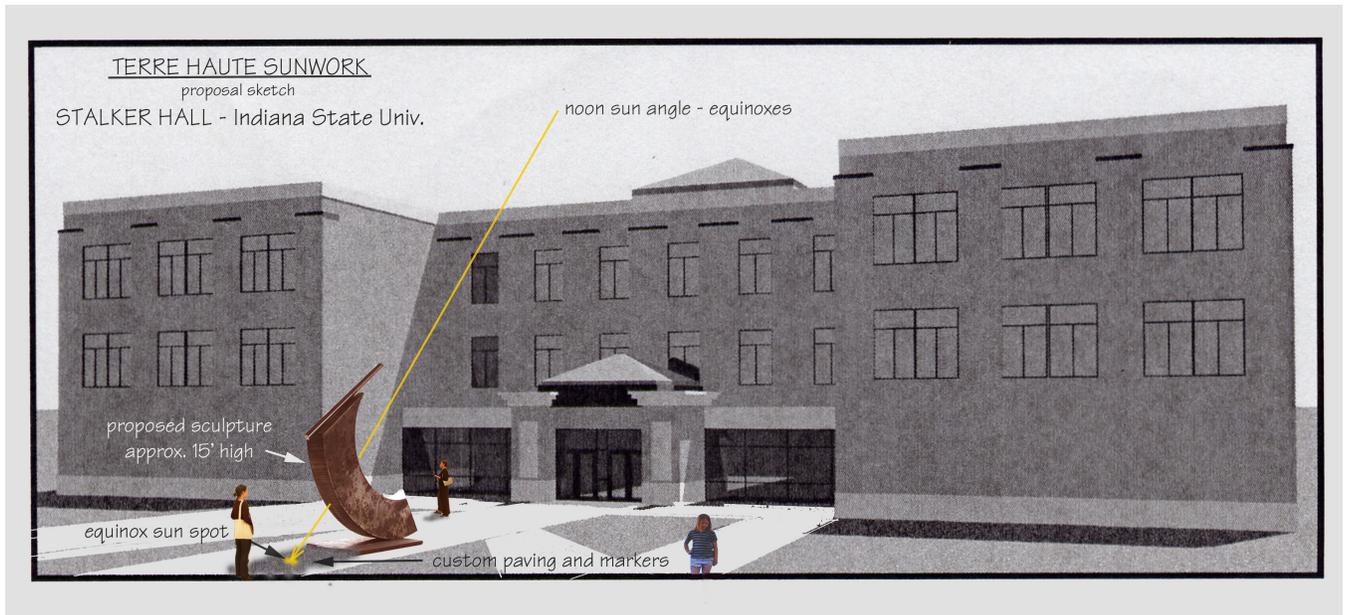
NORTH SIDE LIMITATIONS: making the most of what we have

Because the project will be located on the north side of Stalker Hall special design considerations and sculpture placement have been carefully considered. The height of sculpture and its distance from the building are critical in making sure the maximum amount of yearly sun is accessed.



GATHERING PLACE: a contemplative site

The **Sunwork** will be sited in the plaza area directly off the north entrance of Stalker Hall. Working closely with the architect and landscape design team we will integrate the sculpture into the pedestrian and campus activities. Benches, landscaping and lighting will be added creating a welcoming, "park-like" atmosphere designed to encourage reflection relative to the function and implications of the **Sunwork**.



SIGNAGE: sharing the information

Because the design intricacies of **Sunwork** will not be immediately obvious, it will be important to have well planned signage that effectively communicates the scientific and functional aspects of the sculpture to insure the project is fully understood and appreciated. The signage may take the form of integrated bronze plaques or other appropriate methods. We plan to work closely with the campus Facilities Management to insure clear and understandable explanations.

TEACHING TOOL: sharing with the public

It is also our hope that this site will be used as an educational resource by the general public, particularly the local school system. As with several other similar projects I have completed, it is our intention that **Sunwork** be made available and used as a effective instructional tool and demonstration site.

CONCLUSION: regaining the rhythm

In our contemporary society we often lose sight of the natural occurrences that once impacted our ancestors and played an important role in shaping our collective conscience. The cyclical nature of the days, seasons, tides, and life in general, with their patterns of light/darkness, plant/harvest, high/low, birth/death, have historically given meaning, structure and richness to our lives. **Sunwork**, in a dramatic and sculptural way, offers the opportunity to regain awareness of these fundamental rhythms that continue to subconsciously shape our lives and hopefully help us reconnect with them.

