The Handbook of Architectural Design Competitions

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Preface

Design competitions have been a subject of interest to members of The American Institute of Architects since its founding. In 1870 the AIA issued its first “Schedule of Terms” regulating the conduct of architectural competitions. Over the years a series of documents was developed to promote fair conduct on the part of all competition participants. Like other methods of architect selection and design exploration, architectural competitions must be managed carefully and judiciously. Therefore, the Institute advises that any sponsor undertaking a competition inform itself thoroughly about the detailed procedures, methods and techniques involved. Well-run design competitions require:

- A conscientious sponsor
- A competent professional adviser
- A thorough and carefully written program
Complete graphic and other illustrative material
Fair and precise competition rules
Clearly stated submission requirements
A realistic schedule
A qualified jury
Appropriate prizes
Arrangements for publicizing the winning design

The Institute's participation in competitions is advisory and informational. Decision regarding the appropriateness of the competition method or of a particular type of competition for a specific building project must be made by the sponsor after careful analysis.

This handbook has been produced for sponsors, architects and other interested in learning about the proper procedures for running an architectural design competition. "The Competition Method" provides a brief overview of the design competition system of architect selection. It discusses the types of competitions that can be held, the design "dialogue" they stimulate and the conditions which make a design competition appropriate or inappropriate for a specific project. The next four sections describe in detail the roles and responsibilities of the competition sponsor, the professional adviser, jurors and competitors. "The Competition Program" recapitulates many of the themes developed earlier in the handbook while offering a step-by-step guide for the preparation of a sound and thorough competition program. The time planning and cost estimation guides are included as aids to competition sponsors and professional advisers. Finally, a brief bibliography has been included for the student or professional who wants to learn more about architectural competitions.

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The Competition Method
A Method of Selection

An Architectural design competition is one method of finding a design of quality. It generates
a broad search for the best solution to a particular building opportunity. The architects who
compete for a prize or commission each try to develop a design that answers the program
requirements of the client/sponsor. A properly run competition requires that the architect-
competitors:

• Receive a program prepared by a competent professional advisor
• Work under fair and equitable rules
• Have their submissions evaluated, solely on the merits of their designs, by a qualified
  jury.

Like other methods of architect selection, design competitions must be managed carefully
and judiciously, in this case by a professional adviser. With the assistance of such an adviser, a
competition sponsor should inform itself thoroughly about the detailed procedures, methods and
techniques involved in holding a competition.

Appropriate Conditions

Design competitions can be used for a wide array of design opportunities: houses, office
buildings, parks, squares, libraries, schools, apartments for the elderly, etc. It is the sponsor who
must determine if it is in a project’s best interests to hold a competition. The following guidelines
outline the criteria to be examined in determining when a competition is appropriate.

• The project requires a wide degree of design exploration
• The project is on an important or unusual site. It may be located in an historical area, or the
  site itself may be unusual in location, terrain, vegetation or visual impact.
• The project features a type of structure that deserves a fresh examination by the design
  community
• The project will have a great beneficial influence on subsequent design work
• The project will benefit from the additional public interest a competition may generate

In summary, the project considered most appropriate for a competition is one that is best
served by addressing the problem to a wide range of talent that will submit a broad array of
design concepts for evaluation by recognized experts.

Inappropriate Conditions

Projects are inappropriate for competitions when any of the following conditions exist:

• Projects the client wants built on a very short schedule are poor candidates for competitions,
since there may not be adequate time to plan, organize, manage and judge a competition
under these circumstances.
• Projects for which a sponsor is unwilling to establish a qualified jury should not be undertaken
  as competitions
• Projects for which an adequate development budget is not available will not be successful.
The additional expense of holding a competition is a modest one relative to total project
costs, but adequate initial funding is essential
• Projects that are insufficiently financed, but for which a sponsor hopes that a design chosen
  in competition will either help raise funds or generate sufficient interest to make eventual
  construction possible, tend to squander the competitors’ design efforts while raising false
  hopes regarding a project’s realization. Design competitions should not be used as fund-
  raising events.
• Projects for which sponsors do not offer sufficient prizes solicit design advice without
  providing proper remuneration. If a sponsor cannot afford adequate prizes, it is not in a
  position to hold a competition.
• Projects lacking adequate professional advice result in poorly run competitions that benefit
  neither sponsor nor competitors
• Projects without a sound and adequately developed program do not sufficiently inform the
  competitors. A design competition should not be held to search for programmatic needs, but
  rather to discover different ways of addressing such needs.
- Projects that do not guarantee fair and equitable treatment for all competitors violate a central principle of design competitions.

A Variety of Projects

Competitions have produced projects of all types in the United States, including:

- Grand Central Station, New York NY
- Board of Trade Building, Kansas City MO
- City Hall, Boston MA
- Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, St Louis MO
- College of Architecture and Planning, Ball State University, Muncie IN
- Art Museum, Charleston, SC
- Tribune Tower, Chicago IL
- Housing for the Elderly, Trenton NJ
- Civic Center, Los Gatos CA
- State Capital, Lincoln NE
- Plan for Washington University, St Louis MO
- University of California Art Center, Berkley CA
- Police and Courts Building, Jacksonville FL
- Copley Square, Boston MA
- Washington Monument, Washington DC
- Branigan Memorial Library, Las Cruces NM
- Central Park, New York NY
- Brimingham-Jefferson Civic Center, Birmingham, AL

Competitions

The competition process is readily adaptable. It can generate a wide array of solutions to a variety of design problems. Competition formats can be modified to accommodate most project requirements. Indeed, each competition must be designed to suit a particular set of circumstances.

The first question to be addressed is what the competition is for. The basic division is between competitions for projects that are to be built, undoubtedly the most useful type, and competitions for exploring design ideas.

Project Competitions lead directly to the erection of specific projects on definite sites. The sponsor's goal in holding such a competition is to:
- Select a design solution for the project that is judged the best of the competition. With that, the sponsor will also
- Select an architect who will be commissioned to develop the design and realize the project.

Idea Competitions are held for projects that are not intended to be built. They are useful as explorations of significant design issues, but are limited insofar as they stop short of realization. Nevertheless, idea competitions can stimulate interest in untried possibilities in such areas as memorial, symbolic architecture, city planning and urban design. The subjects for idea competitions should be carefully chosen. Designers are likely to be wary of entering idea competitions that promote or advance a narrow interest, that fail to benefit either the public or the profession, or whose benefits are limited because the ideas cannot be applied or realized.

A second question to be examined is eligibility; that is, who is qualified to enter a particular competition.

Open Competitions are addressed to the entire national or international architectural community. They may be entered by any licensed architect. Usually, open competitions permit entries for architectural designers, students or other design professionals, provided they associate themselves with an architect. The purpose of such an association is to assure a sponsor that the design concept being offered in a project competition has come from an experienced professional and can be realized, should it be selected. Idea competitions and some
project competitions are even more “open.” They permit students, associates and professionals in various design fields to enter their submissions directly.

Open competitions are appropriate under the following circumstances:

- The nature of the project suggests that all architects have an equal opportunity to be selected on the basis of design merit
- The project requires the widest exploration of potential solutions made possible by an open competition

Limited Competitions restrict the submission of entries to a specific set of architects, such as those who reside within a specified area, are licensed to practice within a specified area, are licensed to practice within a particular state or who satisfy other conditional requirements.

Budget restrictions, a desire to make use of local talent, an awareness of and sensitivity to local or regional styles and concerns or a small-scale project that requires a site inspection may all suggest the holding of a design competition limited to those architects living in a specified area.

Invited Competitions are appropriately used by sponsors who want to address their design needs to a small number of firms – frequently size or eight – whose work is of interest to them. The competing firms are paid a fee adequate to cover the cost of their work. In effect, invited competitions “commission” the preparation of several design concepts. Through the recommendation of a qualified jury, the sponsor can then choose the most appropriate design for its building project. Invited competitions also enable the competing firms to develop their designs to a greater degree of detail.

Student Competitions limit the submission of entries to those who are enrolled in a school of architecture. Winners may earn a special prize, such as a scholarship, fellowship or travel award.

A third important question is the phasing of competitions, the steps and time sequences that are employed.

One-Stage Competitions select a winner and rank other prize winning designs in a single sequence. The majority of design competitions are held in one stage, since the requirements of a single-stage submission can be reduced or expanded in relation to the complexity of a project. For idea competitions and real projects of moderate size, a single design phase is usually sufficient as a test of the competitors’ designs.

Two-Stage Competitions afford competitors a chance to develop further their initial designs. Those architects who are invited to participate in a second stage receive compensation both as a reward for their work in the first stage and as a means of paying for costs incurred in developing their more detailed second stage entries. The advantages of holding a two-stage competition are summarized as follows:

- It reduces the amount of work required in the original first-stage submission, thus attracting more entries.
- It is an excellent process for selecting promising concepts in the first stage that can be further developed in the second
- It provides the opportunity for comments by the sponsor and jury before the start of the second stage so that suggestions can be transmitted to the competitors before they refine their designs.
- It permits a further level of judgement on the part of the jury, since in the first stage, only concepts are sought, while in the second, the detailed development of these concepts can be rigorously examined

Two-stage competitions are appropriate for complete building projects. They encourage architects to undertake a broad exploration for general design concepts in the first stage, while requiring detailed design elaboration in the second.

In the evolution of the competition tradition, formats have been established for a variety of highly specialized projects.

Product Competitions are sponsored by manufacturers interested in the promotion of particular types or brands of building materials. Designers may be reluctant to enter such
competitions because they are frequently or more benefit to the manufacturers than the participants. As a result, manufacturers might give careful thought to serving the public concern (and through it their own interests) by sponsoring competitions for subjects of significant public concern rather than holding narrowly defined product competitions.

**Prototype Competitions** may be sponsored by corporations interested in the prefabrication of various kinds of structures. Architects may be wary of entering prototype competitions unless the prize winning designers are appropriately rewarded and their copyrighted or patented features adequately protected.

**Developer/Architect Competitions** include design as one of the factors deserving consideration by a public agency in choosing a development scheme, often at a guaranteed price, for a particular parcel of land. Such competitions are fairly managed and judged, with all other aspects of selection kept independent.

**Combinations of Types**

In designing an architectural competition, various procedural combinations are possible. One sponsor will decide to hold an open one-stage idea competition while another may announce an invited two-stage competition for a real project. The approach a particular competition takes will be dictated by the sponsor’s perception of what is likely to be most beneficial in a specific context.

**Communications Between Sponsor and Designers**

An architectural design competition establishes a highly structured dialogue between designers and sponsor. Though the employment of a professional adviser and an expert and objective jury, competitions add several dimensions to the conventional client/architect relationship by structuring communication:

- Between the sponsor and a professional adviser
- Between the sponsor and the design community through the competition program
- Between the competitors and the professional adviser during a questions-and-answer period
- Between the competitors and the jury examining their designs
- Between the sponsor and the winner commissioned to develop a design

In an architectural competition, communication between the sponsor and competitors requires a high degree of discipline and a systematic presentation of information. The client/architect dialogue is not eliminated in competitions. On the contrary, it takes place in a structured and systematic way. As a result, when the sponsor and a competition winning architect begin their person-to-person exchange, it can take place at an advanced level.
The Composition Sponsors

Role of the Sponsor

The role of the sponsor is crucial to the success of a design competition. To make use of the reservoir of talent and energy within the architectural profession, a design competition requires the following components:

- A conscientious sponsor
- An able professional adviser
- A clear and professionally prepared program
- A qualified jury

Of these four key ingredients, only a conscientious sponsor has the opportunity and the obligation to assure the other three. No competition can take place until the sponsor provides the project, the organization and the financial resources to make it possible.

The sponsor's decisions will, to a large extent, determine the success or failure of the competition process. If it is to advance a particular building opportunity, a design competition must be governed by an impartial and carefully developed set of procedures. Poorly run competitions create difficulties that can undermine an entire project.

When a sponsor holds an architectural design competition, it obligates itself to running the competition in accordance with the procedures set forth in the competition program. Prize money, fees and honoraria must all be awarded in accordance with the competition rules. The sponsor is also responsible for the accuracy of the statements it makes about the competition project. In return, the sponsor should expect all other participants – professional advisor, jurors and competitors – to honor the rules and perform to the best of their abilities.

Cost

The amount of cost, time and effort involved in holding a design competition depends on the complexity of the architectural problem and the extent of participation which the sponsor wishes to encourage. A limited competition for a small library might be run in a few months with a modest amount of funding, while an open two-stage competition that attracts hundreds of entries for a complex subject, such as a major public building, might involve a yearlong timetable and a significant investment. The cost generated by any particular expenses involved in each will be different.

According to the International Union of Architects (UIA), open international architectural design competitions may range from .5 to 2 percent of the total cost of a project. Generally, the larger the project, the smaller the percentage of cost for holding a competition. A range of costs for architectural competitions may be gauged from the information below. The list indicates that competitions can be held for rather modest investments. All but one of the following competitions were held for less that 1 percent of the project budget:

- The Johns Manville (invited) Competition, Colorado (1972-1973), cost its sponsors $186,000 or .7 percent of the construction budget of $24,600,000
- The Rainbow Plaza (open)Competition for Niagara Falls, New York (1972), cost its sponsors $76,000 or 1.9 percent of the budget of $4,000,000
- The Osaka United States Information Agency (invited) Competition (1967) cost its sponsors $11,000, or .22 percent of its budget of $5,000,000
- The Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center (open ) Competition (1966-1967) cost its sponsors $80,530, or .146 percent of its budget of $55,000,000.
- The Boston City Hall (open) Competition (1961 -1962) cost $60,000, or .2 percent of its budget of $30,000,000.


The cost of a competition can be divided as follows:

- The fees and expenses of the professional adviser and jurors
- The prize money awarded to the winning designers
Managerial and administrative expenses, including advertising, printing, mailing, photography, handling, insurance, storage and meeting space rental, exhibit of entries and press information

There is, of course, considerable variation in cost distribution. Limited competitions may have a higher percentage of funds devoted to prize money, while most open competitions will incur higher administrative expenses. In general, the amount of prize money should be sufficient to attract competitors. It should also be reflective of the amount of effort and expense required of those who enter. Competitions with extensive submission requirements should offer larger prizes. The specific level of each cash prize should be set by the sponsor after conferring with its professional advisor.

Benefits to the Sponsor

Although they require considerable planning, architectural design competitions offer a number of major benefits to their sponsors, including:

- A means of attaining an outstanding design by stimulating a range of exploration within the profession on the sponsor's behalf.
- Sound and experienced judgment and advice from the jury evaluating the different submissions
- The instructive discipline of having to prepare a comprehensive and realistic building program
- Public attention for the sponsor and project

A competition places the sponsor's design problem before a large segment of the architectural profession. With many competitors submitting designs in a typical open competition, the sponsor benefits from a wide search for the best solution. Even in smaller competitions, the sponsor has the advantage of finding the most appropriate design.

A partial listing of competitions held in North America since 1958 indicates the profession's continuing interest in entering.

To commission an equivalent number of preliminary designs for any of these projects would obviously have been prohibitive.

In addition to stimulating a search for an innovative design, competitions elicit a great amount of public attention, not only for the winning architect, but also for the sponsoring organization. Contests of all kinds stimulate public interest, and architectural design competitions are no exception. The competition announcement, the deadline for receipt of submissions, the decision of a jury, the awarding of prize money and the opening of an exhibit all are of interest to more than the profession. Each of these events offers the sponsor an opportunity to inform the public about its goals and activities as well as its search for good design.
The Professional Adviser
Role of the Professional Adviser

A competent professional adviser is a prerequisite of a successful competition. As a consultant to the sponsor, the professional adviser is the individual who is most directly responsible for the planning, organizing and running of a design competition. The adviser’s duties are summarized as follows:

• Plan, organize and manage a competition to attract a wide array of outstanding solutions for the sponsor’s stated design problem;
• Develop working documents for the conduct of a competition, including announcements, rules, instructions, program information and reports;
• Assist in selecting a highly qualified jury capable of exercising sound judgement;
• Conduct the competition so that all competitors receive fair and equitable treatment.

These major duties require that the professional advisor serve as an impartial intermediary between sponsor, jury and competitors. To ensure impartiality, the adviser must be an independent architect who is capable of approaching a competition objectively, with everyone’s welfare in mind. The adviser must have no other interest in the project, either as a designer, investor, or as an employee of the sponsor.

Selecting a Professional Advisor

To ensure the proper running of a design competition, a sponsor must enlist the services of a competent professional adviser, delegate the necessary authority and provide whatever managerial support the advisor may need to plan and organize a successful competition. Since the quality of a competition can be traced directly to the capability of the professional adviser, the sponsor should select an independent architect experienced in professional practice who demonstrates the following:

• The respect of peers;
• Previous experience as an advisor, juror or competitor, or knowledge of such experience;
• Sympathy with the objectives of the competition tradition;
• A technical knowledge of the competition process;
• The ability to translate the sponsor’s intentions into architectural competition procedures;
• Experience with group or committee clients;
• A combination of tact and firmness;
• Availability;
• The ability to write succinctly and clearly;
• A belief in the value if the specific competition project;
• Managerial competence concerning operational logistics;
• Sensitivity to the sponsor’s goals, attitudes and circumstances, and the ability to respond to them constructively;
• Personal integrity and fairness.

A sponsor can draw up a list of potential candidates by asking for suggestions from the local architectural community or from other architects with whom a relationship exists. Or, an announcement soliciting inquires can be made in the professional press. For a design competition to be successful, the sponsor and professional adviser must establish a close rapport based on mutual respect and an openness of communication. Therefore, after a list of candidates is prepared, the sponsor may want to conduct interviews to assess the degree of personal, aesthetic and organizational compatibility developed with each candidate before making a selection.

Compensation

Professional advisers will expect to be compensated for their services. The amount of compensation will vary in accordance with the amount of work a competition requires. Both adviser and sponsor should realize, however, that planning and directing even a small competition require a considerable amount of time, for the demand on an adviser’s services will
be extensive, encompassing a competition from beginning to end. Whether the adviser receives a fixed fee, a monthly retainer or an hourly compensation is an issue for sponsor and adviser will negotiate. (Frequently, an adviser will receive hourly compensation for work performed in the office and a daily fee for work-related overnight travel.) An agreement concerning the reimbursement of expenses must also be reached.

Compensation for the professional adviser is usually one of the most important investments a sponsor makes. Good professional advice may mean the difference between a well-run competition and an embarrassing, even harmful experience.

Accepting the Position

In accepting the position of professional adviser, an architect assumes the task of conducting a design competition under conditions that are fair to both sponsor and competitors. This is no small responsibility. It requires that the adviser allocate a sufficient amount of time to the necessary tasks. Even relatively small competitions may entail an extensive assignment. Therefore, an architect should only accept the position of professional adviser with the understanding that it requires a significant professional commitment.

Planning the Process

In every competition, particularly in the planning stages, a number of critical decisions are made. A good professional adviser must, at those key moments, be in full possession of all the facts and convey them with accuracy and assurance.

The professional adviser should establish a detailed schedule for the competition to follow, with the responsibilities of both the sponsor and the professional adviser clearly delivered. During the course of a design competition, the professional adviser should be involved in the following tasks:

- Determining the feasibility of holding a competition
- Examining the sponsor's preliminary program, site and budget to assure that they are sound
- Suggesting an appropriate competition format
- Planning the entire procedure
- Scheduling the order of events
- Preparing a budget for the competition
- Writing the procedural rules
- Preparing and testing the project program
- Writing the submission requirements
- Helping select the jury
- Securing from the jurors an endorsement of the competition program
- Recommending appropriate specialist consultants, if needed
- Planning for logistics and handling
- Writing a competition announcement
- Screening registrants for eligibility
- Mailing out the program to competitors
- Answering competitor's questions
- Checking designs for compliance with program requirements
- Displaying the entries for jurors
- Submitting a report to the jury
- Assisting the jury
- Reporting to the sponsor along with the jury
- Installing a public exhibition of submitted designs
- Assisting in public relations
- Assuring that proper payments are made
- Assembling an archive of the competition
- Returning or disposing of the entries
- Remaining available for post competition tasks
Given the great number of tasks the professional adviser is expected to perform, a single individual of authority within the sponsor's organization should be designated as the adviser's principal point of contact. Such an individual can be of vital assistance to both the sponsor and the professional adviser throughout a competition.

**Sufficient Funding and Authority to Hold a Competition**

One of the functions of the professional adviser is to assure that a sponsor has both the funds and, in the case of a public agency, the authority to hold a design competition. The professional adviser should be satisfied as to the fiscal responsibility of the sponsor. Both advisers and sponsors should realize that their reputations can be enhanced or discredited by the way in which a competition is managed.

Should a sponsor fail to honor the commitments it has made in holding a competition, it is likely that the professional adviser will be informed about the sponsor's attention. Should the situation remain uncorrected, the adviser may be prevented from carrying out the responsibilities of the position, and the conduct of the competition may thereby be endangered.

If a condition of the professional adviser/sponsor agreement is that the sponsor is obligated to honor all contractual and program agreements, then the professional adviser may exercise the recourse of termination the agreement and disaffiliating from the competition should the sponsor fail to fulfill such agreements. The agreement between adviser and sponsor may also require the sponsor to notify the competitors, jurors and consultants to the competition that the professional adviser is no longer affiliated with the project. Such contractual arrangements should be considered by the sponsor early in the planning process as a tangible commitment to holding a properly conceived and managed design competition.

**Developing a Competition Program**

The Success of an architectural competition depends largely on the care which its program is formulated and written. It is the professional adviser's responsibility, therefore, to develop a program that is tailored to a specific design subject while considering the interests of both sponsor and competitors.

The project program for an architectural design competition should be clear, complete and as concisely stated as possible. It may be prepared by the professional adviser, or it may have been developed by consultants to the sponsor prior to the decision to hold a competition. If a building program already exists, the adviser will have to adapt it for use in the competition. The final version of the project program must be approved by the professional adviser.

**Testing the Program**

The professional adviser should examine the competition program to test whether its requirements can be met before sending it to the jurors for their approval. In addition to analyzing the envisioned procedures and checking the accuracy of all relevant project information, the professional adviser must ascertain that the submission requirements can be accommodated within the allotted presentation space. If adjustments in the competition program need to be made, they should be made at this point, before the program is printed and sent to potential competitors. Testing the program is one of the adviser's most important tasks, for if the program is badly conceived or even slightly flawed, the rest of the competition will be adversely affected.

**Recruiting Technical Specialists**

For complex building programs, the sponsor or the professional adviser may need to recruit one or more technical specialists to serve as consultants to the competition. A cost estimator, soil specialist, energy expert, engineering consultant or other pertinent practitioner can help establish specific technical requirements in developing a realistic program for the competition. Later, the same consultants may be asked to check the competitor's submissions for compliance with the program.

Consultants will generally expect to be compensated for their services by the sponsor. They may be recruited on the advice and recommendation of the professional adviser, or appropriate candidates can be interviewed and selected. To preserve objectivity, the sponsor's employees should not serve as consultants to the competition.
Announcing the Competition

When all the planning for an open or limited competition is completed, an announcement should be made in the public and professional press. To ensure that potential competitors have a sufficient amount of time to respond, the professional adviser should determine the advance time required by various publications. (Subscribers to a monthly magazine may not actually receive an issue until four or five weeks after the deadline for copy.) The following items should be contained in all press releases announcing a competition:

- Brief description of the building or project for which submissions are sought
- Name of the sponsor
- Type of competition
- Number of stages
- Eligibility requirements
- Amount or prize money
- Whether or not a commission will be awarded the winner
- Names of the jurors
- Name of the professional adviser
- Schedule for registering and for submitting entries
- Amount of registration fee, if any
- Address to write requesting a competition program and registration form

To improve media coverage and public understanding, the professional adviser may insert a brief description of the history and functions of the design competitions into a press release.

Registration Procedures

It is the professional adviser’s responsibility to plan and implement an appropriate registration procedure. A brief registration form should be designed. This form should clearly state the kinds of information are often requested:

- Name, address and telephone number of competitor or team leader
- State, number and date or architectural license, if requested
- Names, addresses, telephone numbers (and registration numbers, if applicable) of all other members of the design team or association
- Signature of the competitor or team leader stating an intention to comply with the competition rules and all other terms of the program

The Registration form may be printed in triplicate, with one copy going to the professional adviser prior to the registration deadline, one to be enclosed in a sealed envelope that is attached to the competitor’s entry and a third to be kept by the competitor as a file copy.

The professional adviser should prepare a list of all registered competitors. In addition to being an important part of the archival record of a design competition, the list can be used for both logistical and informational purposes. For example, in an open competition, the sponsor may want to announce how many architects or design teams are competition and how many states they represent. The list can also help a professional adviser estimate the size of the space that will be needed for displaying all the entries to the jury and for exhibiting the submissions to the general public. Based on past experience, 60 percent is a rough guide for estimating how many registered competitors will actually submit entries.

A small registration fee can be used to separate the serious competitors from those who are merely curious. Costly fees, on the other hand, are likely to discourage many conscientious designers from entering. Since the sponsor benefits greatly from the breadth of architectural work an open or limited competition generates, it has traditionally been the sponsor’s obligation to pay the costs incurred in holding a competition. Indeed, many potential competitors would regard it as unfair to be put in a position of subsidizing a competition in addition to absorbing the expense involved in preparing a submission. As a result, registration fees will be more readily accepted if they are applied to the costs of a post-competition exhibition or publication of the submitted designs instead of being used to defray a significant amount of costs incurred in sponsoring the competition itself.

Questions and Answers
Although the competition program should attempt to be sufficiently complete so that no further information is necessary, provision must be made for answering the questions of competitors. Following the close of registration and the mailing of program materials, the professional adviser should schedule a time during which individual registrants may submit questions about the competition program. The deadline for questions should occur prior to the halfway point of the design period. As soon after the deadline for submitting questions as possible, the professional adviser should mail out answers to all registered competitors and to members of the jury – without identifying the competitors who asked the questions.

The objective of the question-and-answer exercise is to allow clarification of program requirements while providing all competitors with as much accurate information as possible. Hence, the professional adviser should be sensitive to the fact that some answers may logically suggest additional questions. These should also be answered. Care should be taken so that the adviser’s responses do not suggest a particular design solution.

In an invited competition, the sponsor reimburses travel expenses so that the competitors, as a group, can confer with the sponsor and visit the site. Copies of the program are sent to the competitors in advance so they can publicly ask questions of both the sponsor and the professional adviser. The objective of such a procedure is to ensure that the program’s information and instructions are complete and workable.

**Assuring Anonymity**

To preserve the anonymity if entrants in a design competition, a professional adviser should require competitors to submit their designs in an appropriate and convenient manner. “Double Wrapping” is the most protective system. The outer wrapping carries the return address along with the usual postal markings. It should be removed by an assistant to the professional adviser. It is imperative that neither the adviser nor anyone else be permitted to open the sealed envelopes on the back of the entrants’ submissions, since these envelopes contain the names and addresses of the competing designers. To identify the entries, the professional adviser may assign each a number, often in accordance with the order in which it arrived. The adviser or an assistant will affix this number on the front corner of each drawing or model and on the sealed envelope, which can than be removed for storage in a secure file. Once the entries are numbered, a photographic record of each submission can be made. The rear-affixed envelopes may be opened only after the winning designs are selected. Until that time, the adviser, the adviser’s assistants and, most importantly, the members of the jury will have to refer to each submission solely on the basis of its number.

**Exhibit Handling**

The professional adviser should assure that an appropriate exhibit space is found. This space should be comfortable, well-lit, private, secure and large enough to accommodate the expected number of submission. In addition, the adviser should recruit a sufficient number of assistants to set up the display of entries inside the exhibit space in the brief interval between the submission deadline and the arrival of the jury. The adviser should supervise the arrangement of drawings and models to ensure that all competitors’ entries can be fairly and properly seen. Several logistical problems must be faced. One is the sheer physical task involved in exhibiting the entries. Time is another problem. Available manpower is still another. The entire procedure requires prior planning.

**Checking for Compliance**

One of the principal responsibilities of the professional adviser is to examine all designs to ascertain if they satisfy the competition program requirements. This has to be done prior to the jurors’ viewing of the designs.

A compliance check regarding submission requirements may be performed by a small team of assistants – often consisting of students or apprentice architects – using a checklist prepared by the professional adviser. The adviser should personally review the entire pool of entries as an added precaution. Specific submission requirements may include:

- The size, scale and number of drawings
- Maximum dimensions, scale accuracy, area and volume computation
• Appropriate use of media (photographs, models, black and white line drawings, limited color or full color techniques).

Complex programs for major projects may require that such technical specialists as cost estimators and energy efficiency experts be retained by the sponsor to check for compliance with specific budgetary, energy use or other programmatic requirements.

When a mandatory program requirement is not satisfied, the professional adviser should mark the design accordingly, noting the shortcoming. The deviant entries are thereby disqualified and excluded from presentation to the jury.

Occasionally, a competitor will exceed the design exhibition requirements by submitting a model or extra drawings along with the panels requested. Such extra items should be set aside and not shown to the jury, for they may give their author an unfair advantage over competitors who have followed the program’s instructions.

**In-Person Presentations**

Invited competitions and the second stage of two-stage competitions may require finalists to present their designs in person to the jury. This gives competitors an opportunity to elaborate on their visual conception and explain the rationale for their design. It also gives jury members an opportunity to ask questions of the authors of each design. Each competitor’s presentation may be recorded on audio or videotape for detailed reference by the jury. Such tapes are also a valuable part of the competition record.

The professional adviser’s function on such occasions is to ensure that each competitor has ample time and an equal opportunity to use the media available for presentation. The competitors’ expenses should be paid by the sponsor.

**Jury Schedule and Procedure**

Before making contact with potential jurors, a professional adviser should establish a timetable for running the competition. Time, resources and accommodations must be arranged so the jury can:

• Visit the project site
• See all the entries in a fair and equitable way
• Have a secluded space in which to deliberate
• Write a report explaining its choices

**Inviting Jurors**

Once the decision is made to invite an individual to be a member of the jury, it is the professional adviser’s task to:

• Make the initial contact
• Describe the purpose and scope of the competition
• Indicate when and for how long jury services will be required
• Solicit whether or not the individual is interested in serving as a juror
• Negotiate an appropriate fee for the service

If interest is demonstrated, the adviser should send each potential juror a copy of the competition program in draft form. The program will describe the details of the project and of the competition process to be undertaken. Either a contract of a detailed letter should be sent to each potential juror to establish a fee and identify the jurors’ questions and ascertain that they understand all clauses of the program before signing a contact or letter of agreement to serve. After receiving a juror’s written acceptance, the adviser should notify the sponsor and send an official acknowledgment to the juror.

**Report to the Jury**

Prior to the jurors’ first viewing of the entries, the professional adviser should make an up-to-date report to the jury on the conduct of the competition. In this report, the adviser should explain the reasons why any entries have been disqualified from the competition, whether because of lateness or improper execution of the competition program, including its budget limitations. If
there is any doubt in the adviser’s mind whether or not an entry should be disqualified, the professional adviser may solicit the opinion or decision of the jury.

Assisting the Jury
The professional adviser’s relationship to members of a jury is that of an aide to a committee. The adviser’s function is to facilitate the process, to make certain that proper procedures are followed and to offer assistance when needed. The adviser should make certain that a sufficient number of assistants are available to respond to jury requests that the exhibit of entries be rearranged. Throughout the judging process, the adviser should be positioned nearby to answer any questions the jury may have. After the jury has made its decision(s), the adviser should provide the jury with stenographic and secretarial assistance to facilitate its writing of the jury report.

It is the adviser’s responsibility to produce a brief record of the jury’s deliberations and decisions. This record should contain all relevant statistics pertaining to the number of submissions reviewed at different stages by the jury. Such a record or the jury’s proceedings is a continuation of the professional adviser’s report. Together with the jury report, it constitutes an important part of the official competition record.

Notifying the Winners and Other Competitors
The winner and runner-up should be notified as quickly as possible after the presentation of the jury report by either the professional adviser or the sponsor. Where time, budget and logistics permit, the professional adviser should arrange for a meeting of the jury and the winning designer. Such a meeting permits both designer and jurors to ask each other a number of questions. The designer, in particular, may benefit from hearing the jury’s views of specific aspects of the winning scheme. Of course, such meetings are not always possible. Organizations that have to go to a legislative body or a board of directors for final approval of the jury’s decision may not be able to notify a winning architect until after the jury has departed.

During the period between the jury’s selection and the eventual public announcement of the competition results, the prize-winning architects should be asked to regard their notification as confidential information.

All competitors, including those whose designs fail to win any recognition, should receive a copy of the jury report. The report should be mailed immediately after the public announcement of the competition results.

In a two-stage competition, all competitors should be sent a list of the finalist who will continue to compete in the second stage. Those designers receiving honorable mentions should also be identified.

Notifying the Press
A press conference will frequently be called to make a public announcement of a competition’s results. The professional adviser should attend any such conference, participate in the writing of all press releases and assist in the selection of illustrations to be distributed at the conference or mailed to other publications. (The adviser should try to select illustrations such as black line drawings and high contrast photos that will be readily reproducible, particularly on newsprint.) The adviser’s involvement in these tasks will help to ensure the accuracy of all publicly disseminated information concerning:

- The date the competition was first publicly announced
- The number of queries received
- The number of designers who registered
- The number of submissions received
- A statistical profile of competitor’s places of residence (especially relevant for national and international events)
- The names of competitors and firms whose submission are to receive recognition
- The names of the jurors
- A description of the jury’s deliberative process
- The report of the jury in which reasons for the selection of the winner are presented
To preserve the integrity of the competition process, an announcement of stage one results in a two-stage competition should not include either the preliminary report of the jury or illustrations of any competitor's work.

**Arranging for the Payment of Jurors, Consultant and Winners**

The professional adviser/sponsor agreement may require the adviser to act as an agent of the sponsor in approving expense reimbursements, prize money and fees for agreed services. If obligated, the professional adviser should review all invoices submitted for approval prior to sending them to the sponsor, who will thereby be obligated to render payment.

**Exhibitions and Symposia**

When provision has been made in the competition program, the professional adviser may set up a public exhibition of the drawings and models entered by competitors. For certain competitions, a traveling exhibit may also be established with a suitable catalogue or other publication. The scope of the exhibition will depend on the sponsor's intentions, the amount of public interest or concern generated by the competition project and the amount of space available. Exhibitions provide a fine opportunity to stimulate public consideration of architectural design. They also help to stimulate the competitive spirit of participants. Knowing that their work will be displayed along with that of their peers can be a stimulus to competitors. For all these reasons, as full a presentation as possible of the submissions should be attempted.

The sponsor may also decide to hold a symposium on the competition or on the submitted designs to further disseminate information and foster constructive discussion. If a symposium is held, the professional adviser should play a significant role.

**Returning the Models and Drawings**

Shortly after the awards are announced (or post-competition exhibition is held), the professional adviser should arrange for the return of all of the design exhibits for which competitors have made prior arrangements. The competition program may announce that competitors who desire their entries returned should enclose a check inside the sealed envelope on the back of their entry to cover the sponsor's return shipping and handling expenses. (The amount of the check should be established by the professional adviser.) Another method is for competitors to retrieve their own submissions by a date specified in the program.

In a two-stage competition, submissions should not be returned until after the final judging, even if no post-competition exhibition is intended.

**Establishing an Archival Record**

As the drawings and models are repacked and shipped back to their authors, the professional adviser should assemble the competition's official documents, photographs, slides, sound recordings, film, videotapes, letters and public announcements in one place. Depending on the sponsor's interests and commitments, such archival material can form the basis for a future publication once the project is not envisioned, a competition archive is of value to:

- Members of the design profession
- Scholars interested in the history of design competitions
- Sponsors and professional advisers of future competitions
- Local history societies interested in compiling a record of a city's or state's architecture and design
- Proprietor of the eventually built structure who want to make its users aware of how the project came about, either at its opening or at subsequent anniversaries

Professional advisers should send a copy of the competition program, questions and answers, jury report, illustrations of the prize-winning designs and, when available, slide of all the entries to:

Competitions Archive  
American Institute of Architects  
1735 New York Ave NW  
Washington DC 20006
If not retained by the sponsor, original documents may be donated to a local archive for preservation. If no local archive exists, arrangements may be made for shipping the original documents to a major repository such as:

- American Institute of Architects
- Avery Library, Columbia University
- University of California, Berkeley
- Chicago Art Institute
- Cornell University
The Competition Jury

The Function of a Jury

In an architectural competition, the function of a jury is to examine all design submissions with respect to the sponsor's program of requirements.

Normally, upon deciding to construct a new building, a client will personally select an architect. In an architectural competition, however, the client-sponsor enlists the help of an expert jury in evaluating the designs that are submitted for consideration. Thus, in a typical competition, it is the jury’s responsibility to examine and evaluate the competitor's designs and to recommend which should be selected.

The use of a qualified jury adds expert judgement to the competition selection process. It also furnishes the sponsor with a level of architectural advice that is not available in commissioned work.

If a sponsor feels strongly that an architectural problem requires a design exploration by many professionals, then the selection of the best solution should be made by experts in the appropriate field. Architects are willing to enter competitions to the extent that they can be confident in the ability of juries to judge their work fairly and fully. The quality of the jurors thus helps determine the quantity and quality of submitted designs.

Commitment to the Competition Process

The task of judging numerous architectural designs is extremely demanding. A great amount of work and responsibility is compressed into the two to five days in which jurors customarily meet. Architects and other who agree to become jurors must have a commitment to the competitions process and an interest in the subject that calls forth a particular competitive effort.

Architects who serve on a competition jury should have no vested interest in the sponsor's project or in any of the competing firms. Only as independent professionals can their objectivity be assured.

Obligations

Jurors should regard the competition program as a contractual document binding equally on them as it is on competitors and sponsor. For the jurors as well as the competitors, the competition program and the professional adviser’s answers to competitors’ questions define the design problem that the competition is expected to answer. Thus, it is a jury’s obligation to abide by the program in judging all submitted work. It is essential, therefore, that before agreeing to serve, prospective jurors devote an appropriate amount of time to a careful examination of the draft version of a competition program, paying special attention to:

- The objectives of the program
- The composition of the jury
- The dates established for judging
- The tasks and authority assigned to the jury

Only after being satisfied regarding all aspects of a competition program as well as the sponsor’ commitment to carrying it out, should a prospective juror sign a letter of acceptance and send it to the professional adviser. And only then should his or her name be publicly announced as a member of the jury. When a competition program imposes a mandatory budget or energy use limitation, jurors should give additional consideration before agreeing to serve. They should satisfy themselves that the sponsor is able to obtain reliable information concerning the cost of energy performance of the competitors’ designs. In addition to checking for compliance with the project program, such professional consultants may also be able to make a valuable contribution to the evaluation of entries.

By accepting the position, jurors agree to abide by the rules of a competition. In effect, they pledge they will:

- Have no contact with any of the competitors
- Devote themselves fully to the task of evaluating entries on the days established for judging
- Respect and maintain the anonymity of the submissions, when anonymity is a part of the requirements
• Abide by the requirements of the competition program in evaluating the competitors’ entries
• Refrain from interjecting considerations in addition to or contrary to those specifically described in the program
• Make every effort to arrive at a consensus regarding the selection of a winner
• Submit a report explaining their decision(s)

Most jurors expect to be compensated for their time. Their travel, lodging, meals and expenses should also be paid by the sponsor.

Methods of Jury Selection
Various methods of jury selection have been used in architectural competitions:
• Sponsor selection
• Delegation of selection process to a professional adviser
• Delegation to a committee for recommendations or outright selection
• Selection by a recognized professional body of architects after consultation with the sponsor or professional organization
• A combination approach in which the sponsor or professional adviser names a juror, an architectural society names another the invited competitors may vote for one, and the sponsor and the professional society together might name two more.

Methods of jury selection vary according to the kinds of architectural competitions that are held. International competitions that receive the approval of the International Union of Architects (UIA) take the following approach. The UIA appoints one of the jurors, but the rest are appointed by the sponsor or its professional adviser. The UIA guidelines specify that there be an odd rather than an even number of jurors, that the number not exceed seven, that they represent different nationalities and that the number of jurors from the host country must always be a minority.

The American Institute of Architects suggests that a design competition jury be appointed by the sponsor in consultation with a professional adviser. The AIA does not normally select competition jurors.

However a jury is selected, the goal is to assemble a small group of highly qualified people capable of exercising sound judgement.

Composition of the Jury
Design competition juries should be small enough so members can readily exchange views, individually and collectively, formally and informally. A minimum of three jurors permits an opportunity for different points of view to be examined, while a maximum of seven preserves informality. More than that number diminishes the jurors’ opportunities to communicate with one another. Competition juries may be composed of the following types of individuals:
• Architects
• Architectural historians and scholars
• Other design professionals
• Consultants from relevant fields
• Representatives of the sponsor or eventual users

*Experience indicates that a majority of jury members in an architectural competition should be architectural professionals with substantial knowledge and skill.* This practice helps to ensure that informed judgements are made regarding the merits of the competitors’ proposals. Architects are in the best position of any discipline to understand the drawings and visualize the finished product indicated in the graphic material submitted by other architects. In addition, experienced architect-jurors can quickly determine if a particular design is readily buildable, technically and economically.

The presence of fully qualified architects, often supplemented by respected scholars or historians, assures entrants that the work they submit will be fully understood, properly interpreted, and fairly and competently judged. In this way, the quality of the jury will have a constructive influence on the number of entries and the range of design solutions submitted. Qualified architect-jurors are also an assurance to sponsors that the most promising design solution submitted to a competition will be chosen.
Architectural professionals are not the only people who can exercise useful judgements on a competition jury. Where the skills of such design disciplines as city planning, urban design, landscape architecture, structural engineering or interior design are required, individuals from these disciplines should be on the jury.

Nondesign consultants may also serve, where appropriate. Competitions with specialized purposes such as the use of certain building materials or the exploration of particular themes such as energy conservation should have specialized juries. Similarly, different types of buildings such as hospitals, schools, churches, libraries, theatres and museums require persons familiar with the particular requirements of such structures. Librarians, theatre directors, curators, school principals and hospital administrators may all make excellent jurors. Their participation helps to ensure that specific needs or issues will be considered.

A jury need not be solely made up of architects and other professional consultants. Jury members who are representatives of the competition sponsor may help ensure that all building needs are properly met. In competitions where a public agency is the sponsor, one or more jurors may be chosen to represent the agency’s or even the public’s interest in a project. Neighborhood residents, building industry representative, eventual users of the new building or structure, social scientists, patrons of the arts and public officials may serve this function. Design professionals frequently find that such jurors have a more detailed knowledge of local conditions and culture than many architects can expect to possess.

The following variables should be considered in determining the architect/nonarchitect ratio on a jury:

- The objective of the sponsor
- The complexity of relationships and functions within the structure to be built
- The complexity of relationships with the project’s immediate environment
- The degree of completeness or explicitness requested in the submitted drawings or model
- The design knowledge of the sponsor or users

A jury’s composition should vary in accordance with the subject of a competition. The major advantage of a jury that includes qualified nonarchitects is the discipline that articulate discussion encompassing a variety of useful viewpoints can stimulate. Such discussions may enrich the selection process by clarifying a jury’s search for the most appropriate design in a particular context.

The Architect-Jurors

Unless special regional or local design considerations suggest otherwise, architect-jurors should not be local residents. Rather, they should demonstrate the perspective and objectivity that distance provides. The appointment of a jury composed of respected out-of-town architects serves as an important assurance to competitors that a competition has been well organized, and that the sponsor has sufficient confidence in the process to entrust the evaluation of entries to qualified professionals. The architects who serve on a jury should:

- Enjoy a high level of respect among fellow architects
- Have created a body of design work that is respected by a wide range of their fellow professionals
- Be supportive of the sponsor’s objectives
- Have experience with and commitment to the competition system

A jury whose architect-members hold a breadth and depth of view can assure competitors that a fair and equitable search for the best solution, regardless of approach, will be made. In this way, a balanced jury is likely to increase the number of conscientious solutions a competition receives.

The Jury Chairperson

Competition sponsors may either appoint a jury chairperson or leave the selection to the jurors themselves. In either case, the primary function of the chairperson is to ensure that the jury’s deliberations proceed in a fair and orderly way. After a winner is selected, the chairperson also supervises the writing of the jury report.
In some situations, sponsors may decide to appoint a nonvoting chairperson to a competition jury. Freed from the task of determining and arguing the merits of personal preferences, an appointed, nonvoting chairperson may be in a better position to manage the jury’s group process so that all points of view concerning the merits of different submission may be heard. Such a nonvoting chairperson may be selected from the staff of the sponsoring organization.

Whatever type of chairperson is employed, members of the jury should understand and agree to its use.

**An Undisturbed Setting**

A competition jury should be undisturbed during its deliberations. No one other than the jury, the professional adviser, and the adviser’s official assistants should be admitted to the room. In certain government-sponsored competitions, “sunshine” laws may be interpreted as requiring that adequate space be set aside so that interested members of the public may observe the jury’s proceedings. In such instances competition officials must ensure that the jury’s discussions are not interrupted. The dialogue that takes place should be between jurors and the public. Most observers of the competition process would argue, however, that design juries must hold their deliberations in private. To expose a jury’s process to public view may sound collective judgement more difficult, if not impossible, to achieve.

**Pre-Evaluation Proceedings**

Prior to the evaluation of entries, a jury should:

- Reaffirm that it is in agreement with the competition program
- Select a chairperson (if one has not been designated by the sponsor) to preside over its deliberations and supervise the preparation of a final report
- Visit the site of real project competitions
- Be willing to devote sufficient time, in accordance with the number of entries and complexity of the program, to perform its evaluation responsibilities
- Be given adequate assistance to permit the rearrangement of exhibits as needed

The jury should be given a report from the professional adviser regarding the conduct of the competition. This report should include the professional adviser’s rationale for eliminating any competitor’s entry.

**The Evaluation Process**

A jury’s selection of award winners is made by a progressive elimination of entries. At some points elimination decisions may be made by voice vote, at others by written ballot. Each jury should determine its own voting procedures. More important than how votes are tallied, however, is the exchange of views that takes place during a jury’s deliberations, for the decisions a jury makes grow out of the dialogue that members have with one another.

In the early stages, a jury will find it useful to focus on the elimination of those schemes that are clearly not of sufficient quality to merit further consideration. After a complete review of all designs, agreement concerning the elimination of inferior submissions is fairly easily obtained. The closer the jury comes to determining potential winners, however, the more demanding the process becomes.

Before examining those entries that deserve serious consideration, a jury may want to reconsider the criteria it is applying. Some criteria for judging the quality of entries will be apparent in the competition program, but additional, mutually discerned criteria may be developed during the course of a jury’s deliberations. On occasion, a jury’s discussion of the value of different approaches may suggest the re-examination of a previously discarded scheme that had originally appeared inappropriate.

When it reduces the number of entries to those requiring serious consideration, a jury is well advised to enter into a structured discussion of the merits or shortcomings of each remaining design.

After the field is reduced to three or four potential prize winners, a detailed examination of these remaining designs should be made, the strengths and weaknesses carefully compared, and the workability of the intended structures confirmed. When all issues have been thoroughly discussed, the jury should select the first-prize winner and rank the remaining designs.
In the unlikely event a jury decides that none of the submissions meet the expectations of the sponsor, it may be empowered by the competition program to recommend that no first prize be awarded. If the competition rules do not stipulate how prize money will be assigned in such an event, the professional adviser and the jury may make a recommendation to the sponsor.

In two-stage competitions, a jury will convene on two separate occasions to evaluate submissions. At the end of the first stage, the jury’s mandate is to choose those schemes that deserve further development. Its task is to select a group of finalist who will be commissioned by the sponsor to develop their original concepts.

Toward this end, a jury will submit a preliminary report to the sponsor. In addition to identifying the finalist, this preliminary report should describe the types of solutions submitted by competitors and explain why the finalists’ entries were selected. The jury may also express any concern it has concerning specific features of the finalists’ designs that it feels require further examination or improvement. The jury’s comments about specific submissions may be forwarded to the finalist as a guide for developing their designs in the second stage. No competitor, however, should be permitted to see the jury’s comments on another competitor’s design.

The Jury Report

After it has made its final selection, a jury must write a report that explains the rationale for its decision. Because of their importance, jury reports require a sufficient amount of time and attention to produce. The report of a jury has three basic functions:

1. It is written evidence to competitors, sponsor and public alike that the evaluation and selection proceedings were fairness and care, thus conferring both a procedural and aesthetic legitimacy on the prize-winning designs
2. It is an educational document that describes criteria for evaluating architectural design, this stimulating thought for competitors, design professionals, the structure’s users and the public
3. It is an historic document that list the winners and explains why specific designs were chosen, thus elucidating the values attendant to the creation of a structure at a particular time and place

The report of the jury is presented to the professional adviser for delivery to the sponsor. With the announcement of the competition results, the report becomes a public document. A jury report should be accurate, comprehensive, and succinct. Each juror should have ample opportunity to offer comments and suggesting, but the report as a whole should speak with one voice. The report should:

- List the aware-winning designs and honorable mentions
- Make an appropriate statement of the reasons for the jury’s decision in regard to each

The report may also document the dates of the jury’s proceedings, its acceptance of the professional adviser’s report, its agreement with the aims of the competition program, its choice of a chairperson, and its site inspection, if one is made. The jury may also wish to comment on the general level of the submissions. To facilitate the writing of its report, the jury should be provided with stenographic and secretarial assistance.

Given clearly expressed objectives and the opportunity to engage in an extensive and fair deliberative process, a conscientious jury will, in all probability, eventually agree upon one best design. Indeed, most competition winners are unanimously selected.

Although a juror’s right to disagree with the majority selection must always be preserved, the decision to file a minority report entails a serious responsibility. While a well-articulated minority opinion can focus additional attention on a design that is not declared the winner, it can also undermine the authority of a jury and put the eventual construction of the winning scheme in doubt, especially for a sponsor who must gain approval from another body before the structure can be built.

Meeting with the Sponsor

In addition to producing a report, the jury should meet with the competition sponsor to announce its selection. This meeting offers jurors an opportunity to discuss the major entries with the sponsor, answer the sponsor’s questions, and present in-person assessments of the relative strengths of different designs. The dialogue between sponsor and jurors should continue until the
sponsor is satisfied that all relevant information has been exchanged. Such a meeting also provides the jury of a project competition an opportunity to voice any special concerns or formulate any recommendations it may have concerning the winner's design. With architects who have developed untested concepts or who are insufficiently experienced, or whose firm may need local technical support, the jury may recommend that a second architect or firm assist the winner. A record of the sponsor's questions and the jury's answers may be made and added to the official record of the competition as an extension of the jury report.
The Conscientious Competitor

A Search for the Best

Design competitions are a search for the best. The architect who is awarded first prize in a design competition for a project, but public and professional recognition as well. While the principal purpose of a design competition is to find the optimal solution to a particular building opportunity, the competition system helps both the profession and society discern ideas and talent. Whether local, national or international in scope, competition victories help to establish an architect's reputation. Alvar Aalto, Eero Saarinen, Arthur Erickson and Jorn Utzon are among those architects whose careers were launched by competitions. American designers such as Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood; Mitchell/Giurgola; Venturi, Rauch, and Scott Brown; Geddes, Brecher, Qualls & Cunningham have all advanced themselves through their competitions work.

When properly run, design competitions elevate the level of public expectation regarding architectural design. Such heightened awareness helps the profession offer its best, thus stimulating an improvement in architectural design, generally. All architects who participate in competitions contribute to this purpose, regardless of whether or not they win.

Who Enters and Why

An examination of past competition reveals that they are entered by architects of all ages and design approaches.

Open competitions have traditionally attracted designers who see a chance to test and extend their talent. In winning a competition and the commission that may go along with it, an architect can demonstrate a superiority of design ability. Meanwhile, architects and firms that do not win can add their competition designs to a record of work, to show prospective clients different aspects of their thinking. Even an experienced firm may use a competition entry in this way to increase its reputation or extend its record of achievement.

Entering a competition can be a welcome stimulus to an architect or firm. It allows competitors an opportunity to exercise their imaginations fully by increasing their opportunities to grapple with significant design problems. For architects who may feel constrained by the exigencies of everyday practice, competitions are an opportunity to work towards their own highest standards.

Invited competitions are used to recruit the participation and challenge the skills of designers with extensive reputations. Many established architects and firms enter open as well as invited competitions, however, because they find the challenge of competing with some of the best architects in the nation or world a stimulant to their own work.

Since the odds of winning are always slim, architects enter competitions with the hope that a specific design approach may prove ideal for a particular building opportunity. In the process, their convictions about design are tested, for competitions typically offer the kind of challenge few opportunities in professional practice afford.

The Cost of Entering

The greatest cost to competitors is not so much a monetary one as it is an expenditure of time and energy. The commitment of both can be considerable.

The first cost to the competitor is the registration fee often required of those desiring to enter. The major purpose of such a fee is to separate the serious competitors from those who are merely curious. A nominal registration fee is sufficient for the task.

Materials and printing cost will vary according to the requirements of a particular competition. Some competitions request only a modest number of drawings while invited competitions and the second stage of two-stage open competitions usually require an extensive number of detailed drawings plus the construction of a scale model. In such competitions, the competing architects are compensated for their exacting and time-consuming work. Nevertheless, potential competitors should carefully read the competition program before deciding to enter. Estimates can then be made of the amount of time and cost the development of a competition submission will demand.

Forming Associations
Architects may form associations with other individuals for the purpose of entering a competition. In general, associations are formed between four different sets of people:

1. Architects with other architects or allied professional with whom they like to work
2. Architects with other architects who meet eligibility requirements or limited competitions
3. Students or architectural designers with licensed architects in order to satisfy eligibility requirements
4. Architects with other technical professionals whose special skills may complement the development of a submitted scheme

The division of labor is established by the individuals forming the association. It may involve a relatively close collaboration, or it may entail one designer or firm being responsible for the preliminary design with the associates being responsible for most subsequent work. Whatever the relationship, the individuals or firms involved should establish a clear and workable agreement at the start of their association.

**Establishing a Production Schedule**

Once a decision has been made to enter a competition, the designer should begin to plan how long it will take to develop an entry. Starting with the submission deadline and working backwards, the competitor should establish deadlines for completing the following tasks:

- **Final preparation and send-off**: double wrapping to preserve anonymity, retention of receipts to prove submission date
- **Presentation**: selection and use of technique, media, composition and graphics to make sure that the scheme speaks for itself, because in a competition the jurors rely primarily on the graphic language of the exhibits in assessing the relative value of different schemes
- **Formalization and development**: developing the concept according to the required scale, type and number of exhibits
- **Analysis**: becoming familiar with the competition program; performing a site analysis; doing historical, technical or building type research and submitting questions to the professional adviser.

**Studying the Program**

The competition program demands careful study on the part of the competitors. All clauses, but particularly the mandatory requirements, must be read with great care. If the mandatory requirements are not met, the entry an architect submits may be eliminated from the competition by the professional adviser and never reach the jury. The competitor’s submission should match what is requested in order to have a chance of winning.

**Evaluating the Jury**

Competitors should feel a sense of trust about the jury that will be evaluating their work. With a balanced and unbiased jury, all competitors can be confident their design solutions will be seriously considered. As a general rule, competitors should be wary of architect-jurors who are principally known for a particular approach to design, however appealing it may seem at the moment.

**Questions for the Professional Adviser**

It is a common practice of architectural competitions to establish a deadline for receiving questions concerning the program requirements. Although programs should be written with care, architects who study them thoroughly invariably find questions they need to have answered, if only to test whether or not a particular approach is permissible or contradictory to the stated requirements. All such questions should be submitted to the professional adviser.

Experience in Great Britain indicates that fewer than 10 percent of all registered competitors ask questions. Nevertheless, in a sample population of architects winning first, second and third prizes, 50 percent acknowledged that they had submitted questions. *(Judith Strong, *Participating in Architectural Competitions: A Guide for Competitors, Promoters and Assessors*. London: Architectural Press, 1976. P 20) Obviously, this does not mean that asking the advisor a question will necessarily improve one’s chance of winning. Rather, it seems to indicate that those who place in competitions have studied the competition program rigorously as soon as possible after receiving
it, and may even have considered alternative preliminary schemes, thus giving themselves more time to conceptualize, develop and present their designs.

**More Than One Entry**

On occasion, more than one of the prize-winning designs in a competition have been submitted by the same individual or team. This is especially true in idea competitions, which generally do not require the same kind of detailed submission as other types of competitions. Even in a competition for a real project, however, a design team may find that it has two interesting solutions. If the competitors’ energy and manpower and the competitions rules permit, they may decide to submit both concepts. Generally, competitions specify that only one scheme may be permitted each registrant. In such situations, different members of a design team may each register so that more than one design may be submitted. If the competitor finds the rules unclear regarding the possibility of multiple submissions, clarification may be requested form the professional adviser.

**Copyrights and Patents**

The competition rules governing the ownership of submissions should be reviewed. In most competitions, the sponsor retains possession of all prize-winning designs. If a reproduction is submitted, the competitor should either have reproductions made or take a complete series of slides to document the work.

Unless the rules specifically state otherwise, the competitor retains the copyright to an entry. The rules may grant the sponsor certain of the rights comprised in the copyright, on an exclusive or nonexclusive basis. The entrants should be made aware of the uses that may be made of their submissions. To ensure copyright protection, the entrant should affix a copyright notice to each drawing, photograph or model submitted. Copyright notice consists of the copyright mark, the name of the author and the date of creation. No paperwork is necessary. To preserve the right to bring an action for infringement of a copyright, the entrant must register the work with the Copyright Office. Forms may be obtained by writing:

- Register of Copyrights
- Copyright Office
- Library of Congress
- Washington DC 20559

The registration should state that the competitor is the author of “original artwork,” “architectural drawings” or “technical drawings” since applications using the word “design” will be rejected by the copyright office on the grounds that a “design” is a useful article and therefore cannot be copyrighted.

Competitors may also wish to patent special features on their entries. While copyrights protect visual expressions of designs, design patents protect new and unique ornamental designs and utility patents protect new and unique architectural configurations or systems of organization within a design. Registering a patent may be especially relevant in idea competitions. Applications can be made to:

- US Patent & Trademark Office
- Washington DC 20231

During the life of a patent, the competitor-architect’s right to prevent others from making, using or selling the patented feature without permission is protected.

**Submission and Return of Entries**

Virtually all open and limited competitions and some invited competitions preserve the anonymity of competitors. Where anonymity is an issue, the competitors will usually be instructed to double wrap their entries and attach a sealed envelope containing identifying data on the back of one of the panels as the sole means of identification. To avoid potential disqualification, all of these instructions should be followed scrupulously.

If the entry is to be shipped rather than personally delivered, a receipt should be kept as a record. A receipt stating the date and hour of delivery may also be requested. Such receipts may be the only evidence a competitor possesses that an entry has been delivered on time.
After the results of a competition are announced, those entries that have not been awarded prizes are frequently destroyed. Therefore, competitors who seek to have their entries returned should make prior arrangements with the professional adviser.
The Competition Program

Developing a Competition Program

The competition program is the primary vehicle for communicating the sponsor’s intentions to all potential competitors. It ensures that every competitor receives exactly the same information on which to base ideas for a design solution. A competition program should contain the following three basic elements:

1. The procedural rules, which all participants must obey
2. The project program, including the sponsor’s objectives as well as information about site, space requirements and relationships and all other technical details
3. The submission requirements, including the number, type, size and scale of drawings or models

The Procedural Rules

The rules contained in a design competition program describe the conduct required of all participants in the competition process: sponsor, professional adviser, jurors and competitors. Adherence to the rules is essential in order to maintain the basic tenet of fair play for all participants. The disregard of any rule must therefore be deemed a serious violation. To structure a design competition properly, the procedural rules should cover the following subjects.

1. Type of Competition
   The program should identify what kind of competition is being held:
   • Project competition
   • Idea competition
   • Product or prototype competition
   • Developer/architect competition
   It should also describe the design procedure:
   • One-stage
   • Two-stage

2. Sponsor
   The individual or organization sponsoring the competition should be identified

3. Personnel
   The program must identify the professional adviser and all members of the competition jury. Brief biographical information and professional affiliations for both adviser and jurors should be provided. If applicable, the program should also identify all major consultants to the competition and their fields of expertise, such as cost estimation, energy efficiency and mechanical engineering.

4. Eligibility
   The program should announce whether participation is:
   • Open
   • Limited by residence, place of registration or other qualification
   • Invited
   In an invited competition, the competitors are each paid a mutually agreeable fee, with the amount stated in the program
   The program must identify who is eligible to compete:
   • Licensed architects, engineers, planners, landscape architects, etc
   • Teams in which only the principal or team leader must be licensed
   • Architectural designers
   • Architectural or planning students
   The program should specify exactly what proof of licensing, if any, is required.
The rules should state that no associates, employees or direct family of the sponsor, jurors or professional adviser are eligible to compete.

5. Registration
A registration fee may be charged for entering a design competition. The function of a nominal fee is to separate the serious competitors from those who are merely curious about a project so that the sponsor and professional adviser can estimate the number of entries that will be received and plan accordingly.

The rules should stipulate whether or not competitors may submit more than one scheme in a competition. Generally, only one entry is permitted for each registration. Membership on more than one team may be allowed or prohibited at the discretion of the sponsor.

A statement of agreement to respect all the rules of the competition can be attached to the registration form. The program may require the competitor to sign and return such a statement as part of the official registration.

6. Calendar
The competition program should be mailed to all competitors on the same date, with the reasonable assumption that all will receive it within a few days. This schedule typically establishes the following dates:
- The final date for registering as a competitor
- The final date for submission of questions to the professional adviser (preferably no later than one third of the way through the design phase)
- The date by which design submissions must be postmarked or by which submissions must be received to be included in the competition
- The dates of the jury's deliberation (both first and second stage in two-stage competitions)

7. Communications
Registered competitors may not communicate regarding the competition with either the sponsor or juror or any other consultant involved in the competition under penalty of being disqualified

8. Fees
In an invited competition the sponsor must pay each of the competitors a fee. This amounts to a commission for preliminary design work. The amount of the fee should correspond to the amount and detail of information the competition requires. If the invited competitors (or the finalist in a two-stage competition) are also required to present their designs in person to a jury, their travel and subsistence should be reimbursed.

9. Disqualification
The rules should describe exactly the disposition of a competition entry that fails to meet the requirements set forth in the project program and the design exhibit instructions. In properly run competitions, it is the adviser’s duty to disqualify submissions that fail to meet the requirements prior to their being seen by the jury. Should there be any doubt about whether a submission violates the rules, the adviser may request the advice of the jury

10. Awards
The number and amount of all prizes should be announced. The customary practice in open and limited competitions is for a jury to rank first, second and third prize winners and a number of honorable mentions. In a two-stage competition, the number of competitors who will be selected by the jury to compete in a second stage should be identified. A frequent practice is to award half the prize money at the end of the first stage and the second half following the final judging. Since two-stage competitions and invited
competitions provide fees for the competitors, second and third prizes are seldom granted.

The program must announce the nature and amount of the prize to be awarded the competition winner:

- A specific amount of money
- A commission to develop the winning design
- Money plus a commission
- Money that is deductible from a commission
- A scholarship for study or travel (if a student competition)

For a project competition, the procedural rules should stipulate that the winning architect will be employed by the sponsor or receive additional compensation. The program should describe the proposed contractual relationship. This description should include a statement setting forth the alternative compensations the sponsor will pay the winning architect should the project not proceed beyond the competition.

11. Authority of the Jury

The program should state that the sponsor will be bound by the decision of the jury. If it cannot legally delegate its authority to select or contract, the sponsor must state that its actions will be governed by the decision of the jury. In project competitions, the final authority for awarding a commission, whether it be a corporate board of directors or a legislative body, should be clearly identified.

A jury may decide that none of the designs submitted to a project competition sufficiently answers the sponsor’s problem. The rules should be written to allow for such a contingency. For example, the jury may advise the professional adviser and sponsor that it cannot find a first place entry to recommend to the sponsor as a buildable design. Given this situation, the rules should be written to permit the jury to recommend either of the following alternatives:

- All announced prizes be given and the winning architect be retained to develop a new or improved design
- No first prize be given, but the money be used to enrich the awards made for all the prize-winning designs, (second, third, etc.), thus freeing the sponsor to look elsewhere for a design and designer.

The likelihood of such a situation occurring is fairly remote, but the possibility should be taken into account in the competition rules.

12. Jury Report

The competition rules should require the jury to write a report explaining its reasons for selecting the winning design and ranking the other prizewinning designs, including honorable mentions, in the order chosen. A copy of the jury report should be mailed to each registered competitor. In a two-stage competition, the program should also state that the names of the finalists will be sent by mail as soon as possible after the first stage judging.

13. Competition Rights and Obligations

The competition rules should state that it is the competitor's responsibility to wrap and ship design submissions so that they arrive intact and on time. Sponsors should disclaim any responsibility for loss or damage of designs in transit from competitors. While the entries are in a sponsor’s possession, however, they must be stored in a secure place. They should also be insured by the sponsor.

Sponsors usually will keep all entries for as long as they deem necessary and should so advise competitors in the rules. All entries that are not awarded prizes should be returned to their authors when no longer needed by the sponsor, provided prior return
arrangements have been made by the competitors. The competition rules should state that those entries for which return has not been requested may be disposed of at the discretion of the sponsor. Competitors should be advised to make copies of their submissions prior to sending them so that they will have a record of their work.

Competitors retain the copyright to their entries, even if no notice of copyright has been affixed, but the sponsor may want the right to make certain uses of the works submitted and should therefore request permission for specific uses on the competition registration form. Some uses, such as photography for publicity purposes, may be encompassed within the doctrine of “fair use” so that the sponsor will not need the author’s permission. However, the “fair use” doctrine is not clearly defined by the copyright law and should never be relied on except as a last resort. Requesting and receiving permission for specific uses will protect the sponsor from suit for infringement, so long as the sponsor does not make unauthorized use of the works.

Sponsors should request permission to photograph or otherwise record all submissions for archival and publicity purposes. The rules should state that relevant information will be included in the archive and may be released to the various media. Any copyright notice that the author has affixed must be included in the archive and in any publicity material.

14. Use of Features from Unsuccessful Designs

The rules should state that no feature from an unsuccessful submission will be incorporated into the winning design without the permission of the commissioned architect as well as the author of the specific design feature.

If the sponsor wishes to use a feature from a competition entry in a constructed project or in any other design derived from the entry, just compensation must be paid to the author. The rules should assure competitors that entries will not be used in this manner without first gaining permission from the author. Sponsors should remember that any unauthorized adaptations will be an infringement of the author’s copyright.
15. Right to Require Association

Should the winning designer be deemed by either the jury or sponsor to lack architectural experience or to need wider consulting assistance, the designer may be required to associate with other consultants, including other architects, to develop the design through to final execution. No consultant should be chosen without the concurrence of the sponsor and the winning architect.

The Project Program

Each competitor’s design must address the requirements of the project program or risk disqualification. Therefore, one of the tasks of the professional adviser in preparing the project program is to balance requirements with the competitor’s freedom of design interpretation. Too few requirements may not adequately describe the sponsor’s needs; too many may unduly restrict the search for an imaginative solution.

The project program should make maximum use of clear diagrams and drawings. Floor areas, for example, can be conveniently portrayed as charts, tables or graphic areas. The following is a summary of ingredients essential to a successful project program

1. History and Background

The program should include a brief but relevant history of the project, the sponsoring organization, the immediate urban or natural environment, and the social context, if relevant. It may also include a statement of the sponsor’s interests and intentions. On occasion, sponsors may have established operational methods they would like to have respected in a new architectural design. For example, an organization composed of semi-autonomous units may want competitors to tie spatial expression to such an organizational framework in their designs. Additional programmatic considerations may require a statement about the architectural character sought in harmony with neighboring structures, the surrounding topography and vegetation or the general character of a region.

2. Objectives

The program should inspire the imagination of potential competitors by a clear presentation of the competition’s objectives. What kind of character should the project display? What should it say to the community? What large organizational and architectural functions should it fulfill? What is expected of the structure during its lifetime? How will it serve the owner, users and community? What kind of growth should be accommodated, if any? Are there any special design problems the structure should answer? What requirements are made in regard to energy use, circulation, public-private relationships, etc.? In short, what is the building for? How will it shape the lives of people who live or work in it?

3. Evaluation Criteria

The program should establish the criteria the sponsor expects the jury to follow in evaluating the competitors’ entries. Evaluation criteria vary considerably from one competition to another. In a competition for a memorial, symbolic and aesthetic aspects may be paramount, while in a competition for a building devoted to natural science research, the functional use of space may be deemed to be of overriding importance. To make the sponsor’s intentions clear, some programs list the specific questions the sponsor seeks to have answered.

Other programs will state the project’s major goals or themes in more general terms, to give the jury maximum freedom in its deliberations. Still other programs may attempt to assign points to specific issues or themes, to articulate the relative weight the jury should give to various aspects of the submitted designs. Jurors may find it difficult to treat literally such percentage-weighted criteria. There may be too many intangibles inherent in assessing the quality of a design to warrant the strict use of such a rigid scoring system.
However they are presented, the evaluation criteria should be clear to both jurors and competitors. They indicate, more than any other program element, the design values and solutions the sponsor is seeking.

4. Orientation Map
   A small scale area plan or aerial photograph (or both), with north arrow and scale, indicating the site, environs, the principal roads and all other pertinent geographic relationships must be supplied.

5. Circulation
   A traffic or circulation plan of the general site area should be given. It should graphically represent the flow of automobile, truck, public transit and pedestrian traffic.

6. Climate
   A weather and climate diagram or summary must be supplied to provide information on latitude and longitude. Precipitation averages and extremes should be stated on a monthly basis. Seasonal temperature, humidity and wind data should also be provided. Otherwise, the appropriate National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) documents should be identified.

7. Photographs
   It will usually be helpful to include a group of photographs of the competition area, such as:
   - Air photos (vertical and oblique) of the site
   - Ground level photos of the site, illustrating its main features, including key approach views
   - Photos looking from the site to adjacent, nearby or distant buildings, landmarks or vistas.
   All photos should be keyed to a location point map, which may be a copy of the general area plan or the site plan.

8. Site Plan
   A detailed site plan at an appropriate scale must be supplied. It should show:
   - A graphic scale and north arrow
   - Project boundaries
   - Topography
   - Neighboring buildings (their uses, heights, entrances, materials, etc)
   - Site easements, if any
   - Trees and vegetation
   - Sub-surface conditions (may be a separate report, if required)
   - Utilities (water, sewer, storm, gas, electric, telephone)
   - Prevailing seasonal wind directions

9. Site visit
   The program may require that all competitors visit the site of a project. In invited competitions, the sponsor will make arrangements for a visit that are convenient to all, usually as part of a general orientation. In open and limited competitions, a sponsor must decide whether or not a site visit should be required of all competitors. Travel distance considerations will usually determine whether or not a mandatory requirement is advisable. If a site visit is mandatory, the sponsor should determine the means of verifying that a proper visit to the site has been made by each competitor. A sign-in book placed near the site is one possibility. In lieu of a mandatory site visit, more elaborate site information must be provided in the program. The latter method is one more frequently used.
10. Space Program
A detailed building or project program must include the area requirements for all operational components. It must also supply:
- Areas listed by function and size
- Proximities or relationships between various departments
- A description of how the building should operate, in terms of personnel and what they do
- Special functional considerations, such as security needs or special equipment
- Access requirements of workers, visitors and service and emergency personnel
- Special interior climate considerations, such as climate control for documents storage, special equipment, etc.

11. Special Requirements
A clearly stated list of special requirements may also be provided. It may include:
- Building energy performance standards
- Building construction phasing considerations
- The use of natural light and ventilation
- Proximities to window areas by employees
- Lighting standards for work areas

12. Budget Limitations
Cost is nearly always one of the principal determinants of a project, both initial capital costs and subsequent operations (or “life”) costs. In this respect, real competition projects are no different than any other building project. A competition sponsor may only have a specific amount of money available for a project. Or, a limit for the entire cost of construction and operations may be established. The sponsor’s financial situation should be clearly communicated to the competitors and jury. Specifically, the cost of the project should be established as one of the following:
- **Budget target:** competitors are asked not to exceed a stated overall cost in their designs
- **Budget estimate:** competitors are asked to estimate the total cost of their designs, usually on the basis of area or volume cost assumptions
- **Mandatory budget requirements:** an absolute cost limit is established and a professional cost estimator is hired by the sponsor to check for compliance

Putting limitations on the amount of area or volume allowed in the project program is a less explicit but potentially effective way for a sponsor to control the cost of a project.

Putting limitations on the amount of area or volume allowed in the project program is a less explicit but potentially effective way for a sponsor to control the cost of a project.

Design competitions for real projects should state their budgetary concerns. Idea competitions, product competitions and student competitions may subordinate or disregard cost considerations to focus on design ideas.

13. Local Codes
The program should contain all pertinent information regarding the codes, ordinances and regulations of the local jurisdiction in which the project resides

14. References
It may be helpful for a sponsor to include a list of readily available information resources (articles, books, manuals, etc.) on specialized subjects pertinent to the project program.

**The Submission Requirements**
The submission requirements serve to summarize for competitors and jury precisely what design information the competitors is to produce. Participation in a design competition requires that an architect spend a significant amount of time away from regular practice. Consequently, the professional adviser should exercise care in determining how much design information to require. The design exhibit instructions should be sufficient to explain the design without resulting in overly elaborate and unnecessary drawings. Keeping the number and detail required in the drawings to a minimum usually benefits the sponsor as well as the competitors, for is allow the architects who enter to concentrate on finding the best design solution to a problem, rather than on its graphic presentation. In general, the submission requirements should:

- Be clear and concise
- Keep the number of exhibits to a reasonable minimum
- Stress design information in preference to rendering
- Restrict only what demands restriction, allowing competitors the freedom and opportunity to express their ideas, but in a manner reasonably comparable to other competitors

Disregard of the submission requirements by competitors is a violation of the rules. Those entries that do not follow the instructions should be disqualified from the competition by the professional adviser. The instructions should stipulate how extra materials such as an unrequested model or additional drawings will be handled. The preferred procedure requires the professional adviser to withhold from the jury the extra materials in order to maintain comparability among designs.

1. Drawings
   The number, size, scale and type of drawings from each competitor should be specified. This is a critical decision. The professional adviser should plan this most carefully with the sponsor. By specifying simple types of drawings and avoiding unnecessarily elaborate detail, the adviser and sponsor can ensure that the competitor's efforts will be concentrated on searching for the best solution to a problem. The conventional types of drawings include:
   - Site plan
   - Elevations
   - Sections
   - Isometrics
   - Axonometrics
   - Perspectives
   Perspectives may be required from specified points of view, either from the exterior or to illustrate important interior spaces, such as an assembly or exhibit area. Perspectives should be optically correct.

2. Models
   Models should be kept very simple, since they are costly to construct and ship. Generally, the requested model should be “mass” or “white only,” showing only overall form, not detail, colors or materials. If transparency is an essential of a proposed design, transparent materials should be allowed. The photograph of a small model may substitute for a perspective or isometrics, particularly in an open two-stage competition. If a model is required, its precise base dimensions should be specified (including depth or thickness of base). Topographical interval should also be specified. If deemed helpful, a model of the surrounding area into which all competitors’ models can be inserted should be constructed. This allows all of the competitors’ models to be examined against a common standard and, of course, saves competitors unnecessary work.

Models are seldom required as design exhibits in one-stage competitions or in the first stage of two-stage competitions. Models are frequently used in invited competitions and in the second stage of two-stage competitions.

3. Scale
The scale of all drawings and of the model is very important because scale determines the degree of explicitness sought in the design studies of the competitors. Although it will vary with the project, the scale of submissions can usually be relatively small. In general, scale should be set by the professional adviser in a way that is consistent with the sponsor’s objectives and the competitors’ design search.

4. Explanatory Drawings, Diagrams or Text
It may be helpful to require explanatory drawings, diagrams or text as part of the submission. Specific drawings, such as wall sections, may also be required to indicate materials and construction. Limiting the number of auxiliary exhibits and keeping them small, compels competitors to focus on essentials.

If the competition subject includes an interest in a particular aspect of design (such as passive solar energy), that aspect should be allowed a specified portrayal. A short text, explanatory diagrams and drawings, or a personal presentation of the design to a jury are all appropriate possibilities. If any feature of a competitor’s design submission has been copyrighted or patented by another party, acknowledgement of the patent should be required of the competitor.

5. Gross Area or Volume Tabulation
Competitors may be required to furnish an area tabulation on their drawings. This should be done according to a specified format to facilitate comparison. The competitors may be required to furnish a gross area or volume tabulation showing the trial size of the building design.

6. Cost Estimation
Cost estimations may be required, but cannot be expected to have a high degree of reliability except in more elaborate invited competitions, or in the second stage of two-stage competitions. If a cost limitation is mandatory, the sponsor should hire a single consultant to perform cost estimates of all entries on a comparable basis.

7. Methods of Presentation
The use of color, toning screens, overlays, etc., on the drawings should be carefully described. The sponsor and professional adviser should decide which media are best suited to helping a jury reach its decision without putting an undue burden, either in terms of time or money, on the competitors. Forethought should also be given to how well the required graphics will reproduce when the designs of the winners and runners-up are published in the professional and general press.

Instructions regarding the number, mounting, size and relationships of panels and other exhibit items must be precisely prescribed. Failure to comply may lead to disqualification.

8. Anonymity
In competitions where anonymity is to be protected, competitors should be instructed to submit their designs in an appropriate and convenient manner. Double wrapping is the most secure method. When the exterior wrapping is removed, a plain wrapper with no markings whatsoever encloses the submission. Identification is usually achieved by the competitor affixing a sealed envelope to the rear of a specified drawing. Inside the envelope, the competitor should enclose name, address and telephone number.

Those competitors who desire the return of their design exhibits may be instructed to place a check inside the sealed envelope to defray the sponsor’s packaging and shipping expenses, as estimated by the professional adviser. An alternative is to permit the competitors to pick up their submissions on or by a specific date.
Design Competitions Appendix
Time Planning Guide

The sponsor and professional adviser should calculate the amount of time required for the following steps. Note that several tasks can proceed simultaneously.

1. Preliminary Discussion and Formulation
   a. In-house discussion by sponsor
   b. Fact finding
   c. Interviewing and selecting a professional adviser

2. Competition Planning
   a. Program development
   b. Competition documents preparation
   c. Jury selection

3. Competition Initiation
   a. Announcement in professional press and other media
   b. Receive inquiries and registrations
   c. Log same
   d. Distribute program on a specified date

4. Competition Operation
   a. Time interval for competitors to prepare designs
   b. Receive "questions" from competitors
   c. Prepare and distribute "answers"

5. Receipt of Entries
   a. Receive all design entries
   b. Unpack and arrange all entries for jurors’ examination
   c. Maintain security of designs
   d. Arrange for public display if required
   e. Photograph all design for historical record

6. Jury Operation
   a. Jury examines designs
   b. Selects winner

7. Announcement of Winner
   a. Press release and conference
   b. Public exhibition

8. Follow Through
   a. prepare competition publications
   b. Pay all bills
   c. Return or dispose of unpremiated designs

NOTE: When a two-stage competition is held, steps 4-6 are repeated
**Cost Estimating Guide**

The expense of holding a competition may be calculated by assigning cost to the following:

1. **General Sponsor Overhead**
   Time cost of organizational personnel involved in running the competition

2. **Professional Adviser**
   a. Fee (time rate, contract fee, etc.)
   b. Expenses (office, travel, hotel, telephones, etc.)
   c. Clerical Assistance

3. **Publicity and Publications**
   a. Publicity costs
   b. Publications, printing (NOTE A)
   c. Mailing (can be contracted)
   d. Printing and mailing questions and answers

4. **Jurors and Technical Consultants**
   a. Fee or honorarium
   b. Travel and subsistence
   c. Communications allowance

5. **Exhibit space for design submissions**
   a. Receive designs
   b. Storage space
   c. Exhibit space (NOTE B)
   d. Handling expenses

6. **Prizes**
   Prize schedule – 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Honorable Mentions (NOTE C)

7. **Publication of Results**
   a. Press kit
   b. Public exhibit
   c. Competition publication - book or booklet

**NOTE A**: Competitors often pay an entrance fee, which can be applied to some costs. It should be very low, only enough to discourage the idly curious, not pay for the competition

**NOTE B**: “Sunshine” laws may require that all designs be placed on public exhibit. (This can be done via continuous slide projection of designs.)

**NOTE C**: Adjustments must be made for a two-stage competition.
Standard Forms of Agreement

The "Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect for Special Services" (AIA Document B727) is often employed as the basis for a sponsor/professional adviser agreement. Whatever form of agreement is used, the list of typical professional advising responsibilities enumerated in “Planning the Process” should be consulted in specifying the services to be provided the sponsor. The same form of agreement may be used in specifying the duties and compensation of jurors. Frequently, however, a detailed letter specifying a juror’s obligations and fee is substituted for a more formal agreement. The section on “obligations” should be consulted in specifying the services jurors will provide.

The contract awarded the winning architect in a project competition is often based on a standard form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect, such as AIA Document B141. Frequently, a copy of the owner-architect agreement is printed in the competition program in order to clarify the contractual relationship the sponsor and winning architect will enter into at the conclusion of the competition.
A Brief Competitions Bibliography


These books are particularly interesting because they list all of Aalto’s competition work


Lace Laver’s interview with Gerhard Kallmann illuminates some of the Kallman, McKinnell firm’s attitudes and strategies regarding design competitions.


Broad in scope, this volume is the most extensive source of information about architectural design competitions currently available. It contains hundreds of illustrations of competition-winning designs and an action plan for the expanded use of well-run design competitions in the United States.


Written by the woman who for many years served as the coordinator for design competitions at the Royal Institute of British Architects, this book describes how the competition system works in Great Britain and compares British practices with those found in Europe and the Commonwealth.


Part of the What Makes Cities Livable? Series produced by the Council for International Urban Liaison, this volume offers a brief overview of architectural competition practices in Western Europe, Australia, and Japan.