



FRAMING A
MODERN MASTERPIECE
THE CITY+THE ARCH+THE RIVER | 2015

February 4, 2010

Position Statement of the Competition Manager

Four issues must be addressed to determine whether a design competition should be considered as an appropriate methodology for design delivery – the Problem, the Process, the Design Program and the Role of the Jury.

First, **defining the problem.** In the first design competition that resulted in the Arch and the grounds, the problem was to create the “icon” – a monument to western expansion – and place it on the site with an integrated ground plane. For the The City+The Arch+The River competition, the issues are far more complex. How can the icon and its site be woven into the fabric of the city and region so that it becomes an “iconic place”? How it contributes to the economic and cultural evolution of downtown St. Louis, incorporates the Mississippi River riverfront as an integral and accessible part of the city, extends the influence of the Arch to East St. Louis, and begins to connect the east bank to its surrounds, the river and the Arch is a complex challenge requiring the collaboration of many professionals. The problem will not be solved by a quick conceptual sketch, but through a rigorous examination of the issues by knowledgeable professionals searching for alternatives and applying mature design thought and analysis.

Second, **designing the process.** The process needs to attract not only emerging professionals, but also recognized experts in their fields. The process needs to be realistic and respectful of the expenditure of energy and resources by participants pursuing the competition. Given a determination by a designer or design firm of a finite effort that is willfully expended, it is better to have the designers spend time solving the problem than seeking the ability to participate. Therefore, the process is designed in a 3-step effort that is now recognized as a national model.

Stage I is submittal of a Portfolio by the Lead Designer(s) and Design Team. Selection of those invited to Stage II establishes the quality of design expected in the competition.

Stage II is the opportunity for short-listed Lead Designer(s)/Design Teams to add technical capacity. Selection of those Architect/Engineer (A/E) Teams invited to participate in Stage II means that any one of the A/E Teams is qualified to carry the project into further design development and construction.

Stage III is the Design Competition. The A/E Teams are given an honorarium with specific deliverables so that each Team can focus on the design issues and spend their energy and time creating a workable and achievable solution. Through a series of interactions with a group of technical experts, the A/E Team can develop design concepts that can be moved toward implementation in compliance with critical schedule requirements for completion of the project by October 28, 2015.

Third, **identifying the design program**. In the case of a building, identifying the rooms, their adjacencies, flow and servicing requirements is a matter of metrics. In the case of The City+The Arch+The River, the design program is much more difficult to define. What can be defined are Design Goals – those goals that the designers should seek to achieve. In this program, “definition” enables the designers to achieve more innovative designs by removing barriers to their efforts.

Fourth, **empowering the Jury**. The Jury has been selected and appointed based on each member’s professional qualifications and represents the very best of many fields of endeavor. Members are capable of evaluating how a design responds to the Design Goals. The Jury is fully integrated into the Process in all three stages to ensure continuity and is charged with undertaking a thorough and rigorous examination of the submittals required for each stage of the process. In the end, the four issues – of the Problem, the Process, the Design Program and the Role of the Jury – need to be in balance, present an understandable and achievable methodology and lead to extraordinary results. The complexity of this undertaking demands a process far more defined than an “open competition” process that was used for the original competition that resulted in the Arch and its grounds. The results of “Framing a Modern Masterpiece” will resolve the design issues of the place – and will also achieve a new model for the integration of an iconic symbol into the fabric of the city.

2010 Steedman Competition

Granted since 1925, the biennial Steedman Fellowship is a design competition open to citizens of all countries with no more than eight years experience following receipt of a professional degree in architecture. Organized and sponsored by the College and Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Design at Washington University in St. Louis, the competition carries a \$30,000 first-place award to support study and research abroad – one of the largest such awards in the United States.

This year the Steedman Fellowship will parallel and compliment the “Framing a Modern Masterpiece” competition by seeking submissions from recently graduated architects from around the world. The scope of this “ideas competition” will encompass the site for the 3-stage competition while looking even more broadly at both sides of the river from the confluence to the north to the bridge crossings south of the Gateway Arch and the cities of St. Louis and East St. Louis. Submissions will address among other issues, “ideas that increase the qualities inherent to urban living, rescue land from industrial obsolescence or provide an alternative to peripheral sprawl.”

“Humanity, it seems, delights in and finds inspiration at waterfront settings, but increasingly asks more of them than spectacle alone. The competition brief will ask participants to propose and portray what that “more” might be along this portion of the Mississippi River,” states Steedman Fellowship competition chair Alex Krieger.

The Steedman Fellowship competition will be juried by a group of distinguished professionals and will conclude in May, allowing the submissions to be exhibited and contribute to the ongoing dialogue about the future of The City+The Arch+The River 2015.