

2017 Awards Jury Presentation Comments (reference only) John Burgee FAIA, Marlon Blackwell FAIA, Tom Fowler AIA Jury Suggestions:

- Some of the presentations could have been improved and if presented in a different way, and might have been eligible for an award. A number of projects presented had maybe too casual of an approach in telling a story. The crafting of the presentation is just as important as the crafting of the building design.
- Show a complete story of the project, which includes showing enough of the project's surrounding environment.
- Part of telling the story is two (2) fold: it's to show the context / situation in which you are operating in and to clearly define what the challenges are and how are you solving them in a creative and innovative way. Show it graphically; show it pictorially, it doesn't operate as an object in space – whether it's part of the city, or landscape or urban environment or all of these simultaneously.
- Don't lead out with a building plan or a site plan. Lead out with the best image you have. That communicates the aspirational aspect of a project.
- Your drawings need to be more than something taken out of a BIM or CAD file. The drawings need to be reproduced (or redrawn) as presentation drawings for this compressed thumbnail presentation. - Project's should be accompanied with diagrams to help the jury to understand some of the primary issues that you are resolving, like organization or proportions, nature, or special adjacencies, etc. This will help the jury get below the surface of the project and not just merely the graphical aspects. - Indicate in the narrative the challenges you were faced with, rather than just describe what you did. The jury needs to know what you are trying to solve (restrictions and requirements were and how did you solve them.)
- In preservation categories – need to see the before and the after, so the jury can determine what improvement were made, or what was the extent of the restoration

Submitting a successful packet (from other CA chapters)

If you have been unsuccessful in your attempts to win a design award for your work, you might reasonably conclude that the projects that do get chosen to receive awards are selected either as a result of a worldwide conspiracy mounted against you and your firm, or, worse yet, pre-determined even before anyone sends in their entry fees. Let us dispel the fears of bias, conspiracies, and fate and replace them with some common sense about how to submit your work.

Excellence First, the bad news. Generally, only great design work wins design awards. If your project's primary asset is energy conservation, submit it to an energy awards program unless it also has spectacular architectural design, then submit it to both. Design jurors take their responsibility very seriously and are extremely careful in their selections to insure that every awarded project exhibits an extraordinary level of design excellence. Jurors are as rigorous in their selection process as they are in

their own design work. In fact, they often view their selection as a reflection on their own standards and reputations, which, of course, no one takes lightly.

Strength Don't worry about the jury composition. Again, good work wins awards. Poor work does not. Submitting work that you think looks like something a particular juror might appreciate should not be your motivation. In fact, issues of particular styles, languages, and forms almost never get discussed, because the focus of the deliberations are typically more fundamental than that. Instead, urban design/site planning/social innovation, plan/section ingenuity, and technological/craft issues tend to dominate the discourse. Therefore, submit work because you feel it is strong, and present it so the jury can recognize that.

Participation Have someone from the project's design team participate in writing and assembling the submission. While there are many talented marketing and business development people in firms, design awards are given by a jury of designers, and your presentation should be crafted to speak to that audience on a very professional level. Be sure to be generous in crediting all parties who participated in helping realize the project. And follow all the rules. Obvious oversights, such as the firm name being visible on a slide, have eliminated many submittals from even being considered.

Clarity Provide the jury with all the basic visual information they need to understand the project. This sounds obvious, but many submittals create a huge challenge for the jurors to figure out what it is that they are supposed to evaluate. For instance, if the project is an addition to an existing place or structure, show this clearly with before and after photographs or simple, clear diagrams. Assume nothing. In fact, test your slides on someone who doesn't know the project and say nothing. This is how the jury gets their first look.

Simplicity Write simply and clearly without hyperbole. We realize this is something that doesn't come naturally to us, but we need to improve our abilities in this area. After several project statements are read to the jury with each submittal touting its design as timeless, innovative, forward looking, contextual, and client responsive, the jurors long for simple, informative statements that complement the slides they're looking at while these words are read. Think about the forces that shaped the project that are not visible in the slides, and use this opportunity to reveal them. These forces could include anything from cost constraints to community process.

Images Use photographs that actually show the project in use. Since the jurors usually can't visit the projects, this is a great way to show them that your theories work in practice and to reveal aspects of the projects that are only evident when people occupy the spaces. A staircase that gets used as an impromptu amphitheater at an elementary school, a translucent wall that is animated by people moving behind it, a view out to a landscape vignette that is only visible once someone sits down are examples of the types of information that jurors will not understand without images to support these designed experiences.

Resubmit Always resubmit. Every jury is different and every pool of entries is different. Many entries that only include a few affordable housing projects make a jury hunger for that building type and review those submittals extra carefully. Since you can't control the mix, resubmitting a project two or three

times is a good strategy. You've already done all the work to put the presentation together, so recoup some of the investment by using it more than once: submit it at local, state, and national levels in AIA, industry specific, government, and magazine awards programs. Let the rejections be like water off a duck's back. Keep doing what you think is the best work you can do, and keep submitting it.

Key Points - Consider investing in photography - it really can make or break a project. Use a professional photographer if possible. Starting and ending with good photography is key for a great presentation of the project.

- Include photographs, drawings, floor plans, elevations, sections, renderings and graphic images as necessary to provide a clear understanding of the extent and quality of the finished project.

- Include details: interiors, details, secondary and tertiary views or sides.

- Let the images tell the story as narratives rarely live up to the architecture. Brevity helps clarity.

- Find ways in which particular solutions can be clearly represented – that are transformational and intrinsic to the design proposal. - Show the process of getting to the refined, final result – how the architect went through the design process in order to get where they were. Represent the creative thought process. - Strong conceptual clarity is important. How did the architect take various programmatic concerns and look beyond straightforward solutions to create exceptional, innovative design responses?

- Renovations, restorations, additions and conversions should present “before” and “after” photographs. For projects involving changes to existing structures, documentation of original conditions is highly recommended. Include process sketches that communicate the development of the project and/or its construction.

- Indicate the project's physical context or site character through graphics and/or imagery. - Unbuilt projects should include floor plans, elevations, sections, renderings, graphic images, and/or site plans as necessary to provide a clear understanding of the project. If client-commissioned, include photos of the site location.