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PROGRESSIVE STEPS IN THE INITIATION OF A LOW RENT HOUSING PROJECT

Bulletin No. 5 on Policy and Procedure

Addendum No. 2

SELECTING ARCHITECTS THROUGH QUALIFYING COMPETITIONS

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July 13, 1939

SELECTING ARCHITECTS THROUGH QUALIFYING COMPETITIONS

This addendum discusses the "Qualifying Competition" as a method of selecting architects. In this form of competition a hypothetical problem, incorporating typical questions involved in planning USHA-Aided projects, is presented by the local authority. The competing local architects prepare and submit drawings embodying their solutions of the problem to a group of experts selected by the local authority (hereinafter referred to as the "Jury"). The Jury examines the drawings and, upon the basis thereof, selects the architects qualified for work on USHA-Aided projects. The architects qualifying make up the list (hereinafter referred to as the "Panel") from which the local authority selects architects for its future projects.

The method of Qualifying Competition differs from the method of Direct Competition discussed in Addendum No. 1 in dealing with a hypothetical rather than an actual problem, in being held well before the services of architects are required, and in setting up a Panel of qualified architects rather than selecting architects for a particular project.

Paragraph I below sets forth the advantages of the Method of Qualifying Competition and paragraph II outlines, in detail, the procedural steps involved in making use of this Method of selection.

I. Advantages of the Method of Qualifying Competition in Selecting Architects.

(a) The Method supplies a scientific process for determining, in advance, the architects who have the analytical ability necessary to solve the new problems and meet the new issues involved in planning USHA-Aided projects. Many architects who are otherwise thoroughly competent have been unable to solve the special problems involved in planning large-scale, low-rent housing projects.

(b) The Method supplies the local authority with a Panel of architects from which, under the terms of the Competition Program, architects will be selected for future projects. The local authority may reserve complete discretion as to selection from the Panel or may request the Jury to assign a numerical order of merit or to arrange working groups. Architects who are selected for the Panel are thereby given an incentive to study and prepare for work in the low-rent housing field.

(c) The Method is inexpensive. The costs to the local authority are limited mainly to the expenses incurred in printing or mimeographing and mailing the "Competition Program" (described in paragraph II-(c), below) and any necessary compensation to the local architect or housing expert serving on the Jury. The cost allocable to any one of several projects will be particularly low, since one competition will ordinarily supply a Panel which may be used for a considerable period of time.

(d) The Method tends to expedite the program by obviating the delays which sometimes develop in obtaining qualified architects when they are needed. Selection under the Method may be completed well in advance of the time of actual need as no particular site or any other purely local conditions are involved.

(e) The Method provides an exceptional opportunity for brilliant but inexperienced young architects. Such architects are at a disadvantage in certain forms of competition since "names" and established reputations tend to outweigh technical resourcefulness and originality. The Method tends to reduce these handicaps for younger men and to facilitate their qualifying. The Method also provides a means of associating younger men with qualified seniors and thereby developing the professional maturity of the juniors as well as obtaining a nice balance between originality and experience.

II. Procedure in Selecting Architects by Qualifying Competition.

The principal steps in organizing and carrying out a Qualifying Competition are as follows:

(a) The local authority notifies the local architects that a "Qualifying Competition" will be held to obtain a Panel of architects for future projects. Interested architects are advised to obtain from, and file with, the local authority applications for the Competition Program. The letter of notification should also state that the proposed competition will have the approval of the American Institute of Architects and that applicants should submit with their applications proof of their eligibility, such as registration in States having a registration law or other proof of practice in States not providing for registration.

(b) The local authority obtains from the USHA a suggested form of Competition Program setting forth a hypothetical problem in large-scale, low-rent project and unit planning. This problem is designed to show the analytical ability of the architect rather than his skill as a draftsman. The drawings required are few and the time allowed short.

(c) The local authority arranges and prepares copies of the Competition Program. To meet the requirements of the USHA and the American Institute of Architects, the Program must (1) provide for a Professional (architectural) Adviser to assist in adapting the Competition Program to local needs, to answer questions, to rule on mandatory requirements of the Program, and generally to assist the Jury in determining the qualifications of

the applicants; (2) assure absolute anonymity of the applicants during the competition; (3) state that future awarded contracts will be in accordance with the USHA suggestions; (4) provide for a Jury comprising a member of the local authority, an architect selected by the local architectural society, and a specialist in housing (preferably an architect) to select the winning submissions and, if so requested, place them in order of merit; (5) indicate the places at which and the time when the Jury will render judgment; and (6) state that a brief report by the Jury on the competition will be published. (The USHA suggested form of Competition Program satisfies all the requirements set forth in this subparagraph (c)).

(d) Upon receipt of the executed applications, the local authority issues copies of the Competition Program. The applicants then prepare and submit drawings embodying their respective solutions of the hypothetical problem.

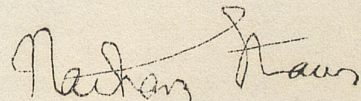
(e) The drawings are checked by the Professional Adviser, or other representative of the local authority, for mandatory disqualifications. Each set of drawings is submitted wrapped, together with an envelope containing the name of the submitter. The representative of the local authority, after checking the drawings as indicated above, numbers each set and numbers correspondingly the envelope containing the name of the submitter. The eligible drawings are then submitted to the Jury.

(f) The Jury examines and renders judgment on the drawings. The judgment will ordinarily require about three days. In the case of a very large number of entrants (for example, a hundred or more) careful judgment will require a longer period.

(g) The Professional Adviser or other representative of the local authority, in the presence of the members of the local authority, opens the envelopes containing the names of the persons submitting the drawings, reads the Jury report, and makes public the awards of the Jury. The architects qualifying constitute the Panel from which the local authority must, pursuant to the terms of the Competition, select architects for its future projects.

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The attention of local authorities is invited to the fact that the USHA will furnish any technical assistance required in the selection of architects by Qualifying Competition. As indicated above, the USHA has also prepared, and will furnish upon request, a suggested form of Competition Program meeting the requirements of both the USHA and the American Institute of Architects.



NATHAN STRAUS,
Administrator.

July 13, 1939.