

**The new State of Jalisco Public Library  
"Juan José Arreola":  
evaluating competition entries  
and the role of the brief in the process**

By  
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This presentation will depart slightly from the published agenda. It will be presented in two parts. The first segment, prepared and presented by Helen Ladron de Guevara Cox, offers an overview of the major library building project underway in Guadalajara, Mexico (Part I in the following text). This project is in the final stages of planning. Construction is expected to commence in the new future. Helen has served as the principal library advisor to the project since its inception. The second segment is by me, Anders Dahlgren (Part II). I was engaged by the Centro Cultural office to prepare a brief for this project and to provide additional advice and counsel to the project. I will describe how the brief was used in the evaluation of entries in an international design competition. Helen?....

**PART I:  
UNFOLDING OF THE PROJECT FOR THE NEW STATE LIBRARY**

**Introduction**

Mexico has a population of 103.3 million people (INEGI Mexico, 2005). Guadalajara is the second largest city in Mexico and is the capital city of the state of

Jalisco located in the Central - Western region of Mexico.

The city and the state is worldwide known by three traditional emblems: tequila, mariachi music and the "charro" cowboy style costume with a wide hat embroidered with silver thread. We, who live there are very fortunate because in a few months things will notably change in the metropolitan area. The area will also be known for its New State Public Library now being built in the municipality of Zapopan, next to Guadalajara.

## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **1.1 Population**

The metropolitan area of Guadalajara (MAG) in the year 2005 reached a population of 4'060 531 living in six distinctive municipalities of the city. The largest municipality is Zapopan, just a few minutes ride from downtown Guadalajara. This will be the location for the state library new building. The main concentration of inhabitants in the state is the MAG. The state as a whole has a figure of 6'752 113 inhabitants and represents a 6.5% of the country's population (INEGI. Mexico, 2005).

### **1.2 The University of Guadalajara patron of the State Library**

The country in its charge to improve the economy and education, and reduction of social differences, provides in its 32 states tuition free education from early schooling up to higher education as a B.A. In this level, the University of Guadalajara is considered the second largest state university in the country with 187,470 student body (May 2007). It was founded in the eighteen century (1792) as the Royal and Literary University of Guadalajara and re-founded as the State University of Guadalajara in 1925.

It is important to mention that the relationship of the library with the University of Guadalajara comes from the State Decree of the Government of Jalisco in the year of 1925, (State Decree # 2731) which mandated the University to manage the library to provide stability to its administration and services, due to continuous governmental changes that affected the library operation in former years. This fortunate decision has created a unique library situation in the country. A university of tuition free education that foresees the services of the state public library

### **1.3 Public Library Scenario in the State of Jalisco**

Public libraries in Jalisco have a fairly long history of existence. There are two main public library systems. One of them sponsored by the National Council for Arts and Culture of Mexico (267 libraries - Red Jalisco... 2007)), and the other one by the University of Guadalajara which runs three libraries (On line catalog Red UdG...) The total collections of the 270 libraries reach a conservative figure of 3'156,680 volumes. It is important to mention that the oldest, with larger and richer collections (approximately 400,000 volumes ) and with the largest building providing continuous service since its

founding in 1861, is the State of Jalisco Public Library, which bears the name of the well know Mexican writer "Juan José Arreola".

#### **1.4 Jalisco State Public Library: history and collections**

The library stores a wealth of special collections and in its essence keeps its spirit of service. Most of the historical holdings and special collections of the library (approximately 300,000) mainly originated from the ones of old academic institutions and monasteries (Ladrón de Guevara y Rendon García. Historia de las bibliotecas ..., p.151). Today they are valued as one of the richest in the Guadalajara and western Mexico. The library safeguards over 300 years of history not only of the state of Jalisco (important part of the former New Galicia); also of the Royal Audience of Guadalajara, which reached several other present states. The archival collections include documents from parts of northern Mexico and the southeast of the United States. The holdings also include some incunabula, Mexican and European valuable imprints from the sixteen to the nineteen century, a large periodical collection, pamphlets from the Mexican Revolution period, legislative branch diaries, map collection, private libraries donated and other valuable materials.

#### **1.5 Justification for a new building**

The older and newer holdings of the library were threatened by the passage of time due to several facts. The first one, the current building was build in 1959 over a dry lake land in the central southern part of the city, The second one, the fortress like design of the building which met the library design elements of the fifties had become obsolete. The permanent humidity in several parts of the building, the space layout, poor ventilation, the lack of flexibility to adapt to new technology and users need of later years, were some of the reasons which led to the need of planning a new building.

The fundamental reason that accelerated this decision was the 2003 earthquake. (not a surprise to local people because Jalisco is part of the Coco's plate which has caused several minor earthquakes throughout history. The library experienced severe damage in various areas, which created to cracks and crevices in some walls plus other serious structural problems. As a result to this situation a decision was to make a new library, therefore it would need a Master Plan to create a project and to produce later on a Building Program, which happened in the following years. IFLA indirectly played a key role through its Library Buildings and Equipment Section.

As a result to this aggravated situation a decision was to make a build a new library, therefore the Master Plan to create a project became the cornerstone for the new concept, which needed a Building Program which was developed in the following years. IFLA indirectly played a key role through its Library Buildings and Equipment Section.

## **2. KEY COMPONENTS: NEW LIBRARY MASTER PLAN, THE UNIVERSITY CULTURAL CENTER AND THE BUILDING PROGRAM**

### **2.1 Master Plan**

The University administrators, librarians and general public understood the seriousness of the situation in regard to the state library. Consequently, the University of Guadalajara Foundation sought the support of the Center for Strategy and Development Studies of the University of Guadalajara to develop a conceptual project that could facilitate the creation of a new library. The work done by a research team composed of experienced librarians and archivists culminated in the Master Plan for the Grand Library and Information Services Center: State of Jalisco Public Library. ( CEED. Plan Maestro... 2001).

The Master Plan is inspired basically on local (through a users survey ) and state needs, the Manifesto of the UNESCO on Public Libraries, The Public Library Service IFLA / UNESCO Guidelines for Development and many of other IFLA's international standards and guidelines produced by the Public Libraries and the Library Buildings and Equipment sections. It strives to create a flexible and up-to-date library with a vision to the future, that can appropriately preserve its historical and special collections, have a solid technical and operational capacity, information access to the rest of the world and vice versa, offer well planed contemporary collections and services, that respond to the community's needs, conducting the educational and cultural spheres of Jalisco, Mexico.

The vision statement of the new state library expresses that it "is the most important library and information services provider in the west of Mexico, with collections of general interest and historical documentation that satisfy the information needs of the people of Jalisco, offering in permanent basis an extensive and varied range of services and programs of interest for the community"

The mission is described as to "be the main gateway of access to the global community and to promote the integral development of all socio-economic groups in Jalisco by providing quality library and information services effectively and accessible in a permanent form which respond to the changing needs of time".

### **2.2 Main Roles and Services**

The library has identified twelve main roles:

- Contemporary general collections library
- Support Center for formal education
- Reference Center
- Access to the information highway
- Gateway of learning for children and young adults
- Center for permanent learning

- Business Development Center
- Historical Research Library
- Center for Community Activities
- Space for artistic and cultural expressions
- Public space for reading and personal work

Also it has planned a large array of traditional and innovative services and substantial support from the latest information technology.

Almost at the same time as the team was working in the Master Plan another fortunate circumstance was taking place. The University of Guadalajara was engaging in the most extensive cultural project of the century -- the planning of the largest University Cultural Center in the country.

### **2.3 The University Cultural Center**

The Cultural Center is conceived as a cultural public park, " a space open to the community, to children, young people and adults. The infrastructure of the complex, as well as its equipment and the services it offers, make it an attractive district to live in and perform everyday activities within an atmosphere of freedom" (Your Place: Centro Cultural Universitario, 2004, p.19). It will be the most important cultural park in the country and will become a model of Mexican culture on a local, national and international basis. The Cultural Center's master planner is Cesar Pelli & Associates, authors of the outstanding project of the Petrona Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the master plan of Ria 2000 of Ria, Bilbao Spain among other outstanding works.

Due to the relevance of this project there are three levels of financial participation: municipal, state and federal. The University of Guadalajara is the complex main promoter. The territorial extension is 2.48 million square feet (23.5 hectares) within the 18.8 million square feet (174 hectares) of the future Cultural District . The Cultural Center will include the Metropolitan Auditorium, the State Library, cinema complex, cyclic art gallery, bookstores and commercial areas, concert, opera and ballet hall, chamber music hall, several theaters, environmental sciences museum, housing, offices, hotels. Nearby there is a group of the University's campuses and a high school, which all together serve a total of 42,000 students.

### **2.4 Importance of the Building Program and the search of a consultant**

The Cultural Center is the birthplace of the new State Library. Therefore it was of crucial importance to develop a sound building program in order to reach the highest standards in the planning of the library spaces, based on the goals and recommendations stated in the Master Plan. A search for a competent librarian, experienced in developing public library building programs had began. At this point it is fair to mention again that IFLA's section on Library Buildings and Equipment played a key role, because it provided through its publications useful information of requirements and standards for a modern state library, which were very useful in the development of

the Master Plan.

As it was mentioned before, the work to locate a specialist was conducted by a Search Group of the Cultural Center early 2003. The Board of the Cultural Center Fund decided to invite Anders Dahlgren, an American librarian that counted with all the credentials to develop the Building Program for the Jalisco State New Public Library.

After Anders Dahlgren's acceptance, a good amount of meetings took place in Guadalajara during the year of 2003 where a Planning Committee of librarians, local architects reviewed the Master Plan so the consultant would understand what the people of the state of Jalisco expected of their new library. We visited the "old" state library and other local public libraries. A public libraries tour was carried out to other libraries in the country in order to introduce the specialist in a full immersion program of local use of libraries.

## **2.5 International Library Design Competition**

After the Building Program was completed in 2004 the Cultural Center launched an open international competition for the design of the new library which concluded with the selection of the winner entry on May 10th, 2005. One of the intentions of the open competition was to have a broader spectrum of designs coming from various parts of the world. The competition accepted 261 entries (of over 400) from 45 countries and counted with a technical review panel of four librarians and an international jury. The president of the jury was Bill Lacy, executive director of the Pritzker Architecture Prize and the participating members were a group of architects composed by Jose Luis Cortés, Carlos Jiménez, Ricardo Legorreta; Robert Campbell architecture critic; and the librarians group integrated by Kenneth E. Dowling, Rosa María Fernández, Andrew McDonald and Hellen Niegaard well know librarians members of IFLA. The chosen firm was Museotec and Grinberg, López Guerra, Toca y Topelson architects associates from Mexico City.

## **CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS**

- This is a library for the present and the future. It is a brilliant outcome of careful planning with IFLA's international library standards and a solid, explicit, well organized and most reliable Building Program, that provided the means for architects to clearly understand the needs of the building.
- The new library will play a key role towards progress and development not seen before in the region due its projected new facilities, the repositioning of a contemporary state library in the Mexican national context and the global knowledge and information society, with a new bright light of service to benefit the community it serves, where ever it is in the global community.
- The state of Jalisco, the municipality of Zapopan, the Cultural Center Trust Fund, the University of Guadalajara, the librarians, the library consultants,

the architects and all others involved in this well planned and designed state library in Mexico, will feel proud that the country will count with a state library, that meets local and state needs and met international standards.

- The Jalisco State Public Library "Juan Jose Arreola" new building is part of the strategy for the educational and cultural development in Western Mexico.
- The library will reach out to the world with a warm welcoming to all interested in her resources and services. Progress, development and partnerships have been in the mind of all of us involved in the making.

## **PART II: THE BRIEF AND ITS PLACE IN THE LIBRARY'S INTERNATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION**

### **Introduction**

A crucial aspect of writing a brief, or program, involves understanding how language and vocabulary can vary from audience to audience. I have an old slide that I used to use in workshops and seminars. It says "circulation" across the top and then illustrates that "circulation" means one thing to a librarian (there's a picture of a charging desk with a library user and a staff member completing a transaction); it means a different thing to an architect (there's a picture of a simple schematic floor plan with arrows indicating how library users or materials will flow through the space); and it means yet another thing to a mechanical engineer (there's a picture of a ventilation shaft with an arrow to indicate fresh air being discharged from the vent).

In preparing my part of this short presentation, I've repeatedly caught myself in a similar trap. Our topic this afternoon is the project brief – but in the States we more typically use the terms "building program" or "building program statement." In some other parts of the world, I know, the corresponding usage is the "terms of reference." I will do my best to use the term "brief" because it's more consistent with the vocabulary heard around the meeting table at the Standing Committee on Library Buildings and Equipment. But old habits die hard, and I will apologize in advance for any confusion if I slip into my more familiar usage.

This portion of the presentation of the Guadalajara building project briefly describes the process of developing the brief and how the brief was then used to guide the subsequent international design competition. The description of the development of the brief illustrates certain challenges that this particular process faced. And the description of how the brief was then used and how the competition entries were evaluated illustrates what was, to my thinking, a very successful process for determining the winner of a large-scale design competition.

### **3. PREPARING THE BUILDING PROGRAM STATEMENT (OR BRIEF)**

#### **3.1. What a brief is**

Whatever we call it, a brief is in the simplest terms a written statement of the parameters to be achieved through the design of the building. It is a set of instructions given to the architect to guide the design. In the title of an article published in *Public Libraries* more than twenty years ago, Lance Finney called it the “key to success.” It is a critical means of communication between the library and the project architect. I would argue that the more detailed and thorough it is, the better it will serve the project, but ultimately the length or thoroughness of the brief is less important than the essential act of taking the time to put your thoughts and goals about the building down on paper.

What do you seek to accomplish through the building project? What collections and services do you seek to support? How should the building be organized into departments and areas and rooms? How large do each of these areas need to be? How do they need to relate one to the other? These are just some of the key topics that should be addressed in the brief.

#### **3.2. Selecting the consulting librarian**

At the IFLA conference in Boston, I made the acquaintance of Helen Ladron de Guevara. As you’ve just seen, she had been actively involved with the early planning efforts for the expanded library in Guadalajara. The local planning group now anticipated moving into a new, more detailed, phase of their planning and Helen came to that IFLA meeting hoping to get introductions with international library building experts. But things don’t always progress as quickly as we might hope. Helen and I continued our conversations over the next couple years, and at the IFLA conference in 2003, she told me they were *really* ready to move forward.

#### **3.3. Developing the brief for the new State of Jalisco Public Library "Juan José Arreola"**

As Helen has indicated, the process of developing the brief extended over at least three separate visits. At each visit, several meetings were scheduled with project staff and library staff. The ultimate goal of these visits was (1) to define as specifically as possible the departments, rooms and areas that needed to be contained within the building; (2) to allocate collections, and resources, and other inventories into those areas so that we could calculate the floor space needed in each; and (3) to describe the required adjacencies among functional areas.

The latter was a particular challenge for this project because we didn’t want the brief to be too prescriptive. We didn’t want to specify how many floors the building should have. We didn’t want to specify that this function *must* be on this floor and that function *must* be on another floor. We wanted to allow some flexibility for an architect to *interpret* the library’s requirements. There were, however, some specific features that

we did want to insist upon. The children's library, for example, was to be off the entry level of the building (because we felt an entry level location would be too insecure), but *not* on one of the uppermost levels of the building (which we felt would be too inaccessible). Other proximities *within* a given department were also specified – the convenient visibility of the public service desk from the entry to the department, a close adjacency between the public service desk and the department's public computer center, and so on.

Another challenge we faced in developing the brief was the fact that I, as the programmer, came from the States where we have a different culture of library services than is evident in Mexico. The Centro Cultural staff understood this important aspect and cleverly arranged an orientation for me. My first site visit on this project actually started in Mexico City, where I was met by Helen and Mauricio de Font Reaulx, the director of the overall Centro Cultural project. Together, we toured major libraries in Mexico City, and from there proceeded to Villahermosa, where we toured one more library, what was at the time the most recent state or provincial library to have been built in Mexico.

The purpose of these tours was to re-calibrate *my* understanding and expectations of library service. I noticed, for example, that these Mexican libraries often had features that were not usually part of an American library. Many had a staffed coat check station or wardrobe near the entry, as is often the case among larger libraries that I've visited in other parts of the world. I observed that the libraries tended to have slightly wider aisles than would ordinarily be found in the States. This would affect the floor space required by each individual section of shelving. I saw that the collections seemed to contain a larger proportion of paperback books. This would affect the number of volumes that can be housed per shelving unit and ultimately the number of shelving units required. These tours helped me understand some of the common differences in service patterns, so I could better incorporate that into the development of the brief.

And a third major challenge we faced is the fact that *mi Español no es muy bueno*. I knew very little Spanish when we started this project, and, sadly, I know not enough more now. But with abundant good humor and a willingness to teach and learn, we surmounted that obstacle.

#### **4: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BRIEF IN AN INTERNATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION**

All of our attention to developing the building program statement – or brief – was crucial because the brief was to become the principal avenue for communicating with the architects during the subsequent competition. Architects registered for the competition and received an extensive package of documentation. This outlined the rules for the competition and the requirements for the submittal. There was information about the site and the larger Centro Cultural project. And there was the brief.

Within the structure of the competition, there was no real opportunity to engage in a dialog with the architects to explore the requirements of the brief and insure that the architects fully understood those requirements. In any competition, one wants to be fair to all of the participants and not “give away” inside, critical information that might give an advantage to one participant over another. In the case of the Guadalajara competition, given the large number of architectural firms that registered to participate, it would have been impractical to engage in that many separate dialogs with individual participants.

Therefore, the information package for competition participants – of which the brief was a substantial part (and I would argue *the* most substantial part) – needed to stand on its own to the greatest possible extent.

The architects did have two or three opportunities to submit questions seeking clarifications of the project’s goals, most of which were enumerated in the brief. Questions ranged from the very general to the very specific. Some revealed a naivete and general lack of understanding of the library as a building type; others revealed an inherent, deep understanding of how a typical library will operate. The questions were received by the Centro Cultural office, and those that could not be answered by the office were forwarded to me for a response. All architects who registered for the competition received a copy of all the questions and all the responses.

Because the brief was, effectively, the principal means of communication with the architects in the competition, my instinct as a librarian and a consultant was to make the brief as thorough and complete as it possibly could be – in the words of an architect friend of mine, “to leave no stone unturned” in the description of the building’s desired internal and external features. The more specific we could be in describing the conditions that we wanted to achieve in the design, the more likely we were to receive a plan that met those goals. Better, I would have thought, to leave as little as possible to guesswork. As you might imagine, a building of more than 35,000 gross square meters is a big building, and the brief describing a building of that scale could become very long indeed.

But Mauricio de Font Reaux, the director of the Centro Cultural office, expressed a corresponding concern regarding the prospective length of the brief. He wanted the brief to be brief. If it were too long, Mauricio said, it could be discouraging for the architects who registered for the competition. A brief of epic proportions might not even be read fully, from start to finish. So he encouraged us to find an appropriate balance between brevity and thoroughness. I thought our brief accomplished that. Even so, staff at the Centro Cultural office reduced what I submitted as a final draft by about a third.

One of the strategies the office employed to pare down the last draft of the brief was to eliminate much of the repetition that arose in the description of the public service departments. Most of the public service departments were organized with a certain similarity. In our brief we described these departments as having a recurring pattern of layout and operation so that users moving from one to the other would be familiar with a

new department based on past experience in some other department. Centro Cultural staff instead provided one expression of the consistent elements to be found in all public service departments, reducing the brief's overall "dauntingness."

## **5: USING THE BRIEF AS AN EVALUATION TOOL**

The brief was developed to guide the efforts of architects as they prepared submissions for the library project's international design competition. The brief was also used by a technical review panel comprised of librarians and the official jury for the competition comprised of architects and librarians as they evaluated the competition entries.

### **5.1. Logistics of the competition**

As competition entries were received, the brief again came to occupy center stage. Entries were received by the Centro Cultural office. They were opened and accessioned. Staff confirmed that they contained all of the required parts and were eligible for consideration. The display panels for each of the entries were photographed. And staff then set about mounting the entries on a maze of temporary wall panels that had been erected under a tent near the library's proposed site, across the street from the municipal auditorium, which had had its own design competition a year or so previous and was just beginning construction.

There were more than 260 submissions. Most, but not all of them consisted of two large display panels measuring roughly one meter wide by two meters tall. (A minority of entries chose to illustrate their concept with only a single panel.) The panels were complemented by a short narrative providing a description of the design conceit. All together, when they were mounted, the panels of the competition entries occupied more than half a kilometer of those temporary walls.

The intent was to subject these 260+ entries to a two-part evaluation process. A technical review panel consisting of four librarians – including myself and Helen – were to examine the entries for consistency with the brief, identifying a subset or shortlist of the 260 entries that would then be examined more closely by the official jury of the competition. The technical review panel was given no specific target number for the shortlist. Our goal simply was to spare the official competition jury from having to review *all* of the submissions, so the jury could devote more of their time and attention to those entries that were "certified" as being in compliance with the brief.

### **5.2. The methodology of the technical review panel**

The technical review panel's process, I think, worked very well. It was a huge task to examine and evaluate more than 260 entries, and our procedure allowed for ample discussion, and it insured that each member of the technical review panel would have a full and complete opportunity to have his or her say. If any of you in the

audience are ever in a position of organizing an architectural competition, I commend this to you.

Our process was modeled on the evaluation process used in the Library Building Award program, jointly sponsored by the American Institute of Architects and the American Library Association. Every second year, these two organizations each nominate three jurors – three architects, three librarians – who are charged with reviewing submissions describing recently completed building projects that have been nominated for consideration for this award. I've served on that jury four times, and each time I've served, the pool of nominees has grown. In recent years, the number has surpassed 200.

For the Library Building Award competition, the six-member jury works independently to examine each of the submissions. Each juror then votes “yes,” “no,” or “maybe.” As each juror completes his or her review, the votes are combined, and those projects that receive the greatest level of support move on to the next level of evaluation. In my experience, the jurors in the Library Building Award program are typically careful about voting “yes” and as a result, by focusing on projects that receive six, five or four “yes” votes you usually have a manageable number of submissions on the table for further consideration.

The technical review panel adopted a slightly different approach. We informally broke up the full group of submissions into smaller groups of roughly forty submissions. Working alone, we each reviewed each of the submissions. In my case, I had to do the best I could using my *very* rudimentary Spanish, but my fellow panel members were both very patient and very encouraging in their ongoing lessons. But I did know the basic language of the brief, and I could use that to interpret the drawings readily.

As we reviewed each submission, we each cast a numeric vote. If a submission received a “0” from one of us, it indicated that panel member’s assessment that the submission did *not* meet the requirements of the brief under any circumstance. A “1” indicated that the submission could be recommended, but with reservations. A “2” indicated that the submission fulfilled the basic requirements of the brief. And a “3” indicated that the panel member felt the submission fulfilled the requirements of the brief in exemplary fashion. If we gave a project a “3” we *really* liked it.

As all four of the review panel members completed the review of a block of submissions – I mentioned earlier we established informal small groups of about forty entries apiece – we took a break to review and summarize our work on that particular block. We identified on a tentative, preliminary basis the entries that together we felt strongest about.

The chair of the technical review panel would tabulate the votes from the four of us, and we would use this as a priority listing of the entries in that block. Although we hadn't agreed to this at the outset of our work, we quickly came to an understanding that a combined vote of “8” or more would typically represent the elimination point. On

one, admittedly simplistic level, a combined vote of “8” meant that each of the four of us had given an entry a “2” which represented a fundamental level of support. Of course it could also reflect a deep split among us, that a few of us really liked the entry and the rest of us didn’t like it at all.

For the most part, though, the final part of our initial review of each group of roughly forty entries involved a group discussion of those entries that received a combined tally of “8” or more. We discussed the strengths and weaknesses of each of those entries. Often, during the course of those discussions, attitudes regarding an entry would change, sometimes to the entry’s benefit, sometimes to its detriment. At the end of each of these discussions, we would make a group decision to keep that entry in consideration or remove it consideration.

One key to our success with this process, I think, was the understanding that our initial review did not seek to identify the projects that would be on the review panel’s final short list. We had agreed early on that in the first review we should strive to eliminate the non-contenders. A second review of our smaller first elimination would yield our final recommendation. Or a third review, if needed, or a fourth. We knew we weren’t making our final, final statement, and that made it easier to make an initial decision and move on.

Another key to our success with this process was our determination to operate on a consensus basis as much as possible during this initial discussion. Except that we agreed among ourselves that any review panel member at any time during the initial review could disagree with the will of the combined group and insist that a particular favorite project be included in that initial review list. This even extended to a few entries that failed to receive the agreed-upon “minimum” combined vote tally of “8” or more. Each of us used this prerogative, but we each used it sparingly, and it insured that if there was an entry that one of us particularly favored it would get a thorough discussion from the full panel. That also made it easier to conclude the discussion of each group of forty and move on.

During the course of our first full day’s work, we completed the review of three groups – about 110 entries. During the course of our second full day’s work, we completed the review of another three groups – about 110 entries again. During the third morning, we finally completed the first review of *all* 260+ entries. And it turns out that through this process we were able to eliminate more than three-quarters of the entries.

For the balance of that third day, our process involved working in a group with the 60 or so entries that remained under consideration. We completed a walking tour of the remaining entries, just to fix them again in our minds as a group. Then we proceeded to go from entry to entry, discussing the merits of each, especially as each related to the requirements expressed in the brief. As librarians, our job on the panel was to review the entries from the perspective of their operations and utility. Although we were concerned with their design qualities and their flair, we were to focus on

functionality of each scheme. Seeing the remaining entries now in the context of this smaller group changed our thinking about some of the entries. During this phase, we were also able to discuss at greater length any entries that a single panel member had carried into this second round of the evaluation. And at the end of each discussion, we again sought to define a consensus around whether to keep a project in consideration or remove it from consideration.

In this second round, very quickly on, we realized that some of the entries that we kept in consideration we felt very strongly about and others we felt less strongly about. We hurried back to the first of the entries we had discussed in the second phase, and set about categorizing the entries that we wanted to keep in consideration as “first tier” and “second tier.”

When we finished the second round of the evaluation, we made one more trip through the remaining, smaller group of entries. We asked ourselves one more time if we were comfortable with our assessment to recommend each of the entries that remained on *our* list as either a “first tier” or “second tier” library. In that discussion, some projects shifted from second tier to first. Others shifted from first to second. And some projects we agreed to eliminate.

In the end, we identified nineteen entries as “first tier” submissions and another twelve as “second tier” submissions. Thirty-one entries remained out of more than 260. We felt we had done a fine job in narrowing down a huge number of candidates to a shorter, much more manageable list. Certainly that would allow the jury to concentrate on a relative handful of entries that met the requirements of the brief.

### **5.3. The jury’s evaluation process**

Now, I’d like to tell you a bit more of how the rest of the competition process played out. The day after the technical review panel completed its work, the members of the jury arrived in Guadalajara. That evening, there was a dinner gathering so that everyone could become acquainted. And the following morning the jury started their work.

I must note that none of the technical review panel members was party to the deliberations of the jury. According to the original plan, the chair of the technical review panel was supposed to sit in on their discussions and serve as a resource, but one of the jury’s first decisions was to dismiss the panel chair from that duty, albeit with a cell phone in hand so that they could reach the chair if needed. Even had any of us been party to the deliberations, the matter of jury confidentiality would likely prevent the revelation of any particulars.

Another of the jury’s first decisions was that they wanted to view and evaluate all of the entries themselves. Effectively, they chose to disregard the work of the review panel. For my part, I was quite upset with that decision. But the jury soon redeemed themselves.

The jury spent one day reviewing the entries, and they sorted their preferences into their own short list of, as I recall, twenty to twenty-four submittals. There was some overlap between the short list of the technical review panel and the jury, but clearly the jury had approached its work from a different perspective than the technical review panel.

On the second morning of the jury's work, the chair of the jury invited the technical review panel to make a presentation regarding its deliberations. Three of the four members were still in Guadalajara. We did not review the specific entries that we had favored, but instead we described the key themes that had emerged in the designs on our short list. And these recurring themes directly reflected the key elements from the brief:

- the need for the design to present a clear point of entry from the major paths of approach
- there needed to be a clear separation between the historical collection and the public library; the historical collection had to operate as a separate library within the library
- the technical review panel tended to favor plans that put the historical collection on one end of the building or another, rather than plans that sandwiched the historical collection between floors of the public library; we felt the strategy of locating the historical collection on an intervening floor or floors could make it more difficult to secure that collection
- there needed to be a proper balance among the number of levels: the brief anticipated a multi-level building but did not specify exactly how many levels would be needed, in order to allow an architect flexibility in developing an entry; the brief contained a clearly expressed expectation, however, that too few floors would result in a floor plate that was too large and unmanageable, while too many floors would fragment the internal configuration and impede effective work flow
- the technical review panel tended to favor designs that had a consistent path through the building vertically; we felt that having library users enter each successive floor at roughly the same point (whether by way of stairs or elevator) would enhance their introduction to each floor of the building
- there needed to be a clear and consistent organization on each floor; if service desks were located in roughly the same location in relation to the stairs and elevator, for example, we felt it would enhance the library user's understanding of the building
- the brief proscribed that individual departments be maintained intact; the review panel insisted that they not be subdivided, but some of the submissions hoped to achieve a creative result by doing just that
- we tended to favor designs that kept the collections away from windows; while this was especially critical in the historical collection (for the basic safety and longevity of the collection), the simple fact is that the books cannot enjoy a view – better to save exterior views for *people* using the library.
- as specified in the brief, certain public service areas needed to be located on

the same floor, next to one another; the collection for very young children needed to be next to the collection for middle-age children, we didn't want to have the children's department, for example, divided over two levels (and some of the entries did just that)

- the children's library needed to be conveniently located but off of the entry level (a specific requirement of the brief)

After that presentation, the chair of the jury invited each of the three technical review panel members to select one of the entries they had favored and describe it to the jury. We each did that, and the jury then retired to continue its deliberations. I have to repeat that none of the technical review panel were party to those discussions. I'll simply note, however, that after the jury completed its work and had selected the winner of the competition, two or three of the jurors commented to me that the panel's presentation to the jury had been extremely useful. I was told the jury referred to our key themes repeatedly and used that information to focus in on their eventual selection.

And with that, the jury acknowledged the work of the technical review panel, and in my estimation redeemed it's initial decision to discount the panel's efforts.

## **6: CONCLUSION**

The members of the technical review panel and the design competition jury in Guadalajara undertook a huge task – the evaluation of more than 260 entries submitted to the library's international design competition. The combined efforts produced a winner for the competition that was striking and elegant in its simplicity, yet functional, the embodiment of the essential goals outlined in the brief for this project. Given the limited interaction between the library and architect that is allowed in the context of the competition, the brief assumed an even greater importance than would otherwise have been the case. Those of us who served on the review panel and the jury now join the people of Guadalajara as we eagerly await the completion of this ambitious new building.

The world library community will be invited to the opening of the new State of Jalisco Public Library "Juan José Arreola" by the end of 2008 or beginning of 2009. Most probably along the attendance of the opening ceremony, you will also enjoy some Tequila, " mariachi" music and meet some "charros" in their elegant felt black suits with a black hat embroidered with silver thread. Hopefully some of you could stay several days longer and visit the University Cultural Center home of the new library, the largest state library in country.

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