

Design Competition

Frequently Asked Questions: As of September 24, 2023. This FAQ may be revised as additional questions are received.

Question 1: Must submissions be individual, or can teams participate?

Answer: Team participation is welcome. We recommend listing the names of team members on application form

Question 2: Is part of the competition site privately owned? Is the owner aware of the design competition?

Answer: The eastern portion of the Project Area for this competition is owned by the City of Benicia while the western portion of the Project Area is privately owned. A lawsuit has been filed to stop development on the privately-owned section of the Project Area that will significantly change the distinctive features of this historic site and could result in de-listing of the historic district from the National Register of Historic Places. The City's Parks Trails & Open Space Master Plan has proposed expansion of Clocktower Park since 1997. Citizens have advocated for park expansion during the Lower Arsenal Mixed Use Specific Plan process in 2007 and the more recent review of two development projects on Officers' Row in 2022. 1000 Friends Protecting Historic Benicia has not informed the property owner of this design competition.

Question 3: What are the Secretary of Interior Standards? How do they apply to the site?

Answer: The Secretary of Interior (SOI) Standards are designed to protect historic sites. The SOI Standards require any project on a site be compatible with the historic features of the site while being applied in a reasonable manner that takes into consideration the economic and technical feasibility of the project. The SOI Standards address four treatments to historic sites: 1) preservation, 2) rehabilitation, 3) restoration, and 4) reconstruction. Each standard includes guidelines to assist in its application to a project. The competition site is subject to the SOI Standards for **Rehabilitation**. See [Competition Resources](#) for weblinks to Secretary of Interior documents most helpful to your submission.

Question 4: Under the Secretary of Interior Standards, how many new structures can be introduced on the site?

Answer: The SOI Standards are applied nationwide and must consider the economic and technical feasibility of the proposed project so there is no specific limit on the number of new structures for a particular historic site. The SOI Standards for Rehabilitation require that any new structure or use must result in minimal change to the defining characteristics of the historic site and its environment. The [Competition Resources](#) includes the "[Existing Conditions Report for the Project Area](#)" which identifies the character-defining features that determine the historic integrity for the Project Area. Any new structure or use must result in minimal change to these features.

Question 5: Is the construction that has occurred in the project area since its listing on the National Register consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards?

Answer: New construction within the historic district since its listing on the National Register in 1976 includes a structure at 1001 Madison Street, various parking areas, and an extension of McKinley Street south of Jefferson Street to Adams Street. We have no knowledge of the process used to approve 1001 Madison Street, and if it was determined to be consistent with the SOI Standards for Rehabilitation which were adopted in 1977. That said, the new structure was built on an historic street parallel to Jefferson Street, has massing, size and scale compatible with adjacent structures. However, the design is not sufficiently differentiated from the historic structures and includes some features (e.g. parapets at gable ends) that create a false sense of historic development. Parking areas have been constructed adjacent to the Clocktower, Commanding Officers Quarters and Lieutenant's Quarters and we have no knowledge of the process used to approve this construction and if they were determined to be consistent with the SOI Standards. The parking lot in front of the Clocktower is large but there is insufficient information available to determine if it significantly alters the historic setting between the Clocktower and the Commanding Officer's Quarters. A tent has been constructed adjacent to the Lieutenant's Quarters which is important to the economic feasibility of this event center and could be removed in the future without affecting the historic integrity of the structure or its setting. The extension of McKinley Street does not significantly change the setting or environment of the Project Area. Finally, after closure of the base vehicle access between City property and private property on Jefferson Street was blocked with installation of a cyclone fence that only allows pedestrian passage. This change in access significantly alters the historic function of the street as the major route for circulation on Officers' Row.

Question 6: Is a lot of research required to prepare a submittal that meets the [requirements](#) for this design competition?

Answer: Please use the [Competition Resources](#) which have been provided to assist participants in preparing a submittal that meets the requirements of this design competition. Participants are welcome to undertake additional research on site conditions and historic resources for your submittal if you have the need, interest and time.

Question 7: Do I need computer software to prepare my submittal?

Answer: Hand-drawn submittals are acceptable, but it must be scanned to create a digital file to include with your entry. This design competition is open to anyone. A "student" prize category has been developed for participants not trained in design techniques used by professionals. The [Competition Resources](#) include a DWG file describing existing site conditions and topography that can be used by participants with design software such as AutoCAD or SketchUP, and a PDF of this CAD file is provided the participants to print using Acrobat software from a desktop or at any [FedEX Office Print & Ship](#) location.

Question 8: Where will Submittals be stored and exhibited?

Answer: All submittals will be on display Dona Benicia Room in the Benicia Public Library. The exhibit will be open to the public and staffed.

Question 9: Who do we contact if we have questions about our submission that require an answer us?

Answer: Send your questions to [info @1000FriendsPHB.org](mailto:info@1000FriendsPHB.org)

Click [here](#) for official Competition Requirements.

Click [here](#) for Competition Resources.