



Ontario Association of Landscape Architects



Toronto Society of Architects

June 25, 2003

Dan Plamondon
Vice President, Ontario Realty Corporation
Ferguson Block, 10th Flr
77 Wellesley St W Toronto, ON M7A 2G3

Fax: 416-326-4851

**Re: Veterans Memorial at Queen's Park
Concerns about the Process for Designer Selection**

Dear Mr. Plamondon:

On behalf of the Toronto Society of Architects and the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects, we are writing to express our concerns about the process, recently announced by the Ontario Realty Corporation, to select a consulting team to create the design for a Memorial for Veterans at Queen's Park. We applaud the government's initiative in announcing the creation of this important public memorial, and we therefore urge you to re-organize the consultant selection process to ensure that the best possible design is achieved through a procedure that is fair, transparent, consistent with professional guidelines and traditions, and one which will attract the best possible talent Ontario has to offer.

As we understand it, ORC has announced a process which can be summarized as follows:

- 1 All interested teams are being asked to prepare a full concept design proposal, within the overall \$ 1.1 million budget, without any form of compensation, within a very tight 3 week time period.
- 2 Criteria for evaluation has been established as follows:

Design quality	40%
Fee proposed to carry out the work	25% (2 nd envelope)
Previous Experience	25%
Proposal Quality	5 %
Organizational strength	5 %
- 3 An independent professional advisor has not been engaged to provide an overview of the process.
- 4 ORC has not announced who will adjudicate the process, but it would appear that the normal tradition of a design jury will not be followed.

There are a number of ways in which the announced process varies from the traditions of our industry and we believe that this will unfortunately discourage the best talent in Ontario from participating.

In our view, the process as set up is fundamentally flawed. Your process evaluates experience, fee and design in the same stage. Typically, the evaluation of experience and fee is separated from evaluation of the best design. If experience in the design of memorials is most important, then we urge you to have a two stage competition. During the first stage, you would ask for submissions that describe experience and capabilities. These submissions would be used to "shortlist" the best teams with the most appropriate experience. Only those teams with the best experience would be asked to proceed to the second stage during which a conceptual design for the memorial would be developed. Selected teams would receive some form of compensation for their efforts.

If on the other hand, design is most important, then the process should be reconfigured to take experience out the equation, and to have a qualified design jury choose the best design through a traditional design competition process.

In either case, in a design competition, the jury of evaluators should be announced. Competitors need to know who is judging their work. This will have a fundamental bearing on a proponents potential interest in participating, particularly in relation to arriving at a sense that their work will be judged professionally and respectfully.

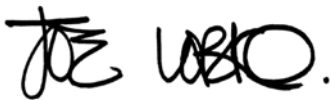
Fees should be taken out of the evaluation criteria entirely for a project of this type, involving the creation of an important piece of public art. The Province should suggest a specific fee within the norms of the industry. It is inappropriate for professional architects and landscape architects to prepare design work without compensation, outside of the context of a properly organized design competition process or some form of charitable activity. Otherwise, teams asked to prepare design concepts should be compensated for their work.

We strongly suggest that the Province hire a professional advisor or public art consultant to provide advice in relation to the proper conduct of this type of design competition. This is an incredibly high profile project that should have the benefit of the best advice available.

We also believe that both a two stage short listed competition and a one stage fully open design competition have great potential to involve the public in a meaningful way as the process unfolds. In a two stage process, the short-listed winners can be announced raising awareness of the exercise. At the submission stage, the short listed schemes can be placed on public display and the public can be invited to review the submissions and offer their comments, prior to a winner being selected. In a fully open design competition, all of the entries might be exhibited in an appropriate public venue, again raising awareness of the process and intentions behind the creation of the memorial.

Representatives of the TSA and OALA would welcome the opportunity to meet with ORC representatives to help design the best process possible and to achieve the best outcome for this most important public initiative. We understand that you are working towards a November 11 announcement of some kind, but are concerned that the schedule outlined in your proposal call is unrealistic. We are confident that a design competition process can unfold within the November 11 time frame, and suggest using that date to announce the winner of the competition and to unveil the proposed design. It is our view however, that a significant modification to the schedule currently announced is required, including a re-advertisement of the project involving a new invitation to participate based on revised criteria.

The Ontario Association of Landscape Architects and the Toronto Society of Architects represent well over 1000 design professionals in this Province and both organizations have a very long history of community development and participation. Both organizations have a mandate to improve the quality of design in this Province including the development of public awareness around design issues and it is in that spirit that we offer these suggestions. Thank you for considering them.



JOE LOBKO (416 778 4934)
On behalf of the
Toronto Society of Architects



Jim Vafiades (519 439 4451)
On behalf of the
Ontario Association of Landscape Architects

Cc: Honorable Dave Tsubouchi, Minister of Culture and Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet
Brian Watkinson, Ontario Association of Architects