DESIGN BY COMPETITION

What meanings do buildings and places convey to the people who use and visit them? Too often, design competitions and signature architecture result in costly eyesores that do not work. How can sponsors and clients get more meaningful results? In answer to these questions, Dr. Nasar, supported by riveting studies of competitions and Peter Eisenman's competition-winning design for the Wexner Center at the Ohio State University, suggests the use of prejury evaluation (PJE). Dr. Nasar demonstrates the potential value of this approach, as well as for visual quality programming for many different kinds of environmental design.

These studies, from those specific to the Wexner Center to those of historic significance, point towards a new method for shaping the visual form of buildings, places, and cities. Architects, urban designers and planners, social scientists, clients, government officials, and residents will want to read this thought-provoking book. It will give them a new perspective on the designed environment.

Jack L. Nasar is Professor of City and Regional Planning at the Ohio State University. He has published widely on architectural criticism, environmental aesthetics, and urban design. Dr. Nasar has served as chair of the Environmental Design Research Association, as the Ethel Chattel Visiting Scholar at the University of Sydney, and as Fellow in the American Psychological Association. He has also been a research associate at the Westinghouse National Issues Center and a Lilly Endowment Postdoctoral Fellow.

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DESIGN BY COMPETITION

MAKING DESIGN COMPETITION WORK

Jack L. Nasar

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To my daughter Joanna Lynn Nasar

There was a most ingenious architect who had contrived a new method for building houses, by beginning at the roof and working downwards to the foundation, which he justified to me by the like practice of those two prudent insects the bee and the spider (p. 126). – Gulliver's Travels[273]

Has there ever been another place on earth where so many people of wealth and power have paid for and put up with so much architecture they detested as within they blessed borders today? (p. 3) – Tom Wolfe[311]

SERIES FOREWORD

In recent decades the relationship between human behavior and the physical environment has attracted researchers from the social sciences – psychology, sociology, geography, and anthropology – and from the environmental-design disciplines – architecture, urban and regional planning, and interior design. What is in many respects a new and exciting field of study has developed rapidly. Its multidisciplinary character has led to stimulation and cross-fertilization, on the one hand, and to confusion and difficulty in communication, on the other. Those involved have diverse intellectual style and goals. Some are concerned with basic and theoretical issues; some, with applied real-world problems of environmental design.

This series offers a common meeting ground. It consists of short books on different topics of interest to all those who analyze environment-behavior links. We hope that the series will provide a useful introduction to the field for students, researchers, and practitioners alike, and will facilitate its evolutionary growth as well.

Our goals are as follows: (1) to represent problems the study of which is relatively well established, with a reasonably substantial body of research and knowledge generated; (2) to recruit authors from a variety of disciplines with a variety of perspectives; (3) to ensure that they not only summarize work on their topic but also set forth a "point of view," if not a theoretical orientation – we want the books not only to serve as texts but also to advance the field intellectually – and (4) to produce books useful to a broad range of students and other readers from different disciplines and with different levels of formal professional training. Course instructors with be able to select different combinations of books to meet their particular curricular needs.

Irwin Altman
Daniel Stokols

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Though I cannot trace all sources of my ideas, two individuals stand out as important influences. Oscar Newman awakened me to the significance of building milieu to people, the differences in the taste of architects and laypersons, and the idea of evaluating architecture for users after occupancy. Jack Wohlwill brought my attention to principals of aesthetic response and scientific methods of measurement. The book also draws on ideas from Henry Sanoff on the scientific methods applied to architecture and visual quality; Wolfgang Preiser on postoccupancy evaluation; and from several researchers on visual quality, including Daniel Berlyne, Stephen and Rachel Kaplan, and Amos Rapoport.

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