# CALIFORNIA MASONRY DESIGN AWARDS

## 2027 STUDENT'S ARCHITECTURE COMPETITION

## PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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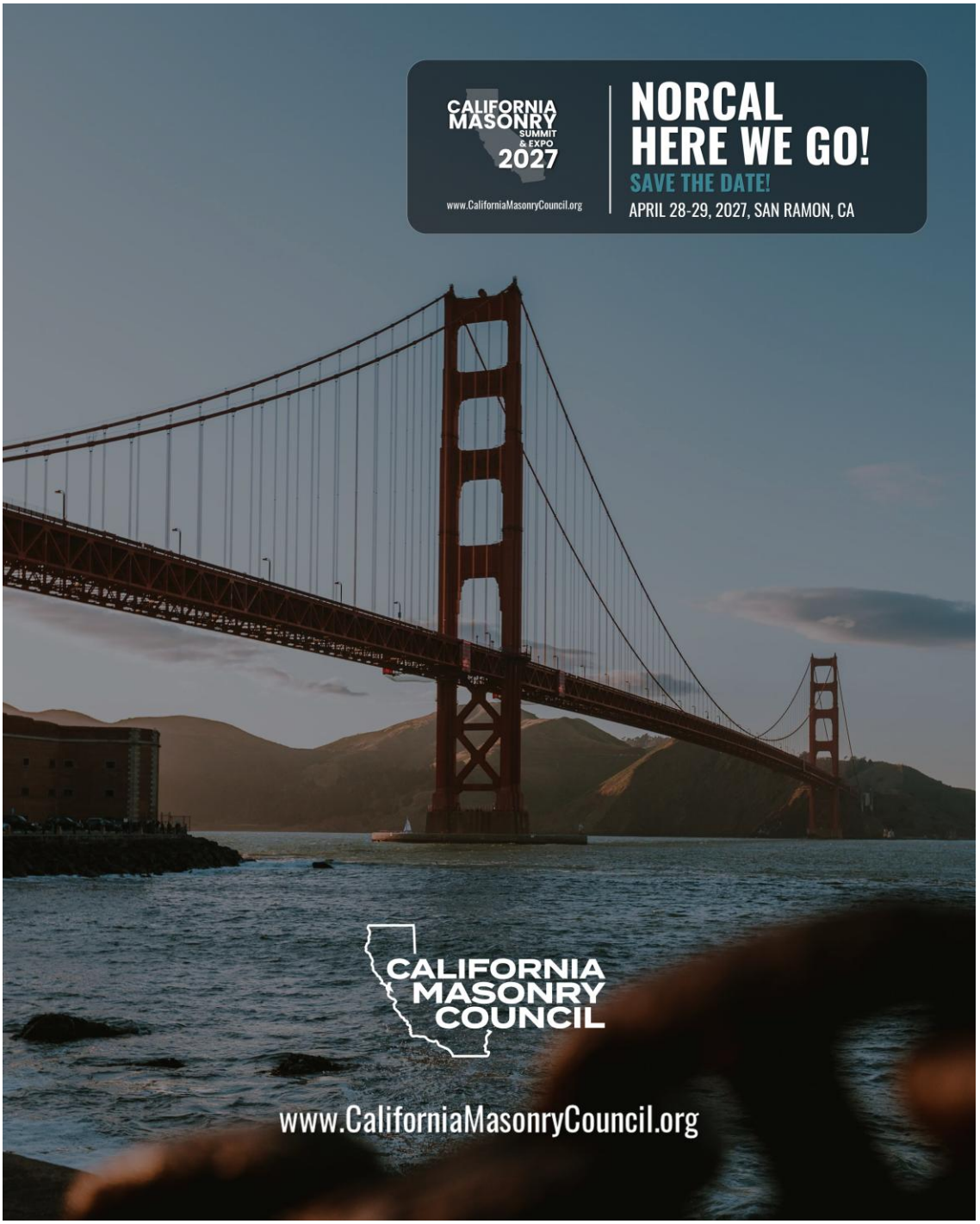
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**CALIFORNIA MASONRY DESIGN AWARDS**

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# CALIFORNIA MASONRY DESIGN AWARDS

## 2nd MASONRY ARCHITECTURE STUDENT COMPETITION - 2027

The California Masonry Council (CMC) is pleased to announce the 2nd Masonry Architecture Design Student Competition, taking place during the 2026-2027 academic year.

The program is intended to challenge undergraduate and graduate students, working individually or in teams, to explore a variety of design issues related to the use of masonry materials in design and construction. Concrete Block (CMU) or Brick (clay) must be used as a prominent material with special emphasis placed on architectural aesthetics, high-performing building envelopes, resiliency, and sustainability.

The scope for this competition is **Schematic Design** with special focus on building envelope and materials.

The competition allows students to explore the many functional and aesthetic uses for Masonry Materials. Students will get a chance to research and learn about many features as: fire resistance, sustainable materials, thermal mass and energy efficiency, constructability, aesthetics and architectural features, durability, resilience, ballistic resistance, and low maintenance costs.

CMC highly encourages students to design with materials that are **locally manufactured and locally sourced within CA.**

When developing your design proposals, consider how masonry interacts with contrasting structural and tactile elements, color, shape, texture, and how all play together when combined. Brick and Concrete Block also work well when combined in the same building, however, you will need to choose a category from the two available as the prominent material.

# COMPETITION GUIDELINES
(brick & concrete block architecture)

Winning students will receive Sponsorship Cash Prizes totaling $12,000 with distribution as follows:

**Concrete Block** Category:
1st Place: Scholarship of **$3,000**
2nd Place: Scholarship of **$2,000**
3rd Place: Scholarship of **$1,000**

**Brick** Category:
1st Place: Scholarship of **$3,000**
2nd Place: Scholarship of **$2,000**
3rd Place: Scholarship of **$1,000**

A selection of projects including winners will be part of an exhibition at the California Masonry Summit and Expo 2027 at San Ramon, CA on April 29th, 2027.

The exhibition will tour different architecture schools and other events and venues to be confirmed.

Travel expense support will be available for selected winners to attend the Award Ceremony at CMSE-2027.

A limited number of honorable mentions may also be awarded at the jury's discretion.

A list of winning projects will be showcased at the CMC web site at www.californiamasonrycouncil.org.

# COMPETITION GUIDELINES
(brick & concrete block architecture)

Two Different Categories to choose from, with a Schematic Design Scope:

**A) Concrete Block (CMU) Design**;
Project: "Laboratory & Tech Multifunctional Building for a Higher Education School Campus".

**B) Brick Design;**
Project: "Student Housing Building Complex for a Higher Education School Campus"

**Schedule:**

**Registration Deadline** (free registration)
January 18, 2027 – You will receive a Registration Confirmation email.

**Submission Deadline**
April 4th, 2027 (11:00 PM PST)
Instructions for Submittal will be provided with your Registration Confirmation email.

April 2027 - Winners will be notified directly from CMC for attending Awards Ceremony.

**Awards Ceremony**
April 29th, 2027 – Award Ceremony at California Masonry Summit & Expo 2027 in San Ramon, CA. (Roundhouse Conference Center)

The design Jury will have access to submittals and will meet during April 2027 to select winning projects and honorable mentions.

# COMPETITION GUIDELINES
(brick & concrete block architecture)

**Eligibility and Registration:**
To participate in this competition, students must comply with the following:

- ❑ All participants (individuals or teams) must be registered as a student in an Architecture (related) Program in the state of California for the 2026-2027 academic year. Proof of enrollment will be required for submittals with your school email. Guidance from your faculty professors is highly encouraged, please provide name of the professors involved.

- ❑ **Participants can be an individual, or a team of maximum number of 5 individuals.** Each participant will be limited to submit only one project.

- ❑ **Registration is Free**. Please follow the link below for Online Registration. You will receive an email with confirmation.
  https://www.californiamasonrycouncil.org/design-awards/

**Digital Submission Format**
Submissions must be presented on three to five 22" x 28" (vertical) digital boards (posters) in High Resolution. All files will be required to be uploaded through a link that will be provided after registration.
Files are accepted in the following formats: PDF, JPEG, JPG, or PNG.
The names of student participants must NOT appear on the boards, or in the project title or project title file name(s).

**Design Abstract**
An abstract/essay, 500 words maximum, is required as part of the submission describing the most important concepts, highlights and features of the design project.
The names of student participants must NOT appear in the design essay.
This abstract is included in the final upload Submission in a PDF format.

**Building Codes:**
Refer to the International Building Code, CA Building Code, and CA Energy Code Title 24 (mass walls, energy efficiency standards, building zones) . All proposals must be designed to meet requirements for accessibility; for guidelines, refer to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the principles of Universal Design.

# COMPETITION GUIDELINES
(brick & concrete block architecture)

**Use of Masonry Materials:**

Concrete Block (CMU) or Brick (clay) must be used as a prominent material, depending on the category you are participating. All masonry materials used shall be listed and available in the California Market.

Materials that are not currently sold or distributed in CA will not be considered. While Masonry Materials should act as a primary anchor for your architectural expression, they are not intended to be exclusive. You are fully invited to challenge traditional masonry boundaries by combining block or brick with a diverse palette of supporting building materials.

**Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI):**

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) and computational design is permitted with the following considerations:

- AI usage in student submissions must ensure the students remain responsibly in control and continue to be accountable for all images and likenesses in their submissions.
- As a tool, AI is not a replacement for professional judgment or creativity. Regardless of the AI tools used, it remains the architecture student's responsibility to provide designs in conformance with academic integrity.

Students choosing to use AI as a tool must attribute this use in their design essay (abstract). Students are accountable for the originality, validity, and integrity of the content and designs of their submissions. In choosing to use AI tools, students are expected to do so responsibly and with a high standard of ethical conduct.

We encourage students to use AI as a tool for rendering, graphic interpretation, or modeling if desired, while keeping ownership of the creative process and the architect's role in design.

# COMPETITION GUIDELINES
(brick & concrete block architecture)

**Mass & Lightness:** Contrast the heavy, grounding presence of concrete blocks or brickwork with other structural and architectural systems like steel frames, wood, or glass curtains.

**Texture & Interlock:** Experiment with how the raw, modular rhythm of brick and concrete masonry units (CMUs) can intersect and interact with other finishes like concrete, metal, or wood.  Keep in mind “modularity” is key to masonry, high performing buildings and construction cost and schedule.

**Technical Note:** Successful entries will look beyond the surface and envelope aesthetics and will consider high-performance building envelopes as a priority. Consider how your material choices respond to durability, weathering, thermal performance, energy efficiency, resiliency, technical innovation, sustainability, and construction logic. If you are combining materials we recommend you intentionally express the joints, reveals, and transition details that allow the selected materials to coexist. Our Jury encourages students to include at least one “Blown-up Detail” for understanding the proposed material connections: How your concrete block or brickwork physically meets or anchors with other materials like wood, glass, or steel frames.

# SUBMITTAL DELIVERIES & SCOPE
(brick & concrete block architecture)

The minimum scope of deliverables for this competition is Schematic Design, including the following, and not limited to any additional materials:

- **Site Plan** (minimum 1)
- **Floor Plans** (minimum 2 diagrammatic)
- **Elevations** (minimum 2)
- **Sections** (minimum 2)
- **Conceptual Renderings and Sketches** (minimum 3, interior and exterior)
- **Material Callouts and Facade Details** (include at least 1 callout and 1 Façade Detail specifying materials)
- **Project Narrative or Description** (500 words maximum) including material descriptions.
- **Daylight Analysis *Optional** (include a simple exposure/daylight autonomy/glare analysis for Extra Points)

**All deliverables must be contained in a minimum of 3 posters, and a maximum of 5 posters 22" x 28' from your Digital Submittal.**

****All projects will be required to submit high-resolution original files/images for use in competition publications and exhibit materials. By uploading your files, you agree that the California Masonry Council (CMC) has the rights to use your images and materials in publications, website, social media, and in promotional and exhibition resources. CMC will attribute authorship of the winning design to you, your team. Additionally, you hereby warrant that the submission is original and that you are the author(s) of the submission.*

Contact us at **info@californiamasonrycouncil.org** and **Katia.Rodriguez@californiamasonrycouncil.org** for any questions.

GOOD LUCK!

# BRICK - PROJECT PROGRAM

**STUDENT HOUSING BUILDING**

For the Brick Architecture Competition, participants will design a "Student Housing Building Complex for a Higher Education School Campus" of their choosing within California.

A significant component of campus life that would enhance the student experience in a campus. It can be a replacement for an existing building, or a new building.

**Site Selection:**
The site for the competition is the choice of the student(s). However, the site must be located in an existing campus lot, accessible by multiple modes of transportation such as public transportation, biking, or walking. Site can be an empty lot, or a replacement of an existing building.

Submissions will be required to explain the site selection, strategy and criteria.

**Project Description:**
The student housing program will consider a mix of unit types including studios, 2-bedroom apartments, and 4-bedroom suites and apartments. Shared amenities that promote socialization and academic support as well as support spaces and components to elevate student's living experience.

Consider design elements that can contribute to a walkable community connecting to the adjacent campus. An innovative approach to collaborative spaces, student Conference Center or retail.

**Approximately 300 to 400 beds.**
**Gross Building Area of 100,000 to 130,000 square feet.**



# BRICK - PROJECT PROGRAM

The following is a suggested architectural program considering the type of building. Do not limit your creativity to the standard spaces and the list provided.

1. Residential Units (Private & Semi-Private Spaces)

Traditional/Corridor-Style Dorms: Double or single-occupancy / Suite-Style Units: 2 to 4 bedrooms / Apartment-Style Units: 1 to 4 bedrooms, private full bathroom(s) / Accessible/ADA Units / Staff (Resident) Apartments.

2. Common & Social Amenities (Shared Hubs)

Ground-Floor Lobby / Welcome Center / Social Lounges & Rec Rooms / Community Kitchen / Indoor Lounge / Rooftop Terrace / Outdoor Courtyards, Plazas, & Landscape Zones.

3. Academic & Study Spaces

Collaborative Study Rooms / Quiet / Silent Study Hall / Digital Hub / Computer Lab.

4. Support & Service Facilities

Laundry Facilities / Vending & Micro-Market / Trash / Bicycle Storage

5. Administrative & Operational Spaces

Management & Residence Life Office / Maintenance & Custodial Rooms / IT / Mechanical / Electrical Rooms / Wellness / First-Aid Room.

6. An innovative component as Student Conference Center or Retail Spaces.



# CONCRETE BLOCK - PROJECT PROGRAM

**LABORATORY & TECHNOLOGY MULTIFUNCTIONAL BUILDING**

For the CMU Architecture Competition, participants will design a "Laboratory & Tech Multifunctional Building for a Higher Education School Campus" of their choosing within California.

A significant component of campus life that would enhance the student experience in a campus. It can be a replacement for an existing building, or a new building.

**Site Selection:**
The site for the competition is the choice of the student(s). However, the site must be located in an existing campus lot, accessible by multiple modes of transportation such as public transportation, biking, or walking. Site can be an empty lot, or a replacement of an existing building.

Submissions will be required to explain the site selection, strategy and criteria.

**Project Description:**
A Laboratory and Technology building housing the spatial allocation, technical requirements, and functional zones needed to support modern STEM education, research, and interdisciplinary collaboration. A building offering an interdisciplinary approach to learning spaces that merge Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics into a cohesive, hands-on educational model.

From flexibility to crossed-collaboration, and sustainability, today's colleges and universities require building research environments that do more and are able to adapt to fast paced scientific and technological advancements.

Flexibility, wellness, transparency, collaboration, technology, sustainability converging toward purposeful and human-centered design.

**A building of approximately 100,000 Gross Square Foot of Building Area, plus outdoor spaces and landscape.**



# CONCRETE BLOCK - PROJECT PROGRAM

The following is a suggested architectural program considering the type of building. Do not limit your creativity to the standard spaces and the list provided.

1. Wet & Dry Laboratory Spaces

Wet Laboratories: Designed for chemistry, biology, and life sciences. / Dry Laboratories: Designed for computer science, robotics, engineering simulation, and electronics. / Specialized & High-Bay Labs: High-clearance structures or "dance-floor" modular labs. / Lab Support & Prep Rooms: Centralized stockrooms, chemical prep rooms, autoclave/wash areas, and instrument-sharing cores adjacent to main labs.

2. Teaching & Learning Spaces

Flex-Classrooms (modular) / Active Learning Studios: Technology-integrated rooms designed for collaborative work. / Lecture Halls: Tiered or flat-floor presentation spaces equipped with AV integration and digital capture tools. / "Science on Display" Zones: Interior glass partitions and transparent corridors that expose active research and experiments to passing students to encourage campus engagement.

3. Faculty & Administrative Offices

Faculty Offices & Suites / Research Investigator Suites / Administration & IT Support.

4. Collaboration & Social Hubs

Breakout & Study Alcoves / Project & Maker Spaces / Restorative Wellness Areas and Quiet Zones / Innovative Spaces.

5. Operational Spaces

Maintenance Rooms / IT / Mechanical / Electrical Rooms / First-Aid Room / Loading Dock & Hazardous Material Handling.



# CRITERIA FOR RATING & JUDGING

Criteria for the judging of submissions will be based on the following scorecard sections and weights:

**Architecture and Design** (Concrete Block & Brick Awards)

| # | Criteria | Description | Weight |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Design Aesthetics** | Evaluates the overall architecture, visual appeal and design aesthetics, with an emphasis on masonry (brick & block). | **12.0%** |
| 2 | **High-Performing Building Envelope** | How efficiently is the design integrated for the purpose of a high-performing building envelope. | **12.0%** |
| 3 | **Material Selection, Usage, and Creativity** | How effectively the masonry materials (brick & block) were selected, used, and integrated with other materials. How creatively were masonry materials integrated and combined with other building materials. | **10.0%** |
| 4 | **Functionality & Practicality** | Practicality of the masonry design for its intended purpose. | **7.0%** |
| 5 | **Sustainability/Environmental Impact** | How eco-friendly the design is, including materials and energy use. Impact of a high-performing building envelope on low embodied carbon, life cycle impact. | **12.0%** |
| 6 | **Craftsmanship/Detailing** | Attention to detail in the design and execution of the block and brickwork. | **10.0%** |
| 7 | **Technical Complexity** | How technically complex is the masonry design. | **8.0%** |
| 8 | **Innovation and Creativity** | How innovative, thoughtful, and creative the use of (masonry) block and brick is. | **8.0%** |
| 9 | **Integration with the Environment** | How well the design fits into the surrounding environment. | **7.0%** |
| 10 | **Positive Impact** | How well the design impacts the user experience. | **7.0%** |
| 11 | **Safety and Durability** | Structural integrity, safety measures, fire resistance, and longevity of materials. | **7.0%** |
| 12 | **Daylight Analysis *Optional** | Include a simple exposure/daylight autonomy/glare analysis for Extra Points. | **5.0%** |

(Maximum Score 100% = 10 Points) **Total Scores:** **105.0%**

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# OUR JUDGES
STUDENT COMPETITION - 2027

The California Masonry Council is honored to present the Jury for this competition, formed by exceptional professionals with outstanding backgrounds in Architecture and Construction.

APRIL 29, 2027 @ SAN RAMON, CA

## 2nd MASONRY ARCHITECTURE STUDENT'S DESIGN COMPETITION



**STACY WILLIAMS**
Executive Director @ AIA San Francisco
Executive Director @ Center for Architecture + Design, San Francisco



**JAMES KRUEGER**
AIA, NCARB - Director of Design @ HMC Architects



**ENRIQUE CENICEROS**
AIA, LEED and WELL AP – Science/Technology Director @ Stantec
Chapter President @ International Institute for Sustainable Laboratories



**ALAIN PESCHARD**
AIA – Associate Principal @ SVA Architects



**LANCE O'DONNELL**
FAIA - Principal @ o2 Architecture – Educator @ CalPoly Pomona



**CAROL LANHAM**
AIA, Assoc. DBIA - Principal and Board of Directors @ Lionakis - VP of Communications @ AIA California

We are honored to present the Jury for our 2nd Architecture Competition for Students in California.

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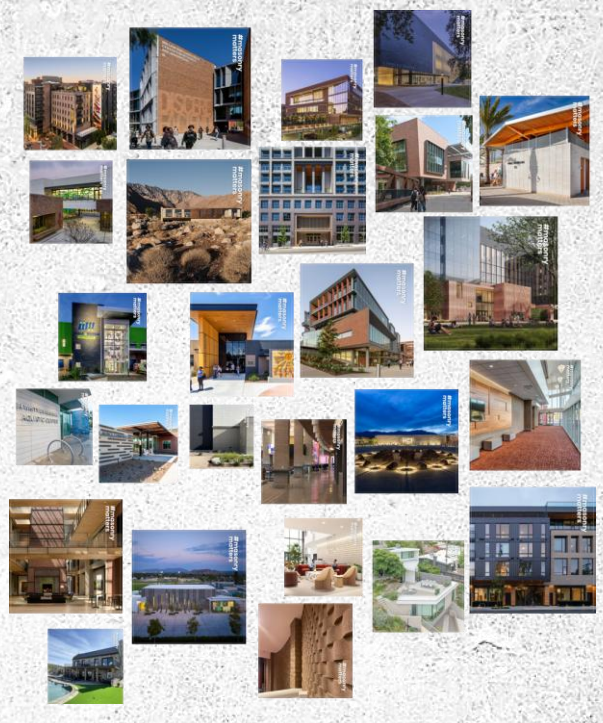
# $12,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

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# INSPIRATION

CALIFORNIA MASONRY ARCHITECTURE DESIGN AWARDS

If you are looking for inspiration, visit our website and socials, check out our previous design competitions.
**https://www.californiamasonrycouncil.org/design-awards/**



Other great sources of inspiration for Award-Winning Masonry Architecture are the following:

CMACN – Design Awards
**https://cmacn.org/design-awards/#2026AwardRecipients**

Brick Industry Association (BIA)
**https://www.gobrick.com/inspiration/2025-competition-award-winners**

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CALIFORNIA MASONRY COUNCIL

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California Masonry Council (CMC)'s mission is to be a catalyst, advocate, and the best masonry resource in California.

Our organization promotes masonry as an essential design and building material while uniting our trade with the AEC community (architecture, engineering, and construction).

CMC is a non-profit organization.

info@CaliforniaMasonryCouncil.org

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