



Advisory Design Panels: Frequently Asked Questions

October 2011

The following questions and answers should be considered as illustrative, pointing the way to the relevant AIBC Bulletin or other documents offering definitive advice along with references to the Architects Act, Bylaws, and Code of Ethics.

1. Q. What is the purpose of an advisory design panel (ADP)?

- A. ADPs exist to provide professional, impartial advice on any proposal affecting a community's physical environment. In some cases they may assist a local authority to develop design policies. Architects on an ADP are also expected to protect the public and represent the profession.

Refer to [Bulletin 65: Advisory Design Panels: Standards for Procedures and Conduct](#), Section B1 – Roles.

2. Q. Who can be nominated by the AIBC to sit on an ADP?

- A. All architects are qualified to be on the nomination roster. Other AIBC registrants are not eligible for nomination by the AIBC to sit on an ADP.

Refer to [Bulletin 65: Advisory Design Panels: Standards for Procedures and Conduct](#), Section A2 – Eligibility for Nomination and Service.

3. Q. What is the process of applying to sit on an ADP?

- A. All architects wishing to volunteer as an architect member on an ADP must apply directly to the AIBC. An online application form can be found on the AIBC website.

Once the application has been received and the membership status has been confirmed, the applicant's name will be added to the roster of architects available for nomination. When a nomination request is received from a municipality, the AIBC Advisory Design Panel Committee will review the applications and provide a list of nominees from which municipal council will make a selection. Suitability is determined by a number of factors and can include but not limited to i) the municipality's specific expressed needs, ii) the architect's range of experience, iii) the number of positions becoming vacant requiring nominations, etc.

Please note that architects can also sit on any design panel as a member-at-large, e.g. as a community advocate, without providing an application to the AIBC. In such cases, architects should make their applications directly to the municipality. All architects, whether selected as an architect member or member-at-large are bound by the *Architects Act*, Bylaws, and Bulletin 65 *Advisory Design Panels: Standards for Procedures and Conduct*.

An architect member sitting on an ADP is expected to provide architectural expertise based on the municipality's terms of reference.

Refer to [Bulletin 65: Advisory Design Panels: Standards for Procedures and Conduct](#) for roles and responsibilities of architects on an ADP.

4. Q. What influence does an ADP have on approval? Is the ADP important in the application decision?

- A. An ADP's comments are considered as professional advice when the local authorities decide on planning issues. An ADP **is not** an authoritative or decision-making body, but it may raise issues that the local authority uses when deciding whether or not to support an application.

Refer to [Bulletin 65: Advisory Design Panels: Standards for Procedures and Conduct](#), Preamble.

5. Q. What is the role of the ADP's chair?

- A. The chair controls the conduct of the meeting, and may use the position to ensure that discussion is relevant and appropriate. Otherwise, an architect who chairs a meeting has the same roles and responsibilities as the other architects on the ADP.

Refer to [Bulletin 65: Advisory Design Panels: Standards for Procedures and Conduct](#), Section B – Professional Conduct of Architects on ADPs.

6. Q. What constitutes a conflict of interest? When is it appropriate to step aside from an ADP discussion?

- A. Architects must disclose any personal or business interest in a project being reviewed. Where such an interest exists, or may be perceived to exist, the architect must withdraw from the meeting and refrain from any discussion or comment. The decision of whether or not to leave the proceedings is an individual one, and should be governed by the architect's own judgment of what is in the public interest.

Refer to [Bulletin 65: Advisory Design Panels: Standards for Procedures and Conduct](#), Section B2 – Responsibilities, (a) through (e)

Other References:

[AIBC Bylaws:](#)

31.2: Conflict of Interest - Disclosure.

32.0: Full Disclosure

32.5: Reporting of Contravention of Act and Bylaws

34.6: Conduct – imprudent or malicious comments regarding work / reputation of another architect

[AIBC Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct](#) 31.0-31.6

7. Q. In the event of a conflict, if I step aside and it affects “quorum”, what is the proper procedure?

- A. In such a situation, inform the chair and meeting coordinator as far in advance as possible. As a courtesy, ask the chair or meeting coordinator if another architect is available to maintain quorum.

In some cases the proceedings themselves may be conducted in a way that causes concern for the architect member. If so, an architect is within his/ her right to opt out of the proceedings if there is a conflict of interest, the perception of a conflict of interest, or a contravention of the Act and Bylaws or Code of Ethics. The decision of whether or not to leave the proceedings is an individual one, and should be governed by the architect’s own judgment of what is in the public interest. However, in the event of a conflict of interest, refer to question 4 above regarding full disclosure, etc.

8. Q. What should I do if an applicant were to lack the necessary qualifications (i.e. the applicant is not a registered architect)?

- A. Architects are obliged to protect the public from misrepresentation, illegal practice or unprofessional conduct, and from persons fraudulently professing to have the qualifications to practise architecture. In some cases, the applicant may be an Intern Architect under the *attending, personal supervision of an architect (refer to Code of Ethics 34.1 (b) and (c))*. Any concerns must be reported to the AIBC. If the applicant appears to be in contravention of the Architects Act, AIBC Bylaws or an AIBC Council ruling, the architects on an ADP must withdraw from the meeting and report the matter to the AIBC’s Director of Professional Conduct & Illegal Practice. For example, an ADP could not comment on the design of an apartment building with five or more dwelling units if there was not an architect involved.

Refer to [Bulletin 65: Advisory Design Panels: Standards for Procedures and Conduct, Section B – Professional Conduct of Architects on ADPs.](#)

Other References: [Bulletin 31: Buildings Requiring the Services of an Architect](#)

[Bulletin 62: Obligation to Report Alleged Infractions of Architects Act and Bylaws](#)

9. Q. What is the scope of an ADP with regards to criteria for consideration/ discussion?

- A. The AIBC’s *Bulletin 65* lists examples of what would reasonably be considered for review by applicants and members of the ADP. The stated examples have been updated to include reference to sustainability. In addition, the scope and nature of the criteria used for comment may also be directed by the planning department relating to the special circumstances of the project and its site.

Refer to [Bulletin 65: Advisory Design Panels: Standards for Procedures and Conduct, Section C \(1\) – Design Criteria for consideration by ADPs.](#)

10. Q. How can an ADP provide meaningful comments as a collective group?

- A. Meaningful comment is contingent on all the pertinent issues being clearly addressed by both applicant and municipal staff. The AIBC’s *Bulletin 65* outlines recommended procedures to facilitate meaningful review. It is the responsibility of the municipality to provide timely

minutes to all members of the ADP as well as the applicant. A summary of all comments presented should be provided to the applicant at the conclusion of the meeting, and minuted accordingly.

Refer to [Bulletin 65: Advisory Design Panels: Standards for Procedures and Conduct](#), Section D – Recommended Procedures for ADPs.

11. Q. When I submit my application, will my name be put forward for nomination to an ADP?

- A. The AIBC receives many applications from architects who wish to sit on ADPs. Every month, the AIBC's Advisory Design Panel Committee meets to consider the roster of architects available for nomination, and to nominate candidates for the municipal ADPs. Applicants who are available and have the most appropriate experience are nominated.

Refer to [Bulletin 65: Advisory Design Panels: Standards for Procedures and Conduct](#), Section A (3) – Criteria for Nomination.

12. Q. If I am nominated to an ADP, will I be appointed to it?

- A. Nomination letters, with a selection of architects for consideration, are sent by the AIBC to municipalities. If requested, the AIBC may also forward their applications. The AIBC has no other involvement in the selection process. The appointment decisions are made by municipal councils, and **not every nomination will result in an appointment.**

13. Q. For how long is my application valid?

- A. Once your application is received and verified, your name will be added to the roster of available architects and remain there for consideration for two years. Applicants who remain interested in serving on an ADP after the expiration of the two-year period are welcome to reapply.

Regardless of nomination or appointment source, all architects are obligated to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with AIBC Act & Bylaws, Code of Ethics and policies. Above all, the architect must act in the public interest when serving on an advisory design panel.

If you have any questions, please contact Practice Coordinator Ryan Dinh at (604) 683-8588 ext. 314, or e-mail practice@aibc.ca.