

When considering the nature of this competition, its location within Silicon Valley, and the focus on designing an “icon” within the built environment, our design team has chosen to propose a pencil tower within a landscape of reinstated native California prairie. While static in form and occupied only at ground level, this installation becomes dynamic within the structure itself and the wider overall landscape through the use of light, shadow and those that inhabit the space within.

By analyzing the use of “technology” throughout the ages, whether it’s the Pharos, the Colossus of Rhodes, an ancient Egyptian temple, fire, the wheel or more modern examples such as Galileo’s refracting telescope, the factory smokestack or the computer motherboard, the term “technology” is very much in-fact relative. In order to be truly timeless in both use and design, your “icon” must not only appeal to those dwelling within the here and now, but truly adapt throughout the ages.

We have considered your site, the opportunities and their ramifications and have chosen to build a structure that uses modern techniques but is timeless in spirit, utilization and function. By breaking down “technology” (both old and new) and utilizing cues from the natural environment, we have come up with a straightforward but radical concept. What if we harnessed the exploration-focused spirit of the past within our modern age of discovery/rediscovery? How could this tie-in to the mission of the City of San Jose and this competition while also reimagining the built environment, landscape, ecology, and the very nature of public art at the same time? Proposing a 200’ tall pencil tower in modern times is anything but radical, however what if the proposed structure was never in-fact occupied beyond the ground level? What if it in-fact became a symbol of exploration and connected deeply within our environment in tangible, educational and meaningful ways?

We are proposing a 200’ x 15’ occupiable analog telescope (based on Galileo’s design) that will work in tandem as a sundial by casting its shadow throughout the park day after day in conjunction with pre-set markers. The form itself is an extrapolation of the trunk of a palm tree and is just as much at home in our current era as in that of pre-history or our own very distant future. We are excited about this opportunity and look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Thank you for your consideration.