



RICARDO J. SEIJO, RA, NCARB, LEED AP BD+C

51 Ramoth Road, Asheville, NC 28804 | seijo.ricardo@gmail.com | (410) 533-1154

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my interest in the open seat for a design professional on the **Riverfront Redevelopment Commission** and associated **Design Review Committee**.

I'm a Registered Architect with 19+ years of experience in the design of multi-use projects, retail, office buildings and fit-outs, public and private schools, public safety, religious and public spaces, master planning, and site design.

I grew up in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where I learned that the permanence of the streetscape demands sensitivity and integrity in design. I experienced the impact of culture and climate on planning and design, and their manifestation as vernacular design principles that are present in everyday life.

During my college years at Virginia Tech, I learned to balance thoughtful design with practical application of methods and materials. I've relied on the ideals of vitalism and mechanism to inform my work as a professional architect. My years in Blacksburg also taught me about life in a college town that experiences acute swings in population, not unlike the struggles Asheville faces due to seasonal tourism and regional higher-ed institutions.

After college, I lived with a friend who was disabled due to health complications. His health deteriorated steadily until he was limited to a wheelchair and spent most of his time bedridden. He grappled with the physical difficulties of navigating everyday life, and struggled with the loss of self-reliance and livelihood. It taught me that disabilities aren't limited to mobility impairment. They affect how individuals experience a city and interact with neighbors.

Living in Downtown Annapolis, Maryland, I gained first-hand insight into the obstacles of adapting modern life and energy strategies to a historic city. I saw the impact of commercial development and retail signage in a historic setting. Heavy tourism and traffic mixed with unfavorable street design create difficulties for pedestrian and vehicular traffic safety, commercial deliveries, and parking. I see that Asheville shares many of the same struggles, trying to balance character and scale with economic vitality and practical realities.

I'm excited about the possibility to serve on the Design Review Committee. After college, I served as a studio assistant, providing guidance to Architecture students, and assisting professors with crits and formal reviews. I've also served as guest juror for several architecture studios at Catholic University in Washington, DC. Through these experiences, I've honed my ability to analyze projects objectively, communicate concerns effectively, and successfully encourage designers to exploit the opportunities offered by the site or created by the project. As a practicing architect, I've participated in numerous formal design reviews involving clients, authorities, and community members. These reviews are essential for clarifying objectives and aligning expectations.

Professionally, my understanding of operational requirements has guided my work on public safety facilities. My visualization skills and attention to detail have served me in K-12 schools design, including phasing plans for work in occupied facilities. I'm familiar with the opportunities and challenges of projects in dense urban settings, and with the formal policies and procedures that accompany them. Finally, thoroughness and sensitivity to context have contributed to my work on projects for the United States Naval Academy, which required balancing demands from various stakeholders, including oversight by the State Historic Preservation Officer for work in a site listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

As an Associate at my current firm, my responsibilities include the full range of traditional management duties through all project stages, including project planning, budget reports, coordinating staff, and daily communications with clients and consultants. I am responsible for the development of projects from schematic design through full documentation. I have extensive experience in contract administration, having worked with general contractors and construction managers under different delivery systems. I have a solid background in sustainable design and have managed or collaborated on several LEED projects, including a LEED Platinum middle school in Washington, DC.

I've always understood that communities must demand design energy and substance from the built environment. As an experienced professional, I rely on strong communication and organizational skills and regard good design as the fruit of collaborative effort. I believe my diverse background and unique perspective will yield strong contributions to the efforts of the Riverfront Redevelopment Commission and the Design Review Committee. I am grateful for your attention and look forward to the opportunity to serve the City of Asheville.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ricardo J. Seijo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ricardo J. Seijo, RA, NCARB, LEED AP BD+C