

# Masai Mara Conservation Centre Competition

## Phase One Briefing Information



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### Invitation

Registered Architects are invited to take part in this international open design competition for the design of a new Conservation Centre at the Oloololo Gate, Masai Mara, Kenya, on behalf of [Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy](#), the philanthropic arm of travel company Abercrombie & Kent and the Mara Triangle Conservancy.

### Introduction

**Abercrombie & Kent (A&K)** is the pioneer of luxury travel worldwide. We are known to look after not just regular travellers but also VIPS, incentive groups, cruise ships and privately chartered jets. With over 40 offices around the globe, we are able to provide a level of service that is second to none. No matter how big or small the request; we pride ourselves in not only meeting clients' expectations but also exceeding them.

**Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy (AKP)** is the nonprofit arm of A&K, working to positively impact lives and livelihoods in the places A&K guests travel. Our projects, which span seven continents, fall within the categories of education, conservation, health, and community enterprise / job creation.

The competition is also supported by the **Architectural Association of Kenya (AAK)**. Established in 1967, the Architectural Association of Kenya (AAK) is Kenya's leading Association for professionals in the built and natural environment in Kenya incorporating Architects, Quantity Surveyors, Town Planners, Engineers, Landscape Architects and Environmental Design Consultants, Construction Project Managers and Interior Designers.

### Vision and Background

The Masai Mara Conservation Centre at Oloololo Gate of the Masai Mara National Reserve is envisioned as an innovative and engaging facility that aims to educate, inspire, and create awareness about conservation and the unique ecosystem of the Masai Mara.

This centre will provide visitors with interactive and exciting experiences while promoting sustainable tourism practices. The facility will include parking, essential amenities, an engaging exhibition space, interactive learning zones, a gift shop, and environmentally conscious design features.

The architectural style should blend contemporary design elements with nods to Maasai cultural traditions. Natural materials like wood, stone, and thatch can be integrated into the building's facade and interior design. Incorporating traditional Maasai patterns, colours, and motifs into the decor can create a sense of place and cultural identity.

## **Site and Context**

The site is next to the Oloololo Gate, Mara Triangle, -1.25820, 34.99767. The road next to the site enters the Mara Triangle Conservancy – part of the Greater Mara National Park. The road traffic consists of 80% Tourism (80 vehicles/day in high season), 5% park business and the remainder transit. The peak times for traffic are in the morning (06:30 - 08:00) and in the evening from (16:00 - 19:00). Peak tourism months consist of the following - Mid-June to Mid-September is High Season and extremely busy. It tails off in October and November and is then busy over Christmas and New Year. There is a slight peak in February before low season from March through May. In 2022 90,000 people passed through the gate – the peak was in August with 13,000 people in the month, the average across the year was 7-8,000 per month and low season down to 3,000 per a month.

Currently guests only stop at the gate to pay their park fees, buy a few promotional materials, use the toilet facilities (which need upgrading) and look at photographs on the wall. Typically, guides will leave their guests in the vehicle as they go into the office to pay fees.

## **Project Aims**

- 1. Educational Engagement:** The primary objective of the centre is to educate visitors about the importance of conservation, biodiversity, and the delicate balance of ecosystems within the Masai Mara. The design should encourage active learning through interactive exhibits, immersive displays, and hands-on activities.
- 2. Sustainability:** The centre should be designed with sustainable principles in mind, utilizing eco-friendly materials, energy-efficient technologies, and renewable energy sources. Passive design strategies, such as natural ventilation and daylighting, should be employed to reduce energy consumption.
- 3. Cultural Integration:** The architectural design should respect and integrate elements of Maasai culture and heritage, creating a harmonious blend between the centre and its surroundings. Artifacts, traditional designs, and local materials could be incorporated into the building's aesthetic.

4. **Visitor Experience:** The centre should offer a memorable and enjoyable experience for visitors of all ages. It should promote a sense of wonder, curiosity, and connection to nature, encouraging repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth.

5. **Accessibility:** The facility should be inclusive and accessible to all visitors, including those with disabilities. Proper pathways, ramps, and facilities should be provided to ensure easy movement throughout the centre.

### **Accommodation Requirements**

Based on the budget for the project, it is envisaged that the floor area of the building would not exceed **485sqm**, but more importantly an extended floor plan must not result in the budget being exceeded.

The building can be over two stories with a viewing platform incorporated into the second floor.

1. **Parking Area:** A well-organized and ample parking area should be designed to accommodate private vehicles, extended land cruisers, and buses. Minimum of 20 spaces for Extended Land Cruisers – Dimensions 6052mm long x 1770mm wide x 2830mm tall.

2. **Entrance:** A welcoming entrance area with clear signage, ticket counters, and visitor information should provide a seamless start to the visitor's experience.

3. **Exhibition Spaces:** Interactive and dynamic exhibition zones should showcase the biodiversity, flora, fauna, and conservation efforts of the Masai Mara. These spaces could include immersive displays, augmented reality installations, touchscreens, and informative multimedia presentations.

4. **Classroom Space:** Small classroom space for school visits and small lectures to be hosted in. Space for 30 people to sit at desks.

5. **Outdoor Experience:** The centre is surrounded by wildlife and there should be thoughtfully designed observation decks to allow visitors to connect with the wonderful views and wildlife around the centre firsthand.

6. **Amenities:** Restrooms, seating areas, and shaded spots should be strategically placed to ensure visitor comfort and convenience.

7. **Gift Shop:** A well-stocked gift shop offering ethically sourced, sustainable, and locally made products should provide visitors with the opportunity to support conservation efforts and take home meaningful souvenirs.

**8. Café or Snack Area:** A small café or snack area serving coffees, smoothies/juices, cool drinks and light snacks (small prep kitchen, full kitchen not required).

## **Project Budget**

The budget for the build should have an upper limit of USD 750,000 which includes the cost of all amenities such as sewage systems, electricity connection, interactive exhibitions etc. and all fees, site visits, etc for the winning architect and contractor.

## **Competition Conditions**

### **1. Competition Client**

The competition client is Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy. The competition is being managed and administered by RIBA Competitions to whom all queries relating to the competition should be addressed.

### **2. Eligibility**

The competition is open internationally to registered architects. Architects should be registered with the Architects Registration Board (ARB) in the UK, or an equivalent, recognised overseas regulatory authority.

No member or employee of the promoting body, the evaluation panel, or any partner, close associate or employee of them is eligible to compete or assist an entrant in the competition.

### **3. Competition Format**

The competition will follow the open design competition format and will be organised in the following phases:

Phase 1: Submission of concept designs assessed anonymously.

Phase 2: A shortlist of up to five designs will be selected and teams will be invited to develop their ideas and present them to the evaluation panel.

### **4. How to Register and Enter**

You may only submit an entry to the competition if you are officially registered through RIBA Competitions and in possession of a Unique Registration Number (URN). The competition is subject to a non-refundable registration and administration fee of £50+VAT. Please click on the following link

to register on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/masai-mara-conservation-centre-design-competition-registration-867378371057>

Once your payment has been processed, you will be issued with a Unique Registration Number (URN), a Declaration of Authorship Form and supporting site photos and plans within two working days.

## 5. Declaration of Authorship & Acceptance of Competition Regulations

The declaration form acknowledges authorship of the design ideas, and by signing it, entrants agree to abide by the competition conditions and the decision of the Evaluation Panel as final. The completed declaration form should be uploaded to the digital entry system along with the design submission.

Please note the team members stated on the declaration form will be used as the credits in all promotional activity so please ensure this is reflected accurately.

## 6. Evaluation Panel

The Evaluation Panel (which may be subject to change) is expected to comprise:

Florence Nyole	President, Architectural Association of Kenya
Brian Heath	Managing Director - Mara Triangle
Fernando Delgado	Chief Product Officer – A&K Travel Group
Murray Hardman	Architect Adviser – Luxury Frontiers
Keith Sproule	Executive Director – Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy
Ina-Mari Ferreira Robbertse	Regional Operations Director – Sanctuary Retreats/A&K
Paul Bauer	Regional Managing Director, East & Southern Africa, Morocco & Europe – A&K
Sebastian Notarmarco Pope	Regional Philanthropy Lead - AKP (observer only)
*Joanne Wallis	RIBA Competitions (observer only)
*Julia Davies	RIBA Competitions (observer only)

\* Joanne Wallis and Julia Davies from RIBA Competitions will attend the evaluation sessions to document the competition process and provide procedural support.

In the event of an Evaluation Panel member being unable to continue to act through illness or any other cause, the client, in consultation with the RIBA, reserves the right to appoint an alternative Panel member.

## 7. Competition Timetable

The anticipated programme, which may be subject to variation, is as follows:

<b>Competition Launch</b>	<b>w/c 8 April 2024</b>
Deadline for entrants to raise questions	Thursday 2 May 2024

Response to questions issued	By Thursday 9 May 2024
<b>Deadline for Phase 1 Designs</b>	<b>Tuesday 18 June 2024 @ 12 midday BST</b>
Evaluation of Phase 1 Designs	24 June – 15 July 2024
Notify shortlist and unsuccessful entrants	w/c 22 July 2024
<b>Phase 2 Design Period</b>	<b>August-September</b>
Final Interviews/Presentations	TBC End September 2024
Notification and result announced	October 2024

## 8. Questions

Questions relating to the competition Brief and conditions must be submitted to RIBA Competitions at [riba.competitions@riba.org](mailto:riba.competitions@riba.org) before **4pm (BST) on Thursday 2 May 2024**. A statement in response to all questions raised will be available to download from the portal by Thursday 9 May 2024.

## 9. Anonymity

All Phase 1 submissions will be evaluated anonymously, via use of the Unique Registration Number (URN) issued at the time of registration. The URN should be prominently displayed on each of the design submission sheets, report and declaration form. Please refer to the section How to Register to obtain a URN.

Any submission that has identifying marks (including logos, text, insignia, or images that could be used to identify the submission's authors) will be automatically disqualified.

## 10. Disqualification

Submissions shall be excluded from the Competition:

- If an Entrant shall disclose his or her identity, or improperly attempt to influence the decision;
- If received after the latest time stated under Phase 1 Submission Method;
- If, in the opinion of the Evaluation Panel, it does not fulfil the requirements of the Competition Brief;
- If any of the mandatory requirements of the Competition Brief and Conditions are disregarded.

## 11. Phase 1 Submission Requirements

There are **four** elements to the design submission, each of which should bear the Unique Registration Number (URN) only. Entrants should refer to the Anonymity requirements and submit the following material digitally:

- i. A maximum of 3 x landscape sheets (equivalent to A3 in PDF format only):

The layout of the sheet/s are left up to competitors' discretion however please demonstrate clearly the main characteristics of the scheme.

The proposals should be presented in a clear and succinct manner to enable Evaluation Panel members to readily understand the essence and design drivers behind the scheme.

Please note that the submissions may be viewed on a tablet, laptop or large screen and may also be printed out at A3 for the purposes of assessment, so this should be taken into consideration when putting together the submission.

The URN should be prominently displayed on the front face of each design sheet in the top right hand corner, together with the order in which the sheets should be viewed (1 of 2 etc).

Physical architectural models will not be accepted as part of the Phase 1 submission. However images of models used to develop the design proposal may be included on the design sheet(s).

- ii. A written design statement (maximum 500 words) in support of the submission.
- iii. A completed declaration form which should bear the URN in the dedicated section on the form. Please note the team members stated on the declaration form will be used as the credits in all promotional activity so please ensure this is reflected accurately.
- iv. In addition, to the pdf of the design sheets, one visual image of the design concept should be provided for publicity purposes. The image should be representative of the ideas proposed and be readily identifiable as such. The image should be submitted in JPEG format, in a low resolution (72ppi) with an image width of at least 1000px.

#### **a) Phase 1 Submission Method**

Each phase 1 design submission should be uploaded to the RIBA Competitions digital entry system **before 12.00 midday (BST) on Tuesday 18 June 2024**. Further details and a unique secure link will be issued to registered entrants.

Please note that the total upload should not exceed 30MB.

Late entries will not be accepted, and the digital entry system will not permit uploads after the deadline. The digital entry system will allow you to amend or delete the information you upload until the stipulated deadline date and time. You are strongly advised to familiarise yourself with the system and to allow adequate time for your submission material to successfully upload.

#### **b) Phase 2**

Further briefing information will be provided to the shortlisted teams and they will be provided with feedback from Phase 1 and asked to further develop their initial design ideas. The shortlisted teams will be invited to an interview to discuss their design ideas further with the Evaluation Panel.



Entries for both phases must be submitted in English.

## 12. Evaluation Criteria

The Evaluation Criteria will be as follows:

<b>Phase 1:</b>	<b>weighting</b>
Overall quality of the design demonstrating a creative and sustainable approach to the challenge	40%
Response to the brief	30%
Clarity of presentation	30%
Total	100%

<b>Phase 2:</b>	<b>weighting</b>
Development of design approach and response to feedback	40%
Response to the site and viability of the design ideas	35%
Clear presentation and communication of ideas to explain the ethos behind the proposals	25%
Total	100%

## 13. Notification of Result / Publicity

The competition results will be published after all entrants have been notified.

Entrants must **not** release their designs for publication to the Press or any other 3rd parties unless agreed with the RIBA. Entrants should note that by entering the competition they are expected to honour the request for confidentiality to prevent information of the shortlist or the winning team being leaked to the Press before any official announcement is made.

The RIBA reserve the right to publicise the competition, any design submission, and the result in any promotional activity, including all social media channels without cost. Once anonymity has been lifted, authors will be credited and recognised in any associated media and publicity. This information will be taken from the declaration form so please ensure the details are accurate.

Please note that once a winner has been selected the client may only wish to publicise the winning design submission and therefore there is no guarantee that all shortlisted designs will be publicised by the RIBA.

## 14. Feedback to Competition Entrants

Requests for feedback should be submitted to RIBA Competitions within one calendar month of a shortlist, or a result being announced. Please note that feedback will only be provided in written form on request and may be limited. Scoring will only be provided if the process is subject to procurement regulations.

## **15. Confidentiality**

Competition entrants are requested to treat documentation supplied by the client confidentially and for the purpose of the competition only. In addition, all material submitted by entrants will be treated confidentially and entries will not be shared in any form with other competitors unless a public consultation or exhibition has been agreed.

## **16. Honoraria**

It is intended that five teams will be selected to proceed to the second phase. Each shortlisted team who submits a compliant phase 2 entry will each receive an honorarium of £4,000 +VAT. The client undertakes to pay these honoraria payments within 8 weeks following the conclusion of the competition. Invoices for payment should be submitted to RIBA Competitions.

## **17. Copyright**

The ownership of copyright will be in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 - i.e. Copyright rests with the author of the submitted design.

## **18. Post competition**

It is the intention, funding permitting, to commission the author of the winning scheme to develop and implement their winning design, working in association with the client to take the scheme forward and through to completion. Should the winning team be based outside of Kenya, it is anticipated that they will be required to work in conjunction with a local architect who is registered with AAK in order to deliver the project. Further information will be provided to the shortlisted teams.

In the event that no scheme meets the requirements set out in the Competition Brief, the client reserves the right not to proceed beyond the competition stage.

Progression of the winning scheme will be dependent upon successful planning and funding applications.

The role of RIBA Competitions is limited to the administration and management of the competition process. The RIBA will have no further role once the winner has been selected and entrants notified.

## **19. Enquiries**

The competition is being managed and administered by RIBA Competitions on behalf of the client.

All enquiries relating to the competition should be directed to:

**RIBA Competitions**

T: +44(0)20 7307 5355

E: [riba.competitions@riba.org](mailto:riba.competitions@riba.org)

Members of the evaluation panel, client representatives or the Architect Adviser should not be contacted for information as this may lead to disqualification from the competition.

