

Record Drawings: Meeting Expectations

Contributed by the Delaware ABC-AIA Partnering Committee (a joint committee of ABC Delaware & AIA Delaware) March 2006

The AIA collects and disseminates Best Practices as a service to AIA members without endorsement or recommendation. Appropriate use of the information provided is the responsibility of the reader.

SUMMARY

Record drawings, often referred to as “as-builts,” are an important product of the construction process, but one in which there is often a great deal of confusion between the owner, design professional, contractor, subcontractor, and field supervision. The term “as-builts” connotes a level of accuracy that is difficult or impossible to achieve and therefore should not be used. Many issues factor into the quality of the final product that is delivered to the owner. This commentary will seek to define the major issues in this process and will make recommendations for their resolution. A few of the most important issues are listed below.

FORMAT OF DRAWINGS

There are two basic choices for the format of a project’s record drawings. The first option is the traditional red-marked blueprints, which are updated on an ongoing basis by the general contractor’s project superintendent, complete with stapled copies of any field sketches and clarifications issued over the course of construction. It is standard practice that each subcontractor is responsible for changes specific to their trade, forwarding their mark-ups to the general contractor/construction manager for incorporation. This is the least expensive and far more usual option and is the format recognized in paragraph 3.11 of AIA Document A201TM-1997, General Conditions of the Contract for Construction. Another value-added option is to have the architect incorporate these notations, along with any field sketches, electronically into the contract documents to create a permanent record of the information for the owner to use in their management of the facility. Under the standard AIA forms, this option is an additional service.

The standard practice for Delaware’s Division of Facilities Management is to use AIA Document B151TM-1997, Abbreviated Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect, which requires scanned archival-quality copies of marked-up drawings and a diskette to be submitted. The

value-added electronic incorporation of the information is listed as an optional additional service.

PAYMENT FOR PREPARATION

The payment for the preparation of record drawings depends on the option chosen. If the general contractor and subcontractors retain full responsibility for collation and documentation, the cost of these services is normally borne by the general contractor/construction manager as part of the general conditions for the project. If the architect or construction manager is required to incorporate the information electronically, the owner should specifically request this service during the interviewing process and a separate fee should be established for this effort.

STANDARD OF CARE

The standard of care for the preparation of record drawings is a point of discussion. At a minimum, major and significant changes, as well as the location of all buried or concealed utilities and features, must be accurately denoted on the drawings. With the recent emphasis on security, it has become even more important that the owner receive a set of reasonably reliable record drawings to manage the facility, recognizing that no set of record drawings will be 100 percent accurate.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Like many parts of the construction process, the success of the record-drawing effort is largely one of communication. To properly manage expectations, owners should clearly communicate their requirements to the project team at the outset of the project. The field professionals actually managing and performing the work need to know the exact expectation for the finished product and how the documents are intended to be utilized. It is equally important that information be gathered on an ongoing basis and monitored on a monthly basis over the course of the project. The owner should address such items as the value and importance of record drawings and clearly delineate the required

format, responsibility, standard of care, quality, and compensation provisions for preparation of these documents.

RESOURCES

More Best Practices

The following AIA Best Practices provide additional information related to this topic

- 10.04.03 How Building Information Modeling Changes Architectural Practice
- 11.02.02 Quality Control: A Working Drawings Preparation Checklist
- 11.02.03 Organizing Construction Documents

For More Information on This Topic

See also “Construction Documents Production” by Susan Greenwald, FAIA, CSI; Kenneth C. Crocco, FAIA; and Kristine K. Fallon, FAIA, *The Architect’s Handbook of Professional Practice*, 13th edition, Chapter 13.4, page 400.



See also the 14th edition of the *Handbook*, which can be ordered from the AIA Bookstore by calling 800-242-3837 (option 4) or by email at bookstore@aia.org.



Feedback

The AIA welcomes member feedback on Best Practice articles. To provide feedback on this article, please contact bestpractices@aia.org

Key Terms

- Practice
- Information management
- Office information resources