

# The Southern Fried Architect

(A clear, complete, concise, and mostly correct, view of stuff happening in the design/construction industry)

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**Nina M. Giglio, CSI, CCS, Assoc. AIA, SCIP:** Editor, SpecWinch, and she who fixes this stuff

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## MasterFormat.Com

The Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) and Construction Specifications Canada (CSC) have their new website for everything MasterFormat up and working. The intent is to allow users to make comments on future updates of the document right online and streamline the process for review by the MasterFormat Maintenance Task Team. I know that I have a few suggested changes, so give it a try at <http://www.MasterFormat.com>.

## MasterFormat Maintenance Task Team Kicks Off New Initiative

Speaking of MasterFormat updates, the CSI/CSC MasterFormat Maintenance Task Team held their kickoff meeting for FY07 on August 12-13. The task team is comprised of major stakeholders such as Building Systems Design (BSD), ARCOM, Specification Consultants in Independent Practice (SCIP), and a few others. The first task was to establish the general operating procedures and processes, and blame the consultant for all the mistakes he has not made yet. We will be keeping our ears to the ground and report on substantive activities of interest as the task team begins its real work.

## AIA Contract Documents to be Released in Late 2007

The American Institute of Architect (AIA) plans to release the next edition of their flagship documents in late fall of next year. The new documents will include some new documents such as a data transfer agreement, digital protocol document, architect's scope of services for BIM, and a renumbering of many of your favorite other documents such as B-141 and B-151. Don't worry, A-201 General Conditions of the Contract will retain its number and title.

## Uniform Location of Subject Matter

Speaking of the AIA, they and EJCDC are working on an update of the Uniform Location of Subject matter document also expected out next year. This document has been out of date since the expansion of MasterFormat in 2004 and is finally being updated. Where is CSI in this process? More on this subject in future issues of *SFA*.

## High Praises for New Draft of SectionFormat

On August 9, the CSI SectionFormat PageFormat Update Task Team (SPUTT) released Draft 2 of the update of SectionFormat for public review and comment and on August 10 they released Draft 2A. Okay, sometimes stuff happens. CSI has received high marks from industry observers for their latest version, which retreated from the proposal for a Part 4. To review and comment on the current and future drafts go to CSINet.org and check out the new CSI Forums.

## NSC Discussion Forum Open for Business

Speaking of the new CSI Forums, our ol' buddy Charles Rick Green, FCSI, AIA, chairman of the USD Program Task Team and member of the US National CAD Standard Project Team has established a National CAD Standard discussion forum on the new CSI Forums to allow users to comment of the current document, proposed changes for Version 4, and other stuff regarding the NCS. It looks like CSI is starting to get a critical mass of activity of the Forums and I invite you to join the fun. Go to [http://www.csinet.org/s\\_csi/sec\\_forums.asp?CID=11&DID=11&ForumId=9](http://www.csinet.org/s_csi/sec_forums.asp?CID=11&DID=11&ForumId=9).

Welcome to another issue of *Sticks + Stones*, where we provide marginally professional advice to our readers based on our many years of creating and observing problems in the construction industry. The SpecWinch is still working on paying work this month, so once again I've stepped in to get the blame for this month's Sticks + Stones.

## Fixed Sound Absorptive Panels (09 83 13)



We have been involved as experts in several lawsuits where the architect has failed to show any understanding of the basic concepts of architectural acoustics. I was recently reminded of this issue when as the administrative architect for design on a Family Life Center project, I asked the Architect-of-Record to provide a simple analysis of the reverberation time for the large meeting room and they responded that they would have to hire an acoustical consultant and that would be additional services to the owner. It seems somewhat amazing that today in this age of specialization, that many design professionals lack what I call a “basic working knowledge” of many fundamental principles of building design.

In the project mentioned above, we were concerned with the selection of finishes and that the large meeting room will be too acoustically “alive” and we might need to plan into the design sound absorbing panels. If so the architect would need to design them into the aesthetics of the space and the contractor would have to budget for them. Therefore, we needed an analysis of the space to determine the approximate reverberation time.

Reverberation time is the time in seconds required for sound to die out to an intensity of one-millionth the intensity it had at the moment the source was stopped. It is calculated using the formula  $T = 0.05V/a$  where “T” is the reverberation time, “V” is the volume of the space in cubic feet, and “a” is the room absorption in sabins, which is calculated based upon area of finishes times the absorption coefficient of each construction material or finish. Most construction materials are tested at 6 different frequencies and the average of the middle 4 frequencies: 250, 500, 1000, and 2000 Hz are averaged and rounded to the closest 5% to give you the noise reduction coefficient (NRC).

The optimum range of the reverberation time is based upon the volume and usage of the space with a lower time for speech and a higher time for music. All this is based upon research done about 80 years ago by a guy named Sabine. The tables for sound absorption in sabins (can't imagine how it got that name) for most common construction materials and the graph of optimum reverberation times can be found in all college textbooks on architectural acoustics and other architectural reference books. Also most manufacturers of acoustical ceiling panels, fixed sound absorptive panels, and other finish materials provide the absorption coefficient or NRC for their products for use by the architect.

And while acoustical design for performing spaces is far more complex than I have described here, a general working knowledge for determining the acoustical absorption (liveliness and deadness) of a large or meeting spaces will enable architects to provide better service to their clients and save them thousands of dollars in legal bills.

# Technically Speaking

SFA - Section C

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## CSI Enters Agreement with ICC

The Construction Specifications Institute has entered into an agreement with the International Code Council to include the definitions in the International Building Code in their new construction industry terminology. This document is not intended as a dictionary but as an organizational structure or framework for construction dictionaries and will be linked with the international initiative. According to sources, Jeff Wix from the UK has been hired as the consultant on this project through a grant from the National Electrical Management Institute and the document will have definitions for some construction terms taken from the IBC and a few other documents.

## ARCOM to Introduce new Website

Architectural Computer Services, Inc. better known as ARCOM, producers of MASTESPEC is introducing its new website later this fall. Expected to debut in October, the new site will be more user friendly and enable MASTERSPEC subscribers to have greater access to information. I anticipate MASTERSPEC to make some major changes in the way it is produced over the next several years. One of the changes I predict is a move to minor changes of all or most sections rather than their current 5-year major update cycle for sections.

## BSD to Adopt New SectionFormat

Speaking of master guide specification providers, in an e-mail to subscribers, BSD has announced that they intend to implement the new CSI/CSC SectionFormat into SpecLink immediately upon adoption by CSI. Remember, these were the first master guide specification guys to implement MasterFormat 2004 as well.

## International Framework for Dictionaries (IFD)

As the Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) is beginning work on their own construction terminology document, two European object library initiatives based on the International Standard ISO 12006-3 *Organization of Information about Construction Works ;Framework for Object-orientated Information*, LexiCon and BARBi , have joined forces to harmonize their IFD libraries. Our sources tell the *SFA* that this joint venture is in response to delays in 2005 by a lack of action on the part of the IFD international initiative and the Europeans decided to proceed on their own .An IFD reference library workshop is being held this fall in Lisbon in conjunction with the IAI buildingSMART – Lisbon conference. Word has it that CSI Technical Director, Roger Grant, will represent CSI at the conference. To view the latest on the IFD for yourself, go to [http://buildingsmart.byggforsk.no/index.php/Ifd:BARBi\\_-\\_LexiCon\\_unification](http://buildingsmart.byggforsk.no/index.php/Ifd:BARBi_-_LexiCon_unification).

## NCS Agreement Still Not Signed

Despite agreement in principle back in June on new operating procedures, the AIA, CSI, and NIBS have still not signed the US National CAD Standard Agreement, which is set to expire the end of this month. We suspect that this delay is the usual bureaucratic shenanigans and general waiting to the last minute to do stuff, but failure to get this accomplish could mean the death of the NCS. Let's hope that whatever the problems are, they are resolved quickly.

## Preservation Your Thing?

Well, then you won't want to miss some of the upcoming presentations by the National Preservation Institute. Just check out a few of these titles, "Native American Cultural Property Law," "Preservation Maintenance: Understanding and Preserving Historic Buildings," and my favorite "Cemetery Preservation". To find out more, check out their web site at <http://www.npi.org/>.

# People in the News, or Not

SFA - Section D

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## Double Secrets Society of Double Fellows

We got a nice email from David Metzger, FAIA, FCSI, SCIP last month, thanking us for mentioning his advancement to Fellow in CSI and being the 26<sup>th</sup> double Fellow of the Institute. He also informed us that there are only nine double Fellows that are currently not retired or deceased, and they are all members, former members, or affiliates of the Specifications Consultants in Independent Practice (SCIP). Humm! They are, in alphabetical order:

R. Stanley Bair, FAIA, FCSI, SCIP

Michael D. Chambers, FAIA, FCSI, SCIP Affiliate

Kenneth C. Crocco, FAIA, FCSI, SCIP

Dennis J. Hall, FAIA, FCSI, SCIP

Douglas Hartman, FAIA, FCSI, SCIP

Mark J. Kalin, FAIA, FCSI, SCIP

Lee F. Kilbourn, FAIA, FCSI, SCIP Affiliate

David Metzger, FAIA, FCSI, SCIP

John Raeber, FAIA, FCSI, SCIP

The only exception to this rule is Phil McDade, FASLA, FCSI who is not only the only non-SCIP person but also the only double Fellow who is a dirt decorator.

## Meet the New CSI Executive Director

No, CSI has not chosen to its new Executive Director yet, following the resignation of Karl B. earlier this year to start his own consulting business with his wife, but the CSI Board of Directors are planning to select the new ED at their meeting near the end of November in Denver. We will give him or her a few months to get their feet on the ground before we conduct an exclusive SFA interview scheduled in February. So, if you are interested in having a cup of coffee and conversation with us, you had better get that resume ready and the application in to the Institute's Executive Director Selection Committee.

We have had several potential candidates call and email wanting to know how to apply for the job as CSI ED. Korn Ferry, the consultant for CSI has been spending August interviewing the Board and others, preparing a job description, and selection criteria. The job is posted on the CSI web site at [www.CSINet.org](http://www.CSINet.org) and when you "click" the link, it will magically take you to the consultant's site. The consultant will narrow the list and the CSI ED Selection Task Team will create a "shot list" of candidates by mid October and then select the two finalists by November 1. The CSI Board of Directors will interview the two finalists and make the final selection in late November.

## AIA Reorganizes

Speaking of Executive Directors, Christine McEntee, AIA's new EVP/CEO has reorganized the Institute. Rumor has it that there are now 50 Vice President positions, some reserved for future expansion. (Okay, bad MasterFormat joke) What does this new reorganization mean to the average AIA member? I have no clue, but since this reorganization was mentioned in several meetings by AIA staff, it must be important to someone.

## Anne Whitaker Named Chair of MASTERSPEC Architectural Review Committee

And speaking of the AIA, our good friend Anne Whitaker, FCSI and chief specifier for Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership on the NW coast has been appointed by the AIA to chair the ARCOM MASTERSPEC Architectural Review Committee for 2007-08. Anne knows her stuff and is not bashful in running meetings. So, if you have any problems with MASTERSPEC, just send us an email and we will send you Anne's home telephone number.

## Quote of the Month

"Information is data endowed with relevance and purpose."

— Peter Drucker, Economist

# Editorial Section

SFA - Section E

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## Standard of Care of the Architect (Part 1 of 2)

by Dennis J. Hall, FAIA, FCSI, SCIP

A couple of months ago, I was asked by an attorney to write two briefs representing two opposite points of view on the standard of care of architects, based upon a case we were working on together, where his client (the architect) was being sued by a condominium homeowner's association as a part of a construction defects case. Below is Part 1 of a two-part article providing a synopsis of those points of view.

### POINT

Negligence is defined as the failure to provide professional services in accordance with the normal standard of care of other design professionals providing similar services, on similar project types, at the same time, and in the same community. In order to determine professional negligence of the architect, we can't look at only one facet of professional services, but must examine the professional services in context of all the project conditions. Below are some of the conditions that may dictate the architect's professional services.

**Contractual Professional Services:** An architect may be contracted to provide only design services or limited services on a project. These limited services may only include minimum construction documents to convey design intent, or no construction administration services. The architect may not have control over or coordination of the other project design professionals and some design services may be provided through delegated design on the part of the contractor.

**Project Type:** Different project types have different levels of complexity of design and construction. Residential contractors that specialize in this project type often work in partnership with developers and have their own standards for construction. Many developer projects are also designed and constructed to very tight budgets and the architect may be limited to a palette of inexpensive construction materials and building types, for example, low-rise multi-family residential condominiums projects are often constructed using Type V construction, where the level of construction skill of the subcontractors may vary substantially.

**Project Location:** The design requirements for buildings vary depending upon location. Buildings designed for the harsh conditions of a coastal environment, an urban environment, or that of a northern climate with severe winter conditions have different requirements than those in moderate climates or in rural locations. The selection of materials, building design, and detailing must also take into consideration the specific site conditions of the project and budget constraints.

**Project Delivery:** Critical to any project is the project delivery method. The architect may be contracted directly by the owner, contractor, or project developer and the scope of services can vary. In some design-build projects the architect may only be contracted to provide a "builder set" of documents. A builder set is typically less complete than a set of documents used for competitive bidding, since the contract is primarily based upon a set of agreed conditions between the owner and the contractor and there may not be any specifications. The purpose of the builder set is to convey the design intent and achieve a building permit.

**Professional Knowledge:** When determining professional negligence, one of the first questions that is always asked is "what did the architect know and when did they know it?" To determine the standard of professional knowledge we need to understand the time frame in which the project was designed and constructed. Today's knowledge of designing building envelopes is far greater than that of ten years ago and any claim of negligence must be viewed with the common knowledge of architects at the time of design.

**Conclusions:** As stated earlier, one can't judge professional negligence solely by the instruments of services provided by the architect, but by viewing them in context with the other major factors of the project. And while the instruments of service of the architect are never perfect, the law does not require perfection of the architect.