

# The Southern Fried Architect

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

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## **MasterFormat Final Draft Released this Month**

The full version of Draft 4, the final draft will be published for public review and comment by the end of the month. The industry will have until November 7 to provide input to the MasterFormat Expansion Task Team (MFETT). The CSI Board of Directors is expected to take action on a recommendation to approve the draft pending final tweaking by the MFETT at its meeting in mid-November. The final manuscript will be sent to the printer on December 19 and Katie bar the door, this 2-1/2 year effort will be almost history in terms of titles, numbers, and changes to principles of practice. This will not be the end of the work however, as education on MasterFormat 04 is only beginning. With this document affecting specifications, reference keynoting on drawings, library filing, cost accounting, and a host of other activities in the construction industry, not to mention numerous other documents including CSI certification exams, CSI Manual of Practice, AIA Professional Practice Handbook, as well as AIA, AGC, EJCDC and other standard documents. Someone is going to be busy for a while ensuring that these changes are clearly understood and correctly incorporated into these other initiatives.

## **CSI Announces MasterFormat Summit**

CSI has sent out invitations for a major construction industry summit meeting to be held in September. While the MFETT has been concerned with development of the document, this summit will focus on marketing and education. You can expect all the major players in the construction industry to send a high ranking, mucky muck to represent their interest. The AIA has agreed to host the meeting in their Board Room. The outcome of the summit is hoped to be industry wide support for this initiative.

## **Branding**

The AIA has recently completed a series of top-secret meetings to discuss branding of all their documents. The goal is to make the AIA brand more recognizable and more valuable. This has caused us wonder about the branding of MasterFormat 04. What we have been missing is a really catchy slogan. Our crack marketing staff here at *SFA* has spent several minutes working on this problem and has come up with the prefect MF 04 slogan. From now on you can expect everything associated with MasterFormat 04 to have the branding "MasterFormat 04: Organizing Your Stuff" plastered all over it. Next we plan to look at a great new MF04 logo to go along with our nifty slogan.

## **From the E-Mail Bag**

Again this month, we have published a few of the many letters and e-mails we have received from our readers, seeking our advice and council on a variety of subjects. As usual, we have changed the names to prevent public ridicule and embarrassment to the senders.

Dear Southern Fried Architect:

As an engineer, I take offense to your suggestion that engineers do not know how to properly specify our work. I include everything necessary for construction right on my drawings to insure that my electrical subcontractors know right when to find everything they need to know. And if they have questions, they call me and I straighten them out.

*Insulting Engineer*

Dear Insulted:

I think you proved my point. But, my criticism is not intended as an indictment of all engineers. In fact, I know some engineers that are excellent specifiers; I just can't remember their names right now. I suggest you check out your local CSI Chapter, as I am sure they offer educational programs leading to a Certified Construction Specifier (CCS) certificate. This course teaches the basic principles of the CSI Manual of Practice (MOP). You can also check out educational opportunities on AECDaily.com and SpecGuy.com.

*SF Architect*

PS.

1. Specifications don't belong on drawings.
2. "Insure" means you are providing insurance, you mean "ensure."
3. Communication should come through the General Contractor to the Architect.

Dear SF Architect:

Thank you for your insight on chain link fencing in the June edition. Can you recommend any other fencing products to your readers?

*National Fencing Association*

Dear NFA:

In addition to chain link fencing, I am surprised that more designers don't specify "chicken wire" more often. This is another one of those versatile products that can be used for site construction, exterior construction, and interior work. The pleasing hexagonal shape of the wire form can add to any construction project. I am disappointed with the limited color choices of "chicken wire" and would suggest to your membership that you expand to at least eight standard colors and maybe a few custom colors. The chickens are beginning to complain about the same old mill finish and are looking for variety.

*SF Architect*

### **Tar and Feathering: On the Road for a better MasterFormat**

The Mrs. is not going to be happy again this month, as we hit the road for parts unknown to preach the gospel of MasterFormat. Below are a few of the locations you can expect the MasterFormat traveling salvation tent to show up.

August 2	CSI South Central Region Conference – Oklahoma City, OK
August 9, 10	MFETT Meeting – Ottawa, Canada
August 15	CSI Great Lakes Region Conference - Louisville, KY
August 18	CSI Charleston – Charleston, SC
August 20	BICSI Convention - Nashville, TN

### **Quotes of the Month**

"He makes my egocentricity look like a single color in the spectrum while he has them all. This surprised me. I thought I was the limit."

*- Frank Lloyd Wright-1931*

Despite popular belief and public opinion, Mr. Wright was not speaking of MFETT Chairman, D.J. Hall, but rather, Dutch architect and writer, H.T. Wijdeveld.

### **Creating a Stir: MasterFormat in the Mags**

We are back at it again and magazines can't wait to get their hands on more exciting articles about MasterFormat 04 and other *SFA* stuff. In August, you can expect to finally see the "Post-Modern Blues" article in *The Construction Specifier*. This article was written while flying back from one of these MasterFormat junkets. We are also starting a regular series of MasterFormat articles in *Architectural Products* magazine.

Since MasterFormat is a work results classification structure and not a products classification structure, we had concerns about writing for this magazine, but when the check cleared the bank, we got over it.

Several other magazines have contacted us about doing a regular article, but our agent is still negotiating the deals. We will let you know as soon as we are told.

### **Technical Corner**

As promised, here is the top 10 list of things, “specifiers wish architects knew” according to a list compiled by Texas architect and specifier Peter Jordan. A survey of top specifications consultants and other folks from across America helped generate this list. More than 80 comments were received and were grouped into the following categories. I am sure for a large fee, Peter will be happy to come to your office and explain them in somewhat great detail.

10. Investigate “custom” requirements.
9. Don’t recycle specifications from previous projects.
8. Use your head.
7. Don’t accept substitutions.
6. Schedule (and budget) for production of the Project Manual.
5. The relationship of Drawing annotations to Specifications.
4. How to use product data and communicate *all* product criteria to the specifier.
3. The function of Division 1 “General Requirements.”
2. The different roles/functions of the Specifications and the Drawings and the relationship between them.
1. What the Specifications are (and what they are not).

### **EIFS Alert**

Speaking of our good friends in Texas, the Texas Bureau for Lathing and Plastering has just issued an EIFS alert advising the construction industry that EIFS leak, possibly creating water intrusion and mold problems in buildings. As a result of this late breaking news, the TEXAS Association of BUILDERS, through their Buildings Standards Task Force has introduced legislation leading to HB 730 that outlaws water intrusion and mold in buildings in the state of Texas.

Let me clue you into a secret, stucco wall, brick walls, hardboard siding and windows also leak. For those of us outside the state of Texas, who do not have the benefit of the protection of this new law, it is absolutely necessary that we carefully install flashing at the roof, and all penetrations of the building envelope as well as properly install a weather barrier. Future editions of the new *Sticks + Stones* will address some of these problems and the incredible design and construction that have lead to litigation.

### **SFA Editorial Section**

Well, you won’t believe it, but as first reported here in the *Southern Fried Architect* and later in the *AIA Architect*, AIA, CSI, and NIBS finally signed the latest Memorandum of Agreement in June. This will enable Version 3.0 of the National CAD Standard to be published next year and the NCS Project Committee to get back to work on Version 4.0. They say bad things come in threes and 2004 will be a banner year for updating standards for producing construction documents with NCS Version 3, the CSI Manual of Practice, and MasterFormat all being updated. You will have to wait until 2007 for the new AIA documents, but the AIA Documents Committee, under the direction of Barbara Heller, FAIA, CSI has already gotten started. Stay tuned for a sneak preview of changes to your favorite boilerplate documents soon.

We got a lot of criticism for our poor spelling and lack of good grammar in last month’s edition. We were even told that we did not deserve the title “editor” since we had failed to actually edit the articles. This really hurt. We tried to explain that we write like we talk (in Southernese) but our critics did not buy that rationalization. Even words of support from our old friend Albert Einstein, “I have no respect for a man who can only spell a word one way” did not calm our critics. So, we are advertising for a ghost editor. The qualifications are

someone who clearly understands the English language (American version, southern dialect), works for free, does not mind constant insults, and will not try hard to fix all our good stuff. Send resumes to us, in care of us, and don't hold your breath until we get back to you because we are busy doing other stuff.

A lot of you have written to voice support for our new sister publication *Sticks + Stones*, scheduled to debut this fall. In fact, our readers have sent in so many suggestions, and our readership has grown so much, we are taken back with the possibilities for going "big time." This attention is almost too much for a poor southern architect to comprehend, and we are looking at ways to reinvent ourselves again. I guess you could say that the *SFA* like MasterFormat is an evolving document.

The folks at AECDaily.com that distribute *The Southern Fried Architect* tell me that the distribution has skyrocketed to in excess of 200,000 people each month. WOW!!! I can't believe that there are that many of you folks out there that are actually taking time away from your jobs to read this stuff. Wait a minute, what are my employees doing right now? Got to go.

### **Epilog**

A lot of folks have written to ask, what the heck is a southern fried architect? As Michael Graham explained in his book, *Redneck Nation: How the South Really Won the War*, the South is not just a place, but also a state of mind. This perhaps explains the fact that "southern" is not just a person from the South, but someone who possesses the qualities as a southerner, hence the phrase "southern gentleman". "Southern fried" is a process of dipping or rolling food in a batter of special seasonings and deep frying at a high temperature producing a product that is crusty and spicy on the outside, while soft and juicy on the inside (explaining the 3 second rule for dropped food). Southern fried food is also considered fun food. This is not to be confused with fast food. Fun food does not only taste good, but is also good for you (OK, the deep fried Twinkies are questionable).

*The Southern Fried Architect* is a publication that reflects this view on written architecture. We are a kinder and gentler publication that does not take crap off of anyone. We not only hope we entertain you, we expect you to learn a little from the experience. And if the extra spice burns your mouth and fingers, well, that is just all a part of the process of enjoying the meal.

Hope your bellies are full and you will come back again next month for another full course of *The Southern Fried Architect*.