A Review of New Zealand Building Consent Documentation Quality

June 2018
Why Conduct the Research?

- Growing pressure on quality & productivity in the New Zealand construction industry
- Declining specification expertise in market
- Anecdotal reports of poor documentation quality for Building Consent applications
- Awareness of use (and abuse) of copied, forged, and out of date specification sections
- Significant time and cost wastage in the consenting process through poor quality documentation
Why Conduct the Research?

To get real data on actual documentation quality of building projects across drawings, specifications, manufacturer's technical information and third party documents in the compliance process.

To identify how Masterspec as an industry-owned organisation, can help improve the quality of project documentation, especially in support of the compliance process.
133 sets of documents - The review was quality based but broad enough, in both numbers of sets and in geography, to provide a quantitative indication.

7 BCA offices:
Auckland Central,
Takapuna
Manukau
Hastings District
Kapiti Coast
Christchurch
Queenstown Lakes
Review Methodology

Used a standardised template reviewing 5 key areas

- Type of project
- Specification source - a master system, contractor's own system, designer's system
- Specification size and breadth of coverage
- Associated information (appraisals, certificates, producer statements, manufacturers' data)
- Quality of documents (specifications and drawings)
Qualitative Assessment

**GOOD**  Complete in every aspect, or with only minor faults

**ADEQUATE**  Reasonable standard but some missing project content & default entries

**JUST ACCEPTABLE**  Included some obviously pirated content but some evidence of customisation

**POOR**  Little or no understanding of the Building Act or Code demonstrated. An extreme example was a 9 page spec for a 2-storied commercial project

**UNACCEPTABLE / INADEQUATE**  Out-dated material pirated from a master systems mixed with clauses/sections collected by a designer over time and not project specific
Our qualitative review of 133 sets of consent documents from 7 BCA offices revealed a concerningly broad range of document quality and competence.

Overall Quality Assessment

- 47% GOOD
- 11% ADEQUATE
- 21% JUST ACCEPTABLE
- 5% POOR
- 16% UNACCEPTABLE/INADEQUATE

79% Acceptable or better
Maintained System Vs Other

- MAINTAINED MASTER SYSTEM: GOOD 47%, ADEQUATE 11%, JUST ACCEPTABLE 21%, POOR 5%, UNACCEPTABLE/INADEQUATE 16%
- NON-MAINTAINED PRACTICE SPEC.: GOOD 45%, ADEQUATE 35%, JUST ACCEPTABLE 40%, POOR 30%, UNACCEPTABLE/INADEQUATE 25%
Comparison of Project Type

COMMERCIAL VS RESIDENTIAL AND OTHERS

- GOOD
- ADEQUATE
- JUST ACCEPTABLE
- POOR
- UNACCEPTABLE/INADEQUATE

ALL TYPES
COMMERCIAL
Key issues identified

Principal issues were identified:

1. Lack of understanding of NZ Building Code by some designers
2. Forged and/or out-of-date specification content
3. Non-specific project specifications
4. Too much unstructured bulk of manufacturers’ information making it difficult for all stakeholders to ensure relevant information is supplied and can be found
5. Designers unclear how to use manufacturers’ information to show product compliance
First Opportunity addressed

Principal issues were identified:

1. Lack of understanding of NZ Building Code by some designers
2. Forged and/or out-of-date specification content
3. Non-specific project specification content
4. Too much unstructured bulk of manufacturers’ information making it difficult for all stakeholders to ensure relevant information is supplied and can be found
5. Designers unclear how to use manufacturers’ information to show product compliance
First opportunity – responded to

Masterspec Verification Seal

Instant Identification of current documentation

Verified spec ID: 159601-98338
This specification has been produced using Masterspec software and completed on 05/06/2018.
Scan to verify or go to masterspec.co.nz/verify
First response - implemented

Masterspec Verification Seal – Unique authentication markers

- Unique Spec. ID
- Scannable QR code verification
- Live link to online verification
Verification Seal

Masterspec Verification Seal – Online authentication

Spec ID: 159601-98338

Verification has been produced using Masterspec software and completed on 05/06/2018. To verify or go to masterspec.co.nz/verify
Verification Seal

Verify the Authenticity of a Specification

Masterspec provides up-to-date specification resources and tools which project designers use to create project-specific documentation.

To ensure that the specification you have is:

- Up-to-date, i.e., has been prepared with the latest Masterspec resources.
- Project specific, i.e., the design has confirmed appropriate customising for the project.

To validate your specification, please enter the Masterspec spec and version IDs.

Spec ID: 159601
Version ID: 98338

Authentication results

Compare the results presented with the Specification you have to validate its authenticity.

Spec ID: 159601
Version ID: 98338
Project: GESTRO APARTMENTS
Spec Completed: 05/06/2018
Spec Written by: BIG Architecture

If the results DON'T match or are invalid
Verification Seal

Instant Identification of Authentic Documentation

Reinforces to both TA’s and Constructors;

• Completion of content
• Currency of content
• Easy online verification
Conclusions

SUMMARY POINTS

- Building consent documentation is of varied quality
- Approximately 17% of specifications are of poor quality / unacceptable
- Manufacturers documentation is generally unstructured and too much bulk
- The level of specification expertise in the market has reduced over the last decade

ACTIONS

Several opportunities for industry stakeholders to collaborate to achieve improved quality and efficiencies in the compliance process:

✓ The first has now been implemented: A ‘Verification seal’ for properly customised and up-to-date project specifications
- Several other projects to come, including training.
master

spec