The ArchiAssist Specification Guide (Architectural)

Welcome to the ArchiAssist full-version lump-sum Master Specification of modern construction…a very user-friendly, 'Read & Delete' Master…for any size project…done in a day.

This Guide is written for the full-version Master. If you are using a Design & Construct (D&C) or Add-on version, similar principles apply (but no specific Guide exists for these documents).

'Read & Delete' is a simple but unique idea…draw & schedule project specifics – so Spec writing is easy, safe and fast.

- No more putting off Spec writing until it gets rushed and mistakes are made,
- More accurate construction pricing,
- No complaints like: writing is hard and time consuming; things are hard to find; it's too big.

SUITS: ALL size projects; ALL building types; ALL States & Territories!

Project size doesn't matter. Brickwork Spec detail for a hospital and a house are virtually the same – any differences are drawn or scheduled. The same goes for basically all materials.

The ArchiAssist Master Documents

ArchiAssist has a variety of low-cost products including; Schedules, Tender process documents, and short 'Add-on' and 'D&C' Specifications (see them at www.ArchiAssist.com.au).

ArchiAssist updated documents are published on-line on the 1st of April & the 1st of October every year. Get the latest low-cost versions by simply re-purchasing them on-line.

How You Profit From ArchiAssist

1. **Low Initial Cost**: ArchiAssist products are high quality low cost. Bad Specs are very expensive,
2. **Fast Editing**: Compare a solid week of hard work to an easy single day. Savings here can be huge especially considering how this affects related tasks,
3. **Less On-Site Hassles**: A good Master is pre-written. Adding to a Spec by a hurried team who only sometimes write Specs, can create expensive mistakes.
4. **Good Reputation**: ArchiAssist quality = Less hassles = More repeat and referred work.

Important Features of the Specification

The Master uses a 'Read & Delete' system – read through & delete unwanted detail. What's left is your Specification. Content quality is high to work down from. Draw & schedule project specifics

The Master is comprised of 27 element based Sections. Trade based Sections don't work (Builders all have different processes), and are inefficient (eg a Partitions Section can have glass, doors, linings, bricks, studs, services, painting, waterproofing, insulation, tiles).

Sections 1, 2 & 3 are common Sections (the other Sections rely on them). No 'General Requirements' Section is used, the Preliminaries has it all. Content is technical only to not clash with your General Conditions of Contract.

Common content (eg Sections 1-3, 'General' Sub-Sections & Clauses) is not repeated but is referred to constantly (including in each page header). Rationalized formatting also avoids repetition, eg:

- Concrete toppings relate to tiling, waterproofing, vinyl or carpet, but are specified in the 'Concrete' Section and referred to (in Clause 1.2 'Cross References') of those other related Sections,
- Recessed floor mats relate to concrete, tiling, vinyl or carpet, but are specified in the 'Fixtures' Section and are similarly referred to in those other related Sections,
- Roof & cladding insulation is in the 'Insulation' Section & referred to in those related Sections,
- Timber is ubiquitous but is specified in 'Timber Work' Section and referred to in related Sections.

To locate things: General detail affecting more than a few Sections goes in the common Sections 1-3, and specific detail affecting only 1 or 2 Sections goes in those specific technical Sections.

Materials have universal descriptions (no Manufacturer names) that will fit in with your selections.

Common Referenced Documents (eg Aust Standards) are specified and the Builder is to use current versions and select the applicable parts.

© Copyright 2020 ArchiAssist Pty Ltd

The Master is concise (Specs often finish at approx. 80 pages) which means easier reading, the Spec is more likely to be read, limits 'large-Specs-price-loading', is easily emailed to Subcontractors.

Conciseness comes from: highly rationalized content; *italicized* definitions; no repeated content; and product Manufacturer advice is not included (the Contractor obtains it) reducing writing time, Spec size, and error.

Concise 'Execution' Sub-Sections exist because specific material execution detail is in the 'Materials' Sub-Section…in one place to easily read and edit.

Finally, *italicized* 'defined' words are used (the first Master to use this). It's done in the BCA and all General Conditions of Contract and VITAL for very accurate, clear, safe and concise text.

How To Write Your Spec

The Master uses a 'Read & Delete' system – read through & delete unwanted detail. What's left is your Specification. Content quality is high to work down from. Draw & schedule project specifics

To become better acquainted with ArchiAssist, first read this Guide.

Your ArchiAssist package includes a Microsoft 'Word' document and a signed PDF (as a record only). Save the Master in your master file, and just copy it to your project file to start.

With familiarity, a full-version Spec can be done within a day – any project size or type.

There is no burdensome assembling of the Spec, ArchiAssist is a single MS 'Word' document. There is no confusing hidden text, instead content is self-explanatory, but some explanatory notes are used, prefixed as: *"[TBC Spec Writer – Note…]"*.

After you copy the Master to your project file, rename it, change the details in the footer (including your name and also delete the Copyright statement).

Read through and delete detail NOT required. Try not to change the Spec. Changes take time and are risky. 'Read & Delete' = pre-written content = safety = preliminary drafts are almost complete.

Draw or schedule project specific items (don't bury them in the 'back-up-detail' of the Spec).

For speed, scan text and trust the content (like you do for Consultant documents). Content is top quality, from which you work down. Text is made for easy deleting with detail usually in one place.

A simple "TBC" in the text highlights things. You can also add a "TBC" to your un-resolved items, to be removed later.

Keep all 27 Spec Sections (even if all don't apply) to enable: **1)** fast Spec writing, **2)** same Spec format project to project, **3)** telling the Builder what is not in, thereby removing the process of deduction.

Some time savers include:

- Don't specify cross references to other documents – the Contractor should know where things are,
- Don't specify your materials codes – leave them on the drawings or schedules,
- It is unnecessary to insert blank last pages so Sections finish on an even page number,
- Word processing skill speeds-up editing especially using keyboard 'short-cut keys' (not the mouse),
- Content is pre-written, so it's very safe and user-friendly, and your Spec gets done FAST!

To finish, update the Spec Table of Contents (using F9 on the keyboard) and the Appendix items (ie documents to be hard-copy bound into the back of the Spec – don't list them if they are not bound in).

IMPORTANT: You DON'T build using the Spec, the Builder does. You DON'T have to know all about its detail, the Builders does (and especially the Subcontractors who work with this detail every day).

The BCA and General Conditions of Contract

ArchiAssist does not repeat regulations, and it does not contradict them. BCA requirements need to be designed into the job by the Project Architect or Designer.

ArchiAssist is written to suit the common industry General Conditions of Contract (GCC), and also purposefully has technical, not contractual, content.

ArchiAssist Safety Features

Spec in-built safety features include:

- Deleting only from the Spec, not assembling it or adding to it.
- Exact wording (one lazy word can cause trouble), and content is not repeated,

- Master content is high quality (the extra building cost is negligible) so you can't select low quality,
- On finding discrepancies, errors or omissions; immediately notify the Superintendent,
- For discrepancies with other documents, a default path is given (see Clause 1.1 of Preliminaries, 'Documentation Discrepancies' (also referred in each page header),
- If Site conditions and Site Info conflict, allow the Site conditions. If an item size is not available, allow the next size up. For an omitted colour/finish, allow a standard suitable colour/finish,
- The words ***NOTIFY*** and ***SUBMIT*** are in bold italics to stand out (and are defined). These are critical words not to be missed (scheduling these is problematic),
- Shop drawings are all to be Engineer certified and apply to complex items,
- When a documented number of items need an on-Site confirmation (eg access hatch locations) "***NOTIFY***" is used to confirm this (the onus then is on the Contractor to instigate the process),
- ArchiAssist is updated twice per year (published on the 1st of April and the 1st of October),
- User-friendly to read at approx. 80 PAGES FINISHED.

WARNING: The Spec cannot rescue you from poor documents or poor selection of a Builder.

Things to be Documented Elsewhere

Remember, project specific things get drawn or scheduled. Spec descriptions are in one location only, so you know if you want more detail, draw or schedule it. Generally other documentation is to include:

- Project specific items and their extent; building details; general arrangements; colours/finishes,
- Project details (address & RPD), Site areas, extent of work, dimensions, levels and falls,
- Designed items affected by Regulation eg the BCA (Regs always change and, Regs are designed into the project – the Spec is kept technical only),
- Extensive Contractor Quality Assurance detail (the Spec only refers to AS/NZS ISO 9001),
- Retaining wall construction, asphalt surfacing, shotcrete,
- Pre-stressed and post-tensioned concrete,
- Swimming pool equipment, pool fence specific detail, water features,
- Roof walkways (usually proprietary items or designed/documented by the Structural Consultant),
- Window furnishings, door protection/thresholds, skirting/architrave/trim selections, joinery layouts, fabric & upholstery detail; ratings and extent of slip-resistance/acoustic/fire resisting items,
- Specific metalwork items (eg bollards, handrails/balustrades, stainless steel benches) – general metalwork fabrication detail is in the Spec, the arrangements & detailing need to be drawn,
- Signage detail (general fabrication detail and general regulatory compliance is only in the Spec),
- Construction quality Services Specifications (see also 'Consultants & Greenstar Detail' below),
- Bushfire resistant regulatory and construction detail,
- Alternative construction (eg mud brick, straw bale, rammed earth) and specialist Heritage detail.

Consultants & Greenstar Detail

This Master has full Civil and Structural Sections if desired to be used. Using these Sections in this Spec avoids having several Specs on the same thing.

If the Structural or Civil Consultant have their own Specs still use the ArchiAssist Sections but edit out Consultant related content (use Part A for the 'Civil' & 'Struct Steel' Sections).

When incorporating Structural or Civil Consultant detail in your ArchiAssist Spec, edit as appropriate (use Part B for the 'Civil' & 'Struct Steel' Sections). Put the Consultants name in the dual footer name which gives the Consultant ownership, and have the Spec checked by the Consultant.

Construction quality Services Specifications (eg Hydraulic, Electrical, Mechanical) need to be drafted by your Consultants. However you can get and edit yourself the ArchiAssist **Architectural (Full Add-on) Services Specification** which is like a 'D&C' Spec where you specify the basics (using this ArchiAssist Add-on Spec) and the Builder does the construction quality Services Specifications.

A Landscape Consultant could be engaged to draft a Specification of soft landscape detail, or the ArchiAssist **'Add-on' Landscape Specification** could be used (get it on-line).

This Master has no 'Greenstar' or other environmental rating detail because it's all highly variable. Document Greenstar Consultant detail separately and refer to it only in the Spec.

Schedules

The ArchiAssist Master Specification works perfectly regardless of what Scheduling system you use.

ArchiAssist provides 3 Schedules: the 'Door Schedule', the 'Internal Room Finishes Schedule' and the 'Project Detail Schedule' (the latter is very handy, replacing several other commonly used schedules).

Schedules need to be separate documents, often started long before the Spec. If they are merged into the Spec and a change occurs (changes happen a lot in scheduling), the Spec needs re-issuing.

Schedules are quick reference tools giving selections only – the Spec has the 'back-up' detail. ArchiAssist does not provide the following Schedules because:

- Window Schedule: Windows are usually drawn,
- External Finishes Schedule: Materials can be shown on the Elevations with colours scheduled,
- Colour Schedule: Colour selections usually done by the Designer early and as matter of course,
- Fixtures & Equipment Schedule: These are simple lists,
- Door Hardware Schedule: This is often done by a Door Hardware Manufacturer,
- Paint Schedule (ie what paint on what substrate): This is often be done by a Paint Manufacturer,
- Warranty Schedule: ArchiAssist supports standard manufacturer warranties which don't require documentation (non-standard warranties need pre-documentation manufacturer agreement),
- Submission & Notification Schedules: ArchiAssist avoids the need for these time consuming and erroneous Schedules by using "***SUBMIT***" & "***NOTIFY***" in the relevant text which is easily seen.

The Tender Conditions and Tender Form

The ArchiAssist **Tender Conditions/Form** is also concise, easy to edit, and accurate (get it on-line).

A great feature is the Tender Price Schedule for price break-up into the 27 Spec Sections – good to analyse Tenders (see pricing highs and lows), and for checking future Progress Claims.

Tenderers are to include rates for normal & rock earthwork rates, bored pier rates, and other items essential for good Tender practice.

On the Tender Form, Tenderers need to acknowledge and provide Services Rates (often hidden in Electrical and Mechanical Specs) so this critical item does not get missed.

At Last You Can Look Forward To Spec Writing

A well written 'Read & Delete' Master is a great investment, making Spec writing easy and SAFE!

Previously there was little choice with Spec Masters. Now you can be confident and even enjoy Spec writing, and get on with other things with time saved.

ArchiAssist has a variety of low-cost products including; Schedules, Tender process documents, and short 'Add-on' and 'D&C' Specifications (see them at www.archiassist.com.au).

ArchiAssist updated documents are published on-line on the 1st of April & the 1st of October every year. Get the latest low-cost versions by simply re-purchasing them on-line.

Please call or email (07 3392 7212 or admin@archiassist.com.au) if you have any questions, including during construction as the Spec should have something to help resolve any on-site disagreements.

Thank you for your support. All the very best with it.

Greg Blain Architect
Creator of ArchiAssist, Australia's first user-friendly, 'Read & Delete' Master.