

LET'S QUIT MESSING AROUND!!!

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NO PROJECT, no matter how gold-plated award winning, innovative, cutting-edge, ballyhooed, highly published, supremely rendered, rhetorically astute, top LEED compliant and of striking image and anointed, blessed or widely endorsed by visionaries, critics, and shakers and movers is going anywhere near reality without contract drawings AND specifications!

Let that be clear to the most starry-eyed youngster even thinking about architecture school, those working hard and aspiring in school and the old-school design-only practitioner who resolutely holds to a high image and be damned the details attitude. This is raw truth; real; accurate; and something not to be so much thought about as acted upon.

The case is that simple and fundamental; that raw and complete. And no person should be permitted to use or carry the title "architect" who does not fully understand, advocate, and participate in the production of these documents--including those who prepare such persons academically (it really needs to start there--period). The process is unavoidable, and left undone will shortchange all clients whose projects will become pawns in the hands of others who carry far different perspectives of what the projects can, should, and more importantly, will be.

This is the message that some in CSI choose to make, while others speak to the roots of the organization--specifications. What's right?

No going organization truly represents working drawings, per se, and the need and contribution as contract documents for construction. Numerous standards, texts and instruction abound in various venues, and many efforts to standardize some segments of this work have been undertaken through the years. But no real concentrated effort, with any real kick to it has come to be. Obviously a CSI opportunity to pick up that gauntlet! And SCIP with its unique perspective has a stake and place in this, too!

Hence, CSI, at least in part could and easily can become the "Institute of Contract Documentation", (ICD) if it so chooses (Now don't go getting into a big roaring snit over this idea and name change—be realistic). CSI has the NCS, the efforts looking toward BIM, an effort to establish a set of appropriate abbreviations and so forth. What is lacking, it appears, is consensus of the whole group to openly embrace these efforts and change styling to match true intent. And the reality is that these efforts will carry no stronger validity for use (i.e., making them mandatory through the industry) than do the well-founded efforts toward specifications.

So what to do? First let's do some strategic TALKING (not planning) and eliminating the puffery, couched, flowery and vague words, and get down to IT! Let's too, begin to address (i.e., impact) professional registration, IDP, and basic academics for design professionals

If the schools continue to resist teaching the rudiments of working drawings and specifications, is there any CSI/ICD opportunity? If the industry and design professions maintain course, are there real, valid and important opportunities? What are they, and how well will any new efforts by CSI (errrr, ICD) be taken, embraced and utilized?

Maybe we need to quit messing around, whining (and mutations thereof), and comes to resolute grips with these issues and address or discard them! Maybe we need to re-look at catchy slogans, nifty graphics, quirky (and relatively meaningless) phrasing, and get to doing what we, COLLECTIVELY, choose to do. Maybe ICD has two branches, separate, but combined according to individual choices. Maybe it comes in one great package--maybe we best find out! May involve some wizardry, but we're up to that!