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Small Building Works Management

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First published 1992 by
THE MACMILLAN PRESS LTD
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 2XS
and London
Companies and representatives
throughout the world

ISBN 978-0-333-56645-9 ISBN 978-1-349-22584-2 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-22584-2

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Typeset by Ponting-Green Publishing Services, Sunninghill, Berks

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Acknowledgements

My appreciation is extended to the following persons:

- Colin W. Campbell, who kindly permitted me to refer to his Master's Degree research work.
- Jeremy D. Headley, Research Associate, Heriot-Watt University, who is further developing on-going research into small building works management.
- Professor Ivor H. Seeley, the Series Editor, for reading through and commenting extensively on the draft typescript.
- Mrs Elasaïd McLean for producing the text, graphics and diagrammatical information for this book.

Preface

Small works are an established and vital part of the construction economy; they account for a growing proportion of construction output and are prominent in each and every sector of the construction industry, none more so than in building. Small building works are so often understated, yet there can be no doubt that they require professional procurement, organisation and management if their undertaking is to be successful and cost effective. Whilst the principles involved parallel those of other building activities, the management tools, techniques and procedures must be matched to the nature and scale of the particular project.

There may be much room for improvement in the ways that clients procure and contractors carry out small building works. The diversity of methods and procedures used and the absence of widely accepted guidelines serve to highlight this clearly. Procedures chosen may be more often than not based upon ease of administration rather than efficiency and cost effectiveness. To be carried out successfully, small building works must be actively managed.

The wide diversity of activity seen in small building works may encompass repair, maintenance, alteration, refurbishment and a wide range of 'retrofit' activities in addition to new build works. This diversity is also represented in the value of small works which may range from minor work costing but a few hundred pounds to extensive contracts running into millions of pounds and in the technical complexity of the work, which may range from simple semi-skilled trade tasks to highly complex construction projects.

This book sets out to provide a detailed guide to the principles and practices of small building works management. Chapter 1 introduces small building works, identifying their significance and importance within construction output. It should be appreciated when reading this chapter that the construction industry statistics referred to in the text and reflected in all the figures are 1989 compilations, published in 1991. Chapter 2 identifies different types of small works, those with jobbing characteristics, ordered works and small/minor building projects. Chapter 3 considers the relationship between the client and contractor, considering the client's choice of direct labour or contractor, selection of contractor and assessment of risk. Chapters 4 and 5 describe the various ways of procuring small works

through works orders, daywork term contracts and lump-sum approaches and identifies applicable forms of contract. Chapter 6 reviews both the client's and contractor's organisations and management of small building works, examining the control mechanisms for time, cost and quality. Chapters 7 and 8 identify the difficulties and problems experienced in small building works management and considers appropriate action for potential improvement.

The professional management of small building works is emphasised throughout this book. Although often misperceived as a poor relation to other types of building projects, clients and contractors must recognise the true worth and importance of small building works. To this end, this book provides a valuable text/reference for construction professionals, clients and contractors in both the public and private sectors.