

## Guidance Notes

### Use of Minor Works Building Contract with contractor's design

- 1 The Contract should only be used where the employer has engaged an architect or other professionally qualified person to advise on and administer its terms.
- 2 The criteria for determining the suitability of the Contract are set out on the inside of the front cover.
- 3 For Works which do not fulfil these criteria, reference should be made to [www.jctltd.co.uk](http://www.jctltd.co.uk) for guidance as to the appropriate contract.
- 4 The Contract makes provision for a Contractor's Designed Portion which may comprise of one or more discrete parts. However, the Contract is not drafted as a design and build contract and should not be used where that form of contractual arrangement is required.
- 5 The Contract is predicated upon a lump sum offer being obtained, based on drawings and/or a specification and/or work schedules, but without detailed measurements. Those documents should therefore be in a form sufficient to enable the Contractor accurately to identify the work to be done without the need for the Employer to provide bills of quantities. In those cases where there is a relevant BIM protocol, it is assumed that it will be included in the Employer's Requirements.
- 6 The Contract is not suitable for use where the Works are of a complex nature.
- 7 The payment provisions in the Contract comply with the requirements of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the Construction Act'). In addition to the statutory requirements regarding payment procedures, the Construction Act provides a statutory right for either Party to refer disputes or differences to adjudication.
- 8 However, not all building contracts are subject to the Construction Act; for example, a contract with a residential occupier within the meaning of section 106 of the Act is excluded and therefore it does not need to contain adjudication provisions, but, unless amendments are made, a residential occupier in entering into a Minor Works Building Contract will be accepting adjudication as a means of resolving disputes.
- 9 For some projects where it is intended to use the Contract, the Employer may wish to control the selection of sub-contractors for specialist work. This may be done by naming a person or company in the tender documents or in instructions on the expenditure of a Provisional Sum. There are, however, no provisions in the Contract to deal with the consequences of such naming and control of specialist work may be better achieved by the Employer entering into a direct contract with his chosen specialist.

### Outline of the Contract

#### Architect/Contract Administrator

- 10 This is the professional whom the Employer has appointed to advise on and administer the Contract. If the appointee is not an architect, he is taken to be referred to in the Contract as the 'Contract Administrator', but, irrespective of the Architect/Contract Administrator's profession, their duties under the Contract are the same.

#### Role of the Architect/Contract Administrator

- 11 The Architect/Contract Administrator is paid by the Employer, advises the Employer on all matters in connection with the building work and administers the Contract on behalf of the Employer with a view to securing completion of the work in an efficient and economical manner. However, in relation to decisions in that administrative role that require professional skill and judgment, he should act fairly and independently as between the Employer and the Contractor, in particular when:
  - issuing payment certificates;

- valuing any variations or any work instructed in respect of Provisional Sums (see “Terms used”) included in the Contract Documents;
- giving any extension to the time stated in the Contract Particulars for the completion of the building work;
- certifying the date of practical completion (see “Terms used”) and the date when in his opinion all defects which appear during the Rectification Period (see “Terms used”) have been made good.

### **Instructions**

- 12** Under the Contract only the Architect/Contract Administrator can issue instructions to the Contractor; although the Employer is paying for the building work, he is not entitled to give any instructions direct to the Contractor in connection with it. If the Employer wishes to make any change to the work or the manner in which it is being carried out, he must ask the Architect/Contract Administrator to give the necessary instructions to the Contractor. The Architect/Contract Administrator has wide powers to issue instructions but instructions affecting the design of the Contractor’s Designed Portion can only be issued with the consent of the Contractor. The Contractor must act reasonably and cannot delay or withhold his consent unless it is reasonable to do so.

### **Contractor’s Designed Portion**

- 13** The First Recital requires a brief description of the Works as a whole; the Second Recital provides for the identification of the part or parts of the Works that are to comprise the Contractor’s Designed Portion. The Third Recital refers to the Employer’s Requirements, the document supplied by the Employer to the Contractor that sets out the Employer’s requirements for the design of work by the Contractor. The Contractor is required to complete the design of the Contractor’s Designed Portion and to comply with any Architect/Contract Administrator’s directions with regard to its integration into the Works but the Contractor is not responsible for the contents of the Employer’s Requirements or for verifying the adequacy of any design included in them.

### **Price**

- 14** This is the lump sum stated in the Contract, plus any VAT properly chargeable on the building work. The precise sum may be increased or decreased depending on any changes to the work or the order or period in which it is carried out, the value of work instructed by the Architect/Contract Administrator in respect of any Provisional Sums included in the Contract Documents and, where applicable, any increase or decrease in contributions, levies and taxes for which the Contractor is liable.

### **Time-scale for the work**

- 15** If it becomes apparent that the work cannot be finished within the original time stated in the Contract Particulars the Contractor is required to notify the Architect/Contract Administrator straightaway. If the delay arises for reasons beyond the control of the Contractor, the Architect/Contract Administrator is then required to give such extension of time as is reasonable.

If the work is not finished by the Date for Completion (see “Terms used”) after taking into account any extensions of time, the Employer can recover liquidated damages (see “Terms used”) from the Contractor.

### **Payment**

- 16** In the 2016 edition there are revisions to and simplification of the section 4 payment provisions including the establishment of Interim Valuation Dates that are also to apply at JCT sub-contract and sub-subcontract levels.

The revisions include modifications to the interim payment due date provisions of clause 4.3. Under the revised provisions of clause 4.3, during the period up to the due date for the final payment, the due dates for interim payments are in each case the date 7 days after the relevant Interim Valuation Date. There are new entries in the Contract Particulars (for clause 4.3) which require the first Interim Valuation Date and the intervals that will apply for subsequent Interim Valuation Dates to be specified. The first Interim Valuation Date should not be more than one month after the Works commencement date and the intervals between Interim Valuation Dates should not be more than one month. If these entries are not completed, the relevant default provisions set out in the Contract Particulars for clause 4.3 apply.

Interim payments are to be made against interim certificates issued by the Architect/Contract Administrator up to the date for issue of the final certificate when the final balance becomes due. The

Construction Act requires interim and final certificates to be issued not later than 5 days after their due date and clauses 4.3 and 4.8 comply with these requirements. The final date for payment of each certificate, together with any VAT chargeable to the Employer, is 14 days from the due date for payment.

Unless a percentage for payment other than 95 per cent is inserted in the Contract Particulars for clause 4.3, interim certificates for the period up to practical completion will reflect the Employer's entitlement to retain 5 per cent. For the period between practical completion and the final certificate, the Contract envisages that the percentage retained will be halved.

The interim payment due date provisions referred to above are followed at clause 4.4 by a general provision governing Contractor's payment applications (and, in default of a payment certificate, their role as a payment notice) which apply with respect to the final payment as well as to interim payments.

There is some consolidation of the provisions dealing with the notice requirements of the Construction Act. The provisions regarding payment and pay less notices, amounts to be paid and default interest are set out in clauses 4.5 and 4.6 and as the text of each indicates, these clauses apply with respect to the final payment as well as to interim payments.

Clause 4.8 still covers the final certificate and final payment, but some of its former content has been included in clause 4.5 (Payments – amount and notices) as part of the consolidation exercise referred to above.

If the Employer fails to pay an amount due to the Contractor by the final date for its payment, interest at a rate of 5% per annum over the official bank rate of the Bank of England is payable by the Employer for the period until payment is made.

If the Employer gives a pay less notice and pays the lesser amount specified in the pay less notice, the Contractor's right under the Construction Act to suspend for non-payment does not arise. However, the JCT provision for interest is intended to preserve the Contractor's right to interest on the additional amount that he should have been paid, insofar as there was no sustainable basis for a withholding by the Employer and regardless of any pay less notice that the latter has given.

### **Suspension**

- 17 If the Employer does not give a pay less notice and does not pay the amount due to the Contractor by the final date for its payment, or, having given a pay less notice, then fails to pay the amount specified in it, the Contractor, after giving a 7 day notice, has the right to suspend performance of some or all of his obligations under the Contract until payment of the appropriate amount is made. The Contractor also has a statutory right to recover reasonable costs and expenses that he incurs as a result of that suspension.

### **Termination**

- 18 Either Party may end the Contractor's employment if the other Party is in breach of certain obligations (in the case of the Contractor those mentioned in clauses 6.4 and 6.6; in the case of the Employer those in clause 6.8) or becomes insolvent. There is also a right under clause 6.10 for either Party to terminate in the case of prolonged suspension resulting from certain neutral causes.

### **Dealing with disputes**

- 19 Either Party may at any time refer any dispute to adjudication for a 'fast track' decision; the adjudicator's decision is binding unless and until the dispute is decided by an arbitrator or the court. Residential occupiers wishing to use the Contract should also refer to paragraph 8 above. The Contract Particulars enable the Parties to nominate an individual adjudicator in advance, should they wish. However, an individual should not be named in the Contract without his prior agreement. It has also to be recognised that those of sufficient standing to merit nomination are generally busy people and that when a dispute arises they may not be available.

The Parties may also agree to mediate a dispute.

For final dispute resolution in cases where either or both Parties are dissatisfied with the results of adjudication or mediation (or neither Party wished to have the dispute adjudicated), the choice is between court litigation and arbitration. Since 2005 litigation has been the default option under JCT contracts. If arbitration is the agreed choice, it should be selected through the appropriate entry in the Contract Particulars.

The JCT 2016 edition of the Construction Industry Model Arbitration Rules (CIMAR), which includes

the JCT Supplementary and Advisory Procedures, will govern any arbitration that is commenced. It is recommended that anyone considering instituting arbitration proceedings should obtain a copy of the rules and, as with litigation, should take competent professional advice before taking steps to institute proceedings.

In making the choice between arbitration and litigation, in addition to the adjudication option, one should consider a range of other factors. Arbitration provides the ability to choose an arbitrator from any relevant profession, greater freedom of choice procedurally and confidentiality, whereas in litigation there is the wider power of the court. In the case of contracts where claims either way are likely to be small, it may be considered desirable to keep open the potentially cheaper route of using the County Court small claims track; any agreement to arbitrate, unless suitably qualified, would normally operate as a bar to using that route if the other Party did not agree.

### **Rights and remedies generally**

- 20** Statutory and common law rights are not restricted by the terms of the Contract. The limitation period for a contract that is simply signed by the Parties is 6 years from the date of the breach or, where it is executed as a deed, 12 years. The limitation period should not be confused with the Rectification Period, which is provided to facilitate the remedying of the Contractor's defective work by allowing him to return to site to make good.

### **Supplemental Provisions**

- 21** Schedule 3 includes six optional Supplemental Provisions which build upon the traditional JCT approach and reflect principles adopted by the Office of Government Commerce in the Achieving Excellence in Construction initiatives. They are for use where appropriate; the extent of such use may depend upon factors such as the scope of the project, the participants and the type of relationship that the Parties wish to have. The choice as to which provisions apply is made in the Contract Particulars. If no choice is made in relation to a provision, it will apply, since the provisions are generally intended to be disapplied only where there is a Framework Agreement or other contract documentation that covers the same ground.

Schedule 3 also contains new Supplemental Provisions 7 and 8. Supplemental Provision 7 contains provisions relevant to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('FOIA') and will only apply in the event that the Employer is a Local or Public Authority or other body to whom the FOIA applies. Supplemental Provision 8, and section 6 (Termination), contain provisions relevant to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ('the PC Regulations') which will only be applicable where the Employer is a Local or Public Authority and the Contract is subject to the PC Regulations. For some background information on the PC Regulations and a summary of those provisions in the PC Regulations that are reflected in Supplemental Provision 8 and section 6 (Termination), please go to [www.jctltd.co.uk](http://www.jctltd.co.uk).

### **Terms used**

- 22** As part of his duties to the Employer, the Architect/Contract Administrator should be prepared to explain the general meanings of the various terms used in the Contract. For example:

#### **Base Date**

- 23** The Base Date is stated in the Contract Particulars. The date often selected is 7 days or thereabouts before the date for submission of tenders so as to avoid any need for tenderers to deal with last minute changes. In the Minor Works Building Contract, however, Base Date plays a comparatively minor role, acting as the date of record for the Employer's status under the CIS scheme and for determining what fluctuations are payable.

#### **CDM Regulations**

- 24** Regulations made under Act of Parliament to improve health and safety standards on construction sites. For guidance on the CDM Regulations 2015, please go to [www.jctltd.co.uk](http://www.jctltd.co.uk).

#### **Principal Designer and Principal Contractor**

- 25** The respective persons named in the Agreement or subsequently appointed as such, as required by the CDM Regulations. With a view to minimising health and safety risks, the Regulations require the Employer to appoint a Principal Designer to control the pre-construction phase where there is more than one contractor, or it is reasonably foreseeable that more than one contractor will be working on the project at any time. One of the contractors must also be appointed as Principal Contractor in

those circumstances. (For these purposes the term 'contractor' includes sub-contractors.)

#### **Health and safety file**

- 26 A manual which the Principal Designer prepares with assistance from the Principal Contractor, containing health and safety information necessary for anyone undertaking work on the site post-completion of the Works, which he passes on to the Principal Contractor if his appointment terminates before the end of the project and is to be delivered to the Employer on completion.

#### **Date for Completion**

- 27 The date by which the Contractor is required to finish the work, as stated in the Contract Particulars or subsequently extended by the Architect/Contract Administrator.

#### **Date of practical completion**

- 28 The date when, in the Architect/Contract Administrator's opinion, the Contractor has to all practical intents and purposes completed the Works.

#### **Rectification Period**

- 29 Unless otherwise agreed, the Rectification Period is 3 months from the date of practical completion. The Contractor is required to put right any defects in the work which appear during the Rectification Period before he is entitled to be paid the final balance of the Contract price. The Architect/Contract Administrator is required to notify the Contractor of any such defects not later than 14 days after the expiry of the Rectification Period.

#### **Insurance in Joint Names**

- 30 The works and existing structures insurance provisions have in this 2016 edition been made more flexible through a widening of clause 5.4C and consequential amendments to the clause 5.2 provisions relating to Contractor's liability for loss, injury or damage to property.

Clause 5.4A remains intended for use where there are no existing structures and the contractor is to arrange a Joint Names, All Risks policy, under which each Party is covered as a 'composite insured'. This may take the form of a specific project policy or through equivalent coverage under the Contractor's annual CAR policy.

Clause 5.4B is for use where there are existing structures and the Employer is able to cover the works on a Joint Names, All Risks basis and, in addition to his own cover for existing structures, is able to extend at least Specified Perils cover to the Contractor in respect of the existing structures.

However, existing structures cover for the Contractor is not always readily available to Employers at reasonable cost, in particular where the Employer is a domestic homeowner or where he is only a tenant and structures cover is effected by the freeholder or an intermediate lessor and clause 5.4C is designed for cases in these latter categories.

The freeholder Employer may cover the Works in Joint Names and continue with his own cover under his household or existing structures policy, with the Contractor covering his liability for any damage to existing structures under the Public Liability cover required under clause 5.3.2 or an appropriate extension of it. Alternatively, the Contractor's insurers may be prepared to cover both the Works and those structures under the Works policy.

In the case of tenant Employers, it is necessary to involve the insuring landlord and in all cases, in particular those involving existing structures, it is essential that Employers and Architect/Contract Administrators, prior to the tender stage, take appropriate specialist insurance advice, consult the Employer's household or existing structures insurers and, where relevant, the landlord. They should also then liaise with the prospective Contractor and his advisers at the earliest opportunity, specify any further cover required from him and check that that is in place before work commences on site.

In the case of the Works insurance, care should also be taken in determining the full reinstatement value (including any applicable VAT) and to ensure that the policy gives appropriate cover for items such as the additional costs of materials, working and removal of debris etc. that are likely to arise from loss or damage to the Works.

#### **Liquidated damages**

- 31 The rate per day/week/month stated in the Contract Particulars by the Employer, to compensate him for the Contractor's failure to finish the work on time. The prudent Employer will be alert to the legal

principles and rules governing the enforceability of liquidated damages provisions and will approach calculation of the rate with these in mind. It is suggested the Employer records an explanation of the rate and why it represents (i) a genuine pre-estimate of the loss that he is likely to suffer or (ii) a reasonable and proportionate protection of his legitimate commercial interest(s) in timely completion, which he can use to respond to any challenge. It is for the Employer to decide whether to deduct any liquidated damages that he might be entitled to from any amount certified as due to the Contractor; such deduction is not taken into account by the Architect/Contract Administrator in the calculation of any certificate and the appropriate notice must be given by the Employer under clauses 2.9 and 4.5.4.

#### **Provisional Sum**

- 32** A sum included for work which the Employer may or may not decide to have carried out, or which cannot be accurately specified in the original contract documents. For instance, where the Employer is undecided whether all, some or none of the outside of the premises will need to be re-decorated, the pricing documents may say "Allow £X for complete external redecoration of the premises." If the Employer then decides any redecoration is necessary, the specification required is instructed by the Architect/Contract Administrator and the price to be paid is either agreed between the Architect/Contract Administrator and the Contractor or valued by the Architect/Contract Administrator.

#### **Variation**

- 33** A change to the work that the Architect/Contract Administrator instructs on behalf of the Employer. The variation may be an addition to or an omission from the work as originally specified or to the order or manner in which it is to be carried out.

### **MWD User Checklist**

A checklist of the key information that will help you to complete the Agreement may be downloaded from the JCT website.

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Care has been taken in preparing these Guidance Notes but they should not be treated as a definitive legal interpretation or commentary. Users are reminded that the effect in law of the provisions of the Minor Works Building Contract with contractor's design 2016 Edition is, in the event of a dispute as to that effect, a matter for decision in adjudication, arbitration or litigation.