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Contract Documentation: Integrating Interiors and Architecture

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Hardy Holtzman Pfeiffer Architects (HHPA) is an architectural firm with an interiors department, but rarely do we work independently of each other. Creating complementary architectural and interior designs is essential to our work, and there is a fine line between where one stops and the other starts. While the interiors department is responsible for producing certain contract documents, such as furniture and finishes plans, we also significantly contribute to developing interior elevations, reflected ceiling plans, millwork drawings and details, and all material selections.

Our approach to contract documentation is straightforward: Provide only the pertinent information required to specify the scope of the work, materials to be used, and design intent. Means and methods are the contractor's responsibility. However, since HHPA's interiors feature unusual forms and original material applications, it is necessary for us to thoroughly detail unique design elements. Our goal at the end of this phase is to supply bidders with adequate information to correctly price the job, provide drawings and specifications from which to build, and insure that design elements and materials are in keeping with established budgets.

Contract documentation (CD) efforts start in schematic design (SD). Under the best of circumstances, the drawings that are developed through SD and design development (DD) evolve into CD. At the beginning of the SD phase, the project manager sets up a "blue book" that outlines all of the drawings we plan to produce during the course of the project and what information each will contain. Through the development of SD, DD, and CD the drawings progress from a sketchy outline to a complete novel, revealing the plot page by page.

HHPA's CD consists of both graphic drawings and a narrative specification book. These documents both complement and supplement each other. Drawings illustrate space configurations, dimensional aspects, material details, and the generic name of each building material (i.e., gypsum wall board, not Sheetrock; plastic laminate, not Formica). The specification manual and its