DIGITAL ARCHIVING: FILE NAMING AND PROJECT FOLDER STRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

Clear and consistent file naming and folder structures will make it easier to rapidly locate files, including the latest versions of files, reducing confusion and the likelihood of potentially costly mistakes, while also facilitating the reliable retrieval of files from the project archive.

Develop simple and flexible guiding principles that work within the context of the practice. Staff should be trained in these principles.

Develop a template structure which is flexible enough to be used for all projects and can be reused for each new project.

It is unrealistic to expect project archives to be perfectly organised. However, good file management, thoughtfully designed from the beginning of a project with final archiving in mind, may mean archiving will largely take care of itself at the end of a project.

File and folder naming principles

- Use short, plain language descriptive names.
- When numbering files or directories, leading zeroes will enable items to be sorted correctly (e.g. 01, 02 or 001, 002 instead of 1, 2).
- Use underscores or dashes rather than spaces (e.g. file-name.docx; file_name.docx).
- Employ a six or eight-digit date code in file or folder names, incorporating the year, month and day (e.g. 20181003 or 181003).
- Do not use 'illegal' characters (e.g. blank spaces, single and double quotes, forward slash, ampersand etc.).

Project folder naming principles

Each project should be assigned a unique identifier, which may be a number or alphanumeric code. Possibilities include:

- A sequential number for each project.
- A number or code for each client, with a suffix to accommodate multiple projects for return clients.

Once established, this numbering system should be used for all future projects.

Folder structure principles

A project folder structure should consist of a main project folder and a series of appropriate subfolders.

The main project folder should be labelled with the unique identifier, the client name and a short project name (e.g. 025_Client_Project_Name).

Subfolders may be named according to typical project stages, for example:

01_Project_Planning
02_Conceptual_Design
03_Schematic_Design
04_Design_Development
05_Contract_Documentation
06_Tendering
07_Construction_Administration
08_Handover
09_Final_Deliverables
10_Operation

The NATSPEC National BIM Guide discusses the storage of BIM Model Files, Sheet Files, and Support Files.

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Digital archiving
Digital archiving is the process of collecting records in a digital environment. Records may include drawing documentation, specifications, reports, email correspondence and photographs, and may be stored in a range of file types.

Training and professional development
NATSPEC provides a training module on archiving digital architectural records. Resources and further reading are available in the *Archiving digital architectural records: towards a national framework* project report, hosted on the NATSPEC website.

Relevant websites
Architecture Museum, University of South Australia
www.unisa.edu.au

National BIM Guide, NATSPEC
bim.natspec.org

Archiving, Acumen Practice Notes
acumen.architecture.com.au

NATSPEC TECHnotes
GEN 030 Digital archiving: Introduction
GEN 031 Digital archiving: Glossary