

WHAT IS DESIGN/BUILD?

RETURN TO THE TIME-HONORED APPROACH OF THE MASTER BUILDER

Design/build is an integrated delivery process that has been embraced by the world's great civilizations. In ancient Mesopotamia, the Code of Hammurabi (1800 BC) fixed absolute accountability upon master builders for both design and construction. In the succeeding millennia, projects ranging from cathedrals to cable-stayed bridges, from cloisters to corporate headquarters, have been conceived and constructed using the paradigm of design-build.

Return to the time-honored approach of the Master Builder, where a single source has absolute accountability for both design and construction. When the citizens of classical Greece envisioned their great temples, public buildings and civil works, master builders were engaged to both design and construct these monumental structures. Master builders accepted full responsibility for integrating conceptual design with functional performance. To assume anything less than complete accountability for delivering a project was unthinkable. Throughout each massive logistical undertaking, they commanded skilled craftsmen, procured time-tested materials, and controlled every aspect of the project. A master builder with the chief architect, engineer and builder molded into one. Enduring structures such as the Parthenon and the Theatre of Dionysus are testimony to an age and a process that are greatly admired, though the process was thought to be virtually abandoned by modern designers and constructors.

Today, however, there is a resurgence of the master builder's approach in the new world. Informed owners have begun asking practitioners to take more than just an artistic (and more than simply a means and methods) interest in their facilities. Steeped in the work ethic exemplified by the ancient master builders, today's design/build process offers reassurance that the design and construction industry can deliver comprehensive services. This valued assurance can only be provided by a singular source.

Design/builders want full accountability for architecture, engineering and construction. In fact, like the ancient Greek master builder, they insist on it. By knowledgeably pursuing design quality, and by effectively controlling costs and schedule, a design/builder makes certain that concept-to-completion is more than idle discourse. It is a reality carved in stone.

—*Design-Build Institute of America (www.dbia.org)*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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