

Vocabulary of roles in a structural timber building project

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Scope: The note is to provide common understanding of the roles found in a timber building project.

Who should read this?

All involved in a building project so that the scope of works and understanding of roles and responsibility are clearly understood.

Vocabulary

Client

Client – responsible to appoint the project team with the skills, time and experience to undertake the scope of works presented by the client: note, the client may have an agent to provide this service.

Client scope of works – defines the services that are required by each of the project team members.

Principal Designer – appointed by the building client as the person or company that plans and monitors the design process of the works. A term that has come from CDM 2015 but covers the principal lead in design.

Principal Contractor – the company that manages the building process to the Principal Designers plans and specification. A term that has come from CDM 2015 but covers the principal lead in construction.

Project team – this varies depending on the scale and complexity of the project but would include Principal Designer (PD) and Principal Contractor (PC). Under the PD, who may be the architect or the lead designer there is likely to be additional designers with specialist input for the project such as structural timber structure designer. Under the PC there may be additional contractors that provide specialist work packages for example, erecting structural timber frames. Under a design and build project the project team typically works for the design and build company, but the same functional duties remain.

Common terms used and names used in a project team

Building Designer (other terms Lead Designer/ Project Design Co Ordinator / Project Director and may be the projects Principal Designer). = The company/ person responsible for the overall coordination of design of the building that ensures the various other project team members have a coordinated design solution. Note, on small projects this is typically the Principal Designer and on larger projects this falls to the Project lead designer who may also take on the role of Principal designer but not necessarily so. Only in turn-key projects will the structural timber building supplier that takes on the full design roles will be the building designer; most projects the structural timber design is a subcontract and part of the building design not the full scope or works to deliver a building.

Other project team members are typically architect, project structural engineer, sub structure structural engineer, structural timber frame engineer and fabrication designer, M&E engineers, cladding designer, acoustic and fire engineer.

Typical companies involved in any structural timber building design process in a project

1. As the building design team engaged by the Building client or Design and Build packaged client:

Architect - may be the building designer. Provides design input to the project team. Also, may be the Principal Designer if the role allows responsibility for managing the design process and material and design choice.

Building structural engineer - sometimes referred to as structural engineer, clients engineer, project engineer. Responsible for the overall engineering control, specification and checking of the structure from foundations, floor slabs, transfer slabs and cladding. Often includes the role of sub structure engineer and cladding engineer subject to client scope of works.

Sub structure engineer – responsible for the foundation and structure below the DPC level of the structural timber building; this can include standard foundations, basements and transfer slabs and often includes the lower floor structure from which the timber building walls start. The role is typically carried out by the building structural engineer.

Cladding designer – responsible for the cladding structural fixings to the timber building structure including lintels, wall ties and ventilation requirements. Can be the Building Structural engineer or Building Designer or Architect or Principal Designer.

Thermal and Acoustic engineer – responsible to provide the specification and performance design for thermal and acoustic requirements. Can be the Building Designer or Architect or Principal Designer.

Mechanical and Electrical engineer – responsible to provide the electrical, heating and plumbing design and specification. Can be the Building Designer or Architect or Principal Designer.

Fire Engineer – where appointed and defined, has responsibility for the compliance to the Building Regulations for the fire safety of the design. Can be absorbed in the work undertaken by the Building Designer or Architect or Principal Designer.

Health and Safety Advisor – where appointed to support the parties on specific health and safety outside of the Method Statements and approach by each company involved. This role should co-ordinate for Health and Safety work, the different parties involved and supports the Principal Designer to plan, monitor and manage the work packages up to pre-construction and into the construction phase and or supports the Principal Contractor in the construction phase plans.

2. As sub-contract to the project either direct to the building Client, the Principal Contractor, where there is an element of design responsibility, or the Design and Build contractor

Structural Timber Building provider – the company that provides the design of the structural timber elements and, as an option, organises the structural timber building design and engineering. The design duties in this scope is not the shape, location or building elements outside the structural frame or what is fixed to the timber structural elements. Note, the Structural Timber Building provider is typically a design and assemble appointment where the design elements are specified and monitored through the Building Designer and Principal Designer. The structural timber building provider will be responding to the project tender performance requirements presented by the Principal Designer.

Structural Timber Building designer - the person / company responsible for the structural timber fabrication drawings and site assembly drawings for the structural timber frame only.

Structural Timber Building Engineer – The company that provides the timber structure member mark up and calculations for the structural elements that achieves the standard requested by the project performance specification. This role may be one company, or several, under the management of the Structural Timber Building provider; separate engineers may be involved in the engineering for structural timber wall elements, timber floor and timber roof where relevant.

Structural Timber Building specialist services: options for acoustic, thermal and fire support design may be negotiated, but this is not common and is typically on available for turn-key projects.

Project performance specification for the Timber Building

The Structural Timber Building frame specification for;

- Loading and structural behaviour,
- acoustic, fire, thermal, acoustic and services design impact on the structural frame,
- durability and space / shape performance.
- specific cladding or special items to be supported declared in this specification.

Scope of works for the structural timber building element. A clear and agreed list of services, materials and elements to be provided by the Structural Timber Building provider.

Principal Contractor sub- teams and components

Principal Contractor – plans, manages and monitors the on-site building works.

Contractors (and sub-contractors) - Companies that provide building activities managed by the principal contractor.

A. As part of the client's contract or Design and Build contractor for the project

Structural Timber Building contractor (called manufacturer, fabricator, specialist timber frame company, building system supplier) – the company that provides the structural timber elements and, as an option, organises the structural timber building design, engineering and erecting. Structural elements and secondary components as clearly indicated in the project scope of works that forms the project contract between the structural building provider and the client. Note, the Structural Timber Building provider is typically a design and assemble appointment where the design elements are specified and monitored through the Principal Designer.

B. As subcontract to the client's contract or Design and Build contractor or part of the contract services by the Structural timber building supplier

Structural Timber Building Erector – the company responsible for assembling the structural timber frame to the site assembly drawings; does not design or change designs.

Limitation of the technical note

This technical guidance is for use by persons in the industry who understand the business they work in. While this document has been prepared in good faith and all reasonable efforts have been made to ensure its adequacy and accuracy, no representation, warranty, assurance or undertaking (express or implied) is or will be made, and no responsibility or liability is or will be accepted by the Structural Timber Association.