



COMPOSING A DRAWING NOTE

Identifying a material on the drawings is easy. Just use the same term as the one in the specifications. If everything is set up on the Uniform System there are few problems.

The less said in a material note, the better. If the specs have a heading called "acoustical tile", just say "acoustical tile" rather than "12" x 12" x 3/4" fissured mineral tile", lest the selection change before the job is built. Also, with long notes, it is too easy for one detail to say "fissured" when another says "travertine" and another says "directional patterned".

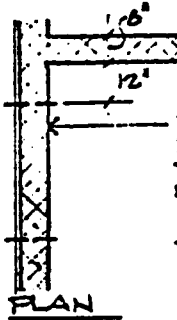
So much for material identification.

The real art comes in composing an instruction on the drawings. Instructions are commonplace in alteration work, and are frequently used to describe some special attention that is to be paid a detail.

Since an instruction "guides the hand", it must be composed with the actual doing in mind, preferably by a person who has observed such work in the field. It is important to foresee questions and problems that may arise during fabrication or on the job.

Not so good

KNOCKOUT PANEL →
3-4 x 6-0, BREAK
JOINTS AS REQUIRED.



Preferred

3-4 x 6-0 KNOCKOUT PANEL, TOP
HELD 12 INCHES BELOW CEILING, WITH
TWO L 4 x 3 1/2 x 1/4 LINTELS ABOVE.
RUN CMU HEAD JOINTS IN UNBROKEN VERTICAL
LINE. BREAK WALL REINFORCEMENT AND
SCORE PLASTER AT PANEL JOINTS.

The preferred note is longer, but it settles more problems.

To criticize the not so good one: Will a barely literate mechanic knock the panel out, thinking knockout is a verb? Will the contractor get an extra for a lintel? Want to bet he starts the panel at the floor line, thinking it's a door opening? Will he or won't he run his wall reinforcement through? 'As required' ... but what is the requirement?

Remember the old GSA rule that the arrowhead always touch the thing noted?

If the architect/engineer is lucky, he will get a puzzled phone call (after bids are in). If he is not, it will likely be built wrong.

Lots of times it helps to sketch out a detail like this one, even if you are not going to put it on the drawings, just so you can compose an adequate note.