



Technical Advice Note 7

A Clients Guide to Selecting A Concrete Repair Contractor

Introduction

There are a large number of concrete repair product manufacturers and an even larger number of concrete repair contractors. The aim of any concrete repair project is to solve a problem and the relationship between the client and the contractor can be crucial to the success of the project. Poor selection at the outset of the project can create major problems later with timetable and budget and could also exacerbate the original problem if the repair methods, application techniques or materials used are incorrect.

Listed below are some simple steps, which if followed should make the selection and evaluation process easier.

Step 1 Have clear objectives of what you want the contractor to do.

Consider the problem and what you want rectified. What do you want the finished work to look like (colour, finish texture etc), what is the design life (life expectancy) of the structure/building, owners future needs. Once the requirements and objectives have been determined a brief assessment of any health & safety issues, insurances and licences required relevant to the site can be made and this information forms the basis for the project.

Step 2 Define the Problem

The correct diagnosis of the problem needs to be determined before the correct methods and materials for rectification can be decided. Structural Engineers, Corrosion Engineers and Specialist Consultancy Services can be used, however they will require professional fees. Manufacturers not only make and sell the products, they have ongoing research and Technical departments with specialists who can advise on product and methods. Most also have specification and sales managers who can visit sites and advise clients free of charge. Similarly some reputable Concrete Repair contractors will also offer a free technical advice and quotation service.

Step 3 Invite quotations from Reputable contractors.

Look for membership of the appropriate trade or professional associations. For Concrete repairs and associated works that body is the Concrete Repair Association (CRA) and the Structural Concrete Alliance (SCA). Both have set high standards for workmanship and technical competence, members must demonstrate a proven track record and overall ability. They must also be Quality Management accredited to BS EN ISO 9001 and BS EN ISO 14001 for Environmental Management.

Project case studies and testimonials from previous clients can help give confidence, and following up client references supplied can also help in the assessment of most suitable contractor.

Health & safety on the site is of paramount importance not just for the contractor carrying out the work, but for any other contractors on the site, staff, visitors and general public who may come into contact with the works. The British and European Standard is the ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety Management system. There are other accreditation bodies specialising in health & safety and accreditation of a contractor is a good indicator that they have the relevant systems and procedures in place to manage health safety and welfare competently and professionally. CHAS (Contractor health and safety scheme) Constructionline, Achilles are good examples of reputable accreditation bodies.

Step 4 Analyse Quotations

Whilst the lowest price may seem the most attractive choice, value for money and best practice must also be considered, along with the technical ability and credentials of the contractor.

The contractor should advise on the most appropriate repair method, giving full consideration to the type, cause and extent of defects, be appropriate to the future needs of the client and conform to the relevant codes of practice and standards. There is a British Standard for concrete repair (BS 1504) which sets out the standards and principles for the industry and any proposed works should conform to the principle's and standards laid out in that standard.

Step 5 The Contract Agreement

There are standard legal contracts available such as the JCT (the Joints Contracts Tribunal) , ACA (Association of Consultant Architects), Chartered Institute of Building Contracts, and NEC (The New Engineering Contract).

The Contract will need to contain

- Full Explanation of the background and services required for the works to be completed by the contractor.
- Define the exact roles and responsibilities of both client and contractor.
- A project schedule including timescales and programme.
- Availability of any resources (access, equipment, staff etc) supplied by the client.
- A budget and agreement on the circumstances for any additional charges.
- The required quality standards.
- A payment schedule and how payments to be made (BACS /Cheque etc)
- Any Incentives for finishing early and penalties for finishing late.
- Arbitration procedures for resolving any disputes.

Not all projects are of a size where a full set of contract documents are necessary. If the pre-contract information supplied to the contractor covers the works required and the quotation from the contractor explains exactly what works are being executed, to what standard and sets out the cost implications, a verbal or written confirmation of quote acceptance can be sufficient.