ABSTRACT

Segregating design from construction and other downstream activities is a main reason for the low levels of productivity in the local construction industry. The local Construction 21 report was a joint effort by the industry to look into and recommend solutions to the problems plaguing the construction industry. According to the report, one way of alleviating the present low productivity of the industry is to introduce greater integration into the construction process. Design and Build was recommended in place of the traditional Design-Bid-Build method to integrate the industry. However, true integration requires an organizational framework capable of permanently bringing together the various disciplines involved in a construction project. The gathering of a temporary project team for Design and Build projects appears inadequate. Interviews with local and Japanese contractors operating in Singapore pointed to the capability of multi-disciplinary construction firms to facilitate integration in the Design and Build process. It was found from the interviews that the multi-disciplinary structure adopted by the Japanese General Contractors is able to offer ease of communication and coordination as well as encourage teamwork, which are critical to creating an integrative environment. The interviewees pointed out that if Design and Build becomes the predominant procurement method, a multi-disciplinary approach should be adopted. At present, impediments exist which hinders the establishment of multi-disciplinary contractors, requiring a series of changes to be effected in the local construction industry.

Key Words: Integration; and Multi-disciplinary construction firms.