



The why behind every specification decision

A specification records what to build. Design Intent records why, so the intent survives the pressure of value engineering. Twelve intent items for Northgate Chambers, each tying a design decision to the outcome it protects, with approval recorded for client project management, tenant brand and facilities, and lead design authority.

CLIENT
Cushman Workplace

TENANT
Wexley & Crowne LLP

ARCHITECT
Trenholme Architects

REVISION
Rev 1

PREPARED BY
BuiltAI Intelligence Ltd

REFERENCE
NG-DI-001

Illustrative example: fictional project and parties.

12

Design intent items

42 dB

Meeting-suite acoustic target

420 lux

Workstation lighting design

2.5%

Average daylight factor

01

ITEMS

The why behind twelve decisions

A specification records what to build. Design Intent records why, so the reasoning survives the pressure of value engineering. Twelve intent items are captured for Northgate Chambers, each tying a design decision to the outcome it protects, and each referenced back into the specification clause it governs.

ITEM	DESIGN DECISION	WHAT IT PROTECTS
DI-01	Reception arrival sequence	The first 15 seconds, a partner-grade impression
DI-02	Meeting-suite acoustic privacy, 42 dB	Confidential legal conversations
DI-03	Tea points as collaboration zones	Informal work, not just a kitchen
DI-04	Workstation lighting at 420 lux	Comfort over bare compliance
DI-05	Restrained material palette	A partner-grade, not corporate, tone
DI-06	L6 to L5 to L4 visual continuity	One identity across three floors
DI-07	Joinery as integrated infrastructure	AV and services hidden in the millwork
DI-08	Wayfinding without signage clutter	Legibility through architecture
DI-09	L6 reception experience	The client-facing floor's identity
DI-10	Invisible AV	Technology present, not dominant
DI-11	Brand integration, presence not dominance	Wexley identity, understated
DI-12	Wellbeing and daylight, 2.5% factor	Working with the building, not against it

02

DEPTH

Three decisions, in depth

The acoustic decision is the clearest example of intent driving specification. The outline brief carried a 38 dB partition; for a legal tenant whose meeting suites host privileged conversations, that is not enough, so the tenant confirmed an uplift to Rw 42 dB. That single decision then flows into the partition build-up, the glazed-screen specification and the door-seal detail, and Design Intent records why, so no later value-engineering round quietly reverses it.

DAYLIGHT AND LIGHTING

The wellbeing item is backed by a Lambourne Vance daylight-factor analysis showing 2.5% average across the floorplate, and workstation lighting is designed to 420 lux, above the compliance minimum, because comfort on a legal-sector floor is a retention decision, not just a code one.

Approval record: client project management, tenant and lead design authority

Design Intent is signed off jointly, because intent held by only one party does not survive contact with a change. The approval table records Cushman Workplace (client project management), Wexley & Crowne LLP (tenant brand and facilities), and Trenholme Architects (lead design authority), each within its listed scope. Each of the twelve items is referenced in the specification so the intent and the requirement are read together.

The sign-off is what gives the document its authority in a later value-engineering round. When a saving is proposed against an item, the approved intent is read first, so the conversation is about whether the outcome can still be protected rather than whether the decision can quietly be dropped. Four items are ring-fenced on that basis, because reversing them would change the character of the floor and not only its cost.

APPROVER	RESPONSIBILITY	SCOPE APPROVED	STATUS
Cushman Workplace	Client project management	All twelve items	Approved
Wexley & Crowne LLP	Tenant brand and facilities	Reception, brand, wellbeing	Approved
Trenholme Architects	Lead design authority	All twelve items	Approved
BuiltAI Intelligence Ltd	Author and coordinator	Rev 1 issue and control	Issued

ITEM	OUTCOME PROTECTED	VALUE-ENGINEERING STATUS
DI-02	Acoustic privacy at Rw 42 dB	Ring-fenced, re-spec only
DI-04	Workstation lighting at 420 lux	Ring-fenced, re-spec only
DI-05	Restrained material palette	Ring-fenced, re-spec only
DI-12	Wellbeing and daylight, 2.5% factor	Ring-fenced, re-spec only

RING-FENCED FROM VALUE ENGINEERING

Each ring-fenced item may be re-specified for cost, but the outcome it protects may not be lost without a recorded decision by all three approvers. That is the whole purpose of writing intent down: a saving that quietly reverses a confirmed decision is caught against the approved record rather than discovered on handover.

The remaining eight items are held as recorded intent rather than ring-fenced, so they may be value-engineered on their merits during procurement. The only condition is that any change is logged against this document, so the reasoning behind the original decision is carried into the next revision rather than lost between them. That is how a specification and its intent stay readable together through to handover.

Reference NG-DI-001

Revision Rev 1, signed off

Approved by Cushman, Wexley, Trenholme