A one-page *specification sheet* for a bespoke piece

A one-page specification sheet for a bespoke piece: twelve fields from function to approvals, with wording to paste in.

AT A GLANCE

Field	Say	Without it
1 Function	What it must do, where, for whom, how hard.	A domestic piece in a contract room.
2 Size, datum	Finished mm, and what each is measured from.	A height nobody can check on site.
3 Materials	Species, cut, boards, metal, stone, by reference.	The cheapest material the words allow.
4 Finish, sheen	System, colour, sheen, sample reference, all faces.	A finish that cannot be matched later.
5 Hardware	Each item by reference, finish code and load.	A different hinge, same words.
6 Performance	The standard, edition and level the project sets.	"Heavy duty" with nothing to test.
7 Evidence	Fire, timber and board evidence, by item code.	A claim with no document.
8 Tolerances	Workshop and fitting tolerances, written down.	Tolerances argued at snagging.
9 Packing	Protection, labels, sections that pass the route.	A piece that will not fit the lift.
10 Site delivery	Address, route, who fixes, connects, protects.	Gaps between trades.
11 Approvals	What must be approved first, and by whom.	Production started on a guess.
12 Open items	What is undecided, who owns it, by when.	A "TBC" nobody owns.

The sheet is the front page of one item: it points to the drawings and schedules, and does not replace them.

KEEPING IT TO ONE PAGE

- One sheet for each item or group of identical items, with the item code from the FF&E schedule in the header.
- Cite, do not copy: size cites the drawing, finish the finishes schedule, evidence the certificate file, approvals the approvals log.
- One revision letter, changed whenever a field changes.
- Every field completed: write n/a and the reason, or "open until [date], owner [name]".

SPECIFICATION WORDING

HEADER

SPECIFICATION SHEET. Item [code, FF&E schedule revision [letter]]. [Name]. Room [ ]. Sheet revision [ ], date [ ]. Read with drawing [number, revision] and the finishes schedule [reference]; if they differ, ask [designer] before work proceeds.

FIELDS 1 AND 2

1 Function: [item] for [number] [users or covers] in [room], [commercial / domestic] use [hours] a day, cleaned by [method].
2 Size, datum: finished size [W] x [D] x [H] mm, from finished floor level (datum A) and the finished wall face (datum B) to the finished surface. [Seat height [h] mm, unloaded / loaded.] Sizes marked * are set after the survey [reference].

FIELDS 3 AND 4

3 Materials: [species], [cut], [grade or sample reference]; veneer [species, cut, matching] on [board and grade, to standard [ ]]; solid [species] lippings; [metal, alloy, thickness]; [stone, finish]. Concealed faces [balanced and sealed]. No substitution without written approval from [designer].
4 Finish, sheen: finish [F-nn] to match control sample [S-nn], approved [date] by [name]; system [coats and type]; colour [reference]; sheen [matt / satin / gloss, as the sample]; all faces; viewed in [light].

FIELDS 5 AND 6

5 Hardware: [item] [make and reference, from the hardware schedule] in finish [code], [number] for each [door / drawer]; rated [load, from the data sheet]; fixings to [wall construction, from the survey]. No substitution without written approval.
6 Performance: strength and durability to [standard and edition], level [set by the project:]; surface resistance to [liquids, heat, abrasion] to [standards in the finishes specification], by report on a panel finished like the item. This sheet sets no value of its own.

FIELDS 7 AND 8

7 Evidence before delivery: [fire standard and ignition source, from the fire risk assessment dated [ ]]; test report for each upholstery composite, [UKAS-accredited], dated within [ ]; timber [claim] with the seller's certificate code on the invoice; boards [class and declaration]. Filed against item [code], checked by [name].
8 Tolerances: workshop [general class, or +/- mm for each dimension]; fitting [scribe to [ ] mm over [ ] mm; gaps [ ] +/- [ ] mm].

FIELDS 9 AND 10

9 Packing: wrapped for [route and mode]; labelled with item code and room; supplied in [sections] sized to pass [access points, from survey [reference]]; packaging removed by [party].
10 Site delivery: to [address, floor, route] within [window] of [site-ready date]; fixed by [party]; services connected by [trade]; protection and making good by [party]; scope split as Schedule [number].

FIELDS 11 AND 12

11 Approvals: production begins only on written approval of shop drawing [number, revision] and control sample [S-nn] by [named role]; approval limited to design intent; departures marked on the drawing.
12 Open items: [item] open until [date], owner [name], priced as [option / allowance]. This revision supersedes all earlier ones.

TERMS USED

Prescriptive specification

A specification in which the design team states exactly what products, materials and workmanship are required, leaving the contractor to supply and install them as described. Design responsibility stays with the design team.

Descriptive specification

A specification that states the required result and performance, and leaves a specialist or contractor to design and detail how to achieve it. Design responsibility for that part generally passes to whoever completes it.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- NBS: Construction specifications: everything you need to know: Paul Swaddle, 5 Oct 2021; read 5 Nov 2026.
- NBS: Five essential tips for writing effective specifications: Dr Stephen Hamil, 2 Apr 2025; read 5 Nov 2026.
- NBS: RIBA Plan of Work 2020 and specification: Dale Sinclair, 17 Jun 2020; read 5 Nov 2026.
- No standard applies: none found that sets a one-item sheet's fields.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/one-page-specification-sheet. Make Bespoke Studio coordinates manufacture through its partner workshops. Figures are guidance only and your specification governs; some may be superseded, so contact the studio to verify.