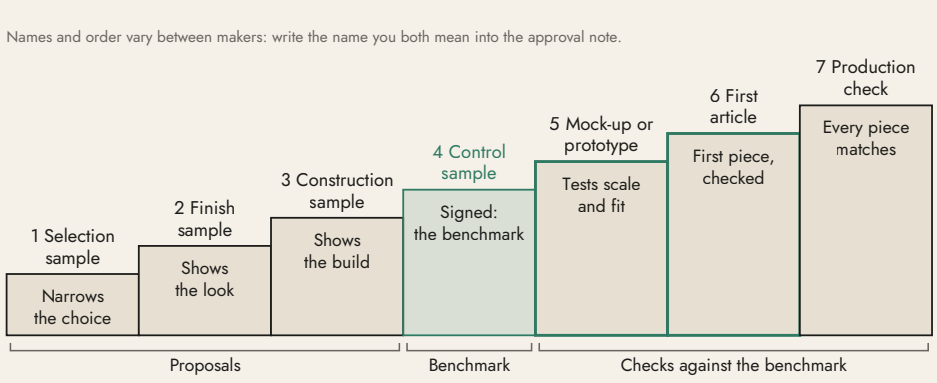
The sample *hierarchy*: what each sample proves

Seven kinds of sample, from swatch to first article: what each proves, which one binds production, and the conditions to approve it under.

AT A GLANCE

Sample	What it proves	What it leaves open	Signed and kept
1 Selection (option) sample	The material or colour exists and suits the palette (swatch, chip, coupon, leaf).	How it looks on the real material, and whether production will match.	Not signed: a working aid.
2 Finish sample	Colour, sheen and texture, on the same material and cut as the production.	How the piece is built, and how much natural variation a full run will show.	Signed if chosen as the control sample.
3 Construction sample	How it is built: joints, thicknesses, fixings, the upholstery build-up.	The look of the finish, and performance in use.	Signed if chosen as the control sample.
4 Control sample	The agreed benchmark. Production is judged against it, within the range stated.	Scale and fit. Whether production matches is checked later.	Designer, maker and, for finishes, the client. A matching copy each.
5 Mock-up or prototype	Scale, proportion, comfort and fit with neighbouring work, in full size.	The finish of the run, unless built in the control sample finish.	Designer and maker. Dimensions marked on the drawing revision.
6 First article	The first production piece matches the drawing and the control sample.	The pieces made after it.	Designer and maker, on an inspection record.
7 Production check	Each later piece matches the control sample and the first article.	Damage after dispatch: see the snagging sheet.	Maker's check; designer at inspection.

Numbers match the steps on the drawing. These are working terms: makers use the words differently, so agree the name of each step in writing.



Seven kinds of sample, in the order they usually come. Green fill: the signed benchmark. Green outline: signed off when the step is used. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio.

APPROVE UNDER STATED CONDITIONS

- Light: name the sources: daylight, and the lamp type the room will have. Avoid torches and site lamps.
- Distance and spot: state where the viewer stands. For stone, standards cited by Stone Federation GB call for at least 2 m.
- Orientation: as it will be fitted: vertical on a wall, flat on a top.

- Size: large enough to judge a large flat surface.
- Material: the real species, cut and board. A finish on another board proves little.

SPECIFICATION WORDING

SAMPLE REGISTER AND LABELLING

Each sample is given a reference [S-nn] and labelled with the project, item, material and finish, date, and the drawing and revision it relates to. Approval is recorded by signature and date of [designer] and [maker], and of [client] for finishes. A matching copy is held by each party until [the work is accepted]. Front and back photographs, with a scale, are filed with the approval.

CONTROL SAMPLE AND CHANGES

Production shall match the approved control sample [S-nn]. Natural variation within the range shown by [range samples S-nn to S-nn / the range report dated [date]] is accepted; features outside it are not. The control sample is not changed, replaced or re-approved without the written agreement of [designer]. A change of material batch, supplier, process or finish after approval requires a new sample and written approval before use.

VIEWING CONDITIONS

Samples are approved by viewing from [distance] m, in [daylight] and under [lamp type of the room], at the orientation they will have when installed [vertical / horizontal]. A second check is made under [second light source]. Conditions are written on the approval record.

MOCK-UP AND FIRST ARTICLE

Before production of the remaining [number] [items], the maker presents [a full-size mock-up of [element] / the first article] for inspection against drawing [number, revision] and control sample [S-nn]. Production of the remainder starts only after written approval by [designer], who responds within [number] working days of presentation.

TERMS USED

Control sample

The one sample that the client or designer has approved and the maker keeps as the benchmark against which production is judged. It should be labelled, dated and signed.

First article

The first finished item from a production run, inspected and approved against the drawings and samples before the rest is made. It is the production counterpart to a prototype.

Metamerism

When two colours look the same under one light source but different under another, so a sample approved in the studio can look off on site. Approving under defined light, and checking under a second source, reduces the risk.

Finish sample

The finish applied to the real material, species and cut, judged for colour, sheen and texture. It becomes a control sample when approved, signed, dated and matched by a copy kept by the maker.

Construction sample

A cut-through or small assembly showing how a piece is built: joints, thicknesses, fixings or upholstery build-up. It shows construction, not the finish.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- Stone Federation GB: Inspection and snagging of finished internal works using natural stone (August 2022): read 5 Nov 2026. It cites BS EN 12057, 12058 and 1469 for the 2 m stone viewing distance; not read here.
- NCS Colour: The phenomenon of metamerism: read 5 Nov 2026: names three light sources and recommends checking under at least daylight and fluorescent light.
- Make Bespoke Studio: Sampling: how the studio works with option samples and control samples.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/sample-hierarchy-and-approval. 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.