



# Pursuit of the perfect plans: A New era in construction?

By Ken Bernhard | Director of Construction Management Services



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**S**ince the beginning of recorded history, the main principles of the building process haven't changed very much. From Imhotep in ancient Egypt to the present day, typically, the owner of a piece of land hires an architect to design a project; the architect then conveys a vision through diagrams and instructions to a team of builders who physically build that vision from those instructions.

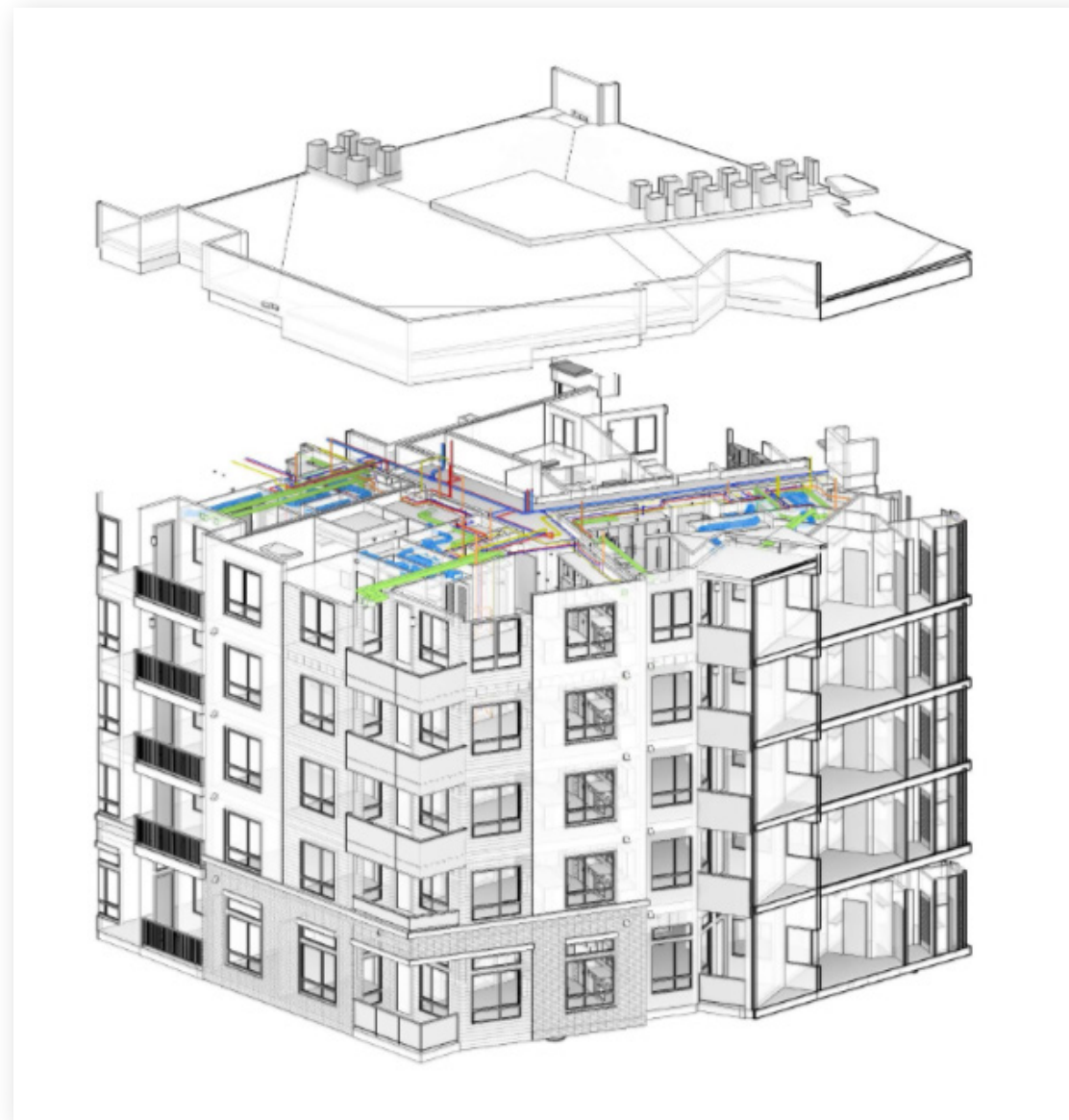


The same approach Imhotep utilized in creating a set of instructions for a builder remains in use with limited variation. However, in today's fast-past, hi-tech, and vastly more complicated world, a world likely much harder than what Imhotep dealt with, it feels like the industry still isn't taking advantage of newer technology, newer processes, and more modern ways of rethinking an ancient process. Sure, we have computers now, but it still feels like the industry's processes are primitive and continue to make the same costly mistakes over and over again without correction.

It used to be that architects were the ultimate, able to focus solely on designing, creating value within the design process itself, and balancing form and function with their client's purpose in mind, all while articulating accurate instructions for the builders to construct it.

**Today's architects have a massively more complex production to choreograph that also needs to be integrated into what was once a purer design process.**

Aside from challenging economic times that require design firms to be as competitive as ever with pricing, often requiring architect's team sizes to be lean and within a tight budget, today's architects also have way more to do than Imhotep. From having to manage and coordinate conventional consultants, like structural, MEP, FS, FA, civil, and landscape, as well as other tiers of interior designers, waterproofing, ADA, and acoustic consultants, to even more specialized consultants that owners often introduce to a project like, access controls, audio/video, security alarms, parking garage systems, solar, or building management systems, which create a mind-numbing assortment of disciplines that all require their own functionality as well as integration.



**Today's architectural choreography:** The design process is not pure anymore; architects must integrate various disciplines and coordinate multiple stakeholders.

Today's architects also have to layer liability and legal compliance for their firm as well as their clients, which creates even higher stakes for an already tight budget. Unlike Imhotep, modern-day architects also have to coordinate with local Building Departments for code compliance and permitting, utility agencies, and usually fire departments while also sourcing materials in a volatile supply chain world, all of which gobble up huge amounts of time.

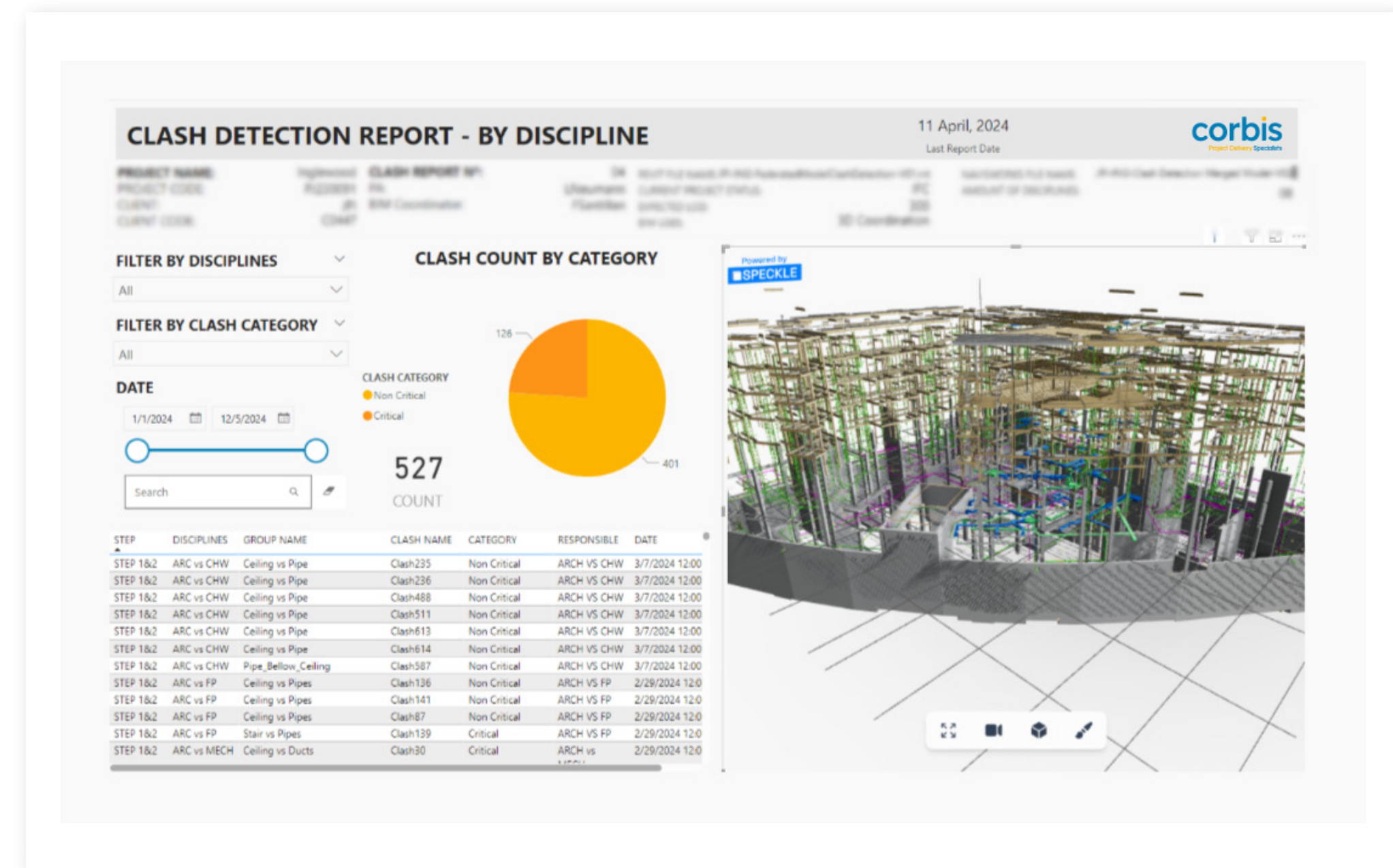
I have the utmost respect for today's architects and believe in the amazing work they produce every day to create impressive sets of compliant documents that convey that original vision. Also for consideration, as technology continues to be more comprehensive and more complex to use, there is more value to add to the design and construction process.

Perfection is typically defined as "free from all flaws or defects," however, as most of us already know, this is idealistic, especially in the world of modern-day architecture and construction, where budgets often seem disproportionate to the amount of work that needs to be accomplished. In most cases, perfection is a unicorn to strive for, to at least minimize flaws to the best of our ability and find the best version of perfection the budget can offer as a balance.

**In striving for perfection, innovation is paramount to discover and capitalize on improvements that, however minimal, can make a huge, positive difference. Those who keep "doing business like it's always been done" risk giving competitors a head-start in the race for efficiencies.**

## Rethinking the construction process

As a 30-year veteran of the architecture, construction, and real estate development industries, I often feel traumatized by my experiences with this dilemma in a seemingly cyclical process that works against itself. Developers find themselves having to pencil in projects with tighter margins and more uncertainty. Relying on data to make informed decisions is now more critical than ever before. While this level of critical data was once reserved for financial and sales projections in the past, nowadays, the same accuracy and predictability can be attained as early as schematic design phases and can be kept on a short-leash all the way through construction documents, avoiding delays and re-works during value-engineering.



**Spot earlier, solve faster:** For a 200-unit affordable housing in CA, the Corbis team presented a clash detection report, which helped detect and resolve many issues on the spot, preventing them from escalating into RFIs or costly change orders. This user-friendly report was shared with client and consultants to solve coordination issues before the job site.

**Unfortunately, all too often, the costs many developers think they're saving by keeping design fees and costs lower, particularly for construction drawings and design coordination, usually come back to haunt them via numerous, costly change orders from contractors during the construction process.**

In my pursuit of more perfect project delivery and a solution to the modern-day construction industry dilemma, I found Corbis. I joined forces with this company to develop and lead their construction management division because our goals to remedy these sorts of industry issues aligned.

Corbis, well-known in the architectural and construction industry as a Project Delivery Specialists, takes pride in assisting developers and design teams to find and fix those coordination gaps and design conflicts that are often overlooked or sacrificed when design schedules are tight and budgets are lean. Our service is provided for a fraction of the cost the same design conflicts will cost an owner, if the conflicts are left unattended for contractors to discover during construction.

## More predictability, less anxiety

Corbis bridges the budget gap by proactively tackling the design coordination process so architects and engineers can still operate efficiently, keeping the gross design fee within developers' proformas. Built for speed, accuracy, and predictability, Corbis will build and work with any design team, developer, or owner's team, managing the process, setting clear expectations, setting up the right BIM technology platforms, and identifying and resolving design conflicts with our experienced professional team. We strive for perfection, delivering tighter documents for contractors to use for bidding and building.

**Discover how we streamline project delivery  
by leveraging BIM + PowerBI**

Regardless of industry sectors, residential, multifamily, hospitality, commercial, or retail, our Corbis team is ready to engage and make an improvement to any project we're involved in, ultimately saving the project money. To further support the value, Corbis teams also assist clients with program management services for multiple site projects, as well as construction management services that enable experienced construction personnel to dig into the project and synchronize all the moving parts as early as DD's and preconstruction phases. As owner's representatives, we also manage the construction process and believe that helping with early design coordination and reducing RFIs centralizes problem-solving for an owner and enables our technically savvy representatives, who already know the projects intimately, to lead the way safely.

## Dealing with cost overruns, delays, and change orders?

Have you recently spent lots of money on construction change orders on your last project unnecessarily due to simple items that should have been coordinated during preconstruction? Are you unsure if your project's plans are as dialed-in as they should be for your GC to bid or build from? Are you skeptical about how much time and money a thorough design coordination and clash detection process can save your project? Don't hesitate to reach out to us; whether you already know that we can help you or need to talk about your concerns, we'd be happy to respond and provide whatever assistance we can. We're always available to our California, U.S., and international industry friends for any questions, collaboration, or to simply chat about the differences between ancient and modern architectural practices.

We all know that perfection is an ideal. However, there's still always room for improvement. Imhotep never had active 3-dimensional technology with skilled professionals to convey his vision, but we do today. **Corbis is the untapped resource and missing link that can improve the inefficiencies that plague today's construction industry.**



# About the author

**By Ken Bernhard**  
**Director of Construction Management Services**

Ken brings over 30 years of construction expertise to the table. With a strong architectural background and a proven track record at industry leaders like Bernards Construction and StarPoint Properties, Ken joined us in 2023 as Director of Construction Management to lead this business unit with a solid skill set and strategic vision. Passionate about delivering innovative and efficient solutions, he ensures your project exceeds expectations, meets deadlines, and stays within budget.



## About Corbis

We are **Project Delivery Specialists**. Since 2002, our goal has been to remove obstacles for frictionless project delivery. On every project, at every level, we see the big picture - a vision that is clear, realistic and detailed - with a plan forward and a backup plan in our pocket.

- **Construction Management**
- **Program Management**
- **Architectural Production**



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