

## B4. Indicative Construction Sequence and Stages

### B4.1 The importance of construction stages in composite design

In many forms of construction it is sufficient to consider the strength, stability and serviceability of a structure only in its final completed form. The documentation of most engineering designs contains a clause to the effect “the builder shall be responsible for the safety and stability of the works during the course of construction”. This clause means that the builder should provide any formwork and or temporary propping and falsework that is required to ensure that the structure does not fall down during construction while the engineer’s responsibility starts once the building is completed. There have been recent changes to the laws in this regard and the split of responsibility is never as black and white as this – but the general principal remains for many types of construction.

With composite construction, the builder remains responsible for many issues during the course of construction – but the engineer cannot pass on all responsibility for safety and stability during construction. A major advantage of composite flooring systems is that at least potentially, no formwork and no propping is required. But the engineer must think through the proposed construction sequence and carry out necessary design checks at all critical stages through the construction sequence, to ensure that overloading or instability will not develop.

This section presents in graphical style a typical construction sequence for this sort of building. In the detailed design stage, calculations are presented that confirm the safety of the structure during the various stages.

It is critical to get a clear picture of the three principal stages during construction at which the designer must confirm design adequacy of the proposed floor framing arrangement and sizes. These critical stages are as follows:

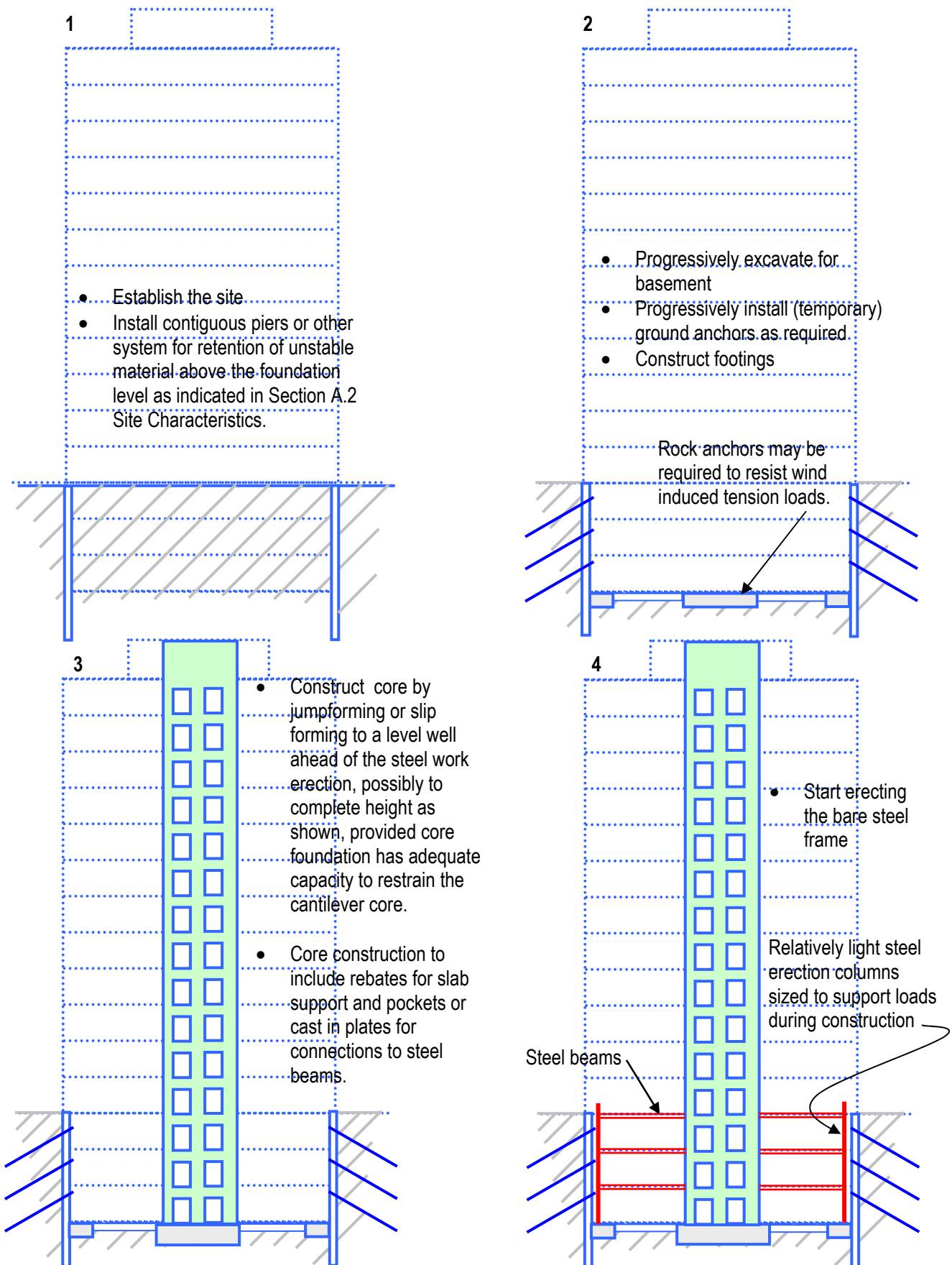
- When the steel beams have been lifted into place and support the steel decking but are not yet fixed to that decking so that they are unrestrained against beam buckling over a long effective length.
- At the concrete pour stage. At this stage the Bondek has to support the wet concrete and construction loads without any assistance from composite action. This is the stage that determines the maximum unpropped slab span. The beams at this stage should be secured to the decking and thus are restrained against buckling but have to support a considerable load without the assistance of a cured concrete slab to act as a composite top compression flange.
- During occupancy when the building is completed. It is not until the floor is completed and cured that composite action develops to assist in supporting the full and final design loads.

With the proposed construction sequence, steel ‘erection columns’ are used. As illustrated on following pages these allow construction to proceed at a fast rate – but they are not designed to support the full final weight of the building. This is carried by the steel columns acting together with reinforced concrete columns poured around the erection columns. Thus the engineer needs to ensure that the erection columns are strong enough to support the maximum load that they will carry during construction – while the final RC columns will carry the final completed building loads. This also provides essential fire resistance. (Normally, the concrete columns will be poured prior to pouring the next floor above, so that the erection columns will support only the erected steelwork plus one concreted floor; only in rare instances will the concreting of the columns be delayed as illustrated on following pages.

The indicative construction sequence shows the steel frame being completed well ahead of the concreting of the floors. This system allows for maximum flexibility in scheduling the construction and was popular in the past to minimise floor to floor construction times. It potentially gives rise to high erection column loads prior to their concrete encasement. Because of increased safety requirements it is now more common (at least in Australia) to allow the steel frame to proceed only one or two levels ahead of concreting.



## B4.1 Indicative construction sequence and construction stages



## Composite Design Example for Multistorey Steel Framed Buildings

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# Table of contents

|                                                                                 |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table of contents .....                                                         | iii |
| Preface .....                                                                   | v   |
| Section A: INPUT INFORMATION .....                                              | 1   |
| A1. Client and Architectural Requirements .....                                 | 2   |
| A2. Site Characteristics .....                                                  | 4   |
| A3. Statutory Requirements .....                                                | 5   |
| A4. Serviceability .....                                                        | 8   |
| A5. Design Loads .....                                                          | 9   |
| A6. Materials and Systems .....                                                 | 10  |
| A7. Design Aids and Codes .....                                                 | 11  |
| Section B: CONCEPTUAL AND PRELIMINARY DESIGN .....                              | 12  |
| B1. Conceptual and Preliminary Design .....                                     | 13  |
| B1.1 Consideration of alternative floor framing systems– Scheme A .....         | 14  |
| B1.2 Consideration of alternative floor framing systems– Scheme B .....         | 15  |
| B1.3 Framing system for horizontal loading – initial distribution of load ..... | 16  |
| B1.4 Alternatives for overall distribution of horizontal load to ground .....   | 17  |
| B2. Preliminary Slab Design .....                                               | 21  |
| B3. From Alternatives to Adopted Systems .....                                  | 22  |
| B3.1 Adopted floor framing arrangement .....                                    | 22  |
| B3.2 Adopted framing arrangement for horizontal loading .....                   | 23  |
| B4. Indicative Construction Sequence and Stages .....                           | 24  |
| B4.1 The importance of construction stages in composite design .....            | 24  |
| B4.1 Indicative construction sequence and construction stages .....             | 25  |
| B4.2 Adopted construction sequence for design of erection columns .....         | 27  |
| B4.3 Core construction alternatives .....                                       | 27  |
| B4.4 Adopted construction method for the core .....                             | 27  |
| B5. Preliminary Sizing of Primary and Secondary Beams .....                     | 28  |
| B6. Plenum Requirements and Floor to Floor Height .....                         | 30  |
| B7. Preliminary Column Sizes and Core Wall Thickness .....                      | 33  |
| Section C: DETAILED DESIGN .....                                                | 35  |
| C1. Detailed Design - Introduction .....                                        | 36  |
| C2. Design Stages and Construction Loading .....                                | 37  |
| C3. Detailed Load Estimation After Completion of Construction .....             | 38  |
| C3.1 Vertical loading .....                                                     | 38  |
| C3.2 Wind loading .....                                                         | 39  |
| C3.3 Seismic loading Not considered .....                                       | 40  |
| C4. Erection Column Design .....                                                | 41  |
| C4.1 Load distribution for erection column design .....                         | 42  |
| C4.2 Side Column C5 (typical of C5 to C10) .....                                | 43  |
| C4.3 End column C2 (typical of C2, C3, C12 and C13) .....                       | 44  |
| C4.4 Corner column C1 (typical of columns C1, C4, C11 and C14) .....            | 44  |
| C5. Floor Beams – Construction Stage 1 .....                                    | 45  |
| C5.1 Secondary beams Group S1(11 050, 2800) (Beams B22 – B41, B43 – 48) .....   | 45  |
| C5.2 Primary beams Group P1(9800, 5725) (Beams B1, B7 to B12, B18, .....        | 46  |
| B19 – 21, B49 – 51 and B42) .....                                               | 46  |
| C5.3 Primary beams Group P2(9250, 6600) (B2, B6, B13 and B17) .....             | 47  |
| C6. Floor Beams – Construction Stage 3 .....                                    | 48  |
| C6.1 Secondary beams Group S1(11 050, 2800) (Beams B22 – 41, B43 – 48) .....    | 48  |
| C6.2 Primary beams Group P1(9800, 5725) (Beams B1, B7 - B12, B18 – 21, .....    | 49  |
| B49 – 51 and B42) .....                                                         | 49  |
| C6.3 Primary beams Group P2(9250, 6600) (Beams B2, B6, B13, B17) .....          | 49  |
| C7 Floor Beam Design for Occupancy Loading .....                                | 50  |
| C7.1 Secondary beams Group S1(11 050, 2800) (Beams B19, B21, B22 - B41, .....   | 51  |
| B43 – B49 and B51) .....                                                        | 51  |



|       |                                                                          |     |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| C7.2  | Primary beams Group P1(9800,5725) (Beams B1, B7 to B12, B18)             | 58  |
| C7.3  | Primary beams group P2(9050, 6600) (Beams B2, B6, B13, B17)              | 63  |
| C8.   | Assessment of Dynamic Performance of Floor System                        | 69  |
| C8.1  | Definition of the dynamic assessment process                             | 69  |
| C8.2  | Application of the dynamic assessment process                            | 73  |
| C9    | Final Slab Design                                                        | 79  |
| C9.1  | Slab design for the office areas                                         | 79  |
| C9.2  | Slab design for the compactus areas                                      | 80  |
| C10.  | Longitudinal Shear Reinforcement Design                                  | 81  |
| C10.1 | Introduction                                                             | 81  |
| C10.2 | Proprietary longitudinal shear reinforcement products                    | 83  |
| C10.3 | Secondary beams group S1, B22 typical – longitudinal shear design        | 84  |
| C10.4 | Internal primary beams group P2, ( B2 typical) longitudinal shear design | 85  |
| C10.5 | Primary beams P1, (B1 typical) – longitudinal shear design               | 87  |
| C10.6 | Perimeter beams B19 to 21 and B49 to 51                                  | 88  |
| C11.  | Floor System Design Review and Final Decisions                           | 89  |
| C11.1 | Floor design review                                                      | 89  |
| C11.2 | Final floor framing plan and deck reinforcement                          | 90  |
| C12.  | Final Design of RC Columns                                               | 91  |
| C13.  | Detailed Design of the Core                                              | 91  |
| C13.1 | Preliminary discussion and statement of limitations of this section      | 91  |
| C13.2 | Basic modelling of the core using beam elements                          | 92  |
| C13.3 | The Space Gass Analysis Model                                            | 96  |
| C13.4 | Model verification and static deflections for $W_s$                      | 97  |
| C13.5 | Dynamic analysis for natural frequency of building                       | 98  |
| C13.6 | Interpretation and application of stress resultants from Space Gass      | 100 |
| C13.7 | Further investigation of the core using a Strand7 finite element model   | 102 |
| C13.8 | Review of core investigations                                            | 105 |
| C14.  | Steel Connection Design                                                  | 106 |
| C14.1 | Can it be built?                                                         | 106 |
| C14.2 | Representative connections                                               | 108 |
| C14.3 | Web side plate connection design for $V^* = 142$ kN                      | 108 |
| C14.4 | Flexible end plate connection for $V^* = 279$ kN                         | 112 |
| C14.5 | B2 to core web side plate connection for $V^* = 308$ kN                  | 113 |
| C14.6 | Column splice for a load of $N^* = 1770$ kN                              | 114 |
| C14.7 | Column base plate for a load of $N^* = 1770$ kN                          | 115 |
| C15.  | Web Penetrations                                                         | 116 |
| C16.  | Some Final Thoughts and Disclaimers                                      | 117 |
|       | Appendix I Theory and discussion – composite slabs                       | 119 |
|       | Appendix II Theory and discussion - composite beams                      | 133 |
|       | Appendix III Dynamic assessment of the floor system                      | 149 |
|       | Appendix IV Theory and discussion steel connections                      | 163 |
|       | Appendix V Corrosion and fire protection                                 | 175 |

