A Plain-English Glossary of Commercial Construction Terms for Albany Business Owners

Construction meetings move fast, and the vocabulary can leave a business owner nodding along without being sure what was just agreed to. Keep this glossary handy when you plan an office renovation, tenant fit-up or warehouse project in the Capital Region.Allowance. A sum of money, usually from the landlord, set aside for tenant improvements. Always ask what it covers and when it is paid.As-built drawings. Drawings that show what actually exists in a space, as opposed to what was originally designed. Scan-to-CAD is one way to produce them.Base building. The parts of a property the landlord typically owns and maintains: structure, roof, shared corridors, main utilities and core restrooms.Build-out. The interior construction that makes a space usable for a particular business. Used almost interchangeably with fit-up and tenant improvement.Certificate of occupancy. The document a local building department issues when a space meets code for its intended use. In some municipalities a certificate of completion serves a similar role for alterations.Change order. A written amendment to the construction contract that adjusts scope, price or time. Good projects have few of them, and every one is signed before the work changes.Clear height. The usable vertical space in a warehouse below the lowest beam, joist, duct or sprinkler line. It decides how high you can rack.Closeout. The https://sites.google.com/cliftondevelopmentgroup.com/clifton-construction-albany-ny final phase: inspections, punch list, warranties, product data and turnover documents.Demising wall. The wall separating one tenant's space from another's. It often has fire-rating requirements.Fit-up or fit-out. See build-out. In the Northeast, fit-up is common; fit-out shows up more often in national and international usage.Long-lead item. Any material or piece of equipment that takes weeks or months to arrive, such as rooftop HVAC units, switchgear, storefront glass or specialty doors.MEP. Mechanical, electrical and plumbing. Moving these systems is usually the biggest cost driver in an interior renovation.Phasing. Breaking a project into stages so part of a building can stay **Clifton Construction general contractor** in use while another part is under construction.Punch list. The list of small items to correct or finish before a project is considered complete.Reflected ceiling plan. A drawing of the ceiling as if seen in a mirror on the floor, showing lights, diffusers, sprinklers and grid layout.Scope of work. The written description of what will and will not be built. The most important document in any estimate.Shell. A space with structure, roof and exterior walls but little or nothing inside.Tenant improvement. Construction performed to customize leased space for a tenant, often shortened to TI.Turnkey. A delivery where the landlord or builder hands over a finished, ready-to-use space.Vanilla box. A clean, code-compliant shell with basic finishes and systems, ready for a tenant's layout.Work letter. The lease exhibit spelling out who builds what, who pays for it and on what schedule.Zoning (HVAC). The division of a heating and cooling system into areas controlled separately. Adding private offices to an open floor often means adding zones.Putting the words to workKnowing the language helps you ask better questions and read estimates more critically. Clifton Construction, the Albany NY general contractor listed as Clifton Development Group LLC, handles tenant fit-ups, vanilla box builds, and warehouse and office renovations throughout the Capital Region, and its team is used to explaining these terms to owners and tenants who are doing a commercial project for the first time.

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