Notes on Meeting with British Board of Agrément (BBA)

Venue – British Board of Agrément, Bucknalls Lane, Watford WD25 9XX

Date - 4 April 2018

Attendees;

Paul Valentine – Technical Director – BBA
Oriola Davies - BBA
Julian Taylor – Chairman of INCA Technical Committee, Structherm
Mitch Gee – INCA Executive Chairman – SPS Envirowall
Kevin Mangan – SPS Envirowall
Brian Mack – Ejot
Kevin Gamble – Weber
Stuart Sadler – Dryvit

The principle items discussed:

- Proposed changes to wording of the agreement certificate
- Mechanical Fix only systems
- Wind Load Guidance

<u>Proposed changes to wording of the agreement certificate</u>

There was a lengthy discussion of the proposed changes to wording of certificates. There was considerable opposition by INCA members to the requirement that the System Designer should ensure and be responsible for a structural survey of the building, undertaken by a suitably qualified engineer. The aim being to deem it fit to take the additional load applied by the addition of an external wall insulation system. Although members accept the responsibility for notifying the client that a structural survey should be carried out, particularly on high rise buildings, there was no way that they could guarantee that it had been done. It would be unreasonable to expect the System Designer to be responsible for structural faults in the building that are not obvious or may develop at some point in the future.

Following this conversation the BBA agreed to place this clause outside section 7.1, thereby placing it outside the ultimate responsibility of the System Designer. Revised wording will be drafted by BBA for circulation around INCA.

Mechanical Fix only systems

There has been considerable consternation from INCA members that certificates which allowed mechanical only fix application would be withdrawn from immediate effect. It had been suggested that this would be the case until an acceptable test method was developed to demonstrate that they could resist the applied dead load, or a suitable theoretical assessment could be made providing calculations that demonstrated the same. Although the INCA delegation supported the BBA's aims in this regard they felt strongly that it was unreasonable to withdraw certification at such short notice and that a reasonable grace period should be provided to allow System Designers and the BBA to develop the appropriate assessment methods. It was suggested that this be a minimum 6 months. The BBA did note that this item had been under discussion for many months and should have come as no surprise to System Designers, though conceded that no definitive statement had been made regarding a deadline for complying. Paul Valentine agreed that he would discuss this with the management team. He did not feel it was unreasonable to provide this grace period considering there had been no widespread failure of mechanically only fixed systems, which have been applied in the UK now for in excess of 30 years.

Wind Load Guidance

The final discussion surrounded the changes to Wind Load Guidance. Concerns were raised about the requirement for considerable additional fixings in systems, in some instances providing results that severely restricted the use of these systems which have been installed without failure, for the past 20 years. Although the arguments are complex and require the knowledge of a structural engineer to fully understand, the INCA delegation felt that the safety factors used were excessive and restrictive. Paul Valentine explained the engineering theory behind these safety factors and felt what was being asked with the data they had been presented with was not unreasonable.

The issue of small sample numbers provided by System Designers meant that correctional factors required may be have a large impact on the overall safety factor being imposed. Larger sample numbers could have a significant impact on reducing the overall safety factor. It was proposed that it may be possible to anonymously aggregate samples that used similar component parts to create a much larger data set. All those

in attendance agreed that they would be willing to partake in such a collaborative venture. Paul Valentine agreed to investigate this further, developing models that might demonstrate the optimum sample number. The System Designer members agreed to meet to consider whether they are willing, and if it is possible, to pool sample data. Paul Valentine will investigate if this is acceptable to the BBA. An alternate proposal is to investigate members coming together to fund testing to confirm the effectiveness of the mechanical fix only systems.

BBA Wind Load Training Course

The content /cost / scope of the training course was discussed. The BBA consider that the course cost is reasonable. Paul Valentine raised a concern that attendees have varying levels of base knowledge, and as such it is difficult to know where to pitch the content. The BBA do not intend this one day course to be a competency scheme and indeed they do not believe that the course could achieve this. INCA stated that it would be appropriate for at least a certificate of attendance to be issued. This was agreed.

Post meeting Note – It has been suggested that the course fee could be shared out with, for example, 10 attendees from different INCA member companies. This will be put to the BBA, though we do not know if they will accept the proposal.

The meeting was concluded by the delegation expressing their appreciation of the BBA spending time to fully understand the concerns that the industry has about some of the changes the BBA were proposing to the certification of external wall insulation systems and their preparedness to consider some suggested compromises. It was agreed that our mutual goal is to improve quality and confidence in. the industry.