
From: Claire Curtis-Thomas
Sent: 29 June 2017 07:07
To: Liz Male
Cc: Brian Moore; Richard Beale; John Albon; Simon Wroe
Subject: Re: BBA draft letter to LA/HAs re Grenfell Tower

Liz, very good

John re the point about building control - is there any role here for competent person self certification which would diminish the input of the building control. ?

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On 28 Jun 2017, at 23:59, Liz Male [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Brian,

Sorry for such a late response this evening. Well done on pulling together this draft.

Writing to LAs/HAs is definitely the right thing to do, for all the reasons you state below, and because it also supports the BBA's ongoing efforts to create dialogue, build brand awareness and prompt closer relationships with social landlords (for the longer-term benefit of CASS, CIT etc). I also strongly support the idea of adding to your FAQs on your website.

I have made quite a few suggestions to the text of the letter – as before, just to simplify the language a bit more for the non-technical person. I've repeated some of the very good sentences you used in your response to the Evening Standard, as they make important additional points for a lay person. And I hope you don't mind, but I've had a play with the layout of the letter, to improve ease of reading.

Please see my suggestions attached. I hope they will be helpful, at least in parts anyway.

Best wishes,
Liz

PS. You may also be interested to note this piece on Building's website today, regarding the BRE fire tests. See text below.

The BRE is under pressure to be much more transparent about the nature of its testing, following accusations in the media (including this in the Guardian recently:

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/26/tower-block-cladding-tests-after-grenfell->

[fire-lack-transparency-say-experts](#)), so hopefully this will also help clear up industry questions.

BRE reveals tower block cladding fire test details **28 June 2017 | By Thomas Lane**

Fire test establishes flammability of core material used in ACM cladding panels

The BRE has released details of the tests being used to establish the flammability of external cladding on local authority tower blocks which it is carrying out on behalf of the communities department.

The government ordered safety checks on the cladding used on local authority tower blocks after the Grenfell Tower fire where fire spread rapidly up the outside of the building.

The tests are being carried out on buildings that are suspected of being clad with aluminium composite material (ACM) panels. ACM panels feature two thin aluminium skins sandwiching a cheaper core material that gives the panel its rigidity and keeps costs down.

The panels used for the external rainscreen on Grenfell Tower were a product called Reynobond which features a plastic core.

The cladding has been tested on 120 blocks, and results so far show a 100% failure rate. Up to 600 blocks could be tested.

The test was devised by an independent panel of experts on behalf of the communities department and performed on the core of test samples after the external aluminium skin had been removed from the panel.

The test has 3 categories with a category 2 or 3 rating deemed by the expert panel to fail the combustibility standards in Part B, the building regulation covering fire.

Peter Bonfield, chief executive of the BRE, said the tests had been performed on ACM panels from a number of manufacturers and all had failed the test.

The test is performed using a device called a bomb calorimeter where the sample is heated in an enclosed contained with the energy given off by the sample measured by the device. There are four to five test devices in the UK which have been calibrated by the BRE to give consistent results.

There have been suggestions the test process is taking too long. However Bonfield said up to 100 samples could be tested a day. He said: "We respond to the samples that we get in. The demand has been increasing.

Bonfield has been appointed to an advisory panel by communities secretary Sajid Javid to advise on measures to be put in following the Grenfell fire.

The panel also includes Amanda Clack, EY partner and president of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, and Roy Wilsher, chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council. It will be chaired by Sir Ken Knight, former government chief fire and rescue adviser.

The first meeting takes place tomorrow.

From: Brian Moore [<mailto:bmoore@bbacerts.co.uk>]

Sent: 28 June 2017 17:24

To: Claire Curtis-Thomas <ccurtis-thomas@bba.star.co.uk>; Richard Beale <rbeale@bbacerts.co.uk>; John Albon <jalbon@bbacerts.co.uk>; Simon Wroe <swroe@bbacerts.co.uk>; Liz Male

Subject: BBA draft letter to LA/HAs re Grenfell Tower

Claire, Liz

We have been working on a letter to Local Authorities and Housing Associations about BBA Certificates and Grenfell Tower.

What we have seen in media commentary last night and in a specific question from a local authority today is 'my BBA Certificate has a Class 0 fire rating so why am I failing the BRE fire tests' i.e. that my Certificate means that I shouldn't have a fire risk.

The exam question is to answer the above and offer support and positive guidance about our Certificates, keeping us relevant, engaged, helpful.

The reader is likely to be an Executive-level person who is handling this and who may or may not have a technical person advising them. Page 1 assumes not and set out as simply as possible what the Building Regs say. Top of page 2 is how the Certificate should be used by a competent professional and centre of page 2 is the exam question – so I could have a Class 0 rating and still fail a fire test.

I rang BRE who clarified that they are undertaking a screening test but there are no pass/fails and some results referred back to the LA/HA will 'require further investigation' by the LA/HA.

Their tests are not the same as the Building Regs test referred to in our Cert, we understand!

The obvious risks are that we further confuse; we invite even deeper scrutiny and/or we get inundated. (I did suggest that our 'extra' service may entail a cost but I removed that reference).

The risk of not communicating, on the other hand, is that we are seen as irrelevant, unhelpful, misleading or we get inundated, anyway.

It is by no means clear that this absolutely the right thing to do but, on balance, it is.

We know of 140 Local Authorities that still own housing stock and we know of a smaller number of Housing Associations that have large stock. We don't have 100% data but we believe that they all act in various associations and in various ways so coverage will be provided. We have some named persons in these organisations but again not 100%.

We will probably break this down into Q and A's for the website also – if we agree that we should write it.

Views and amends please.

Brian Moore

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<Draft Letter to LAHAs re Grenfell Tower - LM.docx>