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Mandatory Standard 2.7 – Application of Classification Without Further Testing (CWFT) to Untreated Timber External Wall Cladding

Information for verifiers

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Purpose

The purpose of this information paper is to provide awareness and information for verifiers on the classification of untested and untreated timber external wall cladding systems more than 1m from a boundary, and which may be classified without further testing (CWFT).

Summary

For the purposes of applying Mandatory Standard 2.7, the principal routes for demonstrating the reaction to fire classification of timber cladding systems are:

- Through appropriate testing (as listed within Annexes 2.B and 2.E of the Technical Handbooks) and classification report to BS EN 13501-1 or justified based on established performance.
- Classification without further testing (CWFT) may be used where supported by applicable European provisions. This is typically demonstrated through compliance with the conditions set out in BS EN 14915. Where these conditions are met, timber cladding may be classified as European classification D-s2,d0 without further testing.

This information paper primarily focuses on the assessment of timber cladding systems using the Classified Without Further Testing (CWFT) route, which is often relied upon where specific fire test and classification evidence has not been provided.

Where a harmonised European Standard is relied upon as a CWFT route, the standard should be reviewed to ensure the proposed construction fully complies with the parameters and conditions of use set out within that standard.

Timber cladding products may also be enhanced through the application of fire retardant treatments and supported by associated fire test and classification evidence.

This information paper aims to support a more consistent approach, whilst recognising that each proposal should be considered on its own merits and that professional judgement may be required. Final decisions will continue to rest with the verifier, based on the specific details of each proposal.

Background Information

This information paper seeks to ensure consistency when assessing the classification of fire performance of untreated timber external wall cladding systems.

Assessment and classification without further testing (CWFT)

When assessing cladding in relation to Standards 2.6 and 2.7, reference is made to Annexes 2.B (Domestic) and 2.E (Non-Domestic). These set out how materials and systems are classified in terms of reaction to fire performance. This can either be demonstrated via appropriate fire testing (as listed in the relevant tables) and classification report to BS EN 13501-1, or by classification without further testing (CWFT). The focus of this paper is on CWFT.

Annex 2.B.3 (Domestic) and 2.E.3 (Non-Domestic) of the Technical Handbooks describes a procedure by which certain construction products may be assigned a reaction to fire classification without the need for testing, where their performance is well established.

The Handbook text refers to agreements published in the Official Journal of the European Commission and listed on the NANDO database. These include, for example, Commission Decision 96/603/EC (as amended), which identifies certain products that may be considered to achieve European Class A1 without testing.

However, this represents one application of the wider CWFT principle, specifically relating to materials of negligible combustibility.

In practice, classification without further testing may also be established through harmonised European Standards, where these contain defined criteria for determining reaction to fire performance without further testing. For example:

- BS EN 14915, supported by European provisions for classification without further testing, sets out the conditions under which solid wood panelling and cladding may achieve a reaction to fire classification (typically European classification D-s2,d0) without further testing.

The European Delegated Regulation supporting this approach can be found here: [Official Journal of the European Union - Commission Delegated Regulation \(EU\) No 1291/2014](#)

Accordingly, for timber cladding systems, the relevant basis for classification without further testing is the applicable harmonised standard (e.g. BS EN 14915) and its defined conditions of use.

Application of BS EN 14915 (CWFT for timber cladding)

BS EN 14915 (Table 1) sets out the conditions under which solid wood panelling and cladding may be classified without further testing (CWFT). The table identifies that timber cladding should meet the following parameters:

- minimum density of 390 kg/m³
- mechanically fixed to a timber batten support frame
- installed without open joints
- minimum thickness (total/minimum) as defined in Table 1 and Figure 1
- open ventilated air gap behind
- substrate behind the air gap achieving at least European Class A2-s1,d0 with a minimum density of 10 kg/m³

Where these conditions are met, solid wood panelling and cladding may be classified as European Class D-s2,d0 without further testing (CWFT), in accordance with BS EN 14915. BS EN 14915 can be accessed via The Construction Information Service (CIS) and should be accessed for full details of these parameters.

Where these conditions are not met (for example, where the substrate is of lower classification), the EN 14915 CWFT provisions do not apply and alternative evidence to demonstrate the reaction to fire performance is required.

It is recognised that Clause 2.7.1 of the Technical Handbooks states that:

“Sheathing or backing board attached to and forming part of the elements of structure of the building are not considered to form part of the external wall cladding system.”

However, where reliance is placed upon BS EN 14915 as the basis for classification without further testing, the relevant requirements and conditions of that standard should be met.

The above provisions are representative of a typical insulated external wall construction incorporating an open ventilated cavity behind the cladding. However, BS EN 14915 also contains less onerous requirements for certain alternative constructions. For example, where timber cladding is installed with a closed air gap (non-ventilated) not exceeding 20 mm and with vertical wood pieces, the substrate may be of at least Class D-s2,d0.

Note – The requirement for an A2 substrate described above relates specifically to the CWFT provisions contained within BS EN 14915 and should not be interpreted as a general requirement applicable to all timber cladding systems. Alternative constructions may be supported by appropriate fire testing and classification to BS EN 13501-1, subject to the scope and limitations of the classification report provided.

General performance of untreated timber

Untreated timber materials are widely recognised, based on established testing and industry data, as typically achieving reaction to fire classifications in the range of Euroclass D to E.

However, the recognised performance of timber as a material does not automatically establish the reaction to fire classification of a proposed cladding system.

Where the reaction to fire classification of a proposed cladding system is not determined in accordance with a CWFT standard such as BS EN 14915, any assumed classification (for example, Euroclass E) should be supported by appropriate evidence relevant to the proposed construction.

Supporting information on the fire performance of timber can be found in industry guidance, including publications by the Wood Protection Association (WPA) [Resources | The WPA](#).

End.