Mr Ivor Meredith
Project Manager Technical
Kingspan Insulation Ltd
Pembridge
Leominster
Herefordshire
HR6 9LA

Our Ref: GP/sp/

Date: 14 January 2015

Dear Ivor

Re: The use of Kooltherm K15 Rainscreen Board in facades above 18.0m

I refer to Graham Perrior's telephone call to you 5th January 2015 during which it was agreed to set up a high level meeting between NHBC and Kingspan with a view to your providing details of exactly how you intend to resolve the K15 issue. I note your brief e-mail 12th January presumably in response to Graham's voicemails 7th January, but unfortunately none of this moves matters forward and positive assurances from you are still awaited.

I'm sure you will appreciate that for a considerable time NHBC have been requesting suitable evidence from Kingspan to demonstrate that the K15 product is suitable for use in facades above 18.0m. Such evidence has not been forthcoming and we have now arrived at a stage where further action is required to bring this matter to conclusion.

For the avoidance of doubt the issue is that you continue to market and supply the K15 Rainscreen Board with confirmations 'that it has been successfully tested to BS 8414; 2002, and can meet the criteria within BR135, which makes it acceptable for use above 18.0m'.

I'm sure you appreciate that our principal concern is that phenolic foam insulation products are not fully resistant to combustion, and will burn in building fires when exposed within concealed wall cavities. This being the reason why the product should be tested to prove performance corresponding to the common range of multistorey building envelope design types constructed with framed backing walls and exterior rainscreen or curtain walling.

When your BBA certificate 08/4582 was amended in December 2013 NHBC subsequently advised in early 2014 that further evidence would be required to substantiate satisfactory performance of the K15 product in facades above 18.0m. We have given plenty of opportunity for this to be done and now consider that the lack of such evidence must be addressed.

Naturally we have built up a complete file detailing the various meetings and discussions regarding this matter, which have often included confirmations from you detailing how you proposed to resolve this issue, but to date none of the proposals have come to fruition.

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The absence of significant progress by Kingspan generates a need to move forward and to this end NHBC will start to advise its customers that the Kingspan Kooltherm K15 rainscreen insulation board product will no longer be accepted by NHBC in facades on buildings exceeding 18.0m which have been submitted to NHBC for Warranty and/or Building Control after the 1st January 2014 unless evidence has been provided in accordance with BCA Guidance Note 18 – Use of Combustible Cladding Materials on Residential Buildings..

Naturally, we will manage this message to our builder customers and guide them toward an acceptable alternative until such time as you can demonstrate to our satisfaction that the K15 product is suitable for use on a representative range of high rise façade types. As with all issues of this nature there will undoubtedly be problems for a small number of buildings designed after December 2013 with K15 where the cladding details are at an advanced stage, which we will consider on a project specific basis.

Finally, and again for the avoidance of doubt, our guidance on this matter relates to all manufacturers of products in the product family insulation boards that do not have sufficient or suitable evidence to support satisfactory use in providing the necessary fire resistance in facades extending above 18.0m. This guidance will be implemented by NHBC Standards and Technical and NHBC Building Control Services Ltd.

We had hoped that this action could have been avoided by the provision of additional technical evaluation and test evidence, as promised, to support continued safe use of this product type, but it is probable that if this information was available it would have been provided to NHBC before now.

But, as always, if at any point you wish to provide a detailed plan to NHBC setting out a definite delivery programme of exactly how you propose to justify the use of the K15 product in accordance with BCA Guidance Note 18 above 18.0m please send this to us in writing at the earliest opportunity.

I look forward to your early response.

Ian Davis
Operations Director

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