Qualicoat UK & Ireland - Newsletter

June 2009

Qualicoat
A Global Standard

As the Qualicoat standard for architectural powder coating in the UK continues to gain widespread acceptance it is important to remember that the Standard is not just UK based.

With offices based in Zurich Qualicoat offer Licences to countries who want to adopt the standards laid down by the association. Qualicoat UK and Ireland have been granted the licence for this region and have been successfully producing and monitoring powder coat quality in the UK and Ireland for eight years. There are many European counties that have adopted the standard, but further afield there are associations in Australia, China, Mexico and more recently 'Quali Middle East Association' (QMEA) which brings together licences already granted in the Middle East into one Association.

Activity is still very high in the Middle East and it is estimated that 25% of the worlds cranes are currently operating in Dubai alone. In 2006 the UAE construction industry was estimated at $221 billion. QMEA goal is to protect the quality of architectural coatings as required for the Middle East climatic conditions as well as provide the best and fair practices to achieve quality coating on aluminium.

Not only does the Zurich based association set a quality label for architectural powder coating, it also sets a standard which crosses boundaries. A project specified in Dubai can be coated in the UK and meet the standard so standards have moved away from being country specific. As an international association Qualicoat is run by its members from all the country associations involved. In order to update and further improve standards the association has currently twelve working groups active each working on a particular aspect of coating standards. Qualicoat UK and Ireland are involved with several of the working groups to offer support and research as well as feedback to its own members.

One of the latest updates (update sheet 24) available from the Qualicoat website covers the 'structured finishes' now available. This update seeks to explain how the structure, or textured finish, is obtained and what general terminology can be used. The descriptions fall into three categories 'Leathered (or orange peel)', 'Textured (or sandpaper)' and 'Wrinkled'. Again with these standard definitions laid down the chance of misinterpretation within a specification is greatly reduced.

Further Guidance from Qualicoat

With the introduction of the 'Seaside' class of architectural powder coating Qualicoat have now completed a new guidance note to assist specifiers when projects are in close proximity to

QUALICOAT

Guidance Notes

No.3

Guide to use of powder coated aluminium in coastal regions

the coast.

"Guide to use of powder coated aluminium in coastal regions" is available as a download from the Qualicoat UK & Ireland website at www.qualicoatuki.org. The guide explains the problems associated with coastal areas and how to safeguard finishes by correct specification and application. This is the third in a range of guides produced by Qualicoat to assist specifiers in the correct use and maintenance of architectural powder coated material.

The new standard confirms Qualicoat's commitment to developing, testing and maintaining the highest possible standards for architectural aluminium fenestration.

Qualicoat Members Meet in Belfast

Members of Qualicoat recently met at the Malone Lodge Hotel in Belfast for their first meeting of 2009. With 23 active members the event offers the opportunity to network and discuss the latest quality systems and methodologies.

Membership continues to grow despite the economic downturn. One UK systems company is undergoing initial inspections with a view to membership and there has been a further two applications from companies who have expressed an interest in joining Qualicoat UK & Ireland.

On technical issues there was feedback from the UK working group regarding the UK's proposals to test alternative substrates and pre-treatment systems to determine the most robust systems for the Seaside classification. The methodology had now been agreed which will encompass some 648 test pieces analysed through two independent testing houses. It was agreed that the testing should proceed as soon as possible.

The 12th Edition of the Qualicoat standard has now been released to members in draft form. The new standard takes the Qualicoat standard to a higher level and incorporates many of the updates that have taken place since the 11th edition was launched in April 2006. The new standard comes into force and will be available for download in September 2009.

On environmental issues there had been no further changes to effluent disposal since the last meeting but there were suggestions that waste polyester powder could be allowed back into landfill sites as regulations ease due to the economic climate.

The next ESTAL (European Surface Treatment on Aluminium) Conference is to be held in Oxford in September and several members were already committed to attending. The next Qualicoat UK & Ireland members meeting was discussed and agreed it would take place in Cork sometime in June.

After the mornings discussion many of the members met for lunch before leaving to return to their respective businesses throughout the UK and Ireland.

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