

April 2011



UK & Ireland



typical powder coated installation

Qualicoat - Meet at Temple Bar

Despite the harsh weather in early December Qualicoat UK & Ireland committee members travelled to Dublin for the last meeting of 2010.

Despite the downturn in the building construction sector there seems to be a great deal of interest in powder coaters gaining Qualicoat approval and joining Qualicoat UK & Ireland. Of the current 28 members, there are currently 14 applicators in the UK & Ireland. With a further 8 applicators now

seeking approval membership will increase significantly in 2011.

There was discussion about the emerging classes of powder and its added value. Qualicoat 'Class 1' powder is commonly used by all Qualicoat UK & Ireland powder coaters today and has excellent weathering characteristics. 'Class 2' and 'Class 3' can offer more durable levels of both gloss retention and colour stabilisation. In certain conditions 'Class 2' has a life expectancy up to five times that of 'Class 1'. Applicator members

said that they are beginning to see the specification of the new powders on projects.

Members confirmed that Qualicoat approved material was on the increase in the UK and there was feedback that several of the major UK systems companies could be looking at specifying Qualicoat approved material for all their systems.

Several new amendments were discussed to the 'Qualicoat Specifications - 12th Edition' further improving the standard and quality procedures.

Qualicoat Instigate Training Programme

All architectural powder coating undertaken by approved Qualicoat companies meets the high standards laid down by Qualicoat



temperature & humidity test

in Zurich. Now 25 years old its a global standard for powder coating and more specifiers are asking for the 'Qualicoat Quality Label' for their architectural aluminium.

Qualicoat UK & Ireland members are routinely inspected by Exova, an independent UK testing institute, to ensure Qualicoat standards are maintained - licences can be withdrawn if standards are not met.

All powder coaters in the UK employ a Quality Manager who routinely runs tests on powder coating samples which are run through the production line several times a day. Specialist equipment is provided for this purpose and is

consistent high quality of testing for all their material output. Further information is available from Qualicoat UK & Ireland.

Qualicoat Quality Label powder coat finishes are renowned for their durability. By additionally specifying Qualicoat Class 2 or Class 3 powders, durability can be further increased to meet the needs of our future sustainable structures.

Cost wise - it is no more expensive than using any other reputable architectural powder coater.

So what are the benefits of simply specifying 'a Qualicoat approved supplier' for all architectural coatings on a construction project?

The Qualicoat label is independent of any one country or government, instead the standard is compiled, written and regulated by members of the association. Members have a vested interest in ensuring that the highest standards of powder coating can be achieved in the most cost effective and consistent manner.

Choice of finish is not reduced as many of the powder manufacturers and pre-treatment suppliers are members of Qualicoat and offer Qualicoat approved materials and systems - the same full range of colours and surface finishes are also available.

Over half of the powder coating applicators in the UK and Ireland are members of Qualicoat UK & Ireland. Even though Qualicoat is a quality label that approves the powder, the pre-treatment chemicals and the process of powder coating, these systems are not sold at a premium. The Qualicoat process ensures consistency, this in turn achieves efficiencies which keeps costs down, particularly reducing the need for reworking. No one quality label does this except Qualicoat and, most importantly, specifying Qualicoat addresses the British standard as well as the European Norm.

By specifying the British Standard, a minimum standard is set and then needs to be tested to be in compliance, Qualicoat differs in the fact that members are independently tested as part of the ongoing quality label. The company responsible for this independent



the powder coating process

always UKAS accredited.

Until now specialist training and advice has been built-up by experience within each powder coater. As a new initiative, Qualicoat UK & Ireland have now set up in association with Exova, to provide training for Quality Managers and networking to ensure that Qualicoat members maintain a

Why Qualicoat Specifications are Growing

Qualicoat is the most widely specified quality label for architectural finishes in Europe. Using standard 'Class 1' powders, the Qualicoat specification exceeds that laid down in the current 'British Standard' and 'European Norm' 12206-1:2004.

testing in the UK is Exova, a highly respected British based testing house. Qualicoat UK & Ireland members are independently inspected at least twice per year, without warning, and may lose their Qualicoat approved status if they fail on any part of the routine testing. To achieve the same result by specifying the 'British Standard' and 'European Norm' 12206-1:2004, an independent consultant will need to be employed to have the finish independently tested.

Members of Qualicoat UK & Ireland are recognised as supplying the best quality architectural powder coating available, in recognition of this members will use the Qualicoat logo on all their marketing communication. The simple long term benefit for the specifier, is that the architectural powder coating failure rate can be dramatically reduced when powder coating is applied to the Qualicoat label.

Regular Qualicoat UK & Ireland member meetings offer feedback on emerging new standards and feedback on the work of Qualicoat technical groups who meet to further the Qualicoat standard.

Just add 'Architectural powder coating supplied by a Qualicoat approved applicator' on your specification. Doing so ensures that the powder coater is registered with Qualicoat UK & Ireland and uses Qualicoat approved powders and pre-treatment systems. By not having any date or references to the label ensures that the specifier can be guaranteed that the coating, whenever undertaken, is always applied to the most up to date Qualicoat specification.

Recent updates to the Qualicoat process now offer higher durability finishes which are now available for specific uses such as 'seaside class' where salts can be problematic and pre-finishing techniques are adjusted in order

to eliminate possible substrate corrosion. Premium powders for coating are also available and are known as 'Class 2' and Class 3' powders, these further add to the durability of the finish by extending the life expectancy for many years, for further information ask a local Qualicoat approved applicator or contact the Qualicoat UK & Ireland head office in Birmingham.

There have also been 13 random inspections of members by Exova since the last members meeting in early December, all who have passed inspection. Random inspection forms an important part of the Qualicoat label and ensures third party accredited output.

The associations website continues to gain interest from the sector with visits increased by 5% over the last three months



Qualicoat Meet at the Metalforming Centre

Qualicoat UK & Ireland members met at the National Metalforming Centre at West Bromwich for their March meeting to discuss current issues relating to the powder coating of architectural aluminium.

The association now stands at 28 members and, despite the slowdown in the construction sector, there are a further eight new potential members undergoing early inspection with Exova, Qualicoat UK & Ireland's independent inspectorate. Three of these potentials should meet Qualicoat approval by the middle of 2011.

and with 30% returning visitors. It was agreed that further technical information should be placed on the site which seems to be the most popular areas of interest. Twitter has now been added as a further news feed taking Qualicoat UK & Ireland into social media.

The Classes of Qualicoat

As sustainability issues continue to take precedence in material specification for our new and refurbished buildings, Qualicoat continue to push the boundaries of quality and durability in architectural powder coatings.

The powder coating process

is widely used for coating various metals in domestic and commercial applications. In construction, the global Qualicoat 'quality label' is the number one choice for specifiers. Finishing to the Qualicoat standard ensures a high quality, consistent finish to aluminium profiles and sheet based products. Life expectancy can be warranted up to 30 years and life expectancy can be much longer. Powder coating companies who meet the minimum requirements for pre-treatment and powder coating equipment can join Qualicoat and become a recognised holder of the coveted Qualicoat label.

'Qualicoat UK and Ireland' currently have 25 members in the UK who meet on a frequent basis to work together to further the understanding of powder coating and the high quality and consistency that the label offers. Qualicoat completes the supply chain to finished product by offering licences to powder manufacturers and metal pre-treatment suppliers as well as powder coat applicators to ensure consistent quality.

One of the quality management measures required by Qualicoat is twice yearly random visits by an independent test house to review a companies own quality procedures and records.

What is little known is that powders themselves can be supplied in various grades of durability to suit a projects application. These premium powder compositions use more expensive and robust materials to offer life expectancies well beyond 30 years and often similar to the life expectancy of the building itself.

The vast majority of powder coating undertaken in the UK and Ireland from Qualicoat members and independent powder coaters meet

what is known under the Qualicoat Specification (12th edition) as 'class 1'. These powders are high quality and offer excellent weathering and life expectancy, however, there are projects and situations where even higher durability coatings are required by the specifier.

Using 'Qualicoat' powder coating the method of pre-treatment and powder coat application is tightly monitored and the chances of



'Florida' sunshine testing

coatings failing due to corrosion or adhesion during its expected life are virtually eliminated. All powder coatings, however, will age over time and using higher durability powders will ensure that the surface finish looks better for longer. Higher durability powders can be used on high rise applications, or other places where access could be difficult or where there is a particularly harsh environment.

Powders for architectural coatings fall into three basic classes; Class 1 is a 1 year 'Florida' weather exposure category, Class 2 is a 3 year 'Florida' weather exposure category and Class 2 is a 10 year 'Florida' weather exposure category.

In class 1 the samples tested must retain at least 50% of its original gloss level at the end of the test, whereas for class 2 powders they must retain at least 75% and class 3 powders at least 90% over the same period of exposure. Colour variation over time is similarly more stringent on classes 2 and 3.

As a specifier, should higher durability finishes be required, contact a Qualicoat member and discuss the project requirements

in greater detail. Pretreatment and powder application is virtually the same for classes 2 and 3, the only change is the formulation of the powder which uses enhanced resin systems and higher grade pigments and stabilisers.

The Qualicoat organisation, located in Zurich, continue to co-ordinate the method of application and the various county working groups to ensure that the Qualicoat label remains the number one choice for specifiers. A specification for Qualicoat by a UK specifier will be fully understood and implemented in various countries across the globe, irrespective of the lack of local standards.

Qualicoat UK & Ireland

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