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## Chairman's Statement Promoting Skills in Our Industry

### - Play Your Part



The wet weather in the last three months of 2000 had a significant effect on market demand for building blocks. Saturated ground conditions delayed site clearance and ground excavations with some housebuilders laying off skilled bricklayers or utilising them for interior finishing work. It appears, to some extent, that similar factors have affected the beginning of this year.

The housebuilding industry is optimistic about sales in 2001 - in a recent survey nearly half of the housebuilders contacted expected higher sales than in 2000. **So this pent-up demand should mean a good year for all of us - or does it?** Many housebuilders believe that there is a shortage of skilled block and bricklayers in the marketplace. Some have resorted to using timber-frame construction on selected sites to ensure that they achieve house completions on time. **Will they resort to timber-frame again this year?**

#### Better Brickwork Alliance

The Concrete Block Association has now joined the Better Brickwork Alliance to promote masonry skills across the UK. The Alliance was formed about three years ago and comprises of brick companies, contract bricklaying companies, training bodies and other relevant trade associations. Its primary aim is to increase the number of people training to become bricklayers and also the skill level of those already in the industry. **Alliance members are encouraged to play an active part, sponsoring prizes and becoming involved in local college activities.**

As a member of the Concrete Block Association you can play your part in this initiative. In Ian Anderson's recent letter he outlined a series of actions including:-

- Regular contact with the college by the factory manager or designated individual
- Provision of building blocks at cost to the college
- Field visits by the students to factories, building sites etc.
- Managers to be prepared to give presentations to students

**Please encourage your staff to become involved - remember our future depends upon this skill in the industry!**



Chris Hudson, Chairman

DTLR Statistics For GB (m <sup>2</sup> )						Product Shares	
	Dense	Lightweight	Aircrete	Total Agg	Total	Aircrete	Aggregate
1999 1st Half	19,374	10,477	13,053	29,851	42,904	30.4%	69.6%
FullYear	38,255	20,829	26,768	59,084	85,852	31.2%	68.8%
2000 1st Half	19,102	11,535	15,163	30,637	45,800	33.1%	66.9%
% change	-1.4%	10.1%	16.2%	2.6%	6.7%		
1999 Jan-Nov	36,096	19,606	26,767	55,702	82,469	32.5%	67.5%
2000 Jan-Nov	34,908	21,409	27,528	56,317	83,845	32.8%	67.2%
% change	-3.3%	9.2%	2.8%	1.1%	1.7%		

- The DETR has revised its figures previously reported in the Winter 2000/01 newsletter
- At the half year stage aggregate block sales volumes in 2000 were 2.6% ahead of the same period in 1999, whereas previous DETR figures showed a reduction of 2.0%
- The latest statistics published by the DETR show aggregate block volumes for Jan - Nov 2000 up 1.1% on 1999 but there was a marked difference in the relative performance of dense and lightweight at -3.3% and +9.2% respectively
- The CBA statistics indicate a similar movement for aggregate blocks sales overall, but differ markedly by product sector showing dense down by 0.3% and lightweight up by 2.5%
- The worst rainfall for 300 years in the second half of 2000 clearly spoilt what would otherwise have been a buoyant market, and when full year figures are available they will likely show no improvement on 1999 total volumes
- Aircrete sales for the 11 months in 2000 have fared only marginally better than aggregate blocks, thus aircrete's product share has remained fairly static year on year




# Technical Report

By Gerry Pettit, Chairman, Technical Committee

## Thermal

**CBA lobby wins favour for Part L: new wall U value confirmed at 0.35**  
With a General Election looming, it appears that political pressure is being applied to implement Part L sooner rather than later, despite an offer from DETR to effectively keep open the consultation of Part L of the Building Regulations until the close of the consultation on Part E.

We are delighted that our lobbying efforts have been heeded: the good news is that there will not be an implementation in two phases as originally planned, and the wall U value is to be 0.35.



This announcement was made by Nick Raynsford at the THB dinner at the Institution of Civil Engineers on 5 March 2001. It is likely that the new Part L will be published in August 2001.

**Part J in Scotland: 0.30 wall U value**  
On the other hand it is clear that our proposal for wall U values of 0.35 made in response to the consultation on Part J of the Scottish Regulations has fallen on deaf ears at the Scottish Executive. Our argument for wall U values of 0.35 along with similar calls from others was considered briefly at a meeting in November last year but rejected in favour of the original proposal for 0.30.

Despite the disappointment on the Scottish thermal regulations, we are still participating actively in the preparation of the 'Robust Standard Details' document which will accompany the new approved documents and which will give practical design solutions incorporating aggregate blocks. We are also participating in a BRE project to develop software to calculate U values to BS EN ISO 6946.

## Sound

January 2001 saw the publication of the much-delayed consultation on the revision of Part E. Those who came to the Regional Meetings on proposals for the Thermal Regulations would have seen an outline of the proposed amendments. Our inside information seems to have been remarkably accurate in this instance.

**We have been advised that plastered aggregate blockwork is the benchmark construction for the new requirements. Aircrete is likely to lose out significantly for separating walls and for flats in flanking walls.**

We may have difficulty initially in re-establishing drylined solutions but we are currently 10 months into a Pil project to establish enhanced performance from drylined blockwork separating walls and are confident that design solutions acceptable to housebuilders will be established. This is the first change of requirements for sound insulation for almost 40 years. In the same period there have been numerous changes to the technical requirements by other parts of the Building Regulations, principally to the thermal requirements.

The changes to the Sound insulation requirements are as follows:

- a specific level of sound reduction between dwellings is now required. (This replaces the implicit levels in the current regulations which calls for the sound insulation to be 'reasonable').
- a new method of rating sound insulation is introduced. Whilst this gives a lower single figure rating for all construction types it reduces the present high single figure rating of timber frame constructions to the same level as aggregate block constructions.
- more building types (hotels, student accommodation, hostels etc) are brought within the regulations albeit with a lower requirement than for dwellings.
- internal noise requirements are introduced for walls and floors between WC's and bedrooms and between bedrooms and other rooms.
- outside to inside sound insulation requirements are also introduced.
- a requirement for pre-completion testing is introduced. A testing rate of 1 dwelling in 10 is proposed.
- previous routes to demonstrating compliance such as 'similar construction' and full scale laboratory testing' are replaced by the need to carry out pre-completion testing.
- prescriptive solutions for walls and floors are given but they too will all be subjected to pre-completion testing at the same rate.
- only stepped or staggered prescriptive drylined cavity lightweight aggregate block work constructions are given. All the other aggregate blockwork solutions require a wet plaster finish.
- the 120 kg/m<sup>3</sup> flanking wall mass takes on a greater prominence. It is an absolute necessity for flats.
- insulating plasterboard on flanking walls have to use a mineral wool insulation material (ie plastics not permitted).

## Health & Safety

I was invited to make a presentation to the Occupational Health Working Party of the HSE CONIAC committee. In the presentation I explained:

- why heavy blocks were needed
- the design solutions developed to address the 20kg weight limit, and
- the extensive work carried out by CBA to develop design data for the design solutions.

The presentation was well received by the working party and there was a renewed call to develop an HSE document which gives sites practical design solutions for avoiding blocks of over 20kg. This would be used by inspectors who have recently been engaged in visiting sites to seek out blocks of over 20kg.

An initiative that not only identifies the problem but also proposes solutions will be in our best interests. We are to work with HSE in developing their guidance and other initiatives they may have for spreading the message through the trade.

# Special Report

Extracts from the DETR statement released on 5th March

Confirmation of the new Part L regulations unveiled by Construction Minister, Nick Raynsford at the Traditional Housing Bureau annual dinner.



## News from



The Traditional Housing Bureau continues to be highly active in promoting the benefits of masonry construction:

- Over 250 guests attended the first THB annual dinner on 5 March. Guest speaker was DETR minister, Nick Raynsford
- A press relations programme targeting trade journals and regional newspapers continues to attract widespread coverage
- The new web site has been launched. Visit [www.housebuilder.co.uk](http://www.housebuilder.co.uk)
- THB's new magazine, Home Life, aimed at house buyers, was launched in February in support of the association's Right to Know consumer campaign
- Master Plan is a new THB newsletter targeting specifiers and builders – the Spring issue was published in February
- A new trade advertising campaign begins in March
- There will be a THB presence at NHBC roadshows and at all major self-build exhibitions this year. Volunteers are needed to help man the stands

## Better Energy Efficiency Targets Brought Closer

Nick Raynsford said:

“The review of Part L of the Building Regulations is now almost complete. The Government wishes to implement the changes at the earliest opportunity to maximise the reduction in CO2 emissions that will result. We are working towards publishing the proposed draft Approved Document in the near future, in advance of its formal publication, with a view to making amendment regulations in August.

“The draft cannot be finalised and formally published until after we have received the responses to the current consultation on Part E. We recognise the interaction between these two parts of the Regulations, and specifically sought any further comments on Part L in the consultation on Part E. **This consultation closes on 20 April.**

“A key issue in the consultation on Part L was the target U values. We have listened to the views expressed in response to the consultation, and have decided to implement the changes in one stage rather than two to reduce the disruption to the industry. We have also accepted that the U value of 0.30W/m2K for walls would cause an undue burden on builders and their materials and component suppliers in circumstances where European standards for declaring thermal insulation performance have yet to settle, and have set it to 0.35W/m2K. This is still an important improvement on the current standard and we will work towards further reductions at a future date by early signalling of the prospective higher target.”

Visit the DETR web site at [www.detr.gov.uk](http://www.detr.gov.uk) for a full statement.

### Proposed Performance Standards for the Elemental Method

Element	U-value	
Pitched roof with insulation between rafters	0.2	
Pitched roof with insulation between joists	0.16	
Flat roof	0.25	
Wall	0.35	
Floor	0.25	
Windows, doors and rooflights	PVC-U or wood frames with face area proportion >20%	Metal frames with face area proportion <20%
	2.0	2.0
Gas central heating system with appropriate controls complying with the requirements in Part L; minimum boiler seasonal efficiency (calculated in the UK standard SEDBUK way)	78%	

Full list of U values to be introduced

To request copies of Home Life or Master Plan, or for further information, contact the THB on 01344 725757

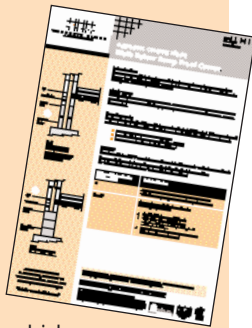
# CBA Membership, April 2001

The Concrete Block Association greatly appreciates the continued support of our members and associate members. We take this opportunity to welcome new member, CAMBRIAN CONCRETE PRODUCTS of Mold in Flintshire. We look forward to seeing you at our regional meetings in 2001.

## The Masonry-Built Homes Event of 2001

Following two recent sell-out conferences on factory-built housing, Building Homes magazine has teamed up with the Traditional Housing Bureau to host another event – The Future for Masonry-Built Homes. This major one-day conference and exhibition will focus on the implications of the new Part L and Part E regulations and will highlight innovations in masonry construction.

This unmissable event will take place on Thursday 5 July at the National Motorcycle Museum at Solihull. Call Jan Baird on 01793 881946 for a booking form.



## New Look CBA

As it's been almost 10 years since the CBA logo has been updated, we felt it was long overdue for a facelift. The new look identity, which we hope you like, will be applied to all our stationery and literature as supplies are replaced in coming months.

Two exciting new initiatives are now available to members:

CBA technical data sheets may be customised with your company logo, providing a valuable marketing tool at a fraction of the cost of new company literature. Details of quantities and prices are available from Jan Baird.

A specially designed A1-size exhibition panel will be issued free to all members later this year. Aimed at promoting the CBA and its work, the panel can be displayed in your reception area or meeting room, or maybe added to your company stand at trade exhibitions. If you would like to display panels at more than one site, additional supplies will be available at cost.

Further details from Jan Baird, tel 01793 881946.

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### Members

#### England & Wales

Members	Main Contact Office	Telephone
Aggregate Industries UK	Ashton Keynes, nr Swindon	01285 646800
Besblock	Telford	01952 586778
Bromfield Sand & Gravel Co	Ludlow, Shropshire	01584 856258/9
Broome Bros (Doncaster)	Doncaster	01302 361773
Cambrian Concrete Products	Mold, Flintshire	01352 741412
Cheshire Concrete Products	Middlewich, Cheshire	01606 837364
Forticrete	Bootle, Liverpool	0151 521 3545
E & J W Glendinning	Newton Abbot, Devon	01364 652601
Hanson Concrete Products	Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon	01235 848877
Interfuse	Syston, Leics	0116 260 9666
Lafarge Concrete Products	Melton Mowbray, Leics	01509 882083
Lignacite	Brandon, Suffolk	01842 810678
Mona Precast (Anglesey)	Anglesey	01248 421772
S Morris	Somerton, Somerset	01458 223991
Plasmor	Knottingley, West Yorks	01977 673221
RMC Concrete Products (UK)	Redditch, Worcs	01527 598699
Sellite Blocks	Goole, North Humberside	01977 661027
Stocks Bros	Garforth, Leeds	0113 232 0022
Tarmac Topblock	Wolverhampton	01902 774102
Thakeham Tiles	Storrington, West Sussex	01903 742381
Thomas Armstrong (Concrete Blocks)	Newcastle upon Tyne	01207 544214
Western Blocks	Hayle, Cornwall	01736 753128

#### Scotland

Aggregate Industries	Inverkeithing	01383 412155
Brand & Rae	Cupar, Fife	01334 652828
David Gordon & Son	Skene, Aberdeenshire	01224 742408
Hillhouse Blocks	Irvine, Ayrshire	01294 311618
Hoddam Contracting Co	Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire	01576 300279
Orkney Aggregates	Orkney	01856 871187
Patersons of Greenoakhill	Coatbridge	01236 433351
RMC Concrete Products (UK)	West Calder, West Lothian	01506 871422
William McMillan Rome	Kilmarnock, Ayrshire	01563 522077
Russell Concrete Products	Kilsyth, Glasgow	01236 822461
Skene Group Concrete Products	Crossgates, Fife	01383 510248
Tarmac (Northern)	Caldercruix, nr Airdrie	01236 843900
Tarmac Topblock	Edinburgh	0131 539 3628

### Associate Members

#### England & Wales

Beton Machinery Sales	Bingley, West Yorks	01274 560119
Blue Circle Industries	Westbury, Wilts	01373 828400
British Cement Association	Crowthorne, Berks	01344 725724
Castle Cement	Birmingham	0121 779 7771
CRMS – DEMREC	Bristol	0117 964 0500
East Coast Slag Products	Scunthorpe	01724 856444
Europa (UK)	Bristol	0117 977 8001
FEB MBT	Swinton, Manchester	0161 794 7411
Grace Construction Products	Warrington	01925 824824
KVM (UK)	Kirk Langley, Derbyshire	01332 825800
Maple Aggregates (UK)	Brighton	01273 699001
Optiroc Exclay	Port of Tilbury, Essex	01375 840396
Rekers (UK)	Tamworth, Staffs	01827 63833
Rugby Group	Rugby	01788 542111
Seament (UK)	Port of Tilbury	01375 856221
Titan Cement (UK)	Hull	01482 784012
Weller Engineering	Ilkeston, Derbyshire	0115 944 3205

#### Scotland

Blue Circle Cement	Edinburgh	0402 565 799
Caledonian Flag Cement	Glasgow	0141 440 5200
Castle Cement	Birmingham	0121 779 7771
Grace Construction Products	Auchterarder	01764 663893
Optiroc Exclay	Port of Tilbury, Essex	01375 840396
Scotash	Kincardine-on-Forth, Clackmannanshire	01259 730110
Seament (UK)	Leith, Edinburgh	0131 554 1555
Sika	Welwyn Garden City	01707 394444
Weeks Technical Services	Glasgow	0141 774 6271

