Comment

There seems to be a bit of a hoo haa surrounding the Residence Collection - with particular reference to why installers should avoid buying unglazed Residence 9 (vertical sliders) windows.

Kurt Greatrex at fabricator firm Dekko Window Systems writes: 'Residence Collection windows achieve industry leading U-Values through smart design. The frames and sashes are deeper than conventional systems, there are more thermal chamber pockets and the chamber webs and external profile walls are much thicker. But most crucially, Residence Collection profiles are bonded to the glass unit, strengthening the mechanically jointed frame and eliminating the need for traditional steel reinforcements. Glass-bonding also prevents movement and bowing in a system designed without large steel reinforcements'.

Steel reinforcements give a window strength when it's windy and resists any bowing when it's hot but reduces the thermal performance of the window, so eliminating it through glass-bonding is really smart – the window is just as strong but offers significantly improved performance.

'So, when I hear that fabricators are promoting Residence 9 windows unglazed and without glass-bonding my knees begin to tremble,' continues Greatrex. 'Are we going to see product warranty issues with the best premium window in the industry?

'If you choose to buy unglazed Residence 9 you have to glass-bond on site but how practical is that? Glass-bonding should be carried out in a dry factory environment and allowed to cure and set for a specified period – you simply cannot guarantee these conditions when out on site.

'I have discussed the issue with DW3 Products Group, owners of the Residence Collection system. They agree that unglazed Residence 9 is simply not manufactured to current specification.

Alan Burgess of Masterframe Windows (a vertical slider specialist) then also took his pen out writing in favour of glass bonding – and steel reinforcement:
'Masterframe lead by example. A rated, SBD and fully steel reinforced sashes as standard shows that it is possible to achieve security and great thermal properties, it just means we must incur significant other costs like Krypton to balance the heat lost through steel reinforcement. The danger with these arguments is that it suggests one cost saving measure (no steel) is better than a perceived loss of weld strength using a new concept offered by competitors. Let's keep this simple, I fully accept that any 'on site operation' can never be controlled better than factory conditions. I also accept that glass bonding seems to be the way forward for those seeking to reduce material costs (no steel). But products would be even stronger (and expensive) were reinforcement retained and sashes, glass bonded! Whilst windows from fabricators not using steel reinforcement and not glass bonding will look identical, it's obvious that they'll perform far worse, expect service issues and further reputational damage, both company and industry.

So there you have it - there's the wrong way, the right way – and according to Burgess, the right, right, way.

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