

LABC approval – it's all in the details



LABC has re-launched its existing 'Type and Systems Approvals'. The new scheme – LABC Registered Details – is offering designers and contractors design details that will help streamline the building control process. LABC Business Development Director Lorna Stimpson reports

As well as covering building types and building systems, LABC Registered Details also includes a new element – LABC Registered Solutions. This will enable us to provide better links between manufacturers, designers, developers and LABC.

Like the previous scheme, LABC Registered Details enables all local authority building control surveyors to share technical details and to recognise the building control decisions made by others in the LABC network. This means that once a 'Registration' has been given through one local authority it will be recognised by all LABC surveyors in England and Wales. The scheme is specifically designed for use within the LABC network. The benefit to LABC surveyors is that technical research does not need to be repeated time after time by different local authorities.

The benefit for LABC's customers is that the use of Registered Details streamlines Building Regulations applications and saves time and money.

LABC is not a testing house and does not provide certification – in fact submissions will be required to demonstrate technical performance and achievement of recognised standards by supplying test certificates and other proofs of performance.

What we are doing with LABC Registered Details is to measure a design, system or solution against the Building Regulations and to judge whether, if used correctly in the defined way, compliance with

the Building Regulations will be achieved.

LABC REGISTERED BUILDING TYPES

LABC Registered Building Types is the new name for LABC Type Approval, the long-standing service offered by local authorities to their customers. Design approvals for 'building types' and 'building systems' can be issued by LABC and will be accepted by all local authority building control departments in England and Wales. This approval covers compliance with the Building Regulations and has now been extended to include preliminary assessment of standard scoring under Code for Sustainable Homes.

Whilst there may be some limited variations to such things as foundations and drainage details, the structure, fire and other strategic design details will remain unchanged.

LABC Registered Building Types are used extensively by house builders, however they are also relevant to other replicated designs used in the industrial, commercial and retail sectors.

LABC REGISTERED SYSTEMS

Formerly LABC Systems Approvals, these are elements of a building that are constructed or installed in practically the same way on any site or project (whereas LABC Registered Solutions will vary according to site specific design requirements, LABC Registered Systems will have little variation). LABC Registered Systems are not 'tested' or 'certified' by LABC, but they are investigated in depth by experts to ensure

"THE BENEFIT FOR LABC'S CUSTOMERS IS THAT THE USE OF REGISTERED DETAILS STREAMLINES BUILDING REGULATIONS APPLICATIONS AND SAVES TIME AND MONEY"

technical compliance with the Building Regulations.

LABC Registered Systems also help suppliers to market specialist building systems because their customers are reassured that the system has been fully checked by LABC as being compliant with the Building Regulations.

LABC REGISTERED SOLUTIONS

These provide LABC's recognition of a product or system that is a solution to a typical design issue created by the Building Regulations, but that will require variations to meet the specific needs of each site, project or unit.

LABC Registered Solutions provide companies that offer quality services and products with the recognition and validation from LABC for products and systems that are varied and bespoke in nature. LABC Registered Solutions is an "approval process" that is both relevant to variable solutions and enables manufacturers, designers and contractors to benefit from streamlined building control through local authorities. Practically, it saves LABC surveyors and our customers time. Strategically, it positions LABC as an adopter and supporter of technical innovation and develops consistent technical handling of solutions that are becoming commonplace in the industry.

LABC's acceptance will be based on a variety of assessments including: compliance with the Building Regulations; component quality and certification; consulting advice to agents; installation advice to contractors; documentation; ethical selling;

Housing association green light for LABC

In the past many housing associations have procured work in a way that excluded LABC. Tender documents used to contain this outdated paragraph: "The constructor will ensure that all properties benefit from a guarantee of at least 10 years from either NHBC or Zurich Municipal".

This text has been embedded in documents for many years and has led architects and developers working for housing associations to choose other warranty suppliers and, therefore, their building control services.

This has been a competition issue and has stopped LABC from winning work but now LABC can compete.

Chief Executive of LABC Paul Everall, has contacted the Homes and Communities Agency, the organisation responsible for the allocation of funding for social and affordable housing schemes, who have confirmed that they approve LABC New Home Warranty as an appropriate warranty provider.

Clive Clowes, Head of Design and Sustainability for the HCA, has provided written confirmation that "the HCA does not differentiate between any warranty provider capable of fulfilling the conditions."

The need for an independent warranty is part of a funding condition that is contained within the HCA's Funding Conditions for application to RSLs and the Grant Agreement for non-RSLs. In other words, housing associations must ensure that any properties they procure or build come with a warranty.

The LABC Business Development Team and their colleagues at LABC New Home Warranty are lobbying all housing associations and RSLs to have this paragraph



updated to include any approved warranty provider.

Over the last three months LABC has presented this information to more than 600 people working in this sector.

The combination of LABC plus the LABC New Home Warranty provides the perfect platform for housing associations looking to develop.

For further information, contact Lorna Stimpson, LABC Business Development Director:
lorna.stimpson@labc.uk.com

track record and proof of post-installation monitoring. These requirements will naturally lead to a focus on solutions that have standard components put together into a larger system. Therefore, the design approach and elements will be repeated from site to site, but the exact elements and site specific needs may vary requiring further checks by a local building control surveyor.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF A CHANGING INDUSTRY

LABC believes it is important in this period of enormous technological change in the construction industry, borne out of the need for more sustainable, greener products, that we and our warranty providers are seen as being receptive to new and modern construction methods. These innovations may be in schools, universities, hospitals, offices, industrial or retail projects and LABC Registered Details can be used by all sector specialists.

APPROVAL PROCESS

- Contact LABC who will provide you with a Registered Details proposal form
- Complete proposal form with a brief summary of your building or system. Marketing brochures and overview technical documents are useful at this stage so that we can see a summary of what you want approved. You will need to supply full details of relevant tests
- Part payment is required on application with the balance paid immediately prior to registration. The payment schedule and further details about the charges are available to view on the LABC website at www.labc.uk.com/registereddetails
- LABC will identify an appropriate local authority to lead the verification process based on location, technical expertise etc. This authority will undertake a detailed examination of the

"THESE REQUIREMENTS WILL NATURALLY LEAD TO A FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS THAT HAVE STANDARD COMPONENTS PUT TOGETHER INTO A LARGER SYSTEM"

application to see that the building type or system complies with the requirements of the Building Regulations; where appropriate LABC New Home Warranty will form part of this process

- Final approval is granted by LABC's specialist Registrations and Partnerships Team members
- The "approved" application will be added to the LABC database and the website, and local authorities will be notified of its addition
- Companies achieving approvals are allowed to use the LABC Registered logo

Find out more about LABC Registered Details on the LABC website at www.labc.uk.com/registereddetails

If you are interested in becoming LABC Registered, please contact LABC now on 0844 561 6136.