

Technical Note No 34

Assessing the appearance of new curtain walling



This Technical Note is one of three on assessing appearance. The series comprises:

TN 34 Assessing the appearance of new curtain walling

TN 35 Assessing the appearance of glass

TN 36 Assessing the appearance of metals and finishes

Introduction

The quality of curtain walling is often assessed by visual inspection and disputes sometimes arise over the associated procedures and acceptance criteria. This is particularly the case where a specification is not sufficiently detailed.

This Technical Note gives advice on assessing the appearance of new curtain walling and provides guidance on sources of information for such inspections. This Note is confined to visual aspects that are commonly queried on new construction and does not cover condition surveys after a period in service.

In this series of three notes, the aspects commonly queried are duly considered and guidance is provided in tabular format on the following:

- Factors affecting glass colour
- Tolerances in glass products
- Viewing criteria for glass types
- Surface treatments to metalwork
- Tolerances in metalwork
- Viewing criteria for metalwork

Purpose of inspection

Well-structured quality control regimes incorporate relevant checks at various stages during fabrication and erection of cladding. Whilst this helps avoid the installation of unacceptable components as early as practicable, a final inspection

of the completed cladding in situ is often required.

To maximise the prospect of the facade being built to an acceptable aesthetic standard, it is essential to ensure that the specification is sufficiently clear, precise and realistic on the tolerances and visual requirements to be complied with. This will not only improve the likelihood of compliance but will also set a benchmark for acceptance or rejection.

In setting the required aesthetic standard, the specifier should use the following tools:

- Quantified tolerances insofar as is practicable for aspects that affect visual appearance
- A requirement for control samples and mock-ups

The viewing of reference buildings using the same glass or framing materials can also be helpful in selecting materials and coatings.

Definitions

Products used in facades invariably incorporate variations in dimensions and visual appearance. Where these occur within legitimate tolerances, such variations should be deemed to be a feature or characteristic of the product or process and should not be deemed to represent imperfections or defects. Thus,