SPRA
Single Ply Roofing Association

SPRA TECHNICAL GUIDANCE S25/24

ABUTMENT FLASHINGS BEHIND RAINSCREEN CLADDING

In accordance with BS 6229 *Flat roofs with continuously supported flexible waterproof coverings. Code of practice*, at the junction between a flat roof and an abutment wall, *'the waterproof layer should be turned up to a level not less than 150mm above the adjacent finished roof system.'*

Where a flat roof abuts a wall with a rainscreen cladding system, its waterproof layer is turned up the external face of the sheathing board or thermal insulation behind the rainscreen cladding. There is no practical method to chase a waterproof layer into a sheathing board or thermal insulant. Prior to the installation of the rainscreen cladding – which can be weeks or months after the installation of the sheathing board or thermal insulation – the integrity of an adjacent flat roof is reliant upon a breather membrane external to the sheathing board or thermal insulation that overlaps its waterproof layer and acts as a temporary counter flashing. Alternative solutions (such as the use of a gun-applied mastic, a liquid-applied membrane, or trapping the waterproof layer behind a cladding rail to provide a temporary seal) raise issues of compatibility, durability and reliability.

Some sheathing board manufacturers consider a breather membrane to be unnecessary in normal UK exposure conditions when combined with façade elements. This does not consider the requirements of other building elements, however, nor how they may be affected by any delays to the installation of the rainscreen cladding. If a flat roof waterproof layer were turned up such a sheathing board and left exposed, the waterproofing integrity of the flat roof could be compromised.

SUMMARY

At the junction between a flat roof and an abutment wall with a rainscreen cladding system, the flat roof waterproof layer should be turned up the sheathing board or thermal insulation to a level not less than 150mm above the adjacent finished roof system in accordance with BS 6229.

While the sheathing board manufacturer may consider a breather membrane to be unnecessary, it should be installed regardless to protect the waterproofing integrity of the flat roof should any delay to the installation of the rainscreen cladding occur.

The manufacturer and/or supplier of the flat roofing system should notify the client, principal designer, designer(s), principal contractor and/or contractor(s) as early as possible to prevent issues from arising on site.

'A breather membrane should be installed to protect the waterproofing integrity of the flat roof should any delay to the installation of the rainscreen cladding occur.'

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