

structural load testing report

thermoseam

thermal break fixings for standing seam roofing

Ref 12070
March 2013

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.01 Standing seam roofing provides an unparalleled degree of weather protection combined with puncture resistance, leading to a very high degree of confidence in the completed roof covering. The key to this reliability is the concealed fixing clip which is folded into the seam when the roof sheets are mechanically locked together. With increasing demands for the thermal performance of roofing systems, any fixing which is a potential thermal bridge is at a disadvantage. A fixing which is both thermally efficient and mechanically secure is therefore required.
- 1.02 Clearly the strength of any thermal break needs to be tested as materials with low thermal conductivity tend to have a lower tensile strength than the traditional steel fixings. The tensile capacity of the cleat assembly is therefore of great importance.
- 1.03 The testing programme was designed to determine the strength of the combination of plastic ferrule and metal cleat which is incorporated into the seam upstand.
- 1.04 The report and testing program were commissioned by Thames Valley Special Products Ltd (TVSP), who designed and constructed the test rig with advice from Allanconsult Ltd. The test regime was determined and supervised by Allanconsult Ltd.

2 NATURE OF LOADING

- 2.01 ThermoSeam fixings are typically used on a 500mm wide trough at 400mm centres, giving a rate of 5 per square metre. Wind suction is the governing criterion and therefore direct tensile testing was clearly the required consideration.
- 2.02 Negative air pressure which stresses the fixings arises when airflow accelerates as it encounters an obstacle. As moving air needs to make room for the obstacle the only way it can do this is to either compress or to accelerate; in practice it does both; initially causing an overpressure immediately on the windward side of the obstacle, and thus causing a pressure gradient around the obstacle. This pressure gradient accelerates the airflow, relieving the pressure increase. Invariably the diversion of the airflow over the roof of a building leaves a pocket of reduced pressure above the roof. This reduced pressure or suction is the design criterion for sheet roof fixings.
- 2.03 The precise interaction between time, pressure, and air velocity is complex and depends on a large number of parameters. In order to facilitate design of practical projects a set of empirical rules and parametric formulae have been devised and codified for the use of Structural Engineers, in British and European standards. Design standards currently use the limit state philosophy and the testing in this report is intended to produce load capacities which can be used with such codes and standards.
- 2.04 This process isn't clear cut since there are a number of parameters which have to be properly understood for the correct interpretation and application of the results. It will be seen that neither the design load to be applied to the fastener nor the ultimate capacity (or load at the point of failure) can be precisely assessed, and also that the absence of precision is not an obstacle to the provision of practical working capacity values for design.
- 2.05 The load resistance required is also to be understood in the context of the behaviour of the clip assembly. Wind suction loading occurs as a transient load on a building element as a whole and derives from the pressure difference between one face of the element and the other. In the case of an insulated roof panel the pressure difference is broken down in steps, with each component being subjected to a partial pressure which is a proportion of the overall pressure difference.

- 2.06 Typically for an enclosed building the dynamic pressure (q) is obtained for the site location and building shape. This is then multiplied by internal and external coefficients to get the surface pressure relative to atmospheric pressure which results from a wind in a particular direction. For the roof structural elements the design case usually arises from considering a negative external pressure combined with a positive internal pressure, resulting in the maximum uplift load on the panel. The panel comprises a series of layers each of which is loaded by a partial pressure on each side. The algebraic sum of these pressures between the inner and outer surfaces is the total pressure difference acting on the panel as a whole.
- 2.07 To put this another way, there is a pressure gradient across the thickness of the panel and this is in the form of a series of discrete steps. Initially the interstitial pressure will be the ambient average normal air pressure. If there is an external pressure drop of $0.8q$ (a typical high value) and an internal pressure rise of $0.3q$, this gives an overall pressure gradient of $1.2q$. A first approximation for a typical standing seam roof would therefore be to take $0.8q$ as the maximum load effect on the fasteners. However a relatively small deflection in the roofing sheet pan in response to a sudden gust would be to cause a sharp drop in pressure within the air gap beneath the sheet.
- 2.08 The space below the sheeting is nominally ventilated at ridge and eaves. However within the timescale of a typical gust the pressure inside and outside this ventilated zone does not have time to equalise. The result is that the suction on the outer surface immediately produces a small upward deflection of the sheet between fixings, and this generates a balancing suction below the sheet. The short term suction of the wind is therefore passed directly to the substrate, with a neutral effect on the sheeting fasteners. To put this into context the deflection under maximum working load would be of the order of 5mm. A change in volume produced by less than a millimetre is sufficient to produce a balancing pressure reduction which would match the highest wind induced suction likely to be met in practice;

$$PV^\gamma = K$$

$$P_2 = \frac{P_1 V_1^\gamma}{V_2^\gamma}$$

Substituting 100kN/m^2 as an approximate value for atmospheric pressure (P_1), a conservative value of 1.25 for γ , and then $V_1 = \text{say } 0.05\text{m}^3$ and $V_2 = 0.051$ (a 1mm upward movement), we get

$$P_2 - P_1 = 2.5\text{ kN/m}^2 \text{ (approx.)}$$

- 2.09 It follows from this that failure of fastenings could only occur at the edge of a roof. The local external pressure coefficient is also at a maximum in edge regions. Edge regions may be considered for the purposes of this report generally as 10% of the width of the building but for particular cases will need careful evaluation by a Structural Engineer, as the detailed code provisions are complex.
- 2.10 In limit state terms the load would be multiplied by a partial safety factor of 1.4, and the load capacity would be taken as 0.87 times the characteristic strength of the assembly. This analysis would result in an overall factor of safety in a typical installation of 2 against failure.
- 2.11 The strength of the fastener here is defined as the limit of proportionality of the assembly (fastener and clip). However the *ultimate* load at failure (the maximum load that is needed to separate the sheeting from the substrate) is at least 70% higher. Twenty five cyclic tests were carried out in which the sample assemblies were loaded to 150% of the limit of proportionality and no loss of breaking failure capacity was found after five overload cycles.
- 2.12 The assessment of the design wind suction must be undertaken by suitably experienced and qualified Structural Engineer, because individual building requirements and wind effects are highly variable.

3 TEST SPECIMENS AND TESTING RIG

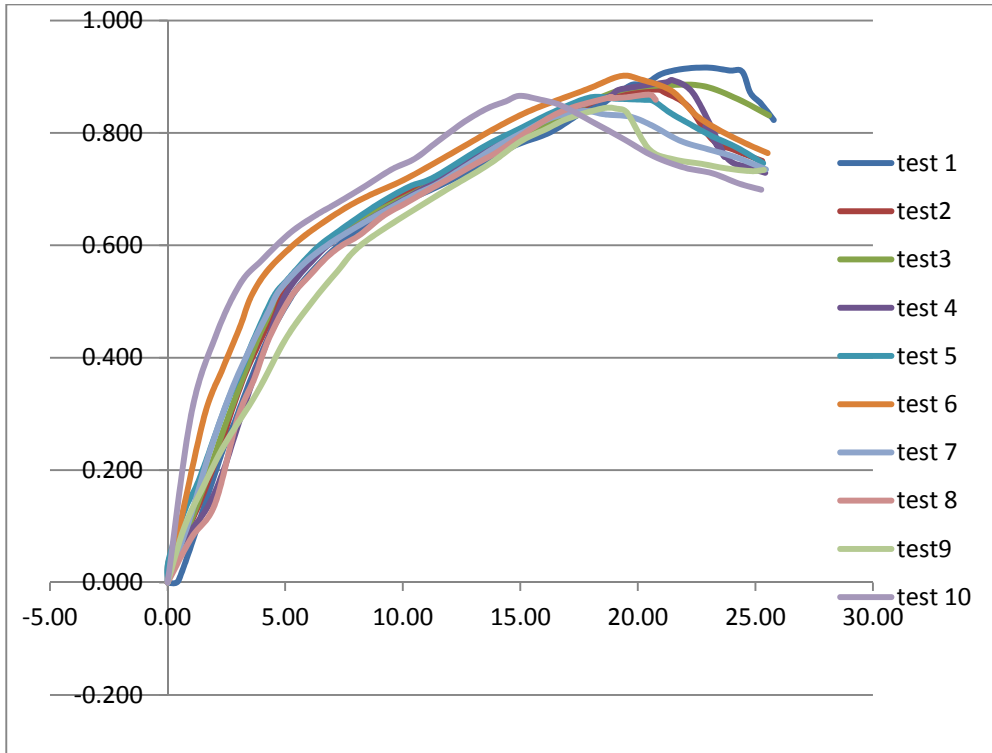
- 3.01 Samples were made comprising a Thermoseam ferrule and metal clip. The ferrule was screwed into a block of timber through a block of PIR insulation board, simulating an actual installation. The ferrule head was engaged into the anchor plate of the fixing clip, which was folded around a steel door hinge to simulate the clamping effect of the welded standing seam.
- 3.02 In this manner the test measures the resistance of the entire fixing system and not just the Thermoseal component.
- 3.03 The frame was arranged such that a progressive strain could be applied by a screw jack at one end. Elongation was measured by a Demec dial gauge with a resolution of 0.02mm, and the load was recorded by a digital load cell (Mecmesin BFG2500N, calibrated by the manufacturer before testing). The load and strain were simultaneously recorded on video and this was interrogated afterwards. This technique allowed the test to be run as a smooth continuous load application at slow speed without pausing for measurements. Pausing the replay at intervals allowed the recording of stress and strain measurements which were precisely simultaneous.
- 3.04 The test frame comprised a channel section of folded aluminium plate, which both housed the test specimens and provided a guide, and also transmitted the compressive reaction balancing the tensile force imposed on the test specimen.

4 TEST RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

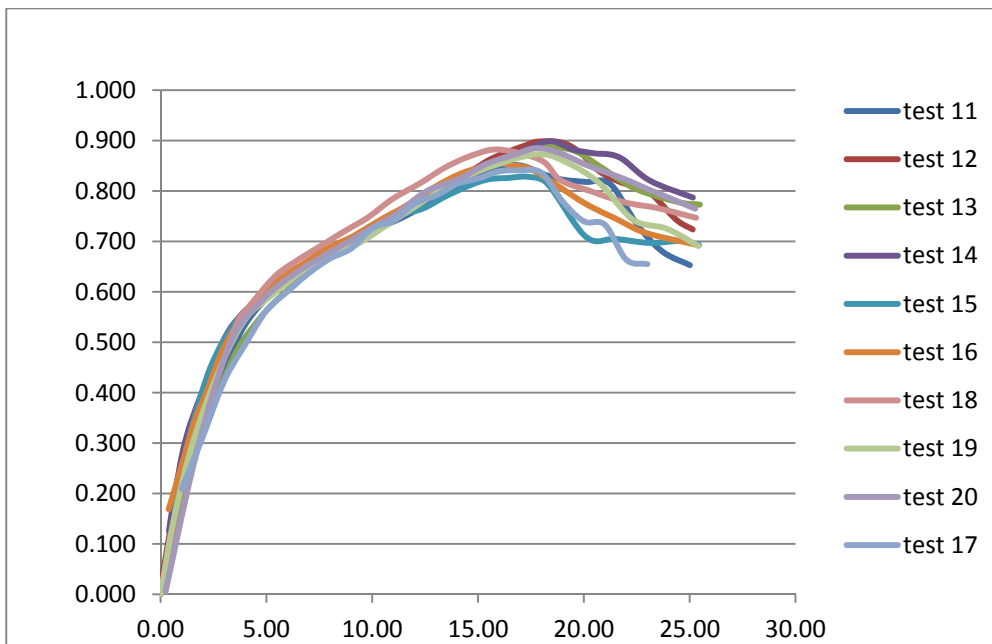
- 4.01 In all tests carried out the first serviceability limit was reached when the metal cleat started to buckle locally at the slot provided for thermal movement. Ultimate failure also occurred first in the metal cleat. It was found that at cleat failure there was permanent deformation in the plastic flange of the Thermoseam coupler, but the coupler remained firmly attached to the cleat.



- 4.02 The photograph above shows a cleat on the point of failure, whilst the isolating ferrule is successfully resisting being pulled through the screw hole.
- 4.03 A sample set of results is appended to this report. Typical load/extension curves are illustrated below.



4.04



4.05

4.06 First yield of the cleat begins at a characteristic load of 0.52kN. The characteristic ultimate tensile capacity of the combined assembly is 0.82kN. The design characteristic strength of the cleat has been assessed conservatively, in view of these results, as 0.452kN which is the characteristic strength divided by the appropriate partial factor of safety,

- 4.07 The design value for use with ultimate (factored) wind loads is **450N**, the strength of the assembly in all cases being limited by the cleat. Hysteresis tests found that samples tested to the 520N threshold returned to their original length when unloaded and showed no loss of strength or stiffness on re-loading.
- 4.08 The metal cleat has been in use for many years and no failures have been reported.

5 DESIGN FOR USE IN BUILDINGS IN UK AND EIRE

5.01 The governing criterion is the local suction at edges of a roof. This should always be assessed by a qualified and experienced Structural Engineer. The following general guide gives an indication of typical results for differing degrees of wind exposure. It is necessarily general and will prove conservative in many instances.

5.02

England, Wales & Southern Ireland	Exposure and / or height	General spacing	Spacing 1 st 1.5m or 10% of roof slope length, whichever is greater, with seam spacing of 500m;
	Suburban / urban up to 10m high	5/m ²	400mm
	Fairly open country and or up to 15m high	5/m ²	225mm
	Open country, no obstructions, 30m high	5/m ²	200mm
Northern Ireland and lowland Scotland inc Edinburgh	Suburban / urban up to 10m high	5/m ²	350mm
	Fairly open country and or up to 15m high	5/m ²	200mm
	Open country, no obstructions, 30m high	5/m ²	175mm



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test 21		test 22		test 23		test 24		test 25		test 26		test 27		test 28		test 29		test 30	
mm	kN	mm	kN	mm	kN	mm	kN	mm	kN	mm	kN	mm	kN	mm	kN	mm	kN	mm	kN
0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000
1.00	0.118	1.81	0.043	0.84	0.148	0.81	0.106	0.49	0.189	0.80	0.164	0.85	0.018	0.89	0.268	0.87	0.123	0.89	0.210
2.22	0.250	2.91	0.144	1.84	0.299	1.85	0.291	1.69	0.378	2.02	0.350	1.43	0.189	1.91	0.410	1.83	0.302	1.88	0.364
3.43	0.399	4.13	0.258	3.25	0.452	3.04	0.424	2.75	0.494	3.22	0.494	2.72	0.370	3.17	0.547	2.98	0.454	3.53	0.551
4.86	0.519	5.81	0.397	4.54	0.542	4.73	0.536	3.84	0.565	4.20	0.555	4.26	0.527	4.43	0.602	4.56	0.551	5.30	0.623
6.59	0.600	7.45	0.481	5.61	0.580	5.80	0.580	5.81	0.641	5.66	0.609	5.95	0.609	5.63	0.650	6.48	0.639	6.87	0.652
7.94	0.637	9.24	0.562	6.59	0.626	7.18	0.621	7.29	0.677	7.99	0.683	7.05	0.635	7.24	0.702	8.61	0.693	8.29	0.694
9.64	0.681	11.08	0.643	8.02	0.673	8.93	0.671	8.66	0.707	9.75	0.721	8.43	0.670	8.66	0.735	10.04	0.727	9.88	0.731
11.40	0.716	12.69	0.686	9.34	0.704	10.80	0.711	10.31	0.749	11.33	0.758	9.90	0.702	10.11	0.767	11.65	0.763	11.32	0.766
13.16	0.753	14.23	0.720	10.98	0.740	12.52	0.750	12.07	0.802	13.23	0.799	11.29	0.732	11.99	0.811	13.15	0.803	12.97	0.803
14.95	0.788	15.75	0.753	12.44	0.783	14.37	0.789	13.68	0.843	15.21	0.831	13.32	0.785	12.77	0.837	15.13	0.853	14.04	0.823
16.28	0.819	17.49	0.800	13.88	0.818	16.32	0.823	15.29	0.869	15.88	0.836	14.87	0.818	14.91	0.861	16.85	0.881	14.90	0.826
18.24	0.861	19.62	0.853	15.34	0.852	18.04	0.840	15.97	0.865	17.74	0.811	15.89	0.843	15.19	0.856	17.75	0.889	16.28	0.812
20.30	0.886	21.15	0.883	17.01	0.876	19.32	0.830	17.50	0.864	19.35	0.782	17.13	0.863	16.84	0.854	19.02	0.864	17.93	0.778
21.25	0.885	23.39	0.906	18.28	0.885	21.02	0.797	19.30	0.859	21.40	0.757	17.60	0.865	18.35	0.820	21.29	0.810	20.11	0.759
23.15	0.881	24.50	0.897	19.54	0.877	22.83	0.740	21.09	0.825	23.38	0.739	19.12	0.826	20.93	0.797	22.83	0.780	22.70	0.743
25.34	0.835	25.25	0.862	21.01	0.843	25.00	0.685	23.13	0.729	25.47	0.720	21.02	0.702	22.52	0.762	25.30	0.745	25.24	0.722
				22.76	0.798			25.30	0.698			22.76	0.656	25.39	0.759				
				25.18	0.778							25.02	0.637						

test 42		test 43		test 44		test 45		test 46		test 47		test 48		test 49		test 50	
mm	kN	mm	kN	mm	kN	mm	kN	mm	kN	mm	kN	mm	kN	mm	kN	mm	kN
0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.00	0.000
0.95	0.366	0.90	0.365	0.69	0.264	1.19	0.275	1.20	0.019	0.56	0.111	0.89	0.314	0.38	0.038	0.84	0.344
2.16	0.502	2.02	0.496	2.09	0.454	2.34	0.432	2.28	0.291	2.11	0.391	1.93	0.433	1.98	0.329	2.37	0.514
3.76	0.600	3.02	0.540	3.45	0.544	3.76	0.547	3.21	0.411	3.95	0.556	3.11	0.544	3.55	0.495	3.97	0.581
4.96	0.637	4.48	0.606	5.11	0.618	5.18	0.612	4.60	0.552	5.72	0.631	4.50	0.616	5.27	0.598	5.73	0.640
6.32	0.671	5.92	0.646	7.42	0.683	6.90	0.667	6.19	0.628	6.85	0.667	5.79	0.657	6.66	0.654	7.37	0.682
7.83	0.713	7.49	0.689	9.04	0.715	8.53	0.701	7.70	0.665	8.00	0.700	7.00	0.690	7.70	0.679	8.77	0.716
9.37	0.766	9.02	0.727	11.52	0.781	10.29	0.755	9.30	0.703	9.49	0.742	8.30	0.731	9.11	0.727	10.57	0.759
10.88	0.813	10.64	0.776	13.25	0.825	11.57	0.787	11.16	0.757	11.15	0.787	9.94	0.785	10.48	0.772	12.29	0.803
12.28	0.847	12.23	0.819	15.13	0.861	12.95	0.820	12.79	0.805	12.83	0.829	11.70	0.830	11.96	0.816	13.82	0.832
13.76	0.877	14.13	0.840	16.10	0.866	14.36	0.854	14.24	0.837	14.40	0.853	12.89	0.861	13.79	0.866	15.23	0.841
15.04	0.886	14.42	0.845	17.57	0.847	17.10	0.867	16.05	0.869	15.63	0.864	13.92	0.881	15.40	0.895	16.96	0.817
15.33	0.883	16.07	0.830	19.16	0.825	18.30	0.847	17.20	0.878	16.23	0.851	15.54	0.899	15.77	0.900	18.38	0.801
17.11	0.859	17.85	0.797	21.67	0.807	20.23	0.815	19.35	0.861	18.05	0.833	16.50	0.870	17.56	0.870	20.15	0.783
18.63	0.847	20.22	0.768	23.49	0.782	22.51	0.793	21.82	0.829	20.14	0.801	18.29	0.842	19.10	0.840	22.71	0.785
20.02	0.831	22.59	0.748	25.21	0.770	25.33	0.794	23.67	0.801	22.90	0.798	20.13	0.829	21.07	0.806	25.26	0.791
22.52	0.818	25.23	0.741					25.32	0.777	25.04	0.805	22.57	0.808	23.13	0.784		
25.09	0.795											25.13	0.789	25.20	0.756		