



Report on the BBA's 2021 consultation
to the industry: Construction Product
Assessment Relating to Higher Risk
Residential Buildings

June 2021





Executive Summary

The BBA launched its industry consultation on 18 February 2021, with a document titled Consultation to the Industry: Construction Product Assessment Relating to Higher Risk Residential Buildings. The consultation quickly became known as the Agrément Plus Consultation, this term being coined within the documentation. The consultation was closed on 03 June 2021.

We started with a range of preliminary interviews that spanned February and early March. These yielded extensive qualitative data and a variety of ideas and opinions as to how the BBA could move forward. Many of the ideas were far reaching in their implications, so it was considered appropriate to develop a quantitative survey. In this way, we were able to formally test the ideas across the stakeholders with regards to Agrément Certification, and a much wider demographic was engaged. For this, we called on research partner Mace & Menter, who first conducted research interviews, to independently validate the BBA's findings, and then designed and ran the quantitative survey. The survey was launched on 25 March 2021 and ran until 03 June. A number of further interviews were conducted in parallel.

The consultation engaged both the BBA's clients (product and materials manufacturers) and the certificate user group (primarily architects, specifiers, warranty providers, insurers, construction managers, funders, building control, and regulators).

The data generated from the interviews and the survey were extensive. It was clearly identified that the market has a very high regard for BBA's Agrément Certification and is fully in support of its future success; its integrity and fitness-for-purpose attestation are seen as both vital and unique. Nevertheless, there is work to do, in particular: further systemisation of BBA processes; strengthened testing regimes; a move towards digitisation of the certificates and embracing the digital revolution; more attention to sustainability; and a greater collaboration with industry leadership and certificate users.

Overarching was the view that a two-tier 'Agrément' and 'Agrément Plus' regime was not a good route forward. In this regime, products with an Agrément Plus certificate would be attested as fit for use in HRBs, whereas products with an Agrément certificate would not be. The preference was that the format of the Agrément certificates should be developed so that fitness (or the lack of it) for use in HRBs is clearly identified; a modular style of certificate can achieve this. Secondly, an important finding was a very clear indication that the market considers that both poor workmanship and uncontrolled value engineering pose by far the highest risks to the built environment, higher than fires, even façade fires of existing buildings. This warrants industry leadership attention, especially when the workmanship challenges of the domestic RMI (Repair, Maintenance and Improvement) market are considered.

Of course, there is a balance to be struck between cost and excellence. The BBA will consult further before making changes to its demands on those wishing to certify products and therefore forming an industry liaison group will be an early 'next step'. Notwithstanding, the BBA will do what it considers right, and will work with industry leaders and regulators to drive high standards and safe outcomes.



Find out more here:
<https://www.bbacerts.co.uk>

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