Masonry Frame Systems

Silka Elements

Frequently Asked Questions

The Silka Wall Panel System FAQ's

How does this differ from our normal Thin Bed block work ?

Well, I best describe this as an 'adult version' of our Thin Bed block system. It has all of the same qualities which means our labour can easily transfer but it comes in an even larger format that has to be installed with a mini crane.

What is the composition?

Essentially the panels are manufactured from Calcium Silicate as opposed to Aircrete for our current 'day to day' Thin joint and achieves strengths in excess of 25 N/mm2 . This enables us to put an entirely different perspective on it and makes it appropriate for Medium to High rise where our standard 3.60 and 7.30 N/mm2 blockwork can't cope.

What size do the Elements come in?

The standard elements are 1000mm x 650mm and can weigh up to 240kg depending on the thickness hence the need for mechanical installation.

What thicknesses are the elements manufactured in?

They are manufactured in a range of sizes to meet all different demands. We see the 150mm wide for external walls and the 214mm width for party and separating walls being the most common that we will specify and are confident these will satisfy a range of applications.

How Expensive is it?

Its early days in a formal 'Cost Comparison', and will depend on its application. In a recent exercise that we undertook in the office on a 3 storey structure it was no worse than cost neutral compared with our Thin Joint blockwork system but more significantly, it was substantially quicker in fact halving a 'traditional' build programme. Yes, on a recent scheme we were able to reduce the build programme for the Structural Envelope from 34 weeks to 16 weeks!!!

But it is in 'medium' to 'high' rise where we see it will be of most value. We are total convinced that this will re-define the way apartments / flats / student accommodation / and care homes are constructed.

So how many storey's can you build?

Providing we address the Disproportionate Collapse, we can take the system up to 10—12 storey's high, not that I would want to though!!!

How do you address the Disproportionate Collapse?

This has probably been our biggest single hurdle to overcome as it relevant from 4 stories +. So after much debate, we have engaged our own Structural Engineer to design a range of solutions that could be relatively simply adopted to given situations.

So do you now undertake the Design?

Yes, the nett result is that we now consider every project on its own merits and offer to take Design Responsibility for the whole of the Structural Envelope from oversite and more importantly provide you with a Design Warranty. That way we are able to rationalize our approach and provide the client with the comfort of a 'tried and tested' solution with a single point of responsibility.

What is the lead time on your system?

Depending on the scale and level of complexity of your project, the lead time on the manufacture is in the order of 6 – 8 weeks. However, to take most advantage of the benefits of the system, we would recommend as early involvement in the design process as can be afforded that way the greater the impact we are likely to have.

How quickly can you erect the frame?

That is difficult to answer as we take every project on its merits; but essentially, we can turn a typical storey around in approximately 10 —15 working days depending on the scale of the project. Beyond that it is just a question of adjusting the resource levels to sequence and balance the programme.