Twitter Thread by Peter Apps

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Lunchtime update from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry:

President of Arconic's French arm accepts customers were 'deliberately and dishonestly misled' over fire classification of cladding panels, as he is asked about email saying failed fire test must be kept 'VERY CONFIDENTIAL'



To: Moyses, Isabel; Scheidecker, Guy; Mignon, Frederic
From: Wehrle, Claude
Sent: Tuesday 16 March 2010 15:46
Subject: RE: Market info. for Spain: Larson

Hello,

I think Larson have based themselves on the test conducted on products in cassette form.
Contrariwise to what might be expected, the above type of test is much less favourable for the composite than for riveted products.

And Reynobond PE in cassette form doesn't obtain level "B" either!

Having said that, this shortfall in relation to this standard is something that we have to keep as VERY CONFIDENTIAL!!!

Claude

The most interesting point of this morning's evidence came right at the end of the session when Claude Schmidt was grilled about an email his colleague Claude Wehrle sent regarding the serious failure of polyethylene-cored ACM panels when bent into a cassette form in March 2010

Remember: Arconic in 2004/5 tested its ACM PE panel when bent into cassette and when bolted to a wall with rivets. The cassette version failed spectacularly, burning 10 times as fast. But Arconic dismissed this as a 'rogue result' and drew no distinction in its marketing...

... simply presenting the panel as a 'Class B' (the rating for the rivetted panel, and the required standard for many European countries). Skip forward to 2010, and this email chain.

Mr Wehrle, the firm's senior technical member of staff is told about a trend in Spain and Portugal where clients are demanding more fire resistant panels, and warned that with this type of panel "our prices are no longer in the market"



To: Scheidecker, Guy; Mignon, Frederic
From: Moyses, Isabel
Cc: Wehrle, Claude
Sent: Monday 15 March 2010 16:09
Subject: Market info. for Spain: Larson

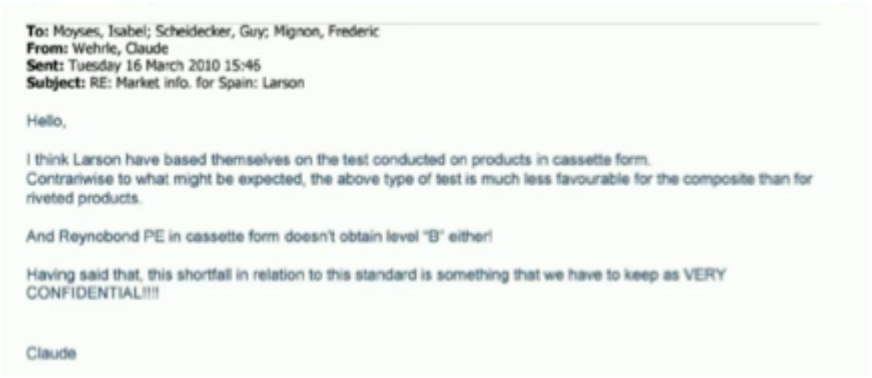
For your information,

Román has confirmed to me that Larson are obliged to recommend and install FR for architectural use in Spain, since with their PE product they don't have the minimum B-s3,d2 classification required under Spanish law.
At the moment Romgom have the opportunity to recommend PE as a counter-offer given that the Reynobond PE classification is B-s2,d0 but if we recommend using FR our prices are no longer in line with market trends.
Note: it's the same for Alpolic

What's more, the last offer made for the Portuguese market has been in RB FR since the project is proposed in Larson FR. This market trend needs to be looked at very carefully

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Mr Wehrle responds saying that he thinks this is because of the difference between cassette and riveted testing, notes that Reynobond PE in cassette doesn't obtain a Class B and says this should be kept "VERY CONFIDENTIAL!!!"



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Millett, inquiry counsel, asks Schmidt: If Claude Wehrle genuinely believed the test on cassette to be a rogue result, he would have said so in this email? Yes
Asks if, in fact, Arconic knew cassette was not a Class B? Reading this email, yes, says Schmidt

"Do you accept that Arconic through Mr Wehrle knew that architects, designers, construction professionals were being misled by the claimed fire classification for cassette?"
"Yes."

"Do you accept that Arconic was deliberately and dishonestly misleading its customers about the claimed fire performance for the cassette variant of Reynobond PE 55?"
Long pause
"Well, in any case, regarding the B classification, I mean according to the Euro norm... yes"

A further email up the chain shows Wehrle's line manager Guy Scheidecker saying "this shouldn't even have been mentioned". Schmidt asked if this was ever reported to him. "No, I don't think so," he says.

"You would remember wouldn't you if you were told Arconic was perpertrating a deceit on it's customers. You would have remembered something like that, wouldn't you?"
"In theory, yes," says Schmidt.

Schmidt says he cannot explain how Scheidecker was "in on this" but he was not. Says he hasn't seen the emails before.

Much more discussed this morn, and I'll have a fuller report at the end of the day, but this felt like the most significant exchange.

(Note to any news editors who happen to be reading this thread: we've seen these emails before, it's Schmidt's answers about them that are the new bit)