



Robust Details in Scotland

This revised (January 2017) guidance note has been prepared by Nick Charlton Smith, BArch MPhil MIOA FRIAS RIBA HonFaPS, Acoustic consultant to CSP Acoustics LLP (Dundee and Glasgow) to provide guidance to architects and developers in Scotland.

The Scottish Version of the Robust Details scheme that has operated successfully in other parts of the United Kingdom for a number of years was launched in February 2012 – offering, for Scotland, a system of tested construction details that comply with the Scottish Building Standards.

The Robust Details approach can now be used within the Scottish Type Approval Scheme (STAS) and all Local Authorities in Scotland will accept homes registered and built using the Robust Details Scotland scheme as automatically complying with the requirements of the Building Standards, as is has been approved under STAS.

The use of robust details provides an alternative to post-completion sound testing for demonstrating compliance with the performance standards of Section 5 for new build dwellings. In other words use of the scheme would enable verifiers to dispense with the post-completion testing requirement – provided that every dwelling in a scheme has been built using robust details (*which includes on site checking requirements*), has been registered with Robust Details Limited and a plot registration fee paid for each dwelling unit.

All the robust details included in the schemes guidance documents have undergone an extensive sound insulation testing regime, robust design analysis and independent audit and have satisfied the Robust Details Standards Committee that they should provide a level of sound insulation compliant with Section 5 – with successful testing based on the principle that the detailing and checking helps achieve compliance *and a performance at least 5dB better* than the Building Standards test minima. Only after this rigorous process are they incorporated within the Robust Details Handbook.

However, because Scottish Testing standards are different from those in England and Wales, only some of the existing systems for England and Wales currently qualify for use in Scotland. In time more designs and systems should come forward once they have been tested on site and approved for use in Scotland.

A number of Scottish construction product companies are currently engaging in R&D to develop new Robust Details for Section 5 – which, once accepted are highly likely also to qualify for use in England and Wales (given the higher standards required in Scotland).



As at January 2017 the Scotland Robust Details Handbook (published May 2016) contained:

- Six masonry based separating wall constructions
- Four timber based separating wall constructions
- Two timber based separating floor constructions
- One concrete and steel based floor construction

It is not essential for all separating elements in a particular plot to be robust details: those that meet the RD Specification can be registered, those that don't can be tested. Currently, for Scotland, ten wall details can be used, but with the exception of two compatible floors (for timber based systems) all other separating floors will need to be tested pre-completion.

So, as the system stands at the moment, limited use of the Robust Details system is available for flatted / multi-storey dwelling developments. For attached (semi-detached/ terraced) dwellings, however, the use of Robust details could be beneficial, especially as use of this system removes test failure risks almost completely. Nonetheless, control of standards of design and construction workmanship, as advocated in the CSPA Test Risk Management Strategy, will still be advisable.

Until there is sufficient housing activity, user demand and development of Robust Details' floors to meet Scottish needs this scheme will be, therefore, of only limited relevance to Scottish architects, clients and developers involved in flatted / multi-storey developments, although architects developing attached housing may well wish to familiarise themselves with the wall details already available for use.

Efforts to encourage uptake, testing and approval of robust details are currently underway and we would recommend checking with Robust Details Scotland (see contact information below) from time to time to see how many, and what types of details, are available.

Further information on using the Robust Details Scotland scheme can be obtained at:

Plot registration and Handbook orders:

Email: customerservice@robustdetails.com Tel: 0870 240 8209 (Refer to Robust Details Scotland). See also: <http://www.robustdetails.com/other-services/robust-details-in-scotland>