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PRESS RELEASE

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH MODERN TIMBER TREATMENT

The role of timber in the modern South African business environment is central to an informative seminar to be rolled out during the coming months by Arch Wood Protection, to architects involved in building design and the specification of building materials.

The seminar reflects Arch's commitment to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and the South African Institute of Architects (SAIA) has assessed and validated the course as Category One CPD Activity. The activity carries a 0.2 CPD credit.

The seminar titled: "Introduction to the World of Treated Timber," is two hours in duration. The activity reference number is CPD SAIA 09-03.

As new generation wood preservative timber becomes more commonly available, additional courses will be rolled out.

"The basic thrust is premised on reminding users of the history and attributes of timber as well as bringing them up to date on the latest developments in timber treatment methods and preservation applications," says Gerard Busse Marketing Manager of Arch.

Presenters include Busse himself, as well as Dave Mullin, general manager Arch Wood Protection, Daryll Ehrke the company's customer account manager and Denise Conradie, technical manager.

Taking the form of visuals and discussion with the intention of achieving information and education outcomes, the presentation covers a considerable amount of ground which assists in contextualising the general attributes, application, treatment and legislative issues related to timber production and use in South Africa.

Amongst the topics is a fascinating history which tells of the virtual absence of local timber production other than the harvesting of local indigenous species until the 1950s.

Imports from that time were steadily replaced by commercial plantations, mainly of pine species in South Africa, but which were found to have little resistance to fungal and insect attack.

The government of the day sought international expertise in the shape of Hickson Timbers in the UK which resulted in the 1948 compulsory treatment of wood legislation being gazetted in terms of the Forestry Act. It also had the incidental effect of spurring the establishment by Hickson of a South Africa subsidiary which subsequently evolved into Arch Wood Protection SA (Pty) Ltd.

The presentation emphasises the rationale for timber preservation to extend the useful life of timber and touches upon timber's numerous attributes, notably its renewability, re-usability, insulation qualities, design flexibility, minimal impact on the environment and surroundings and its production in a controlled environment.

Interestingly the course also addresses the Life Cycle Assessment of timber (LCA), an internationally accepted tool for analysing environmental aspects associated with a product, process or service.

In each of these stages the impact of timber from an environmental perspective has been measured in terms of resources used and environmental impacts caused, to arrive at a comparisons with other materials – and in each instance timber emerges favourably.

“Technically from what’s known as an embodied energy point of view, timber is an exceptionally environmentally friendly material relative to concrete, bricks, aluminium, steel etc,” points out Busse.

“Carbon release aspects are similarly extremely low in the production process and of course, as is widely known, timber itself reduces carbon emissions by absorbing CO₂ and releasing oxygen. These are clearly important aspects in the context of the big move towards ‘green’ products and applications.”

The course also addresses the reasons for treating wood, essentially as a preventative against insect and fungal attack and it highlights the various ‘enemies of wood’ ranging from bacterial to stain and mould, fungal decay and insect attack.

It reiterates a previous position taken by Arch, based on market research, which shows that inland regions are experiencing more insect attack than before and it moves on to address methods of preservation application working up to the ultimate methodology of pressure treatment.

“What emerges from the course is that timber preservation in South Africa is extremely scientifically based as evidenced in numerous ways including the classification of hazard classes for timber exposure, its legislative controls under the national standards of wood treatment and the in-depth knowledge

available locally related to the production, choice and application of timber preservatives,” adds Busse.

“We touch on the various preservatives and their applicability, ranging from waterborne products to oil and solvent borne types and we bring into the picture, the new generation of wood preservation chemistry which centres chiefly on two choices, that of copper azole and alkaline copper quaternary.

“These products are finding increasing demand and application throughout the timber value chain.

“Reaction to the course is expected to be extremely positive and we believe it will add to the general body of knowledge of timber designers and users.”

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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2009-04-03

Arch Wood Protection-April PR1-2009