

ALIPRESS

The News Magazine from AliDeck



Aluminium Decking &
Balcony Component Systems



Balcony Component Configuration Tool Launched

Page 3

In this issue:

Woodgrain Finish
Range Expand Further
Page 4

Chinese Aluminium
Decking Imports Levy
Page 5

New EWS1 Criteria
Announced by RICS
Page 6-7

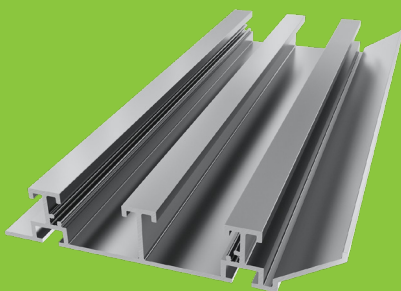
PRODUCT FOCUS

AliPave Non-Combustible Aluminium Balcony Paving Support System.

AliPave is a recent innovation from the makers of the AliDeck non-combustible aluminium decking system.

AliPave has been designed to provide for the first time an off-the-shelf, fully compliant, positively drained paving system for steel balconies.

With easily attainable options previously limited to decking boards or steel plate flooring, steel balconies have sorely missed the aesthetic opportunities offered by porcelain and granite tiles. The AliPave system now allows the simple specification of high-end flooring options on high-rise steel balconies.



A Message from our MD



Welcome to the first issue of **AliPress**, the news magazine from **AliDeck!**



Hi, I'm Richard, managing director of AliDeck. I am very proud to be writing this message to you, AliDeck has grown remarkably in the two years since we launched as a standalone brand. Being able to create a magazine packed with interesting news from the industry and our company is a sign of how far we've come.

As part of the Milwood Group of aluminium extrusion specialist companies, AliDeck is backed by decades of experience. It is that rich insight that has helped us create a comprehensive family of products that deliver complete balcony component systems solutions to architects, specifiers, fabricators, and contractors.

In the pages of **AliPress** this month, we look at the launch of our latest innovation; the **AliDeck Balcony Configurator**. This is a browser-based 3D tool that is intended to be used by architects and specifiers in particular to specify our compliant products to their steel balconies.

It's a really exciting step forward for us but is firmly rooted in our mechanical engineering and project design mindset. Make sure to read all about it and then visit **balconycomponents.co.uk** to configure your AliDeck balcony components!

Also in the issue; the latest additions to our woodgrain colour range for our aluminium



decking are discussed; a lovely installation of our products at a retrofit project is featured; and we also take a detailed look at the latest changes in the ongoing EWS1 saga, with new criteria for surveys issued by RICS following their January consultation on the matter.

We hope you enjoy reading your copy of AliPress and that you find its contents informative and enlightening!

If you have any thoughts, comments or questions on any item in these pages, please give us a call on **01634 756 076** or email **info@alideck.co.uk**.

Richard Izzard

AliDeck Managing Director

CONTENTS

Launching Balcony Configuration Tool

Page 3

Woodgrain Finish Range Expands Further

Page 4

A Fire-Safe Replacement - Aluminium vs Composite

Page 4

Chinese Aluminium Decking Imports Levy

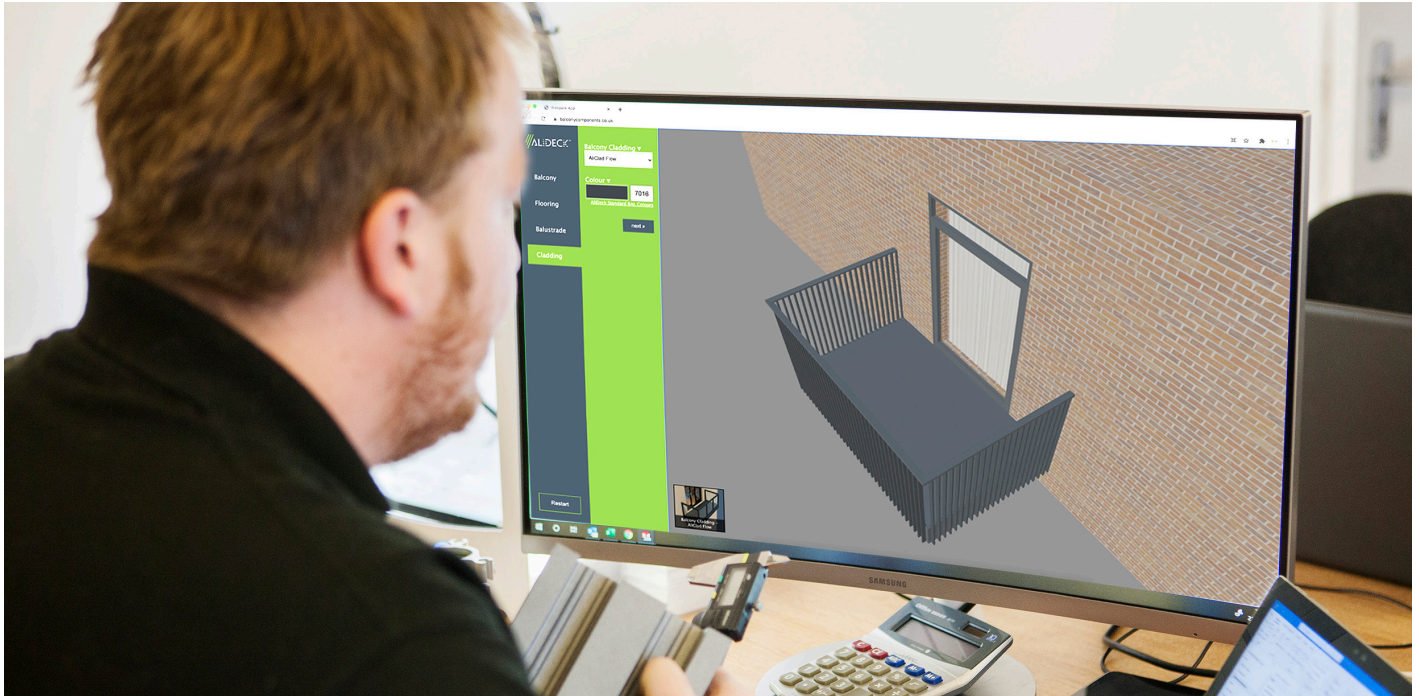
Page 5

New EWS1 Criteria Announced by RICS

Page 6-7

For more details on any of the articles within this newsletter call the AliDeck team on **01634 756 076** or email **info@alideck.co.uk**.

3D balcony component configuration tool launched by AliDeck for architects and specifiers



In keeping with our reputation for continually innovating, we are delighted to announce the launch of our new AliDeck Balcony Configuration Tool for architects and specifiers.

Well known in the construction industry for our non-combustible aluminium decking range, we have recently expanded our product offering to include balcony soffit cladding and balcony balustrade systems. With these new product lines, we now offer off-the-shelf solutions for all component aspects of balcony design, making specification a simple process.

With a wide range of choices now available for decking, drainage, cladding, and balustrades to cope with all imaginable scenarios, AliDeck's product offering is comprehensive and in-depth.

Richard Izzard, AliDeck managing director, said "We have always provided detailed and clear literature, in print and on our website, but we recognised that our product line up could be quite intimidating for architects to work through and select the products that they needed."

"We wanted to go the extra mile to make sure that we were doing everything we could to help specifiers understand our range and easily identify which product would best suit their project, so we have developed an online balcony configuration tool."

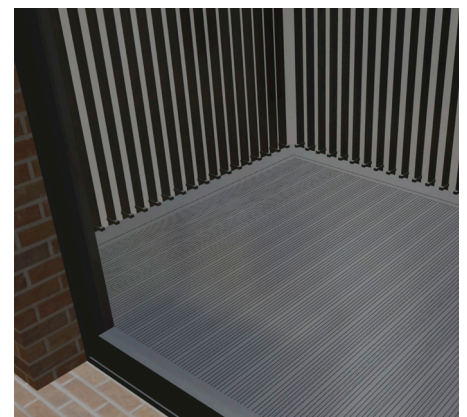
The AliDeck Balcony Configurator is a web-hosted, browser-based 3D app that provides the opportunity to create a balcony design using the whole range of AliDeck materials.

Starting by defining the intended dimensions of the balcony steel framework, the balcony configurator is an intuitive tool that guides the user through the process of creating an aesthetically striking balcony design. Once configuration is complete, a report is generated that captures the details of all of the specified products, including datasheets and DWG files.

"This tool is intended to not just help architects quickly, easily, and accurately specify compliant components to their balcony designs," explained Richard. "By providing the user with a detailed technical report along with product specs and DWG files, the AliDeck configurator becomes a powerful tool that specifiers can roll into their workflow to shortcut the specification process."

The launch of AliDeck's Balcony Configurator now allows specifiers to interrogate the full range of AliDeck balcony component systems, easily understand the available options, and quickly incorporate the products directly into their proposals.

The balcony configurator can be accessed at www.balconycomponents.co.uk.



To find out more about our range of balcony component systems, call the AliDeck team on **01634 756 076** or email info@alideck.co.uk.

BREAKING NEWS!

AliDeck Aluminium Decking **Woodgrain Finish** Range Expands Further

Hot on the heels of the recent addition of the striking Oak woodgrain finish to our aluminium decking range, we are overjoyed to announce the debut of two further woodgrain finishes!



A NEW finish for that natural appearance

Forever innovating, the AliDeck product development team noted the incredibly warm response that our initial woodgrain finish offering received and immediately set about looking at further solutions. Two **NEW** woodgrain finishes were developed and sent into production; **Grey Ash** and **Walnut**.

The addition of these two colours expands the tonal range of the AliDeck woodgrain line, from very light (Grey Ash), through warm mid-tone (Oak), and to a darker natural effect (Walnut). Showcasing these new colours to key players in the architectural sector gave a terrific response, with several looking to specify the woodgrain finish into upcoming projects immediately!

Aluminium decking **fire-safe replacement** for flammable composite balcony decking

There's nothing we like more than seeing our products installed and as we continue to grow our order book with new customers every week, there's a steady stream of photos of completed projects hitting our inbox.

A great example is this recent installation to a low-rise block of flats in High Wycombe. With flammable composite decking on the balconies, the building owner was keen to find a non-combustible alternative and our aluminium decking system was just the ticket!

Opting for our 20mm Junior Flat Board and 50mm Low Joist, the existing steel framework provided a perfect foundation for our system to be fitted to. Balcony decking is often one of the simplest remediation tasks that building owners can be faced with. This project is a great case in point; the non-compliant decking was simply removed from the steel framework and our decking system went straight in. We are seeing a huge number of retrofit enquiries now that EWS1 has had its impact, nearly all of which, happily, are as straightforward as this one.



This installation was carried out by **Alu-Installations**, one of the first companies to gain AliDeck Approved Installer status in 2019. Alu-Installations are a great example of the kind of installer that we are happy to recommend to our customers, holding a deep knowledge and understanding of all of our products and able to deliver great installs every time.

The AliDeck Balcony Drainage System was specified for the balconies on this project to obtain positive drainage to a specified outlet.

Drainage on balconies is becoming a bigger concern for designers and specifiers so it's a real boon that we have such an easily integrated option available.

Don't Get Hit By Chinese Aluminium Decking **Imports Levy**, AliDeck Competitors Raising Their Prices

Since the start of 2021, we have been struck by the number of enquiries we have had from contractors, fabricators, and developers looking for urgent new quotes with extremely short lead times.

The reason for these urgently required quotes we're told is that our competitors who have previously quoted for these projects have suddenly hiked their prices by up to 15%!

Many of our competitors rely on importing their entire range of products from China. The European Commission recently required EU member states to begin to register imports of aluminium extrusions from China in order to be able to retroactively apply tariffs once the Commission had completed its Anti-Dumping Investigation.

The UK has left the EU, and the transition period ended on 31st December 2020. However, the European Commission regulation requiring registration of Chinese extrusion imports has been carried over to UK legislation and therefore applies in the UK.

This has increased costs for our competitors, and they have clearly begun to pass those costs to their customers.

AliDeck only extrudes and manufactures our products in the UK. We do not import any of our products from China, or from anywhere else in the world and our customers will therefore never find their quotes changed to mitigate incurred import duties.

By receiving a quote from AliDeck for your aluminium decking, soffit cladding, or balustrade requirements, you are investing in peace-of-mind that the price you receive is fair and stable, and that your order will be produced and manufactured wholly within the UK.



→ If you are concerned about any quotes you currently have live with our competitors, contact the AliDeck team on **01634 756 076** today to request our quote for your project, and to secure the stability and price guarantee that your business needs.

New EWS1 Criteria Announced by RICS following Consultation, Combustible Balconies Highlighted As Concern



For over a year, the leasehold housing market has been ensnared in the EWS1/External Wall Fire Review debacle. Launched in December 2019, the EWS1 scheme was an effort by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), the Building Societies Association (BSA), and UK Finance to resolve the issue of mortgage providers being unwilling to accept the risk of lending for properties in high-rise blocks following Grenfell and the newly-recognised issue of flammable cladding.

Background on EWS1

While EWS1 as launched was a perfectly reasonable and sensible set of guidelines, the entire scheme was derailed within weeks by new Government guidance in the January 2020 MHCLG Consolidated Advice Note.

The main issue with the new Advice Note was that guidance pertaining to height of buildings was changed, from the previous 18m and above, to include buildings of all heights into the scope of the Advice Note and, consequently, EWS1.

This sudden and unexpected vast expansion of affected buildings caused EWS1 to effectively fail as a scheme due to the extreme shortage of qualified surveyors. With only fewer than 300 Chartered Fire

Engineers in the country “suitably qualified” to complete EWS1 surveys and now many tens of thousands of buildings requiring inspection, quoted lead times for surveys were often several years or more.

Clearly, this Kafkaesque situation was wholly intolerable and many thousands of homeowners experienced extreme challenges throughout 2020 as they found themselves trapped in unsellable properties while also potentially facing large remediation bills and increased insurance costs.

Steps towards resolution

While the issues surrounding EWS1 took a backseat in the early part of 2020 to the Coronavirus pandemic, as summer arrived more and more attention began to be paid to the problem and it was rapidly recognised as a crisis and brewing scandal. Discussion of EWS1 eventually reached Parliament with it being raised in Prime Minister’s Questions on several occasions and subsequently raised in various debates.

In November 2020, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) issued a Supplementary Note to the January 2020 Consolidated Advice Note. The intended effect of this was to allow blocks meeting certain criteria to be removed from consideration for EWS1

surveys. Sadly, while initially reported as a declaration that EWS1 was not required on buildings without flammable cladding, the practical effect of the Supplementary Note was negligible and little, if any, progress was made.

As 2021 began, and after taking many months of heat in the media and online (and associated reputational impact), RICS announced a consultation on new criteria for EWS1. With new definitions on requirements for surveys for buildings of different heights and with different materials used in their construction, the consultation proposed a radical overhaul of the EWS1 scheme.

Results of the RICS January 2021 EWS1 Consultation

On 8th March 2021, RICS published their new guidance on EWS1. Titled “Valuation of properties in multi-storey, multi occupancy residential buildings with cladding – RICS guidance note March 2021”, the guidance provides major changes to EWS1 and the intended scope of the scheme.

RICS state in their announcement that the guidance “creates clarity and consistency about when a valuer is not required to request further investigation of cladding through an EWS1 form before valuing a property in a building of multiple occupation” and Dame Janet Paraskeva, chair of the RICS Standards & Regulation Board, said that the announcement “is a crucial step in unlocking the market, by ensuring that only those buildings where there are risks of costly remediation as a result of safety concerns from cladding are subject to additional checks. The guidance is anticipated to result in a reduction in the number of EWS1 requests which will therefore allow more focus on the assessments of higher risk buildings, which should speed up the overall process whilst ensuring appropriate protection for lenders and purchasers.”

The new criteria for EWS1 requirement follows;

For buildings over six storeys an EWS1 form should be required where:

There is cladding or curtain wall glazing on the building or

there are balconies which stack vertically above each other and either both the balustrades and decking are constructed with combustible materials (e.g. timber) or the decking is constructed with combustible materials and the balconies are directly linked by combustible material.

For buildings of five or six storeys an EWS1 form should be required where:

There is a significant amount of cladding on the building (for the purpose of this

guidance, approximately one quarter of the whole elevation estimated from what is visible standing at ground level is a significant amount) or there are ACM, MCM or HPL panels on the building** or there are balconies which stack vertically above each other and either both the balustrades and decking are constructed with combustible materials (e.g. timber), or the decking is constructed with combustible materials and the balconies are directly linked by combustible materials.

For buildings of four storeys or fewer an EWS1 form should be required where:

There are ACM, MCM or HPL panels on the building.

Does this new guidance solve the problem?

The Million Dollar Question here is, indeed, will this new guidance solve the issues at hand and will it unblock the housing market and allow currently trapped homeowners to sell their homes and move on?

Time will tell, of course, but the new criteria certainly contains specific guidance on circumstances where EWS1 should be required, hopefully providing clarity for situations where it should not be required. A key new definition in the criteria is how heights are addressed; rather than speaking in terms of metres, heights are now defined by storeys, clearly intended to simplify appraisal of buildings.

There are, however, some concerns remaining.

The EWS1 criteria is valuation guidance only and is not legislation, so does not carry regulatory weight. Ultimately, lenders will make their own decisions on how they approach the risk profile of low and high-rise buildings and, if they feel that the risk remains unacceptable, there is the danger of the 2019 and earlier, pre-EWS1, reluctance to lend returning.

Further questions must surely be; how will buildings be assessed as requiring EWS1 or not, and who will perform those assessments? Will it be the case that a survey will be required to determine if an EWS1 survey will be required? If so, will it involve invasive testing? Who will be qualified to perform that? What liability will that person or organisation have if their assessment is subsequently proved wrong?

A major issue throughout 2020 was that many of the chartered fire engineers who were deemed as “suitably qualified” to conduct EWS1 surveys could not access adequate professional indemnity insurance for their work at an affordable cost. This particular problem seems to be unaffected by this new guidance on survey criteria, and how insurers will react to other individuals deeming blocks as not requiring EWS1 remains to be seen.

Combustible balconies and EWS1

Balconies, as specified attachments to the external envelope of buildings, are highlighted in the new EWS1 guidance as causing concern for fire safety issues. This is in-line with the previous form of EWS1, where combustible materials on balconies indicated that further remedial works may be required.

In the new criteria, for buildings of five storeys or higher, stacked balconies with combustible decking and balustrades or balconies with combustible decking that are linked by combustible materials are identified as situations where EWS1 should be required.

This implies that when balconies are not stacked and are not linked by combustible materials, and for buildings four storeys and lower, that EWS1 is not required (unless there are other issues that do require EWS1, such as flammable cladding, etc.).

It is worth considering in these instances, however, that the Government advice issued in January 2020 specifies that combustible materials in balconies at any height should be removed and replaced “as soon as practical”, and it would be a fair assumption to make to expect lenders to look closely at this when deciding on a building’s risk profile. Also, with new legislation moving through Parliament in the Fire Safety Bill and Building Safety Bill, the ultimate regulatory position is yet to be determined and might well again negate the guidance provided by RICS, injecting an inherent uncertainty in any EWS1 decisions by lenders.

Conclusions and thoughts

The new EWS1 criteria guidance from RICS is absolutely to be welcomed and its clarity on key matters is helpful and informative. What is even clearer is that the situation with homeowners being unable to sell their properties cannot be allowed to continue. However, as with the Government attempt to resolve the issue in November 2020, there appear to be several unanswered questions.

As reaction to the new guidance comes in over the coming months, a clearer picture should begin to form. What is certain, though, is that even with these changes in criteria, EWS1 will continue to be an issue for many homeowners and many blocks will continue to be impacted.

The only certain solution is to remove and replace all combustible materials in the external envelope of affected buildings, far from a simple task but logically the only effective remedy.



USES INCLUDE:

Balconies • Walkways
Bridges • Steps • Terraces
Commercial Areas • Raised Platforms



Unit 27
Rochester Airport Industrial Estate
Laker Road, Rochester
Kent ME1 3QX

Tel: 01634 756 076
Email: info@alideck.co.uk
www.alideck.co.uk