

# Increased Demand for Lightweight Thermal Blocks

By Brian Ó'Murchú

Aerated concrete blocks have superior insulation properties and are approximately 50% of the weight of standard blocks. The current legislation for increased U-values and the demand for higher 'Health and Safety' standards on building sites, are the two main drivers behind the increased demand for this product.

Lightweight Thermal Blocks have been in use in continental Europe since the early 1900's and are today sold as standard building materials in many European countries. In Ireland the market for 'Autoclaved Aerated Concrete Blocks' is currently being developed by 'The Quinn Group', who in 1995 opened a fully automated purpose built plant in Co. Fermanagh.

Aircrete aerated blocks have many advantages over standard masonry blocks. In addition to reducing insulation requirements, they are easy to handle, take less time to install and require less mortar than standard blocks. Lightweight blocks are highly workable and are easily shaped and trimmed on site, using a fine toothed hand saw. They can also be easily routed



with a fine saw and small pick to accommodate electrical conduit. These are important considerations in the current climate where labour costs are high.



Quinn-lite blocks

Quinn-lite can be used as party walls between adjoining houses and comply with current fire and sound insulation requirements. Party walls between adjoining houses must be plastered as per standard masonry construction. Quinn-lite also produce a range of blocks (B7) for multi-storey buildings.

Thermal Blocks are manufactured in a range of widths and in three different densities to suit market requirements. Blocks of 3,5 and 7N/mm<sup>2</sup> compressive strength are manufactured in widths of 100mm to 305mm for use above foundation level, while

foundation blocks (of the same compressive strength) are available in widths of 215mm, 250mm, 275mm & 300mm. A comprehensive range of coursing blocks are also available. All foundation blocks are suitable for use where class 1 & 2 soil conditions prevail as defined in BRE digest 363.

*Further information on the technical aspects of Aircrete blocks is available from the Quinn-lite technical department.*

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Block Type	Compressive Strength	$\lambda$ -Value	Use
B3	3N/mm <sup>2</sup>	0.12 W/mK	Inner leaf partition walls
B5	5N/mm <sup>2</sup>	0.17 W/mK	External walls
B7	7N/mm <sup>2</sup>	0.19 W/mK	Multi-storey const. Superior thermal & fire performance