

# Berkvens No-Brainer

Editor Bruce Meechan brings news from Holland of a startlingly fast system for fixing internal doors.



Every once in a while you come across an invention which is so different and so effective from the accepted way of doing things, that you can only stand and shake your head in amazement. The Berkvens internal doorset bears as much resemblance to standard internal door construction as a Harrier jump-jet to the Wright brothers' contraption. And in real terms it is also cheaper.

As in the case of the vertical take-off fighter, it was only seeing it in action that you actually realised what was so different about the design from any other fixed wing aircraft. For the

Harrier's swivelling nozzles see the Berkvens clamping mechanism. To be fair, the doorsets are only suitable for door openings built to the tolerances associated with Modern Methods of Construction, but then they allow the installation to be completed in minutes.

The head section of the steel frame fits around the top of the wall opening and the first of the two uprights is pushed into it. The second slots home and downward weight on the head 'clicks' the frame together, before two magnetic spirit levels and a wooden template across the threshold confirm the squareness

of the unit. The fitter then utilised an electric screwdriver with an Allen key attachment to tighten the two sets of three clamps hidden in the vertical frame components,

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Rick Boeijen, International Business Manager for Berkvens

squeezing the frame onto the wall. Six more screws and the hinges, together with the factory finished door leaf, are then in place. The company claims the operation takes 12 minutes but I saw it done far

faster on a major housing project known as Brandevoort; where Berkvens teams reckon to complete five to seven dwellings per day. The International Business Manager

for Berkvens, Rick Boeijen reflects: "If you look at the 'as-built' cost of an internal door you must not only consider the purchase of the doorset, but also the installation time, the fact that it will be painted one and a half or two times because it is built in much too early. With our system the frame and the doors can be fitted right at the end of the construction process, presenting a fully finished and extremely durable product.

"At around 100 Euros it is roughly three times dearer than a standard internal door

eighties to convince the contractors about our concept of doing everything for them. We supply the hardware and the glass where there is a light above the door. In every country we have gone into we have come up against the local way of doing things which may not fit with the delivery of turnkey solutions. In these cases we adapted our solutions to the local needs"

Once the consultants and the contractors have calculated the cost savings, there are a number of other key benefits to the advanced doorsets, several of which should appeal directly to the social housing sector.

The highly automated manufacturing process sees Berkvens producing different sizes and specifications of doors for several market sectors, including commercial and healthcare as well as domestic. Depending on the core utilised, the completed installation can achieve excellent acoustic and even ballistic resistance, as well as 30 or 60 minute protection in fire situations.



and frame from one of our UK rivals, but once you take into account the speed and quality of our system, together with the low maintenance lifespan, the customer is better off with our system; and then it is a done deal for us."

"We have a 'train the trainer' concept where we will send over our people to show contractors how to do it. Most people take it on board very quickly. Possibly more importantly is for us to get the specifier to understand how they must work with the system: there has to be a return or nib for the frame to clamp on to and the opening must be accurate to within five millimetres." "What we say to the Dutch market is you leave a hole in the wall and we will fix it for you. That is our business – "filling the hole in the wall" – it is a total solution. Even in the Netherlands it took us years in the

Then where tenant choice is considered a priority, the lacquered or painted finishes – applied in half a dozen or more coats of 60 U thickness – can vary house by house or floor by floor. Even with the hardware and glazing, there are variable options on any contract. Berkvens is soon to establish a sales and distribution depot in the Birmingham area, while a timber frame version of the speedy fit doorsets will facilitate refurb applications where greater tolerances are required. The clamped doorsets could soon be 'squeezing' the competition out of the market. **For further information please visit [www.berkvens.co.uk](http://www.berkvens.co.uk)**

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