



LOK-N-BLOK

Wall Assembly Test Report Out-of-Plane Flexural Test

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Test Standard

Testing was performed following ICC-ES AC447 (June 2018) *Acceptance Criteria for Fiber Reinforced Plastic (FRP) Modular Wall Systems* Section 4.4.3 and ASTM E72-15 *Standard Test Methods of Conducting Strength Tests of Panels for Building Construction* Section 11. Transverse load tests on a horizontal wall specimen were conducted using the “Bag Method” to apply a uniform load, as permitted in ASTM E72-15 Section 11.3.1.2. The loading procedure and instrumentation were modified from the requirements of AC447 and ASTM E72-15 as described below.

Objective

The tests were undertaken to evaluate the out-of-plane flexural response of a wall built with Lok-N-Blok (LNB) fiber-reinforced plastic block units, as well as to investigate the effect of pretensioning force on this flexural response.

Test Specimen

Four out-of-plane flexural tests were conducted on a single LNB wall specimen. The wall specimen was 5 blocks (61 inches) wide and 14 blocks (113 inches) tall (Figure 1) and was constructed using LNB units produced in 2017. The blocks were placed in a running bond pattern. Due to the absence of adhesives or mortars, the LNB wall assembly requires the application of a precompression force to engage and bind the blocks together as a wall. For this purpose, the wall was clamped down using two 3/4-10 threaded rods (low-strength steel, grade 50), spaced at 3 feet, 9 inches on center about the center of the wall and running through the block cavities. The rods were threaded into a base steel plate (Figure 1), bolted through two 2x6 wood top plates (Figure 2), and pretensioned to provide a clamping force to the wall system. The initial tension force in the rods was varied for each test, see below.

Test Setup

The LNB wall specimen was placed horizontally over four deflated airbags resting on the laboratory floor. The top and bottom of the wall specimen were simply supported using roller-type steel supports, which were anchored to the strong-floor with the use of the steel framing shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. The clear span between supports was approximately 9 feet, actual measurement 107.25 inches.

Instrumentation consisted of the following:

- One laser displacement sensor was used to continuously measure the out-of-plane displacement of the geometric center of the wall specimen. ASTM E72 requires two out-of-plane displacement measurements, one on each vertical edge of the wall panel; however, AC447 requires displacement measurements to be taken at the wall assembly’s mid-width and mid-length. These additional displacement measurements will be added in future out-of-plane wall panel testing.
- One linear potentiometer attached with adhesive to the tension face of the wall at the geometric center of the wall specimen was used to continuously measure the in-plane opening of the mid-span joint between blocks.
- Two load cells, one in line with each pretensioning threaded rod, were used to continuously measure the tension in each rod.
- Four digital pressure gauges attached to each of the four airbags were used to measure the applied pressure at each loading stage.

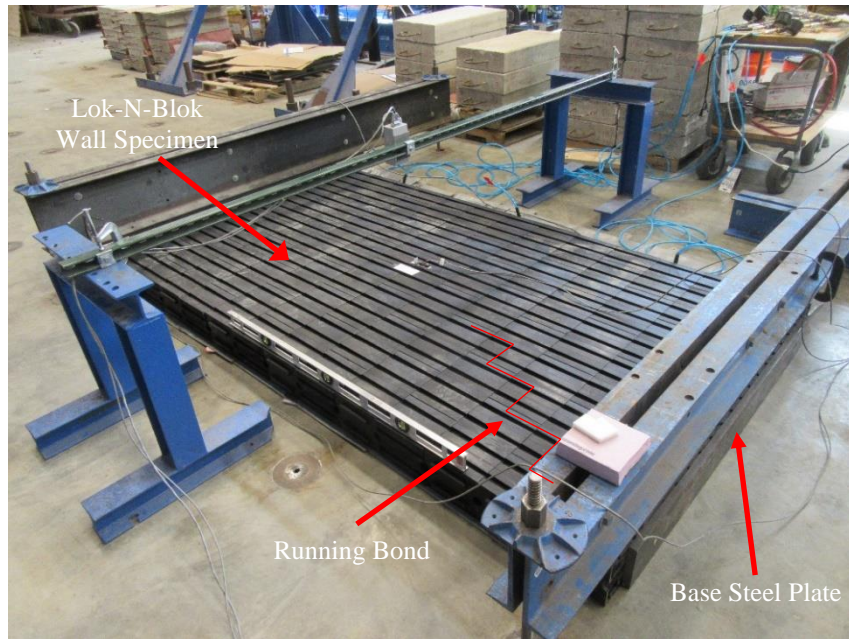


Figure 1. Transverse Load Testing Frame and Lok-N-Blok Wall Assembly

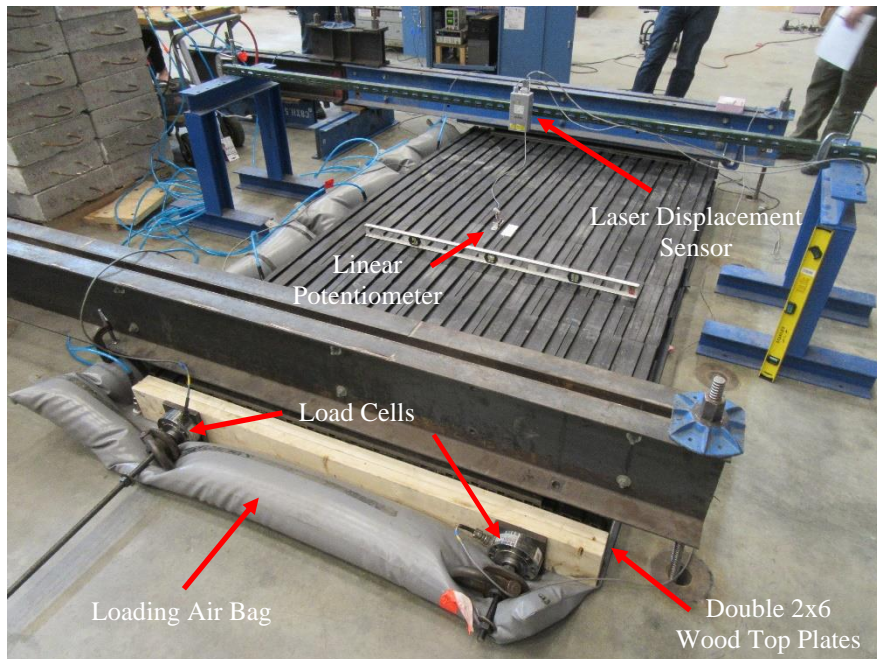


Figure 2. Instrumentation and Loading Bags for Out-of-Plane Flexural Test

Test Procedure

For each of the four tests, the loading procedure was as follows:

1. The threaded rods were tensioned using wrenches to an initial tension load that was slightly higher than the target pretension load for that test. See Table 1 below for the target pretension forces applied to each rod.
2. Measurements of rod pretension, mid-span out-of-plane displacement, and mid-span in-plane joint opening were recorded prior to the application of the first pressure increment.
3. Pressure was applied to the wall specimen in increments of 0.05 psi (pausing momentarily to record applied pressure, compression force on each load cell, and displacement measurements) up to a pressure of 0.30 psi, followed by increments of 0.10 psi up to a peak pressure of at least 0.70 psi. The wall was not loaded to failure.
4. The peak pressure was held for 10 minutes before unloading. Air pressure in each bag, threaded rod tension, mid-span displacement, and mid-span joint opening were recorded at 1-minute intervals during the 10-minute peak pressure hold.
5. The air pressure in the bags was released and the tension in the rods was removed. Final “set” measurements were taken.

ASTM E72-15 requires that the load be held at each load stage for 5 minutes, and that unloading be performed and “set” measurements be taken between each load stage. Also, AC447 requires testing of a minimum of three replicate assemblies for each level of wall precompression.

Results

For each test, the net applied pressure at a deflection of $L/240$ (0.45 inches), with L taken as the wall span between supports, and the peak net applied pressure are reported in Table 1. The net applied pressure at a deflection of $L/240$ was estimated by linear interpolation between recorded data. Note that the reported net applied pressures are taken as an average of the pressure measured in each of the four bags and are also adjusted to account for the self-weight of the wall assembly. The outermost loading bags failed during Test 2; therefore, the pressures for Tests 3 and 4 are the average of the remaining three bags. The recorded data for each of the four tests are provided in Appendix A.

Table 1. Net Applied Pressure Results

Test	Target Single Rod Pretension Force (lbs)	Target Wall Precompression (lbs/ft)	Net Applied Pressure at $L/240$ (0.45 in.) ¹ (psf)	Peak Net Applied Pressure (psf)
1	5500	2165	43.0	105.7 ²
2	4000	1575	31.5	86.8 ²
3	3000	1180	24.7	88.7 ³
4	2000	785	20.3	94.4 ³

Notes:

1. Pressures estimated by linear interpolation of the recorded data.
2. Reported pressures are the average reading of 4 pressure gauges, adjusted for wall self-weight.
3. Reported pressures are the average reading of 3 pressure gauges, adjusted for wall self-weight.

The pressure-displacement response of the wall specimen for each of the four out-of-plane flexural tests is shown in Figure 3. Figure 4 shows the tension side joint-opening displacement at the mid-height of the wall versus the net applied pressure. As the wall deflected out of plane, the joints between each course of blocks on the tension face of the wall began to open under increasing tension. The displacement across the mid-span joint was continuously measured throughout the tests so that wall performance could be compared to requirements for future waterproofing, air barrier, or cladding systems.

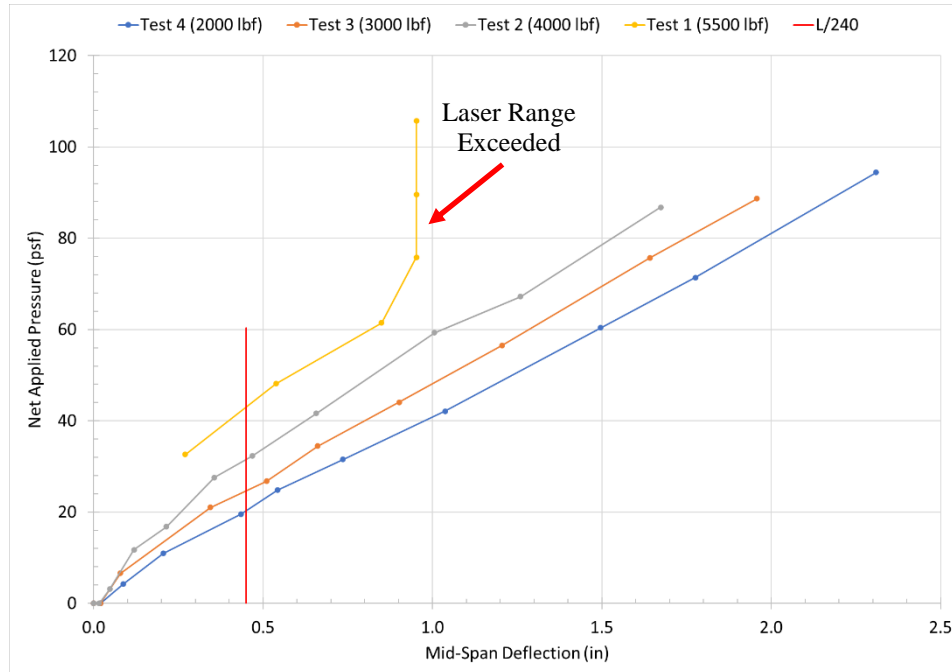


Figure 3. Net Applied Pressure versus Mid-Span Deflection (Test 1 to Test 4).

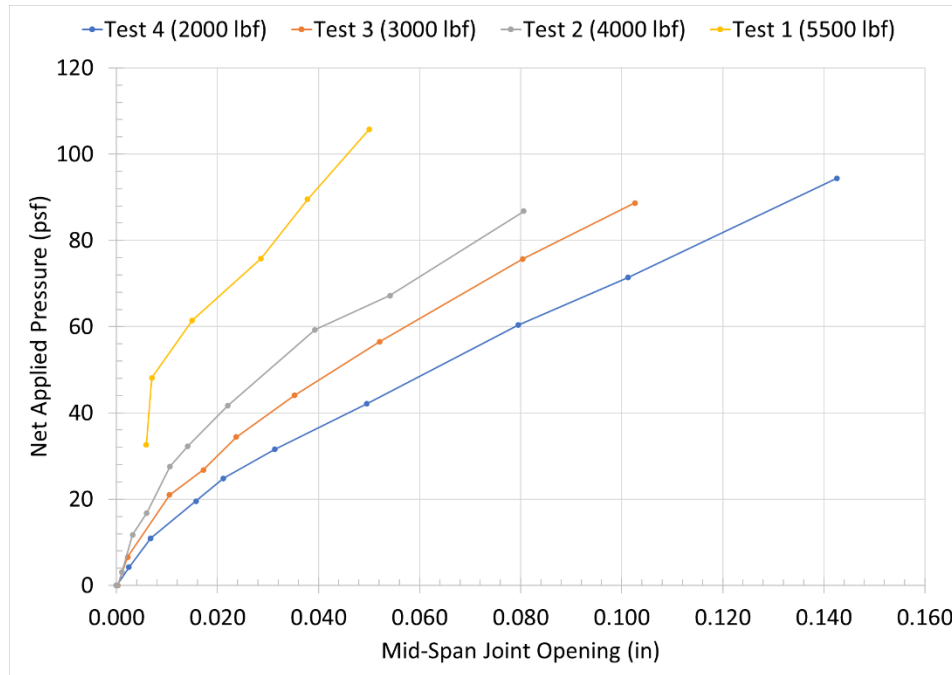


Figure 4. Net Applied Pressure versus Mid-Span Joint Opening (Test 1 to Test 4).

Discussion

Flexural tests on a LNB wall assembly were conducted to investigate the out-of-plane behavior of the wall system and the effect of the precompression force on the out-of-plane response of the wall system. Per AC447 Section 4.4.3.4, the allowable uniform transverse load for wall assemblies is defined as the minimum of one-third (safety factor of 3) of the maximum test load in out-of-plane bending tests or the load associated with the deflection limit prescribed in the 2018 edition of the International Building Code (IBC) Table 1604.3, whichever is more restrictive. To determine the allowable uniform transverse loads for serviceability, the test results were compared to the deflection criteria in IBC for exterior walls with brittle finishes other than plaster or stucco, which is $L/240$ (0.45 inches for the tested span). Table 2 summarizes the allowable uniform transverse loads for each test, according to the strength and deflection criteria in AC447.

Table 2. Summary of Allowable Uniform Transverse Loads (Pressures) per AC447 Criteria

Test	Target Single Rod Pretension Force (lbf)	Target Wall Precompression (lbf/ft)	Allowable Pressure per Strength Criteria (psf)	Allowable Pressure per Serviceability Criteria (psf)	Allowable Pressure (psf)
1	5500	2164	35.2	43.0	35
2	4000	1574	28.9	31.5	29
3	3000	1180	29.6	24.7	24
4	2000	787	31.5	20.3	20

Because the wall specimen was not loaded to failure in any of the tests, the lower allowable transverse load per the strength criteria of Test 2 relative to Tests 3 and 4 is due to a lower peak applied pressure and

therefore is not an accurate assessment of the wall’s ultimate strength at that level of precompression. The allowable pressure in Table 2 above is reported based on the wall testing results given in this report. Where the AC447 strength criteria controlled (Tests 1 and 2), the allowable pressures given do not represent the allowable pressures at failure. Allowable pressures for the wall at rod pretensions where the strength criteria controlled will likely be greater when the wall is tested to failure.

The applied pressure vs. deflection curves for the various wall assemblies (Figure 3) show that the initial wall stiffness is dependent on the magnitude of the precompression force applied to the LNB wall assembly. The deflection of the LNB wall was greater for assemblies that had less precompression at the same load levels. Because of the imposed deflection limits for serviceability, this means that the allowable uniform load of the wall assembly is dependent on the precompression force. Greater precompression forces resulted in higher allowable uniform pressures.

To provide context to the test results, allowable design wind speeds were determined based on the allowable pressures shown in Table 2 and several design assumptions common to a typical low-rise building. Allowable design winds speeds were calculated per IBC and ASCE 7-16, *Minimum Design Loads and Associated Criteria for Buildings and Other Structures*, based on the following assumptions:

1. Wind load analysis for components and cladding
2. Enclosed building type
3. Exposure Category B (Surface Roughness B corresponds to urban and suburban areas)
4. Topographic Factor, $K_{zt} = 1.0$ (no abrupt changes in topography)
5. Maximum roof height of 20 feet (one- or two-story structure)
6. Typical wall section away from wall ends (wall end-zone regions not considered because of additional restraint from perpendicular wall)
7. Wind pressures calculated using allowable strength design (ASD)

The calculated allowable design wind speeds are summarized in the table below.

Table 3. Summary of Calculated Design Wind Speeds Corresponding to Allowable Uniform Transverse Loads (Pressures) per AC447 Criteria

Test	Target Single Rod Pretension Force (lbf)	Target Wall Precompression (lbf/ft)	Design Wind Speed Corresponding to Allowable Pressure per Strength Criteria (psf)	Design Wind Speed Corresponding to Allowable Pressure per Serviceability Criteria (psf)
1	5500	2164	190	251
2	4000	1574	172	215
3	3000	1180	174	190
4	2000	787	180	172

Appendix A. Tabulated Testing Measurements and Results

Table 2. Holding Load

Holding Load	Air Pressure (psi)				Rod Tension (lbf)		Displacements	
	Bag 1	Bag 2	Bag 3	Bag 4	North	South	Out-of-Plane at Mid-Span (in)	In-Plane Joint at Mid-Span (in)
0 min	0.73	0.69	0.68		5195	5438	2.0330	0.1066
1 min	0.72	0.68	0.67		5152	5392	2.0370	0.1066
2 min	0.72	0.67	0.66		5124	5361	2.0270	0.1067
3 min	0.71	0.67	0.65		5100	5335	2.0338	0.1067
4 min	0.71	0.67	0.64		5077	5310	2.0292	0.1067
5 min	0.70	0.67	0.63		5063	5291	2.0290	0.1067
6 min	0.69	0.67	0.62		5040	5270	2.0202	0.1067
7 min	0.69	0.67	0.61		5020	5248	2.0220	0.1067
8 min	0.69	0.67	0.61		5002	5231	2.0225	0.1067
9 min	0.68	0.67	0.60		4985	5215	2.0225	0.1067
10 min	0.67	0.67	0.60		4968	5197	2.0172	0.1067
Residual					2326	2429	0.1140	-0.0009

Test 2 – 4,000 lbf

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Lok-N-Blok Out-of-Plane Bending Wall Tests

WEIGHT OF 1 BLOCK	6.76 lbf	SPAN LENGTH	107.25 in
WEIGHT OF THREADED ROD	1.24 lbf/ft	WALL WIDTH	61 in
BLOCK WIDTH	12.13 in	TOTAL SELF-WEIGHT	0.071 psi
BLOCK HEIGHT (EXCLUDES POSTS)	8.0625 in		

Table 1. Load Step

Load Step (psi)	Air Pressure (psi)				Rod Tension (lbf)		Displacements	
	Bag 1	Bag 2	Bag 3	Bag 4	North	South	Out-of-Plane at Mid-Span (in)	In-Plane Joint at Mid-Span (in)
0					4123	4073	0.0060	0.0036
0.05	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.04	4071	4020	0.0218	0.0038
0.10	0.10	0.08	0.09	0.10	4042	3982	0.0537	0.0047
0.15	0.15	0.16	0.15	0.15	4060	3970	0.1250	0.0068
0.20	0.18	0.19	0.20	0.18	4090	3978	0.2208	0.0096
0.25	0.27	0.26	0.26	0.26	4173	4027	0.3620	0.0142
0.30	0.30	0.30	0.28	0.30	4246	4086	0.4736	0.0177
0.40	0.37	0.36	0.35	0.36	4400	4248	0.6633	0.0256
0.50	0.50	0.48	0.47	0.48	4814	4710	1.0120	0.0429
0.60	0.55	0.54	0.53	0.53	5174	5115	1.2660	0.0577
0.70	0.71	0.63	0.68	*	5732	5807	1.6800	0.0842
0.80								
0.90								
1								

* Bag 4 failed at this pressure.

Table 2. Holding Load

Holding Load	Air Pressure (psi)				Rod Tension (lbf)		Displacements	
	Bag 1	Bag 2	Bag 3	Bag 4	North	South	Out-of-Plane at Mid-Span (in)	In-Plane Joint at Mid-Span (in)
1 min	0.71	0.63	0.66		5672	5752	1.627	0.0847
2 min	0.71	0.63	0.65		5643	5723	1.673	0.0848
3 min	0.71	0.62	0.64		5630	5711	1.668	0.0854
4 min	0.70	0.62	0.63		5607	5689	1.665	0.0855
5 min	0.70	0.61	0.63		5593	5676	1.661	0.0855
6 min	0.69	0.61	0.62		5575	5659	1.665	0.0855
7 min	0.68	0.63	0.61		5560	5646	1.657	0.0855
8 min	0.67	0.61	0.60		5544	5633	1.657	0.0855
9 min	0.66	0.61	0.60		5534	5621	1.653	0.0854
10 min	0.65	0.61	0.59		5519	5607	1.653	0.0854
Residual					3503	3579	0.089	0.0072

Table 2. Holding Load

Holding Load	Air Pressure (psi)				Rod Tension (lbf)		Displacements	
	Bag 1	Bag 2	Bag 3	Bag 4	North Rod	South Rod	Out-of-Plane at Mid-Span (in)	In-Plane Joint at Mid-Span (in)
1 min	0.73	0.69	0.72		4832	4986	2.313	0.1394
2 min	0.73	0.68	0.71		4953	4805	2.309	0.1390
3 min	0.73	0.68	0.70		4777	4916	2.305	0.1393
4 min	0.73	0.68	0.68		4754	4890	2.302	0.1393
5 min	0.72	0.68	0.67		4732	4866	2.305	0.1393
6 min	0.72	0.68	0.66		4711	4843	2.302	0.1394
7 min	0.71	0.68	0.66		4689	4818	2.298	0.1393
8 min	0.71	0.68	0.65		4673	4800	2.293	0.1394
9 min	0.70	0.68	0.64					
10 min	0.69	0.67	0.63		4638	4761	2.293	0.1393
Residual					1614	1508	0.071	0.0015