

PAINTING BRICKWORK

Face Brickwork should be attractive to look at and be virtually maintenance free throughout its design life if built in accordance with the appropriate Codes of Practice.

Ibstock produce a varied choice of facing bricks for aesthetic purposes and as such do not recommend covering them with surface treatments or paint. Furthermore, if certain treatments are carried out to the brickwork there is a possibility of irreversible damage to the facings.

Sometimes, however, it may be necessary to specify bricks for painting usually for matching purposes on extensions. This being the case, the following points should be taken into consideration:

- Use bricks with a low soluble salt content to minimise the disruption of the paint film by efflorescence.
- Bricks of a similar absorption and suction rate should be used to achieve an acceptable uniform appearance.
- If possible only use smooth faced bricks. Sanded or stock type products may not allow paint to adhere properly.
- Brickwork must be completely dry before any application is attempted. New walls should not be painted but if it is the desire to paint a newly constructed wall, a curing time of at least 28 days must elapse and brickwork must not have been cleaned or treated with acid solutions.
- Any loose materials, or organic growth must be removed prior to painting

Brickwork, in common with other materials, is constantly moving through thermal expansion and contraction. Any surface covering would have to flex with the construction to avoid cracking. Once cracks have appeared, moisture is able to penetrate the masonry.

Once inside, the drying capability could be greatly affected dependant on the restrictive effect of the surface treatment and frost action may result.

Any surface applications to bricks will invalidate the normal Ibstock durability warranty.

Mortar

Mortars are chemically basic and free alkali within them may attack paint products that are based on drying oils (see below).

Paint

The majority of masonry paints available at present carry a guarantee of up to 15 years as long as they are applied in accordance with BS6150: 1991: Code of practice for painting buildings, and the manufacturers own recommendations.

The constituents may contain resins which can expand and contract with the brickwork and avoid cracking. There are also vapour permeable systems available allowing the brickwork to 'breathe'.

All surfaces should be treated with a stabilising solution, available from the paint manufacturers, prior to painting.

Alkali resistant paint negates the alkali's in the mortar preventing salt crystals forming around the mortar lines and can also help to minimise the occurrence of efflorescence in bricks in some instances. It is advisable to make sure the product chosen advertises good alkali resistance.

Painted brickwork that pre-dates the 1960's probably contains lead and great care should be taken in the preparation for re-coating. When dry-sanding ALWAYS wear a mask.

In all instances, contact the paint manufacturer for advice on application methods and health and safety issues.

Remember, painting brick does not preclude good construction and detailing practices.

For further information or advice please contact Ibstock's Design & Technical Helpline on 0844 800 45767.

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