

Considerations When Specifying Special Shaped Bricks

When designing a structure incorporating special shaped bricks, Specifiers may have expectations of exact matching of specials with standard bricks without realising some of the manufacturing constraints which may affect the finish.

Special Shapes compliment the standard product and the following is a guide to successful specification.

Special shapes are often manufactured separately to main plant standard squares, they need more attention to detail, longer drying times and more care when firing due to different shapes and volumes of units. They will normally be fired in a different type of kiln.

In main plant kilns the way products are 'stacked' can be a method of achieving certain finishes such as 'hearting' or 'flashing'. To achieve the same effect on the sloping face of an angle, plinth or cant could mean impractical or unsafe setting of units in the kiln and discussion with the manufacturer should clarify which products may be affected and therefore differ in their finish.

Texture is another consideration. Methods of manufacture give standard shaped products their character such as the creased effect in some stocks and drag wire, rusticated or rolled in some extruded. To replicate this on special shapes may mean hand application. This may result in subtle differences between bricks and special shapes when in work.

Some specials have a left and right handed version because their shape is asymmetric or , if textured, it would mean some of the products could be laid 'upside down'. This may not matter with a smooth product but when specifying 'handed' textured products, always consult the manufacturer.

When brickwork is viewed from the standard minimum 3m distance, differences between the methods of manufacture should not be noticeable.



Due to different extrusion processes, the drag wire marks on the plinth bricks run horizontal whilst the standard bricks are vertical.

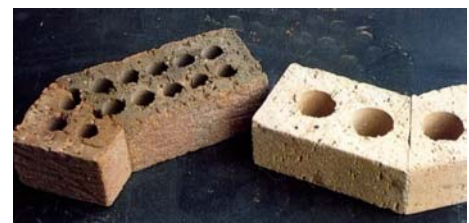
A popular use of Special shapes is to specify a different colour or texture to the main brickwork. This shows off the shapes to their fullest and makes an attractive feature.

However, if complimentary rather than contrasting specials are required, early consultation with the manufacturer will help clarify requirements and expectations.



Contrasting Special Shapes giving the brickwork an attractive feature.

Many special shapes can be cut and bonded from main plant products helping reduce potential colour variation and speeding up manufacture and delivery schedules.



Cut & bonded Angle bricks.

Finally, many special shapes are in an exposed position such as sills or plinths and only F2 (frost resistant) products are suitable in locations such as these.

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