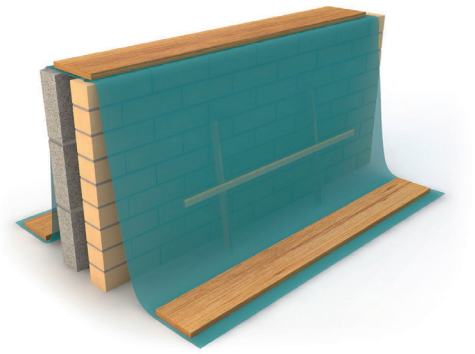
TECHNICAL INFORMATION | B15

Ibstock Brick

SITE PRACTICE AND TROUBLESHOOTING
MINIMISING EFFLORESCENCE OR VANADIUM IN NEWLY BUILT BRICKWORK

Recommended methods for removing Efflorescence and Vanadium can be found in Ibstock's Technical Information Sheets B1 and B2. This information sheet concentrates on minimising the occurrence of unsightly salts, which can manifest on any brickwork given certain conditions.



Salts within brickwork are dissolved by water which is introduced during construction or from rain. Shrink-wrapped packs of bricks can develop efflorescence if in contact with damp ground and condensation forms within packs. As the brick or brickwork begins to dry out the solution of salts will be drawn to the surface where the salts become more concentrated as moisture evaporates. This tends to be most prevalent when temperatures reach optimum levels for drying, i.e. Spring onwards.

Apart from the salts derived from the bricks and mortar, almost any soluble salt can form efflorescence if it is introduced as a contamination from external sources. The quantities of salts involved are small and a tiny percentage of soluble sulphates in the bricks or the Portland cement, is sufficient to account for the amount of efflorescence often seen. Coastal areas may also be prone to efflorescence from sea salt being blown inland.

- Bricks should be stacked onto a clean, firm, level surface. They should be protected from rain, mud splashes, etc. by covering with waterproof covers.
- Newly erected masonry should be covered to protect cavities and stop masonry becoming saturated. The first 3 to 5 days after laying (dependent on season), brickwork is most vulnerable to the elements as mortar is still undergoing the hardening process. Newly erected masonry should be covered by waterproof sheeting to protect fresh mortar and open cavities to stop masonry becoming saturated. Once the structure is watertight, i.e. roof and windows in place, the building can commence the drying process.
- Unless instructed otherwise, wetting of bricks prior to laying should be avoided.
- Connect rain-water down-pipes as soon as possible as prolonged saturation will result with efflorescence or staining as the inevitable consequence.
- Equally important is the incorporation of the appropriate DPC's, copings and sills at the design stage. No amount of good site management can alleviate efflorescence arising from saturation due to a badly designed construction.

Many of the above precautions will also greatly help in the reduction of iron staining, and 'peacocking' with Blue facing bricks

For further information or advice regarding this topic please contact
Ibstock's Design & Technical Helpline on **0844 800 4576** or **email technical@ibstock.co.uk**