



SITE PRACTICE & TROUBLESHOOTING

COATINGS ON BRICKWORK

ANTI-GRAFFITI, WATER-PROOFERS AND WATER-REPELLENTS

ANTI-GRAFFITI COATINGS

There are materials which are applied to new brickwork with a view to making subsequent removal of graffiti easier, i.e. they create a surface coating which is easily removable by steam cleaning so taking the graffiti with it.

Sacrificial coatings as they are known are advertised as enabling graffiti to be removed with more ease. They will need to be re-applied each time the wall is cleaned but are virtually invisible to the eye and are removed by hot water pressure washing.

Some types of treatment however, are not satisfactory there has been an unacceptable deterioration of the coat, i.e. it has gone brittle, opaque and flaked off, creating a most unsatisfactory appearance.



Unsuccessful anti-graffiti coating on a bridge in Leicestershire.

Before using any coatings it is advisable to seek written assurances from the manufacturers that they will not cause deterioration of the brickwork as a consequence of its application. The application of any coating to brickwork will invalidate the durability warranty.

WATER-PROOFERS AND WATER-REPELLENTS

Complaints of rain penetration in half-brick thick walls occur frequently and it must be accepted that driving or persistent rain will penetrate 102mm of masonry.

In general, little rain penetrates the brick itself in well-constructed walls, either it is of engineering density and acts like a raincoat, repelling the water and forcing it to run down the face of the brickwork, or it is of stock brick density and performs rather like an overcoat, absorbing quantities of rain before shedding the surplus down the external fabric. The quality of the mortar joint however provides a critical path for the rain to penetrate. The use of the correct mix of mortar with good quality workmanship will improve the rain resistance.

If a water repelling agent is deemed necessary it should be applied only on dry brickwork for maximum penetration. The water repelling agent differs from water proofers and sealants, whereas a water-repellent will be impregnated into the 'pores' of the brickwork; a sealer or proofer is merely a surface coating which does not allow the bricks to 'breathe'.

Such treatments have a limited life, requiring re-application after a number of years. The only permanent solution to rain penetration is the provision of a properly constructed cavity wall, but surface treatments will help to reduce the amount of penetration which occurs, but cannot necessarily totally eliminate the ingress of water.

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