



Tinting of Brickwork - Colour Variation

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The technique of tinting brickwork by applying colour-fast oxide-based pigments in a potassium silicate medium to give a permanent tint to the surface of brick masonry has been used with success for about forty years. Experience has shown that such tinting is a permanent modification of surface colour and the treatment has no adverse effects on the durability or other performance attributes of the masonry.



Most often the reason for its use is to rectify a mismatching of bricks and/or mortar, or to correct colour banding or a patchy appearance resulting from a failure to blend bricks adequately during bricklaying.

The technique has also been used by designers to create a particular colouration that could not be achieved by the selection of bricks alone. For example, when new bricks of the particular colour wanted for a job are unobtainable, brickwork can be built with bricks of the size and textural character required and the bricks subsequently tinted to the specific colour.

A particular example is the diaper patterns in the brickwork of the new houses on the Ashwood Place development in Woking featured in Brick Bulletin Winter 2000. Here tinting was used to enhance the blackness of the headers forming the diamond patterns to match more closely those of the original house.

Tinting has also been used to create features of contrasting brick colour in the bond pattern of brickwork after its completion. For example sports pictogram motifs picked out by tinting bricks to contrast with the walling at large. This option probably offers a more economic alternative to building the feature work with contrasting bricks. It also allows the patterning to be applied after completion of the building.



Yet another application is seen in the work of sculptor Richard Kindersley, who frequently enhances form and line of his carvings in brickwork with complementary or contrasting tints. As Kindersley says (Brick Bulletin, Winter 1999) 'These dyes have always to be used with restraint as the work can easily be spoiled with too harsh a treatment'. This is true of all tinting applications and for this reason the work should only be entrusted to specialist contractors with the appropriate knowledge, experience and skill, rather than to a general building contractor.

British Standards exist for the pigments used for tinting, but not for the tinting procedures.

There are only a few specialists offering tinting services. BDA and our members can provide contact details for companies that have been known to us for several years. However, BDA does not endorse the work of individual companies or craftsmen providing services in the construction industry.

The Brick Development Association Ltd., Woodside House, Winkfield, Windsor, Berkshire, UK. SL4 2DX.

Tel: +44 (0) 1344 885 651
Fax: +44 (0) 1344 890 129
e-mail: brick@brick.org.uk
Web Site: www.brick.org.uk