

Wienerberger Technical Guidance

PEACOCKING

Peacocking, or as it is sometimes known picture framing, can often manifest itself on blue bricks as an oily coloured type of stain.

This is a normal feature of blue clay brickwork due to the shimmery/shiny effect of the colour and is caused by light refraction through a very thin layer of silica in the bricks surface layer.

This can be caused by saturation of brickwork prior to the mortar curing, or through the use of excessively wet mortar. This gives a picture frame effect with the dark staining around the edges of the brick. Saturation of bricks or mortar may also result in free lime in the mortar being released and thus lime leaching from the joints may also occur (see Lime Leaching Technical Guidance Sheet for more information). Staining from wet mortar being washed across the face of the brick by rain will also be more noticeable on blue bricks.

The 'peacocking' effect is not harmful to the durability of the bricks but whilst the effect tends to tone down with weathering, it will not weather away completely. Prevention is therefore better than cure.

Under normal circumstances, a cleaning operation with a proprietary brickwork cleaner would not have a detrimental effect on the surface of a blue brick but should only be carried out when brickwork is fully cured.

To minimise the effects of staining on blue bricks, good site practice should be adhered to following the recommendations in PD6697. Stored bricks and newly laid brickwork should be kept as dry and clean as possible and mortar should not be excessively wet. Dependant on the season, freshly laid brickwork is vulnerable to environmental conditions for the first 3-5 days as mortar is still going through the curing process. Waterproof sheeting should therefore be used to protect fresh mortar and open cavities, and stop brickwork from becoming saturated.



Peacocking



Picture framing