

INTRODUCTION

A common question asked of us is “can our bricks be used in brickwork below the damp proof course (DPC) of a building?” This guide provides information and assistance in making the choice..

GENERAL INFORMATION

By definition bricks that sit below the DPC will be exposed to potential saturation from water migrating from the ground up through the brickwork. In such a situation it is important to choose bricks that are both Frost Resistant (F2) and have low Active Soluble Salts content (S2) as defined in EN771-1 Standard for Clay Masonry Units.

All our facing brick products meet the F2/S2 classifications and as such are suitable for use in locations subject to severe exposure. This includes areas above and below ground level (approximately 2 courses above and below).

Bricks used deeper below ground level, whilst equally saturated, are less likely to be subjected to freezing conditions.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

When using handmade or soft mud type bricks in areas where they are likely to have prolonged exposure to water, e.g. below DPC, the more natural open texture of the product makes them more likely to absorb and retain water. Whilst not affecting their structural qualities it can have the effect on the aesthetic properties of the brickwork such as appearing darker than the dryer bricks above DPC. There will also be an increased possibility of aggregation of dirt or moss growth in a shady location.

Aesthetically no smooth engineering brick will match the natural colour and texture of a handmade or stock brick, therefore these bricks will always differ in appearance when laid together.

This is less of an issue with the denser wire cut facing bricks from our Blockleys and Carlton ranges.

Our facing bricks are not engineering or DPC bricks and should always be used with a suitable DPC, and a backing membrane if used in a retaining wall.

Care should be taken adjacent to hard paved area to ensure surface water runs away from the base of the brickwork.

MORTAR

In most situations we would recommend a minimum of M6 mortar class below DPC however the final mix should be determined by the brickwork contractor after considering all the structural factors on any particular job.

CONCLUSION

The decision whether to use a denser brick below DPC can be based on the individual project design, location and client preferences. However, providing normal good practices are followed in design and workmanship, there should be no structural issues with MBH bricks if used in brickwork below DPC. They have been used successfully over many years in such locations.

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with a practical specification and design tool. Within the following pages, you may find reference to the wide range of Michelmersh products that are available. We hope that you will find this guide as useful in your everyday work as it was designed to be. We look forward to speaking to you personally, should you require any further information, please contact Michelmersh's Technical Department on 0844 931 0022 or email technical@mbhplc.co.uk.

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