

architectural handmade bricks n pavers

Brickwork Cleaning & Finishing

Build Clean. Don't Clean Later.

The highest-quality brickwork is cleaned during construction—not after completion.

At Architectural Handmade Bricks, we recommend that bricklayers clean the brickwork progressively as it is laid, rather than relying on harsh chemical cleaners or high-pressure water once the wall is complete.

Using a traditional lime mortar and good bricklaying practice allows most brickwork to be completed with minimal additional cleaning, helping to preserve the appearance of both the bricks and the mortar joints.

Clean as You Lay

Traditional lime mortar remains workable during construction and responds well to progressive cleaning as it firms.

As the mortar begins to firm:

- Brush the brickwork with a soft bricklayer's brush to remove loose mortar.
- As the mortar hardens further, lightly brush the brick faces and joints with a light wire brush.
- Remove mortar while it is still workable rather than allowing it to fully harden.

This traditional method greatly reduces the need for harsh chemical cleaning and produces cleaner, more consistent mortar joints.

In our experience, mortar containing numerous proprietary additives can become more difficult to clean, often requiring more aggressive cleaning methods once hardened. This increases the likelihood of harsh chemical cleaners or high-pressure water being used, which may adversely affect the appearance and consistency of the finished mortar joints.

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Avoid Harsh Chemicals & High-Pressure Water

Where possible, avoid cleaning brickwork using harsh chemical cleaners or high-pressure water.

- These methods can:
- Damage mortar joints.
- Cause mortar joints to become patchy or discoloured.
- Alter the natural appearance and colour of the mortar.
- Remove the finished surface of mortar joints.
- Force water into freshly constructed masonry.
- Reduce the overall quality and appearance of the finished brickwork.

In our experience, aggressive cleaning methods often cause more damage to the mortar joints than to the bricks themselves.

The need for aggressive cleaning is often an indication that the mortar was too wet, contained unnecessary additives, or was not cleaned progressively during construction.

If Additional Cleaning Becomes Necessary

Where additional cleaning cannot be avoided:

- Allow the mortar to firm sufficiently before cleaning.
- Always begin with the least aggressive cleaning method.
- Test a small, inconspicuous area first.
- Use the weakest effective cleaning solution.
- Thoroughly wet the brickwork before applying any chemical cleaner.
- Never allow cleaning chemicals to dry on the wall.
- Rinse thoroughly with clean water.
- Avoid repeated cleaning wherever possible.

Additional cleaning should always be regarded as a last resort rather than standard practice.

Our Philosophy

At Architectural Handmade Bricks, we believe the highest-quality masonry is achieved through traditional materials, simple mortar mixes and good workmanship—not by relying on harsh chemicals or excessive additives.

A traditional mortar made from Portland cement, genuine hydrated lime, quality bricklayer's sand, clean water and mortar oxide (where required), combined with progressive cleaning during construction, will consistently produce cleaner brickwork, stronger and more attractive mortar joints, and the highest-quality architectural finish.