

MOVEMENT JOINTS

In general, experience suggests that movement joints in clay bricks are generally spaced at approximately 10-12 metres. BS5628:Part 3 clause 20.3 states that in no case should joints exceed 15 metres and the spacing of the first joint from an internal or external angle should not exceed half of the general spacing. In long narrow runs of walling or panels which have certain unrestrained edges a spacing of half the general recommendations should again be incorporated.

Joints should be weather sealed on the external face and be filled with an easily compressible material such as Compriband, or any similar proprietary brand of filler. Materials which cannot be readily compressed by hand will not normally allow free masonry movement.

Cracking due to movement can often be induced from the corner of openings, i.e. windows and doors, but the prediction of such cracking is extremely difficult with many parameters to consider, including the interaction of various materials such as concrete and brickwork, and the structural behaviour of the building. The use of brick reinforcements such as "Murfor" or "Expamet" can provide some control over such cracking.

Wherever movement joints are positioned it is most important that the Structural Engineers are aware of their location to ensure that assumptions in brickwork design are fully met. If a joint is located in a wall where panel restraint has been assumed, it will be necessary to provide ties across the joint which prevent lateral movement, e.g. movement at right angles to the plane of the wall, but allow the brickwork to expand. This could be achieved by placing the ties across the joints ensuring that they are fully bonded on one side and free to move on the other.