



Installation and care guide

COTTAGE RED RECLAIMED BRICK



Thank you for choosing Cottage Red reclaimed bricks.

This guide provides advice on laying, jointing, cleaning and ongoing care to help achieve a beautiful and durable finish.

Following these recommendations will ensure your brickwork ages gracefully and retains its timeless character for years to come.



The character of reclaimed brick



No two reclaimed bricks are exactly alike. Every brick carries the marks of its previous life, creating a truly one-of-a-kind finish.

- Residual mortar is normal
- Weathered patina and colour variation
- Chips and imperfections
- Tumbled edges and textures



Reclaimed bricks and embodied carbon

0.7 kg CO₂ saved

for every brick reused instead of made new*

Reclaimed bricks reduce embodied carbon and support a more sustainable built environment.

*Source: Think Brick Australia



1. Laying guide – overview

Careful preparation and good workmanship are the key to a successful outcome. The following guidelines are recommended for all Cottage Red brickwork.

- Flush, shallow raked or half-round joints
- Do not wet-sponge joints or brickwork
- Blend from multiple pallets
- Do not lay in extreme heat or cold
- Dry brushing is the best cleaning technique
- Sensible face selection
- Protect unfinished walls from the rain



Laying: best practice and common mistakes

BEST PRACTICE

- Ensure damp proof course is in place before laying.
- Keep bricks clean and free from excess mortar during construction.
- Use clean water for mixing mortar and for cleaning.
- Dry brush once mortar is no longer tacky but still workable.
- Allow mortar to fully cure before any further cleaning.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Laying with overly wet or dry bricks.
- Deep raked joints.
- Dry brushing while mortar is still tacky.



2. Blending from multiple pallets

To achieve a natural, well-balanced brick wall with even colour distribution, always blend bricks from multiple pallets.

STEP 1 Work across all the pallets at the same time, taking a few bricks from each pallet in rotation. Taking from at least 6 pallets is ideal, but the more the better.

STEP 2 Lay bricks from the blended mix, continuing to draw from at least 6 pallets throughout the entire build.

If your build is smaller than 6 pallets, draw from all available pallets.



3. Mortar and joints

We highly recommend either a flush, very shallow (e.g. 1 mm) raked joint or half-round joint.

Do not wet-sponge the joints or the brickwork.

This will smear a thin film of mortar over the brick face.

In coastal areas or areas that can experience sub-zero temperatures, flush joints are best.



4. Cleaning: pressure washing

PRESSURE WASHING

- Low pressure washing is effective for general cleaning.
- Maximum pressure 1000 PSI.
- Use a diffuse spray.
- Minimum distance 300 mm.
- Keep the spray moving. Avoid concentrating in one area.

CLEANING DO'S

- Pre-wet the wall first.
- Test a small area first.
- Use a fan spray.
- Keep 300 mm distance.
- Rinse thoroughly.



Cleaning: acid washing and common mistakes

ACID WASHING

Do not acid wash.

- Acid washing can remove the white reclamation scumming.
- Always begin with the least aggressive cleaning method.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Using a concentrated jet.
- Acid washing.
- Cleaning before mortar has cured.
- Holding nozzle too close.
- Too high a pressure.



Professional cleaning recommendation

For the best results, we recommend that brick cleaning is carried out by a contractor accredited by Think Brick Australia.

Accredited contractors have demonstrated knowledge and experience in the correct cleaning of masonry and use of appropriate products, equipment and technique to protect your brickwork.

NOTE: These recommendations are general in nature. Always comply with relevant Australian Standards and seek professional advice when required.



Damp proof course

- All bricks are porous to some degree. They absorb moisture and can wick water through the masonry. Damp-proof courses (DPCs) are installed to create a physical barrier that prevents moisture from the ground travelling upward through the brickwork.
- When a DPC is missing, incorrectly installed or bypassed, rising damp can occur. This can lead to unsightly staining, efflorescence, brick fretting, and in persistently damp conditions, mould growth.



DPC: clearance and visibility

- Under the National Construction Code (NCC), DPCs must be correctly positioned in relation to the surrounding ground and finished surfaces. As a general requirement:
- The DPC should be located at least 150 mm above the adjacent finished ground or landscaping level, subject to the specific construction and paving conditions.
- The DPC should remain visible and unobstructed, allowing its position and clearance to be readily checked.
- Landscaping, garden beds, soil, mulch, paving, paths, decking or subsequent building work should never bridge or bypass the DPC, as this can provide moisture with a pathway around the barrier.

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DPC: construction and landscaping

- Unfortunately, incorrectly installed DPCs and landscaping that later bridges or bypasses the DPC occur far too often. These mistakes may not cause obvious problems immediately, but they can result in persistent and expensive moisture-related issues over the longer term.
- Make sure your DPCs are installed correctly, at the correct height and remain visible throughout construction and landscaping. Pay particular attention when final ground levels, paving and garden beds are being established. A correctly installed DPC can only do its job if nothing is allowed to bypass it.
- Raising landscaping, paving or concreting against the brickwork after construction will effectively defeat the DPC and create the very rising-damp problem the building was designed to prevent.



DPC: placement above the slab

- To achieve the required clearance above the finished ground level, the DPC will typically need to be installed several brick courses above the slab, rather than simply at the point where the brickwork meets the slab. If it is installed at the slab/brick interface, this means you need to have the slab exposed (i.e. the slab will be above the landscaping level).
- In many situations, installing two DPCs can be an excellent approach: one at the slab/brickwork interface and a second DPC higher in the wall at the appropriate level above the finished ground or landscaping. This provides an additional line of defence against moisture movement and reduces the risk of the damp-proofing being compromised by future paving, landscaping or changes in ground levels.
- The important point is that the effective DPC must remain correctly positioned, visible and above anything that could bridge it.