

SUGGESTIONS FOR TREATING AND LAYING NORFOLK PAMMENTS

There are various ways of sealing and laying pamments and many builders have their own ideas. Which is best is difficult to say and may depend on taste. These suggestions are based on our, and others, experience and are known to work. Whatever method you decide upon, sealing should be done prior to grouting, and can be done before they are laid or after (if you lay them unsealed, protect them with cardboard/cloth until they are sealed. There is no 'right side' or 'wrong side'; just lay the side you prefer upwards.

The finish you use will depend on the substrate on which it is laid. If the base has a damp proof membrane, or is of suspended wood, then you can use any seal you wish, including varnish. A clear matt floor varnish such as Sadolin Clear Varnish will make the pamments smooth and waterproof, as well as giving them a slight sheen. If you are laying pamments on limecrete or any other permeable base, then you should use a breathable finish such as boiled linseed oil mixed with white spirit or any of the microporous finishes available from HG, Lithofin and Aquamix. You can use any of these on a floor with a damp proof membrane. You can also use a solution of water and PVA (eg. Unibond) in a ratio of 10:1.

Whichever you choose, it is a good idea to try a couple of finishes on some spare pamments (we are happy to provide seconds for this purpose).

Colourless tile sealers such as Cementone or Clearseal Universal will not darken the pamments, and are invisible. They are most suited to outdoor use.

Important: whatever finish you decide upon, please check with the manufacturer to ensure that the product will meet your requirements.

The linseed oil method will darken and enhance the richness of the colours and is especially suitable for the redder pamments. If you want to keep the colour of the pamments as close to the original as possible then use the alternative methods.

Prior to laying/sealing, any sharp or raised edges should be smoothed off using a carborundum stone. Pamments can be laid on a number of different adhesives, and can be laid either side up. Hydraulic lime and sharp/grit sand (to a ratio of 4 sand to 1 lime) works well and is especially suitable for older houses which may move and where there is no damp proof membrane. The disadvantage is that it takes longer to dry than the cement or tile adhesive methods. Any proprietary floor tile adhesive will give good results. If you are installing underfloor heating you will need flexible adhesive and flexible grout to allow for any movement caused by expansion and contraction.

The colour of the grout will have a profound effect on the overall look of your floor, so do take some time to think about it. You can grout with a mixture of sand and cement, quite strong; this will emphasize the pattern of the pammments. Make the mixture wet enough to adhere when squeezed in your hand but no wetter. Squeeze it in and push it down hard. You can also buy ready made grouting material which can be used to give different colour finishes; for instance, sandstone colour grout will complement with the pammments. An excellent grout applicator is the Durgun 45 Pro. Clean off any cement stains as you go. This should not be a problem if you have got the mixture right and have sealed the pammments before laying them. If necessary clean again afterwards with cement stain cleaner.

After laying, put on a further coat of sealer, including the grouting. This linseed oil mixture should to 50 per cent linseed to 50 per cent turps or white spirit. Do not put it on too thick. Clean any areas where there is 'ponding' (or pools) after half an hour or so, with a rag soaked in turps or white spirit.

Try and minimize the dust when the sealing is being done.

Polish will enhance the colours. Any good wax polish will do, though some need a mechanical applicator, and the floor may become very slippery - dogs and small children beware!

Should your pamment (or other) floor need refinishing/restoration, contact us.

Skirting board: as the surface of pammments is not completely flat and regular, it is best to put the skirting board on first, and cut the pammments so that there is mortar between pamment and skirting board which will be filled with grout.

Rough guide to quantities for 9in x 9in x 3/4in pammments

Adhesive: approximately 6kg per square meter

Grout: approximately 4.25kg per square meter.

These are only for guidance. For other sizes of pamment, the amount of adhesive required will be the same, but the amount of grout will change according to the size and depth of the pammments.