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Advice Sheet 1 Armourcoat Polished Plaster in Internal Areas Exposed to Moisture

Internal areas exposed to moisture can be broken into two areas; wet areas such as shower cubicles and general areas such as those exposed infrequently to water, like kitchen, bathroom and interior swimming pool walls. Each area needs to be treated separately in terms of substrate requirements, product usage and finishing techniques.

Armourcoat Polished Plaster is suitable for application on vertical surfaces only.

1 Wet Areas

1.1 Substrate Requirements

Follow the guideline set out in Substrate Specification Sheet SSS9 'Armourcoat QA Working Specification for render board substrates suitable for wet areas'.

1.2 Product Usage

Armourcoat recommends that only base plasters (P01, P20, P30, P66, P50, P100, P350, P500, P70, P700, P80 and PPX) be used in wet areas. The usage of pigmented systems in wet environments is outlined in our advice sheet 'AS2 - Exterior Use of Polished Plaster'. All the aesthetical limitations on using pigmented polished plasters in areas frequently exposed to water are clearly outlined.

1.3 Finishing Techniques

- The substrate preparation should be followed as outlined in Specification Sheet SSS9.
- Application of polished plaster finish as per Armourcoats standard method (Armourcoat AntiCrack is not suitable for use in wet areas).
- The plaster is allowed a minimum of 7 days to cure. Periodic dampening of the surface with a fine mist is recommended to ensure better curing (surface should only be lightly misted and then tamped dry to avoid streak lines).
- 2 coats of Armoursil Impregnator is applied. This is allowed to cure for a minimum of 24 hours.
- 2 coats of Aquawax are to be applied. The surface can then be polished to an acceptable sheen. 24 hours later the shower can be used.

2 General Areas

2.1 Substrate Requirements

The substrate should be prepared using 2 layers of 12.5mm moisture resistant plasterboard. For installation advice follow the guidelines set out in Substrate Specification Sheet 'SSS1 - Armourcoat QA Working Specification for Plasterboard Installation and Surface Finishing'.

Special conditions need to be obeyed when applying polished plaster to the walls surrounding an interior swimming pool;

- Work should be conducted when the pool is empty or good ventilation and humidity control are present. Humidity levels need to be low to ensure adequate drying rates.
- Polished Plaster should only be applied to the walls of the swimming pools that will not get splashed in the routine use of the pool. However, walls that get splashed occasionally would be suitable.
- It is not recommended for columns situated inside the pool or along the edge of the pool.
- Where maintenance is difficult, Armourcoat is not recommended.

- There should always be a water seal along the floor/wall to avoid damage from rising damp. (A 600 mm stone or tile skirting offers good low-level protection against wear and tear and is ideal for separating the wet floor from the polished plaster but a good water seal is required).
- Our recommendation is that there should be a minimum of 1.5 m from wall to poolside.
- The pool surround should be laid to a minimum fall of 1: 50 wall to poolside.
- Armourcoat recommends a hydraulic lime/cement as the most appropriate undercoat for swimming pools.

2.2 Product Usage

Armourcoat recommends using the base plasters in their natural colours. If pigmented plasters are required it is recommended that our standard range of tints be used to create light pastel colours. Dark colours have been used successfully in the past but are more prone to the problems as outlined in our advice sheet "Exterior use of Polished Plaster".

2.3 Finishing Techniques

- The plasterboard installation should be followed as outlined in Substrate Specification Sheet SSS1 (using moisture resistant plasterboard instead of std plasterboard).
- Application of polished plaster finish as per Armourcoat's standard method.
- The plaster is allowed a minimum of 2 days to cure.
- 2 coats of Aquawax are to be applied. The surface can then be polished to an acceptable sheen.
- The plasterboard should be taped and jointed in accordance to the manufacturer's guidelines on installing moisture resistant plasterboard in humid environments.

3 Care and Maintenance

Polished Plaster is primarily made from marble powder and in many respects behaves like solid stone; it is in its nature to be slightly absorbent and to darken when wet and then lighten again when dry. The only problem with this would be that liquids soaking into plaster could leave residues when they dry out forming stains in the same way that happens with stone.

To overcome this absorption problem, Armourcoat finishes contain unique resins that react chemically with the material to impart hydrophobicity throughout the thickness of the material. This hydrophobicity is then further improved by over coating the plaster with

Armourcoat Aquawax and/or Armoursil Impregnator.

Armourcoat Aquawax is also applied to the surface to provide a sacrificial wax coating. It should be re-applied every few months to maintain its water resistance and may be purchased in 1 or 5 litre units from Armourcoat by calling the number below.

Polished Plaster can never be as impervious or inert as glass or glazed tile. As with marble, oils, hot candle wax and solvent solutions containing colourant, such as mouthwash, may penetrate the seal and leave a stain. Any polished plaster surface likely to come into contact with such materials should be protected with a sheet of glass. In a similar manner, try not to leave wet sponges or flannels on the surface for prolonged periods as some moisture may eventually penetrate. Use a soap dish rather than leaving wet bars of soap directly on the finish.

Clean the surface with warm soapy water. It is better to do this frequently rather than having to scrub hard at long dried on dirt. Aquawax should be re-applied every few times the finish is cleaned. Applying Aquawax will make cleaning easier and will strengthen the seal of the finish.

Lime scale is chemically the same as marble. Armourcoat does not recommend the use of lime scale remover on Polished Plaster surfaces as they may become etched and dull. In hard water areas, it is a good idea to fit a chemical water softener to the water supply to eliminate the build up of lime scale altogether. If de-scaling cleaning products need to be used, use very dilute solutions only and ensure that the solution is applied and wiped off in quick succession. Exposure time should be kept to an absolute minimum. Re-applying Aquawax after de-scaling the Polished Plaster will greatly add to its protection.

4 Application of Aquawax

To apply Aquawax, pour some into a bowl and dip a cloth into it. Squeeze out the cloth so as not to stream the wax down the surfaces and then work the cloth across the wall in a circular motion. Within a few minutes, the waxed area should be buffed with a dry cloth to remove any excess, which would leave swirl marks.

Aquawax is a water-based non-hazardous product, which becomes water resistant when it has been allowed to dry fully (minimum 24 hours in dry conditions). Spillage on the floor should be cleaned up with warm soapy water immediately. If it is left to dry, it will make the floor very slippery.

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