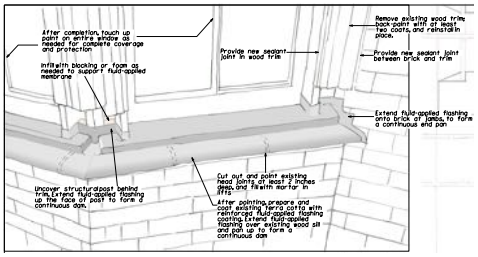
Brick buildings sometimes need to pointed, but don't expect it to cure deeper problems.



This building, now a luxurious condominium, was built in the 1920's using durable masonry construction. But it was plagued for decades by a patchwork of unexplained leaks, some worse than others. A $1 million program of repairs, including pointing, was completed with very little effect. The condominium management looked for better advice and decided to call Leavitt Associates.

"Pointing only concealed the problems from view. It did not keep water out."

Leakage showed up in a variety of locations, for example, above window heads, and below window sills in projecting bay windows.

Water tests showed that water was entering at rusting shelf angles and lintels, which had cracked the brick. Pointing only concealed the problems from view. It did not keep water out.

Water tests were conducted from a boom lift.

We did trial repairs to make sure they work, before recommending them for wider use.

We conducted a series of water tests and concluded it was unrealistic to promise a simple, economical fix to stop all leakage. We decided to concentrate efforts on a few of the most severe leakage areas, because durable and reliable repairs are very expensive. They include flashings over some window sills, and rebuilding masonry, including new flashings, where rusting steel has caused cracks through the wall. Brick buildings do need to be pointed sometimes, but don't expect it to cure deeper problems in a 12" or 16" wall.

Some leakage came from shelf angles The steel had rusted severely, and the original asphaltic flashings were destroyed.

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