

# An anniversary - 25 years of outdoor weathering of pigmented building materials

Nowadays, it is common practice to pigment building materials such as rendering, mortar, concrete pavers, concrete roof tiles and prefabricated concrete products. There was a rapid increase in the manufacture of pigmented building materials in the 1960s, a trend which has continued world-wide until today. Seminal work on the safe manufacture of pigmented building materials has been conducted at the Uerdingen production site. Various pigments are available, primarily inorganic color pigments such as iron oxides and chrome oxides. One of the key criteria in selecting suitable pigments for building materials is weather stability. The significance of this parameter and the need for outdoor weathering tests were recognized at a very early stage.

## Which building materials are tested?

In the late 1950s, the department for application technique was manually producing samples - usually rendering and mortar - for weathering on racks at its Uerdingen production site. As the technical department expanded in the 1960s, the weathering station in Krefeld was developed. Here too, work initially involved only rendering, mortar and in-situ concrete. This work laid the foundations for systematic weathering tests with manufacturing facilities for products such as concrete roof tiles, paving slabs, concrete masonry blocks, calcium silicate brick and concrete pavers.

A compacting machine from Rino has been available since around 1968 for the manufacture of paving slabs. Machinery from Schade for manufacturing concrete roof tiles was added in 1970 (Photo 1). This can be used to produce small, non-corrugated products.

The first weathering tests at the weathering station near the Uerdingen production site (Photo 2) were carried out using paving slabs, rendering and mortar.

Once the capacity to produce roof tiles was available, testing was improved significantly as these small components are easier to handle. Other build-



Photo 2: Krefeld weathering station

ing materials such as concrete masonry blocks and calcium silicate brick were also produced for various trials. A press from Henke was acquired for this purpose in 1971.

Concrete pavers are an important product group in which iron oxide pigments are used. A concrete paver machine, also from Henke, was purchased in the early 1980s (Photo 3) so that realistic testing of weather stability could be carried out. Up until then, concrete pavers were produced on the compacting machine, i.e. in a way not usual in the industry.



Photo 1: Concrete roof tile machine (extrusion press), Schade (1970)

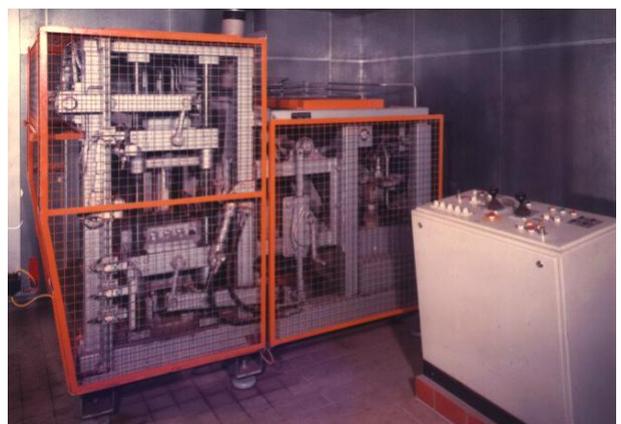


Photo 3: Concrete paver machine (Board machine), Henke (1982)

The acquisition of this machinery meant that the test facility was fully equipped within a short space of time to produce all types of modern building materials under standard industry conditions.

What began with just a few test samples has grown into a large test series with more than 9,000 different samples of building materials at the weathering station in Krefeld alone. Smaller weathering stations have also been developed in Germany and abroad so that the differences between various climatic zones can be recorded.

New samples are constantly being sent to the weathering stations since new angles of investigation are always being developed, new products are being launched on the market, research products require testing and customer samples are tested within the framework of our customer service.

There are a number of preconditions for successfully testing the weather stability of pigmented building materials. The first of these is that the test samples are produced under standard industry conditions. The test site must be well equipped, i.e. it should have a weather station, suitable racks, a store of reference samples, etc. Nowadays, suitable colorimetric instruments should also be part of the basic equipment.



**Photo 4: Mineral rendering, Weathering commenced: 1970, Photo taken: 1995**

**Pigment content:**

1 = 3 % Bayferrox® 110; 2 = 3 % Chrome Oxide Green GN; 3 = 3 % Bayferrox 660; 4 = 3 % Bayferrox 960; 5 = 3 % Le 70; 6 = 3 % LG 200; 7 = 3 % Bayferrox 180; 8 = 3 % Lightfast Blue 100; 9 = 3 % Bayferrox 140; 10 = 3 % Bayferrox 920; 11 = 3 % Ue 5015 (trial product); 12 = 3 % Tronox® A

It should also be ensured that the sample data, measured values, weather data, etc. are carefully documented. Today, this is of course made much easier by the use of computer systems.



**Photo 5: Concrete masonry blocks (un-weathered reference samples in foreground), Weathering commenced: 1970, Photo taken: 1995**

**Pigment content:**

1 = 5 % Bayferrox 920; 2 = 5 % Bayferrox 120; 3 = 5 % Bayferrox 160; 4 = 5 % Bayferrox 686; 5 = 2,7% Bayferrox 110 I Carbon Black 2 (70 : 30); 6 = 5 % Bayferrox 663



**Photo 6: Calcium silicate bricks (un-weathered reference samples in foreground) Weathering commenced: 1970, Photo taken: 1995**

**Pigment content:**

1 = Chrome Oxide Green GN; 2 = 1 % Bayferrox 920; 3 = 1 % Bayferrox 960; 4 = 1 % Bayferrox 110; 5 = 2 % Bayferrox 660/6

## What results have been yielded by these long and detailed tests?

The first thing to note is that pigmented building materials in many variations have been weathered at the Krefeld station for more than a quarter of a century. Results are available for a number of specific investigations, for example, the influence of the raw materials, the water/cement ratio or the manufacturing conditions. The long-term weather stability of inorganic color pigments such as iron oxides, titanium dioxides and chrome oxides has been demonstrated in building materials manufactured under standard industry conditions. This can be shown very impressively by the oldest test sample. Photo 4 shows a wall covered with mineral rendering containing various inorganic color pigments which has been weathered for 30 years. The following photos show the relationship between weather stability and the pigments used in other building materials. Photo 5 shows concrete masonry blocks and Photo 6 calcium silicate brick, both containing inorganic color pigments and both weathered for around 25 years.

These test samples and many others allow conclusions to be drawn about the stability of the entire system and not just of the pigments used. It has been found in many cases that various pigments, for example, carbon blacks or certain organic pigments do not have adequate weather stability. Photos 7 and 8 show concrete masonry blocks and

calcium silicate brick colored with various black pigments after outdoor weathering for around 25 years. Photo 9 shows concrete pavers after outdoor weathering for two years in Den Helder, The Netherlands. The carbon black pigment used has already faded in this relatively short period of time. The most important conclusion to be drawn from this, apart from the familiar fact that certain pigments are not stable enough, is that this fading process is irreversible and not merely a temporary phenomenon.

Photos 10 and 11 show various blue and green pigments used in concrete masonry blocks and calcium silicate brick and tested for their long-term stability. Here too, it can be seen that there are considerable differences in the weather stability of the various pigments. Chrome oxide green or cobalt oxide spinel blue provide durable color in the pigmented building materials. It should be pointed out again that the fading of organic pigments is an irreversible process, i.e. not merely a temporary phenomenon. Numerous authors [1, 2] have discussed this subject in great detail.

Long-term testing has also yielded valuable information about efflorescence on various building materials. Photo 12, for example, shows the process of efflorescence on concrete roof tiles. Testing has shown that this phenomenon is virtually impossible to prevent. However, if concrete roof tiles are sprayed with an unpigmented plastic disper-



**Photo 7: Concrete masonry blocks (unweathered reference samples in foreground) Weathering commenced: 1970, Photo taken: 1995**

**Pigment content:**

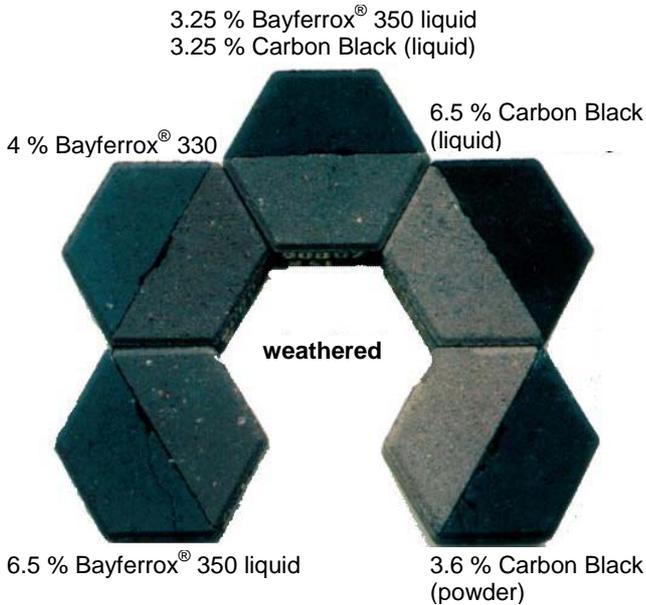
1 = 5 % Bayferrox 318; 2 = 3.5 % Bayferrox 320; 3 = 2.8 % Carbon Black 1; 4 = 1.2 % Carbon Black 2; 5 = 1.7 % Carbon Black 3



**Photo 8: Calcium silicate bricks (unweathered reference samples in foreground) Weathering commenced: 1970, Photo taken: 1995**

**Pigment content:**

1 = 3 % Bayferrox 303 T; 2 = 1.1 % Carbon Black 1; 3 = 0.5 % Carbon Black 2; 4 = 0.9 % Carbon Black 3; 5 = 0.5 % Carbon Black 4



**Photo 9: Weather stability of black pigments, Concrete pavers, Weathering commenced: 1990, Photo taken: 1993**

**Pigment content:**

- bottom left: 6.5 % Bayferrox<sup>®</sup> 350 liquid
- top left: 4 % Bayferrox<sup>®</sup> 330
- middle: 6.5 % Bayferrox<sup>®</sup> 350 liquid/Carbon Black 5 (1 : 1)
- top right: 6.5 % Carbon Black 5
- bottom right: 3.6 % Carbon Black 5

sion, efflorescence does not occur, as shown by the samples in Photo 13. On the basis of this fact and the recognition that virtually no efflorescence occurs at a later stage, these tests have provided useful pointers on how to reduce the tendency for efflorescence to occur on building materials. This information has been detailed in various publications [3].

With the introduction of colorimetric assessment in the mid-1970s, it became possible to record a wide range of data in addition to purely visual assess-

ment and photographic documentation. This allowed conclusions to be drawn about the exact process of weathering in various building materials over the course of a number of decades. Photo 14 shows the individual phases of weathering in concrete roof tiles of varying composition.

As already mentioned, we have only had the capability to produce concrete pavers on a board machine under standard industry conditions for the last 15 years. Nevertheless, we have already made valuable discoveries about the stability of the



**Photo 10: Concrete masonry blocks (unweathered reference samples in foreground) Weathering commenced: 1970, Photo taken: 1995**

**Pigment content:**

- 1 = 3 % Lightfast Blue 100; 2 = 3 % Lightfast Blue 2 R; 3 = 0.2 % organic Blue pigment;
- 4 = 3 % Chrome Oxide Green GN; 5 = 0.5 % Organic Green pigment

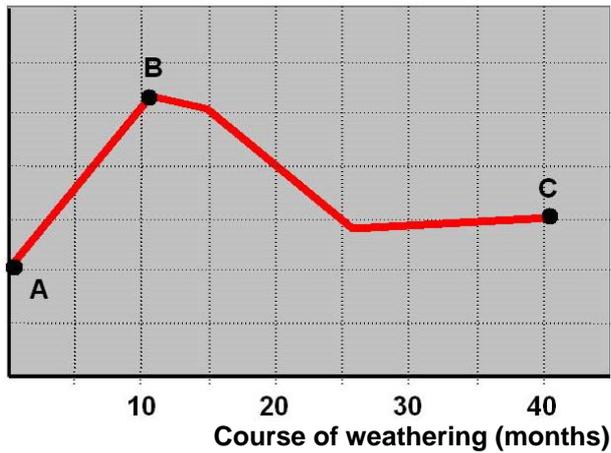


**Photo 11: Calcium silicate bricks (unweathered reference samples in foreground) Weathering commenced: 1970, Photo taken: 1995)**

**Pigment content:**

- 1 = 0,075 % Organic Blue pigment, 2 = 1 % Lightfast Blue 100, 3 = 0,15 % Organic Green pigment, 4 = 1 % Chrome Oxide green GN

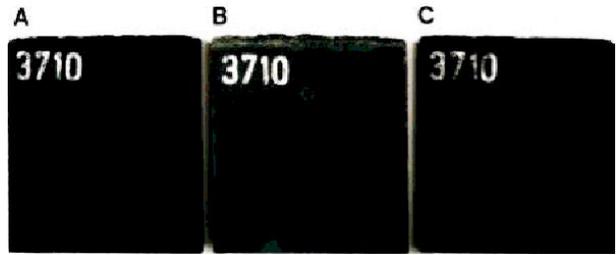
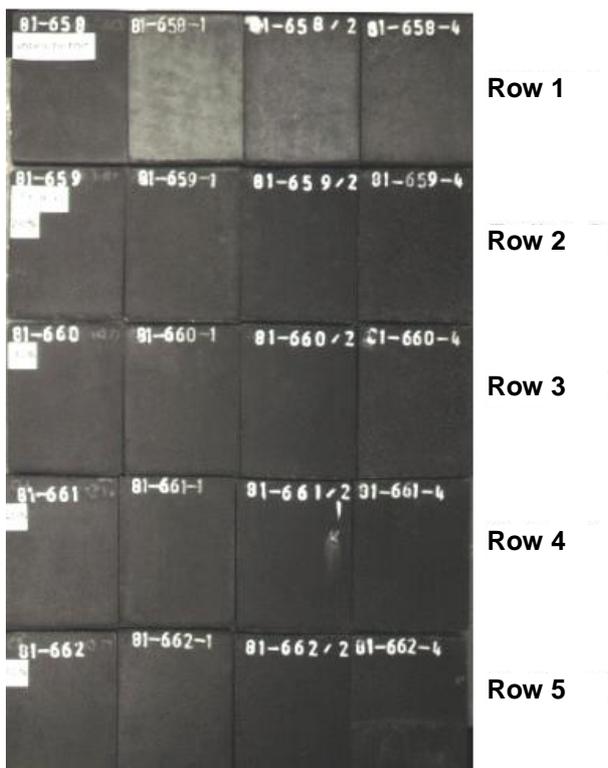
## Lightness



pigments used and the stability of colored concrete systems of varying composition. Photo 15 shows a selection of the oldest test samples.

A key property of a building material is its resistance to erosion. Colorimetric is of no help in assessing this. Although there are a number of highly complex tests, useful conclusions can only be provided by visual assessment, still an important feature of any testing.

The question arises here as to whether accelerated weathering tests could replace the time-consuming process of outdoor weathering tests. Work conducted to date in this respect shows that this method is of no use in the testing of building materials, despite its value in testing plastics and coatings [1].



**Photo 12: Efflorescence disappears during the course of weathering (Concrete roof tiles)**

**Pigment content:**  
5 % Bayferrox® 318

It is as true now as it ever was that only outdoor weathering tests yield reliable conclusions as to the weather stability of pigments in building materials.

After more than a quarter of a century of systematic testing of the stability of pigmented building materials, many valuable conclusions have been drawn in response to a wide variety of questions. The main objective of these efforts has been to provide the manufacturers of building materials with accurate advice as to the suitability of color pigments for their products. Also revealed by the many years of testing is just how well through-colored building materials perform. This is not only of interest to the manufacturers of such products but also to users and specifiers such as builders and architects.

## Summary

The weather stability of pigments used to color building materials can only be demonstrated by means of outdoor weathering tests.

Systematic testing of building materials has been carried out at the Krefeld weathering station for 25 years. Concrete roof tiles, masonry blocks and pavers, calcium silicate brick and rendering manufactured under standard and near-standard industry conditions have been weathered long enough to establish the weather stability of the Bayferrox®, Tronox®, Chrome Oxide Green and Lightfast pigments used.

The continuation of the tests will ensure that it is possible to answer further questions relating to the weather stability of pigmented building materials in future.

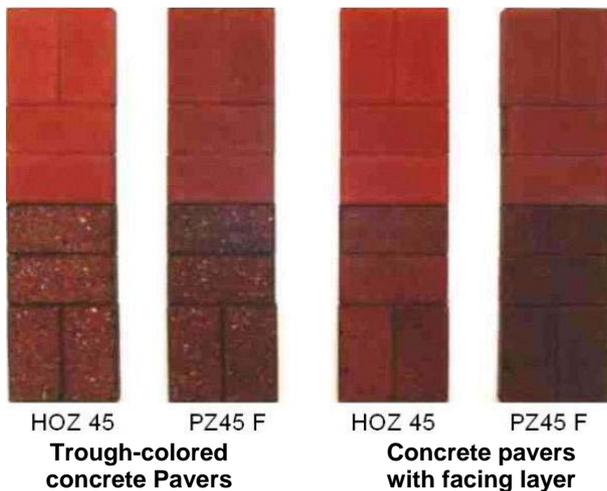
**Photo 13: Tests of the prevention of efflorescence**

Row 1 uncoated concrete roof tiles  
Row 2 - 5 sprayed with a plastic dispersion (approx. 20 - 40 % solids content)

	Weathering duration in years						
	2	5	10	15	20	25	30
Through-coloured	E	chalking — erosion					→
Unpigmented dispersion*	N	chalking — erosion					→
Unpigmented dispersion (solvent-borne)*	N	chalking — erosion					→
Pigmented cement slurry and coloured sand	E	Fungi and moss	removal of sand grains				→
Emulsion paint*	N	chalking — erosion					→
Pigmented cement slurry and emulsion paint*	N	chalking — erosion					→

\* The durability is dependent on the film thickness and the binder used.  
 E Efflorescence  
 NE No efflorescence

**Photo 14: The individual phases of weathering in concrete roof tiles of varying composition**



**Photo 15: Concrete pavers produced using different cements, colored with 5 % Bayferrox® 130**

### Bibliography

- [1] Dr. Kresse, Farbänderung bei der Bewitterung pigmentierten Betons, Beton + Fertigteil-Technik, 8/82
- [2] Dr. von Szadkowski, Bewitterung von farbigem Beton, Beton + Fertigteil-Technik, 11/91 (The weathering of colored concrete)
- [3] Dr. Kresse, Ausblühungen und ihre Verhinderung, Beton + Fertigteil-Technik, 10/91 (Efflorescence and its prevention)