

Silicate Masonry Paint weathers Orkney storms

Products - Silicate Masonry Paint

Project - Seafront home, Orkney

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Where better to test the durability of exterior masonry paint than a seafront property off the north coast of Scotland?



A former merchant's house in Stromness, Orkney, is one of several properties in the town's conservation area to have been painted with Ecopro Silicate Masonry Paint. Owned by retired lobster fisherman Billy Seatter, the house was refurbished in 2012 thanks to funding from the Stromness Townscape Heritage Initiative¹.

Billy said: "I wanted a paint that is environmentally friendly and tough enough to withstand the extremes of weather here in Orkney. In winter the sea spray can actually drive over the house.

"Ecopro Silicate Masonry Paint stood out as the best product for the job and now, two years down the line, I am still happy with it. I've tried other paints in the past but they soon flaked off."

Earthborn developed its Ecopro Silicate Masonry System to offer the most durable, environmentally friendly paint for exterior masonry. It is ideal for all mineral based surfaces such as stone, brick, concrete, plaster and render, offering a high performance alternative to lime wash and conventional masonry paints.

The VOC free system comprises a water based primer and topcoat which chemically bond to the underlying mineral substrate. This creates a hard wearing, water repellent and weather resistant barrier that allows the masonry to breathe. It is ideal for renovations as it stabilises loose, powdery mineral surfaces and is especially suitable for use on lime render.

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Billy added: "My walls are coated with harling, the traditional Scottish render incorporating aggregate. First, the walls were thoroughly cleaned, using two applications of a fungal wash to remove lichen and any earlier, residual paintwork.

"Then the silicate primer was applied, followed by two coats of silicate paint, the first thinned with 20% primer. The products have a lot of body, which helped fill any cracks in the harling. A roller was fine for most of the job. A brush was only needed around the edges and where the aggregate was particularly large.

"Because the paint bonds with the masonry, instead of just sitting on the surface, it is not being affected by sea spray. It has already shrugged off two winters."

The system's stated lifespan is up to 15 years but, judging by historic examples of silicate masonry paint, Earthborn expects many applications to last much longer.

Colin Jones, Earthborn's Technical Sales Advisor, says: "We know of buildings painted with silicate paint more than 80 years ago, which are still in excellent condition."

The Ecopro Silicate Masonry System gives a crisp, classic matt finish that does not yellow with time and is algae and mould resistant. It is available in 12 standard shades, while customised colours can be produced by Earthborn stockists.

Orkney Island Council has an approved palette of conservation colours. Billy's supplier Celtic Sustainables created a shade to match his preference from the palette.

For further information visit:
www.earthbornpaints.co.uk/trade
www.celticsustainables.co.uk

¹ The £3.5 million Stromness Townscape Heritage Initiative was funded by various bodies, including the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland. Its aim was to aid the regeneration of the town centre, ensuring economic viability through investment in the built heritage. Building repair grants were awarded to help property owners fund the traditional materials and craftsmanship required to preserve the appearance and character of old buildings.



Front page - A bespoke shade, Setting Plaster, was selected to match the town's conservation colour palette.

This page (top left) - Ecopro Silicate Masonry Paint was applied to the harling coated walls and chimney stacks as well as the smooth cement facings around doors and windows.

This page (bottom left) - In winter sea spray can drive over the seafront houses.

This page (below) - Other paints soon flaked off but, two years on, Billy remains happy with Ecopro Silicate Masonry Paint.

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