

Movement Joints

Architecture

Why buildings need to move, and roughly how often the joint has to appear.

Everything moves. The only question is whether you chose where.

Causes of movement

Thermal expansion and contraction

Moisture: clay brick expands over years

Drying shrinkage in concrete and blockwork

Structural deflection and creep

Differential settlement between parts

Typical spacing

Clay brickwork: about 12 m

Concrete blockwork: about 6 m

Rendered surfaces: follow the substrate

Also at every change of height or plan

Educational reference. Spacings vary by material, code and exposure. Coordinate joints with the elevation before it is fixed.