



Brick color selection is a process that should utilize multiple resources to make the most informed decision. The below letter from the National Brick Research Center (NBRC) discusses the factors that influence perception of brick color.



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Jim Bryja SE, PE  
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General Shale  
3015 Bristol Highway  
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RE: Advice on Color Perception and Sample Selection

The National Brick  
Research Center

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Dear Jim:

Our perception of product color is influenced by a number of factors. These factors include:

- Surface Texture/Reflectance
- Mortar Color
- Lighting Conditions (see description of metamerism below)
- Angle of Illumination and Observation
- White Balance Issues (pertains to photographs)

The well-known phenomenon of metamerism is a common cause of apparent color differences between products viewed under various types of illumination. Often, the same product can appear as different colors under different illumination sources. Put simply, our perception of color is partially determined by the wavelengths present in the illumination source. Indoor lighting like incandescent, fluorescent, or LED has different wavelengths than sunlight on a bright day and can make certain colors appear to be different for the same product. This effect is particularly problematic for neutral colors like white and grey.

When selecting brick, it is advisable for the customer to view the product on existing housing and with various types of mortars as well as on both sunny and cloudy days to get a true impression of the product appearance. Reliance solely on static pictures for product selection should be avoided for the reasons stated above as they may not adequately represent the color of the actual product.

Sincerely,

John Sanders, Ph.D., PE  
Director, The National Brick Research Center  
Clemson University