

CONCRETE BLOCK PAVING



Technical note for steep slopes

Concrete Block Paving

An overview of cost, looks and durability

CONSTRUCTION OF STEEP SLOPES

The construction of roads on steep slopes poses particularly interesting challenges for road engineers. The horizontal (inclined) forces exerted on the road surface are severely increased due to traffic accelerating (uphill), braking (downhill) or turning. These horizontal forces cause distress in most conventional pavements, resulting in rutting and poor riding quality.; Experience has shown that concrete block paving (CBP) performs well under such severe conditions. Although CBP performs well on steep slopes, there are certain considerations that must be considered during the design and construction of the pavement:

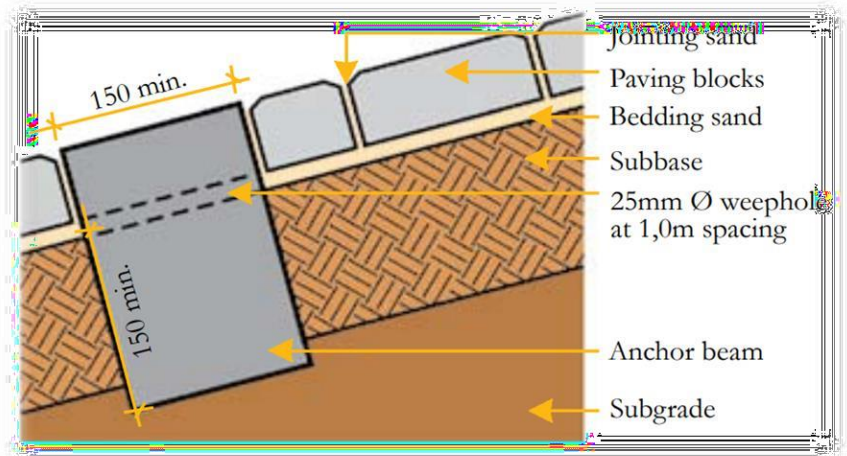


Figure 1 – Typical section through anchor beam showing dimensions

1.1 Anchor beam

It is common practice to construct edge restraints (kerbing and anchor beams) along the perimeter of all paving to contain the paving and prevent horizontal creep and subsequent opening of joints. Due to the steepness of the slope, the normally vertical traffic loading will have a surface component exerted on the blocks in a downward direction. This force is aggravated by traction of accelerating vehicles up the hill and braking of vehicles down the hill. If uncontained, these forces will cause horizontal creep of the blocks down the slope, resulting in opening of joints at the top of the paving. An anchor beam at the lower end of the paving is necessary to prevent this creep. Figure 1 shows a typical section through an anchor beam. Anchor beams should be used on roads where the slope is greater than 12%. Between 8% and 12% anchor beams should be used at the discretion of the engineer.

1.2 Spacing and position of anchor beams

There are no fixed rules on the spacing of anchor beams (if any) above the essential bottom anchor beams. This should be determined by the engineer. However, the following can be used as a guideline: -

Slope	Spacing of anchor beams
12%	30m
15%	20m
20%	15m

See **figure 2** for details

It is standard practice when laying CBP to start at the lower end and to work upwards against the slope. This practice will ensure that if there is any movement of blocks during the laying operation, it will help to consolidate the blocks against each other, rather than to open the joints. If one is constructing a road over undulating topography, it is suggested that one begins at the low point of the dip and work away in both directions simultaneously. No anchor beam is required at the low point.

1.3 Construction of anchor beams

For ease of construction, it is recommended that the blocks are laid continuously up the gradient. Thereafter, two rows of blocks are uplifted in the position of the beam, the subbase excavated to the required depth and width and the beam cast, such that the top of the beam is 7-10mm lower than the surrounding block work. This allows for settlement of the pavers. This method of construction will ensure that the anchor beam interlocks, with the pavers and eliminates the need to cut small pieces of block.



Photograph 1 – Anchor beam, showing gap due to creep of blocks immediately downside of anchor beam.

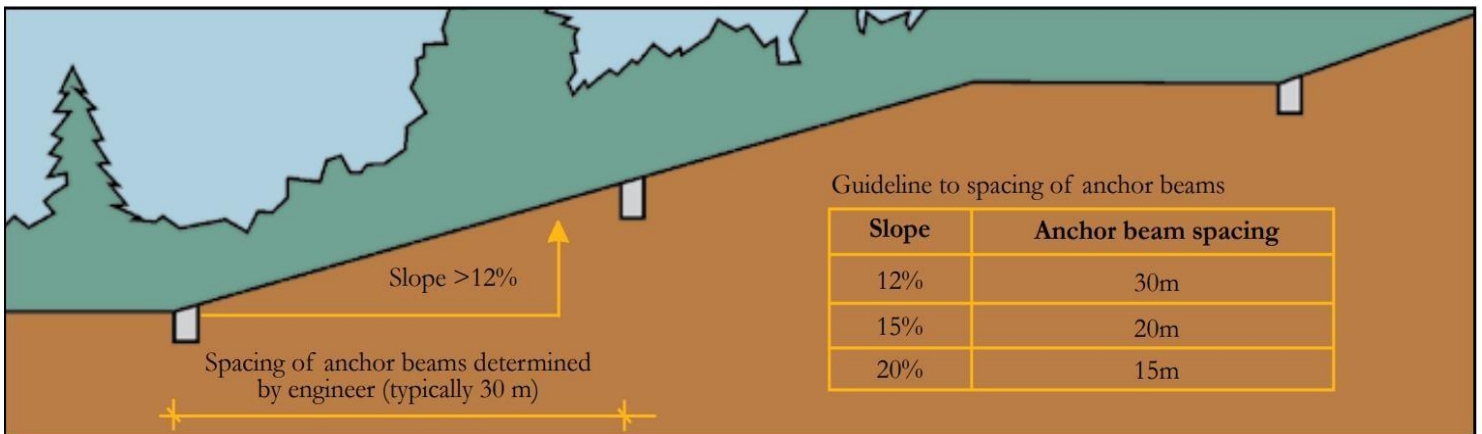


Figure 2 – Spacing of anchor beams

1.4 Subbase drainage

As with other pavement surfaces, rain water can penetrate through the joints in the CBP. With steep slopes, the tendency is for this water to travel down the slope in the bedding sand layer and accumulate at the anchor beam. If unattended, this water can lead to softening of the subbase, settlement, and possible pumping. To eliminate this problem, it is important to provide subsoil drainage, immediately upstream of the anchor beam. Figure 3 shows two methods of achieving this. In addition, weep holes should be cast into the anchor beam.

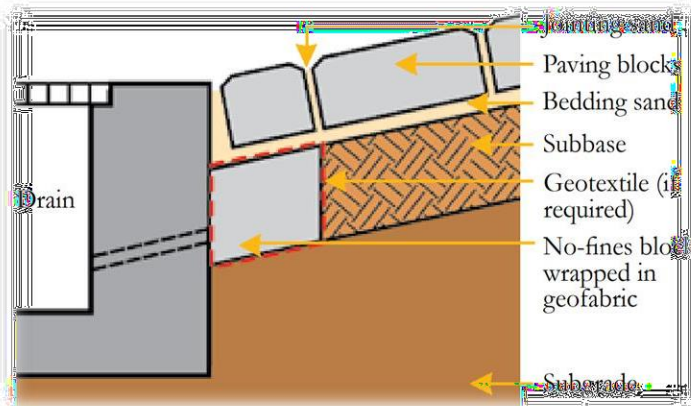


Figure 3 a – No fines block in subbase layer

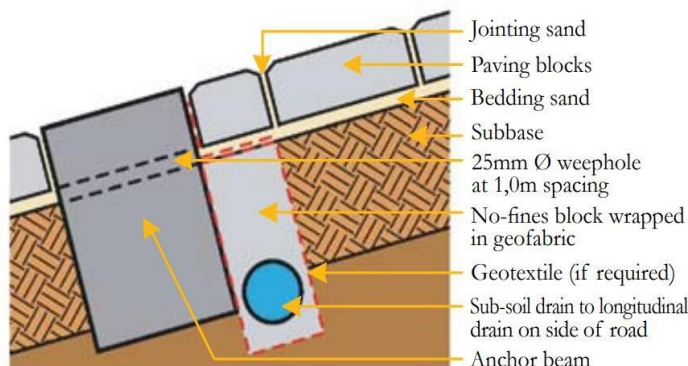


Figure 3 b – Subsoil drain drawing bedding sand water to side drain

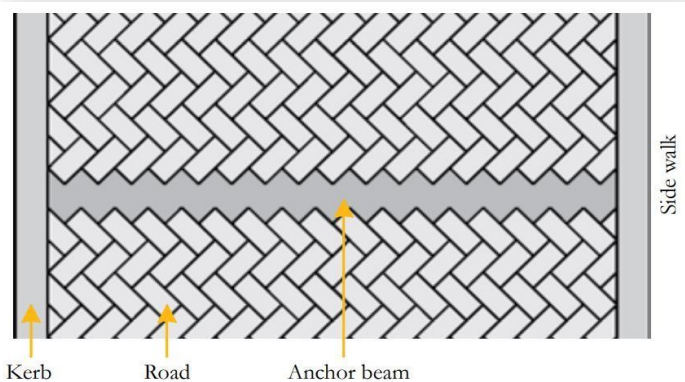


Figure 4 – Herringbone 45° to the kerbing

1.5 Surface drainage

Due to the steep slopes, the storm water, which flows down the road during a storm can attain relatively high velocities. If uncontrolled, this flow can cause erosion of the jointing sand and result in the paving losing its integrity. The following are several precautionary measures, which can be used to prevent this erosion:

- Blocks should be laid in herringbone pattern at 45° to the kerbing. See figure 4. Not only does this practice encourage the flow of water to the side channels, but it maximizes the arching action of the paving against the kerb;
- If the blocks are to be laid in stretcher bond, then it is important that the lines are normal to the direction of flow of water;
- The road should have a reasonable camber or cross fall (slope > 3%) to ensure that the stormwater is diverted to the gutters and does not run down the center of the road. Blocks should be laid such that the finished level is approximately 5mm above the gutter to prevent ponding along the edges;
- Interlocking blocks (type S-A) should be used as the shape prevents flow build up along the joints, which reduces creep or surface movement;
- 80mm thick blocks have an advantage over 60mm, as the additional depth of joint mitigates against wash out;
- Care should be taken to ensure that joint

1.6 Top edge maintenance

As a result of the forces described previously, there could be a small amount of horizontal creep and sliding of the blocks due to the horizontal consolidation of the jointing sand. This could result in an opening up of the top edge joint. Although this gap does not affect the structural integrity of the pavement, it does need addressing as it can lead to ingress of water. Typically, the pavement should be monitored after 3-6 months, and if a joint has opened, it should be filled with jointing sand or a bitumen sealant.

CAPE TOWN – CASE STUDY

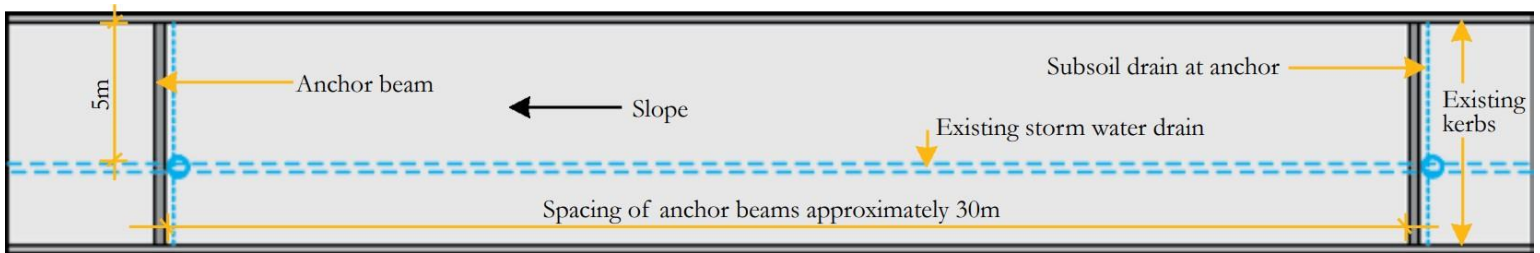


Figure 5– Plan view of Boundary Road, Greenpoint

Of particular interest are a number of very steep roads in Cape Town, which were rehabilitated using concrete block paving. The roads which were paved are given in Table 1.

A concrete slab pavement was considered as an alternative, but concrete block paving was chosen for the following reasons:

- Concrete block paving can be uplifted and replaced relatively easily and so makes maintenance of underground services a relatively easy operation.
- Concrete block paving can be opened to traffic immediately upon completion and requires no curing.

Road	Suburb	Slope
Boundary Road	Greenpoint	23%
Avenue Charmante	Fresnaye	18%
Upper Rhine Road	Seapoint	22%

Table 1 – Roads in Cape Town repaved with CPB.



Photograph 2 – Boundary Road after rehabilitation

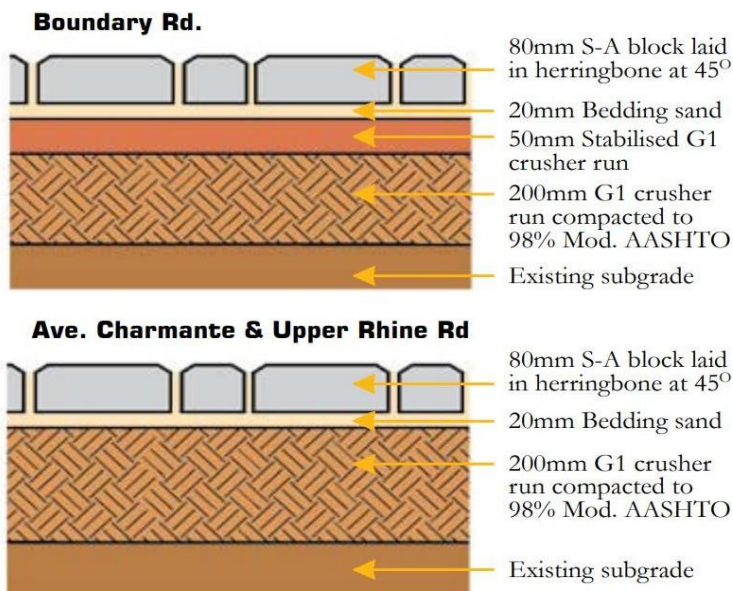


Figure 6-Pavement layers of Cape Town roads under review



Photograph 3 – Anchor beam at bottom of Upper Rhine Road



Photograph 3– Upper Rhine Road



Photograph 5– Upper Rhine Road -Section to be Rehabilitated



Photograph 7– Avenue Charmante



Photograph 4– Anchor beam in Avenue Charmante



Photograph 6– Avenue Charmante

Credits

Client: Cape Town Municipality

Contractor: Cape Town Municipality,
Roads Department

Contact Details:



Tel: +27 11 805 6742

E-Mail: marketing@cma.org.za

Website: www.cma.org.za

4th Floor, Standard Plaza Building
440 Hilda Street

Hatfield
Pretoria
0083

CMA Concrete Paving Block Producer Members:

Conframat



Tel: +27 861 33 55 99

MVA Bricks



Tel: +27 12 368 0050

Technicrete - Gauteng



Tel: +27 11 206 8920

Vanstone Precast



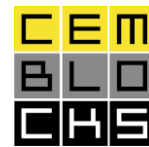
Tel: +27 12 541 2056/1808

Vibro Bricks and Paving



Tel: +27 12 374 5533

Cemblocks



Tel: +27 87 135 2445

Horizon Brick and Concrete



Tel: +27 12 943 3701

Deranco Precast



Tel: +27 41 463 3338

Shukuma Bricks



Tel: +27 41 372 1013

**Technicrete -
Mpumalanga**



Tel: +27 13 696 1153

C.E.L Paving Products



Tel: +27 21 905 5998

**Inca Concrete
Products**



Tel: +27 87 944 8954

Lategan Cement Works



Tel: +27 21 873 1154

Mobicast



Tel: +27 44 878 0322

Revelstone



Tel: +27 21 761 9739

**CEM Bricks
Manufacturers**



Tel: +27 51 433 4479

Conticrete



Tel: +27 41 365 7616

Corobrik (PTY) Ltd



Tel: +27 031 560 3111

Pavecon Manufacturing



Tel: +27 87 940 3631

West End Cement



Tel: +27 11 851 1100

Fick Sement Werke



Tel: +27 22 913 1921