
Guidelines for drystone walling

To conserve walls as features of historic and landscape interest it is important to maintain their local character so the repair or rebuilding of walls should normally be carried out as close as possible to the original style and height.

Stone

Where there is insufficient stone on site for the repair or rebuilding of a wall it is essential that any imported stone is of the same geological type as the existing walls in the area.

Footings

Footings are the oldest undisturbed section of a wall, some may be mediaeval or even older. For this reason, when rebuilding an existing wall, the original footings should always be retained if they are of good quality. However, old footings should be carefully checked and replaced if they are insecure, out of line, tilted or if the stone has decayed.

New footings should be dug into the ground to a depth sufficient to provide a firm and level sub-surface, usually 7.5-15cm. With double walls the gap between the two footings should be packed with irregular stones. On sloping ground the footings should be stepped into the slope so that their surfaces are level rather than running with the slope of the ground.

The largest stones should be used for the footings. These should reach at least a third of the way across the wall and project 5-10cm beyond the base of each face of the wall.

Facing stones

The largest stones should be used at the bottom of the wall grading to the smaller stones at the top. Except where the style of the wall is 'random' or uncoursed, facing stones should be laid in even horizontal courses, even on sloping ground. Walls should have an even "batter" (taper inward from bottom to top, see diagram), except with single faced walls and those running across a slope.

Each facing stone should touch its neighbour and each joint between stones must be crossed by the stone above so there are no vertical breaks. Stones should be placed with their longest dimension running into the wall rather than along it. Stones must not slope into the wall. *On sharp gradients the courses should be laid horizontally and stepped.*

Through stones

With double skinned walls through stones should be used regularly, ideally at 0.5m and 1m above ground level and at 90cm spacings. Through stones must be at least the full width of the wall and may protrude slightly from the wall, ideally not more than 5-7.5cm beyond the face of the wall, particularly if stock have access. Wedges should not be used to secure stones on the outside of double skinned walls.

Hearting between the two skins of a double wall should consist of small stones packed in as the courses are built. Soil or other fine material should not be used as it will wash out.

Coping

The top of the wall should be built to an even height and coping stones should cover the full width of the wall. They must be carefully placed so that they pack tightly together and provide weight onto every top facing stone.

All coping stones on a wall should be laid at the same angle, i.e. either flat, angled or vertical, and should not project beyond the faces of the wall.

Note: No mortar should be used unless specified for special reasons.

Wallheads

Wallheads should be built of alternate courses of ties (i.e. through stones) and runners (long stones placed in line with the wall). See diagram for detail. The end coping stone must be large and heavy enough to support the rest of the coping.

All wallheads should be free standing and should not lean on trees, gate posts or other structures.

Retaining walls

These are built on the face of a bank to prevent soil moving down slope. A retaining wall should be built in the same way as a free standing double skinned wall. The inner face should be vertical and need not be even but the outer face should taper as normal.

Wall furniture

During restoration work all gates, gate posts, sheep creeps, stiles and other features should be retained in their original position.

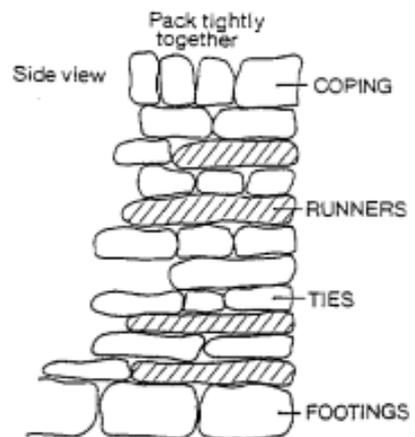
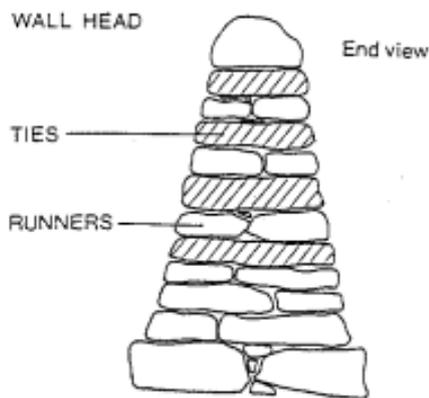
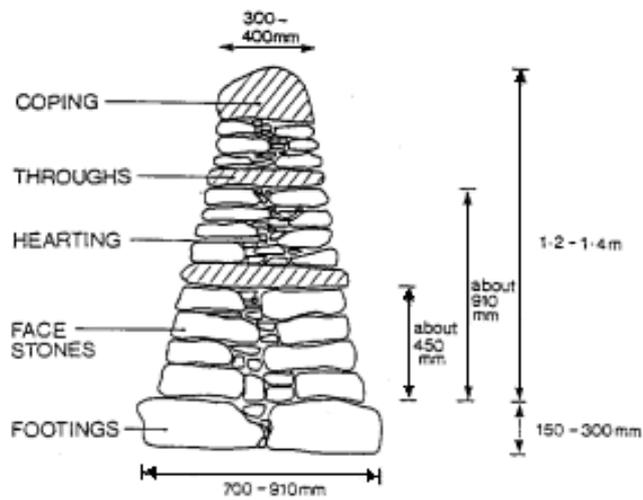
Boundary trees

Existing boundary trees are to be protected and maintained. Where appropriate suitable saplings should be selected to grow on into boundary trees but these must not threaten the long term viability of the boundary.

Site clearance

All surplus stone and old fencing materials must be removed from the site on completion of the wall and any rights of way should not be obstructed whilst work is in progress.

Diagrams for walling



This guidance is given for general advice only and may not be appropriate to all situations. For more details and site specific advice please contact the Conservation Service on 01629 816270 or email farming@peakdistrict.gov.uk.