

# 3b Gardens and Boundary Walls

## Boundary Walls



### The Conservation Value of Boundary Walls

**Dry stone walling is a characteristic feature of the district. Most of the dry stone walls in and around the conservation areas would have been originally built in the 18th century when much of the district's prime farmland was enclosed. While dry stone walling is a key feature of the district's rural and semi-rural conservation areas, the more urban areas are typified by coursed stone boundary walls.**



Traditional stone walls of any type are crucial as they delineate streets, pavements and pathways and have a strong bearing on their character and feel, and therefore the character and feel of the conservation area as a whole. Most boundary walls are contemporary with the houses behind them and can therefore reflect the architectural style of the house and /or the status of its original occupier. For example, a row of workers' cottages might have a simple, low coursed stone boundary with rounded copings; a terrace of middle class Victorian houses may be fronted by a low wall with ashlar copings which were originally topped by stylised iron railings; mill masters often surrounded their large villas and gardens with high boundary walls to protect their privacy.



The most crucial feature of boundary walls is a consistent

appearance, as terraces often share a front boundary wall, or a street or lane will be lined on both sides by the walls of various properties. This means that any unsympathetically altered or demolished walls are particularly prominent and can have a strong negative impact on the street scene.

In conservation areas, planning permission is required to demolish or partially demolish any gate, wall, fence or railing which is a metre or more in height and abuts a public highway (including a public footpath or bridleway, waterway or public open space). Where a boundary feature does not abut any of these, planning permission is only required if the boundary feature is two or more metres in height.



### The Maintenance and Repair of Traditional Stone Boundary Walls - Best Practice

#### DO...

- 4 Follow the advice in Section 1e of this guide as to the repair of missing or damaged 'bricks' in mortared stone walls.
- 4 Follow the advice in Section 1e of this guide as to the re-pointing of mortared stone walls.
- 4 Follow the advice in Section 1e of this guide as to the cleaning of stone walls if they have been painted, rendered or vandalised.
- 4 Follow the advice in Section 1i of this guide if you are intending to reinstate iron railings to a wall which traditionally had them.
- 4 Maintain the original height, extent and appearance of a stone boundary wall. Few alterations will have a positive effect on the wall's appearance and the property's value.



4 Retain features such as stone gateposts and traditional gates. These often relate to the architecture of the house and enhance the street scene.

4 Have repairs to dry stone walls carried out by an experienced dry stone waller who has local examples of their work. A well-constructed dry stone wall should stand for at least a few decades.



**DO NOT...**

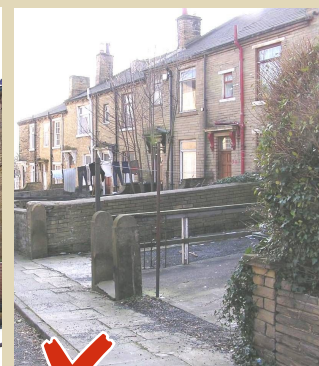
6 Paint, render or stoneclean a boundary wall. This would remove much of a wall's traditional character and create unwanted contrasts with unaltered walls.

6 Raise the height of walls by attaching fencing to the copings of the wall or by adding courses of cast concrete blocks, bricks or artificial stone. All of these materials are alien as boundary features to conservation areas and will have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the area (particularly where houses are terraced) and can devalue a house.



6 Add mortar to a dry stone wall or rebuild a dry stone wall in mortared courses. This will fundamentally alter the character and appearance of the wall, may not necessarily result in a sounder construction, and will require more ongoing maintenance.

6 Allow repairs to dry stone walls to be carried out by a general builder or anyone else who is not a trained or experienced dry stone waller. The construction of dry stone walls is a specialist job and walls repaired by an unsuitable waller will not last as long.



6 Demolish boundary walls. They are of importance to the traditional street scene and overall character of a conservation area.



## The Construction or Reinstatement of Stone Boundary Walls - Best Practice

### DO...

4 Use natural local stone of appropriate dimensions, either in mortared courses or as a dry stone wall where appropriate.

4 Build walls which are of traditional dimensions, particularly the height, but the solid appearance provided by a traditional wall thickness is also important. If your house forms part of a group such as a terrace, the new wall should match those of the neighbouring houses as closely as possible.



4 Incorporate traditional style stone copings, and, where appropriate, stone gateposts.

4 Ensure that the wall is built by a dry stone waller or bricklayer with

experience in working with local stone and can provide local examples of their work.

4 Ensure that whoever is building the wall knows exactly what end product you have in mind. Use drawings with dimensions marked on if necessary.



### DO NOT...

6 Use non-local stone, artificial stone, brick, or concrete for new walls. These will contrast with the local stonework of the house and the surrounding street scene.



6 Use stone of non-traditional dimensions. This will make the wall visually different from other traditional walls, even if local stone is used.

6 Lay the stone in irregular, snecked or other non-horizontal courses. Otherwise the wall will not look traditional.

6 Ignore the context provided by the traditional boundary walls of neighbouring houses.



6 Build walls without copingstones or with planters set into the top course. As well as not being a traditional detail, the lack of coping means moisture can get into the wall and cause it to decay.

6 Use non-traditional styles of copingstones. These will look out of place in the traditional streetscape and can even contrast with the traditional appearance of the rest of the wall.

6 Hire labour if you are not confident that they will build the type of wall you want.

6 Simply leave it up to the builder to interpret what is meant by a 'traditional' wall, otherwise you may be disappointed with the end result.