



Dry Stone Walling

There is great variation in the dimensions and style of dry stone walls in the North York Moors National Park. The majority of these variations are based on the type of stone locally available, the purpose of the wall and the period in which it was built. 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.

Stone

There is considerable range in the type of stone occurring throughout the National Park. 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.

If additional stone is needed to complete walling work the source of the stone must be agreed with the Authority in writing before work starts. If it is agreed that derelict walls can be used as a source of stone the foundation stones must be left in situ as a record of the historic feature.

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 15-30 cm (6"-12"). 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.

In general the largest stones should be used for the footings. These should reach at least a third of the way across the wall and project 5-10 cm (2"-4") beyond the base of each face of the wall.

Facing stones

In general 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), 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.

With double skinned walls through-stones should be used regularly, ideally at 0.5 m (1'6") and 1 m (3') above ground level and at 90 cm (1 yard) spacings. Through-stones must be at least the full width of the wall and may protrude slightly from the wall.

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.

Wallheads

Wallheads should be built of alternate courses of ties (i.e. through stones) and runners (long stones placed in line with the wall). 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.

Site Clearance

All surplus stone must be removed from the site on completion of the wall.

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North York Moors National Park Authority, The Old Vicarage, Bondgate, Helmsley, York, YO62 5BP

Tel: 01439 772700

Email: conservation@northyorkmoors.org.uk

Web: www.northyorkmoors.org.uk