

## BEST DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES: STONE WALLS

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**12.16 Non-binding Guidelines and Recommendations for Fences.** Fences, including stonewalls, should reflect the rural and historical character of our Town. Materials and construction methods should be harmonious with those that have been used in our region for generations. Stone walls that use native materials and traditional dry construction methods are encouraged; stone walls that use non-native materials, rectilinear stones, formal designs, and mortar-style construction are discouraged.

The members of the Washington Conservation Commission, in light of the ever-increasing development pressure and the ensuing changes wrought by such pressure and the lack of an enforceable town ordinance addressing the specific issue of stone wall preservation, recommend a guideline for homeowners, architects, builders and landscapers. Considering the plan of Conservation and Development instituted in 2003 for the Town of Washington **seeks to preserve rural character** through a number of strategies including: scenic resource protection regulations, encouragement of implementation of Scenic Road ordinances and sensitive stewardship in relation to our Historic resources we suggest the following “best practices” guidelines:

- 1) Do not remove, destroy or alter existing Historic stone walls-**most particularly those in the public view shed.**
- 2) Where walls have deteriorated they should be restored using a traditional dry stack method with any mortar work hidden within the wall.
- 3) Where a new wall is being constructed refer to the existing stone wall vernacular in guiding the aesthetic decisions. (“**New Walls** -- This is the biggest problem in districts that are house rich but land poor (Greenwich, CT and Lexington, MA are good examples). There, the problem is that massive new walls are being constructed in a way that is judged ugly or out-of-place by long-term residents who are psychologically and socially invested in what properties should look like. Usually such walls do not follow the local folk art style, being excessively ornate; for example with portholes or turrets.”)
- 4) Be conscious of the rural nature of our town and the efforts by many to preserve this quality.

Sincerely,

**The Conservation Commission**

