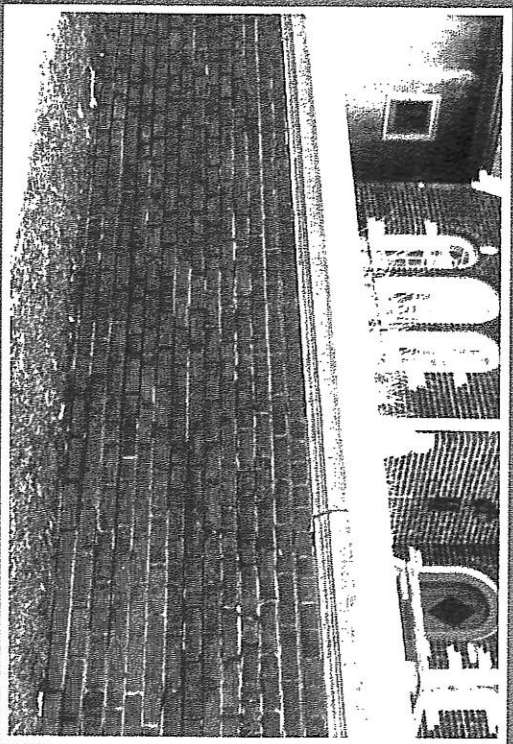
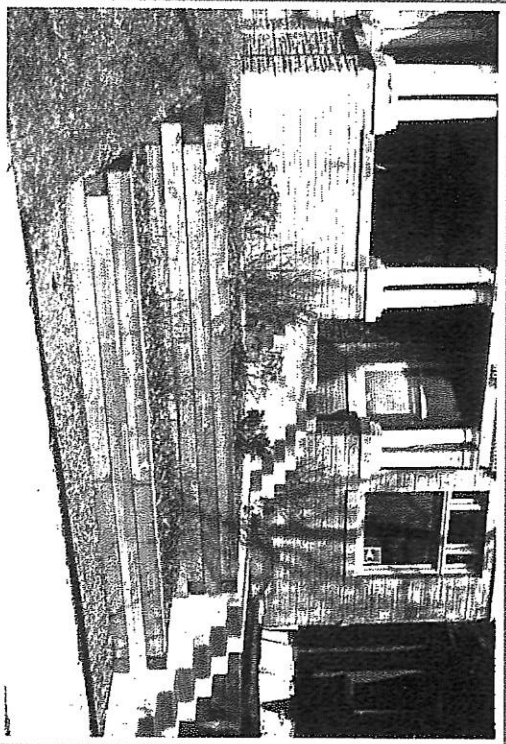


A good example of a traditional stone retaining wall.

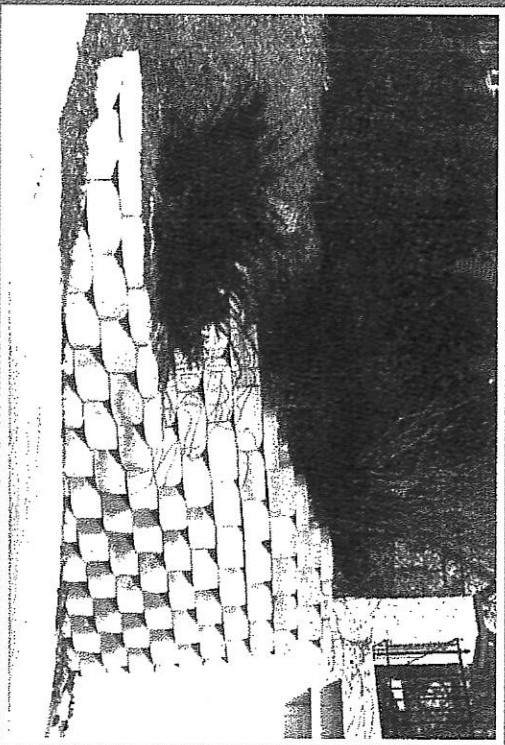


A good example of a traditional brick retaining wall.

RETAINING WALLS



A timber retaining wall should not be used at an old house if it will be visible from the street.



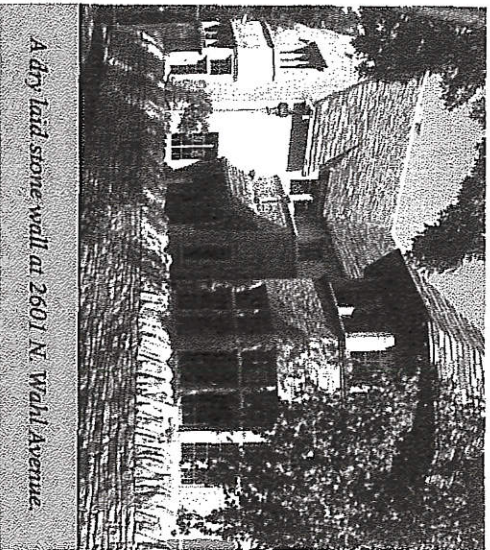
An interlocking concrete block retaining wall should not be used at an old house if it will be visible from the street.

the weight of the stones themselves. This type of wall, however, is not appropriate for all types of houses, because of its rustic appearance. It would look inappropriate in front of most Victorian houses and many very formal twentieth century dwellings, although it might be all right for use in a side or rear yard.

The dry-laid stone wall is said by some to be the easiest masonry wall to construct. Homeowners with basic building skills and a strong back should be able to build a dry laid stone wall with excellent results. Typically, large stones are selected for the base and laid just below grade on undisturbed, leveled soil. On top of these stones are placed the regular wall stones. According to one old rule of thumb, a dry masonry wall should not be less than two feet in thickness at the base for a wall up to three feet in height. For every six inches of additional height, the width should be increased by four inches. Although many stone walls are built perfectly vertical or "plumb," many builders choose to "batter" the wall, which means it slopes inward from the base to the top.

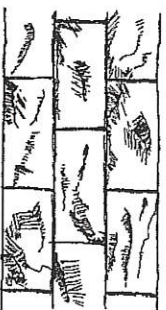
Stone walls can be built in many different patterns and textures, but the four most basic types of stone walls that can be dry-laid are: random rubble, coursed rubble, random ashlar, and coursed ashlar. The simplest of these, random rubble, is made of irregular, random-dimensioned, natural stone that cannot be laid with continuous horizontal joints. Random rubble walls have a rustic, informal appearance and are laid with as little cutting or splitting of the stone as possible. Coursed rubble walls are made from irregular stone, but laid in recognizable horizontal courses or layers. An ashlar is a squared, or dressed,

building stone. Random ashlar walls are made of dressed stones of various sizes that permit close fitting joints. Coursed ashlar walls are generally formal-looking and are made of regularly-shaped, block-like stones that can be laid in precise patterns with continuous horizontal joints.

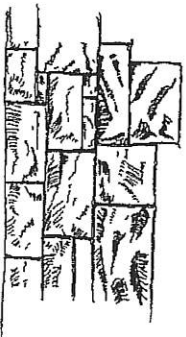


A dry laid stone wall at 2601 N. Wahl Avenue.

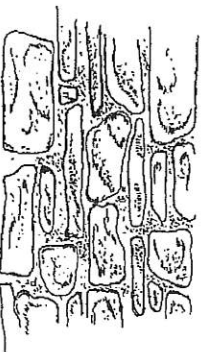
Limestone is a common type of building stone, and it is readily available from local sources. It was, and still is, the most common choice for stone retaining walls. Limestone ashlars and rubble can also be salvaged from demolition sites. Salvaged stone makes a fine retaining wall and can be relatively inexpensive to acquire, although moving it to the construction site can be back-breaking work. ■



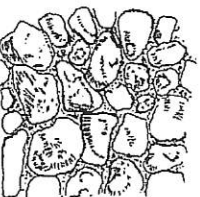
COURSED ASHLAR



RANDOM ASHLAR

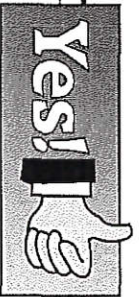


COURSED RUBBLE



RANDOM RUBBLE

Types of stone masonry.

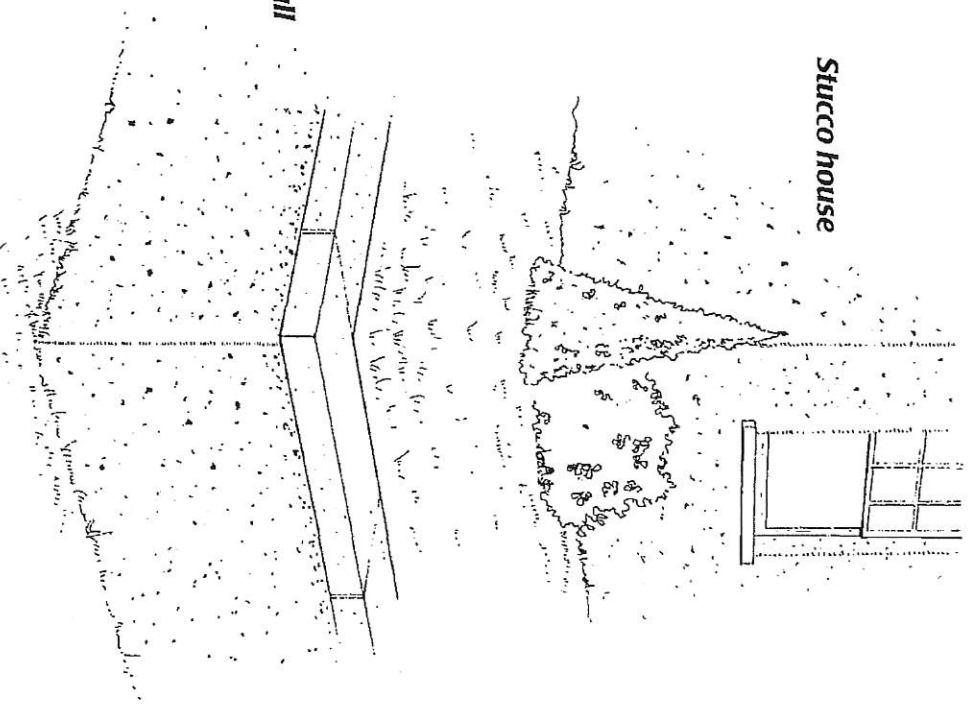


Compatible Masonry Retaining Walls

Building a retaining wall where none ever existed is generally discouraged. However, in some instances, it may be permissible. If you build a new retaining wall in a historic district, it must be masonry and the design and materials must be compatible with the style and materials of the house.

For example, a stucco-clad retaining wall is the logical choice to go with a stuccoed house while a compatible retaining wall for a frame house would generally match the masonry foundation of the building. The do's and don'ts of designing traditional retaining walls for older properties are highlighted on the next three pages.

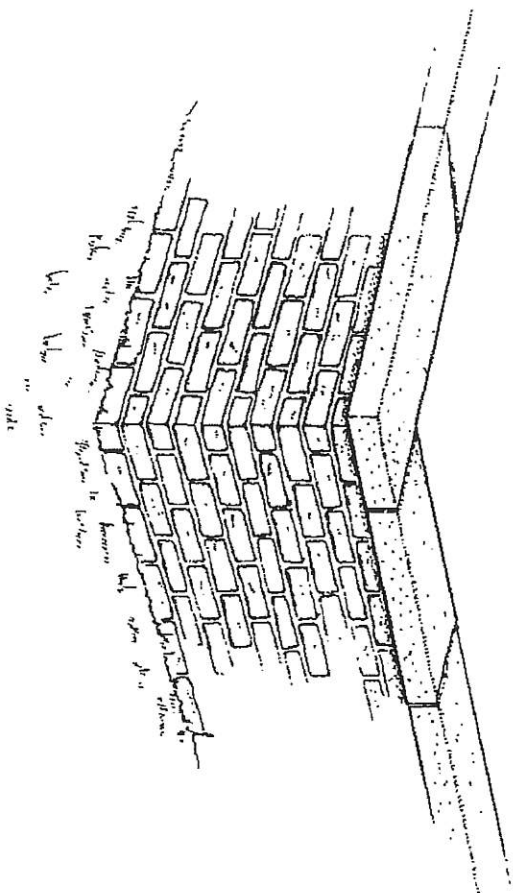
Stucco-clad masonry retaining wall



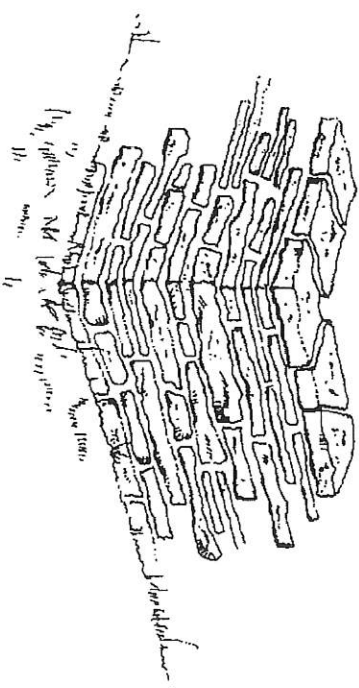
Landscaping



Masonry Retaining Walls



Brick wall with stone coping
1890-1940



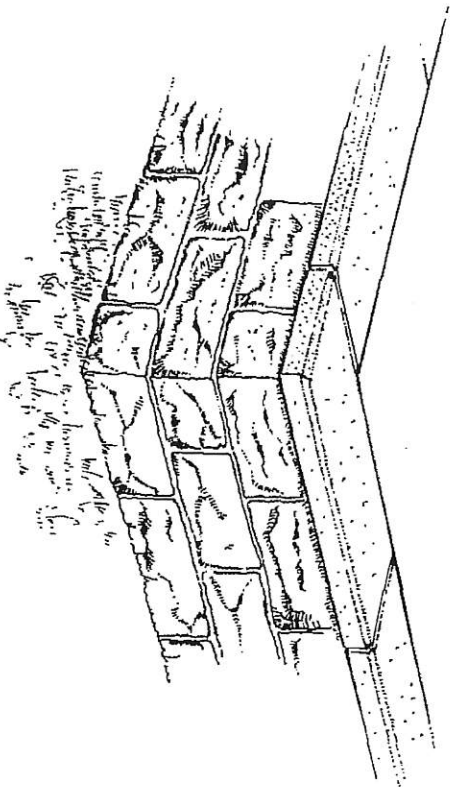
Random Rubble
Early 20th century Period Revival Styles

Landscaping

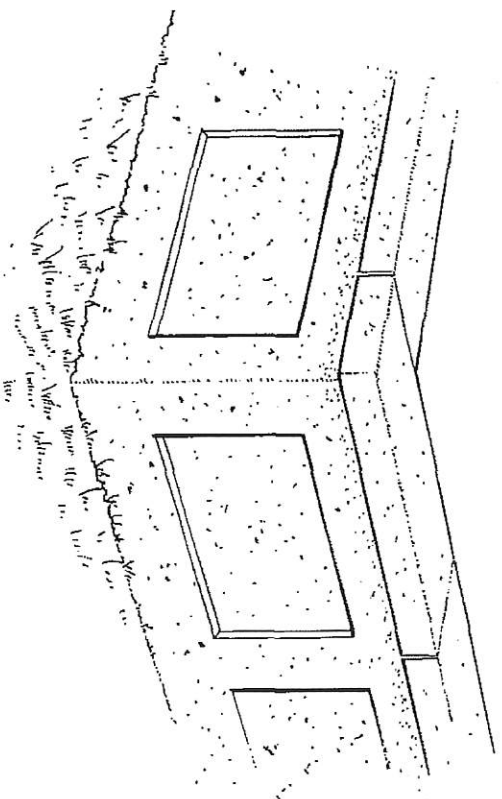


Masonry Retaining Walls

The following designs illustrate several types of retaining walls that are compatible with the architecture of houses built before 1940. Remember, however, that the decision to build a retaining wall should be made carefully because of the cost involved and the potential negative impact on the character of a neighborhood.



Rusticated Limestone
1860-1900



Poured Concrete or Concrete with a Stucco Finish
1900-1940