

“Good fences make good neighbours.” *Anon.*

**Traditional boundary treatments have evolved to provide the best solution to suit the local situation - designing a new boundary in the local style will often make good sense for functional reasons, as well as fitting into the context.**

Getting the boundary treatment right is essential in any location, but is particularly important where new development is proposed: this is emphasised in Harrogate District Local Plan Policy C11 which requires proposals for new development to have regard to the relationship of the site with surrounding landscape features and landscape character.

When designing your new boundary, think about:

### **function**

boundaries can define ownership; separate different land-uses; provide security or safety; keep in stock or children; keep out pests; provide screening or shelter; provide a new edge to a settlement.

### **legal/planning aspects**

think about the legal requirements for example obligations to provide or maintain the boundary; wayleaves, easements or rights which should be taken into account; effects on adjacent land/landowners; effects on any known interests (e.g. ancient boundary features, trees protected by tree preservation orders, listed buildings, sites of nature conservation or historic interest).

### **aesthetic objectives**

consider what the boundary will look like from within and outside the plot and at different times of the year; how it relates to the existing context and to the new development.

### **management**

think about maintenance or management - if using plants, is there sufficient space for their growth and development? will hedge plants create management problems through shading land or growing too vigorously?

### **wildlife benefits**

hedges or tree belts can provide wildlife corridors linking existing habitats such as ponds or woods; these can also provide habitat for birds or animals, depending on species composition and management. Dry stone walls can also benefit wildlife such as over-wintering amphibians, small mammals and lichens.



New development without landscape framework looks stark on the edge of a settlement.



New development with tree and hedge planting is integrated with the landscape.



# Types of Boundaries

## Walls

Good walls provide robust, long-lasting boundaries that are quite costly to construct but require little maintenance - if constructed well a drystone or brick wall can last for a hundred years before needing much work. Walls can be low, high or retaining (holding back earth behind the wall). Some low walls are backed by hedges, other low walls have, or had, railings along the top.

Types of walls traditionally used in Harrogate District vary from place to place, usually reflecting the underlying geology but also the local history. (See Guidance Sheet LDG 5.1)

## Hedges

Most hedges are comparatively inexpensive if small bare-root plants of native species are used, but can have associated costs (protective fencing during establishment and maintenance costs). Hedges range widely in appearance, species composition and management.

Combinations of plant species vary from place to place depending upon local geology, soil conditions and history. (See Guidance Sheets LDG 6.5 & 8.2)

## Fences

There are many different types of fence, ranging from the simple timber post and wire agricultural fence to ornamental railings to high-security palisade or weld-mesh fencing.

The visual effect of a fence can be minimal (timber post and wire fences can almost seem invisible against rising ground and grey days) or very intrusive both in appearance and in symbolism - a high fence of vertical steel palisade with forked tops sends a strong signal to keep out!

Costs and maintenance vary according to the type of fence, but most fences need regular maintenance to keep them in good order. (See Guidance Sheet LDG 5.2)

## Gates

(See Guidance Sheet LDG 5.3)

