GUIDELINES FOR STONE WALL CONSTRUCTION AND RESTORATION

1. Mortar, if used, should not be visible.
2. If additional stones are required, native quality New England fieldstones should be utilized.
3. The wall should be irregular in form as opposed to a recognizable geometric shape or overly squared-off wall.
4. It should be between 2-3 feet high, undulating with the grade.
5. The faces of the wall should be inclined at between 10 and 20 degrees to vertical in order to simulate a hand-stacked, mortarless wall's appearance. In addition, these faces should be constructed with variation in the degree of protrusion of stones to avoid a uniform, planar appearance.
Walls shown above are from other historic properties along Umpawaug Road, and show the characteristics of the historic stone walls in the area.

Note the important features: 1. The uneven top course which is comprised of stones which only approximate a uniform surface. 2. A batter of from 10 to 15 degrees, giving a loose stacked wall its stability. 3. Use of occasional smaller stones to fill in chinks, but no overuse of these stones, and very few of them smaller than a tennis ball. 4. Face of the wall was not uniformly flat or true, and the stones protrude varying amounts from it. 5. Undulations that follow the ground's contours. The use of guide strings in building the wall is therefore not recommended, since the original wall builders did not care for such perfection. They were simply clearing their fields of stones, creating property markers and containing cattle.
The Commission's objections to the sample section of wall are as follows:

1. The top course is too flat, and the use of thin flat stones to construct it is not historically appropriate.

2. The edge of the top course is also far too well defined.

3. The face batter is plumb.

4. The stones are laid too uniformly creating a flush, flat face. The stones should randomly protrude, and excessive chipping of stones to flatten their face is discouraged since area walls indicate that rounded fieldstones were the predominant historically available materials. Care should also be taken not to fill too many chinks.

5. The use of guide strings during construction for more than the most general alignment will lead to a wall that is too uniform in height for historical authenticity.
Historic Stone Walls in Redding

Stone walls are a key feature of Redding’s rural character and a hallmark of its long agrarian history. When building or repairing a wall in Redding, especially those with high visibility, the guidelines below should be followed. In the case of walls bordering a Designated Scenic Road, these guidelines must be followed, and a sample section must be approved by the Redding Planning Commission prior to beginning such wall construction. The walls shown here lie along Umpawaug Road, and show the attributes typical of the historic stone walls of Redding.

Redding’s geological history has left our landscape comprised of glacial deposits between and atop ledge outcroppings. These two sources of wall-building stones affect the appearance of walls found in different parts of town. The steeper, ledge-dominated slopes give rise to wall building materials that are more angular since the rocks there come from fractures of exposed ledge. The rocks in flatter areas are rounded in shape due to the action of glacial and watercourse tumbling wear. Where possible, care should be taken to use the type of rocks already found on the site and in any pre-existing historic walls.

The important features of a traditional wall:

1. The lack of mortar in its construction.
2. The uneven top course, which is comprised of stones that only approximate a uniform surface.
3. A batter (the backwards slope of the wall’s faces) of from 10 to 15 degrees, which gives a dry stacked (no mortar) wall its stability.
4. Use of occasional smaller stones to fill in chinks, but no overuse of these stones, and very few are smaller than a tennis ball.
5. The face of the wall is not uniformly flat or true, and the stones protrude varying amounts from it.
6. Undulations in the top generally follow the ground’s contours rather than staying level. The use of guide strings in building the wall is therefore not recommended, since the original wall builders did not care for such perfection. They were simply clearing their fields of stones, creating property markers and containing cattle. In short, avoid the chip-shaped, geometrically precise, squared-off look of walls that are more suburban in nature, using local or similar fieldstones where possible.