



Residential Retaining Walls Shape Backyard Paradise



Homeowners Achieve Backyard Bliss with CornerStone™ 100 Blocks

Whidbey Island's stunning, natural Pacific coast terrain can be found in Washington state's northwest inlet of Puget Sound. It is also the location of many CornerStone 100 retaining walls that help shape and transform coastal properties. These residential retaining walls tell a common tale of the strength and versatility of CornerStone 100's retaining wall system. More specifically, how these ageless dry-cast concrete blocks can transform rugged, unusable terrain into enviable backyard dreamscapes.

Designing and installing retaining walls to create more usable backyard space was therefore deemed a top priority. The landowners contacted their local retaining wall installation experts at BL Landscapes for further insight on the best hardscaping solutions.

The steep lot has a lovely cottage but the backyard had such a sharp drop-off that standard tasks like mowing the grass became unfeasible. With that in mind, the landowners' goals were to construct an area that was easier to maintain, while also building an area where they could entertain and enjoy the views.

We love the CornerStone 100 installation process. After we used this retaining wall system the first time, we knew we'd never use another block – *Brian Linson, Owner, BL Landscapes*

To convert the land into a viable backyard that could be enjoyed to its fullest extent, BL Landscapes instantly recommended CornerStone 100 blocks. With over 25 years of hardscaping experience, the team secured over 2,700 sq. ft. (250 sq. m.) of blocks from Mutual Materials, a trusted manufacturer of CornerStone retaining wall systems since 1993.

Infinite Possibilities for Limited Property Space

The property's grassy hillside presented similar challenges that BL Landscapes has helped many clients overcome in the past. Elaborate planning and calculated steps were necessary to minimize land disturbance and access material staging areas, a notorious problem when reaching excavation areas on such steep sites.

Equipped with a mini skid-steer and dump trailer, BL Landscapes' crew diligently removed excavation materials, then brought in small trailer loads of backfill and gravel from a staging area in the driveway. The hollow core CornerStone 100 blocks were transported 10 blocks at a time with the mini skid-steer and built from the furthest wall up.

CornerStone 100's dynamic retaining wall features offer designers, installers and landowners a proven wall solution for coastal climates. The block design caters to simple and efficient installation processes for seasoned professionals and DIYers alike.

Drainage Solutions for Complex Retaining Wall Projects

Coastal climates are often a major test for retaining wall systems, with more precipitation and water runoff than inland communities. Therefore, exceptional drainage is paramount to their structural strength and longevity. Mutual Materials' high-quality concrete blocks are relied upon throughout the PNW states, with CornerStone 100 being BL Landscapes' go-to system.

CornerStone 100's hollow core blocks are backfilled with clear crush gravel to enhance and expand the retaining wall's drainage capabilities. Comprised of vertical and horizontal drainage channels, the system offers designers and installers more options to effectively drain water from behind the wall for everlasting strength and durability.

This residential project did require an extensive drainage system because of the terrain and tiered wall design, Linson noted. With CornerStone 100's gravel-filled blocks I've never seen water leaking through the front like other segmental retaining wall (SRW) systems – the water

always remains behind the wall and safely exits through drainage outlets where it's intended to.

Stylish Curves and Terraced Retaining Wall Solutions

The tiered retaining walls offer an excellent solution for residential applications, which increase the backyard's functional space. Its multi-level, tiered walls give the property a lush, natural aesthetic to match the seaside environment. Boasting a total of 6 retaining walls including terraced designs, the CornerStone 100 system helped carve raised gardens, landscaped pathways and a charming firepit area into the previously overgrown backyard terrain.

The aesthetics, manufacturing tolerances, curves and size of the blocks were complementary to these kinds of projects, said Linson. But the biggest reason why we chose CornerStone blocks for this project was the wall strength. With a huge hillside, house and garage behind the wall, this system has the ability to withstand those loads and pressures.

Delivering on simplicity and efficiency, the CornerStone 100 blocks' removable wings help to easily incorporate curved retaining wall designs. Additionally, its concrete SecureLugs interlock system, located on the bottom of each block, provide consistent alignment and setback for each wall. Thanks to those removable wings, this project seamlessly integrated flowing curves into the design in order to further maximize space and utilize the property to its full potential.

Why Choose CornerStone 100 Retaining Wall Blocks?

BL Landscapes has been installing Mutual Materials' CornerStone 100 retaining wall blocks throughout properties on Whidbey Island for years now. For BL Landscapes, the design details are what make it stand out above the rest and exceed clients' expectations. CornerStone's engineered retaining wall system's timeless, textured appearance is just one of many contributing factors that went into selecting the blocks for this project.

The ability to take an unusable, sloped yard and build terraced walls to create tons of space where it didn't exist before, that's the most impressive part, Linson stated. It's a tough project but the end result was well worth it and the clients were really happy.

For more information on CornerStone Retaining Walls, please call (888) 688-8250 or email contactus@mutualmaterials.com.

Citations

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