

Staddle stones, often admired today for their rustic charm and distinctive mushroom-like shape, were once a vital agricultural component throughout the British countryside, particularly from the 17th to 19th centuries. The name "staddle" comes from the Old English word "stathol," meaning a foundation or support.

Primary Purpose: Protection of Stored Crops

The main reason for their existence was highly practical: to elevate timber-framed structures, primarily granaries, hayricks, and game larders, off the ground. This elevation served two critical functions:

Vermin Deterrent: The unique "mushroom" shape, with a tapering base and an overhanging, flat cap, created an insurmountable barrier for rodents (like rats and mice) and other small animals. They simply couldn't climb past the projecting cap to reach the valuable contents above.

Damp and Rot Prevention: Lifting the building off the damp ground allowed for crucial air circulation underneath. This prevented moisture from rising into the structure, protecting the stored grain or hay from rot, mould, and spoilage. Before modern ventilation and storage methods, dampness was a major threat to harvests. animals. They simply couldn't climb past the projecting cap to reach the valuable contents above.

Appearance and Design

A typical staddle stone consists of two main parts:

The Base (or Pedestal): This is the lower, vertical part, which is usually tapered, cylindrical, or sometimes square/rectangular. It sits directly on the ground or a shallow foundation.

The Cap (or Top): This is the flatter, often circular or sometimes square, stone that sits on top of the base and projects outwards, creating the overhang that deters vermin.

The structures built on top of staddle stones would have a timber framework laid across the flat caps, forming the floor of the granary or haystack. These buildings were usually not mortared or fixed to the stones but held in place by their own weight. Their traditional use declined with changes in farming practices, the advent of modern storage solutions (like concrete silos), and improved transportation of goods in the 19th and 20th centuries.

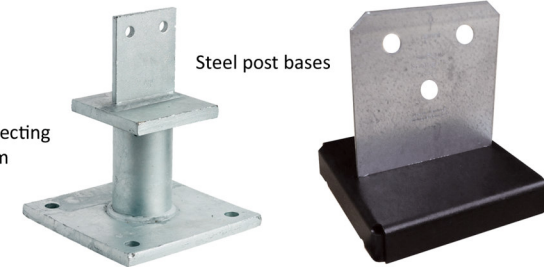


Modern Uses

While no longer essential for agricultural storage, staddle stones have found a new lease of life.

Due to their unique, sculptural and often weathered appearance makes them highly sought-after decorative features in gardens, adding a touch of rustic charm and historical interest.

They are now used as post bases for modern timber-framed buildings like oak garages, carports, gazebos and extensions. Here, their primary function is to lift timber posts off the ground, protecting them from moisture and rot, thereby extending the lifespan of the timber structure. This is often achieved with a simpler, more block-like "padstone" but can also use the traditional mushroom shape for aesthetic appeal. For a more contemporary look, steel bases can be used and there are different varieties on the market.



Steel post bases



Some oak frame companies will use a mass produced re-constituted stone and some will even make their own using concrete.

At Albion Oak we usually use a Portuguese Granite stone for the best quality although we have used Natural cut stone from Grinshill Quarry in Shropshire for use in the Cotswolds where a more yellow colour is preferred.

We can also at a premium use Belgian blue stone which look fabulous.



Albion Oak

staddlestones