Illustration & Clarification
of the
West Highland
White Terrier Standard
THIS BOOKLET HAS BEEN PREPARED AND PUBLISHED BY
THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE
WEST HIGHLAND WHITE TERRIER CLUB
OF AMERICA

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PREFACE

This booklet has been prepared and published by the Special Committee of the West Highland White Terrier Club of America for the sole purpose of promoting a better understanding of, and appreciation for, the Westie by the breeders, exhibitors, fanciers and judges. We have attempted to CLARIFY the standard as written, by correlating text and illustrations for better understanding.

Further, in order to assist the serious breeder/exhibitor relate the external appearance of the Westie to the underlying reasons for this appearance, some of the drawings depict the skeletal structure ... the basic and important framework upon which the dog is molded.

We realize that there is a divergence of opinion on certain finer points. For this reason, we have endeavored to avoid the area of interpretation. Instead, we have attempted to show type, faults and virtues. We hope that the ILLUSTRATIONS and CLARIFICATION will serve as a fundamental base upon which the individual will build his/her concept of the ideal Westie.

It should also be kept in mind that a true appreciation for the Westie must go beyond anatomy. Proper health care, grooming and temperament finish the framework as each Westie is an individual living being with the capacity for such emotions as fear, happiness, devotion and love. All these attributes must be considered when envisioning the ideal.

For ease of reference we have arranged each subject in the following order:

1. A section of the official Standard
2. Faults as state in the Standard, which pertain to the section under consideration
3. Clarification, explanation and illustration

We express our gratitude to those people who contributed many long hours in the preparation of this booklet.

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GENERAL APPEARANCE

The West Highland White Terrier is a small, game, well-balanced hardy looking terrier, exhibiting good showmanship, possessed with no small amount of self-esteem, strongly built, deep in chest and back ribs, (Fig 29) with a straight back and powerful hindquarters on muscular legs, and exhibiting in marked degree a great combination of strength and activity. (Fig 1) The coat is about two inches long, white in color, hard, with plenty of soft undercoat. The dog should be neatly presented, the longer coat on the back and sides, trimmed to blend into the shorter neck and shoulder coat. (Fig 62) Considerable hair is left around the head to act as a frame for the face to yield a typical Westie expression.

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CLARIFICATION

1. Those characteristics required on a proper working terrier should be considered of utmost importance, e.g. compact, to go to ground; stong moderately short back with good strong legs. (Fig 30)

2. All parts of the dog should blend into a balanced whole. A dog out of balance cannot be a truly good working dog.

3. The Westie should stand off the ground rather than have the low slung appearance of the Scottie. (Fig 1)

4. "Neatly Presented" means that the coat should be properly blended in areas of trimming and should be dense and free from flying hair.

5. The Westie should be pure white as the breed name implies, with a double, weather resistant coat.
HEIGHT MEASURED AT
TOP OF WITHERS

Fig 2

Fig 3
SAME LENGTH OF BACK WITH
LONG LEGS SHORT

Fig 4
NARROW RIBBED DOG WITH LONG LEGS LARGE DOG WITH SHORT LEGS
SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE

The ideal size is eleven inches at the withers for dogs and ten inches for bitches. (Fig 2) A slight deviation is acceptable. The Westie is a compact dog, with good balance and substance. The body between the withers and the root of the tail is slightly shorter than the height at the withers. Short-coupled and wellboned.

Faults: Over or under height limits. Fine boned.

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CLARIFICATION

1. While the height limits are important, it should be stressed that well boned properly coated dogs may appear larger than light boned and short coated dogs. (Figs 57,58) In all instances, quality is essential and in this respect, a slightly under or oversized dog of obvious quality is preferable to a proper sized dog lacking this desideratum. (Figs 3,4)

2. The only proper way to determine height is to measure the dog at the withers. Different methods of grooming may create the illusion that the dog is big or small.

3. Undersize is to be penalized to the same degree as oversize. Dogs should look masculine and bitches feminine.

HEAD

Shaped to present a round appearance from the front. Should be in proportion to the body.

Expression - Piercing, inquisitive, pert. (Figs 5,12)

Eyes - Widely set apart, medium in size, almond shaped, dark brown in color, deep set, sharp and intelligent. Looking from under heavy eyebrows, they give a piercing look. (Figs 5,12,13) Eye rims are black. (Fig 60)

Faults: Small, full or light colored eyes. (Figs 10,11)

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CLARIFICATION

1. A Westie with a proper stop will have eyes that are “slightly sunk in head”. Eyes need to be beneath an overhanging brow for protection against injury. (Fig 13).

2. Proper eyes give the Westie a piercing, pert and inquisitive expression.

3. A “piercing look” does not imply small “beady” eyes. (Fig 10)
Ears - Small, carried tightly erect, set wide apart, on the top outer edge of the skull. They terminate in a sharp point, (Fig 5) and must never be cropped. The hair on the ears is trimmed short (Fig 6) and is smooth and velvety, free of fringe at the tips. Black skin pigmentation is preferred. (Fig 60)

Faults: Round-pointed, (Fig 7) broad, large, ears set closely together, (Fig 8) not held tightly erect, (Fig 9) or placed too low on the side of the head. (Fig 9)

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CLARIFICATION

1. Any deviation from the proper ear will affect the frame of the head and the expression.

2. Poorly placed ears, or ears too close together can make the head look long.

3. Black pigment should show on ears and skin as well as areas noted in the standard. (Fig 60)

Skull - Broad, slightly longer than the muzzle, not flat on top but slightly domed between the ears. It gradually tapers to the eyes. There is a defined stop, eyebrows are heavy. (Figs 12, 13)

Faults: Long or narrow skull.

******
CLARIFICATION

1. Overall the head (skull and muzzle) should be in balance. A wide backskull and a narrow muzzle do not balance each other.
Fig 12
CORRECT HEAD
HEAD ON

Fig 13
CORRECT HEAD
PROFILE

Fig 14
LONG MUZZLE
LACK OF HAIR

Fig 15
SCISSORS BITE

Fig 16
LEVEL BIT

Fig 17
OVERSHOT

Fig 18
UNDERSHOT

Fig 19
FRONT VIEW
Muzzle - Blunt, slightly shorter than the skull, (Fig 12,13) powerful and gradually tapering to the nose, which is large and black. (Fig 60) The jaws are level and powerful. (Fig 14) Lip pigment is black. (Fig 60)

Faults: Muzzle longer than skull. (Fig 15) Nose color other than black.

*******
CLARIFICATION

1. Nose should be black, but may tend to fade in winter ("winter" or "snow nose")

2. The black nose is large and blunt, giving the muzzle a short look. (Fig 12)

3. Head furnishings may alter appearances and a dog with heavy furnishings may appear to have shorter muzzle than one without heavy furnishings. Care should be exercised to determine proportions without regard for furnishings. Also, puppies without head furnishings can look long in muzzle.

Bite - The teeth are large for the size of the dog. There must be six incisor teeth between the canines of both lower and upper jaws. (Fig 19) An occasional missing premolar is acceptable. A tight scissors bite with upper incisors slightly overlapping the lower incisors (Fig 15) or level mouth (Fig 16) is equally acceptable.

Faults: Teeth defective or misaligned. Any incisors missing or several premolars missing. Teeth overshot (Fig 17) or undershot. (Fig 18)

*******
CLARIFICATION

1. Strong teeth are an important breed characteristic. Dogs without 6 incisors upper and lower should not be used for breeding. The jaw may change shape and become narrower if incisors are missing.

2. When the incisors grow out of the jaw at an angle causing the overshot or undershot condition, but the canine teeth mesh perfectly, it is unlikely that there is an abnormality in the jaw structure.

3. Correct placement of permanent teeth is dependent on proper development and conformation of the muzzle. Teething pups (15-18 weeks) need to be watched to insure that permanent teeth, especially canines, are not displaced by "baby" teeth which have not been shed.
NECK, TOPLINE, BODY

Neck - Muscular and well set on sloping shoulders. (Fig 20) The length of neck should be in proportion to the remainder of the dog.

Faults: Neck too long (Fig 21) or too short (Fig 22)

**********
CLARIFICATION
1. A proper neck blends into the well laid-back shoulders. (Fig 20)

2. The head should not appear to rest on the shoulders. (Fig 22)

3. The length of neck should be in proportion to the remainder of the dog. A too long neck imparts the look of a Fox Terrier, a too short neck makes a dog look cloddy. (Fig 23)
Topline - Flat and level, both standing and moving. (Figs 24, 63)

Faults: High rear, any deviation from above.

Body - Compact and of good substance. Ribs deep and well arched in the upper half of rib, extending at least to the elbows, and presenting a flattish side appearance. (Figs 24,26) Back ribs of considerable depth, and distance from last rib to upper thigh as short as compatible with free movement of the body. (Fig 24,26,28) Chest very deep and extending to the elbows, (Figs 24,26) with breadth in proportion to the size of the dog. Loin short, broad and strong.

Faults: Back weak, either too long (Fig 25) or too short. Barrel ribs, (Fig 27) ribs above elbows. (Fig 25)

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CLARIFICATION

1. Compact does not mean broad, low and long. As defined by Webster: closely united, firmly put together, not gangly or lanky in appearance.

2. The Westie differs from most other Terriers in that it should be more or less flat sided. It is not supposed to have a great round spring of ribs, but rather the rib cage should be heart shaped. (Fig 26)

3. When viewed from the side, the forelegs should be set under the dog so that the sternum (chest bone) over hangs the front legs. (Figs 1,29,30)

4. A shallow chested dog will have no overhang, will usually be narrow in front and not move properly.

5. Too little "let down" (chest not down to the elbows) hampers movement and generally contributes to a narrow front: (Fig 25) too much "let down" makes the dog appear too low.

6. You should be able to place your open hand (or at least 3 fingers) between the elbows, under the chest, fairly easily.
Tail - Relatively short, with good substance, and shaped like a carrot. When standing erect it is never extended above the top of the skull. (Fig 31) It is covered with hard hair without feather, as straight as possible, carried gaily but not curled over the back. The tail is set on high enough so that the spine does not slope down to it. (Fig 35) The tail is never docked.

Faults: Set too low, (Fig 35) long, (Fig 32) thin, carried at halfmast, (Fig 36) or curled over the back. (Fig 34)

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CLARIFICATION

1. A tail set too low prevents a dog from carrying its tail straight and proudly, and the dog may compensate by carrying the tail over the back.

2. Tails can be made to appear low set, if the top line of the back is groomed improperly or too much hair is left on the backside of the tail.

3. There is an obvious thick base to a good strong tail which tapers towards the top (looks like an inverted carrot or a pine cone).

4. Slight kinks are felt to be hereditary and undesirable. Also undesirable are long thin tails that flop around when the dog moves.
FOREQUARTERS

Angulation, Shoulders - Shoulder blades are well laid back and well knit at the backbone. (Fig 37) The shoulder blade should attach to an upper arm of moderate length, and sufficient angle to allow for definite body overhang. (Figs 29,30)

Faults: Steep (Fig 39) or loaded shoulders. (Fig 50). Upper arm too short or too straight.

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CLARIFICATION

1. Steep shoulders are not 45 degree shoulders.

2. Loaded shoulders are caused by excessive development of muscles covering the scapula.

Legs - Forelegs are muscular and well boned, relatively short, but with sufficient length to set the dog up so as not to be too close to the ground. (Figs 29,30) The legs are reasonably straight, and thickly covered with short hard hair. (Fig 45) They are set in under the shoulder blades with definite body overhang before them. (Fig 37) Height from elbow to withers and elbow to ground should be approximately the same.

Faults: Out at elbows, (Fig 52) light bone, fiddle-front. (Fig 51)

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CLARIFICATION

1. Though slight turning out of front feet is acceptable, there should be a straight line of the bone from the shoulder to the front foot. (Fig 46)

2. Elbows should be close to the body and the coat trimmed so that the gait can be seen.

3. Out at the elbows is usually caused when the rib cage is barrelled. (Fig 27) The elbows are thrown out and loose. This can easily be seen when the dog is gaiting.

Feet - Forefeet are larger than the hind ones, are round, proportionate in size, strong, thickly padded; (Figs 41,42) they may properly be turned out slightly. (Fig 46) Dew-claws may be removed. Black pigmentation is most desirable on pads of all feet and nails, although nails may lose coloration in older dogs.

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CLARIFICATION

1. Nails should be kept short to keep the feet tight. (Fig 41)
HINDQUARTERS

Angulation - Thighs are very muscular, well angulated, not set wide apart, (Fig 28) with hock well bent, (Fig 38) short, and parallel when viewed from the rear. (Fig 47)

*******

CLARIFICATION

1. If thighs are well muscled and stifle well bent, the hind legs will look short. (Fig 38) The hindquarters should not be so wide that the dog double tracks. Rather the hind feet, when moving, tend to single track as the speed of movement increases, which may be observed by watching the rear pads at different speeds.

2. The hindquarters should not be groomed to present a wide appearance, (Fig 53) but should be kept neat without too much hair. (Fig 47)

Legs - Rear legs are muscular and relatively short and sinewy. (Figs 28,29,30)

Faults: Weak hocks, long hocks, lack of angulations. (Figs 40,56) Cowhocks. (Figs 55,69)

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CLARIFICATION

1. Hind feet should be relatively close together when moving although the rear legs are generally spread apart when the dog is being posed for judging. Under no circumstances should the rear feet be wide apart when the dog is moving. (Fig 72)

Feet - Hind feet are smaller than front feet, and are thickly padded. (Figs 41,42). Dew-claws may be removed.
Fig 49  WIDE

Fig 50  LOADED SHOULDERS
         BOWLEGGS -- TOES IN

Fig 51  NARROW
         FIDDLE FRONT

Fig 48  CORRECT FRONT

Fig 53  WIDE

Fig 47  CORRECT REAR

Fig 54  BOW LEGGED
         TOES IN

Fig 55  NARROW
         COW HOCKED

Fig 52  OUT AT ELBOWS
         TOES IN

Fig 56  STRAIGHT
         WEAK STIFLE
         LACK OF ANGULATION
COAT

Very important and seldom seen to perfection. Must be double coated. The head is shaped by plucking the hair, to present the round appearance. (Figs 5, 12, 60) The outer coat consists of straight hard white hair, about two inches long, with shorter coat on neck and shoulders, properly blended (Fig 61, 62) and trimmed to blend shorter areas into furnishings, which are longer on stomach and legs. The ideal coat is hard, straight and white, but a hard straight coat which may have some wheaten tipping is preferable to a white fluffy or soft coat. Furnishings may be somewhat softer and longer but should never give the appearance of fluff.

Faults: Soft coat. Any silkiness or tendency to curl. (Fig 59) Any open or single coat, or one which is too short.

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CLARIFICATION

1. "Double coated" means there is an undercoat of soft, dense, white hair (designed to keep cold and elements from penetrating to the skin) which is difficult to part sufficiently to see the skin. The outer coat is wiry to the touch and is kept at 2" on the back by hand stripping. The coat is blended into shorter hair on the neck and shoulder. (Figs 61, 62)

2. Furnishings on harsh coated dogs may be somewhat less harsh than the back coat, and harsh furnishings take longer to grow than soft furnishings.

3. Though some harsh coats may have a slight wave, coats of the proper texture never curl, even when wet.

4. Belly furnishings should not reach the ground, but rather should be tidied to improve the silhouette of the dog.

5. The coat should be properly blended from one area to another and should never show sharp deviations from short to longer hair, but should blend without apparent trim lines.

6. An open coat is one that does not fit the body tightly, and a single coat is one without undercoat.

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Fig 57

TOO MUCH COAT

Fig 58

TOO LITTLE COAT

Fig 59

CURLY COAT
COLOR

Color is white, as defined by the breed's name.

Faults: Any coat color other than white. Heavy wheaten color.

*******

CLARIFICATION

1. The pure white coat is most desirable, but with a very harsh coat there may be a tendency to a slight yellowing down the dorsal strip. The coloring appears only on the stripped part of the coat and usually only on the tips of the hair. While this is not desired, it should not be heavily penalized when comparing this type of coat with one of softer texture.
GAIT

Free, straight and easy all around. It is a distinctive gait, not stilted, but powerful, with reach and drive. (Figs 63,65) In front the leg is freely extended forward by the shoulder. (Figs 63,67) When seen from the front the legs do not move square, but tend to move toward the center of gravity. The hind movement is free, strong and fairly close. (Fig 66) The hocks are freely flexed and drawn close under the body, so that when moving off the foot the body is thrown or pushed forward with some force. (Fig 63) Overall ability to move is usually best evaluated from the side, and topline remains level.

Faults: Lack of reach in front, and/or drive behind. Stiff, stilted or too wide movement. (Fig 72,74)

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CLARIFICATION

1. Proper movement requires proper structure. Poor layback (upright shoulders) (Fig 39) will prevent the proper reach in front. Poor layback can also make a dog look long in back and body and short in neck.

2. The Westie should have enough angulation so that it can “drive off of the rear”, an action impossible to achieve with straight hocks. (Figs 63,38,40)

3. The Westie should project a strong, easy, free gait (Figs 63,46) not a “stiff”, or bouncy movement.

4. It is better to have angulation balanced, ie., if the front is underangulated/overangulated, the rear should be matched in angulation, to balance the dog. (Figs 39,40)
TEMPERAMENT

Alert, gay, courageous and self-reliant, but friendly.

Faults: Excess timidity or excess pugnacity.

*******

CLARIFICATION

1. The key word here is “friendly”. Remember the Westie’s heredity is to work in a pack, so this precludes aggressiveness to one another, but does not preclude inquisitiveness with tail and ears up. (Figs 80,81)

2. “Sparring” is when the Westie has its tail up and quivering, ears alert, body “pulled together”. (Figs 80,81) Not acceptable is a pugnacious, snapping, snarling or growling dog or dogs. (Fig 79,81)

3. A Westie should be happy and unafraid with “no small amount of self-esteem”.

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GLOSSARY

ANGULATION: The angles formed by the meeting of the bones. Mainly the shoulder, upper arm, stifle and hock.
APRON: Longer hair below the neck on the chest. Frill
BACKSKULL: That portion of the skull between the stop and the ears.
BARRELL: Rounded rib section; thorax.
BRISKET: The forepart of the body below the chest, between the forelegs, closest to ribs. The lowest part of the body between the forelegs.
CHARACTER: A combination of points of appearance and disposition contributing to the whole and distinctive of the particular breed of dog.
CHEST: The part of the body or trunk that is enclosed by the ribs: forepart of the body above the brisket.
CLIPPED: Trimming the coat with clippers or scissors.
CLODDY: Low, thickset, comparatively heavy.
CLOSE COUPLED: Comparatively short from withers to hipbones.
CROPPED: The cutting or trimming of the ear leather for the purpose of inducing the ears to stand erect.
COARSE: Too heavy or overdone with bone.
COBBY: Short-bodied, compact.
COUPLING: The part of the body between the ribs and the pelvis; the loin.
COW-HOCKED: When the hocks turn towards each other; turn inward like those of a cow.
DOCKED: Tail shortened by cutting.
DORSAL STRIP: The strip of hair down the center of the back.
DOWN IN PASTERN: Weak or faulty pastern (metacarpus) set at a pronounced angle from the vertical.
ELBOW: Joint between upper arm and forearm.
EXPRESSION: The general appearance of all features of the head as viewed from the front and as typical of the breed.
FIDDLE-FRONT: Combination of forelegs out at elbow, in at pasterns, and feet turned out.
FLANK: The side of the body between the last rib and the hip.
FOREFACE: The front part of the head, before the eyes; the muzzle.
FURNISHINGS: The long softer hair that covers the legs, chest and appears on the face to make the halo.
GAIT: The manner in which a dog walks, trots or runs.
HAW: A third eyelid or membrane in the inside corner of the eye.
HEIGHT: Vertical measurement from the withers to the ground; referred to as shoulder height.
HOCK: The tarsus or collection of bones of the hind leg forming the joint between the second thigh and the metatarsals; the dog’s true heel.
HAND-STRIPPED: To pluck the hair out with fingers or tool.
LAYBACK: The angle of the shoulder blade as compared with the vertical.
LOIN: The region of the body on either side of the vertebral column between the last rib and the hindquarters.
MUZZLE: The head in front of the eye - nasal bone, nostril and jaws. Foreface.
OCCIPUT: Upper, back point of the skull; between the ears.
PAD: Tough, shock-absorbing projections on the underside of the feet. Soles.
PADDLING: An action of the forelegs seen with the dog coming on. The feet have an outward swing or flip to the side when moving.
PASTERN: The joint between the radius and ulna, and the meracarpals; the foreleg from knee joint to top of foot.
ROACH BACK: The convex curvature of the back from behind the withers and carrying on over the loins.
SIDEWALKING: Movement where the hind feet do not follow the paths of the front feet but rather move on one side or the other.
SLOPING SHOULDERS: The shoulder blade set obliquely or “laid back”.
SNIP: A pointed, weak muzzle.
SPLAYED FOOT: A flat foot with toes spreading. Openfoot, open-toed.
SPRING OF RIB: Curvature of ribs for heart and lung capacity.
STERNUM: Breastbone.
STIFLE: The joint of the hind leg below the thigh; the dog’s knee.
STOP: The step-up from nose to skull, or the indentation between the eyes where the nasal bones and skull meet.
STRAIGHT SHOULDERS: Shoulders blades rather straight up and down, as opposed to sloping or “well laid back”.
STRAIGHT STIFLES: Erect, lacking bend or angulation.
SWAY BACK: Concave curvature of the back between the withers and the hipbones.
THIGH: The hindquarters from the hip joint to the stifles.
WITHERS: The point at the top of the shoulder blades where the neck joins the body.