

1.2.3.2 *Structure and dimensions*

The post-capillary venules have a wall structure generally similar to the capillaries, being simple endothelial tubes surrounded by a basement membrane. Vascular smooth muscle is absent in venous vessels under $30\mu\text{m}$ i.d. in skeletal muscle and is more evident as diameter increases but a continuous layer is not seen in vessels less than $300\mu\text{m}$ i.d. [25]. The post-capillary venules, being situated at the opposite end of the capillaries from the terminal arterioles, are separated from the latter by a distance of several hundred microns in skeletal muscle [19, 34]. The tree-type networks of arterioles and venules immediately adjacent to the capillary network also are separated but the upstream arcade branches of both networks are closely aligned