

Dear neighbor, you are receiving this notice because a portion of Whispering Oak's perimeter wall along Wurzbach or Lockhill-Selma sits on your property. Construction of this concrete block wall was led by WOHA over 35 years ago and ownership was transferred to the owner of your property at that time. Many current homeowners are unaware they own a portion of the wall. This courtesy reminder also explains how to extend its longevity and avoid repairs.

How you became part-owner of the wall.

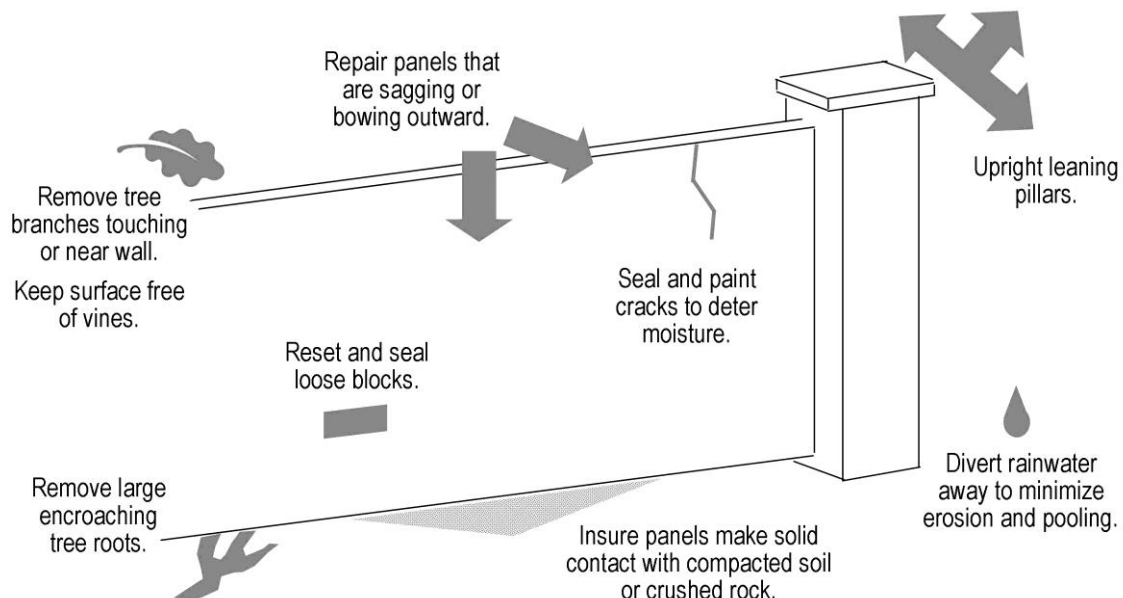
The wall was one of the community's largest undertakings and a costly endeavor. Owners of 37 properties agreed to receive sections, which were often subsidized by funds contributed by hundreds of neighbors. Besides providing a taller, superior sound barrier along an increasingly busy roadway, the masonry wall would be maintenance-free for decades. As a result, these property owners were able to avoid the periodic repair and replacement expenses associated with a wooden fence.

In return, all recipients accepted ownership of their sections and committed to provide on-going insurance and pay for future repairs. This agreement was ratified as a contract permanently attached to each property's deed, which thereby automatically transfers to all subsequent owners regardless of WOHA membership status. Ten of the agreements include curved sections, known as monuments, featuring engraved lettering near the community entrances. The only section of the wall that remains under WOHA ownership is alongside an alleyway behind 11703 thru 11729 Whisper Dew.

In most cases, the wall was built on the edge of each property and exterior land is city property.

Get to know your panels and pillars.

The wall was constructed of concrete block and held together with mortar reinforced with varying gauge steel which will naturally corrode and weaken over time. Some of the 8-ft wide panels are beginning to sag in the middle, bow outward or have loose blocks often because the supporting soil has eroded. The 9 ft tall pillars are less likely to incur problems at this stage, however those that are leaning or have large cracks may indicate soil settling or the intrusion of large tree roots. Movement of these pillars can cause damage to attached panels.



Be proactive to avoid costly repairs.

Property owners can take simple steps to extend their wall's longevity:

- ✓ Never allow tree branches to make contact which can add significant weight and pressure especially in strong winds.
- ✓ Remove vines which add weight and retain problematic moisture.
- ✓ Periodically excavate and cut back encroaching tree roots which may cause pillars to tilt and panels to buckle.
- ✓ Seal and paint cracks in the masonry which allow water to enter, and when combined with natural expansion and contraction from temperature changes, accelerate interior decay.
- ✓ Reset and seal loose blocks promptly.
- ✓ Shore up center support of panels by packing heavy-clay soil, decomposed granite or crushed rock underneath and monitor for erosion on-going. A more durable solution is to install a concrete footing or steel beam, which is ultimately less costly than rebuilding a failing panel.
- ✓ Divert rainwater away from the wall to minimize erosion and puddles which weaken the soil.

What to Do if You See a Problem.

Walls at risk of collapse pose serious liability risk for the homeowner and should be repaired in a timely manner. Intact leaning pillars may be uprighted without being rebuilt. However sagging, bowing or crumbling panels often need to be replaced. Although the exact decorative blocks used decades ago are no longer available, WOHA requires blocks similar in texture and size to the existing. Repairs must be painted to match color exactly. A qualified mason can explain potential options.

Please be advised, your deed restrictions specify that the wall cannot be removed or modified without prior approval from WOHA which is legally entrusted to ensure this community investment is maintained. Please visit our website to request a consultation if repairs are imminent.

Take a moment to thoroughly inspect both the interior and exterior of your wall.

We hope inspection finds your portion of the wall will last for many years to come with only minor maintenance. But if you notice some of the early warning signs described above, it may be wise to begin budgeting for inevitable repairs which could be significant.

Thank you for taking time to review this information. You can find additional support on our website, and WOHA volunteers are always available to provide assistance to paid members.

Simon Esparza
WOHA Board President

p.s. – Don't forget, each owner is legally responsible to maintain liability insurance for any wall sections on their property. WOHA encourages you to verify coverage with your insurance agent as some policies may require a specific rider.