

Mrs Barbara Whitehead – 23rd October 2019

Comparisons were with of the photographs taken at the time the Party Wall Award was prepared in 2019. It is clear that the damage is progressive has become much worse. (see photograph attached)

It is noted that the fully mature Lawson Cypress is located just 1.45 metres from the back face of the affected retaining wall. It is generally accepted that the roots of this type of tree can affect surrounding areas by up to 10.00 metres radius and that the roots will spread at least as far as the canopy. It is therefore certain that the roots of the tree are having a detrimental effect on the retaining wall. (See photograph 1)

The retaining wall

The damage to the brick retaining wall is as follows.

- 1) The brick-on-edge coping is tilting down away from the tree and there is a severe crack to the coping 10-12mm wide, immediately opposite the trunk of the Lawson Cypress tree.
- 2) The wall is leaning over for its whole length, up to 100mm from the vertical plane.
- 3) The wall is bulging, with the centre of the bulge immediately opposite the trunk of the Lawson Cypress tree.
- 4) There is a stepped crack for the full height of the retaining wall which is approximately 10-12mm wide; the stepped crack starts at the top of the wall immediately opposite the trunk of the Lawson Cypress tree.

(See photographs 2, 3 &4)

All the indications point to the roots of the Lawson Cypress tree pushing over the retaining wall.

If the above evidence is not accepted by the Hillingdon Borough then it may be necessary to excavate and remove soil between the tree and the back of the retaining wall to expose the roots which are present.

CONCLUSIONS

There are no indications of subsidence due to shrinkage of the subsoil therefore the reasons for the damage to the retaining wall are the physical effects of the roots of the Lawson Cypress pushing against the wall. Over the years this has become worse due to the roots of the tree growing to a much larger size. When the Tree Preservation Order was first enforced the tree would have been much smaller and regarded as just decorative. It is clear that it is positioned much too close to the retaining wall and at the time of planting consideration was not given to the future growth of the tree which would affect the wall.

It was noted that there is no damage to the similar retaining wall at the right hand area of the rear garden where there are no trees. In addition the affected retaining wall has in the past remained intact and undamaged for many years previously and therefore it is