

I refer to a mature multi stemmed Quercus ilex on the front boundary of Hall Place Cottage.

The tree is dislodging a listed brick pier.

I have noted that the root system of the tree is malformed. At the north side, what appears to be a primary root has been deflected west by a structure which is no longer in situ, probably a wall. It appears to me that the root started to be deflected when the tree was young.

It seems then to be the case that the root, which is possibly the main primary root on that side of the tree and should be extending northwards, is not providing the anchorage that is required of it. In the absence of evidence to the contrary I am of the view that the tree is not sufficiently well anchored on the north side.

To compound this, the tree is not symmetrical but is significantly weighted to the south and south east. The root that is malformed should be bracing the tree against movement to the south.

The tree cannot be reduced significantly, because of its species and its particular form.

I am concerned that there is a significantly elevated risk of the tree being uprooted in a southerly direction, by gales.

There is no practicable way of determining how well the tree is actually supported by roots to the north, so I can only consider what is visibly clear from the surface.

I am not aware of any practicable means of assessing the stability of the tree. Equipment is available for load-testing trees but I cannot vouch for its reliability and so far as I am aware load-testing has only reached an experimental/research stage. In my view it would not be practicable in terms of cost and the location of the tree, in any case, to load-test this particular tree.

My advice is that the only way to guarantee the tree does not catastrophically uproot, is to remove it.

Andrew Skeet.