



Complete Landscaping Services

Commercial Landscape Maintenance & Arboriculture

ARBORICULTURAL CONSULTANCY

Arboricultural Report detailing the condition of an English Oak at Mitre Oak, Stourport on Severn. DY13 9SJ

For Hartlebury Parish Council.

Prepared by

Andrew Douglas

20th June 2022

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief: On behalf of Hartlebury Parish Council, we are instructed by the Parish Clerk Lesly Cleaver to inspect an Oak tree located adjacent to A449. I have been asked to provide an assessment of the health, condition and overall safety of the tree, and to provide recommendations for any work required in order to bring it to an acceptable level of risk.

1.2 Report scope: This report only relates to one tree, as identified in section 1.4. The possible effect that the tree may have to structures through changes in soil volume is not included in this report. This report is based on a visual tree analysis with the aid measuring tape, nylon mallet steel rod and binoculars

1.3 Background: No record of previous survey.

1.4 Tree location: The approximate location of the tree has been shown on the site plan included as Figure 1.

2. SITE VISIT

2.1 Date of site visit: 4th April 2022

2.2 Description of site: The site inspected is a grass verge with the boundary line punctuated by a cast steel fence approximately 7 metres from the highway & 6 metres from an adjacent property with car parking, this ancient tree bears a significant historical interest to the local community Figure 2.

2.3 Method of inspection: Initial observations of the tree were carried out employing Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) techniques. Subsequent tests on the condition of the wood were conducted by using a nylon mallet. I did not carry out soil excavation or take root or soil samples for analysis. The observations were made from ground level with the use of binoculars where appropriate. The conclusions that have been reached are based on an interpretation of observations using my knowledge and experience.

3. TREE DESCRIPTION

3.1 T1

- **Species:** English Oak (*Quercus robur*)
 - **Height:** 7m
 - Crown spread radius:** N: 2m E: 5m S: 2m W:2m
 - Diameter of stem at 0.5 metres:** 2700mm
 - Age class:** Ancient
 - **Vitality:** Poor
- TPO (Figure 3)**

TPO/W/45/90/003/TPO 01/01/1990 19/02/2004 http://maps.wychavon.gov.uk/wychavon_docs/tpo/Hartlebury/1990/45_90_003_TPO

3.2 General observations/comments:

- 3.2.1 This ancient monolith has a significant quantity of dead wood with an outer core of live wood with foliage towards the North @ 4m (Figure 4).
- 3.2.2 The tree is hollow has longitudinal cracks along the stem and is clothed in Ivy (Figure 5).
- 3.2.3 There is a section of wood tearing South @ 4m.
- 3.2.4 There is a history of remedial work with timber props and steel rods clamping the remaining tissue (Figure 6).
- 3.2.5 The location is within 6m of a car parking area for the adjacent property & the tree has a leaning habit towards this direction.
- 3.2.6 A dual carriageway – A449 is located 10m away.
- 3.2.7 The neighbouring resident believes that there has been basal movement.

4 DECAY POCKET EXAMINATION

- 4.1 The remaining wall thickness is significantly below 30% (Figure 7).
- 4.2 There has been no historic monitoring of basal movement and there no clear indications of this condition.

5 APPRAISALS

- 5.1 In response to previous pruning the tree has only a small percentage of live wood and forming a sparse canopy with some twig die back.
- 5.2 Following the disintegration of heartwood, the remaining outer wood has degraded but by virtue of species has retained much strength. The outer core is supported by the extensive growth of Ivy (which reinforces in the same manner as a bandage).
- 5.3 The tree is of historical importance to the parish, it's perimeter is surrounded by a Victorian wrought iron fence accompanied with a gate.
- 5.4 The only potential hazard beyond the perimeter fence is the adjacent parking area (Figure 8).

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are made in order to bring the tree to an acceptable level of risk. Recommendations are based on our knowledge and experience, and on the latest accepted research and guidance.

6.1 **We recommend that the stem is reduced to above the intersection of live wood @ 5m North (Figure 9).**

6.2 This would reduce the weight on the props supporting on the Southerly side.

6.3 In the event of the stem falling the above procedure would limit the range of the stem so it would not encroach upon the neighbouring boundary (5.4 fig. 8).

6.4 It is advised that the basal movement is monitored by a competent arborist.

7. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Report limitations: Trees by their very nature are hazardous and will always pose a certain level of risk. This report is not intended to provide recommendations for the complete removal of risks posed by trees.

The report is based on my assessment of the tree, and provides recommendations for reasonable levels of management required in order to bring tree to an acceptable level of safety

Andrew Douglas trading as Complete Landscaping Services cannot accept liability if recommendations contained within the report are not fully carried out.

8. APPENDIX

8.1 Figure 1



Figure 2

HARTLEBURY

Heortlanbyrig (x cent.); Heortlabiri, Huerteberie (xi cent.); Herclebery (xii cent.); Hertlebur, Hertlebyr (xiii cent.); Herthulbury (xiv cent.); Hertylburie (xv cent.); Hartilbury, Hurtbery (xvi cent.).

The parish of Hartlebury has an area of 5,355 acres. Upper Mitton, with an area of 359 acres, formerly a hamlet of Hartlebury, was constituted a civil parish under the Local Government Act of 1894. (fn. 1) From the low-lying banks of the Severn and the Stour on the western side of Hartlebury the land rises towards the east, reaching a height of 200 ft. above the ordnance datum on the eastern border and of 300 ft. at Bishop's Wood on the southern boundary. The eastern part of the parish is on the Keuper Sandstones, the western on the Bunter Pebble Beds. There are 1,618 acres of permanent grass and 2,810 acres of arable land, the chief crops being wheat, barley, peas and potatoes. The woods and plantations, of which the largest is Bishop's Wood, cover 172 acres. (fn. 2) The Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton branch of the Great Western railway passes through the parish, and is joined at Hartlebury station by the Severn Valley branch. The main road from Worcester to Kidderminster enters the parish on the south near the Mitre Oak, where the road from Stourport meets it, and running north is joined in the village of Hartlebury by another road from Stourport, on the left of which near the smithy is the old pound.

The village of Hartlebury is on the Worcester and Kidderminster high road. The church stands in the centre of the village in a churchyard of moderate size. The village itself contains few features of particular interest; the best house is, perhaps, the rectory, a good building of the late 17th century built by Bishop Stillingfleet (1689–99). Hartlebury Castle is situated a little to the north-west of the main village, surrounded by an extensive park. On the east side of the road ascending to the southward out of the village, which is built at the foot and upon the sides of small hills of sandstone, is the old grammar school, a small and much modernized building of brick. On the same side of the road, a little distance to the southward again, new and elaborate buildings for the accommodation of the school have been erected, and were opened in 1912.

There used to be in the village an old cross bearing the date 1666, but it was pulled down by a farmer's team in 1839 because it was thought to be in the way, and with it went also the stocks and whippingpost which stood below it. (fn. 3) A sundial covered with quaint inscriptions used to stand in a cottage garden surrounded by a yew hedge. It was called the Wizard's Pillar, being put up in 1687 by a man named Fidkin, who was considered to be a wizard. This now stands in the churchyard of Areley Kings. (fn. 4) On the glebe farm there is a hermit's cave called Hardwick's Cell. The roof is supported by sandstone pillars, and a door and window have been cut in the rock. Two giant oak trees stand in this parish, one in the bishop's park, called the Prior's Oak, and the other called the Mitre Oak, on the high road to Worcester. Probably they marked the boundaries of the bishop's rights in the forest. The Mitre Oak is said, but certainly erroneously, to have been the oak under which Augustine met the Welsh bishops.

Source;

[A History of the County of Worcester: Volume 3](#). Originally published by Victoria County History, London, 1913

Figure 3

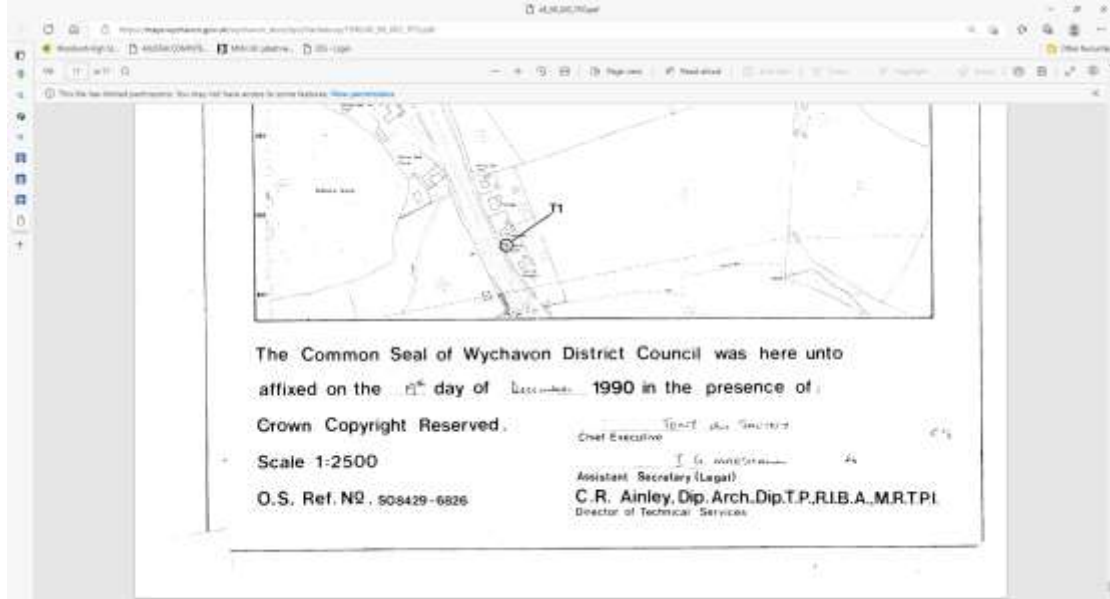


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



References:

- "The Body Language of Trees"* Claus Mattheck and Helge Breloer.
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- "Modern Arboriculture"* Alex L. Shigo, Shigo & Trees, Associates, LLC
2008
- "Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management"* David
Lonsdale. HMSO 1999
- BS 3998: 2010 *"British Standard Recommendations for Treework"*.
- "Collins Tree Guide"* Owen Johnson & David Moore, HarperCollins 2004
- "Collins Guide to the Mushrooms of Britain & Europe"* Régis
Courtecuisse, HarperCollins 1999
- "A Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Northern Europe"* Alan Mitchell
William Collins Sons & Co Ltd 1974
- "An Arborists Field Guide - Fungi on Trees"* Guy Watson and Ted Green
Arboricultural Association 2011

Below are set out are Andrew Douglas' competences and experience.

Insurance: -

£5m Public Liability & £0.5m Professional Indemnity (renewed March).

Personnel: -

A G Douglas (born 1971) started a career in landscaping in 1987 and throughout a six-year period of higher education and following a three-year career in a commercial environment before establishing a landscape gardening business in 1997. He studied Horticulture and Hard Landscaping (NVQII) 1998 to 1999. In 2007 he embarked upon chainsaw, tree felling and tree surgery courses at Warwickshire College on a part-time basis and then successfully passed Royal Forestry Society level II (practitioner) and level III (technician's Certificate). In merit for passing the Technicians' Certificate Andrew was presented with the Arboricultural Association Student of the Year 2013 Award. He has undertaken LANTRA and Tree Life courses in tree surveying and mortgage reports and held NPTC certificates of competence in chainsaw use on the ground and climbing trees.