

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

c/o Blakett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH

Web site: <https://durhamcity.org/>

22 May 2026

Ms Amy Beveridge
Durham County Council
Planning Department
PO Box 274
Stanley
County Durham DH8 1HG

Dear Ms Beveridge

DM/26/01201/TPO Zen Bar Court Lane Durham DH1 3JS
T1 - Sycamore - Fell to ground level

The Trust has concerns about the nature of the damage to this tree and the information provided on the application form.

The tree forms part of the group that helps to create the character of the crescent and open space in front of Durham Crown Court and as an offshoot to Old Elvet. It therefore has a local role and needed appropriate treatment to ensure its survival. However, its treatment has been less than satisfactory. There is surfacing up to the trunk, a store has been built also up to the trunk. The immediately adjacent area is currently poorly maintained, and bamboo poles have been stored against the trunk. There is evidence of very heavy pruning that removed most of one side of the tree completely unbalancing it and leading to extensive growth on the opposite side. The cause of the extensive bark loss down the pruned side of the tree is not identified.

The requirements of the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) application form have not been met.

Firstly, the form requires '*written arboricultural advice or other diagnostic information*' if the tree is '*diseased or you have fears that it might break or fall*'. All that has been provided is the very brief and unexplained statement: '*Fell to ground level. The main leader is dead so if this is removed it would leave the tree unbalanced as there would only be two limbs left that would leave the tree with no shape or balance*'. This is very inadequate as information on condition and causes of the tree damage given the high visibility of the tree and its previous poor treatment. The unbalancing is a result of the proposed pruning and there is no full exploration of alternative tree surgery.

Secondly, the TPO form clearly requires the applicant, if a tree is to be felled, to either provide a proposal for a replacement or reasons for not wanting to replant. Neither has been provided in contravention of the TPO and form requirements.

Given the high visibility of the tree and what appears to be the consistent pressure to operate the leisure use of the premises right up to the tree, the submission is wholly inadequate and much more information should be required of the applicant.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Childs

Vice-Chair, City of Durham Trust
trust@durhamcity.org

Celebrating, Protecting and Enhancing the City of Durham