

[REDACTED]

From: planningcomments@highpeak.gov.uk
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To: Planning Comments (HPBC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

[REDACTED]

Application Reference No. : HPK/2026/0228 Site Address: Spring Shopping Centre & Land South of Station Road
Buxton Derbyshire Comments by: Peter Barrett

From:
Whitegates
Corbar Woods Lane
Corbar
BUXTON

SK17 6RH

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Submission: Objection

Comments: Obviously it would be perverse not to want Buxton to be an even more vibrant town. However, this proposal for the development of a (significant) part of the very centre of the town is not the way forward, in my view, and is not the only option that can and should be considered. The process through which we have arrived at the current proposal can be typified as a steady slide from a modest mixed use development to a land grab of publicly owned spaces for a private housing development. This shift has made the consultation a deeply flawed process where a distorted, partial view has been presented and then radically changed (for example re the number of houses and the impact on parking spaces). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The resulting scheme does not respect the nature of Buxton either in terms of its history, economics or current facilities, taken as a whole. Taking the last first, there is no assessment of the scheme in the wider context of Buxton as a town, which already has shops, cafes, market / open spaces. There is actually no need for these to be replicated in the proposed development, where they will either fail or have a negative impact on existing zones in the town. Turning to the nature of the proposed development, it is heavily based on housing units for which it seems to be envisaged a new cohort of town dwellers will appear from elsewhere, and apparently at prices that few local people could afford. So what happens when the sale of houses does not take off? What is the fallback position?

Even if the commercial gamble were to pay off, we would be left with a development that is far too dense for the site, with the result that the historic character of the town would be undermined, despite quite laughable nods to "copper", sight lines to churches, etc. Within this the major problem created is a parking in the town centre is reduced from 431 to 146 spaces. With a "green" hat on one might say "good", but the reality is that those living in the town will typically use their cars for shopping and visitors to the town will be put off if they have to rely on public transport. The existing shops in this area, apart from some being unnecessarily demolished, are probably not viable in the longer term if people can't reach them and in the short term will probably go out of business anyway during the three years plus when the car parks are lost during development.

There seems to be no reason why a different approach to improving the Town centre should not be taken. This could be incremental, focused on improving and utilising the existing buildings of Spring Gardens, exploiting the Conways site to create a better route from the station plus some key new facilities, but without demolishing two of the anchor shops in the area (Next and New Look), improving the appearance / green nature of the existing car park with well planned planting, etc. This would be much lower risk, much less expensive, much more sensitive to the existing assets of the town, much less disruptive and much more adaptable to what is learnt on the way, with significant control retained in public control.

I would ask you to reject the current proposal and instead to look for a less high risk, high rhetoric way forward.

Thank you

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