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

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

From:
67 Devonshire Place
Station Road
Buxton
Buxton
County
SK17 6GP

[REDACTED]

Submission: Objection

Comments: We object to the planning application for a number of reasons.

¿ Insufficient weight has been given to Buxton's heritage and significance as a Roman spa town, and its magnificent Georgian architecture. The large modern buildings proposed will change the distinctive character of our town centre. The High Peak Local plan states that planning must take account of the local character and heritage assets. Indeed the National Planning Framework states that substantial weight must be given to the conservation of a town's heritage. This application fails to achieve this.

¿ The application is dominated by an excessive number of residential units within a commercial area of the town. This is not regeneration of the town centre, just housing development which will lead to a significant loss of retail space. Indeed, the Transport Assessment provided in the application states that there will be a net reduction of 835.69 sqm of commercial floorspace as a result of this development.

Policies CF1 and CF2 of the High Peak Local Plan require the Council to support retail and maintain the town-centre vitality. Absolutely no evidence has been provided that any consideration has been given to existing retailers, current and future footfall and the commercial future of Spring Gardens. We need clear evidence of how this proposal aims to regenerate commerce in Buxton.

¿ There are currently 431 central visitor parking spaces in Buxton. The car park is often full (we overlook it, and are therefore able to make this observation). The proposals will reduce the number of visitor parking spaces to 146. This is clearly ridiculous. Current retailers will suffer as people will drive elsewhere to shop. There is a real danger that we could even lose more retailers, such as Waitrose, if their footfall decreases. If people cannot park next to a supermarket / shops, they will not come.

¿ In such a rural area as the High Peak public transport cannot be considered an alternative to driving. The only regular bus services out of the town on a Sunday are the 199, which reduces to an hourly service and is already very busy, and the Transpeak to Matlock. Train services are only every 2 hours on a Sunday. At any time the train service only connects towards Manchester in the North. There are no connections to the East, West or South. These bus and train services serve only the main roads / more urban areas. But for people in the very substantial number of outlying villages and hamlets there is no public transport at all on a Sunday. It is also very limited at other times. People have no choice but to drive if they want to come to Buxton and they need somewhere to park. Your Transport Assessment does not seem to take account of this lack of public transport in the evenings and at weekends. Or indeed where people travel from in order to come to Buxton and whether or not they have the option of using public transport at all.

¿ With respect to the proposed car parking allocation for residents of the new housing units, we believe you have underestimated car ownership. Appendix 1 of the High Peak Local Plan states that parking standards for new units should be as follows:

1 ¿ 2 bed units 1.5 cars per unit

3 bed units 2 cars per unit

4 bed units 3 cars per unit

Therefore, if you apply HPBC parking standards to this development, you would require 517 parking spaces for residents alone.

Derbyshire County Council uses a different formula. But even so, following their parking policy guidelines would result in the need for 365 parking spaces for residents alone.

¿ We also note with interest the reference to encouraging cycling within the area. Cycling around Buxton and the area is generally unsuited to the average resident because of Buxton's situation in a hollow and the steep road gradients leading away from the town centre. Indeed, these gradients also make walking any distance very difficult for certain residents. Hence, there is an even greater reliance on car ownership than might be expected in a flatter area of the country.

In summary, a much more focused and modest development is required that prioritises the commercial development of the town centre, to make it a place that people want to come to in order to shop and sightsee. The current proposals fail to state how this application will help the commercial regeneration of our town centre. In addition, there is no provision for parking during the construction phase which is a massive risk for the future of Buxton as a commercial centre, as people will simply shop elsewhere.

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