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

[REDACTED]

Application Reference No. : HPK/2026/0229 Site Address: Spring Shopping Centre & Land South of Station Road
Buxton Derbyshire Comments by: Max Wellingham

From:
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Submission: Objection

Comments: I wish to object to this application on the grounds that it risks causing significant harm to Buxton town centre, its economy, its historic character, and the convenience and accessibility of the town for residents and visitors.

Whilst I support investment in Buxton and recognise the need to address vacant premises and ensure the town centre remains viable in the long term, I do not believe this proposal represents the right solution for the challenges facing the town.

Loss of Town Centre Parking

My principal concern is the substantial loss of centrally located parking at The Springs.

Buxton serves a large rural catchment and many people who use the town centre do not have access to frequent public transport. Residents of surrounding villages regularly travel into Buxton by car to shop, access services, attend appointments, and support local businesses.

The proposal assumes that displaced parking demand can be adequately accommodated elsewhere. However, the value of The Springs car park is not simply the number of spaces it provides, but its location in the heart of the town centre. Replacing central parking with parking further away is not necessarily an equivalent substitute, particularly for elderly residents, families, and those with mobility issues.

I am concerned that reducing convenient access to the town centre will discourage visitors and negatively affect existing businesses at a time when many retailers are already facing challenging trading conditions.

Impact on Existing Businesses

The application appears to focus heavily on creating new commercial opportunities whilst providing insufficient evidence that existing shopping areas will benefit.

Experience elsewhere demonstrates the risks associated with creating new retail and leisure destinations adjacent to established shopping districts. In Bristol, the opening of Cabot Circus drew investment and occupiers away from existing retail areas, contributing to the long-term decline of The Galleries and parts of Broadmead. Rather than strengthening the wider city centre, investment became concentrated in the newer development.

I fear a similar pattern could emerge in Buxton. New units, incentives and modern premises may simply attract businesses away from established areas such as Spring Gardens rather than generating genuinely additional economic activity.

The result could be a regeneration project that succeeds within its own boundaries whilst weakening the wider town centre.

Failure to Prioritise Existing Assets

Buxton already possesses significant strengths, including its historic architecture, independent businesses, attractive public realm and distinctive spa-town character.

In recent years, the restoration of traditional shopfronts along Spring Gardens has visibly enhanced the appearance of the town centre. These improvements demonstrate that investment in existing streets and buildings can successfully reinforce Buxton's unique identity.

I believe public investment should prioritise the repair, restoration and occupation of existing assets before facilitating major new development. There remain vacant and underused premises within the town centre that could accommodate businesses, services and community facilities.

Many residents hoped to see practical improvements such as better maintenance, support for existing retailers, continued heritage-led regeneration and additional public facilities. This proposal does not sufficiently address those priorities.

Impact on the Character of Buxton

I am also concerned that the scale and architectural approach of the proposed development is inconsistent with the character of Buxton.

Buxton is nationally recognised for its Georgian and Victorian heritage. Its townscape is defined by historic buildings, traditional materials and carefully composed streetscapes. The town's attractiveness to visitors is closely tied to this distinctive character.

Whilst the applicant has stated that aspects of the design draw inspiration from local architectural features, the overall appearance remains contemporary and risks appearing out of place within its historic setting.

Development should complement and enhance Buxton's character rather than compete with it.

Infrastructure Concerns

The proposal would introduce over 300 new town centre homes and a substantial increase in population.

I am not convinced sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that local infrastructure, healthcare services, highways, public transport and other community facilities can accommodate this growth without adverse impacts.

Residents are frequently told that infrastructure improvements will follow development. However, experience elsewhere often shows housing being delivered before supporting infrastructure materialises. The application should demonstrate clearly how necessary infrastructure will be delivered, funded and phased.

Conclusion

I believe the application places too much emphasis on new residential development and insufficient emphasis on protecting and improving the assets that already make Buxton successful.

A more appropriate approach would focus on revitalising existing shopping streets, supporting current businesses, restoring heritage buildings, improving public facilities and enhancing the established town centre rather than reducing parking capacity and fundamentally altering the character of the area.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the application be refused.

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