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From: planningcomments@highpeak.gov.uk
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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: Ashley Taylor

From:
Westwood
38 Manchester Road
Corbar Ward
Buxton
Derbyshire
SK17 6SZ

Phone:

Email: [REDACTED]

Submission: Objection

Comments: Objection to HPK/2026/0228 ¿ The Springs redevelopment

I support the principle of regenerating The Springs and bringing appropriate new homes and activity into Buxton town centre. Residential development towards the Station Road roundabout may be capable of being accommodated successfully. However, I strongly object to the treatment of the central Spring Gardens frontage.

The proposal appears to remove the existing roof over the shopping centre principally to enable substantial residential development above and around it. This risks sacrificing an important covered public thoroughfare and replacing it with large, generic apartment blocks in one of the most prominent and heavily used parts of central Buxton.

This is not a peripheral development site. Spring Gardens is one of the principal routes through the town centre and sits within a town of exceptional architectural character. Buxton's identity is shaped by its colonnades, curved façades, domes, octagonal forms, articulated rooflines and carefully composed views. The proposed architecture should respond meaningfully to that heritage rather than merely adopting isolated historical references.

Capital & Centric have referred to mansard roofs as evidence that the scheme responds to Buxton's character. However, the use of a mansard roof alone does not make the wider composition contextually appropriate. In the submitted designs, it appears largely to be a superficial device applied to otherwise bulky, rectilinear and metropolitan apartment blocks. This risks extending and amplifying the least attractive architectural qualities of the existing shopping centre rather than enhancing Buxton's distinctive townscape.

There is also a wider concern that the design has increasingly been driven by the objective of maximising residential yield rather than by the original purpose of revitalising Buxton's high street. The July 2025 EIA screening proposal comprised 329 homes and 5,457 square metres of commercial floorspace. The submitted scheme now contains 332

homes but only approximately 4,250 square metres of commercial space. Although the increase of three homes is modest, the reduction of approximately 1,200 square metres of commercial space represents a significant shift in the balance of the scheme towards residential development.

The applicant should therefore demonstrate that removing the Spring Gardens roof, increasing the scale and massing of the buildings, and introducing extensive residential accommodation stacked in multiple storeys above this central thoroughfare are necessary to deliver genuine town-centre regeneration-not principally to maximise rent-generating floorspace. Publicly supported regeneration should be judged by the quality of place, commercial vitality and lasting public benefit it creates, rather than simply by the maximum number of rental units that can be accommodated.

The large, box-like rooftop viewing structure is particularly inappropriate in this location. It should be redesigned as a genuine architectural feature that contributes positively to Buxton's skyline-potentially drawing upon the town's tradition of domed, octagonal or otherwise carefully articulated roof forms.

I also object to any prominent rooftop or skyline-level Capital & Centric branding. Large corporate lettering would be visually intrusive and would make a major part of Buxton's centre feel branded by a private developer rather than belonging to the town and its residents. Any signage should be discreet, subordinate to the architecture and subject to separate detailed approval.

The central Spring Gardens element should therefore be substantially redesigned. The council should require:

- ¿ a less bulky and more varied building form;
- ¿ a roofscape genuinely informed by Buxton's architectural heritage;
- ¿ retention or meaningful replacement of the sheltered public route;
- ¿ removal of prominent developer branding;
- ¿ stronger architectural articulation, materials and detailing appropriate to this sensitive town-centre location;
- ¿ clear evidence that the balance between housing, commercial space and public amenity delivers the intended high-street regeneration benefits.

The issue is not opposition to housing or regeneration. It is whether a major publicly supported redevelopment enhances Buxton or prioritises residential yield at the expense of place, character, commercial vitality and public amenity.

As currently proposed, the central Spring Gardens element would not enhance this important part of Buxton. It would erode its character, dominate the townscape and represent a serious missed opportunity for genuinely contextual regeneration.

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