

[REDACTED]

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: IAN HOWARTH

From:

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Submission: Objection

Comments: I object to the current size and scale of the Springs development. It is over developed and provides insufficient parking allocation for a small rural town where residents are reliant on cars to travel for both work and leisure due to the geographic location and poor public transport services.

The current parking assumptions do not include the following information

1. Actual car ownership amongst C&C residents in their other developments. It assumes that those who do not rent a space do not have a car.
2. The impact of the sale of 62 car parking spaces as part of the sale of Buxton Town Hall
3. Realtime parking surveys during Buxton high season. There has been sufficient time to do this rather than rely on projections based on low season use.
4. Market street loss during development of that site
5. Market place loss during the carnival week (high season)
6. Demand for the retail businesses in spring gardens
7. Demand for any retail/offices in the new development
9. Tree removal for access to DB Shenker and environmental impact

There is no economic impact study for this development to assess the impact on retail, parking and tourism so a more sensible approach would be to develop the site more slowly with a starting point of delivering the grant

condition requirement of 75 homes whilst moving more council and NHS services into the existing centre to increase footfall.

Given that tourism is a critical element of the Buxton economy parking is a fundamental need to ensure that day trippers can park with ease. 20M people live within a 1 hour of Buxton

Scaling back the size and complexity of the development would further benefit the scheme given the responses to the Environment Agency that claim that meeting the EA's requirements "that the scheme would become unviable and therefore unlikely to proceed". Taking a more cautious approach and limit the more expensive civil engineering aspects of the proposal by avoiding over development of the site.

There doesn't appear to be a condition to prevent future demolition of the remaining Springs shopping centre, what reassurance do we have the C&C won't simply remove leases from the current businesses such as Waitrose and eventually knock down and develop that area for additional residential which would leave the town centre without a major supermarket.

The responses to the Environment Agency tends to suggest that the development has been taken to the very edge of viability.

The environmental issues also extend into the removal of many trees between station road and the proposed new car park to the rear of the train station (DB Shenker) which "will" have massive town centre environment and aesthetic impact of the area

The consultation for this scheme has been wholly inadequate and has failed to advise the public that the increase in housing from 250, which was the number that the scheme had risen to in the last public consultation, to the current number of 332.

The statement in response to the Environment Agencies concerns that further de-culverting of the Wye that "a reduction in the proposed housing provision,

contrary to the housing objectives set out in High Peak Borough Council's planning policies." This suggests that the statements about "opening up the wye" in the consultation were misleading and that HPBC's intention was to build as many properties as possible to meet government housing targets even though the local plan does not have any housing in the current iteration of the plan on this site.

Developers are required to consider local input and demonstrate how community feedback has influenced their final proposal before submitting their application.

The developer has failed to do this in the following areas

1. Sharing with the public the opportunities and risks associated with the site. Specifically, the known risk that the complexity of the site may lead to an increased volume of housing to deal with the financial viability gap created by the complex level changes on the site. This now leading to overdevelopment of the site.
2. Giving the impression that all elements of the river wye would be 'opened up'. This is now not true as the additional housing need maintains existing culverts as evidenced in the response to the Environment Agency
3. The risk to parking on the site created by the additional housing subsequent to the last point of consultation and the risk presented by assuming that the residents will only require 50% parking provision per property when the Buxton average is 82%. There is no information from the developer about car ownership amongst residents who elect not to hire a car parking space in their other developments. The assumption appears to be that they do not have cars. This developer has not delivered a development in a small market town with a reliance on tourism to support its economy.
4. Changes to the road layout on Station Road as a result of a new entrance opposite McDonalds that have occurred after the end of the public consultation. Additionally, the purchase of land for an additional car park. which will require a more complex road junction at the junction of Palace Road and Station Road.
5. The increase from 250 homes to 322 representing a significant increase in the layout and density of housing on the site.
6. Information from parking surveys which appear to have only been undertaken since the developer and HPBC concluded that the number of homes on the site would need to increase to close a known funding gap.
7. Design, Appearance and materials associated with the development which have changed significantly because of the increase in the homes proposed to be built as part of the development.
8. The potential loss of the residents parking scheme to manage down peak period demand.
9. The proposal to over-ride nature conservation through the development of an alternative parking site and loss of trees with TPO orders.
10. Has not consulted with the Licenced premises trade in Buxton who may be directly impacted by the assertion that the development will contain new bars and restaurants. Officers were requested to ensure this consultation occurred.
11. The nature of the development being a 'rental only' scheme with no properties for sale on the open market.

Immediately prior to the application for this development being submitted the plans posted in the Springs Shopping centre stated the 250 homes ambition and have not been replaced with updated plans and information on how to comment on the application. This despite the leader, deputy leader and CEO of HPBC providing an assurance to Labour councillors that this would happen during a meeting to update Labour councillors on the changes in the development. The purpose of this meeting was to determine if Labour Councillors were supportive of the development.

HPBC have a public vested interest in the whole project and therefore should not have any say in the planning stages of the entire application

There is currently no funding from the government to improve the rail link between Buxton and Manchester Piccadilly which questions the assumption that 50% of the residents residing in properties will be commuters given the 1 hour commute time and limited capacity in the 2 carriage trains that regular service this route during peak hours.

The current cost of a rail season ticket between Buxton and Manchester is £3949 vs £2660 from Macclesfield where the cost of renting a flat is between £750 and £850 per month (Rightmove) and a journey time to Manchester of between 22 & 30 minutes. A number of Burbage residents choose this option as it is cheaper than travelling from Buxton Station even with the costs of driving to Macclesfield.

A proper economic study would reveal these facts and then assess the types of jobs that residents willing to pay £1100 a month for the smallest unit are likely to undertake and the transport methods they use. It would also assess the impact of churn in the rental market when residents discover the erratic nature of the train service and the cheaper options of living closer to Manchester if that is where they work.

The only fact that can be substantiated is that 82% of properties in Buxton currently own at least 1 car. On questioning Capital and Centric conceded that they had no information about the car ownership of residents in their other schemes who choose not to rent a parking space.

This is critical as the 50% assumption, if wrong, only further exacerbates the parking issue that has led to the purchase of land for another car park.

Given that parking is such a crucial issue the planning committee should consider either scaling back the development or if minded to support the application, set conditions that need to be met before any construction/demolition work can commence..

1. No development to commence until alternative parking capacity has planning permission and is functional. Land known as 'DB Shenker'.
2. Development of the West end of the site and new multi story car park to be completed before the East end deck car park (Waitrose) can be developed.
3. The development to contain restrictions on the residential units being used for short term lets (Airbnb)
4. The development to contain restrictions on commercial units being converted into residential units
5. An accurate and independent impact study is carried out on potential damage to existing traders including hospitality for potential damage that could be caused by both car parking removal through an entire year and not just in low season.
6. HPBC who have a vested interest in the development should have to withdraw from the planning stage of the project

7. No green areas including tree areas should be removed for the purpose of additional car parking (rear of train station)

The committee may consider rejecting the application and asking for a revised submission that is closer to the 250 homes that formed part of the public consultation.

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