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From: planningcomments@highpeak.gov.uk
Sent: 20 July 2026 15:23
To: Planning Comments (HPBC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

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

From:

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Submission: Objection

Comments: As a resident of Buxton and a local historian, I object to this application in the strongest possible terms, on the grounds of its detrimental impact on Buxton's Conservation Area, the enormous cost of a missed opportunity to improve and regenerate a declining area of the town, and the completely unsympathetic nature of a development that makes superficial gestures towards Buxton's unique heritage and then proceeds to railroad right through it. In return for the very substantial amount of local and national taxpayers' money, the proposed development does not show evidence of value.

1. Harm to the character, history and appearance of Buxton's Conservation Areas.

The developers make the most superficial gesture towards Buxton's heritage, with generalised information (gleaned from any web search) and in some cases, inaccurate references (eg the London Midland Station was demolished in 1970 not 1963). This indicates a developer not committed to enhancing what is a truly unique town which has been spoilt by developments such as the Spring Gardens Centre. The proposed site for development derives its historical interest not just from individual buildings but from what was once an important relationship between the railway station and a once-thriving shopping street marred by a now-declining shopping centre.

The proposed development does not enable HPBC to fulfil its statutory duty to give considerable weight and importance to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the site. Instead, the size, brutalist design and scale of the new blocks and the redesign of the area around the River Wye are totally out of keeping with the rest of Buxton in terms of size, heritage etc. They could be located in any city or town and are totally out of keeping with a small market and spa town.

The proposal justifies the use of materials that will be visually discordant within the Conservation area with gratuitous and superficial references to Buxton's unique history by asserting that the Devonshires' contribution to Buxton came from its copper mines. This is not the case and the use of copper in the design is completely out of keeping with Buxton's heritage and appearance. The design and scale of the proposed new blocks pay no homage to the character and appearance of travesty in a small historically significant town like Buxton.

This proposal could be a once-in-a-lifetime chance to address decline, unsympathetic developments etc but it's not. It pays no attention to the need to relate the new buildings to the existing, increasingly scruffy and run-down Spring Gardens road. The application provides no proper evidence of a need for new shops and cafes etc and no acknowledgement of how the new development will affect existing businesses both during a prolonged period of construction and afterwards. New retail and leisure units could well take trade away rather than generating new economic activity. The rundown nature of many nearby existing shops and empty units is at odds with the design, scale and size of the development. This will create a very unattractive juxtaposition between Spring Gardens and the new site.

The new pedestrian route from the station to the new development prioritises commercial interests of the developers rather than enhancing routes from the station into the historic core of the town. The opportunity to redevelop the delapidated Station Approach is missed. Again, the application makes gratuitous nods towards heritage in referring to the listed bollards on the Approach: again, this indicates a complete lack of engagement with Buxton's history and character. The views of and from the Approach are not exploited in a sympathetic way; an opportunity to reinstate their historic significance is missed.

he proposed new parking provision around the station, and the need for a new approach from the junction between Palace Road and Station Road will require significant development, including the destruction of TPO trees. This will spoil an attractive aspect of Buxton's historic core.

2. Housing need.

The developers assert the need for 332 new residential units yet there is no evidence to show how this meets local housing need, or won't lead to even more Airbnb, holiday or second home lets. The density and car parking needs for these new residential units are inappropriate and again out of scale with Buxton's character and heritage.

4. Lack of consultation

The proposed development has changed substantially from initial plans submitted as part of the previous government's High Street fund, which was discussed extensively at the time with plans on show in Spring Gardens. HPBC needs to be aware that many Buxton residents are dismayed at the lack of consultation for this new development, no matter what the developers assert. Serious consideration needs to be given to public disquiet on the objections that I and many others have raised.

In summary, what could be a really important chance to redevelop a run-down and unattractive site in the middle of a conservation area could land Buxton residents and visitors with an expensive, totally inappropriate, unattractive development that will cause enormous disruption in construction and does not demonstrate economic, social and historical benefits. The planning responsibilities of HPBC in what is unique, beautiful but deteriorating historic centre are seriously compromised if this development is approved

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