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From: planningcomments@highpeak.gov.uk
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Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Categories: [REDACTED]

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

From:

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Submission: Objection

Comments: I strongly object to the proposed development of Spring Gardens as it will significantly degrade the wellbeing of the residents of Buxton and has very few benefits. I have the following objections.

Purpose. I understand that the purpose of 6.6 million of Future High Streets funding from the Government is to regenerate the highstreet due to Buxton's high shop vacancy level. The proposed development does nothing to address this, with no improvement to our high street. Indeed, currently used, important shops within Spring Gardens will be demolished. This will increase the percentage of vacant shops! This funding certainly isn't designed to impose a modern housing estate in the very heart of a Georgian/Victorian spa town dependent on tourism. This seems to be a money-making venture by both Capital and Centric (by securing long-term rental income) and HPBC (by selling off a vital public amenity and securing new Council offices) at the expense of the resident and visiting public. The proposal seems contrary to HPBC's mission statement of 'Working together' with the Council on your side and should be firmly rejected.

Character of buildings. The modern design of the development is totally out of character with Buxton and will fundamentally change the appeal of the town centre. Tourism is vital for Buxton, who visit Buxton for its Georgian/Victorian charm, not to see modern architecture. Any buildings MUST nest comfortably with Buxton's current character. Indeed, it would be interesting to see a Georgian-style building in a newly-built condition, as our current beautiful buildings would have looked in the 19th Century.

Loss of public amenity - Parking. It is not by chance that our major shopping centre has been built with adjacent parking. Buxton is a significant focal point within an area of low population density and poor public transport. The local population are dependent on cars to shop, so the current parking capacity is vital. We use it on an almost daily basis. The development proposes a very significant decrease in the number of parking spots available (and the loss of residents' parking permits) while drastically increasing the number of residents (and cars) in the town centre. This is ridiculous. The planning assumption that only 50% of new residents will own cars is clearly wrong (if convenient) as I understand that 82% of residents currently own cars. Searching for an adjacent parking spot while shopping and having to pay for a previously free amenity is detrimental to the current residents of Buxton. It will

also impact on tourists' ability to park, making Buxton less attractive and leading to a loss of tourist income. The possible development of the plot north of the rail station for parking does not form part of the planning proposal and is not assured, especially as there are restrictive covenants and Tree Protection Orders on this land. Even if built, this parking is far too far away from the shopping centre – you should not expect residents to walk a significant distance, using lifts (!!) with their shopping to their cars, when the current ideally-located parking has been sold off so Capital and Centric can make money. This is a ridiculous proposal!

Scale of development. The proposed development is totally out of scale with the town centre. The Future High Streets funding required less than 100 new residencies. Yet the proposal has grown since the public consultation from 250 homes and now crams-in a massive 322. Yet, at the same time, Buxton's public services are withering, with the all-but closure of the local hospital and lack of availability of medical and dental appointments. There is nothing on the proposal about increasing public services, including school, to support the hundreds of new residents. Overall, the imposition of such a large, modern building estate is totally out of scale with the character of Buxton's town centre.

Disruption. The inappropriate scale of the development will result in long-term disruption to Buxton's town centre due to the building work. This is unacceptable, especially given that the development has few advantages to the current residents of Buxton.

Impact on local shops. The loss of adjacent parking will be highly detrimental to vital local shops, such as Waitrose. This puts their viability at risk; their loss would be fatal for the residents of Buxton. The plans also seem to propose demolishing vital existing shops such as Nationwide and Next. Shops such as Next are vital, not only for their own goods, but also as a focal delivery centre for a variety of goods from other providers. Similarly, the loss of a bank such as Nationwide would be highly detrimental to Buxton's residents. We have already lost Conways DIY shop (probably my most visited shop in Buxton) whose lease was not renewed to allow for the proposed development; I now have to use my car to access DIY shops. The loss of M&S severely impacted on Buxton. We cannot afford to risk losing any more shops (especially when the Government funding is intended to increase occupancy).

Impact on tourism. Tourism is a vital income stream for Buxton. It supports local shops, restaurants and accommodation providers. Tourists come to Buxton to bathe in its C19 charm. They don't visit to see modern, out-of-character housing estates. The proposal does nothing to promote tourism; indeed, it will be highly detrimental, reducing tourist parking, reducing the number of shops, while fundamentally changing the town's character.

Lack of transparency and scale. I am disappointed by the lack of transparency of the proposed development. It has grown in scale without public consultation and the significant concerns about the impact on the town's residents have been ignored, as reflected by the initial very short window to provide comment. HPBC do not seem to be – Working together – with the Council on your side –

Gentrification of Buxton. The proposal is likely to involve many workers moving from Manchester. This will put further strain on rail links. These new residents are likely to work and socialise in Manchester, merely sleeping overnight in Buxton, lured by its charm, which itself will be impacted by the character of the proposed accommodation. This will do nothing positive for the current residents of Buxton.

Overall, the proposal has very few advantages, while being significantly detrimental to the wellbeing of local residents, and should be firmly rejected. This money-making proposal is contrary to the aims of the Future High Streets funding, resulting in a misuse of public funds. Adjacent parking must be detained. The character of all buildings must be in keeping with Buxton's current character; shops must not be impacted. The Future High Streets funding should be used to improve our dire high street, not impose a huge, modern housing estate in the centre of our beautiful town.

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