

From: [REDACTED]
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Subject: Comment Received from Public Access
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Application Reference No. : HPK/2026/0228

Site Address: Spring Shopping Centre & Land South of Station Road Buxton Derbyshire

Comments by: Simon Whiteley

From:
4 Park Road

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Submission: Objection

Comments: I object to application HPK/2026/0228.

I support the regeneration of Buxton town centre in principle.

However, I do not believe the current application is acceptable in its submitted form for the following reasons:

1. Scale, density and change from consultation.

Residents understood from earlier public consultation that the scheme would provide a much smaller number of homes, understood locally to be around 120 homes. The submitted application is now for more than 332 rental homes a massive increase. The initial proposal also had roof gardens & was to be built in gritstone to match existing Buxton buildings, but now we have no roof gardens & cheaper materials & copper cladding more suitable in a city than in a spa town like Buxton. This appears to be a substantial change in scale, density and impact. I ask the council to provide a clear comparison between the consultation material and the submitted application, including the number and tenure of homes, the level of parking for the properties & the town centre shops, the suitability of the proposed city scape architecture which is not in keeping with the existing Georgian & Victorian Buxton Spa town architecture, which is the character of our town.

2. Parking & location of flats.

Parking is one of my principal objections. Existing town-centre parking is already heavily used, particularly during the periods when local council taxpayers can park free of charge. The areas close to the town centre where free parking is available e.g. Park Road are already heavily overparked with pavements obstructed, pedestrian crossings regularly covered & access for the ambulance station on Park Road & residents restricted to such an extent that dangerous traffic / pedestrian situations which exist already will be further exacerbated. A development of more than 300 homes, many of them understood to be two-bedroom flats, could create significant additional parking demand from residents, visitors, carers, staff, deliveries, taxis, tradespeople and servicing. At the same time, the scheme appears to reduce or displace existing town-centre parking adjacent to the main shopping area. I do not consider it safe to assume that public transport and cycle parking will remove the need for practical car parking in Buxton, especially given the town's geography, weather, lack of cycling lanes, existing traffic pressures and reliance on visitors from surrounding areas many of whom are older & unable to ride bikes. If the applicant or council relies on proposed parking near Buxton station as mitigation, that provision should not be treated as adequate unless it is approved, funded, legally secured, operational and available before any existing parking is lost or displaced. The council should also assess whether replacement parking is suitably located for elderly people, disabled users, families, local shoppers and visitors who need convenient access to Spring Gardens and existing businesses.

Town-centre vitality and existing businesses Convenient parking and access are vital to Spring Gardens. If local residents and visitors find it harder to park, existing shops and retail units may suffer, which means the main reason given for this development, town centre will actually weaken footfall and create further vacancies. The council should assess the impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre, including the risk to existing anchor stores and everyday retail services. Regeneration should strengthen the town centre, not make it harder for people to use the shops and services that are already there. Local infrastructure and cumulative impact. The application should be considered alongside other housing growth in Buxton, including Foxlow Fields, Burlow Road, Harpur Hill and other new developments.

Parking near the shops & placing the flats + parking for the flats on the old Railway depot would seem to be a better option for all parties involved retaining the town centre parking & thus the direct access to the shops and placing the flats & associated parking in a quieter traffic zone.

3. Other community services.

The cumulative impact on GP surgeries, dentists, schools, public transport, local services, drainage, waste collection, public toilets and community facilities should be properly assessed. Where mitigation is required, it should be secured through planning obligations before permission is granted.

Architecture, heritage and design.

The proposed city scape architecture is also of great concern, as Buxton was largely built by the Dukes of Devonshires, notably William Cavendish, the 5th Duke of Devonshire, who shaped it into a premier spa town in the 1780s. They hired prominent architects like John Carr of York, who designed the iconic Buxton Crescent, and Robert Rippon Duke to transform the town.

Any proposed Buxton town centre buildings should generally be gritstone buildings of a similar height to those built by the Cavendish family. More recent examples of buildings built in keeping are the McCarthy Stone building near the Railway Station, Haddon Hall Care home & even McDonald's. The proposed structures are not in keeping & are Copper clad or other materials / design more representative of modern city tower blocks not suitable in a Spa town like Buxton. The proposed Tower is said to represent a Maypole (!!!) in the original presentation but is again a city centre idea & far too high & imposing.

Buxton's historic character is central to its identity and economy. The scheme should preserve or enhance the conservation area and the setting of listed buildings, including Winster Place. I ask the council to assess the design, materials, rooflines, massing, scale and public realm against the town's historic character, not simply against the need to deliver a large number of rental homes.

4. Public facilities and public benefit.

The proposal appears to be presented as bringing new public realm and civic benefits. Those benefits should be clear, deliverable and legally secured. I ask the council to explain how public facilities, including public toilets, accessible public space, disabled access and any civic or cultural uses, will be protected and funded over the long term. If public bodies such as the museum or council services are expected to occupy space in privately owned buildings, the council should explain how that arrangement is in the public interest and how it has been assessed against other options, including council-owned buildings.

5. Conclusion.

For these reasons, I ask High Peak Borough Council to refuse the application in its current form and require the applicant to submit a revised scheme with reduced density, a robust parking and highways strategy for the town centre, shops & flats, stronger heritage protection including architecture in line with Buxton's heritage & less like a city scape, proper public amenity provision and further public consultation.

What Buxton residents need from their town centre is affordable commercial shop premises for local businesses, more opportunities for bars and restaurants, the parking they already have for easy access to the town centre shops and pedestrianised open spaces. This proposed development provides none of that, and simply seems to be a vehicle for the developer to make a lot of money from rental residential properties that the town does not need & could be provided in existing unused large buildings e.g. the conversion of the Portland care home to flats, the conversion of the Branksome care home, the conversion of the disused care home on St John's Road & others.

We don't need more bars & restaurants as we have many already at both ends of the town with more coming, we need affordable high street rent so shops survive, and more support for our local businesses.

Using funding to improve the appearance of the Spring Gardens shopping centre and landscaping the river is a good idea. However, Buxton climate is not suitable to try and put outdoor seating round the river there as it would be often in the shade even when the weather is fine, especially due to the height of the proposed buildings.

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