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From: planningcomments@highpeak.gov.uk
Sent: 22 July 2026 22:12
To: Planning Comments (HPBC)
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: Diane Waplington

From:
22 ORIEL COURT

DERBY

DE1 2FW

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Submission: Not Object

Comments: HPK/2026/0228 & Springs Shopping Centre Redevelopment

I object to these applications because I do not believe sufficient weight has been given to Buxton's exceptional heritage significance.

Buxton is one of only two recognised Roman spa towns in England and possesses a unique collection of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian architecture. Its significance derives not only from its individual listed buildings but also from its historic townscape, conservation areas, landscape setting and overall character.

The proposed development introduces large contemporary buildings of up to five storeys within the historic core of the town. The scale, massing and architectural treatment of these buildings would do nothing to preserve or enhance the distinctive character of Buxton or respond appropriately to its historic setting.

In determining these applications, the Council is under a statutory duty pursuant to section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings. It is also under a separate statutory duty pursuant to section 72(1) of the same Act to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

These statutory duties carry considerable legal weight and must be treated as more than ordinary planning considerations. The courts have consistently confirmed that decision-makers must give heritage preservation considerable importance and weight when balancing competing public benefits. In addition, paragraphs 205 to 214 of the National Planning Policy Framework require great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets irrespective of the level of harm identified, while the High Peak Local Plan requires development to respond positively to local character, conserve heritage assets and reinforce local distinctiveness.

Given Buxton's nationally significant historic environment, I do not believe the application has demonstrated that these statutory and policy requirements have been satisfied. The applicant has not shown that buildings of this scale, massing and contemporary form would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or avoid harm to the setting of nearby listed buildings.

Accordingly, I ask the Council to refuse planning permission unless it can clearly demonstrate, through robust heritage evidence, that the proposals comply with its statutory duties under the Planning (Listed Buildings and

Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework and the policies of the High Peak Local Plan, and that any identified harm is clearly and convincingly justified and outweighed by demonstrable public benefits.

Departure from the Original Regeneration Vision

I am concerned that the proposals have evolved significantly from the regeneration concepts originally presented to residents.

Earlier proposals emphasised improvements to the public realm, stronger pedestrian links between the railway station and Spring Gardens, the reuse of underutilised buildings and measures to support the town centre's retail economy.

The current application, however, is dominated by approximately 332 build-to-rent dwellings together with a substantial increase in residential floorspace. This raises the question of whether the scheme remains a genuine town-centre regeneration project or has instead become primarily a residential development with ancillary commercial uses.

The Council should explain how the current proposals remain consistent with the objectives that originally justified public investment in the regeneration programme.

The Council's regeneration funding documentation states that the scheme was required to deliver 75 residential dwellings in order to satisfy the funding criteria. The current proposal for approximately 332 build-to-rent homes therefore represents an increase of more than 360% beyond that requirement."

Impact on the Town Centre and Retail Economy

The application site lies within Buxton's Primary Shopping Area.

Policies CF1 and CF2 of the High Peak Local Plan seek to maintain town-centre vitality, support retail activity and protect the role of shopping frontages. The proposals involve the loss of significant retail floorspace and a substantial shift towards residential use.

I am concerned that insufficient evidence has been provided regarding the likely effects on:

- ¿ existing retailers;
- ¿ town-centre footfall;
- ¿ independent businesses; and
- ¿ the future commercial role of Spring Gardens.

Before permission is granted, the Council should be satisfied that the proposals will strengthen, rather than weaken, Buxton's long-term economic vitality and commercial function.

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