

From: planningcomments@highpeak.gov.uk
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To: Planning Comments (HPBC)
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: Richard and Fiona Wilcock

From:
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Submission: Objection

Comments: We believe that there is a conflict of interest: we understand that High Peak Borough Council owns the land and some of the building within the proposal, and therefore cannot demonstrate that it can make an independent decision. We cannot support HPBC making the planning decision on this proposal.

However, if HPBC decides that it is sufficiently independent to consider the proposal we have the following comments.

We welcome investment in Buxton town centre in principle - particularly the areas that were previously developed during the 1980s and 1990s, which now look dated and tired. We attended both of the public consultations (in May and September 2025) and broadly supported the plans shared at that time. However, we cannot support the current application and urge High Peak Borough Council to refuse the application for the following reasons:

1. There are significant differences to between the current proposal and the proposal that formed the consultation during 2025, including:

- A huge increase in the number of residential units (from less than 100 to 332 one and two-bedroom flats). Any redevelopment of the town centre must prioritise a balance of businesses and housing to maintain the existing character of the town's central business district.
- Of the 11 proposed new buildings, seven will be either 4 or 5 stories which will dominate other town centre buildings. Any redevelopment must be in keeping with the existing size and scale of the town centre.
- Changes to the proposed materials, which seem to be of lower quality. We supported the 2025 consultation partly because of the commitment to using high-quality materials, including natural stone, to fit in with existing heritage buildings. The proposal notes that 'a significant proportion of Buxton town centre (is) within both the Buxton Central and Buxton Hardwick Conservation Areas'. Any redevelopment must include materials that don't

look out of place alongside other heritage buildings in the immediate area, such as the Quadrant, the Crescent and buildings on Terrace Road.

- Changes to the proposed design of some of the buildings, which now echo far fewer elements of nearby existing heritage buildings. Again, we supported the 2025 consultation because of the strong ethos of using design features from existing heritage architecture in the town. Any redevelopment of Buxton town centre must prioritise a design that compliments the existing heritage buildings.
- A big reduction in green spaces and trees. We supported the 2025 consultation in part because of the expanse of roof terraces, which now seem to have been replaced by flat roofs, and green spaces. Given that the town centre is lower than many other places in Buxton, people will be looking down onto a huge expanse of flat roofs. Buxton is surrounded by hills, fields and woodland: any redevelopment of the town centre must prioritise public spaces and landscaping.

2. We do not feel that this application is right for Buxton town centre. The development will significantly change the character of the town centre, and there is a huge missed opportunity to improve the area. Under these plans, Buxton will look and feel like any modern town centre instead of feeling like a modern extension to the town's existing historical parts. HPBC has an obligation to serve the community by providing something better.

We do accept that there are a few positive points in the proposal, which we would like to see maintained in any future proposals - including:

- The link between the station and Spring Gardens.
- Improvements to the frontage onto Station Road.
- The proposed redevelopment of Winster Place, which does seem to be in keeping with the building's heritage.

However we also have a number of specific issues with the current proposals:

- The use of a lift between Spring Gardens and the station, to transport those who can't use stairs. This will need constant maintenance to maintain this accessibility. We would like to see ramps and slopes in the design too.
- A huge reduction in parking compared to the current situation. Buxton relies on visitors, many of whom arrive by car. Added to this, shoppers using Waitrose need to be able to park within trolley-pushing distance of the supermarket (otherwise will choose to use out of town alternatives).
- Congestion on Station Road will likely increase, with traffic slowing and turning into the proposed underground car park as well as an increased number of pedestrians crossing to the proposed additional parking north of the station. This road already suffers some of the worst congestion in Buxton.
- Deliveries (and presumably emergency services) using New Wye Street, which will have a shared surface finish. There are already problems for pedestrians in Spring Gardens when lorries are making deliveries: this will repeat the issue within the new design.

- There is no mention of the need for support services that are likely to be needed for the residents of the 332 residential units (eg healthcare, dental care, schools etc). We appreciate that HPBC needs to increase the level of house building within the Borough, but this should be good quality housing some of which is big enough for families.

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