

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

HPK/2026/0206 & 34 SPRING GARDENS
HPK/2026/0213 BUXTON

Valid 10/06/2026

NEW SHOP FRONT.
INSTALLATION OF FASCIA
SIGNAGE & PROJECTING
SIGN. INSTALLATION OF
VENTILATION GRILLES AND
CONDENSER UNITS.

(FULL PLANNING &
ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT)

MAIN ISSUES

- Design and Conservation
- Highways and Public Safety
- Nutrient neutrality

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application relates to No.34 Spring Gardens, a three storey building that comprises a ground floor retail (Class E) unit that is situated within Buxton Town Centre and within an area of Primary Shopping Frontage, within the Buxton Hardwick Conservation Area.



Above: No.34 Spring Gardens in context

PROPOSAL

The applicant seeks Advertisement Consent (HPK/2026/0206) and Full Planning Permission (HPK/2026/0213) respectively for a various aspects of development in connection with a new commercial/retail operation (Post Office Banking Hub) which amount to the following:

1. New Shop Front
2. Installation of Signage
3. Installation of Ventilation Grilles
4. Installation of Condenser Units

An amended description has been agreed with the applicant to align with revised plans and elevations that have been submitted which follows concerns raised by the Council's Conservation Officer.

The plans and documentation subject of assessment within this report are therefore as follows:

- Location Plan
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan (0201-P08)
- Proposed Elevation 1 and 2 (0202-P08)
- Demolitions Ground Floor (0301-P06)
- Demolitions Elevations 1 and 2 (0302-P05)
- Demolitions Elevation 3 (0303-P05)
- Detail Sheet (2402-P03)
- Lighting Assessment
- Heritage Statement

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.

The Local Development Plan for this site comprises the High Peak Local Plan (2016). Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance documents and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are also material considerations in determining applications.

High Peak Local Plan 2016

- S1 Sustainable Development Principles
- S1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- EQ6 Design and Place Making
- EQ7 Built and Historic Environment
- CF1 Retail and Town Centres
- CF2 Primary Shopping Areas
- CF6 Accessibility and Transport

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design Guide for Signs SPD
Design Guide for Shopfronts SPD
Design Guide for Signs SPD

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

Achieving Sustainable Development	Chapter 4
Achieving Well Designed Places	Chapter 14
Promoting Sustainable Transport	Chapter 15
Pollution Public Protection and Security	Chapter 17
Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment	Chapter 20

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

The site has been subject to a long planning history with the last application determined in 2011, none of which are relevant to the assessment and determination of these two applications.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 23rd July 2026
Neighbour consultation period ends: 7th July 2026
Press Advert: 15th July 2026

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

N/A

Buxton Civic Society

No objection.

Derbyshire County Council Highways

No objection.

HPBC Environmental Health

No objection.

HPBC Conservation Officer

Initial Comments

Summary of Significance

The Buxton Hardwick CA incorporates a residential area of Villas and Spring Gardens.

Spring Gardens is the main commercial street within Buxton. The character of Spring Gardens changes from the west to east end. The western end is characterised by high quality three storey buildings. The eastern end holds a more understated character with lower buildings, this end once formed the original entrance to the shopping street, and main approach into Buxton. The eastern end of Spring Gardens is dominated by views of the Hogshaw Viaduct, which acts as a landmark feature in the area. No. 34 Spring Gardens is a three-storey end terrace property. The application relates to the ground floor commercial property.

Assessment of Impacts

The applications seek consent to convert the vacant unit into a banking hub, including a new shopfront, internal alterations and illuminated signage. As the building is not listed, there are no heritage objections to the change of use and internal alterations.

The proposed new shopfront is a timber shopfront, with pilasters, stallrisers and mullions. This is in keeping with traditional shopfront design principles as outlined in the High Peak Design Guide for Shop Fronts SPD. The traditional shopfront design is complementary of the Spring Gardens street scene and host building. As such there are no heritage objections to the new shopfront.

It is proposed to install an internally illuminated directory of services to be suspended in the shopfront window. Promotional TV's are considered inappropriate within this setting. Internal illumination is not considered acceptable within the conservation area as it creates a garish and unsightly glow which is out of character within the historic street scape of Spring Gardens. As such the internally illuminated directory is considered harmful to the character and appearance conservation area. Therefore, it is advised that the TVs are removed from the scheme.

The application seeks consent for an externally illuminated facias sign and heritage projecting sign. The proposed signage is in keeping with other commercial units along Spring Gardens. Furthermore, the external lighting is subtle swan neck design which provides a softer illumination than internal illumination which does no overspill into the street scene.

It is proposed to include a vinyl welcome slogan in the shopfront window. The slogan occupies a large portion of the shop front window, which is not in keeping with commercial properties within the conservation area. The High Peak Design Guide for Signs states that signs on glass are only appropriate where there is no appropriate place for a standard sign.

The proposed vinyl letter contradicts this and creates a cluttered visual appearance within the front window and is not necessary for signposting or advertisement of the commercial use. As such it is recommended that the vinyl slogan be removed from the proposed scheme.

In summary, the proposed new shopfront, fasci sign and hanging sign are considered in keeping with the character and appearance of the conservation area. However, the proposed internally illuminated directory and window vinyl create visual clutter in the shopfront window, which is not traditional of shopfronts within the Conservation Area. Furthermore, the proposed use of internal illumination is considered inappropriate for use within the conservation area as outlined above. As such it is recommended that the proposed internally illuminated directory and window vinyl's are removed from the proposed scheme in order to protect the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Further Comments

As the internal illumination and window vinyl's have been removed, there are no further heritage objections to the proposal.

Recommended conditions:

1. Limit external lighting of signs 1 and 2 to opening hours only.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The application relates to an existing retail premises that lies within the built-up area boundary of Buxton, within the defined Town Centre, and also within an area of Primary Shopping Frontage. As such, the application is subject to Local Plan (LP) Policies CF1 and CF2.

LP Policy CF1 refers to Retail and Town Centres and states that the Council will seek to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres and local centres as defined on the Policies Map in accordance with their function and scale. One of the ways in which this will be achieved is by *“supporting proposals that seek to deliver qualitative environmental improvements and support the local distinctiveness of town centre environments through high quality design.”*

LP Policy CF2 relates specifically to Primary Shopping Frontages and requires that ground floor retail uses are retained in so far as consistency with the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order (as amended).

Having regard to the above policies, the principle of introducing a new shop front with supporting ancillary development, in connection with the ground floor use of the building as a retail/commercial (Class E) operation is acceptable.

However, notwithstanding the above, the premises lies within the Buxton Conservation Area, and therefore both applications for Full Planning and Advertisement Consent

must satisfy LP Policy EQ7 and restrictive policies contained under Chapter 20 of the NPPF, underpinned by Section 72(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The principle of development will only be found to be acceptable where the proposals in their latest form are found to comply with the above legislation and policies relating to heritage conservation. Should harm be identified, this must be weighed against the public benefits associated with the proposals in the overall planning balance.

Design & Conservation

Section 72(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that with respect to any buildings or land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of that area.

LP Policy S1 sets out a number of sustainability principles which all new development proposals should incorporate in order to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protect, and where possible enhance the environment.

LP Policy EQ6 states that all development should be well designed to respect and contribute positively to the character, identity and context of High Peak's townscapes, having regard to matters of scale, height, density, layout, appearance and materials.

LP Policy EQ7 has regard to the Built and Historic Environment. It states that the Council will conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.

Chapter 6 of the Design Guide SPD provides specific guidance for shopfronts:

6.2 *Both traditional or modern shop fronts can be appropriate. However, they should:*

- *reflect the character and architectural style of the upper floors and the area generally*
- *maintain the rhythm of the individual buildings in the street;*
- *be constructed in appropriate materials and have appropriate finishes;*
and
- *be well proportioned and well detailed*

6.3 *Advertisements and signs should always be designed to complement the appearance of the shop front, building and character of the area. Fascia signs should be slim and not be a dominant feature of the frontage. Hanging signs offer a more traditional approach and add interest and individuality to the street scene*

The Design Guidance for Shopfronts SPD contains six principles to inform good design. Principles relevant to this proposal are summarised as follows:

- Important to retain and restore shopfronts that contribute to the overall design and character of the area and that they are restored in a sensitive manner.
- Replacement shopfronts should respect the local street scene. There is a great deal of variety within a shopping area and this should be reflected within the design. Respect for adjacent fascia heights on buildings of similar design should be taken into account
- Good quality contemporary designs should also be valued where this is appropriate. Many of traditional design principles can be applied to the design of new shopfronts
- A well designed shopfront will help to attract interest and therefore business. A proliferation of colours, materials, signs, window stickers and over large lettering on the fascia, will only encourage adjacent shops to compete

The Design Guidance for Signs SPD provides useful guidance for lighting, fascia signage, and projecting signs. Relevant guidance in connection with each aspect is presented as follows:

Lighting

“Shop signs do not generally require lighting if the level of the street lighting and the lights from windows are adequate. Any lighting incorporated should be discreetly hidden on suitable parts of the building. The cornice provides a suitable place for sensitive strip or floodlighting. The use of swan neck lamps may be acceptable, where the lamps are small and sparingly used, being of a neutral or similar colour to the fascia’s.”

Fascia Signage

“Care must be taken to integrate the fascia within the building and so avoid obscuring windows and architectural detailing. Flat fascia’s should be avoided by incorporating a projecting element above it known as the cornice.”

Projecting Signage

“The size of the sign should relate to the size and scale of the shopfront of the building. There should normally only be one hanging sign per building and this should generally be positioned at first floor level. The sign should be positioned so that it does not obstruct the fascia or any architectural details.”

NPPF Policy DP3- sets out the key principles for well-designed places which include the following:

- g. Identity: create visually attractive, distinctive and characterful development to establish or maintain a strong sense of place and pride, including through the use of a coherent palette of materials, design features and planting.

NPPF Policy HE5 relates to assessing effects on heritage assets. The policy states that development proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected (including any contribution made by their setting) and of the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is necessary to understand the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The relevant historic environment record should be referred to in making this assessment, and appropriate expertise employed where necessary.

NPPF Policy HE6 relates specifically to proposals affecting designated heritage assets. Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal. Important public benefits can include securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed. Where a development proposal would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, consent should usually be refused.

NPPF Policy HE9 refers to development in Conservation Areas and states that development proposals affecting the significance of conservation areas should:

- a. Retain and conserve buildings and other features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area where possible; and
- b. Consider the area's special architectural or historic interest (as identified as part of the designation of the conservation area) in the design of development.

Whilst the building is not Listed, it nevertheless is located within Spring Gardens, a busy shopping thoroughfare located within the heart of Buxton Town Centre, and within the Conservation Area, and as such any changes to its external appearance must be handled in a sensitive manner.

The proposed new shopfront is a timber shopfront, with pilasters, stallrisers and mullions. This is in keeping with traditional shopfront design principles as outlined in the High Peak Design Guide for Shop Fronts SPD. The traditional shopfront design is complementary of the Spring Gardens street scene and host building. As such there are no heritage objections to the new shopfront.

In its original form the applicant has sought consent for an internally illuminated directory of services associated with the specific retail/commercial operation to be suspended in the shop window. As confirmed by the Council's Conservation Officer, the Council consider this aspect to be inappropriate to its setting, owing to the fact that the proposed internal illumination creates a garish and glow which fails to respect the historic character of Spring Gardens.

The externally illuminated fascia and projecting sign is considered to be of a proportionate scale with a traditional attractive appearance that results in a visual enhancement of the current external elevation and respects the character and appearance of the street scene and Buxton Harwick Conservation Area. Moreover, the external illumination in the form of a subtle swan neck is considered to provide a softer illumination which prevents light spill and thus is found to be acceptable in heritage terms.

The proposed vinyl welcome slogan signage as originally submitted was shown to occupy a large portion of the shop front window, which was found by the Conservation Officer to conflict with supplementary guidance which states that signs on glass are only appropriate where there is no appropriate place for a standard sign, which is not the case with this proposal. The Council consider that the proposed vinyl signage as submitted created a cluttered visual appearance which was unnecessary and harmful to the character and appearance of the street scene and Hardwick Conservation Area.

Further to the initial concerns raised by the Conservation Officer, revised plans and details have been submitted which show the omission of all illumination from the directory of services aspect, and the removal of the welcome vinyl, replaced with a non-illuminated suspended poster. In light of these changes, the Conservation Officer is satisfied that the proposals are acceptable subject to a single planning condition that restricts the operational times of the lighting to coincide with the opening hours of the business.

The applicant seeks to carry out minor operations to the rear of the premises. The sole aspect that requires planning permission is the introduction of a proposed condenser unit located immediately adjacent to a rear entrance door. Given the limited nature of this aspect of development and that it would not be visible from any public vantage point, it is considered that all minor alterations to the rear elevation would have not material impact on the character and appearance of the street scene and wider setting of the Conservation Area.

Therefore subject to this condition, the Council are satisfied that both applications demonstrate would not harm the importance of the heritage asset, and comply with LP Policies CF1, CF2, EQ6 and EQ7, relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance and relevant paragraphs contained under Chapters 14 and 20 of the NPPF.

Amenity

LP Policy EQ10 seeks to ensure that people and the environment are protected from adverse impacts relating to issues including air pollution, noise, light pollution or any other nuisance or harm to amenity, by securing appropriate mitigation by way of planning conditions and obligations.

NPPF Policy P3 refers to living conditions and pollution and states that development proposals should be appropriate for their location taking into account the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should (amongst other things) mitigate any potential

adverse impacts resulting from noise and limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity.

The application in its revised form includes externally illuminated signage (fascia and projecting sign) that owing to its subtle swan neck detailing is found by the Conservation Officer to provide a softer illumination, thereby preventing unnecessary light spill.

The Environmental Health Officer provides guidance contained within the Professional Lighting Guide 05: The brightness of illuminated advertisements (2015) – Institute of Lighting Professionals, which for adverts/signage under 10m² in an urban area, there should be a maximum of 600cdm², and for signage over 10m² to have a maximum of 300cdm².

The latest plans shows that there would be 2no signs situated on the exterior of the building that would be illuminated by way of a trough light. Sign No1 spans a length of 3.5m and depth of 1.6m and would have a total lumens of 5775. Sign No2 spans a length of 0.6m and depth of 1.2m with a total lumens of 990.

Upon requesting confirmation from the applicant's agent of the maximum cdm associated with both signs, it is understood that the cdm for the illuminated signage will not exceed 300cdm².

It is therefore considered that subject to a compliance condition restricting the laminations of proposed signage to 300cdm³, and a further restricting the hours of when the lights can be in operation to opening times, the proposed development would not give rise to any adverse impacts to amenity with regards to light pollution.

The application is thus found to be acceptable with regards to LP Policy EQ10 and relevant paragraphs contained under Chapter 17 of the NPPF.

Highways & Public Safety

LP Policy CF6 seeks to ensure that development can be safely accessed in a sustainable manner and that all new development is located where it can be satisfactorily accommodated within the existing highway network.

Chapter 15 of the NPPF contains the relevant national planning policies relating to highway safety impacts. NPPF Policy TR6 states that development proposals should be refused if they would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network, or an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

The applicant seeks full planning permission and advertisement consent for various aspects of development including external signage above the street used by pedestrians. As such there is a requirement for the Council to consider the potential impacts of the development proposals upon pedestrian and highway safety.

The Highways Authority have reviewed the submitted plans and confirmed that owing to the fact that bottom of the projecting sign being more than 2.4m above the finished

floor level of the pavement and projecting outwards within 0.5m of the elevation the proposals are acceptable having regard to pedestrian movements.

The applicant has also confirmed that the illuminated signage would have a maximum cdm of 300m², and on this basis the Highways Authority have no objections to the proposals.

In light of the above, the Council are satisfied that the application would not give rise to any adverse highway/public safety impacts in line with LP Policy CF6 and relevant paragraphs contained under Chapter 15 of the NPPF.

Nutrient Neutrality

The site lies within the catchment of the River Wye which forms the Peak District Dales Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Council has been notified that action must be taken to address exceedances of phosphorus in the River. As such, the Council cannot grant consent for development unless it can rule out “likely significant effects” on the SAC. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be required when the plan or project creates a source of water pollution or has an impact on water quality and when it is within the catchment of the SAC. Initially, a screening assessment will be required to consider if “likely significant effects” (alone or in-combination) on the SAC can be ruled out. If not, this will be followed by an “Appropriate Assessment” where the impact of the plan or project is considered in detail.

Screening Assessment

The proposal is not directly connected with or necessary for the conservation management of a European site. The proposal will not increase overnight stays or surface water run-off from the site. Therefore it will not risk having a significant negative effect on the SAC either on its own or in combination with other proposals and therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Appropriate Assessment.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

LP Policy S1a reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. It states that planning applications that accord with relevant policies in the Local Plan will be approved without delay.

NPPF Policy S3 refers to the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development and states that:

- a. Policy S4 should be applied when considering development proposals within settlements
- b. Outside settlements, Policy S5 should be applied; and
- c. In all locations, development proposals that accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies in the Framework should be approved without delay.

The applicant seeks Advertisement Consent under HPK/2026/0206 and Full Planning permission (HPK/2026/0213) for various aspects of development associated with the external and internal re-design of No.34 Spring Gardens, Buxton to facilitate a new Post Office Banking Hub. The planning merits of both applications are considered within this combined Delegated Report.

The site lies within the Town Centre of Buxton, forming part of a Primary Shopping Frontage, and lies within the Hardwick Conservation Area.

Through positive and proactive discussions with the applicant, initial concerns raised by the Conservation Officer have been satisfactorily addressed through the submission of revised plans.

Having regard to the latest plans and developments, Officers are content that the proposed development in its entirety fully complies with the Local Development Plan, relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance, and relevant parts of the NPPF including those restrictive policies relating to heritage conservation contained under Chapter 20 of the NPPF.

As such, both applications are considered to constitute a sustainable form of development and in line with LP Policy S1a and NPPF Policy S3(c) and are recommended for approval subject to appropriately worded conditions.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Approve with Conditions

Case Officer: James Stannard

Recommendation Date: 18th August 2026

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of High Peak Borough Council