

The Buxton Civic Association has held a meeting of members to discuss the "Proposed construction of a supermarket and a mixed use building including a hotel, restaurant, shops and cafes along with associated car parking, service arrangements and access improvements." HPK/2014/0560.

Forty three of the association's 360 members attend the meeting on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> of February at the Visitor Centre on Green Lane.

**The unanimous decision of the meeting was to strongly oppose the proposal.**

The Planning Team of the BCA having considered the comments at the meeting and the other letters, emails and phone calls from members would make the following comments on the proposals.

Design

Rather than enhancing Buxton, this design it was unanimously agreed would detract from the town. Some of the reasons for this are:

The design is considered to be inappropriate for this elevated site which overlooks the town. It is felt that the southern elevation in particular will be very overbearing when viewed by people walking north from Spring Gardens.

No attempt has been made in the proposals for improving connections with the existing town centre either visually or for pedestrians: in fact the site and the proposed development appear divorced from the town.

The siting of the various elements of the development will block the view of the railway station with its listed fan window when entering the town from the east and will destroy the precious view of the town currently enjoyed by train passengers when they arrive in Buxton. This would be replaced by the view of the service yard, waste skips, articulated lorries and the featureless rear of the supermarket building.

We are also concerned that the development will be visible from the upper floors of the Crescent which is also listed and we think within 200 meters of the site.

Comments on the design at our meeting ranged from, prison block to factory to offices to halls of residence.

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Sustainability

We feel that the siting of a large supermarket building in this location is not sustainable and may even set an unfortunate precedent for a large featureless building which is quite out of scale and keeping with the rest of Buxton's buildings. We are further concerned that if consent were given for a supermarket sized building then applications may be made in the future to increase the height of the building by adding one or more floors to it, or by increasing the footprint of the building.

We do not consider credible the developers forecast for job creation, even assuming the majority are part time. If it proceeds we anticipate that there may be job losses elsewhere in the town.

Location

We feel that the proposed development would lead to an extension or shifting of the Town Centre into an area that is edge of town at best and could be considered to be out of town. We are concerned that if the proposed development went ahead it would draw more trade away from both town centre, Spring Gardens, and Higher Buxton leading to more urban sprawl.

The large roof area of the proposed supermarket would be visually intrusive when viewed from the top of Holker Road, Solomon's Temple and other elevated locations around the town.

### Traffic

The impact on traffic in the immediate area is of great concern to us in spite of the developers traffic study. We consider that it would become difficult for pedestrians to cross Station Road and access public transport be it bus or train. In particular it would become difficult to approach or leave the station at busy times and when trains arrive and depart leading to many missed trains and or buses. The volume of traffic generated was also of great concern especially with the proximity of the already difficult roundabout on Bridge Street. Station Road was originally built as a relief road for Spring Gardens. As all residents of Buxton know any disruption to traffic flow on Fairfield Road, The Quadrant or Manchester Roads leads to immediate traffic gridlock on Station Road. It was felt that no comparison could be made with the traffic movement of the sites previous use given that we understand that a lot of the articulated lorry traffic was at night. We do not accept the conclusion of the traffic survey that an alternative use for residential purposes on this site would generate a similar volume of traffic as the proposed development.

### Context

Whilst we acknowledge there is currently no Local Plan and the site in question was never considered for development whilst the plan was being consulted upon it is felt that High Peak Borough Councils (HPBC) subsequent Design and Place document correctly identifies this site as not for retail. We also understand that a report on the town was prepared for HPBC by GVA Grimly which said that no further supermarkets were needed in the town and certainly not on this site.

### Landscaping

Whilst the landscaping of the site is a reserved matter for the purposes of the proposal it is apparent that no space is left on the site to implement anything other than the planting of a few token trees and certainly nowhere for a meaningful landscaping scheme that would benefit the location of the site.

### Site use.

Whilst not germane to this planning application some BCA members feel very strongly that this site should be reserved for a high quality leisure type development which provides interest and engagement for the large youth population, those of university age and young adults who now live in the town.

Another suggestion was for more residential property.

The opportunity of a vacant site should not be squandered in the way proposed by this application.