Councils urged to bulldoze ugly retail parks for homes

By **Christopher Hope**

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UGLY and abandoned retail parks and large supermarkets should be demolished to make way for housing, a government report says today.

The Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission said town halls should encourage the redevelopment of retail parks and large supermarkets into communities that include homes, shops and businesses.

Councils should also have confidence in "saying no to ugliness" – with authorities "celebrating" examples of bad schemes they have turned down.

High streets should strive to be beautiful, walkable, well-connected places for people to live and work, with a greater mix of buildings that includes smaller shops, businesses and homes, according to the interim report, titled "Creating space for beauty". Such "mixed use" communities would need to be supported by new public transport systems to reduce reliance on cars.

Nicholas Boys Smith, the interim chairman of the commission, said: "Redeveloping abandoned, out-of-town retail parks and ugly old supermarkets would deliver something much more beautiful in the form of thriving new communities where people can raise a family, work or settle down. Our initial report sets many ways we can make our country more beautiful while fulfilling the needs of future generations...

"Beauty should not be just a property of the old buildings or protected landscapes but something we expect from new buildings, places and settlements. We need to deliver beauty for everyone, not just the wealthy. This will require, ultimately, some fundamental changes."

James Brokenshire, the Housing Secretary, said: "We owe it to the next generation to not just build more homes but to build communities people can be proud of. As a country, we should not shy away from talking about what building beautifully means – and this report is an important contribution to that discussion."