

6 August 2022

Proposals for an Aldi in West Norwood

Thank you for approaching and meeting with Norwood Forum and Norwood Action Group on your proposals, and for organising the public exhibition and early consultation on the proposed Aldi store in West Norwood. We have the following joint comments to make:

Location: Our fundamental concern with the proposals is the plan to use KIBA land for retail. We do want to see this long time vacant brownfield site (20 years plus) developed as soon as possible, and we have consistently looked to Lambeth Council to lead on its early development. You make an eloquent argument that complete use of the site for industrial use is not economically viable. Our view is that this economic viability test has not been genuinely explored, so we continue to support this usage. You have talked about searching for other sites - to what extent have you considered the alternative opportunity presented by Council proposals to enable large scale development at [site 18](#) (item 6)?

We note the proposals also contravene Lambeth's Town Centre policy which was only adopted in 2021.

However, should Lambeth Council be willing to discuss a multi-use approach with you, we have the following comments to make:

Business workspace: At the moment this part of the proposals comes across as a hopeful bolt on. The Council already has experience of letting out office space to start up/small businesses (Lambeth Town Hall, St. Matthews Church and International House come to mind). We know from Station to Station BID that there is an established demand for affordable commercial space for small businesses, including start-ups (which will require additional support – including financial), in the Norwood area. Further discussions should establish a viable way of marketing and managing the space to make this aspect an integral part of the planned development – with local businesses given priority. Viable access to the first floor for manufacturing businesses will also be important. We suggest there is leeway to increase the amount of workspace to make this aspect of the proposal more viable, and acceptable.

Traffic management: We have safety concerns on the plan to allow right turn access for northbound traffic into the planned Knight's Hill car park entrance. Despite the 20mph limit traffic usually travels at speed both down and up Knight's Hill. Given the width of the road, we fear a danger of traffic collisions and a dangerous manoeuvre for cyclists will be created. A similar situation arises from slow traffic moving from the car park onto Knights Hill. For pedestrian safety, the access is very wide to accommodate delivery vehicles, and this means more risks to pedestrians as they traverse a long length of footway without a kerb.

Car parking: If construction of the store goes ahead – it must be for local people. To this end we would want to see more positive proposals to encourage shoppers to walk or cycle to your store. To align with the Lambeth Local Plan, the planned 43 car parking spaces must be reduced. Ideally the number of rapid electrical charging points should be increased along with the number of disabled parking spaces. A CPZ will be essential in Chapel Road to prevent Aldi customers parking there. Charging for car parking would put the store on a more even footing with existing West Norwood retailers. Unlike other local stores this Aldi will not provide parking for those shopping in the main town centre, as it is too far to walk.

Cycle parking: This falls below Lambeth standards as set out in the Lambeth Local Plan. It is also poorly located with shopping trolleys between the cycle parking and the store entrance, which does not compare favourably with the access provided for those arriving by car. There is also no provision for cargo bikes or cycles with child carrying trailers.

Access: Separate pedestrian and cycle access off Knight's Hill is non-existent. Both groups of people have to go through the car park where there are no marked safe routes let alone segregated ones. Nothing is proposed to enable safe and pleasant access by pedestrians (which will include bus users) and cyclists at access on Knight's Hill.

Loss of amenity - noise: Nearest residents have already expressed concerns about noise from delivery vehicles. The design relies upon these reversing in the car park, so the timing of deliveries is also a factor. Will the site be secure at night to prevent noise and disturbance to local residents?

Loss of amenity – visual: Whilst we applaud the fact the building will be constructed to BREEAM standards, we question the impact of the current proposals on the surrounding residential landscape and would expect to see detailed visuals that map and illustrate that impact. The architecture is disappointingly shed-like and does not show the imagination that a large scale development being slotted into a residential neighbourhood requires.

Impact on existing local businesses: It seems inevitable that the new store will take some custom away from Crown Point/Knights Hill/Norwood High Street and Norwood Road shops. Our retail centres remained resilient during Covid lockdown and we cannot support any plans that undermine our existing business community. What liaison with them, perhaps via Station to Station, has taken place? Has any assessment been made of this impact that might alleviate our concerns?

Natural environment: There are a number of mature trees on the site and others close to the boundary. These are important for wild life and sustainability and should be protected. The Aldi plans for landscaping are limited and unimaginative. What are they proposals in terms of sustainability – green roof, permeable surface to car park and other hard surfaces, SUDS, and PV panels?

Local impact: Local people and businesses should be prioritised for jobs, both during construction and for supplying goods and services. This could be set up as a local training and apprenticeship programme working with Lambeth and the BID.

Neighbouring Yellow Box site: Lambeth Council has recently [refused an application](#) (22/01502/TPO) to cut down a tree protected by a TPO to enable a Thames Water booster pump station to be built. The development would also have damaged an area where [Open Orchard](#) have planted and maintained trees. Liaison with Lambeth Council might show your site could better accommodate the Thames Water facility. Perhaps your new electricity sub-station could be located next door? A more strategic look is needed at the location and provision of these statutory services and related structures. This might further enable more extensive landscaping and the planting of more trees – including semi-mature or mature trees.

Packaged goods: We would seek reassurance on this aspect of the Aldi offer. The local community is actively working to make West Norwood a green and sustainable place to live and work, and reducing packaged goods is part of that ambition.



Norwood
Action
Group



We hope these thoughts are useful in your considerations going forward. Please keep in contact.

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