

Proposed Food and Non-Food Retail Development

Homebase Unit, Sturlas Way, Waltham Cross, EN8 7BF

Client: Aldi Stores Limited - Corporate

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Author: Justin Griffiths

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1.0 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement accompanies a full planning application by Aldi Stores Ltd – Corporate (Aldi hereafter) for the refurbishment and extension of an existing Homebase retail unit to form a new Aldi Food Store and second Homebase retail unit at Sturlas Way, Waltham Cross.

The description of development is as follows:

“Refurbishment, extension and external alterations to existing non-food retail unit to enable it to trade as part foodstore and part non-food retail unit, alongside modifications to existing external garden centre, car parking layout, and other associated site works”.

The aims of this Design and Access Statement is to show that the proposed development has been informed by an awareness of the site’s context and principles highlighted by Borough of Broxbourne Council.

The statement will explain the proposals, identify the factors which have influenced this application and highlight the principles that were incorporated in the detailed design of this proposal.

The key planning policies informing this application, which are set out in the Broxbourne Local Plan 2018-2033 (adopted 23rd June) 2020 are listed in the supporting Planning & Retail Statement prepared by Avison & Young.

Figure 1 Aerial view of the application site



Figure 2 The Vine Public House



Figure 3 Tesco Express

2.0 Site Analysis

2.1 Location & Movement Networks

The application site is located at the northern end of Waltham Cross town centre within the Borough of Broxbourne Council. The site sits southeast of the intersection roundabout of Winston Churchill Way, High Street, Swanfield Rd, Monarch's Way and Sturlas Way. The site is approximately 1m from junction 25 of the M25.

Access to the site is off Sturlas Way with both pedestrian and vehicular access points. There is a pedestrian route (2m wide) running along the eastern boundary and a cycle/pedestrian route (3m wide) along the northern boundary linking the site with the wider area of Waltham Cross. A full assessment of highway matters is available in the accompanying Transport Assessment prepared by Connect Consultants Ltd.

2.2 Land Use

There is a mix of land uses surrounding the site including:

- Public House (The Vine)
- Retail Convenience Store (Tesco Express)
- Residential (Burlington House, Sawyers Court, Ruthven Av & Leven Av)
- Office (First Call Contracts)
- Ecclesiastical (Church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception & St Joseph)
- Retail and Services (Kwik Fit & Wickes)
- The wider retail and leisure offer of Waltham Cross town centre is a short walk south-east on high street.

In summary, the land uses surrounding the site are largely retail / commercial in nature, reflecting its town centre location.



Figure 4 Burlington House



Figure 5 Sawyers Court

2.0 Site Analysis continued...

2.3 Architecture

The existing site comprises of the existing Homebase non-food retail unit, carpark and limited soft landscaping.

The building is a modern steel frame building with a mixture of external finishes of brick & high level profiled cladding. On the eastern & northern elevation of the building the high level cladding is cloaked with a net banner. The existing GEA of the building is 3,520 sqm excluding garden centre canopy enclosures. Its existing GIA (based on the ground floor and mezzanine) is 4,319 sqm.

As evident from figures 2 to 8 there is a mix of architectural styles in the surrounding area. There are also three Grade II listed properties on the High Street (no 207, 226 & 228). At circa 100m from the application site the development will have no material impact the setting of these historic assets.



Figure 6 Rear of dwellings on Ruthven Av



Figure 7 Existing Homebase Store (east elevation)



Figure 8 Existing Homebase Store (north elevation)

3.0 Design Development

A pre-application meeting with officers was held on Wednesday 11th March 2020, a written response has yet to be provided, however officers welcomed the overall design approach as proposed.

Following the pre-app with the LPA an Arboricultural Assessment has been undertaken which identified that the existing mature tree (T1) at the north east corner of the site is in danger of toppling and has recommended its removal.

The highway authority at Hertfordshire County Council have provided a detailed written pre-app response requesting a number of highway related improvements. In direct response the site plan has been amended to provide:

- An additional pedestrian link with the wider network.
- Four Sheffield 'D' cycle hoops for eight customer bicycles.
- Parking for 5 motor cycles.
- Four active electrical vehicle parking bays & provision of a future 16 EV parking bays.
- Employee shower facility.

Please refer to the accompanying Transport Assessment prepared by Connect Consultants Ltd for further details.



Figure 9 & 10 Existing Tree (T1)

4.0 Design

4.1 Use

This applications seeks the refurbishment, extension and external alterations to an existing 'Use Class E' non-food retail unit (Homebase) to enable it to trade as part foodstore (Aldi) and part non-food retail unit (Homebase), alongside modifications to the existing external garden centre, car parking layout, and other associated site works.

4.2 Amount

The existing ground floor GIA of the Homebase including garden centre annex is 3,435 sqm, whilst there is also a mezzanine floor of 884 sqm (4,319 sqm total). The proposed ground floor GIA of the Homebase element of the scheme (including garden centre annex, customer lobbies and extensions) will be 1,735 sqm, whilst the unit will also have a mezzanine of 636 sqm. The proposed Aldi element of the building (including customer lobby and servicing extension) will extend to 1,756 sqm GIA. Accordingly, the overall GIA floorspace of the building following its extension and refurbishment will be 3,491 sqm at ground floor and 636 sqm at mezzanine floor, or 4,271 sqm in total. Accordingly, in terms of 'amount' the development proposals will actually result in a net reduction in floorspace at the building of 48 sqm (largely as a consequence of the reduction in size of the existing mezzanine floor).

4.3 Layout

The proposal includes the sub division of the existing Homebase store (albeit this in itself does not require planning permission), the existing customer entrance/exit lobby will be demolished and two new customer lobbies will be provided on the northern elevation of the building. The downsized Homebase will continue to use the existing service road and yard for deliveries. The existing Homebase garden centre will be reduced in size to all for the creation of additional car parking.

To facilitate Aldi operations a loading pod extension is proposed on the eastern face of the building; this will result in the loss of some car parking spaces which is offset by the additional spaces created on the northern portion of the site.

The carpark will be re-white lined adding designated disabled bays, parent & child spaces, click & collect spaces and electrical vehicle spaces (see submitted drawings for further details). Outside of the site the existing wall retaining the public footpath has been damaged through tree root movements, therefore it is proposed to locally repair this wall and surface finish of the footpath.

The Aldi external plant will be located on the roof of the loading pod; this will be at least 40m from the habitable rooms of the properties on Ruthven Avenue. At the time of submission it is assumed an acoustic screen will be required; in the event that further investigations conclude minimal impact from plant then the acoustic screen can be omitted from the development.

4.4 Scale

The existing parapet is circa 8.1m above ground and will not change as a result of the development. The proposed customer lobbies will be circa 3.5m from ground to soffit of the new canopy. The proposed loading pod extension will be circa 8.4m (including acoustic screen) above ground. In the event the acoustic screen is not required this parapet would reduce to circa 7.0m above ground.

4.5 Landscaping

Any dead or diseased shrubs in the existing landscape bed along the existing boundary will be replaced. As stated previously, the existing tree (T1) in the north east corner will be felled. A new soft landscape bed will be provided in the north western edge of the car park. Please refer to the accompanying soft landscape plan prepared by Vector Design Concepts for further details.

4.6 Appearance

The application seeks to modernise and refresh the primary public facing elevations of the building. The existing brick panels between the brick piers on the east and north facing elevations will be covered with new white render finish (brick piers will be cleaned). The existing high level parapet cladding will be redecorated in a single colour (anthracite); new shopfront glazing and glazed lobbies will be installed (anthracite); and a new solid canopy (anthracite) will be provided over new customer trolley areas (figure 11).

A new paladin fence (anthracite) will be provided separating the reduced garden centre area from the car park. The proposed loading pod extension will be clad using flat composite cladding panels finished in metallic silver.

4.7 Access

The existing customer and delivery vehicle access off Sturlas Way will be improved through works to be agreed with the local highway authority. As stated previously the existing pedestrian access off Sturlas Way will be retained and a second access in the north east corner will be provided. Please refer to the accompanying documents prepared by Connect Consultants Ltd for further details.



Figure 11 proposed CGI

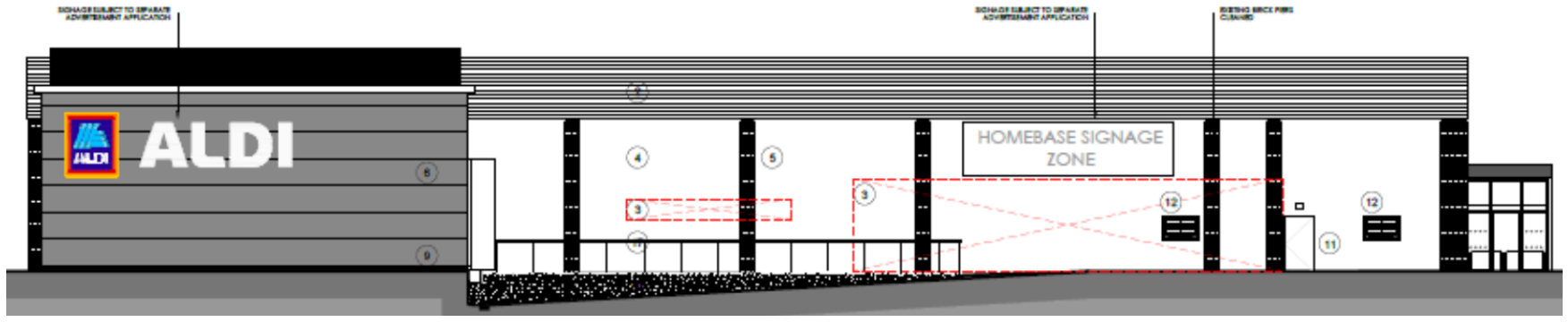


Figure 12 proposed east elevation



Figure 13 proposed north elevation

5.0 Conclusion

The objective of the development proposals are to modify, refurbish and extend the existing Use Class E non-food retail unit on Sturlas Way in order to enable joint occupation by both Aldi Stores Ltd and Homebase.

This will enable Aldi to make a positive investment within Waltham Cross town centre, whilst retaining the home improvement retail offer of Homebase and the existing benefits this brings to the area. The reduced size of Homebase's unit will be more commensurate with their future business requirements and will safeguard the viability of their operation.

Given its town centre location the site is both sustainably and accessibly located to the surrounding residential areas that it will serve. The introduction of Aldi at the northern end of the high street will provide an important convenience retail anchor for Waltham Cross town centre which will help drive footfall and spin-off trade for existing businesses, thereby enhancing the centre's overall vitality and viability.

This document has demonstrated that the design of the proposed refurbished and extended retail unit has been fully justified in relation to amount, layout, scale, landscaping, appearance and access; in line with the Government's requirements for DaASs. The analysis has also demonstrated that the proposal complies with the relevant design and access policies of the Broxbourne Council Local Plan and, more generally, equivalent policies contained within the NPPF.