

Heritage chiefs criticise plans to move store near historical site

HERITAGE chiefs at Cadw and leading historians have hit out at plans to relocate a supermarket near a nationally important historical site in Carmarthen.

Lidl wants to move to a new site at the former police station at Friars Park from its current Priory Street store.

However, the Friars Park site borders civil war earthwork defences, known as the Bulwarks, dating back to the 17th Century. Cadw has now lodged its concerns over the plans and echoed those already raised by the town's civic society. Cadw

IAN LEWIS

07790 591150
ian.lewis@mediawales.co.uk

argues that the supermarket would be closer to the Bulwarks than the existing police buildings and that plans to widen the access road to the site from 5m to 9m would encroach on the historic scheduled monument land.

Cadw said in its assessment that the Bulwarks "form the sole remnant of Carmarthen's Civil War defences and by some distance the best preserved urban fortifications of this type in Wales."

"The proposed develop-

ment will see the main supermarket building moved significantly closer to the monument than the existing buildings."

While turning to the access road widening, Cadw said more assessment was needed over whether the historic land would be sliced away at its edges. Within its planning application, Lidl has submitted a heritage assessment prepared by Cotswold Archaeology and other documents justifying the site's design and layout.

However, in response Cadw said: "The proposed development is mostly

outside of the scheduled area, but extends into it to the south-east where the existing entrance road will be widened from 5m to 9m. The heritage assessment acknowledges this would encroach on the boundary of the scheduled area, but states that 'this boundary has already been encroached by the existent road and side-walks for the development of the former police station and the widening of the road, as it is, is not likely to result in any further intrusive effects'.

"Cadw does not agree with this statement.

"While the earthworks

have been reduced at this point and clearly contain service runs, no formal assessment has been undertaken to confirm this."

Lidl ultimately needs scheduled monument consent from Cadw if its plans are to go ahead.

However, prior to that Lidl has been asked by Cadw to carry out an archaeological evaluation of the site before that consent can be considered.

Earlier this month, Carmarthen Civic Society voiced its fears over the location of the store and its impact on the Bulwarks.

In addition, leading historians have added to the argument that the Bulwarks must be protected.

Dr John Kenyon, from the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff, said: "There is nothing in Wales regarding urban defences surviving other than at Carmarthen. This scheduled ancient monument is of national UK importance, and nothing should be built in or near it to detract from the significance of the earthworks."

And consultant archaeologist Neil Ludlow, who previously worked for Dyfed Archaeological Trust and has written a

book on Carmarthen Castle, has also spoken out against Lidl's plans.

He said: "The development has the potential for negative physical impact on the Bulwarks, through its access and parking arrangements.

"It also appears to represent a demonstrably negative visual impact.

"The application would have a significant impact on 'The Bulwarks' - the only part of Carmarthen's 17th Century Civil War defences to fully survive."

Lidl were asked to comment but did not respond by the time the Journal went to press.