

# Store switch site fears allayed

FEARS have been raised that a part of historic Carmarthen could be lost with major plans by a supermarket to relocate.

Lidl currently has a store in Priory Street but wants to move to a new site at the former police station at Friars Park.

However, the site borders civil war defences, known as the Bulwarks, dating back to the 17th Century.

Questions have been raised over whether the former police station land is large enough for what Lidl wants to build without losing part of the Bulwarks.

Lidl's plan includes a larger store than its Priory Street one and a 116-space car park and the company is adamant that the Bulwarks will not be encroached upon.

Carmarthen Civic Society says the Bulwarks bordering the police site are considered to be the best surviving examples of defensive earthworks in the UK and are some 350 years old.

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The society has lodged its opposition to the plans arguing the site is too small for the needs of Lidl and would encroach on the Bulwarks, which is classed as an ancient monuments site of national importance.

Concern is also raised over plans to widen the access road into the site which is feared could "chip away" at the Bulwarks, said society member Sally Bere.

She also wants clarification from the supermarket over the exact proposed siting of a large advertising totem branded with the Lidl name - which she believes could actually be on the Bulwarks themselves, according to aerial plans.

Mrs Bere added: "The society believes part of the Bulwarks are to be lost due to doubling the width of the access road and a 26ft illuminated totem advertising sign inside the bul-



Carmarthen Civic Society fears the historic Bulwarks could be impacted by the new Lidl development at Friars Park.

warks area, which we say would be unacceptable."

Turning to the size of the development, Lidl's planning application, lodged in June, states the development site is 0.73 hectare.

While a retail impact assessment carried out in April by the firm WYG Planning and Environment states Lidl would require a "minimum site area requirement of 1.1

hectare" for its needs.

Furthermore, a 2015 report by Asbri Planning carried out on behalf of Dyfed-Powys Police to consider redevelopment opportunities once the police station closed stated "the developable area would be reduced to some 0.6 hectares".

The Carmarthen Civic Society argues that based on these differing figures, the site is potentially not

large enough for a store of the size planned and associated parking.

Mrs Bere said a supermarket would be a blow to the historic site.

She added: "As far as we can see, the site is not big enough to accommodate the size of store Lidl want."

"Lidl will need to widen the access road, which cuts through the Bulwarks area, which is protected by law.

"They need scheduled monument consent from Cadw which has not been decided yet."

In an objection letter to the plans on behalf of the Carmarthen Civic Society, she said the Bulwarks must to be safeguarded, adding: "Clearly, this is a site which has a story to tell, and it should be protected and actively enhanced to enable that story to be told to future generations."

While Twm Jarvis, a member of the historical re-enactment group Sir Henry Vaughan's Company of the Sealed Knot, said Lidl should make more of the Bulwarks and highlight them to the town.

He added: "I'm not against Lidl going to the old police station site."

"As long as the Bulwarks are untouched as they have been for more than 300 years then surely there is an opportunity to show them off."

"So why not turn this whole issue on its head and see Lidl not only pro-

tect the Bulwarks but help raise the profile of them?"

A spokesman for Lidl said: "We would like to reassure residents and the civic society that our proposed new store would be built in line with our planning application, comprising of a 0.73 hectare development, which does not encroach on the surrounding Bulwarks."

"We are working closely with Cadw, the Welsh Government's historic environment service who aim to protect historic buildings and structures in Wales, to ensure that any archaeological work at the access point to the site is completed in compliance with the conditional consent they have provided."

"Should totem poll signage be considered suitable for our new store, it would be the subject of a separate application and would fall within the parameters of the proposed development, while not exceeding 6m in height."