

Planners Reject Sainsbury's

Written by John Eager

Tuesday, 14 February 2012 14:15 - Last Updated Thursday, 23 February 2012 16:57

Ahead of Herefordshire Council's planning committee (22nd Feb) Herefordshire planning officers have recommended rejection of Sainsbury's controversial planning application on the Galebreaker site.

The planners have revealed that they received 2,409 written expressions of objection against the application, with 992 written expressions of support. It is unlikely that these impressive displays made much difference to the planners' decision as their focus has always been on planning laws and regulations, the council's own development plans for Ledbury and the impact it would have on the town centre.

According to the planners' [submission](#) English Heritage are against the application because of the harm to town centre historic buildings if they were no longer in use. Ross, Kington and Bromyard are cited as examples of what could happen to Ledbury if the town centre were to suffer business losses. These are considered to be 'Conservation Areas at Risk', while Ledbury's retail base is considered 'healthy'.

The Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) objects to the proposed development citing the closure of town centre shops, which would jeopardise listed buildings and make Ledbury less attractive for residents and tourists.

Similarly Ledbury Civic Society objects citing the proposal is likely to lead to deterioration in the condition of listed buildings in the town centre currently occupied by retailers. Such a deterioration would adversely affect the conservation area and the attractiveness of the town to tourists.

The Environment Agency opposes the application as it does not include a flood risk

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assessment.

The Traffic Manager is objecting to the application because of the increase of traffic to the area and the lack of linked trips to the town centre because the proposed site is too far from the town centre.

The Co-Op store submitted its own detailed objection, citing the rejection of the recent similar Tesco application.

The Parish Councils of Ledbury, Wellington Heath and Putley voted against the application, while Bosbury and Aylton voted for it.

The planners state that "the Lower Road Trading Estate is the only employment land within Ledbury classified as 'good'...The application represents 20.2% of the overall Trading Estate... The petrol filling station is located upon land safeguarded for employment purposes. This employment land is of a high quality. As such, the petrol filling station element of the proposal also conflicts with Policies S4 and E5 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007.

"The supporting Planning Statement states that "The partnership with Sainsbury's will also ensure that Galebreakers are able to remain in Ledbury." However, during discussions, Galebreaker stated that their continuing operation in Ledbury was not reliant upon relocation and that they could continue to operate in their existing premises. This indicates that their site is suitable for continued employment operation and therefore the application is contrary to the principles of policy E5 part 1. The land would also be suitable for other potential employment users."

The planning officers also cite an environmental issue; slow worms have been found on the site Sainsbury's wishes to build on. It was told it would have to manage the relocation of the slow worms to another part of Herefordshire. Sainsbury's has failed to find such a site for the slow worms.

To view the report:

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[N113052/F - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION OF A SUPERSTORE CLASS A1 PETROL FILLING STATION, CAR PARKING, BIOMASS BOILER, LANDSCAPING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT LAND AT GALEBREAKER HOUSE, LEADON WAY, LEDBURY](#)