

Plans for new Tesco store scrapped

Tesco has scrapped its plans for a new Edinburgh store after Leith locals complained there were already “too many” in the area.

Detailed proposals for a Tesco Express on Queen Charlotte Street were lodged in January and withdrawn last week following nearly 50 objections.

Despite three other branches being “within a 500m radius” of the former motorbike showroom the supermarket giant argued there was “a lack of convenience retail provision to serve the established residential population”.

Objectors accused the company of a “disgusting display of greed” by “creating a monopoly of Tesco stores means that they will have no incentive to keep prices low as competition diminishes”.

And while plans to redevelop the unit which has lay empty for 12 years and create more jobs were welcomed by Leith Links Communitiy Council it also opposed the bid “on balance”. The group raised concerns the shop would “have a bad effect on the appearance of the local area” and attract “beggars sitting on the ground outside”.

Tesco recently opened Leith Walk’s second Tesco Express, joining another on Great Junction Street and its Duke Street superstore – all of which are situated within a half kilometre of the proposed Queen Charlotte Street site.

Plans submitted by the retailer said: "Tesco have identified that Queen Charlotte Street and the surrounding area have a lack of convenience retail provision to serve the established residential population and employment uses.

"The nature, scale and location . . . will serve to meet a local convenience retail need, and therefore will have no impact on convenience stores in Leith or across the wider town centre."

Planning documents revealed there was previously interest in the vacant unit from – among others – Cairngorm Coffee, F45 Fitness, Caverninos Pizza and Sainsbury's, which didn't make an offer in the end due to the proximity its Bernard Street store.

Tesco said the new branch would employ between 15 and 20 staff in full and part time position, while noting the Co-op was granted permission to turn the old Yamaha showroom into a convenience store in 2015 but the plans were ultimately ditched.

However locals appeared not to be on board with the proposal and lined up to object.

One commented there were "too many Tescos in Leith," adding: "This is not the way for cohesive neighbourhood communities."

Another wrote: "Faceless clone storefronts detract from the character of the area."

A Yardheads resident said: "I wholeheartedly object to this disgusting display of greed by a company that already occupies three other shops that includes a large store within site of each other!

They asked: "How is this a fair and good solution for the community?" and urged planners to "give someone a fair chance at starting another business in there".

And it was remarked by different objector that adding “yet another Tesco shop in such a small area is taking away choice for local residents and by creating a monopoly of Tesco stores means that they will have no incentive to keep prices low as competition diminishes”.

A council report stated: “The application has been withdrawn by the applicant.”

Tesco was contacted for comment.

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter