

Design and Access Statement

**Proposed New Aldi Food Store
Mafon Road, Nelson, Caerphilly**



Document Control Record

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1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Kendall Kingscott in support of a detailed planning application for submission to Caerphilly County Borough Council. The application relates to the construction of a new Aldi food store on Mafon Road in Nelson, Caerphilly.

The report describes the design philosophy for the scheme. It includes an appraisal of the site and its surroundings followed by a detailed description of the proposals and key features of the design.

As the statement forms part of a formal detailed planning application, it should be read in conjunction with all supporting plans and documents.



Aerial image overlaid with the site boundary.
Source: Google Maps

2. The Applicant

The application is to be submitted by Aldi Stores Ltd.

Aldi Stores Ltd are a global discount supermarket operator who are currently the fourth largest grocer in the UK. Aldi began trading in the UK in 1990 and now have approximately 1000 stores in the UK and Ireland.

3. Design Team

Architecture

Kendall Kingscott Ltd

Planning Consultant

Avison Young

Highways Consultant

Entran

Engineering Consultant

Craddys

Services Consultant

Building Management Technology (BMT)

Landscape Consultant

Tyler Grange

Construction Management

Arc Bauen

Cost Consultant

Owen Associates

Acoustic Consultant

Sharps Redmore

Ecologist

Tyler Grange

4. Context and Site Appraisal

4.1. Location

The new Aldi store proposal is located on a plot just off Mafon Road (the A472) in the village of Nelson, south-east of the town of Treharris. An existing Co-op food convenience store sits on site next to a Texaco garage, and opposite a car dealer and tyre shop tucked on the edge of a residential estate. The site comes under the jurisdiction of Caerphilly County Borough Council.

4.2. The Site and Context

The site exists primarily as hard-standing tarmac throughout the car park, with a small hedge along the north-westerly boundary to Texaco, and a line of established trees along the west facing boundary. The north-eastern wedge also exists as a soft landscaped segment with many established trees.

North Boundary

The northern site boundary runs parallel to Mafon Road where the existing site entrance sits centrally on the boundary and the pocket of soft landscaping begins just after. There is a bus stop just outside the site on the opposite side of the road. A partial timber knee rail defines the boundary between the existing car park and pedestrian path adjacent.



Street view images showing the approach to the existing site from the north boundary on Mafon Road. Source: Google Images

East Boundary

The eastern boundary runs down along the pocket of soft landscaping and trees, before coming back in along the car park edge. A field and drainage pond sit the other side of the boundary.



(Left) Street view image within the east site boundary. (Right) Site visit photo showing the view of site from the fields south-east of the existing site boundary.

Source: Google Images

South Boundary

The southern boundary again runs along a field, with a row of established trees outside the division and a chain link fence within separating the two plots.

West Boundary

The western boundary features a line of established trees sat just outside of the chainlink fence making up the boundary. The boundary runs along the division to Texaco, also separated by chain link fence and a few small hedges and trees.



(Left) Street view image showing the relationship between the existing site and the Texaco garage to the west. (Right) site visit photo showing the trees lining the south-west boundary behind the garage.

Source: Google Images

4.3. Connections

The site sits around 600m from the main high street in Nelson. There are several community hubs within the area, including the local community centre, rugby club, and a number of small businesses. The village of Nelson sits less than 3km to the south-east of Treharris, and approx. 10km from the larger town of Caerphilly.

The site is ideally located for access by both pedestrians and cyclists on calm single carriageway roads, encouraging active travel to the site. There is a bus stop immediately outside of the site boundary on Mafon Road, which is served by the Stagecoach no. 78 bus travelling between Merthyr Tydfil and Pontypridd every 10 minutes in the more popular hours of the day, as well as the Traveline Cymru x38 service that shuttles between Pontypridd and Bargoed hourly at peak times for travel. The nearest train stations are Treharris Quakers Yard and Abercynon that both sit less than 5km away in neighbouring towns.

4.4. Area and Topography

The application area is 10,160 sqm (2.51 acres). The site is generally level with a slightly raised area sat in the far north-east section of the boundary.

4.5. Landscape and Ecology

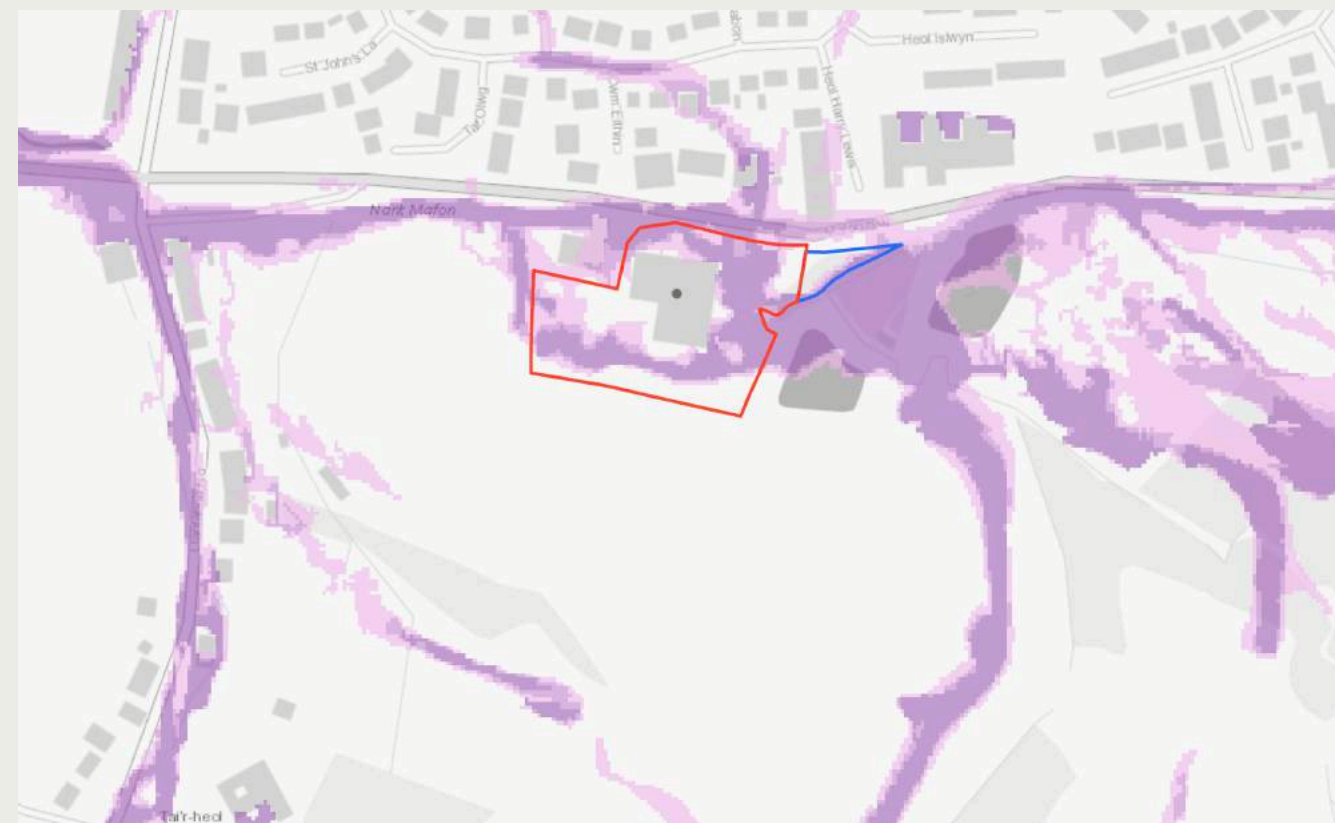
The nature of the existing site as a food store with associated car park means it is largely made up of asphalt, with a few pockets of concrete surrounding the existing loading bay and delivery area. There are a few trees sat just within the western boundary, and the north-east section exists as soft-landscaped terrain curtaining a water culvert that travels beneath the northern area of site from the east to west.

Please refer to the separate ecology report submitted with the application for further details.

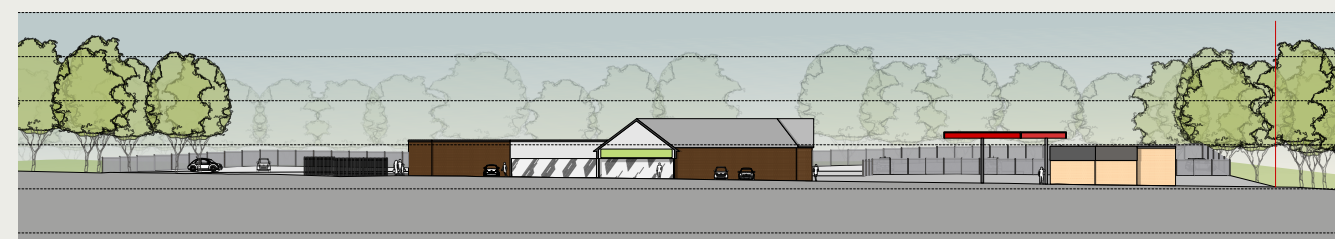
4.6. Flood Risk

The site lies within an area at very low risk of flooding from rivers and the sea, meaning it has a chance of flooding less than 0.1% each year, however the risk of flooding from surface water and small watercourses is considered high, with an annual flood likelihood of 3.3% in part due to the presence of the water culvert that emerges above ground toward the north-east corner of site.

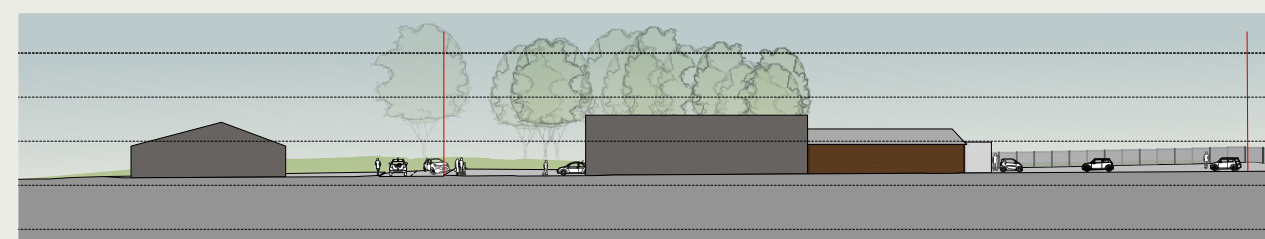
Please refer to the separate Flood Risk Assessment submitted with the application for further details.



Flood risk map with site boundary overlaid. Dark purple indicates high flood risk from surface water and small watercourses, and lighter purple medium. Source: Flood Risk Map from Natural Resources Wales.



EXISTING SITE SECTION (A - A)



EXISTING SITE SECTION (B - B)

Existing Site Sections (not to scale).

4.7. Constraints & Opportunities

The site offers a great opportunity for development given its close proximity to the village centre and community hub core, with ease of access from the larger towns of Pontypridd and Merthyr Tydfil, as well as several neighbouring villages.

Site opportunities:

- The site is located near to several community hubs and is within close reach of several residential estates and bus stops in the surrounding area.
- The site benefits from allowing clear visibility of the proposed storefront from Mafon Road where existing and proposed site entry sits.
- The site is easily accessible by a range of transport options including walking, via bus and cycling.
- The site is relatively flat.

Site constraints:

- The site will require demolition works to the existing building.
- There is an existing water culvert and emerging channel running across the northern area of site.
- The site sits on an area with a high flood risk from surface water or small watercourses.

The provision of a new Aldi food store will provide the following benefits to the area:

- A chance to provide further retail provisions in the community-hub prominent area.
- The proposal will bring new life to the site that is in need of development, and provides the opportunity of employment within the area.
- The discount food retail outlet will increase current provisions of the valuable service to the local community, enhancing consumer choice.

4.8. Pre-application advice

A pre-application response from Caerphilly County Borough Council was received in October 2023 (SPA/23/0069). Some of the key design related matters raised during discussion included:

- Concern for the design to not blend in with the surrounding village, and a suggestion of incorporating brick, pennant stone, slate, green walls and roofs or additional glazing to better address local character.
- There should be a comprehensive landscape plan that retains the trees but also plants further trees throughout the site to reduce the heat island effect, help sustainability, and provide cooling during the summer.
- Infiltration zones and areas of permeable paving using new technologies should be implemented wherever possible.

See the separate Planning Statement submitted with this application.

5. Planning Policy

5.1. National Policy, Guidance and Legislation

Planning Policy Wales – Edition 11 (Feb 2021)

Good Design Making Better Places

Paragraph 3.3 of the PPW states that good design is fundamental to creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise...To achieve sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, economic, environmental, cultural aspects of the development.

Para 3.4 states that design is an inclusive process, which can raise public aspirations, reinforce civic pride and create a sense of place and help shape its future.

Access and Inclusivity

Para 3.5 states that good design is inclusive design. Development proposals should place people at the heart of the design process, and acknowledge diversity and difference.

Para 3.6 states that development proposals must address the issues of inclusivity and accessibility for all. Design measures and features should enable easy access to services by walking, cycling and public transport.

Environmental Sustainability

Para 3.7 states that good design promotes environmental sustainability and contributes to the achievement of the well-being goals.

Para 3.8 states that good design can help to ensure high environmental quality.

Character

Para 3.9 the layout, form, scale and visual appearance of a proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are important planning considerations.

Para 3.10 In areas recognised for their particular landscape, townscape, cultural or historic character and value it can be appropriate to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

Community Safety

Para 3.11 Local authorities are under a legal obligation to consider the need to prevent and reduce crime and disorder in all decisions that they take. Crime prevention and fear of crime are social considerations to which regard should be given in the preparation of development plans and taking planning decisions.

Movement

Para 3.12 states that good design is about avoiding the creation of car-based developments. It contributes to minimising the need to travel and reliance on the car, whilst maximising opportunities for people to make sustainable and healthy travel choices for their daily journeys.

Para 3.13 states that existing infrastructure must be utilised and maximised, wherever possible.

Design and Access Statements

Para 3.17 states that a Design and Access Statement communicates what development is proposed, demonstrates the design process that has been undertaken and explains how the objectives of good design and placemaking have been considered from the outset of the development process. In preparing design and access statements, applicants should take an integrated and inclusive approach to sustainable design, proportionate to the scale and type of development proposal.

Para 4.1.17 states that Design and Access Statements should show how the design of the scheme has responded to the sustainable transport hierarchy.

Para 4.1.24 states that Design and Access Statements should demonstrate how the design of new or enhanced streets has responded to urban design principles, including the guidance in Manual for Streets and the Active Travel Design Guidance.

Para 4.1.49 states that Design and Access Statements should demonstrate how the design and layout of the development will reduce the level and speed of traffic to appropriate levels, and responds to the guidance in Manual for Streets and the Active Travel Design Guidance.

Public Transport

Para 4.1.36 states that the availability of public transport is an important part of ensuring a place is sustainable. It enables people to undertake medium and long journeys without being dependent on having access to a car.

Accessibility

Para 3.45 states that Spatial strategies should support the objectives of minimising the need to travel, reducing reliance on the private car and increasing walking, cycling and use of public transport.

Para 3.48 states that sites which are unlikely to be well served by walking, cycling and public transport should not be allocated for development.

5.2. Local Policy

Caerphilly County Borough Adopted Local Development Plan (LDP) 2010

The key policies from Local Development Plan that are relevant to the proposed development are outlined below.

Development Strategy – Development in the Northern Connections Corridor

SP2 – Development proposals in the Northern Connections Corridor will promote sustainable development that:

- A. Focuses significant development on both brownfield and greenfield sites that have regard for the social and economic functions of the area
- B. Reduces car borne trips by promoting more sustainable modes of travel
- C. Makes the most efficient use of the existing infrastructure
- D. Protects the natural heritage from inappropriate forms of development

- 1.58 Development in the Northern Connections Corridor will be targeted to settlements with good public transport links to encourage travel by sustainable modes, and provide for a range of uses that reflect the roles and functions of settlements in order to enhance quality of life for residents.
- 1.59 Brownfield sites will be utilised in preference to greenfield sites where feasible, subject to satisfactory environmental and community safeguards. Proposals for the reclamation and beneficial after-use of contaminated land will be considered favourably.
- 3.87 The village centre in Nelson offers a range of small shops and services to serve not only the Nelson area but also adjoining villages in Merthyr County Borough such as Treharris, Trelewis and Quakers Yard. Recent improvements to the central bus station have significantly improved the accessibility of the village centre to the surrounding area.
- 3.88 The national cycle route (47) runs through Nelson adjacent to the Wern Woodland Park and links the area to Penallta Community Park. Together these facilities provide a very attractive rural backdrop to Nelson. Wern Woodland Park also provides a valuable link for visitors to the area to a range of small shops and services within the historic village centre. Given the range of heritage and visitor attractions in the vicinity including Llancaiach Fawr living history museum, Nelson could have significant tourism potential.

Place Making

- SP6 – Development proposals should contribute to creating sustainable places by having full regard to the context of the local, natural, historic and built environment and its special features through:
- A. An appropriate mix of uses that reflect the role and function of settlements
 - B. A high standard of design that reinforces attractive qualities of local distinctiveness
 - C. Design in accordance with best practice in terms of designing out crime
 - D. A location and layout that reflects sustainable transport and accessibility principles and provides full, easy and safe access for all
 - E. The incorporation of resource efficiency and passive car gain through layout, materials, construction techniques, water conservation, and where appropriate the use of sustainable drainage systems
 - F. The efficient use of land, including higher densities where development is close to key transport nodes
 - G. The incorporation and enhancement of existing natural heritage features
 - H. The incorporation of mitigation measures that improve and maintain air quality
- 1.65 The LDP Strategy seeks to ensure that sustainable places are created that are socially cohesive, enhance quality of life, meet the needs of current and future residents and reflect the role and function of settlements. The promotion of good design, sustainable transport, resources efficiency and the enhancement of natural heritage will contribute to developments that encourage a sense of place and identity, whilst reflecting local distinctiveness.

For Retail Policy, please see the separate Planning Statement submitted with this application.

6. Scheme Design

6.1. Design Development

Taking account of the known constraints, a number of site layouts were explored at the early design stage. The existing site access and egress is established and has been subject to a number of upgrades and highways modifications in recent years. Given its proximity to the Petrol Filling Station (PFS) and junctions opposite, the strategy from the outset has been to retain the access and egress as existing.

The existing culvert running under the site and Co-op site has a notional easement running along its length. If the Co-op is demolished, access for maintenance to the culvert should be retained as much as possible, therefore new construction over the top should be avoided. Options to divert this watercourse and turn it into an open drainage basin were explored but ruled out on the basis that the works would not be necessary. A water main also runs parallel to the southern perimeter of the site restricting new development close to the boundary.

On the following page, four of the main scheme layouts produced at the feasibility stage can be seen. The first of which would, at face value, have been the ideal layout due to the prominence of the storefront onto the main road, however restricted site width and the aforementioned existing water culvert unfortunately ruled it unfeasible. Vehicle access just isn't possible with the store in this orientation. Mirroring the store in this orientation is also unfeasible due to the section of site behind the PFS being cut off from the remainder of the site.

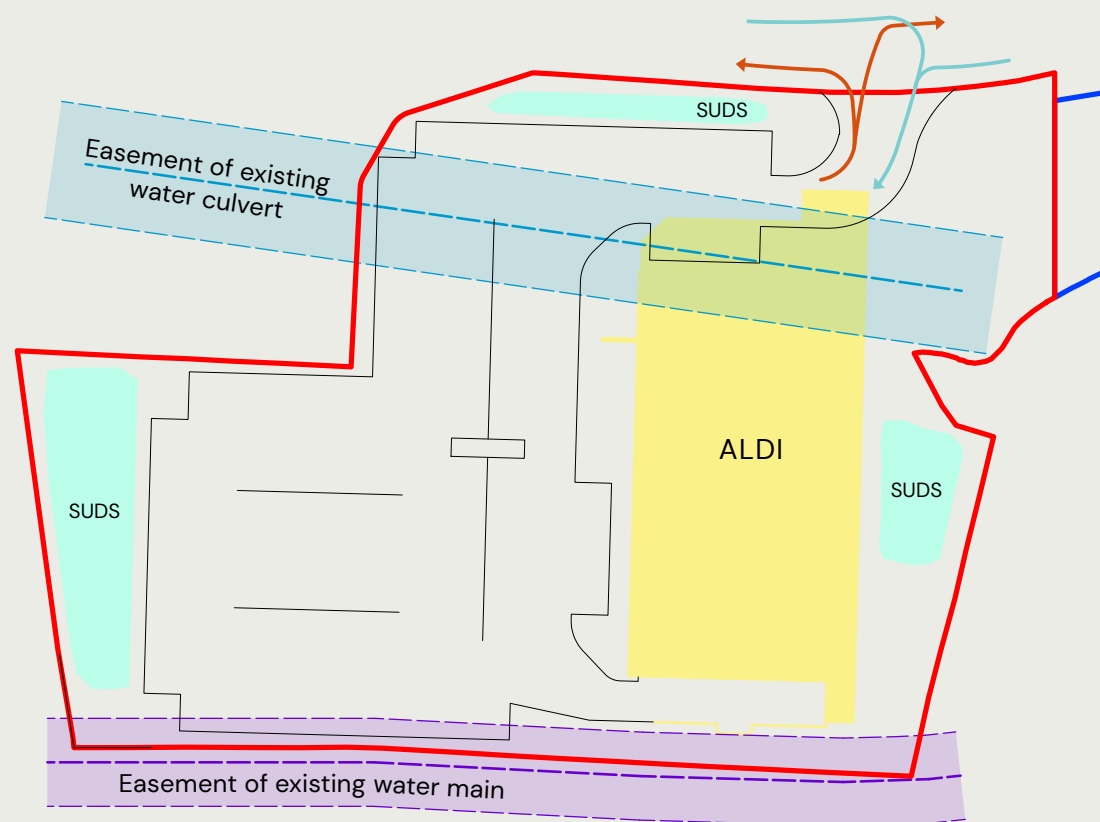
The second alternate site option allowed for these constraints, particularly regarding the water culvert easement, to be avoided. The parking flow seemed to work well, however the storefront now sat tucked into the corner of the L-shaped site, and the PFS adjacent to site would obscure the majority of the store on approach. Servicing of the store would require the HGV to undertake a reversing manoeuvre within the customer car park which increases risk and therefore should be avoided where possible.

In option three, this was ameliorated using a different store layout that saw the service area shifted toward the obscured west edge, with the storefront remaining visible from the main road and site entrance. This option appeared to satisfy the main site constraints and was the one chosen to be progressed for planning.

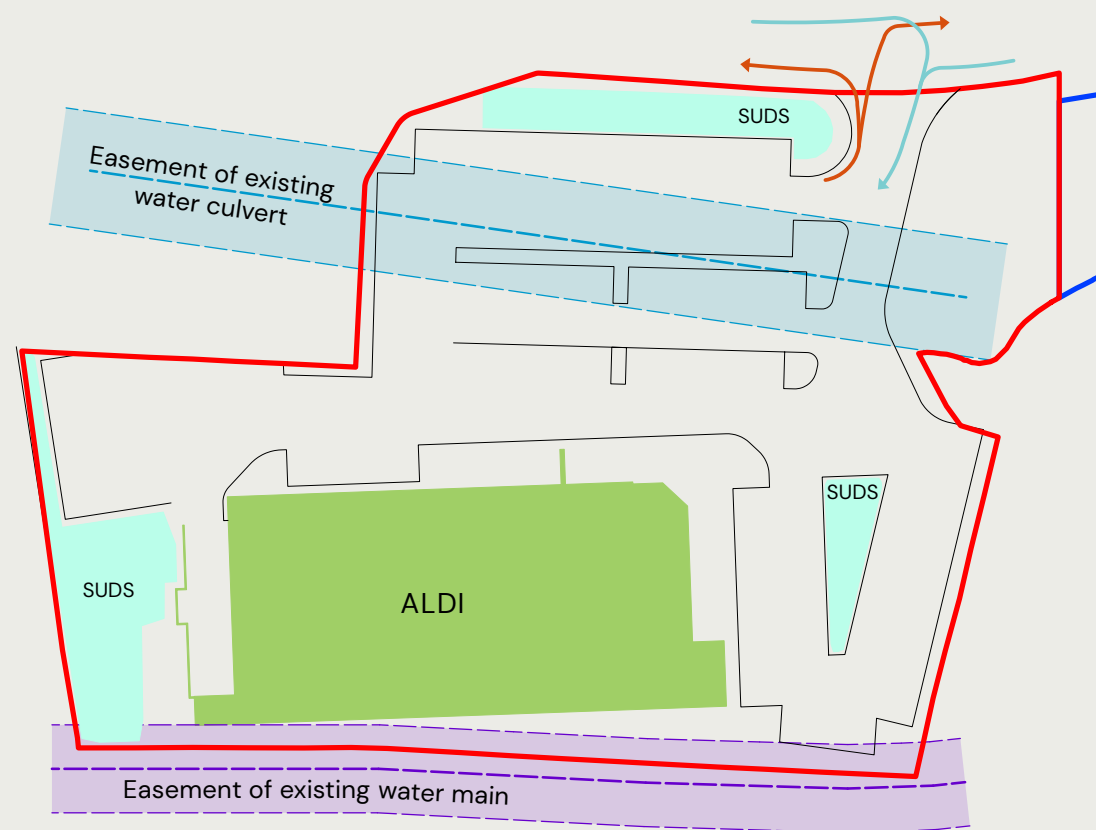
In the fourth and final alternate site option, the store was shifted to the south-east corner in order to retain visibility from the road. The pedestrian access worked well and parking flowed nicely, however the service area unfortunately became more prominently in view from the approach than the storefront entrance. This option also caused conflict between customers and service vehicles.

The resulting scheme design that can be seen on page 13 progressed from layout option three in order to retain the best compromise between avoiding easements, providing safe and easy pedestrian and vehicle access and, importantly, keeping a good visibility from the approach and therefore maintaining a strong relationship with the neighbouring amenities on Mafon Road. The service area remains tucked in the optimal location behind the PFS, to allow non-customer related activity to be obscured from public view. Please see section 6.4 – 'Layout and Site Access' for further details.

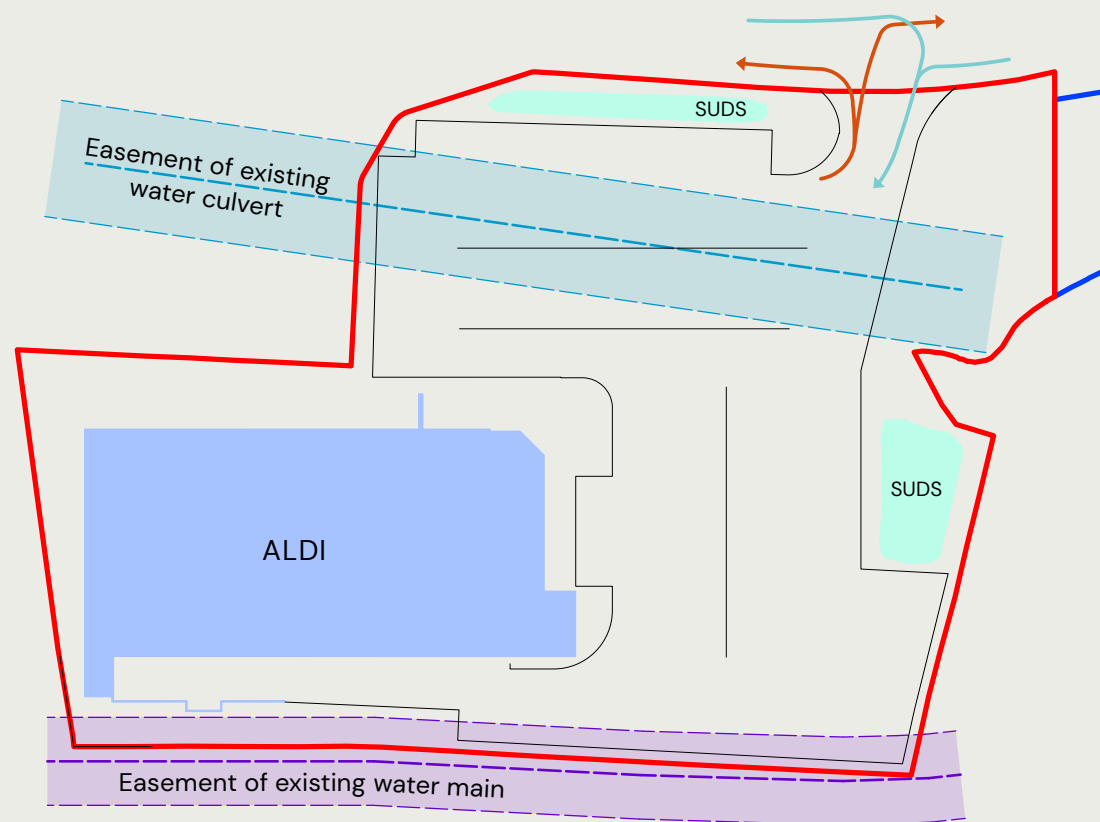
Alternate Site Option 1



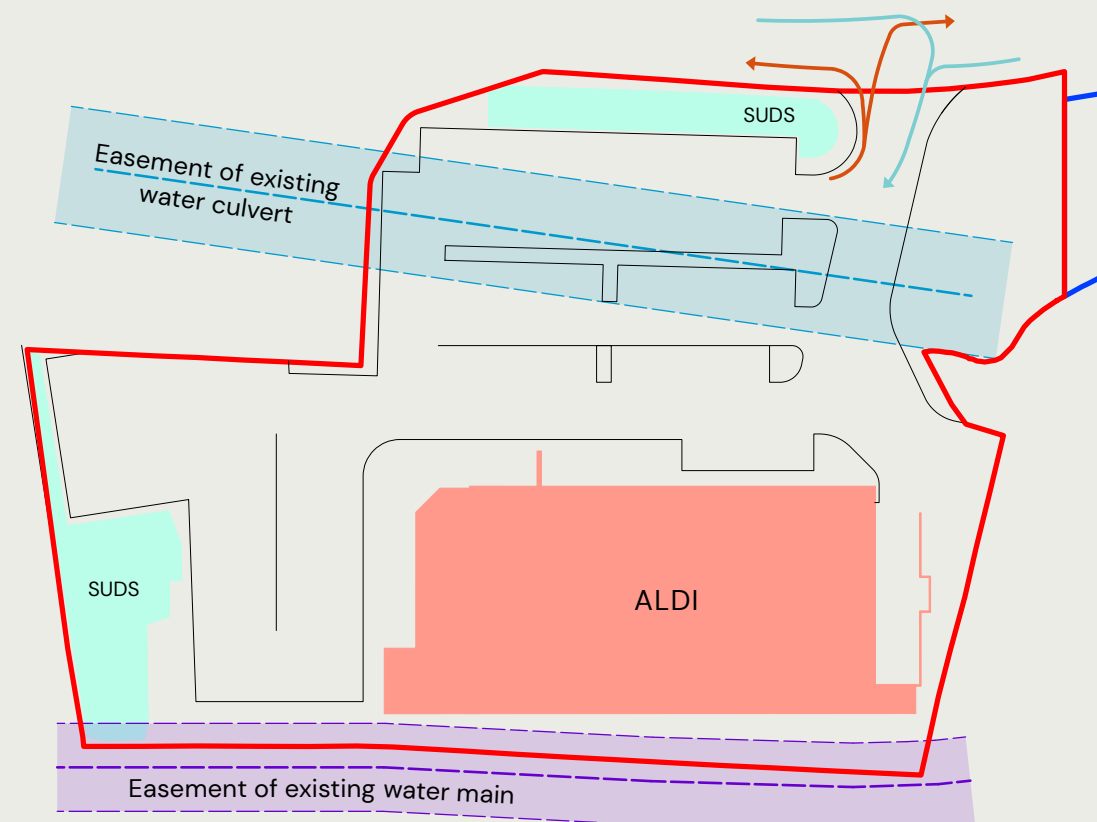
Alternate Site Option 3



Alternate Site Option 2



Alternate Site Option 4

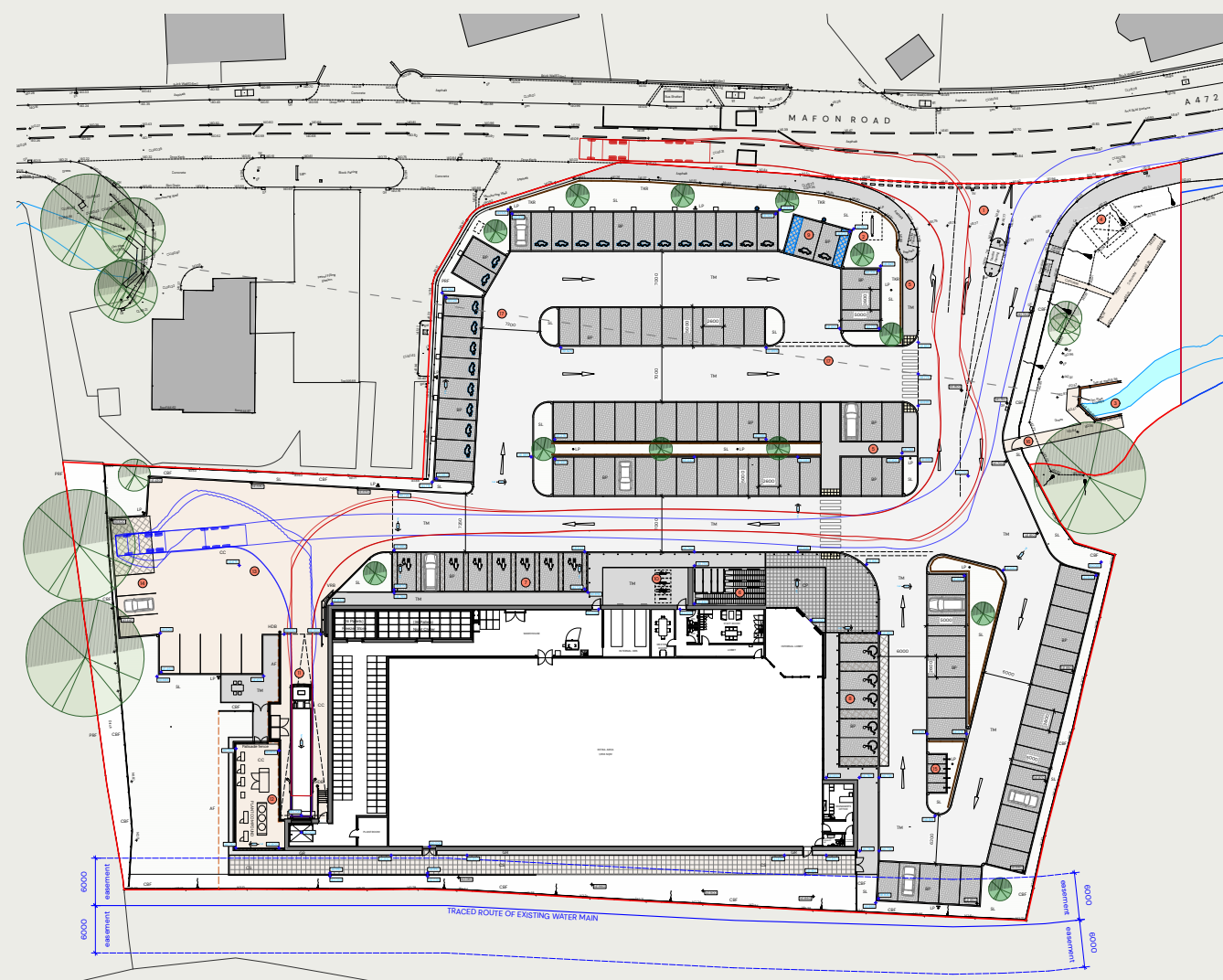


6.2. Scheme Proposal

The proposal seeks planning permission for a new single storey Aldi food store with associated customer parking. The new store will have a GIA of approximately 1,910m², with a GEA of approximately 2,000m².

6.3. Parking Provision

The scheme will provide 120no. car park spaces including 5no. accessible spaces for disabled persons only, 8no. parent & child spaces, 8no. standard bays designated for employee use, & 4no. bicycle hoops for secure cycle parking for up to 8no. bicycles. The site will also have 4no. active electric vehicle charging points, with the provision made for an additional 20no. spaces in the future.



Proposed Site Plan - Planning (not to scale).