

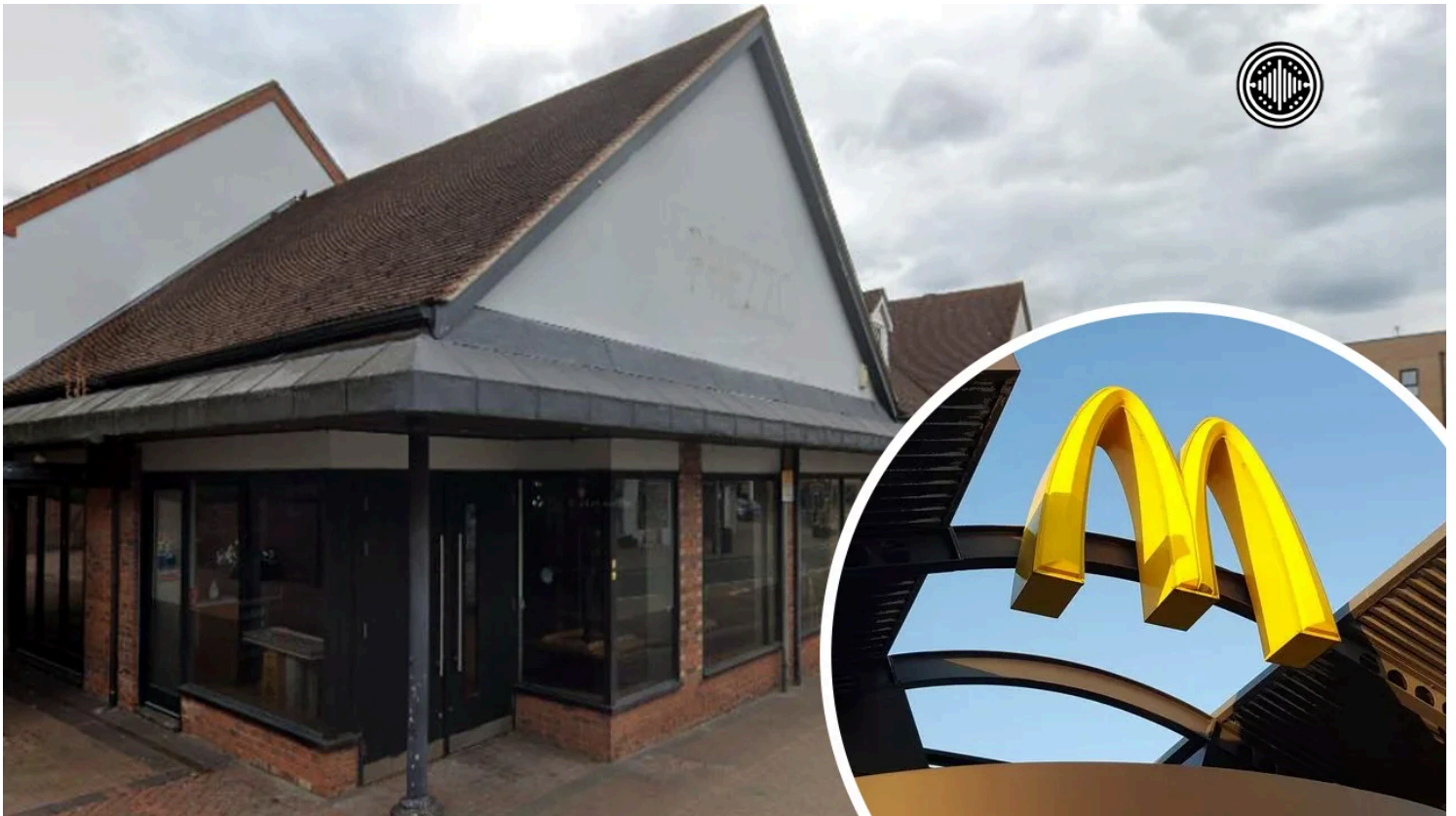
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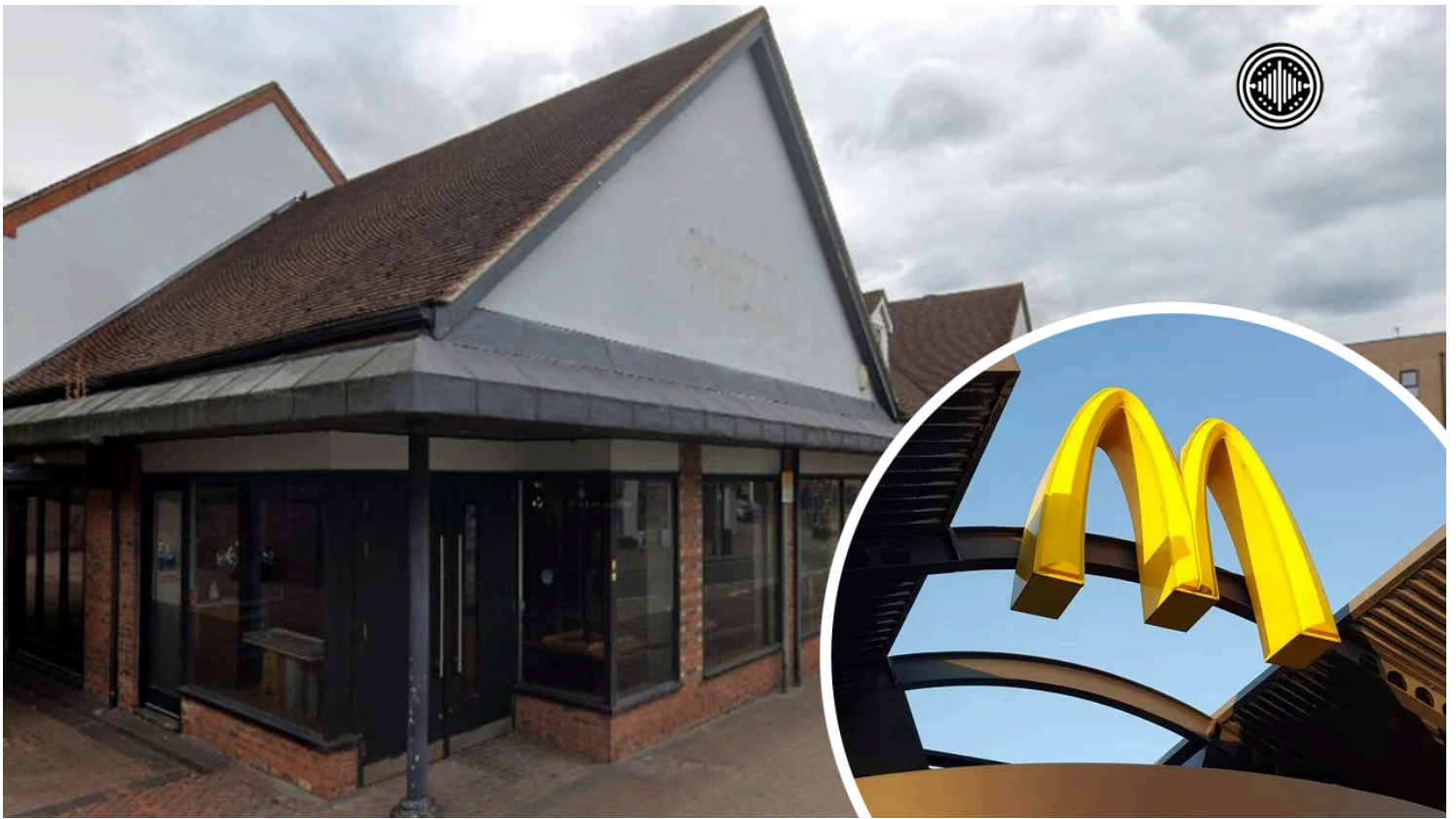
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## New McDonald's Set to Open on Wickford High Street in July 2025

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— Categories: Real Estate





Wickford High Street is gearing up for a fresh addition as McDonald's prepares to open its first restaurant in the town this month. The fast-food giant confirmed earlier this year that the new venue, located in the former Prezzo unit, will welcome customers in late July 2025. Bold signage now adorns the site, proclaiming: "Hello Wickford High Street. Your new McDonald's is coming soon."

The move follows nearly a year of planning, with McDonald's securing approval to transform the vacant Prezzo restaurant, which closed in 2023 as part of the Italian chain's decision to shutter 46 UK locations. The empty unit, a lingering reminder of the economic challenges faced by high street businesses, will now be revitalised, bringing new life to the area. David Harrison, leader of Wickford Independents, expressed cautious optimism about the development in a recent interview with *Echo News*, stating, "To fill up a space, especially the large space left by Prezzo, is a bonus, to bring another national name into the town. As long as they keep it tidy and we don't get a lot of rubbish thrown around, I do think people will love it."

McDonald's launched recruitment in May to staff the new branch, with adverts suggesting a late-July 2025 opening; new crew members are now training at nearby Basildon sites. These positions have now been filled, and new staff are undergoing training at nearby McDonald's locations in Basildon, including Festival Leisure Park and Eastgate Shopping

Centre. According to job adverts on the McDonald's careers website, the company is committed to fostering a "safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace" while offering opportunities for career development.

Located at 54 High Street, the Wickford branch will be the town's first McDonald's and approximately three miles from the nearest outlet at Mayflower Retail Park. This proximity has sparked some debate, with concerns raised about the saturation of fast-food outlets in the Basildon borough, which will now host eight McDonald's restaurants if all proposed plans proceed. Critics warn that the growing number of fast-food outlets in Basildon borough could strain infrastructure and public health, though no formal objections have been submitted against the Wickford location.

The Wickford opening forms part of McDonald's UK and Ireland's expansion, backed by a £1 billion investment to open over 200 new restaurants across four years. The Wickford branch is expected to draw both residents and visitors, boosting foot traffic on the high street. However, some locals remain wary, citing the need for diverse businesses to maintain the town's character. A local commenter on Reddit observed: "It's great to see investment, but another fast-food joint doesn't exactly scream variety."

While the current Labour government has championed high street regeneration, its broader economic policies have drawn scrutiny for potentially stifling small business growth, which could limit the diversity of new shops in towns like Wickford. Nevertheless, the arrival of McDonald's signals a practical step toward filling vacant units, a persistent issue for many UK high streets. Whether this sparks further investment or fuels concerns about fast-food dominance remains to be seen.

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