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Supermarket chain said to be dropping small Bfresh stores planned for Philly

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by [MICHAEL KLEIN / STAFF](#)

Everything Fresh store, 1222 Walnut Street.



by [Jacob Adelman](#), Staff Writer

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Dutch supermarket giant Ahold Delhaize, whose chains include Giant, Food Lion, and Stop & Shop, is suspending its Bfresh brand of smaller-format, urban-focused grocery stores, which it had planned to open in Philadelphia as part of a larger national rollout.

The company still plans to use the Philadelphia real estate that it secured to accommodate Bfresh stores but is rethinking its concept for those locations, two people with knowledge of the company's plans, but who were not authorized to discuss them publicly, said Monday.

The 3,700-square-foot Everything Fresh grocery store at 1222 Walnut St., which Ahold's Fresh Formats LLC division opened in December 2014 as a prototype for the smaller-format stores, plans to close Saturday, Ahold spokesman Chris Brand said in an email Monday.

"The decision to close the Everything Fresh store was a difficult one, but the location was always considered a learning lab and we intend to use those learnings going forward," he said.

The company said last year that it planned to open a Bfresh store on the ground floor of the Abbotts Square condominium building

(http://www.philly.com/philly/business/real_estate/commercial/20160318_Fresh_Format_store_to_open_in_Al at Second and South Streets. It was also said to have leases for Bfresh brand stores (http://www.philly.com/philly/business/real_estate/commercial/Two-more-central-Philly-Bfresh-stores-planned-by-parent-of-Giant-markets.html) on the ground floor of the Bloc23 condominiums being built at 2300 Bainbridge Street and at the former Eastern Mountain Sports location at 3401 Chestnut St. in University City.

Brand said options for those sites are being evaluated.

Boston-based WCVB-5 reported Saturday that the company's Bfresh store in Brighton, Mass., is also set to close (<http://www.wcvb.com/article/popular-boston-market-closing-over-thanksgiving-weekend/13800535>) this weekend. The Brighton shop is one of three existing Bfresh locations, all of which are in the Boston area.

Plans are in the works to integrate the Bfresh brand there with Ahold's Stop & Shop banner, the station reported.

Robert Gorland, a supermarket-site-selection specialist with Matthew P. Casey & Associates of Rahway, N.J., said in an interview that the company appears to be reverting to its established brand in New England because of the expense and organizational challenges of establishing a new one.

"It's costly to start a new brand in a very competitive environment," said Gorland, who declined to speculate on what the company's approach may be in Philadelphia, where Stop & Shop is not a recognized name.

Ahold opened its first Bfresh store in Allston, Mass., in September 2015. A Fairfield, Conn., shop closed in April 2016, less than six months after opening.

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