

Traders back plans for cinema complex

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A MULTI-million pound proposal for a three-screen cinema and nightclub at an empty mill in Stroud could be ready by next spring if conversion plans are approved.

Stroud businesses are delighted with the plans which could create more than 100 jobs.

The scheme involves converting the old Hill Paul factory near Stroud's railway station, adding a rooftop restaurant and wine bar with panoramic views of Stroud.

Leisure firm KPA, which runs a Bristol nightclub, says Stroud desperately needs a cinema and it hopes to get planning permission as soon as possible.

Company spokesman Sean MacDonald said he became involved after spotting the building from a train.

"Stroud's always been neglected by the leisure industry and I can't think why," he said.

"The main thing is to bring something back into Stroud.

"Now our offer for the building has been accepted and

by James Mackintosh

we are working on a deadline of early September to get planning permission."

And Stroud district planning officer Barry Wyatt has given his support, explaining that although the prominent building is in a conservation area, it is not listed and the cinema scheme is in line with the local plan.

"The building needs a viable use fairly quickly as it is falling into disrepair," he said.

"Of course we can't make any exceptions to planning regulations but I don't see any problems with a cinema - although there may be some local concerns about a nightclub because of the noise," he said.

John Davis, president of Stroud's Chamber of Trade, hailed the plans as a "golden opportunity" for the company.

"I think it is absolutely brilliant - it is great news for the town," he said.

A cinema is exactly what the town needs and a nightclub can only be good news both for the town and the building."