

Landmark may be demolished

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by Jo Barber

OUTRAGED conservationists say they are horrified by a shock plan to knock down a landmark building in the middle of Stroud.

Leading members of Stroud Civic Society said the historic Hill Paul property near Stroud Railway Station must be saved, although district planning chiefs say there are concerns over the safety of the old clothing factory.

The application to demolish Hill Paul – a towering red brick building at Cheapside – has been submitted to Stroud District Council by its owners Harper Homes.

But the loss of the property would be a tragedy for Stroud, said Louise Townsend, secretary of Stroud Civic Society.

“I think it would be an absolute disgrace. It would just be a tragedy.

“Hill Paul is part of Stroud’s history. It would be such a waste.

“When buildings of that quality are lost, we never get anything of such fine design or good materials in their place.”

Jenny Bailey, vice-chairman of the Civic Society, agreed.

She is planning to write to the district council in protest of the plan.

She said: “I think it would be a great loss to Stroud.

“It is a most prominent building and part of our industrial heritage.”

Hill Paul was cordoned off last autumn after dangerous masonry was discovered.

Building control staff said at the time that loose stonework 15 metres above the ground weighing about 150kgs was extremely dangerous.

Coun Brian Addle, chairman of Stroud District Council’s planning executive sub-committee, said he was not surprised by the demolition application.

“Hill Paul has caused a lot of concern from the safety point of view lately,” he said.

It is Coun Addle’s committee which will have to make up its mind about whether or not to allow the demolition, at one of its future monthly meetings.

No-one from Harper Homes was available for comment at time of going to press.