

# Developer set to make offer to save Hill Paul

13-12-01

**THE group behind a bid to save Stroud's historic Hill Paul building from demolition claim they have found a developer prepared to spend £1.1 million converting the former clothing factory into flats.**

Members of Hill Paul Regeneration Limited say they have been talking with a mystery investor months and have now come up with a bid to buy the site from owners Saville Construction.

The building firm, which trades under the name Harper Homes, originally gave the regeneration group a year's stay on demolishing the Hill Paul site to allow them time to raise the £1.3 million needed to buy the site.

With the 12-month deadline January 8 next year, campaigners hope the offer will be accepted.

"At this stage we are not prepared to say who the developer is, what with negotiations things are rather delicate," said Irene Hopwood, spokeswoman for Hill Paul Regeneration Limited.

"We can say he is from the North of England, he's done lots of similar kinds of work.

"What I hope is that Harper Homes isn't going to stick out for their £1.3 million."

According to Mrs Hopwood the latest developer to put in an offer for the Hill Paul building shares the regeneration group's vision for its future development.

**by Matthew Ford**

matthew.ford@gloscitizen.co.uk

"He wants to convert it into flats with housing on the rest of the site. As well as regenerating the building it will regenerate that part of Stroud, which is dead at the moment.

"The main thing is the developer is ready to start straight away. He's committed, and he actually likes the building.

"There are plans to demolish the building on January 8, but it's not the last throw of the dice until then. We shall be there, we are very determined."

Malcolm Bushell, a director at Saville Construction, was pleased with recent developments but said no one had been in touch with him with an offer for the Hill Paul site.

"The Hill Paul group already paid £145,000 so they are almost there, that's good news. We have always said if you want to find other developers, we don't mind who completes the contract. But nobody has been in touch with an offer as far as I know," he said.

Should no offer be forthcoming between now and January 8, Mr Bushell said his company would have no choice but to press on with plans to demolish the building.

"We have given them a year to try and prove it is a viable economic project. If they can't make it work, no developer will and it is a dangerous building," he said. "We'd press ahead and bring it down."

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