



Project officer Scott Curtis with the model of the proposed building to house the Orpheus mosaic pavement. Inset: Close-up of the intricate mosaic.

Photo: Richard Besent



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PAVING WAY FOR SHOW

PLANS to finally put the replica of the world-famous Woodchester Roman Pavement on permanent display have been unveiled.

A consortium of local councils and traders yesterday announced an ambitious £5.4 million bid for Millennium Commission funds to house the replica in Stroud.

Almshouses

A specially-designed building would also house an entertainment and business centre and recreate an historic row of almshouses lost to development in the 1930s.

The scheme's backers hope the replica will attract visitors from all over the world.

"This will be a major visitor attraction for Stroud," said Councillor Roger Sanders, chairman of the district's environment committee.

"It solves the problem of housing the replica and recreates an attractive part of Stroud that should never have been lost."

The mosaic, the largest in northern



■ The original almshouses in Church Street, Stroud. ★

Europe, depicts Orpheus charming the beasts with his lyre, and was discovered more than 200 years ago in a graveyard at Woodchester.

Further excavations uncovered a palatial Roman villa believed to be the residence of the governor of the Roman province which had its capital in Cirencester.

However, despite being regarded as one of the most important Roman discoveries in Europe, the villa has remained largely buried for fears of

damage by the elements.

The replica was painstakingly created by Bristol-based brothers John and Bob Woodward.

It has not been put on display locally since the 1980s and there were fears it may end up abroad unless a suitable site could be found.

Its proposed new home in Church Street is currently a car park. The exhibition would take the theme of Orpheus in the underworld, siting the replica underground.

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