

'BUYER FOR HILL PAUL'

A POSSIBLE buyer for the controversial Hill Paul building in Stroud has stepped into the limelight.

The potential saviour of the derelict old factory at Cheapside is David Crownshaw, boss of well known locally-based company Snow Business.

Mr Crownshaw tried to acquire Hill Paul three years ago when the asking price was just £195,000, he revealed at the weekend.

But at that time his offer was made just a few days after the present owners Harper Homes had secured the deal.

Now Mr Crownshaw, whose artificial snow-making firm has just enjoyed a record year, says he will try again.

by Jo Barber



"It would be a nice place to work and to have as our main office," he said.

"The owners are going to let me know on Tuesday how much they would be looking for."

The news delighted members of the Hill Paul Regeneration Group, said acting secretary Ron Birch.

"The people of Stroud could receive a very special Christmas present this year if Mr Crownshaw bought Hill Paul and thoroughly renovated it to save it from demolition," said Mr Birch.

Hill Paul has suffered a chequered history since it closed as a clothing

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Ron Birch, acting secretary of the Hill Paul Regeneration Group

manufacturer. It has lain empty for years and has suffered so much dereliction that Harper believe it is unsafe and has gained planning permission to knock it down.

But the regeneration group is fight-

ing the demolition because it believes Hill Paul is a landmark and part of Stroud's industrial history.

Time is however short, since Mr Crownshaw is already negotiating to buy another former Stroud mill into which he could move his successful Nailsworth-based company instead.

"We have a lot of people who work for us in London," he said.

"Hill Paul is easy to find for overseas visitors too as it is right by the railway station. We might have our offices on the top floor, a free gallery for Stroud artists in the middle and a wine bar, cafe restaurant on the ground floor."

Mr Crownshaw's firm recently supplied snow for the current box office hit *102 Dalmatians*.

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