

Campaigners hit first target

22/1101

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The group had collected the cash ahead of schedule, their acting secretary Juliet Shipman said at the weekend.

But there was still a tremendous way to go, she warned, if the newly-formed Hill Paul Regeneration Ltd was to find the rest of the £1.3 million purchase price within the year.

It was just a fortnight ago today that the group clinched an 11th-hour deal to buy Hill Paul and halted plans by its owners Harper

by Jo Barber

Homes to knock it down.

The group exchanged contracts on the purchase, but now has a year to come up with the money before the deal is completed.

They simply wanted to save the building at Cheapside for the people of Stroud, Mrs Shipman went on.

"It is the most prominent building in the area and steeped in the industrial history of Stroud," she said.

The group is now considering setting up a community development trust to redevelop Hill Paul and the former builders' merchants site next door, which they own.

"We will be looking at future plans for the building and surrounding site, which will complement the existing facilities of Stroud while providing housing, employment and recreation," added Mrs Shipman.

Meanwhile the regeneration group has set up a contact and donation point in an old shop at the top of Stroud High Street.

An "offers of assistance" book has been opened there and the group hopes to mount a display about Hill Paul soon.

The shop, that will be opened on Fridays and Saturdays at least for the next month, was made possible thanks to the Painswick Inn Project, a Stroud charity which provides training and housing for young people.

The project owns the shop and has already developed two flats above.

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