

Flats at a discount for Hill Paul backers

10802

Picture: Paul Nicholls C222061-PN40



■ **IN PROGRESS:** The work is in hand to convert the old Hill Paul clothing factory to flats.

THE end is in sight after years of uncertainty about the future of the long-abandoned Hill Paul factory building in Stroud.

Its new owner, Cheltenham based developer Julian Magee has told *The Citizen* he is grateful to the protestors who campaigned to save the landmark building from demolition.

"Thank you to them for saving the building for me, because without them the building wouldn't be there," said Mr Magee, managing director of Chelbury Homes.

Members the Hill Paul Regeneration Company Ltd are were due to meet today to consider Mr Magee's offer for them to buy flats in the Hill Paul at discount.

Hill Paul company shareholder Pat Hollands said: "The important thing is the building has been saved."

Mrs Hollands, from Haresfield, said she and her husband knew it was risky when they originally contributed to the fighting fund to save the Victorian factory building.

"We would like our money back, but we are not going to be insolvent because we are not getting it back," she said.

During the Christmas and New Year holiday of 2000-01 protesters stopped demolition work by the building's former owners because they believed the old clothing factory was a key part of Stroud's industrial heritage.

by Jo Barber

Stroud reporter

reporter@stroudcitizen.fsworld.co.uk



Police were called after one of their supporters staged a rooftop protest to halt the proposed demolition work.

But now Chelbury has stepped in with the scheme for converting Hill Paul into 36 flats and for two more homes in an outbuilding.

The firm has also submitted four new planning applications to Stroud District Council for demolishing the adjacent old builders' merchants showroom and sheds. The proposals would also change the "corner building" into residential use.

Mr Magee said: "We have applied to put four penthouses, on two levels, on top of Hill Paul.

"The buzz for me will be to see the finished building rise from the ashes. Hopefully we can take the citizens of Stroud with us and the councils so that we are all working for the regeneration of the town."

Fellow shareholder Paul Griffiths said he and his mother put £8,000 altogether into saving Hill Paul. Mr Griffiths, a cabinet maker and farmer from Edge, said he thought Mr Magee's offer of a flat, or part of one, was fair.

"The initial thing was to save the building," said Mr Griffiths. "I don't think we could have asked for much more."