

# MSP takes fight to save city landmark to Holyrood

Egyptian Halls owner is asking for more cash

By CAROLINE WILSON

A CAMPAIGN to save a historic Glasgow building from demolition has reached the Scottish Parliament.

Green MSP Patrick Harvie has lodged a motion calling on Glasgow City Council to protect the Grade A listed Egyptian Halls after the owner of the Alexander "Greek" Thomson building applied for planning permission to demolish it.

The motion calls on the council to refuse the application and back plans to transform the building into a hotel.

**City council must redouble efforts to work with the owners**

Owner Derek Souter, boss of Union Street Properties, says he has no option but to have the property knocked down because renovation costs have risen to £20million.

The halls have been described by Neil Baxter, secretary of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, as "the finest surviving example of an Alexander Thomson commercial building".

Mr Harvie said: "This magnificent building has been empty for too



■ Derek Souter has applied for permission to demolish the Egyptian Halls in Union Street, while Patrick Harvie, right, wants to see the building protected

long, but that is no excuse for demolition.

"Thomson has left a legacy to Glasgow at least as influential as Charles Rennie Mackintosh's and we owe the Alexander Thomson Society a debt of gratitude for their tireless work to protect this legacy.

"Glasgow City Council must reject this application to demolish the Egyptian Halls and

must redouble efforts to work with the owners to ensure the property is not just kept standing and derelict but is instead fully and sensitively restored."

Campaigns to protect the Egyptian Halls and other Thomson buildings in Glasgow have been led by the Alexander Thomson Society. The building, opposite the side entrance to Central Station, is

regarded as one of the finest in Glasgow.

However it has been lying empty for around 30 years and is in poor condition.

Mr Souter wanted to restore it to its former glory and create a 250-bedroom hotel along with 200 jobs. He believes it would help spark the regeneration of the area bringing in millions of pounds of investment.



Union Street Properties and sister company Union Street Investments have so far spent £5million on the project and Mr Souter says they are willing to invest a further £12m.

The city council agreed a £1m grant and Historic Scotland a

grant of around £1.65m but Mr Souter says he needs the Scottish Government to provide an extra £2.35m.

Historic Scotland insists it will not be able to provide the project with any more cash.

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## Autumn start for university study course

UNIVERSITY of the West of Scotland is to introduce its Executive MBA to Lanarkshire from this September.

The EMBA, currently delivered at the university's Management Centre in Ayr, has been running for over 10 years.

Being introduced to the Hamilton Campus, it is studied online with monthly workshops.

An EMBA information session will be held at the Hamilton Campus, Caird Building on Tuesday June 7 at 6pm.

For more call 01292 886400, e-mail managementcentre@uws.ac.uk, or visit www.uws.ac.uk/managementcentre



## Town centre car park for Renfrew

RENFREWSHIRE Council is to begin the latest stage of its multi-million pound regeneration programme of Renfrew town centre.

A new £250,000 car park will be built in the town centre on the site of the former telephone exchange in Dunlop Street.

It is planned to be in place to complement the reopening in November of Renfrew Town Hall following its £5.2 million refurbishment.

Contractor JCY Ltd will carry out the first phase of work which involves demolishing the old telephone exchange.

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# Mum Jennie banks £500 boost for son's school

By EWAN FERGUS

A PAISLEY mum has helped her son's school by successfully appealing for a cash grant.

Clydesdale bank worker Jennie O'Neill secured £500 from her employer's staff volunteer grants programme.

Mum-of-three Jennie applied for a grant earlier this year to provide much needed funds for new state-of-the-art sensory equipment at St Paul's Primary School

in Foxbar. Jennie, 33, is a banking advisor at the Clydesdale's Hairst Street branch in Renfrew and her eight-year-old son Lee is a pupil at the school.

St Paul's is a mainstream school but is one of only two schools in the area to have its own communication disorder unit for children with additional support needs.

Jennie said: "I jumped at the chance when I found out I could apply for a staff

volunteer grant as I have very close links with St Paul's and was delighted that I could help them continue the great work they do for the children.

"It's reassuring to know that pupils at the school, including my son Lee, will really benefit from the new equipment."

The £500 from the bank Jennie will go towards paying for a multi-sensory box containing equipment such

as fibre optics and bubble tubes designed to stimulate the senses and create a feeling of calmness and tranquillity.

The box is designed to provide stimulation from a variety of sights, sounds and textures and help children to relax and become more alert and responsive.

Clydesdale Bank's staff volunteer grants programme funds charitable initiatives that its employees are

passionate about. They can apply for a grant of up to £500 if they are involved with local community groups in their own time.

This includes local charities or not-for-profit organisations such as schools, Brownies, Scouts or sports groups.

The money helps the groups continue their work in the local community.

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