Subscribe

View offer

You are reading this article for free. Enjoy unlimited articles, free for one month.

## Glasgow's Egyptian Halls will crumble if advertising banned, says owner

Mark Smith Saturday August 05 2023, 12.01am, The Times Retail



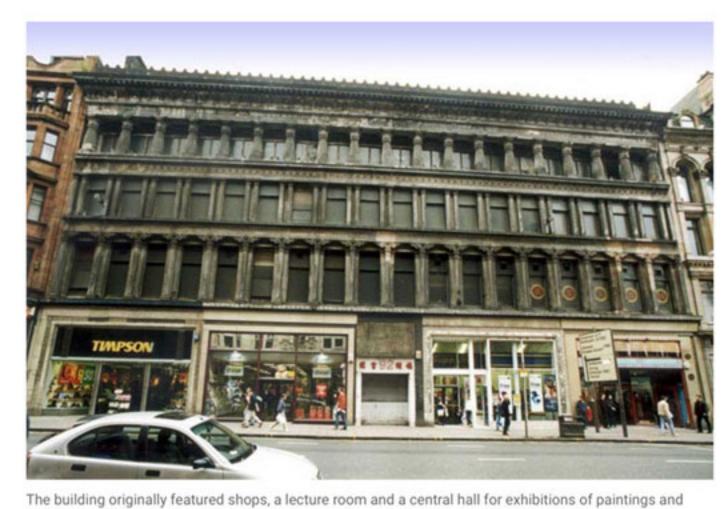
The Egyptian Halls, designed by the renowned Victorian architect Alexander "Greek" Thomson, has been under wraps after falling into disrepair ALAMY

Share

Income from advertising on scaffolding at the Egyptian Halls in Glasgow is paying towards the building's upkeep, its owner has said after the city council served a stopping order.

The Egyptian Halls is one of the finest achievements of Alexander "Greek" Thomson, the Victorian architect who was born in Stirlingshire.

Derek Souter of Union Street Properties acquired a stake in the building in 2000. He said the action by the council was unfair and that the income paid for the scaffolding and maintenance. If he does not defend the action the council will be able to obtain a decree to have the ads removed.



antiquities

"An upgrade programme has to be funded via ad hoarding income or grant funding," Souter told The Times. "Given pressure on the public purse I would have thought a source of long-term income should not be dispensed with too hastily." He is seeking legal advice.

Paul Sweeney, a Labour MSP and a trustee of the Scottish Civic Trust working group, said time was of the essence for Souter and the council to find a solution. He said that if advertising revenue from was supporting basic maintenance it might be premature to insist on removal.

Souter has until August 14 to go to the Court of Session. The council issued the order in July after Souter was refused planning permission for the adverts.



**NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS** 

Souter would not confirm the amount of advertising revenue but said it was exaggerated. Adverts on the General Post Office in George Square are thought to have made the owners £70,000 a month but Souter said his earned less than that a year.

The council said it was impossible to comment on Souter's claim without detail. It said: "The bottom line is that there is no planning permission in place to display the advertising as confirmed by the Court of Session. It is the responsibility of owners of historic - or otherwise - buildings to maintain their property."

creative business plan for the building but that the Egyptian Halls have been the biggest barrier to the council improving Union Street. She said the stopping order meant there was finally movement.

Susan Aitken, the council leader, said she was keen to work with anyone with a

engineers and a feasibility study for renovation works have demonstrated that the category A-listed building is still salvageable.

Sweeney said: "Recent structural investigations by conservation-accredited



TIMES NEWSPAPERS

"Time is now of the essence for the current owners and Glasgow city council to find a way to cut through the long-term impasse, particularly as I understand that there is a commercial interest by a third party in taking such a project forward.

"If it can be evidenced that revenue from the advertising scaffolding is supporting basic maintenance costs . . . then it may be premature to insist on its

removal until an approved plan for restoration of the building is in place."