

NEWSBRIEF

Taste of China at city travel show

VISITORS to a popular travel show will be able to book themselves a golden holiday when it arrives at Glasgow's SECC.

China National Tourist Office, exhibiting for the first time at the Holiday and Travel Show, expects a surge of interest ahead of the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

The stand, at the SECC from January 20-22, will also feature Wendy Wu Tours, which highlights destinations such as Shanghai and Tibet

Solo London show for Glasgow artist

AN award-winning Glasgow artist is celebrating the launch of her solo exhibition in London.

Sue Biazotti, from the west end, won last year's Aspect Prize which is one of Scotland's biggest painting accolades.

The 42-year-old scooped £10,000 and a chance to hold a major exhibition of her work in London's Adam Gallery.

The prize winner's show will run from today until January 17.

New deal will seal £3.8m revamp of Egyptian Halls

■ Deadlock broken to help restore 'Greek' Thomson's architectural gem

By GERRY BRAIDEN

THE future of one of Glasgow's architectural gems looks likely to be resolved by the end of the month.

And the revamp of the A-listed Egyptian Halls - which will be in excess of £3.8million - could at last breathe much-needed life into Union Street.

There have been complaints the area has become rundown. It is now lined with empty units and To Let signs.

It is understood a deal will be struck this month that will see the halls - opposite Central Station - come under sole ownership for the first time in 70 years.

Dundee-based Union Street Developments is finalising proposals to transform the neglected Alexander 'Greek' Thomson masterpiece and have overcome the funding hurdle that has held the project up for years.

The company has also snapped up the remaining 47% of the property owned by the council for the last three years.



■ Alex Mosson said a deal for the Egyptian Halls would help bring back life to Union Street

Once a deal is reached, the building will then be marketed.

A new planning application to repair the building, including replacing windows and floors, putting in fire escapes and removing decades of grime from the stonework, has been submitted ahead of the company finalising its proposals.

Three years ago the council stepped in to snap up half the property to prevent the redevelopment collapsing when USD failed to come up with the required funding.

The four-storey, 27,000sq ft hall was completed in 1873. Besides providing a fine shopping area in the city cen-

tre, it was also used for concerts and art exhibitions.

In 2002, Mitchell's Amusement's was granted permission to take over a section of the building as an arcade. The firm spent £100,000 restoring some of the original internal features, including pillars and cornicing.

In 1999 a more ambitious

project for the property fell through. A £3m refurbishment was proposed as part of Glasgow's celebrations for its year as UK City of Architecture, but the scheme collapsed because of a legal wrangle.

Today, Terence Leventhal, of the Scottish Civic Trust, which includes the Egyptian Halls on its 'at risk' register, said the imminent deal was "great news".

He said: "All too often buildings like this languish because of issues over ownership."

"Anything that brings restoration a step closer has to be welcomed."

Alex Mosson, local councillor and the city's tourism boss, said he was hopeful the deadlock would soon be broken to the benefit of the entire city centre.

He said: "It is such an important building and a revamp would certainly help bring life back to Union Street and benefit the whole city centre."

Union Street Developments refused to comment.

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