

### Remploy staff rethink date of strike action

A STRIKE by disabled workers in Glasgow has been rescheduled for next month as fears remain that a new potential employer could sack the most vulnerable staff.

As reported in the Evening Times, workers at Remploy in Springburn plan to take action at a time when three firms are thought to be eyeing the site.

The strike, originally planned for four days of next week, will now last five days, from Monday, September 3.

The stoppage comes after the Government axed 25 other Remploy plants across the UK, including one in Wishaw, Lanarkshire. The cost-cutting move by the Department of Work and Pensions has triggered widespread criticism.

Workers from the axed plants yesterday occupied the HQ of the firm, in Leicester, with the GMB union saying the action was part of a bid to save jobs.

### BBC sports event in call to honour Olympic helpers



MP Pete Wishart

VOLUNTEERS who helped at the London Olympics should be honoured in a new category in this year's BBC Sports Personality of the Year competition, an MP has said.

The efforts of thousands of 'Games makers' put the 'heart' into the event, according to SNP MP Pete Wishart.

In a letter to BBC director general Mark Thomson, the North Perthshire politician wrote: "I can think of no worthier winner for a team achievement award for 2012 than the Games makers."

### Films set to put dementia care in the spotlight

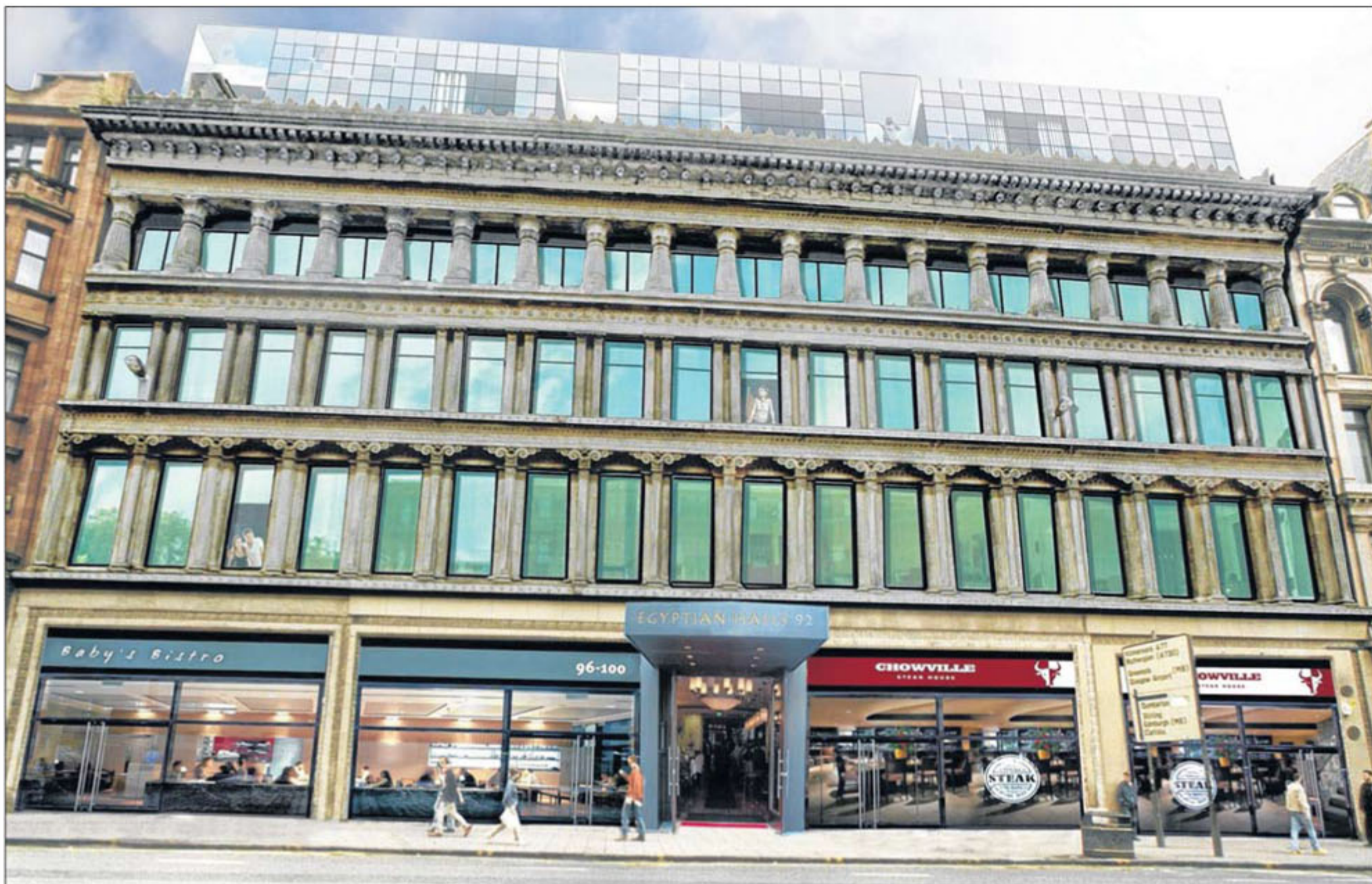
PEOPLE in Scotland are "in the dark" when it comes to caring for those with dementia, according to a private healthcare firm.

A poll for Bupa Care Homes suggests that 29% of Scots do not know the best way to support someone with dementia.

Bupa has now launched a series of films offering advice to people caring for someone with dementia - and have teamed up with choreographer Arlene Phillips, whose father had dementia, to make the films for their Understand Dementia campaign.

Around 800,000 people across the UK have dementia and this is expected to rise to at least one million by 2021.

## EXCLUSIVE: AMBITIOUS BID TO TRANSFORM UNION STREET'S NEGLECTED 'GREEK' THOMSON EGYPTIAN HALLS



Main and above, an artist's impressions of how the hotel in the historic Egyptian Halls in Glasgow's Union Street, below, would look, including the two-storey rooftop extension



# £20M HOTEL THAT COULD REVIVE CITY

By CAROLINE WILSON

THESE are the first pictures of a new £20million hotel which could kick-start the regeneration of a city centre street.

Ambitious plans have been unveiled to transform one of Glasgow's most iconic buildings into a 114-bedroom hotel in Union Street.

The proposals will convert the upper three floors of the Grade A listed Egyptian Halls, built by Alexander 'Greek' Thomson, into a 3-star hotel.

A two-storey rooftop extension will be created for the hotel giving spectacular views across the city. The ground floor and basement of the building will house a combination of bars, restaurants and retail units, across four units.

Significant mezzanine space will be created on the lower floors revealing the original Thomson ceilings and cornicing, which have been hidden for 60 years.

Owners, USP Ltd and USI Ltd, say the project has the

potential to create up to 200 jobs, around 30 apprenticeships and deliver up to £350,000 in business rates annually for the public purse.

Accor Hotels has been named as the hotel franchise and is expected to opt for the mid-range Ibis or Mercure brand, managed by hotel operators Longrose Buccleuch.

The plans are being billed as the "last throw of the dice" for the building, which has been

empty for 32 years and was earmarked for demolition in 2011 because of funding shortages for a previous restoration plan. Thousands backed a campaign and petition to save the halls from the axe.

Owners say the proposals will result in almost the "complete preservation" of the halls. A planning application was lodged yesterday with Glasgow City Council, for the

hotel and listed building consent.

The building is widely recognised as 'Greek' Thomson's finest commercial building. However funding for the project could, once more, prove a stumbling block.

Funding is secure for the hotel however there is a deficit of around £11.4m to refurbish the ground floor, which the owners say will rely on "substantial public subsidy".

Glasgow City Council previously agreed a £1m grant but say there is "no funding" available at present, although it is supportive of the hotel plan. Historic Scotland has previously confirmed a grant of £1.65m.

However the owners, who have invested £6.2m since 1998, are confident grant funding can be secured if planning permission is approved and say the deficit can be reduced to £4.5m through public and private sector collaboration and business rates revenue.

Derek Souter, of USP Ltd, said: "I'm delighted that an application for the 100% preservation of the Egyptian Halls

has now been lodged with Glasgow City Council.

"The combined short, medium and long-term regeneration benefits are acknowledged by all, as the additional £350,000 business rates per year the project generates.

"The Scottish Government has approved the principle of innovative Tax Increment Financing funding for the

**This is the strongest case that can be made to preserve this architectural masterpiece**

Buchanan quarter. This is conditional upon Glasgow City Council ensuring that this investment does not occur at the expense of other city centre areas."

Retail letting experts involved in the project say interest in the ground floor units is "building strongly" given the significant commuter, tourist and public footfall in the area, and the hotel plan. It is hoped the restoration project will act as a catalyst

for the "long overdue" regeneration of Union Street, which property analysts say is having a negative impact on the city centre as a whole.

Drew Oswald, senior partner at Knight Frank Scotland, said: "We have been valuing property in Union Street for well over 20 years and the character of the street has changed dramatically over that period.

"Over the past decade many retailers have relocated away from once major thoroughfares like Union Street, this has an ultimate cost to be borne."

Richard Heggie, planning consultant of TPS Planning, said: "This is without doubt the strongest case that can be made to both preserve this architectural masterpiece and also generate the sustainable economic growth which is an overarching Scottish Government objective."

A council spokesman said: "Planning applications have been submitted for conversion into a hotel with an accompanying application for listed building consent."

caroline.wilson@eveningtimes.co.uk



The Seventh Heaven club in the city centre

## Police in lap dance club raid

Art, cash and jewels seized in swoop drama

By HELEN McARDLE

A GLASGOW lap-dancing bar has been raided in searches on the premises and a house that saw police recover £10,000 in cash, plus art and jewellery.

Strathclyde Police searched Seventh Heav-

en. Police said more than £10,000 cash and valuable items including art and jewellery have been seized. A report will be forwarded to the procurator fiscal.

The premises where Seventh Heaven is located were originally opened as a nightclub by ex-Celtic defender Stephane Mahe in 2002 before going bust.

Since opening in April 2003 it has been owned and run by Glasgow-based Kell Scotland Ltd, founded by Isabella Peterkin.

Her husband, William Edward Peterkin, is its sole shareholder and the firm has HQ in the city's Cadogan Street.

The couple took Glasgow City Licensing Board to court in after the club's license was revoked in 2009 after a complaint over a flyer which showed a dancer in skimpy clothing.

A Sheriff threw out the case in 2010, saying there was no more flesh on display than in an average "evening dress".

**Complaint after a flyer showed a dancer in skimpy clothing**

en in the Charing Cross area of the city and a house in Newton Mearns, East Renfrewshire, under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

A 55-year-old man and a 47-year-old female were detained under Proceeds of Crime Legislation.

## Homes water alert

HOUSEHOLDERS in East Dunbartonshire are being warned not to drink or cook with tap water due to a "quality issue".

Scottish Water is distributing bottled water to around 190 homes at Woodilee, Kirkintilloch. The "precautionary measure" follows complaints about the taste, odour and appearance of the water.

Customers have been told not to use their water for drinking, cleaning teeth, preparing babies'

feeds, disinfecting equipment, preparing food, pet food and drink or washing open wounds.

Scottish Water is sampling the water supply to test if it is safe for drinking.

The advice was issued after Scottish Water liaised with the Consultant in Public Health Medicine at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

It follows another water quality scare this week at Stonelaw High, Rutherglen.