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Eight-screen movie complex bid at Castle Mall

CINEMA PLAN

WILL RAISE ROOF

Photo: JULIAN NICHOLLS



CINE-MALL? Architect Michael Innes with the plans for a cinema complex at the Castle Mall shopping centre.

A NEW multi-million pound cinema complex is set to raise the roof of Norwich's Castle Mall shopping centre.

Bosses today unveiled detailed plans to open an eight-screen, 2000-seat showpiece development on the top floor within two years.

Blueprints for the complex — the most advanced within a 60-mile radius of Norwich — are on city council planners' desks.

And cinema giant UCI, which runs a string of multi-screen cinemas across the country, looks favourite to run it.

Castle Mall manager David Newton said today he thought the scheme would revolutionise shopping as well as cinema-going in the

by STEVE SILK and MARK EVANS

city. He added: "Once the cinema is open we will keep both car parks open as well, and that will mean that our retailers would be able to extend their opening hours right through to 12.30am if they wanted to."

Pubs and shops could also benefit, and a spokesman for Timberhill Traders Association has welcomed the move.

The blueprint, designed by the mall's architect, Michael Innes, would include raising the roof of the existing car park in Farmers Avenue. The Evening News exclusively revealed first indications of the multiplex plan back in May.

People would enter the complex either through the shopping centre itself or via the Farmers Way or Timberhill entrances.

The existing glass lifts and a new feature stairway would whisk film-lovers up to an unused fifth floor which would extend into the existing car park.

All eight state-of-the-art screens would include digital sound and the latest cinematic technology with a total of 2108 seats and a restaurant overlooking the Castle Mall gardens.

The complex would create 26 jobs and might also attract a bar and shops selling film merchandise. It would cost several million pounds and should be open by early-1998.

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Lads Club to close

EXCLUSIVE
 by CHRISTINE CUNNINGHAM

A SPORTING club opened to keep Norwich youngsters off the streets and out of trouble today announced it was to close.

Norwich Lads Club, which gave former world boxing champion Herbie Hide his first big break, will shut for good on August 31 because it has no money to carry on.

Manager Ronnie Brooks, 64, said it was with extreme sadness that staff at the 78-year-old club had decided to give up the fight to stay open.

"It's a sad day for Norwich," he added. "We just do not have enough money to keep a place like this open."

Despite desperate attempts to keep the club afloat, council cuts and fire safety improvements have sounded the final bell for the club, which crafted the talents of boxers like Ginger Sadd in the 1930s.

Mr Brooks added that cash requests to the National Lottery had been turned down twice.

Ironically, he said, he had received a letter from the Lottery Board inviting him to make a fresh bid for cash this week.

Although Mr Brooks was due to retire in November his one wish was to hand the club over for someone else to carry on his work.

Graham Woodford, chairman of the club management committee, said the city had lost a valuable asset which had provided a reasonably-priced place for youngsters to expend their energy.



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