

Owners say no to last hurrah at Blue Orchid

Safety fears doom plan for last big night

By **Ross Lidbetter**

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DREAMS of the famous Blue Orchid nightclub reopening in 2013 appear to have been dashed.

Promoter Lewis Rooney announced an ambitious proposal last week to open up the Park Lane building for one night only next year.

His proposal led to growing excitement that the venue, visited by the likes of glamour model Jordan in its heyday, could have a final swansong.

But long-term leaseholder Minerva has dismissed the idea and says it has no plans to enter into negotiations about reopening the club.

David Owens, of Minerva, said ensuring people's health and safety would be the number one concern.

Mr Owens said: "It would need a lot of expenditure to get to that point [of reopening]."

"It's in a condition that

wouldn't be deemed safe to become a public area.

"It's probably not how everyone remembers - although the sticky carpet is still there.

"You've got a property that's not been open to the public [since December 2004] and you've got so many insurance hoops and public trading hoops to get it up and running."

Nostalgic

Mr Owens explained that he has previously had phone calls from married couples wanting a nostalgic look around the former nightclub and understands there is a lot of affection for the old venue.

He added: "I can see it was a super club in Croydon in its time."

When the Advertiser revealed the plans last week, more than 270 comments were left on our Facebook page, and more than 1,300 people "liked" the story.

Reacting to calls for the club to

reopen, Angie Lawrence wrote: "So many fab fun memories of the Blue Orchid - worth the trip down from Manchester to walk once more through its pearly gates."

Kelly Trehearn added: "I miss that place so bad. "I doubt it's going to happen but if it did it would be amazing.

"Dancing all night long to old skool garage, then a nice drunken walk home with a kebab, classy."

Minerva says it now wants to see what happens with the Nestlé Tower, before deciding what to do with the Blue Orchid.

Last week, Legal and General Property submitted a planning application for the building's refurbishment. This is expected to include around 288 new homes.

■ Do you have a view on this story? Would you like to share your memories of the Blue Orchid? E-mail newsdesk@croydonadvertiser.co.uk or comment at www.thisscroydontoday.co.uk



PACKING PRESENTS: The volunteers making a difference last Friday

CRGM201212141-004_C Photo by Grant Melton

Schoolgirls lend Nightwatch a hand

KIND-HEARTED volunteers have been helping to spread a bit of festive cheer among the less fortunate.

Homeless charity Nightwatch was assisted by girls from the St Vincent de Paul society of the Coloma Convent Girls' School in Shirley in packing 84 presents for homeless and other

vulnerable people last Friday. The packages contain hats, gloves, scarves, a gift voucher, soft drinks, chocolates, mince pies and other festive items.

This Nightwatch Christmas effort has been funded by the Gregg's Foundation.

Nightwatch chairman Jad Adams said that youngsters are

not often involved with the charity because of the particular problems of some of their clients.

But referring to the girls helping to pack presents, he added: "This sort of thing is great for young people interested in social issues."

The presents were delivered on Sunday.

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