

Secret passageway is discovered in ex-shop

A SECRET passage was revealed as work began on a derelict former joinery shop in Clitheroe.

John Turner, who has been in business as a financial adviser for two decades, and his wife, Sam, secured funding to convert buildings behind Moor Lane into high quality "incubator units" which they hope will provide an ideal location for fellow entrepreneurs.

Work to convert the 10 units is already under way. The couple are keen to preserve as much of the building's character as possible, in the knowledge that the site is steeped in local history. Part of Clitheroe Castle's bedrock forms an integral part of the main building and a secret passage – which once ran the length of Moor Lane around the base of the Castle – was revealed as building work started. Ghost tour organiser Simon Entwistle said that there were similar passageways throughout the town that still pro-

vided snapshots of its past history, although a lot of the walkways had been filled in. One of the garages on the site is also believed to have housed Clitheroe's first volunteer horse-drawn fire engine.

Keen to continue the theme of using alternative modes of transport, a storage space specifically for bicycles has been incorporated into the building as the Turners are keen to encourage their new tenants to cycle or walk to work, or make use of the excellent local public transport links. The couple have invested in the buildings which once housed J. H. Fern Joiners, and have secured £103,000 funding from the Rural Lancashire Development Grant and Lancashire County Developments Ltd. That money will help cover the cost of converting the old workshop and associated garages into 10 prestigious new office/work-space units in a prime site at the heart of a thriving rural community. They have also

secured a small grant from Lancashire Leader and to assist in marketing the development.

Mr John Turner said: "We have always wanted to work from the heart of Clitheroe, but struggled to find suitable premises – a problem we are sure other local business professionals also encounter.

"Then we discovered Fern Court and, thanks to the support of Lancashire Rural Futures, we were able to secure money towards regenerating the entire site and undertaking a full renovation project which will give this whole area a new lease of life by providing new centrally-located workspaces which are modern yet intimate."

Anyone wanting to know more about the development can contact John or Sam Turner on 01200 429717.

■ IF anyone has any history regarding the site, please contact the Clitheroe Advertiser and Times.