

Warehouse shelves past with Jenners for a new lease of life

KATIE EMSLIE



THE landmark Jenners depository building is to be given a new lease of life by an Edinburgh-based storage company.

The category B-listed building, which has dominated the landscape in Balgreen Road for more than 80 years since it was built for the department store, has been snapped up for a seven-figure sum by Edinburgh Self Storage.

The striking warehouse, with its distinctive red brick exterior emblazoned with the words Jenners Store in bold white capitals, has been a familiar landmark on the Edinburgh to Glasgow railway line since 1925.

The warehouse became surplus to requirements for Jenners after the store was taken over by House of Fraser and put on the open market.

Edinburgh Self Storage boss Alister Jack snapped up the 70,000 square feet Saughtonhall structure to capitalise on his rapidly growing business venture.

He already owns ten storage facilities in the UK and seven in France.

Mr Jack, who started in the industry with his Aardvark Self Storage company, which he ran for six years before selling it in 2002, said the self-storage craze had well and truly taken off in the Capital.

He said he began receiving inquiries about the storage facility, only hours after temporary Edinburgh Self Storage signs went up earlier this year.

"It was staggering," he admitted.

"Inquiries have gone through the roof since then as word has spread.

"Most people know where Jenners Depository is and thousands pass it every day.

"It is listed - and that includes the famous sign - so we'll not be altering the external appearance in any way. If it's a landmark building seen by so many people, then there's no point in changing it."

Self storage as a concept was already massive in America, he added.

"One of the main drivers of the business is the mobility of the workforce, and you want to be in a place where there's a vibrant and active housing market.

"Another driver is divorce, I'm afraid to say. It's definitely a factor."

Mr Jack said that the storage facility was protected by round-the-clock security features, such as CCTV with a broadband link-up to a monitoring station.

"All the cars coming in are photographed on the way in and the way out. The criminal element definitely stays away."

Project manager Simon Turnel said: "Since we put the signs up outside of the store, we have been inundated with business.

"People want to store everything from archives, to lawnmowers and three-piece suites.

"It is proving to be very popular."

Originally built on farmland and joined by houses after the Second World War, the Jenners Depository is the biggest of its kind in Scotland, matched only by the famous Harrods equivalent on the bank of the River Thames. It was used by the Princes Street shop to store everything from clothes and furniture to toys and electrical goods.

When House of Fraser took over Jenners in a £46.1m deal last March, it ceased using the depository because Jenners' distribution functions were then merged with existing House of Fraser warehouses across the UK.

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