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Carpet company partners still on a roll after 20 years

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Avonvale Carpets of Bath brings you a unique combination of excellent choice, expertise and perfect fitting.

Privately owned by Paul Ivory and Jim Ironside, Avonvale Carpets offers you more than 80 years hands-on experience of all kinds of quality flooring, satisfying the needs of domestic and commercial customers.

Originally started in 1972 by Peter Pink in Frampton Cotterell, Avonvale Carpets is a well established family orientated business that puts the customer at the heart of every transaction.

In the late 90s when Peter retired, Jim Ironside joined forces with Paul Ivory as business partners and the rest is history.

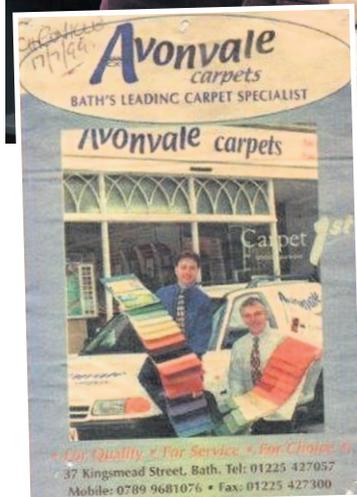
Paul said: "Jim was the obvious person to take on. Neither of us wanted to be sole proprietor so by chance we met and came together, I was looking for another job and we talked about the possibility."

On January 4 1999 the deal was done, and now the pair are celebrating 20 years of running the company together.

Paul said: It is impressive but it's also impressive from a partnership point of view... It's like a marriage. Neither of us would say it's like a honeymoon!"

Paul and Jim ran their first advert as a duo in the Bath Chronicle soon after starting. They often featured in the adverts and quickly became known around Bath for their characters of 'Paul' and 'Jim' on the radio.

Since then Paul and Jim have expanded the company bringing in fresh minds, experienced experts and a few familiar faces. Between the business partners they have



Paul Ivory and Jim Ironside at Avonvale Carpets; left, an advert for Avonvale in the Bath Chronicle from 1999 shows then new partners Paul and Jim

daughter, has been with the company five years and looks after front of house.

Amy, Kate, and Anna-Louise are now following in their father's footsteps, making Avonvale a second-generation family-run business with a keen eye on the future.

Paul said: "Everyone else is part of the family too and enjoys working here."

Despite the company developing and Paul and Jim's children now being involved, the pair ensure they are still always involved with their clients. "I still remember our first customer... That's what our business is always about, people", said Paul.

three children who work at the company.

Paul's daughter Anna-Louise Ivory has been working on the marketing side of the company for the past 18 months, while, Jim's daughter Kate Fey works in administration, and Amy Maidment, who is Jim's daughter and also Paul's god-

daughter, has been with the company five years and looks after front of house.

"Farewell to Bath," said Rachel. "When you do something for 16 years it becomes part of your life.

"We've always met most of our customers at art fairs. Galleries are a bit of an antiquated system - people go to art fairs where they can see 100 galleries, rather than one.

"There are a lot of galleries in Bath, all competing. We have a lot

Time spent working in traditional department stores provided Paul and Jim with a solid grounding in the carpet trade, teaching them the prime necessity of absolute integrity and excellent customer service. It's a vital philosophy that lies at the heart of Avonvale Carpets of Bath.

Paul said: "I always tell my staff what I was told. Even though someone asked you to measure for carpets you have no right to be there. You are the guest in someone else's home. We never take anything for granted."

To find out more about Avonvale Carpets just pop into the shop, ring on 01225 427057 or visit <http://www.avonvalecarpets.co.uk>.

Cafe's plans to extend hours spark protests

A Bath cafe vying for a late licence to launch a "secret dinner club" has sparked concerns it could one day become a nightclub.

Objectors to the Courtyard Cafe's plans fear the existing "nuisance" will extend into the evening and that there will be issues with noise and cigarette smoke until 11.30pm.

Applicants at the eatery, at Lilliput Court, want to extend the opening hours from 7pm to 11pm for pre-booked functions like secret dinner clubs and tasting events.

No more than 25 people are expected to attend each event. It will serve alcohol but the applica-



tion says there will not be a bar.

The owner of the flat above the cafe said she fears being kept awake by the noise until 11.30pm, "powerless" to do anything about it.

Another objector said sound carries through the walls from the Hideout Whiskey Bar, also in the courtyard, stopping residents sleeping until after midnight seven nights a week and putting her holiday let "in jeopardy".

She said there is no double glazing on the listed properties so all residents, including children, are subjected to cigarette smoke and have "become passive smokers".

A third objector who owns a guesthouse said: "We are concerned that if a late licence is granted, it might enable the future possibility of a late night, club type venue in Lilliput Court, something that would have major implications for the surrounding residents and businesses."

Several objectors were concerned that having both bar and cafe customers will be a very intense use of the courtyard that will exacerbate the existing issues.

The application includes plans to open from 11am on New Year's Eve until 11pm on New Year's Day, ringing "serious alarm bells" for residents of Hamilton House.

The applicant declined to comment on the concerns.

The fate of the plans are due to be decided by Bath and North East Somerset Council's licensing sub-committee today.

Mexican restaurant in the frame to replace fine art gallery

A fine art gallery in Bath could be converted into a Mexican restaurant. Plans for the Edgar Modern reveal that applicant Shail Eric Ltd is in the process of taking over the lease and wants to change its use.

If approved, the Edgar Mews venue would be converted into a taqueria and mezcaleria bar, opening from midday to 1am Sunday to Thursday and from noon until 2am on Fridays and Saturdays.

The plan is to employ three full-time and four part-time staff.

The applicants declined to comment.

Edgar Modern is a contemporary art gallery featuring the work of artists from the UK and Europe.

Rachel Read ran Edgar Modern with husband Stuart Nield. She said the way people buy art has changed in the last few years, with people shopping more online or at

art fairs, so they are taking the business to London.

"Farewell to Bath," said Rachel. "When you do something for 16 years it becomes part of your life.

"We've always met most of our customers at art fairs. Galleries are a bit of an antiquated system - people go to art fairs where they can see 100 galleries, rather than one.

"There are a lot of galleries in Bath, all competing. We have a lot

more customers in London, New York and Singapore. We're really grateful to all the clients who've supported us over the years. We really want to thank them."

The couple are looking to open a gallery in south east London, where Rachel is from. They can still be reached through their website.

Bath and North East Somerset Council will decide the fate of the planning application.