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LIMERICK LEADER 02-08-2014

As Limerick's leading newspaper group, we have been serving generations of readers throughout the city and county since 1889. We are immensely proud of the Limerick Leader's heritage and tradition - and that of its sister paper the Limerick Chronicle - in reporting local life. Both in print and online, we continue to be the market leaders for news, sport and much more - so if you've got something to say or a business to promote there is no bigger audience in any medium in Limerick than our newspapers. And that's a fact. **We have more readers than anyone else.** To get in touch, see our contact details below.

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Traders join forces to object to Horizon Mall proposals

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to the fantastic success of the Crescent Shopping Centre. We know from what we have seen in America how incredibly dangerous it is to allow the hollowing out of city centres."

Mr Gleeson insisted traders in the city are not anti-progress.

"Nobody is against progress, nobody wants to see a half-built site at one of the key arteries into the city. But at the same time, the city centre needs to be developed first. The city centre is the key for the city as a whole. The priority has to be the city centre," he said.

Ms O'Donnell said the closure of Helene

unfortunately some people have not been able to hang on," she said.

But she said the LCBA was delighted with the response from the traders to the fact they are putting together an objection to the proposal.

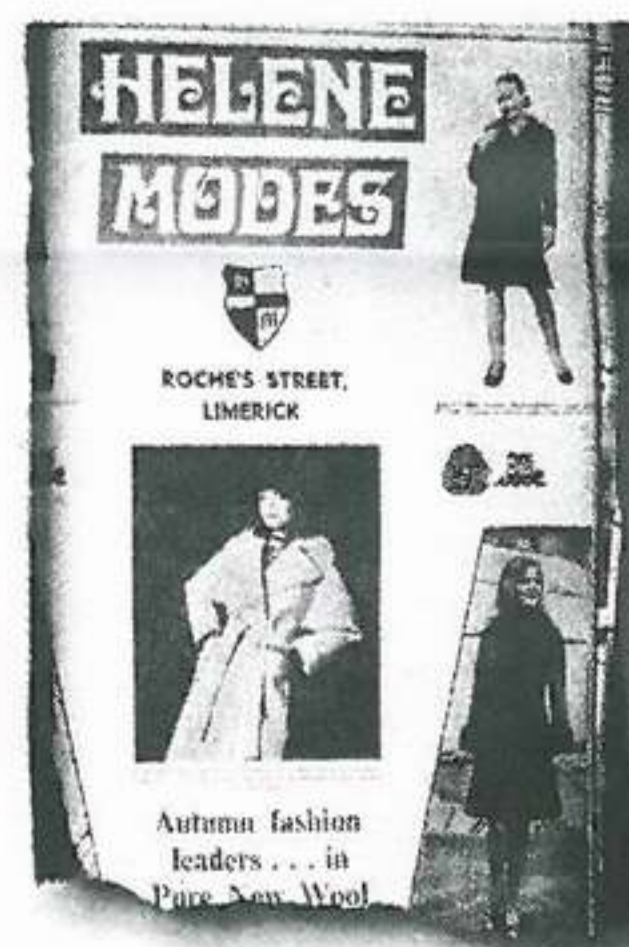
"We have been working on the whole city project for three years, we have a consistent method, and I think people are glad somebody is taking a lead in it, and something is being done."

The report from HRA planning costs in the region of €1,000 to prepare.

It is anticipated that the consultancy firm will submit the final report to local authority planners by mid-way through next week.

The business

Fashion 'institution' Helene Modes is closed due to losses



Generations of style: In the main picture, top, a customer is served at Helene Modes back in 1971. Bottom left: Model Lorna Coffey models a Chanel-inspired ensemble for Helene Modes in a classic black and white shot from the 1970s. Centre: owners Terence and Sheila Cusack, pictured in happier times, have been left 'devastated' by its closure. Right: an advert in the Leader from November 1972 showcases high-quality wool coats on offer

City bastion of style for ladies is no more

ANNE SHERIDAN

THE retail industry in Limerick city has been dealt another blow, as one the long-established boutiques in the city has closed its doors after two generations and nearly 70 years in business.

Tearful staff of Helene Modes were informed at a meeting at the Roches Street store, situated in an area pitched as 'Limerick's fashion quarter'.

Owner Terence Cusack said he is "devastated" that they have been forced to close due to mounting losses.

A notice on the store informed shoppers this week that it is "closed until further notice", just days after it held a 50% off sale with final reductions.

Model agent Celia Holman Lee, who modelled for the store for decades, described the closure of "heart-breaking and horrific".

"It was an institution for generations of women who shopped there, and one of the leading lights in the fashion industry in Limerick for 60 years plus," she said.

"It's a very sad day for the family, and a sad day for Limerick," she added.

County councillor Daniel Butler of Fine Gael said he is 'devastated for his good friends' who ran the business for years, and said its closure will be a "huge loss" to the city.

Mr Cusack, who ran the business for 42 years, said the decision to close the store is "devastating" and "like a death".

"It's very painful - for us, our staff, and I'm sure it will be for many of our loyal customers," he told the Limerick Leader.

"It's a hugely emotional time for us, but we just weren't getting the footfall.

"Retail is changing, maybe more people are shopping online. I'm just gutted. A lot of other great Limerick stores have gone, like Eve's and JR's. It's tough being an independent retailer," he said.

Terence's parents Tom and Nora Cusack ran the popular boutique, which drew customers from across the Mid-West, for nearly 30 years before him, along with his aunt Bridget Skeehan, now 98. However, he said he did not wish to appoint blame for anyone else for the closure, which shocked its loyal fanbase yesterday.

"I don't want to knock Limerick; everyone is doing the best they can for the city. The footfall just isn't coming into Limerick for whatever reason. Some customers said their bus routes changed, others talked about parking. There are a

multitude of factors, and the Crescent [shopping centre] is a very powerful presence."

"The bottom line is people aren't coming into the city. When that 'fashion quarter' sign went up, Eve's were trading, Dolly's boutique was trading, we were trading...at the end of the day I'm responsible for my own business."

Mr Cusack, of the North Circular Road in the city, said a creditors' meeting will be held in the coming weeks, and a liquidator may be appointed to take control of its remaining assets. He said they tried to operate the business for as long as possible, while making "small losses", but said it was no longer prudent to keep it open.

Their two full-time and two part-time staff were informed on Tuesday morning.

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