

OUTLINE PROPOSALS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT
OF THE ENVIRONS OF THE OLD TOWN WALL,
COWBRIDGE

August 1972

PROJECT OFFICE
WELSH SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
UWIST CARDIFF

COWBRIDGE TOWN WALLS AND SURROUNDING AREA

1.0 BRIEF

- 1.1 Terms of Reference : The Project Office of the Welsh School of Architecture was requested to prepare a report on the immediate environment of Old Hall, Cowbridge, its garden and the Town Wall, reference meeting at Glamorgan County Council on Monday 26th June, 1972.
- 1.2 To provide a feasibility study of development within this area with outline costs.
- 1.3 To inspect and report on the renovation required to the Town Wall forming the garden boundary of Old Hall, with outline costs.
- 1.4 The study to be linked if possible with "Operation Eyesore" for which a grant might be available to assist in improving the appearance of the area.
- 1.5 The services of a Quantity Surveyor to provide specialist costing advice to assist in compiling the various aspects of the work within the terms of reference.

2.0 FEASIBILITY STUDY

- 2.1 General Note :- It must be accepted on reading this report and the accompanying drawings that it is a feasibility study. It is based on a conception which has been carefully considered as to the overall appreciation of the area both from the layout and cost considerations, but must be qualified as outline proposals only.
- 2.2 The more detailed information of repairs and technical data for work to the Old Wall has not been included in this outline report.
- 2.3 Every effort has been made to be practical, providing considerable areas of parking, but balancing the need to maintain a clear and appreciative view of the Old Wall.
- 2.4 Costs include landscaping both hard and soft for the total areas of car parking adjoining the wall, the landscaping within the grounds of Old Hall and work to the Old Wall itself, but not the reinstatement of the Cattle Market.

3.0 SITE APPRECIATION

- 3.1 The Butts :- At present this is a narrow lane bordered by the Old Sheep Market and the Cattle Market to the east and three cottages with their garden to the west, the lower portion of the road widening to provide access to the New Sheep Market. The lane enables traffic to travel in both directions, but the entry to Westgate Street is blind in the direction of the town due to the gable wall of the Masons Arms Public House. This lane has a minimal pavement of 700 mm, flush with the road surface, but only in front of the cottages. These cottages which are owned by the Borough of Cowbridge, have a traditional charm which with minor improvements could add greatly to the environment of the area. The overall width of this road from wall to wall is approx. 4.600 M at its narrowest point.
- 3.2 The Old Sheep Market :- This has an area of approximately 930 sq.M and contains open and covered sheep pens, a small weighbridge office with platform and gentlemens toilets. The weighbridge platform and office are no longer used for their original purposes, but the offices have been leased for use in connection with the market, the toilets are in rather poor condition.
- The pens of the Sheep Market are no longer in use; recently a new Sheep Market has been opened at the lower end of The Butts. The effective boundary of the market is The Butts and the wall of the Masons Arms Public House with its 3M high garden wall.
- 3.3 Between the old Sheep Market and the Cattle Market is a wide opening of 11M which provides access to the rear of the Public House and was previously an area for unloading sheep. This area now houses a timber shed used for tea making on market days and provides access to a small Betting Office in the garden at the rear of the Public House (at present untenanted), and for the brewery dray.
- 3.4 The Cattle Market:- The present Cattle Market has an area of 950 sq.M and includes covered and open cattle pens and a covered auctioneers ring of approximately 100 sq.M. The covered sheds abut directly against the Town Wall and the corner turret, completely

obscuring the view and consequently ones appreciation that this is the oldest part of the Town. The new Sheep Market is located across the road from this part of the site.

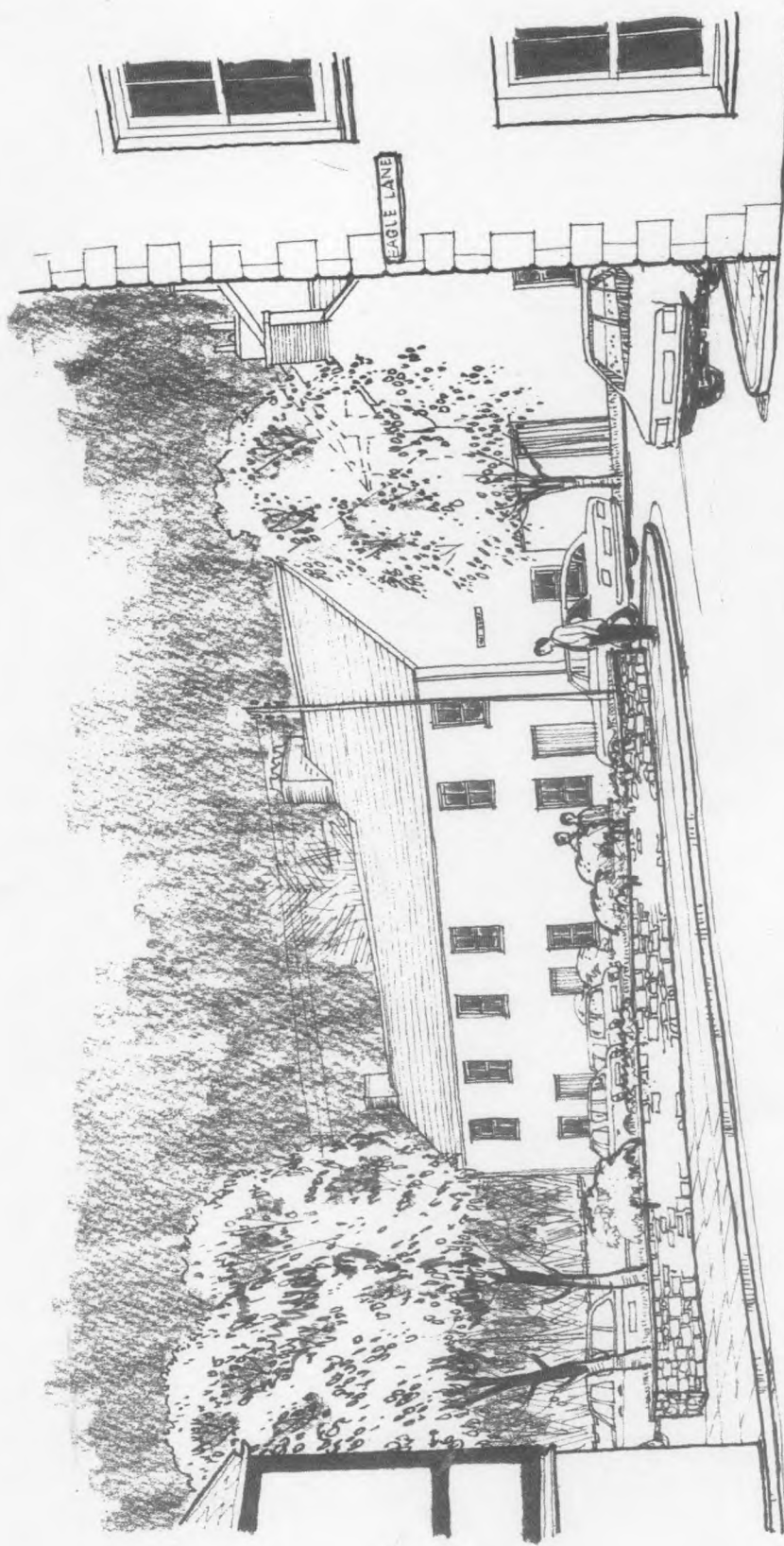
- 3.5 The Butts (South of the Town Wall):- The road boundary is difficult to define here as there are no fixed kerbs, the road has a sharp bend confirming the corner of the Town Wall, the area between the road and the wall is covered in gravel and is used for car parking and lorry washing on market day. There are no pavements along this stretch of The Butts. The original Town Wall ends mid way along this road, though the remaining continuous wall is still of ancient origin and will be retained. The Butts meets Town Mill lane at a tee junction, this proceeds into Church Street which is entered under the narrow arch of the old wall, adjoining the Boys Grammar School.
- 3.6 Church Street :- Though this does not form part of the brief, it was felt that as the traffic proposals include reference to this street that its main features should be listed. This is a narrow street with a carriage-way width of approximately 3M in parts, but it does have continuous pavements along most of its length. The junction with High Street is visually far better than the junction of The Butts into Westgate Street. There is a small car park which can accommodate approximately 14 cars, partly owned by the Duke of Wellington public house. Parking now allowed in this street is scheduled to be abolished by the end of the year.

4.0 HIGHWAY PROPOSALS

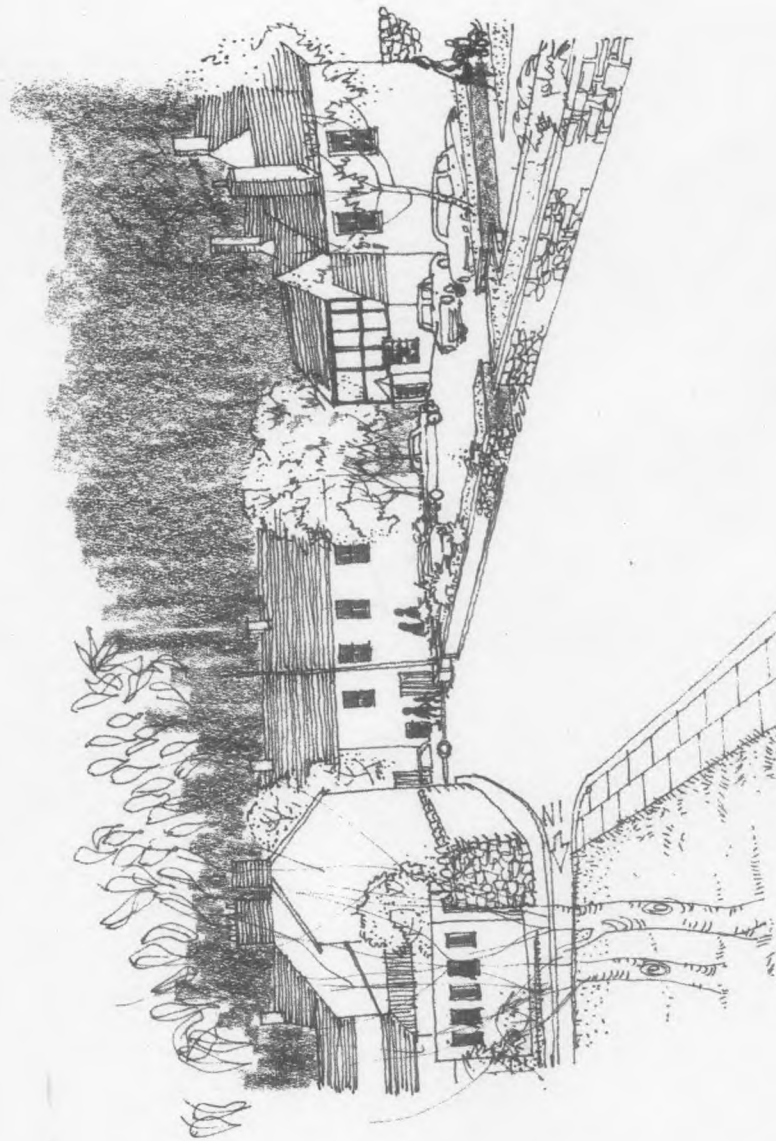
- 4.1 Having studied the traffic flow though The Butts and Church Street areas both on market day and under normal conditions, it was felt that the increased flow which new development will have in the area will necessitate a one-way system operating, entering The Butts from Westgate Street proceeding along Church Street and into High Street. At present both roads do not allow for a lorry and a car passing each other within their full lengths.
- 4.2 The new parking layouts have been based on this one-way system, though in practice they could operate if this was not immediately enforced.

5.0 PROPOSALS

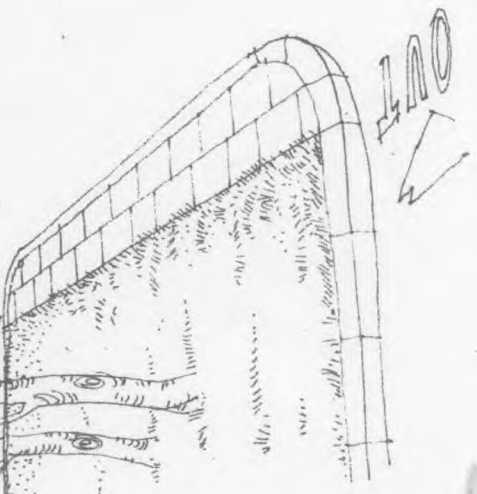
- 5.1 The Old Sheep Market :- It is suggested in the layout that car parking facilities can be incorporated on this site for 22 vehicles. Entering from the Westgate Street end of The Butts and leaving through the main entrance into the gardens of Old Hall. Concurrent with this development this report advocates the widening of The Butts to include a 2M pavement in front of the cottages and an overall carriage width of 6M. To separate the car parking effectively from the highway it is recommended that a 2M wide raised grass bank be taken the length of the street with a few flowering shrubs providing a screen for the occupants of The Butts cottages. Similarly a grass area will be created between Westgate Street and the car park with a pedestrian outlet from the car park adjoining the Masons Arms.
- 5.2 In order to allow a continuation of the brewery dray service to the rear of the public house, access will be provided in the garden wall adjoining the entrance to the Library and Clinic.
- 5.3 Cattle Market Site :- The Cattle Market buildings which house the auctioneers ring and covered pens directly abut on to the original Town Wall of Cowbridge. This approximately 36M length of wall is the most historic part of the town terminating in a small turret at the corner. It is very much regretted that this wall is not visible due to the rather mundane agricultural buildings which now abut it. The recommendation which this report strongly advocates is that the wall be exposed with a 5M wide grass lawn in front of it and space be provided for limited car parking of 12 vehicles. The corner turret which is in excellent condition, requires to be viewed from the road completely uncluttered with intervening buildings etc. It is proposed that a shallow grass area be left in front of the turret, this will gently rise to the base of the turret. This could be a pleasant area for providing seats for elderly people from the nearby home for the aged, and it faces the South and West.
- 5.4 Parking for Health Centre :- Parking has been provided for six vehicles to accommodate the Local Authority and Doctors operating from the Health Centre, this will be an area reserved for medical purposes and adjoins the entrance through the wall into the Clinic.

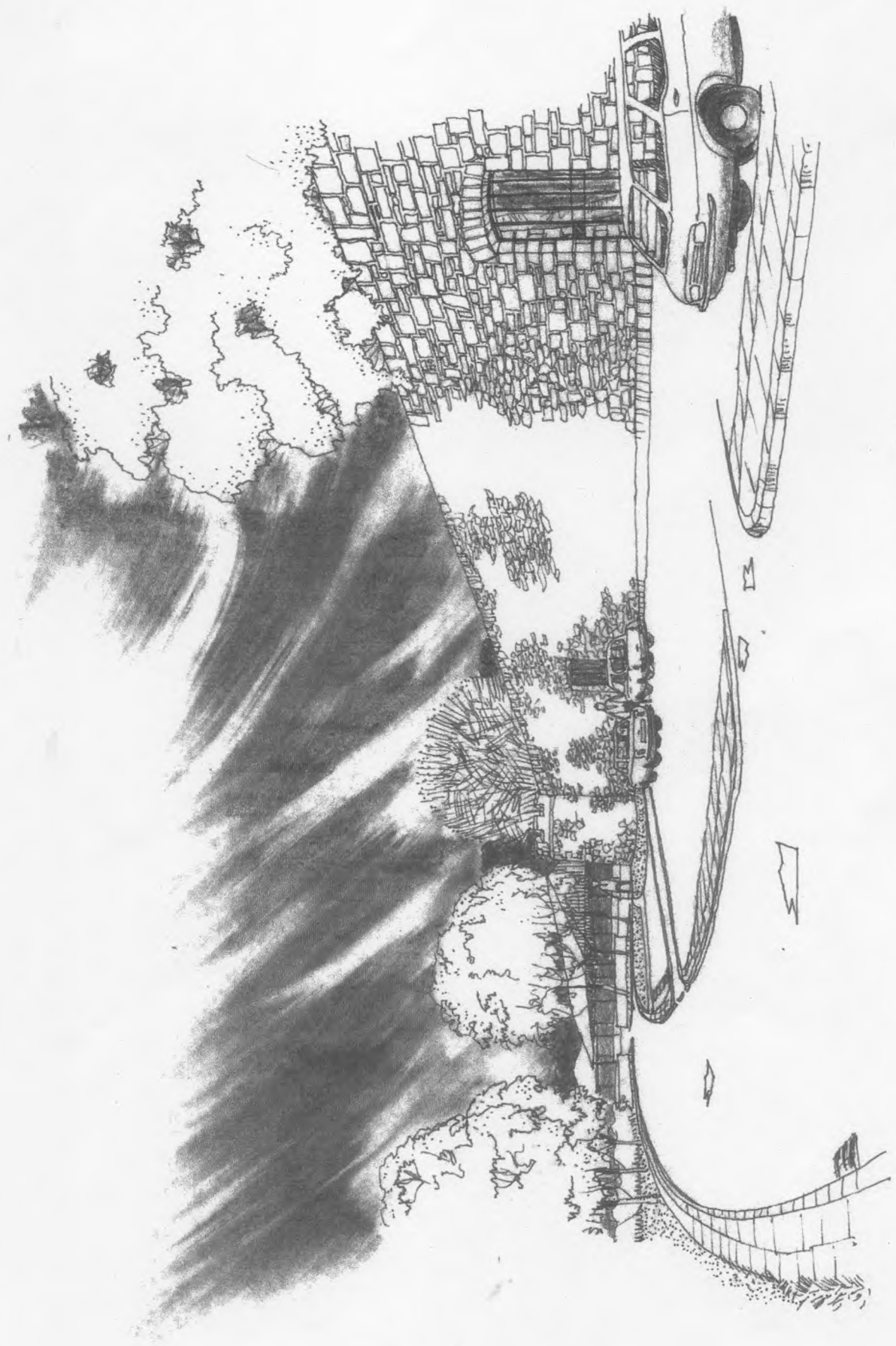


VIEW FROM WESTGATE-BUTTS COTTAGES & CAR PARK



THE BUTTS, VIEW TOWARDS
WESTGATE





VIEW OF TOWN WALL & TURRET SOUTH OF THE BUTTS.

- 5.5 Car parking facilities are provided for 17 cars under the wall, maintaining a clear space for the existing entrance to the garden of Old Hall.
- 5.6 The continuation of The Butts to the south of the town wall is to be determined by kerb stones and pavements. The area bordering the school playing fields is to be grassed and trees planted. Similarly the area between the boundary wall of the new Market and The Butts is to be landscaped.
- 5.7 New Cattle Market :- The proposals included for the erection of a new Cattle Market with its ancillary auctioneers ring to the west of the new Sheep Market. This is at present a large open gravel area. The drawings show in the outline proposals an adequate area for lorry parking. The new site is well screened with mature trees to the south and a combined market on this site would surely be more effective.
- 5.8 New Toilets:- A new toilet block has been sited off The Butts and equal distance from the car parks and the markets. This will provide facilities for both men and women and should be built from natural stone available from demolishing the old buildings in the Cattle Market. The use of masonry will be in keeping with most of the older buildings in the area.
- 6.0 TOWN WALL :- Effectively for the purposes of this report it has been assumed that the Town Wall commences at the opening between the Old Sheep Market and the Cattle Market, includes the turret and extends as far as the existing entry along the Southern boundary wall of Old Hall. Generally the wall, apart from the removal of a small amount of ivy and bramble is in a fair condition along its Western boundary and also the turret facing the Cattle Market. The corner of the turret and the Southern wall requires the removal of a considerable amount of ivy and the renovation of the uppermost 1.500 M of the wall by repointing etc. The condition of the Southern part of the Town Wall does give considerable concern in that the upper 2M of the wall along its length of approximately 45 M has been damaged by large ivy roots and small shrubs growing out of the wall. The Ivy is an attractive feature of the Wall but the

deterioration over the years has been considerable. The upper portion of the wall will have to be carefully considered on the removal of the ivy and it conceivable that the face bordering the car park will have to be rebuilt in parts, whereas in others pointing may be sufficient. On the garden side the same conditions prevail and restoration work on the wall will have to be phased in such a manner that sufficient time is given for one side to be consolidated before attempting to repair the other, assuming that the main core of the wall is loose fill. There remains a further length of wall approximately 27M which is of the same character as the original town wall but of more recent origin and it is recommended that this wall be similarly treated, accepting that obviously there would be no grant available for this length of wall from the Historic Buildings Council.

7.0 POSSIBLE GRANTS

- 7.1 The Old Town Wall is a listed building qualifying for a grant under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act of 1953. Such grants are made "for the purpose of defray for whole or in part for expenditure incurred in the repair or maintenance of a building appearing to the Minister to be of outstanding Historic or Architectural interest or in the upkeep of any land comprising or contiguous or adjacent to any such buildings". It would appear therefore that to have the possibility of a grant for the Town Wall one would have to accept the moving of the Cattle Market. We wish to stress that this would be a move for creative planning for preservation.
- 7.2 Other grants related to tidying up dilapidated buildings etc. within the conservation area may be put forward under the Government sponsored "Operation Eyesore". This could be considered and discussed further if this study is to be proceeded with.

8.0 POSSIBLE REVENUE

We have not considered the possible revenue ensuing from the proposals, at present Cowbridge does not charge for car parking facilities and we are not aware of the decision of the Borough Council on these matters. The outline proposals have been discussed with the County's Consultant relating this outline report to his alternative proposals of use for Old Hall, dated 1971.

9.0 GARDEN OLD HALL, COWBRIDGE

9.1 General Condition

The garden is dominated by two very large beech trees which regrettably are both in an advanced state of decay. It is agreed that the copper beech will have to be removed before any building work starts. The remaining beech tree has a limited life and before deciding whether to retain this tree it must be examined thoroughly by a tree surgeon. The remaining large trees have all passed their prime, but the two Scots pines can be saved by judicial tree lopping and surgery. The group of trees in the centre of the site dominated by a large yew will be retained. These include two young conifers and a variegated holly.

The four trees to the south of the site are located on land required for building purposes, or their root system is too close to the proposed Health Centre and will have to be removed. These include two rubina, a badly damaged holly, an ash and a plane tree, all of dubious quality.

Surrounding the walled areas of the site are numerous young trees, mainly hazel, holly and ash - these will be discussed in our proposals. The walled area within the garden to the north contains fruit trees which once trailed up the wall ; these have been unattended and do not now bear fruit.

9.2 Proposals

The proposals are shown on drawing No. AS/1a. and are briefly as follows:-

The retention of the large beech (subject to its examination), the two Scots pines, the group dominated by the yew tree, and two ash trees to the south of the proposed Health Centre. Two new Acer-negundo trees are to be added to the group in the middle of the garden, and the young existing hazel trees are to be retained along the eastern boundary of the site, thinning out the undergrowth. Along the wall bordering the Masons Arms Public House all the existing fruit

trees are to be removed ; in the corner of this area is a magnificent Wisteria which is somewhat overgrown and is supporting a dilapidated gazebo. This shrub is to be saved and the shed demolished.

Within this area three *Betula-pendula* (silver birches) and rhododendron bushes are to be planted. Adjoining the proposed screen wall of Old Hall the red flowering shrub is to be retained after clearing away the heavy undergrowth.

The southern boundary wall of the site is heavily overgrown with ivy, ash, hazel, all young saplings, briar and undergrowth; this area is to be thinned and a limited number of hazel trees retained with the addition of two *Acer Japonicum*. The area between the Clinic and the Sentry Walk is to have two *Acer Japonicum* and two *Hamelis Japonicum* (Witch Hazel) planted.

A major new feature in the landscape is a raised bank taken to a height of approximately one metre, grassed over, with six trees planted on it. These will be two *Aelanchier-canadensis*, three silver birches and another Witch Hazel. The bank will be made from excavated material taken from the building site and covered with retained top soil.

A sum of money has been allowed to cover the purchase of flowering shrubs adjacent to the new buildings and for the introduction of a few *Forsythia* and *Cotoneaster-decorus* to be planted along the eastern boundary. A further sum of money is allowed for reinstating the privet-hawthorn hedge between the Grammar School garden and the site. The existing pond is to be filled up to a depth of 500mm below the lawn level and entirely rebuilt in waterproof concrete. Various hard surface areas and paths in paving slabs, gravel and tarmac cross the garden and these are shown on the drawing. Soft areas covered with lawn grass and areas that are to be naturally landscaped in rough mown grass are indicated for the remainder of the garden.

COST

GENERAL NOTE

The following report on cost relates to the foregoing proposals and the paragraph numbers are repeated for convenience.

The costs given are a broad indication of the probable order of expenditure based on the level of building costs current at the date of the report. More detailed figures could be provided when any section has been developed to a more detailed stage.

- 5.0 Work to areas outside the site of the Old Hall on the south and west sides. This is summarised as follows :-
- 5.1 & Work on site of original sheep market comprising new
5.2 car park and improvement to road - £3,500
- 5.3 & Work on site of existing cattle market comprising
5.4 new car park and improvement to road and access to market - £5,000
- 5.5 & Work to south of Old Hall garden comprising small car
5.6 park and work to road - £3,500
- 5.7 Construction of new cattle market. There is insufficient information to provide a guidance figure for this work at the present stage. Presumably a broad indication could be obtained with knowledge of the cost of the new sheep market.
- 5.8 New public toilet block and connections to drains, etc. Provisional allowance £4,500.
- 6.0 Work to Town Wall. We have made an assessment of the probable cost of carrying out the work suggested in the report but must emphasise that very much depends on the precise condition of the Wall as revealed after the commencement of work and any indication of cost at this stage must be very approximate. However, we consider that the most realistic figure we can put forward would be a sum of £4,000.

The scope of work covered by this figure has been restricted to the necessary repairs to the Wall and does not include the cost of forming openings and improvements such as the construction of steps and ramp to form an approach to the sentry walk from the Old Hall garden.

In preparing the above costs, particularly those for work to the road and car park areas, we have assumed that main drainage exists and that only modifications and extensions are required.

COST

GENERAL NOTE

The following estimates of cost relate to the scope of work indicated in the report and shown on the drawings prepared. The costs all relate to paragraph 9.2 of the report.

Site works within Old Hall garden. This comprises general external works with paved areas, paths, work to new and existing walls, work to existing pool, together with garden paths and formation of steps and ramp access to old wall. The estimated cost of this work we assess as £8,000.

Soil and surface water drainage to the Health Centre and Library buildings. Preliminary estimate £3,000.

General landscaping work to the site, including clearing the ground of undergrowth and old trees, making good existing lawns and forming new where required, removal of old trees and surgery work to some of those remaining, provision of new trees and shrubs. Provisional order of cost - £3,000.