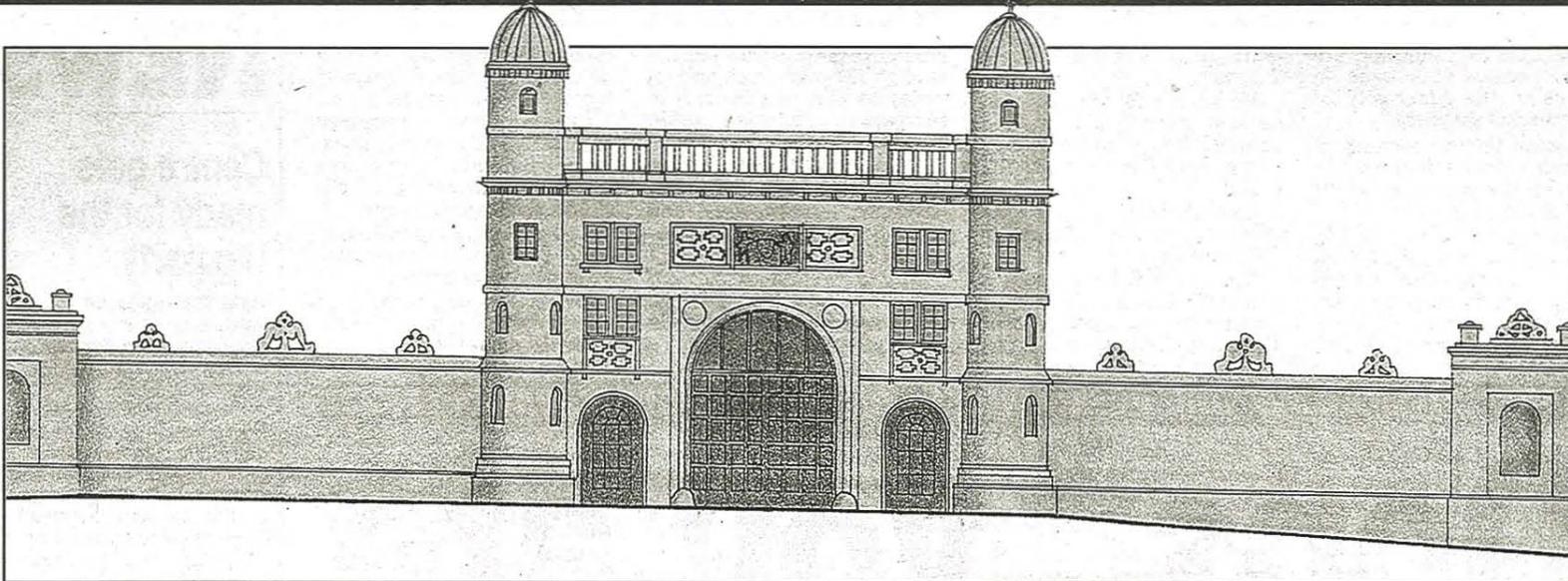


DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORIC BUILDING SHOULD KEEP VANDALS AWAY



FUTURE VISION: An artist's impression of how the transformed Lenton Lodge will look

New home set to be fit for a prince

Lodge will now have 30 rooms

A LANDMARK Nottingham building looks set to be given a new lease of life.

Lenton Lodge, the grade II listed gatehouse to Wollaton Park, on Derby Road, is being transformed forever.

The historic building, which was erected in the early 19th Century to keep out riotous mobs, is now being restored to create a 30-room private house.

And tomorrow, the 23ft-high arch, which used to form the magnificent entrance to the park, will be permanently filled in.

Architect Julian Owen, whose Beeston-based firm has master-minded the project, said: "This really will make a very major change to a well-known building, which is unique in Nottingham."

"In order for it to be viable as a residential property, the arch needed to be in-filled and made into a room, so we're doing it with a timber-framed and fully-glazed screen which will be brought in a single piece."

Police outriders will be needed to escort the lowloader carrying the unit, which will have to be manually lifted into position.

The huge gates will stay in place at the front to comply with heritage rules, but the arch will be sealed to form a domestic room inside.

The building was designed in 1823 by the King's architect, Sir Jeffrey Wyattville, with an under-

ground winding mechanism for the gates — aimed at keeping out mobs.

Mr Owen explained: "The owners of Wollaton Park were very concerned about being attacked, and so they built the gatehouse to barricade themselves against rioters."

"This was at a time when many aristocrats were quite nervous."

The lodge was designed to mimic the original hall and was placed at the start of a mile-long tree-lined avenue leading through the park.

But the stately building was divided from the estate by the construction of the Nottingham ring road.

Difficult

It was bought by Nottingham City Council and temporarily inhabited by the police, park workers and a design consultant.

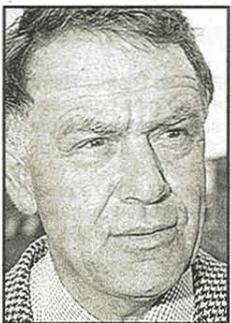
But, from 1985, finding a permanent suitable use proved difficult. Mr Owen said: "It had fallen into disrepair over the last few years and had been badly vandalised."

"There was not a single window left unbroken."

It was eventually bought by a Nottingham businessman, who aimed to carry out major works to turn it into his own home.

After negotiations with heritage experts, they finally gave the go-ahead to seal off the gateway about 18 months ago.

Work is expected to be completed in September this year.



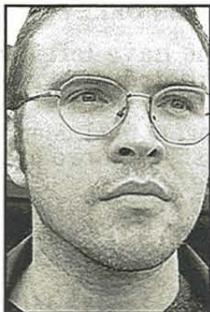
'FIGHT IT': Timothy Gibson, 49, an ex-teacher from Kennington Road, Radford: "I think the work will spoil it. They are redeveloping and destroying so many historic parts of Nottingham and somebody should fight against it."



STATELY LOOK: The gatehouse as it is now



LONG TIME: Gladys Palling, 83, from The Glenn, Clifton: "Whenever I walk down the street, it's always the first thing I notice. It has been there such a long time."



'NOT ON': Peter Dow, 27, a research assistant from Wollaton: "Wollaton Park was one of the first things that attracted me to Nottingham. They're doing what they've done to the other monuments of Nottingham. It's not on; it's out of order."



'BIT SAD': Jill Wragg, a Beeston nurse: "It's a bit sad, but they're not going to modify it that much. I suppose it's good because it's been there a long time and not utilised. It's a nice building and on a road where everyone can see it. Altering it could be a bad thing."



'BAD IDEA': John Barnes, 32, a shed manufacturer from Beeston: "I think it's a bad idea, but we can't do anything to change it."

NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS

Come and join in — centre plea

BULWELL: Residents are being urged to attend the annual meeting of Snape Wood Community Centre.

The meeting takes place at the centre in Snape Wood Road on June 11 at 7.30pm, and community development worker Paula Curzon said it would also be a social as well as a business event.

She added: "We are putting out a plea to residents and tenants — it's their chance to see how the centre is run and have their say on what should be happening in the neighbourhood."

"The last meeting had to be cancelled because of the poor response so we are hoping for a good turnout this time. Hopefully it won't be a long boring evening — we will get the business out of the way and then have a social gathering."

Anyone wanting further information should ring Paula on 975 3299.

Art group's display date

TOP VALLEY: Rise Park Art Group is holding its annual exhibition at Top Valley Library next month.

The exhibition starts on June 2 and there will be a chance to see the artists at work, by popular request.

Twenty-two artists will be exhibiting and most of the work on show will be for sale. The exhibition finishes on June 28 and part of it will be transferred for display to Rise Park Infant School.

BULWELL: The Portland College for people with disabilities will benefit from the proceeds of a six-a-side cricket tournament being held at Bulwell Hall Park on June 15 (10am to 8pm). There will also be a giant tombola with 200 prizes.

HYSON GREEN: The Vine Community Centre playgroup has vacancies for its sessions which are held Mondays to Fridays.

The sessions — for 2½ to five-year-olds run from 9.30 to 11.30pm and the charge is £1.40. Anyone interested should call the centre on 0115 9249700.

HYSON GREEN: The Vine Community Centre, Bobbers Mill Road, Hyson Green, holds an Afro-Caribbean luncheon club every Thursday at 12 noon.