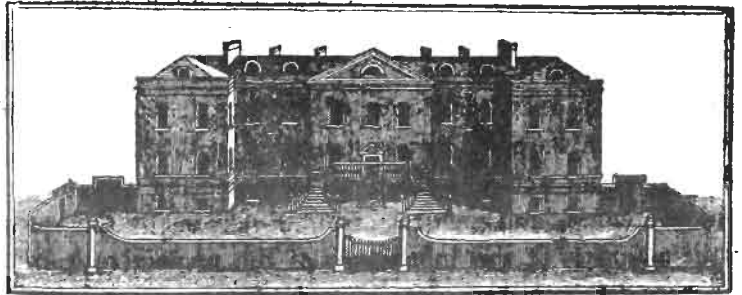


- AND OF GLOUCESTER INFIRMARY ?

Ian Parsons

In the Autumn of 1982 the GSIA received from the City of Gloucester for their comment a planning application proposing the demolition of the Infirmary, which is a Grade 2 Listed Building. On investigation, it appeared that



the application had been made on behalf of the Regional Health Authority, but it was withdrawn as the Planning Officer had not been convinced that there were any firm proposals. He would consider proposals for demolition of the non-listed buildings at the rear and their replacement by housing, and also the conversion of the Listed building fronting Southgate Street.

Members may well ask what all this has to do with "industrial archaeology". The fact is that this building lies between the Docks and Brunswick Square, two very pleasant areas, and any chance of a way through the hospital site should be encouraged.

The building is one of the oldest hospital buildings outside London. In 1750 some benevolent gentlemen purchased the Crown & Sceptre, a large inn in Westgate Street, and fitted it for the reception of patients until sufficient contributions had been received for building the original part of the present Infirmary. The Rev. T. Rudge says it was built by the suggestion and under the auspices of the "late Lord Botetourt" and the Hon. & Rev. Dr. Talbot. The Crown granted 9,200 feet of timber. Planned by Luke Singleton and executed by Mr. Leadbetter, it was built in brick by Anthony Keck, with central pediment and projecting wings. In the centre over the board room at the rear is a chapel in a projecting bay. The railings have Greek "Anthemion" finials. It was completed and opened in 1755 at a cost of £6,200, though the formal opening was performed on 18 July 1761. It was enlarged in 1827 and again in the 1870s, but ceased to be used as a hospital in 1975.

Ian Parsons (with help from Samuel Rudder's New History of Gloucestershire, T. Rudge's History & Antiquities of Gloucestershire, David Verrey's Buildings of England - Gloucestershire, and the Gloucester Civic Trust.)