

# Hospital protest takes new turn

SAVE Standish Hospital campaigners are due to throw down the gauntlet, literally, today in a challenge to Gloucestershire Health bosses.

The ancient custom will symbolise the determination of the pressure group to keep the hospital in the National Health Service, despite threats to sell it off for development into a housing estate.

The campaigners want the hospital, and its beautiful grounds on the Cotswold escarpment, to find a new lease of life for respite care, AIDS care or an hospice.

Campaign spokeswoman, Linda Townley, said: "We acknowledge that we have lost the battle to keep the specialist orthopaedic and chest facilities at Standish, but that does not mean that the hospital should not continue to be used."

## Meetings

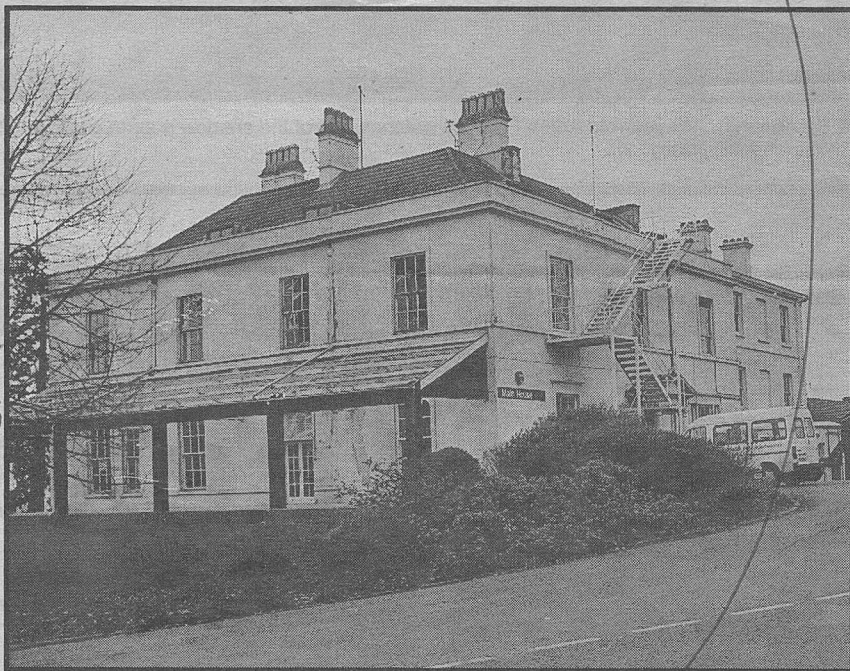
"We are challenging the health planners to find a new use for this remarkable site.

"Our campaign is far from finished. We must now stop the sell-off, and our ancient challenge of throwing down the gauntlet symbolises this.

"We are calling meetings with health care providers and the voluntary sector to discuss alternative uses."

Peter Colclough, chief executive of Gloucestershire Health, said: "Standish will be needed for another four years, after which our policy is to sell the site for the best price we can get.

"The use to which the site is put depends on the decision of councillors on the



## ■ Standish Hospital... to be the subject of further talks.

planning committee at Stroud.

"We have had informal discussions with officials about the future of the site, but these were suspended until the Minister's decision was known.

"We will now be seeking to resume those talks, and probably giving evidence at the public inquiry into the Stroud District Plan.

"We do not see Standish as part of the community hospital plan.

"We already have buildings at Stroud, Berkeley and Tetbury which can be developed for these purposes.

"As far as an AIDS hospital is concerned, it is right against all policy guidelines, to separate AIDS patients from others," he said.