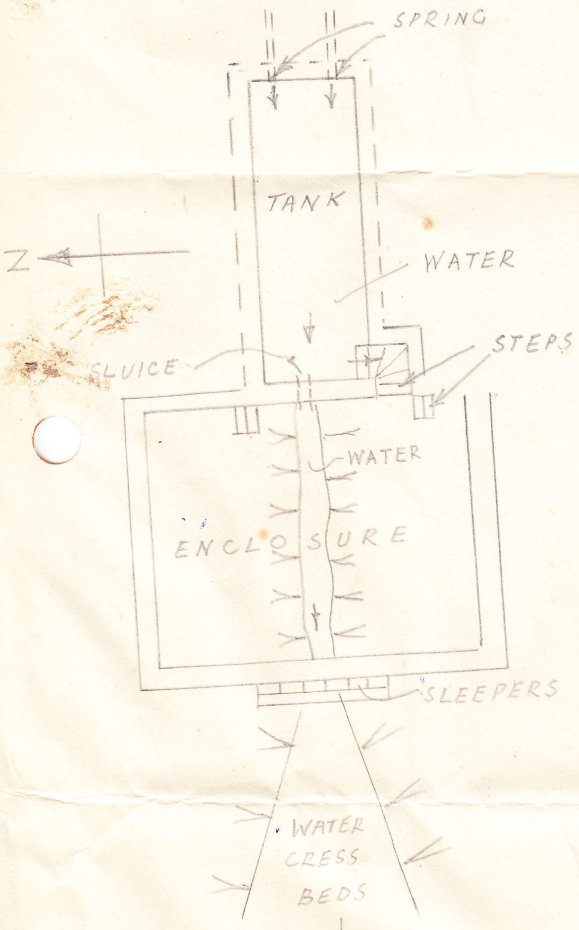
COPY

ST. THOMAS A BECKET'S WELL, OTFORD, KENT.

The well is situated in a field some distance to the east of the ruined Archbishop's palace and consists of a large rectangular tank approximately 30 feet long by 9 feet wide, sunk about 8 feet below the level of the surface of the field. It was built of roughly coursed masonry at the base and ru bble above. The spring water enters at the east end through two small holes cut in the lowest course of masonry. In the west wall of the tank are the remains of a narrow sluice with grooves cut in the stone sides for boards. At the south west corner a stone stairway leads down to the bottom of this chamber, which is covered with water to a depth of several inches and in which is also a considerable amount of masonry that has fallen from the top of the walls.

To the west of the tank is an enclosure about 20 feet long. The general level of this enclosure is the same as that of the field but slopes steeply down in the centre to the water course which flows from the tank and out through an opening in the west wall where it widens out on to watercress beds. The enclosure is surrounded by a low wall and against the outer face of the west wall railway sleepers have been placed, the reason for which is not apparent.

Due to the want of maintenance over a period of many years the masonry is now in a bad condition and a considerable amount of work is necessary, if the monument is to be preserved.



SKETCH PLAN OF WELL

The object of the work is to prevent the monument from deteriorating further and consists briefly of securing all loose masonry liable to fall or that could be easily moved; the removal of all trees (including roots) and other growth in the joints between the stones and where sufficiently close to endanger its stability. Loose stones must be re-bedded in their original position and should be properly marked and photographed before removal except in cases where only one or two stones are removed at any one time. The bedding and pointing should be in lime mortar. The tops of the walls must be waterproofed with mortar so that water will not remain in pools. It is also desirable that the site generally should be cleared of bushes, redundant trees etc.

Tank. The masonry to the tank is not in a bad condition but the following defects should be attended to without delay.

Take down the stones forming the bulge at the west end of the north wall and re-build replacing each stone in its original position.

Clear away the ivy, brambles and earth from the tops of the walls, reset any loose stones and waterproof top.

Remove the small saplings growing in the masonry, reset stones disturbed. Consolidate the masonry to the corner by the steps where the stones have fallen

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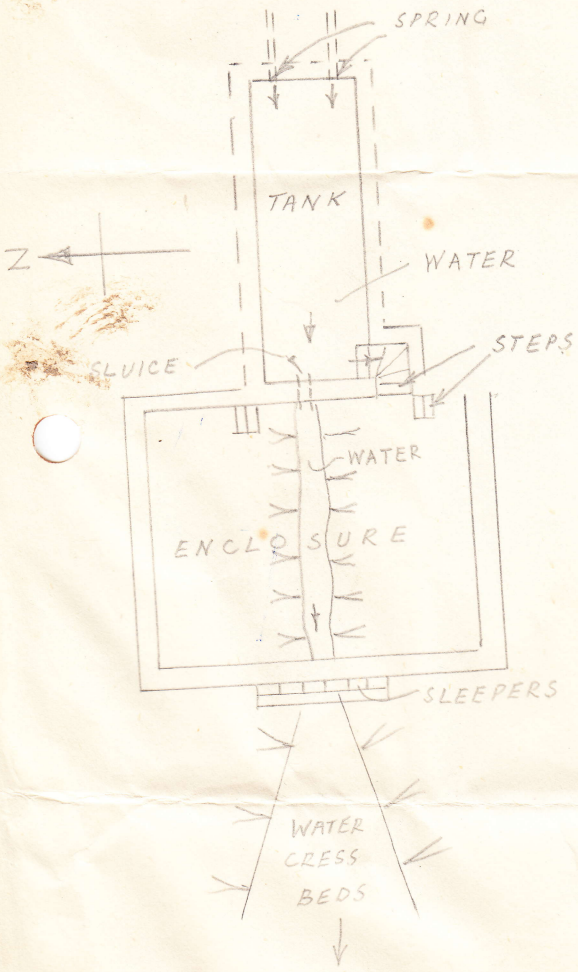

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Reset the loose stones in the west wall.

Rake out the loose cement pointing in the west wall and repoint, in lime mortar including all open joints in the other walls.

Remove the earth so as to expose the steps to the north and south of the west wall.

Remove the debris from the bottom of the chamber.

West enclosure

Remove the trees growing near the wall at the north east and north west corners and branches of the tree resting on the west wall.

Remove the small bushes, saplings to the south wall and the ivy from all the walls.

Rebed all the loose stones to the walls and repoint all open joints.

Remove the sleepers leaning against the west wall and make good masonry behind if necessary.

Remove all the brambles etc growing inside the enclosure, clean out the water way and rebed the stones at the sides.

An accurate estimate of the cost of the work involved cannot be given as it is impossible to see without further investigation the number of stones that will have to be rebedded etc. It is, however, estimated that approximately £300 should be allowed for the restoration of the monument of which about £50 is for non urgent work such as the removal of the saplings etc. not liable to damage the masonry.

The present fence is barbed wire on rough wooden posts and it is desirable that this should be replaced by a new one with a gate for access.

No detailed description has been given in this report of the methods to be employed in carrying out the work and it is recommended that a further visit should be arranged when the work is about to be put in hand so that details could be discussed.