

Hopes of repairing church

PERSISTENT vandal attacks and storm damage have reduced one of Cardiff's oldest churches to a complete wreck.

And in an attempt to preserve what's left of St Mary's Church in Caerau plans have now been drawn up to carry out work on the 13th Century structure.

The church, which fell into disuse in the 1970s, has endured continuing attacks by vandals, stone theft and storm damage in recent years.

Drug taking is also suspected on the site following the discovery of syringes.

Consultant engineers Veryards, which has prepared a report on its current condition for Cardiff County Council, has recommended a programme of works which includes making the Grade II listed structure safe and protecting what is left as best as possible.

"If left unchecked continued damage to the fabric of the bell tower will lead to its eventual total collapse and with it the loss of an important local landmark and historical feature," it stressed.

The firm said that while most areas of the church were in ruins, careful conservation would pro-



'COMPLETE WRECK' St Mary's Church, in Caerau, Cardiff.

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vide a monument to the Christian presence in the area.

Caerau councillor Jacqui Gasson said: "The church has been the victim of considerable vandalism over very many years because of its isolated position.

"There is a need to protect what is left but I do wonder what it will cost."

There were plans by the former South Glamorgan County Council many years ago to develop the church as a heritage centre but it failed to take off because of financial restrictions.

The application will be considered by Cardiff councillors later this year.