

THE GNOLL, NEATH PORT TALBOT: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT



Prepared by DAT Archaeological Services
For: Andrew Scott Ltd



DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

REPORT NO. 2023-17
PROJECT NO. E007337

June 2023
Mehefin 2023

THE GNOLL, NEATH PORT TALBOT: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

by

Philip Poucher MCIfA



The report has been prepared for the specific use of the client. Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited can accept no responsibility for its use by any other person or persons who may read it or rely on the information it contains.

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf
Corner House, 6 Stryd Caerfyrddin, Llandeilo, Sir
Gaerfyrddin SA19 6AE
Ffon: Ymholiadau Cyffredinol 01558 823121
Adran Rheoli Treftadaeth 01558 823131
Ebost: info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited
Corner House, 6 Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo,
Carmarthenshire SA19 6AE
Tel: General Enquiries 01558 823121
Heritage Management Section 01558 823131
Email: info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk

Cwmni cyfyngedig (1198990) ynghyd ag elusen gofrestredig (504616) yw'r Ymddiriedolaeth.
The Trust is both a Limited Company (No. 1198990) and a Registered Charity (No. 504616)

CADEIRYDD CHAIR: Judith Wainwright MA MSc FIC FRSA. CYFARWYDDWR DIRECTOR: K Murphy BA MCIfA

THE GNOLL, NEATH PORT TALBOT

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

Client

Andrew Scott Ltd

Event Record No

E007337

Report No

2023-17

Project Code

FS22-070

Report prepared by

Philip Poucher

Site-visit undertaken by

Philip Poucher

Illustrated by

Philip Poucher

Report Approved by

Fran Murphy

Rev Number	Description	Undertaken	Approved	Date
1	Draft V1	PP		
2	Final	PP/CK	FM	21/07/23

**THE GNOLL, NEATH PORT TALBOT:
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1 INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 Project Proposals and Commission	2
1.2 Scope of the Project and Methodology	2
1.3 Abbreviations	4
1.4 Illustrations	4
1.5 Timeline	4
2 POLICES AND GUIDANCE	6
2.1 The Historic Environment (Wales) Act	6
2.2 Planning Policy Wales	6
2.3 Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment	6
2.4 Local Development Plan	7
3 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY	8
4 DESIGNATED HISTORIC ASSETS	12
4.1 General	12
4.2 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens	12
4.3 Listed Buildings	14
4.4 Scheduled Monuments	15
4.5 Conservation Areas	15
4.6 Registered Historic Landscapes	15
5 NON-DESIGNATED HISTORIC ASSETS	18
5.1 General	18
5.2 Palaeolithic, Mesolithic & Neolithic	18
5.3 Bronze Age	18
5.4 Iron Age	18
5.5 Roman	19
5.6 Early Medieval and Medieval	19
5.7 Post-Medieval and Modern	20
6 ASSESSMENT OF EVIDENCE	27
6.1 General	27
6.2 Previous Archaeological Work	27
6.3 Historic Mapping	28
6.4 Aerial and Historic Photography	40
6.5 LiDAR	42
6.6 Site Visit	42

7 ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL, IMPORTANCE AND SETTING	63
7.1 Potential & Value	64
7.2 Setting	73
8 IMPACT ASSESSMENT	75
8.1 Development Proposals	75
8.2 Impact Assessment Criteria	78
8.3 Physical impacts upon historic assets	78
8.4 Impacts to the Settings of Surrounding Designated Assets	85
9 CONCLUSIONS	86
9.1 Archaeological Potential and Impact Assessment	86
9.2 Mitigation	88
10 SOURCES	90
FIGURES	
Figure 1	Location of development area 10
Figure 2	Outline of the registered parkland 11
Figure 3	Designated historic assets 17
Figure 4	Non-designated historic assets 25
Figure 5	HER sites within the registered parkland 26
Figure 6	Extract of the 1741-68 Estate Map 31
Figure 7	Extract of the 1801 Estate map 33
Figure 8	Extract of the 1801 Estate map 33
Figure 9	Extract of the 1812 Estate map 35
Figure 10	Extract of the 1812 Estate map showing Gnoll House 35
Figure 11	Extract from the 1845-6 tithe map 36
Figure 12	Extract from the 1877-81 Ordnance Survey map 38
Figure 13	Extract from the 1899 Ordnance Survey map 39
Figure 14	Sites identified within Gnoll Park, west end 71
Figure 15	Sites identified within Gnoll Park, east end 72
Figure 16	Development details 76
Figure 17	Development details 77
Figure 18	Development zones and sites of archaeological interest 84
TABLES	
Table 1	Archaeological and historical timeline for Wales 5
Table 2	Designated historic assets within the study area 16
Table 3	Site potential definitions 63

The Gnoll, Neath Port Talbot:
Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment

Table 4	Site importance definitions	63
Table 5	Sites of archaeological interest within Gnoll Park	65
Table 6	Potential physical impacts on archaeological sites	79

PHOTOS

Photo 1 - 3	RAF aerial photographs 1944-49	41
Photos 4-37	Site Visit	45 - 62

THE GNOLL, NEATH PORT TALBOT HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned to prepare a Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment of proposed works within the Gnoll Estate and Country Park, Neath Port Talbot (SS 7680 9764).

The archaeological background to the area is examined and a large number of individual sites of interest have been recorded throughout the parkland as a whole. A slight to moderate adverse impact upon several identified and potential archaeological sites has been highlighted, which may require archaeological mitigation. A beneficial impact from the work on several sites is also highlighted.

CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL

Comisiynwyd Gwasanaethau Archaeolegol YAD i baratoi Asesiad Desg Amgylchedd Hanesyddol o waith arfaethedig yn Ystâd a Pharc Gwledig y Gnoll, Castell-nedd Port Talbot (SS 7680 9764).

Archwilir cefndir archeolegol yr ardal a chofnodwyd nifer fawr o safleoedd unigol o ddiddordeb ledled y parcdir yn ei gyfanrwydd. Amlygwyd effaith andwyol fach i gymedrol ar nifer o safleoedd archeolegol a nodwyd a rhai posibl, a all fod angen lliniaru archeolegol. Amlygir hefyd effaith fuddiol y gwaith ar sawl safle.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Proposals and Commission

- 1.1.1 DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned by Andrew Scott Ltd to prepare an Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment for proposed works within the Gnoll Estate and Country Park, Neath Port Talbot (NGR SS 7680 9764).
- 1.1.2 The site lies in an area of significant historic and archaeological interest. The park itself is a Grade II* listed formally designed parkland with its main phases of construction dating from the early 18th century through to the late 19th century (PGW(Gm)60(NEP)). It includes numerous parkland features, listed buildings and structures, as well as the site of the original mansion associated with the parkland.
- 1.1.3 A variety of projects are proposed throughout the park to assist in the restoration and enhancement of the Gnoll Estate and Country Park. They include repair and restoration work around the original mansion and cellars, a new visitor centre, improvements to the car parking area, a new bridge, adventure play areas, work on Pond Cottage, restoration work within the kitchen garden area with new pods and lodges proposed and repair works on walls, cascades, footpaths and landscape features. Initial proposals have been drawn up by Hiraeth Architects together with a number of consultants, and these have been further refined and development by Andrew Scott Ltd. The intention is to submit five different planning applications to the local planning authority, Neath Port Talbot Council, for the proposed works. Due to the archaeological sensitivity of the area, an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been requested by the client to assist in assessing the potential impact of these proposals and outline possible mitigation measures. The intention is to submit this assessment as part of the planning application documentation.
- 1.1.4 This Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment is primarily a desk-based study of the site area combined with a site walk-over. It provides an indication of the archaeological potential of the development area and highlights possible issues in relation to the impact of the development on the historic environment and what potential mitigation may be required.

1.2 Scope of the Project and Methodology

- 1.2.1 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been produced, detailing the methodology by which this assessment would be carried out. This WSI was submitted to the Archaeological Planning Officer at Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) for comment and approval in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority.
- 1.2.2 Initially a large area was chosen as the basis of the assessment, encompassing the entirety of the registered parkland due to initial outline proposals also examining this entire area. Ultimately the proposed development became focussed on five main areas around the central and southern part of the park. The report retains its assessment of the entirety of the park, but potential impacts have been focussed on these five main areas, outlined in the later stages of the following report.
- 1.2.3 The scope of the assessment follows the Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment as laid down by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014). The standard is stated by CIfA as:

Desk-based assessment will determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within a specified area. Desk-based assessment will be undertaken using appropriate methods and practices which satisfy the stated aims of the project, and which comply with the Code of Conduct and other relevant regulations of CIfA. In a development context desk-based assessment will establish the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the historic environment (or will identify the need for further evaluation to do so), and will enable reasoned proposals and decisions to be made whether to mitigate, offset or accept without further intervention that impact.

1.2.4 A desk-based assessment is defined by CIfA as:

.....a programme of study of the historic environment within a specified area or site on land, the inter-tidal zone or underwater that addresses agreed research and/or conservation objectives. It consists of an analysis of existing written, graphic, photographic and electronic information in order to identify the likely historic assets, their interests and significance and the character of the study area, including appropriate consideration of the settings of historic assets and the nature, extent and quality of the known or potential archaeological, historic, architectural and artistic interest. Significance is to be judged in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.

1.2.5 The desk-based study of an area identifies known archaeological sites within its boundaries and environs and assesses the potential for hitherto unknown remains to be present within the proposed development area. This will help inform future decision making, design solutions and potential mitigations strategies, including the potential for further archaeological works.

1.2.6 The report also includes a brief assessment of the impact on the settings of surrounding designated historic assets, including scheduled monuments, listed buildings, historic landscape character areas and undesignated archaeological sites. This utilises the best practice guidance in *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales* (Cadw 2017).

1.2.7 The report presents relevant information from a number of sources including:

- Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) Historic Environment Record data;
- Map regression exercise using earlier cartographic sources;
- Available and relevant reports on any archaeological work undertaken in the area that affects the site or its setting;
- Archive records held at the County Archive, the National Library of Wales (NLW) and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW);
- Aerial photography, satellite imagery and LiDAR data;
- Relevant records held by the developer;
- Identification of any scheduled monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, registered historic landscapes, historic landscape character areas or conservation areas within or in the vicinity of the site area (Cadw, DAT, NRW);
- Assessment of the archaeological potential of the area;

- Assessment of the likely impact upon the settings of surrounding features of the historic environment; and
- Assessment of likely impacts on any identified remains within the development site (or potential remains) and likely requirements, if any, for further stages of archaeological work.

1.2.8 The study area will include the area of the registered parkland of Gnoll Park, along with a search radius buffer of 1km from the edge of the registered parkland boundary, in order to identify the presence of designated historic assets including scheduled monuments, historic landscape areas, registered parks and gardens conservation areas and listed buildings and non-designated historic assets recorded on the GGAT Historic Environment Record (HER). This large area incorporates all relevant records to assist in establishing the archaeological background and potential for the proposed development area, but also includes many unrelated records, therefore only results within the parkland, and pertinent results within the wider study area, are discussed in detail in the following assessment report.

1.2.9 For the purposes of planning policy in Wales, the historic environment is defined as:

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and deliberately planted or managed (Welsh Government 2017).

An historic asset is:

An identifiable component of the historic environment. It may consist or be a combination of an archaeological site, a historic building or area, historic park and garden or a parcel of historic landscape. Nationally important historic assets will normally be designated (ibid).

1.3 Abbreviations

1.3.1 All sites recorded on the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) are identified by their Primary Reference Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Sites recorded on the National Monument Record (NMR) held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) are identified by their National Primary Reference Number (NPRN). References to cartographic and documentary evidence and published sources will be given in brackets throughout the text, with full details listed in the sources section at the rear of the report.

1.4 Illustrations

1.4.1 Printed map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale. North is towards the top of the page unless otherwise indicated.

1.5 Timeline

1.5.1 The following timeline gives date ranges for the various archaeological periods that may be mentioned within this report.

Table 1: Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales

Period	Approximate date	
Palaeolithic	c.450,000 – 10,000 BC	Prehistoric
Mesolithic	c.10,000 – 4400 BC	
Neolithic	c.4400 – 2300 BC	
Bronze Age	c.2300 – 700 BC	
Iron Age	c.700 BC – AD 43	
Roman (Romano-British) period	AD 43 – c. AD 410	Historic
Post-Roman / early medieval period	c.AD 410 – AD 1086	
Medieval period	1086 – 1536	
Post-medieval period*	1536 – 1750	
Industrial period	1750 – 1899	
Modern	20th century onwards	

Note: *The post-medieval and Industrial periods are combined as the post-medieval period on the Regional HER, as held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust.

2. POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

2.1 The Historic Environment (Wales) Act

2.1.1 The *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979* was previously the primary legislation for protecting archaeological remains and scheduled monuments. This has more recently been amended by *The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016* which has three main aims as defined by Cadw:

- to give more effective protection to listed buildings and scheduled monuments;
- to improve the sustainable management of the historic environment; and
- to introduce greater transparency and accountability into decisions taken on the historic environment.

2.1.2 The Act amends the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and also the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It is supported by a number of planning guidance documents. The Act most specifically provides better safeguards for the protection of scheduled monuments, listed buildings and historic parks and gardens. It also includes further guidance on place names.

2.2 Planning Policy Wales

2.2.1 *Planning Policy Wales* (Ed.11, 2021) sets out the Welsh Government's land use planning policies. Its primary objective is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the *Planning (Wales) Act 2015*, the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* and other key legislation.

2.2.2 Chapter 6, 'Distinctive and Natural Places', explains how planning systems must take into account the Welsh Government's objectives to protect, conserve, promote and enhance the historic environment as a resource for the general well-being of present and future generations. It also sets out the planning policies for the sustainable management of specific categories of historic environment assets.

2.3 Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment

2.3.1 This technical advice note provides guidance on how the planning system considers the historic environment during development plan preparation and decision making on planning and Listed Building consent applications. It also provides specific guidance on how the following historic environment assets should be considered:

- scheduled monuments
- archaeological remains
- listed buildings
- conservation areas
- historic parks and gardens
- historic landscapes
- historic assets of special local interest

- World Heritage Sites

- 2.3.2 The technical advice note usefully gathers the selection criteria employed in the designation of scheduled monuments and listed buildings, and the registration of historic parks and gardens and historic landscapes.
- 2.3.3. Advice and decisions on planning applications affecting nationally significant historic environment features (or designated historic environment assets) is provided by Cadw acting on behalf of the Welsh Government.
- 2.3.4 This report will also make reference to other guidance documents published by Cadw, namely: *Conservation Principles* (March 2011); *Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales* (May 2017); *Managing Historic Character in Wales* (May 2017); and *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales* (May 2017).

2.4 Local Development Plan

- 2.4.1 The Historic Environment is subject to the relevant policies and procedures as laid out in the Neath Port Talbot (NPT) *Local Development Plan* (LDP). The LDP was adopted on 27 January 2016 and covers the period 2011 to 2026.
- 2.4.2 The historic environment is covered by Strategic Policy SP21 Built Environment and Historic Heritage. This policy states:

The built environment and historic heritage will, where appropriate, be conserved and enhanced through the following measures:

- 1. Encouraging high quality design standards in all development proposals;*
- 2. Protecting arterial gateways from intrusive and inappropriate development;*
- 3. Safeguarding features of historic and cultural importance;*
- 4. The identification of the following designated sites to enable their protection and where appropriate enhancement:*
 - (a) Landscapes of Historic Interest;*
 - (b) Historic Parks and Gardens;*
 - (c) Conservation Areas;*
 - (d) Scheduled Ancient Monuments; and*
 - (e) Listed Buildings and their curtilage.*

- 2.4.3 Policies exploring high quality design (Policy BE1) and how this affects the natural, historic and built environment is explored further, as are policies affecting buildings of local importance (Policy BE2).
- 2.4.4 Policy SP21 and Policy BE2 of the LDP are supplemented by The Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Guidance (January 2019). This outlines the planning policy protections that are in place to safeguard and conserve as far as possible the historic assets of the County Borough; provides advice about the requirements that will need to be met where development is proposed that could affect any type of historic asset; and outlines the approach that will be taken when such proposals are considered.
- 2.4.5 A list of registered parks and gardens is included within the Supplementary Planning Guidance, which also states:

4.4.1.9 Proposals that could affect a registered park or garden or its setting will need to be fully assessed, including consultation with Welsh Ministers/Cadw, to ensure that there are no adverse effects, and applicants should ensure that the significance of the registered park/garden and any impacts are shown to be fully understood and addressed.

3 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 3.1 Gnoll Park is an area of parkland comprising open grassed areas, woodland, ponds and localised development. The location and topography of the park is best described in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, reproduced in section 4.2.2.
- 3.2 The park lies on the east side of the Neath Valley, spread along a level shelf of land on the sloping valley edge, overlooking the valley basin to the west and in turn overlooked by the upland ridge of Cefn Morfudd to the east. The town of Neath developed on the riverside approximately 1km to the west but has since spread and now borders the western limits of the parkland, with the modern development of Cimla spread around the southern end of the park and near continuous development along the valley base from Neath to Tonna, 0.5km from the northern end of the park.
- 3.3 The main routeways through the area follow the valley base, with the local Fairyland Road climbing the valley and bordering the northwest edge of the park, and the B4287 climbing through Cimla to the south to cross the upland into the neighbouring Pelenna Valley. The 18th century Neath Canal also runs down the valley, and the railway reaches Neath before turning south again to run along the coastal plains.
- 3.4 The underlying geology largely comprises grey-green sandstone of the Brithdir Member, rising to similar sandstones of the Hughes Member to the east, and Swansea Member to the west. The sandstone is interbedded with thin bands of siltstone and mudstone, and the area lies within the South Wales Coalfield. The bedrock is overlain by diamicton. (BGS 2023).

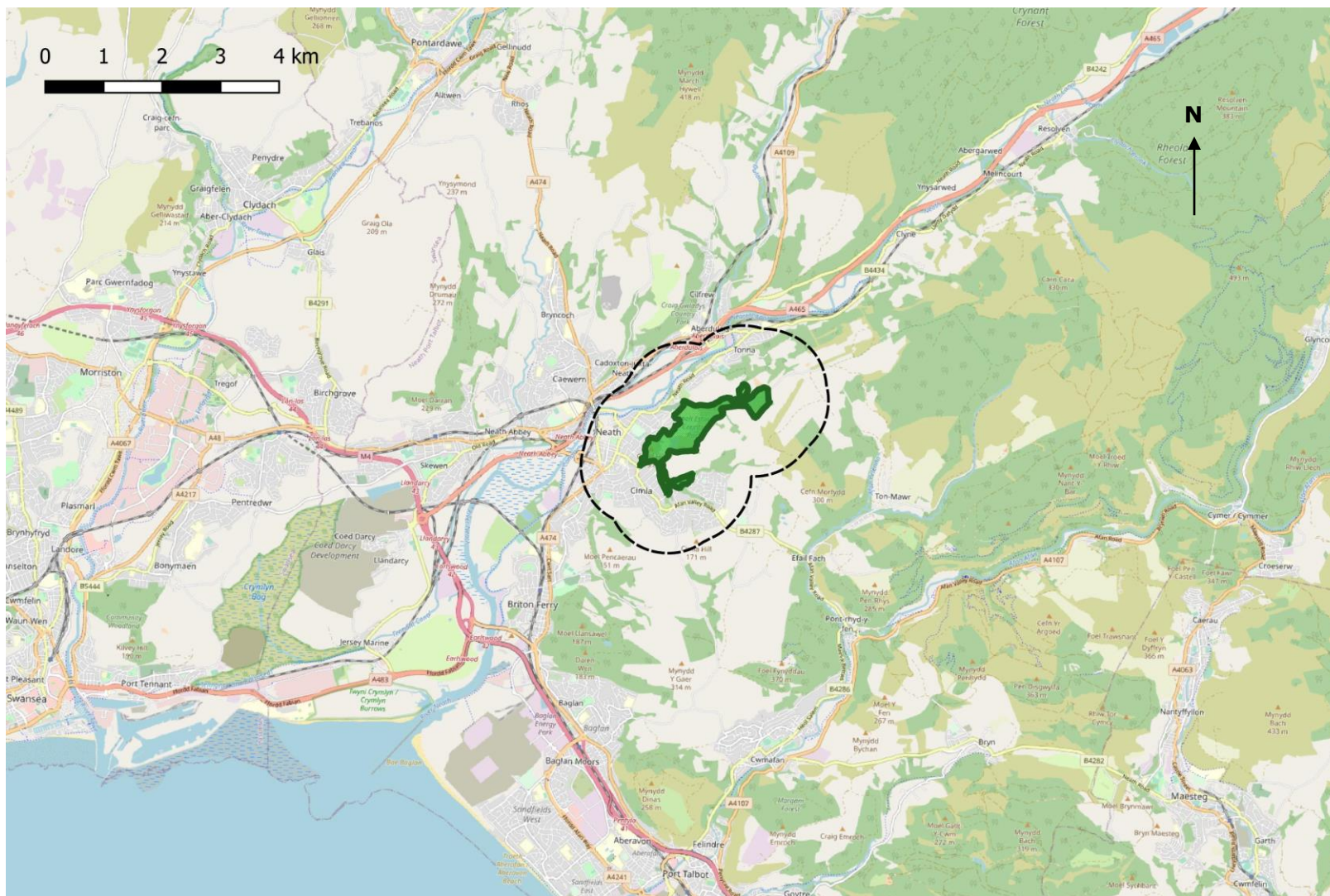


Figure 1: Location of development area, showing the proposed development site.

Map data from OpenStreetMap (OSM) <https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright> 24/05/2023

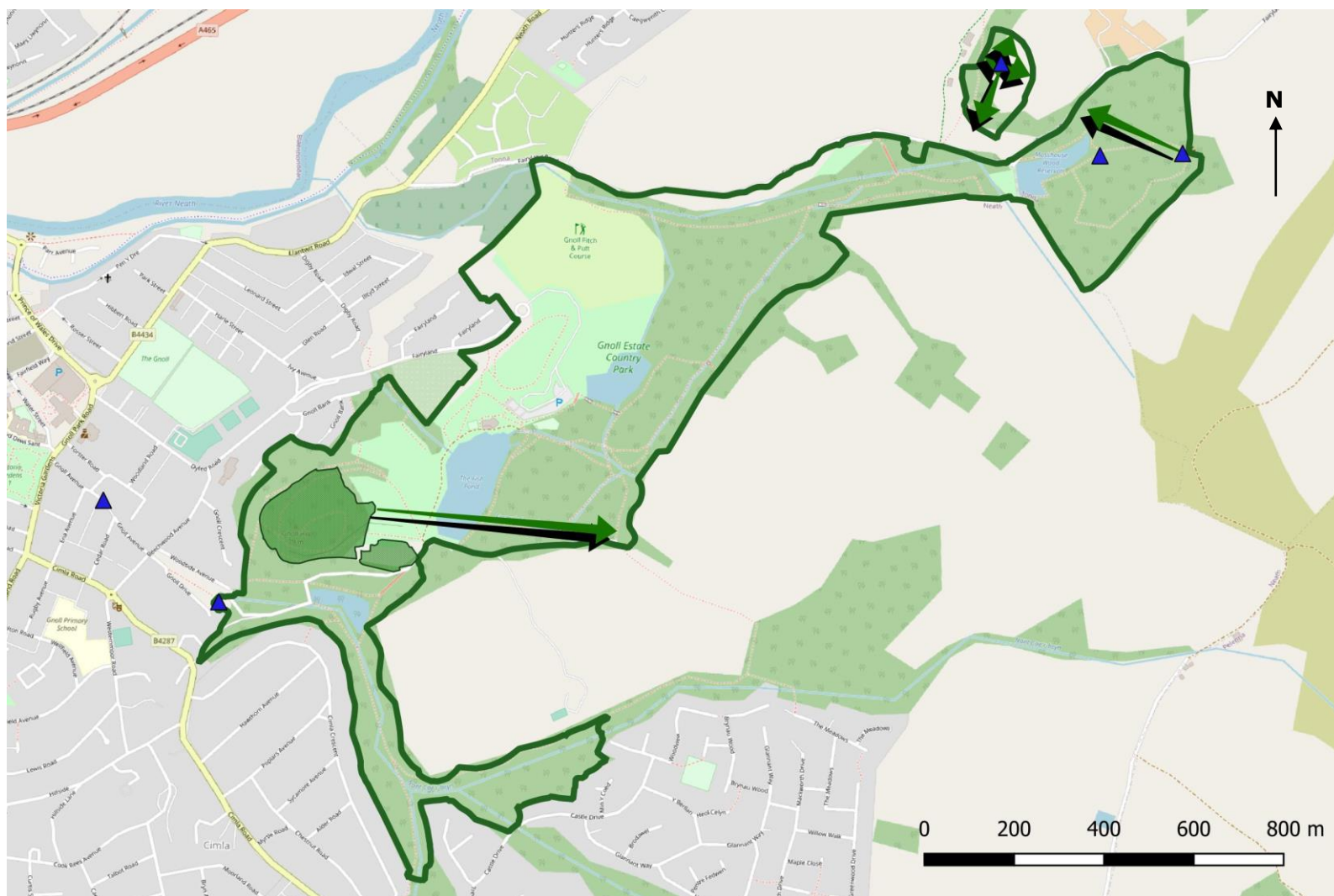


Figure 2: Map showing the outline of the registered parkland (green line) and gardens (solid green), associated listed buildings (blue triangles) and significant views (green arrows).

Map data from OpenStreetMap (OSM) <https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright> 24/05/2023

4 DESIGNATED HISTORIC ASSETS (Table 2 and Fig 3)

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 A search of data held on several databases was made of historic assets within the 1km radius search area. Designated assets beyond this radius were also considered for potential wider-ranging impacts but ultimately it was considered more likely they would be limited to within the initial search area, and often to a smaller area still, given the scale of development and nature of the surrounding topography. These designated assets are described first, as they largely comprise assets with some form of statutory protection.

4.2 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

- 4.2.1 Parks and gardens of special historic interest in Wales are included on a Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, designed to provide comprehensive information to assist decision makers help protect and preserve their essential features and enable their significance and character to be protected through the planning system.
- 4.2.2 The Gnoll is a grade II* listed historic park and garden (PGW(Gm)50(NEP)). The park is described in detail within the Conservation Management Plan (Baggott 2022); the following is the description of the park by Cadw:

The Gnoll was located on a prominent, steep-sided hill or knoll, on the east side of Neath.

It is registered for the survival of its largely eighteenth-century landscape park, which is of great historic interest, in its original rural setting above Neath. It lies on the flank of the Vale of Neath, long famed for its picturesque beauty. The landscape of The Gnoll is exceptional for its combination of industrial and ornamental functions and for its strong visual relationship with the surrounding countryside. The eighteenth-century landscaping is of several phases, including an exceptionally interesting early transitional layout by Thomas Greening, in the style of Stephen Switzer, with formal and informal elements, including a (restored) formal cascade. The following phases include an outstanding informal cascade of the 1740s and the later eighteenth-century follies of a rock-hewn grotto and the Ivy Tower, which forms a prominent landmark in the Neath valley. Although the park's historic character has been somewhat diluted through the loss of the house and planting, most of its structural elements remain intact or have been restored or rebuilt. Most of the major developments in the park and grounds took place during the eighteenth century under the ownership of the Mackworth family.

The park lies on elevated, rolling ground on the south flank of the Vale of Neath. It is linear, orientated north-east by south-west. Its eastern, upper side is largely wooded, its western side more open. On the east the ground rises towards the high ground of Cefn Morfydd, while to the south and west it drops below the park to the town of Neath. The house is sited on a prominent hill at the south-western end of the park. There are three ponds and a late nineteenth-century reservoir, to supply water for coal mining and copper smelting, and for ornament.

South of the house site, at the south end of the park, is the wooded Preswylfa valley, largely deciduous, with the Great Pond half way along it. To the north is an open area of parkland, the largest pond, the Fishpond,

and a smaller pond with two small islands. Fishpond Wood is mature woodland containing the (restored) formal cascade to the east and remnants of a more extensive lime avenue. This is aligned on a long formal axis from the north end of the hill on which the house stood, across the ha-ha and up the cascade to Brynau Wood and Cefn Morfydd, beyond the park.

The northern part of the park comprises open ground on the western side, now partly a golf course, and Mosshouse Wood, mixed woodland which extends from Fishpond Wood on the south to high ground on the north. It contains the reservoir and a long, informal Grade II Listed cascade (LB 22870). There are also several eighteenth-century follies including the rebuilt 'gazebo' and a Grade II Listed Grotto (LB 22860). The final feature of the landscape park is Grade II Listed Ivy Tower (LB 11768), a prominent eighteenth-century eye-catcher folly tower situated on a hilltop to the north of Mosshouse Wood, overlooking the park and the Vale of Neath.

There have been several entrances at The Gnoll, only two of which remain in use. An entrance with imposing castellated stone archway and a simple iron gate now lies on Gnoll Avenue. Inside the entrance the former drive, now a public road, is lined with pines, leading to the Grade II Listed War Memorial Gate of Honour entrance (LB 11784). Inside, a tarmac drive runs eastwards up the Preswylfa valley. A former entrance at the end of Gnoll Avenue is marked by Grade II Listed gate and lodges (LB 11782).

The garden and pleasure grounds lie on the hill on which the house once stood. The garden consists of the terrace to the west of the house site, which looks out over the town and beyond. It is a rectangular grassy platform bounded with a low stone parapet wall on the west and a revetment wall on the east, accessed from the house by a flight of steps. Below is an area of deciduous woodland with ornamental understorey. At the north end is a curving recessed stone seat and a yew on a small mound. To the south of the house is the oval forecourt area, with grass in the centre. Two paths now lead into it.

The grounds lie mainly to the east of the house site but also on the slopes of the hill to the west and south. The crown of the hill is occupied by wooded grounds laid out informally, with paths and a few open areas. The south side is bounded by a stone revetment walling. Below on the south-east is a walled enclosure, formerly the herbaceous garden but now rough grass. On the hill summit is the bowling green, a roughly circular level lawn surrounded by rhododendrons and mixed trees. To the north is a gentle slope down to a long, level, grass terrace running east-west from the north end of the house to a ha-ha on the east. North of the terrace is an area of mixed ornamental woodland and shrubs, with some bamboo clumps.

The former kitchen gardens lie to the east of the pleasure grounds, on ground sloping gently to the south, and have origins in the mid-eighteenth century. To their west is Gnoll Cottage, or Little Gnoll House, and garden. The kitchen gardens form three compartments. The northernmost is roughly oval in shape, partially walled and under rough grass. The others occupy a roughly rectangular area adjoining on the south, bounded by walls 2.5m-4.5m high with a wide entrance at the east end. The east compartment is on two levels; on the upper one is a modern glasshouse; on the lower one are two long, parallel ranges of single-storey stone and brick bothies. To their south are three modern

glasshouses set at right-angles to the bothies. The third compartment, to the west, is roughly square, the south-east corner rounded and with an entrance towards the west end of the south side. Tipping has raised the ground level in this compartment.

Setting - *The Gnoll stood on a prominent, steep-sided hill or knoll, hence its name, on the east side of the town, the park lying on the flank of the Vale of Neath, well known for its picturesque beauty. Urban expansion means that the town now abuts the southern and western margins of the park.*

Significant views - *From the main west front of the house there were magnificent views out over the town and Vale of Neath, and from the pleasure grounds views east towards the higher ground of Cefn Morfudd. The view eastwards from the end of the pleasure ground terrace is across the sloping park to the Fishpond and up the cascade on the wooded slope beyond. The Ivy Tower folly, at the north end of the park, afforded panoramic views over the park and the Vale of Neath.*

4.3 Listed Buildings

- 4.3.1 Listed buildings are buildings and structures of national importance given legal protection by being placed on a 'List' of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. Buildings on the List are given one of three grades which denote their level of importance (Grades I, II* and II), Grade I being the highest level. A listed building may not be demolished, extended or altered without special permission from the local planning authority.
- 4.3.2 There are 81 listed buildings within the search area, of which six are Grade II* and the remainder are all Grade II.
- 4.3.3 Of these sites, the majority (44 listed buildings) lie within the historic centre of Neath to the west and are of no direct relevance to the project area or proposed works within it. Similarly, to the northwest, there is a collection of eight former almshouses on the northern side of Neath, a warehouse to the south in Cimla, and a collection of 19 listed buildings in Tonna to the north that are also of no direct relevance to the project area or proposed works within it. These sites have therefore been discounted from further study.
- 4.3.4 There are five Grade II listed buildings that are directly linked to the parkland. These are described in the registered parkland description above, and comprise:
- 11768 Ivy Tower
 - 11782 Former Gate and Lodges to Gnoll House
 - 11784 War Memorial Gates
 - 22860 Grotto in Gnoll Estate
 - 22870 Moss-house Wood Cascade
- 4.3.5 At the entrance to Fairyland Road, which provides an access route to some parts of the park, lies the Grade II* listed Parish Church of St Illtyd (11797), a 13th century church with mid-19th century restoration, and its Grade II listed Gatepiers (11798).

4.4 Scheduled Monuments

- 4.4.1 Scheduled monuments are historic and archaeological sites considered to be of national importance. These sites are given legal protection, and consideration of the impact of development upon these sites and their settings are important aspects of the planning process.
- 4.4.2 There are no scheduled monuments within the boundaries of the park.
- 4.3.3 There are five scheduled monuments within the 1km study area. Approximately 800m to the west lies **GM039 Neath Castle**, a medieval castle site first built by the Normans in the centre of Neath. Approximately 500m to the east, on the ridge top beyond Mosshouse Wood, lies **GM264 Cefn Morfydd Dyke and Earthwork**, a c.410m long curving defensive bank and ditch with an oval earthwork nearby, likely dating to the later prehistoric or early medieval period. Another 200m east lies **GM447 Glyncorrwg Mineral Railway**, built between 1839-41 as a horse-operated tramroad carrying coal to the Neath Canal. Around 1km to the north lies **GM505 Canal Boat at Aberdulais Basin**, a late-19th century canal boat. Nearby lies **GM506 Aberdulais Aqueduct**, part of the Neath canal built in 1824.

4.5 Conservation Areas

- 4.5.1 Conservation Areas are designated to preserve and enhance the special character of areas of architectural or historic interest. The purpose of designating a Conservation Area is to provide the Planning Authority with an additional measure of control over an area that they consider to be of special historic and/or architectural value.
- 4.4.2 The proposed development area does not lie within a Conservation Area. The nearest is Neath Town Centre, the edge of which lies within 30m to the west of the park. Features of importance include the traditional commercial centre of Neath with some small shop units, the general market, public buildings, the castle, St.Thomas' church, Victoria Gardens and other architectural features and structures.
- 4.4.3 Just over 700m north of the park lies Tonna Canal Depot, a small area around the Neath Canal at Tonna, including the restored canal depot and workshops, canal structures including lock and lock gates, and the residential lock house property.

4.6 Registered Historic Landscapes

- 4.6.1 Registered Historic Landscapes are landscapes of historic interest included on the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales (Cadw 1998). The landscape boundaries and associated details have been created as non-statutory advice to assist decision makers and landscape managers ensure that the historic character of the landscape is sustained, and that where change is contemplated, it is well-informed.
- 4.6.2 The proposed development area does not lie within a Registered Historic Landscape.

The Gnoll, Neath Port Talbot:
Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment

Table 2: Designated historic assets in the vicinity of the development area discussed above.

Site / Building Name	Cadw Ref.	NGR	Designation
The Gnoll	PGW(Gm)50 (NEP)	276824 197582	Grade II* listed Park & Gardens
Ivy Tower	11768	277640 198291	Grade II Listed building
Former Gate & Lodges to Gnoll House	11782	275641 197318	Grade II Listed building
War Memorial Gates	11784	275898 197092	Grade II Listed building
Grotto in Gnoll Estate	22860	278044 198090	Grade II Listed building
Mosshouse Wood Cascade	22870	277860 198085	Grade II Listed building
Parish Church of St Illtyd	11797	276195 198038	Grade II* Listed building
Neath Castle	GM039	275364 197801	Scheduled Monument
Cefm Morfydd Dyke and Earthwork	GM264	278740 198082	Scheduled Monument
Glyncorwg Mineral Railway	GM447	278994 198122	Scheduled Monument
Canal Boat at Aberdulais Basin	GM505	277362 199343	Scheduled Monument
Aberdulais Aqueduct	GM506	277291 199292	Scheduled Monument
Neath Town Centre	-	27535 19746	Conservation Area
Tonna Canal Depot	-	27693 19879	Conservation Area

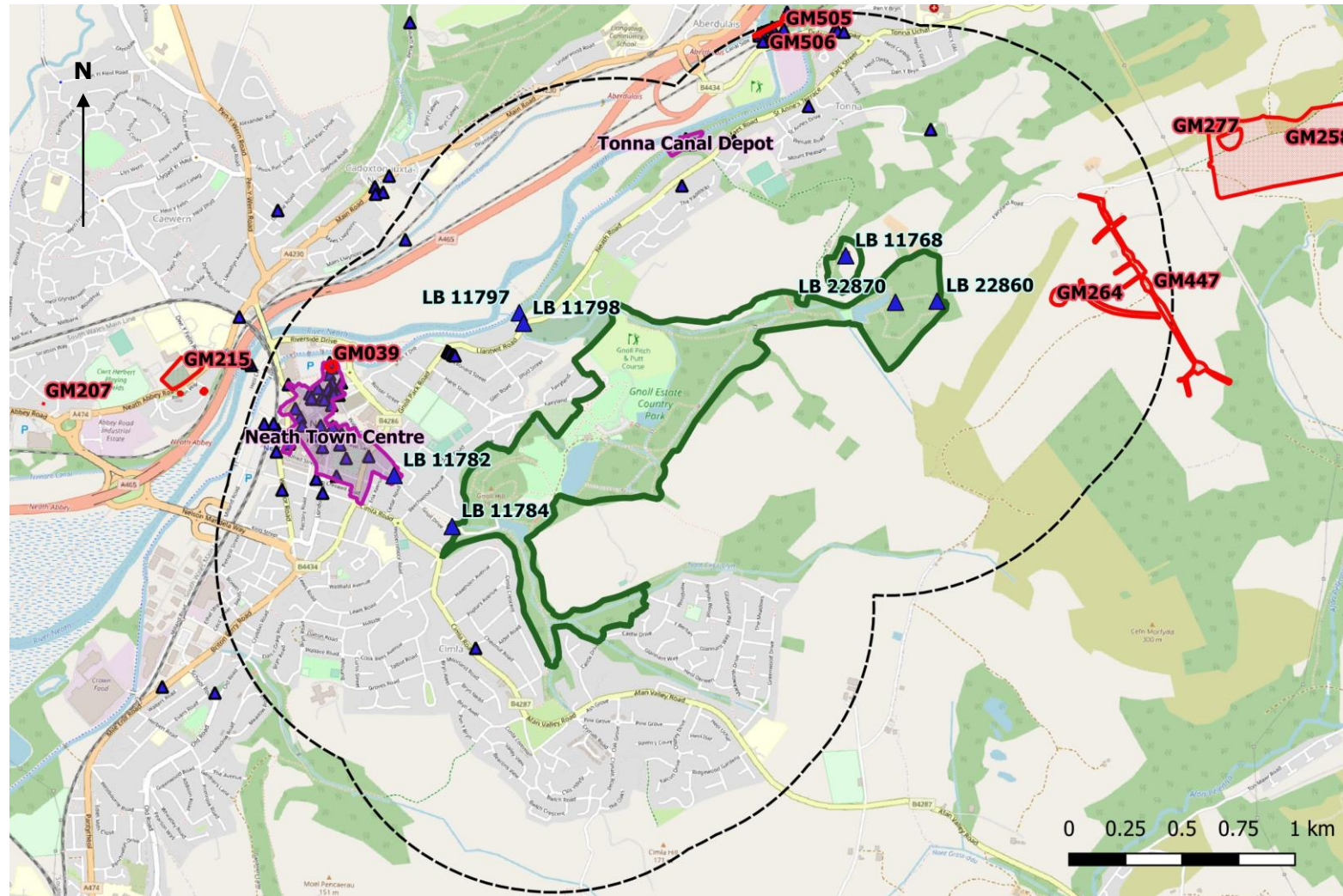


Figure 3: Map showing designated sites in the 1km study area (dotted line), including the registered park (green line), scheduled monuments (red), listed buildings (blue) and conservation areas (purple).

Map data from OpenStreetMap (OSM) <https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright> 29/05/2023

5 NON-DESIGNATED HISTORIC ASSETS (Table 5 and Figs 4 and 5)

5.1 General

- 5.1.1 A search of the regional Historic Environment Record (HER), held and maintained by the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (enquiry reference - 7014) and other databases was made within the 1km search area around the proposed development.
- 5.1.2 The HER records 196 historic assets within the search area, of which 29 are recorded within the bounds of the registered parkland/proposed development area itself. Seven assets are also recorded on the NMR database, held and maintained by RCAHMW, within the registered parkland/proposed development but no additional sites to those recorded on the HER are present within this area, although the NMR data does contain additional detail.
- 5.1.3 The following information is laid out chronologically to provide a brief archaeological and historical background for the development area and its environs for each period, along with the relevant HER entries pertaining to that period. Detailed research into the post-medieval Gnoll House and the parkland estate has been carried out by Baggot (2022), presented in the Conservation Management Plan. Information from this, and other published documentary sources, is included within the following summaries.

5.2 Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic

- 5.2.1 No sites dating from these periods are recorded within the 1km radius study area. Evidence of activity during the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods in the wider landscape also appears to be lacking. A stone axe head, dating to the Neolithic, is recorded on the National Museum of Wales database, recovered from the Aberdulais area to the north but there appears to be little evidence of extensive Neolithic activity in the locality.

5.3 Bronze Age

- 5.3.1 There are two sites of Bronze Age date within the 1km search area. Both sites (PRNs 00608w and 00609w) lie on the prominent Cefn Morfudd ridgeline to the east and comprise low mounds of earth and stone. These sites may be remnants of Bronze Age barrows, funerary and ritual sites which are often placed in visually prominent locations such as this ridgeline. There does appear to be some doubt however over their provenance; PRN 00608w in particular is described as 'unlikely to be of funerary origin', but the presence of other Bronze Age funerary and ritual sites along this ridgeline suggests a good potential for such Bronze Age activity on Cefn Morfudd. These sites would have been prominent features when viewed from lower ground to the west, suggesting activity within the Neath Valley. There is currently little record to indicate the nature of this activity, and whether the lower valley would have been an important routeway, or the site of settlement. A Bronze Age spearhead has been recovered from the Millend area of Neath (Phillips 1925) but at present there is little indication of Bronze Age activity within the proposed development area.

5.4 Iron Age

- 5.4.1 One site is recorded within the 1km study area that has been dated to the Iron Age, also located on the Cefn Morfudd ridge. An archaeological

watching brief in 2004 uncovered remains of an oval enclosure defended by a bank and ditch (PRN 08332w). The form suggests an Iron Age enclosure which appeared to be either unfinished or damaged. No further evidence of Iron Age activity closer to the proposed development area has yet come to light.

5.5 Roman

- 5.5.1 There are no recorded sites of Roman date within the 1km search area. One record, PRN 07969w, is included in the HER search data but this site actually lies further to the south. However, Neath itself was the site of a fort and civilian settlement during the Roman period (Tuck 2018), both of which lie outside the 1km search area but indicate activity within the valley during this period. Similarly, a large Roman marching camp lies in the upland area of Blaen Cwmbach to the northeast which has been attributed to the invasion campaigns of Sextus Julius Frontinus during the period AD73-78. At present however there is little indication of Roman activity within the proposed development area itself.

5.6 Early Medieval and Medieval

- 5.6.1 There appear to be two main focal areas of activity during the early medieval period. On Cefn Morfudd ridge lies a large dyke (PRN 02790w) comprising a bank and ditch curving gently along a saddle between Mynydd Cefn Morfudd to the south and the Gwenffrwd ridge to the north. It is built in three sections with a central opening. A square platform lies on the east side (PRN 00636w), which may have been a building platform. This dyke has been dated to the early medieval period based on similar examples within Wales and the Welsh/English border area.
- 5.6.2 The second focal point is St. Illtyd's Church (PRN 00628w) which is first recorded in the 13th century but is thought to have pre-Norman origins. The early origins are suggested by the presence of 9th to 10th century panelled cross slabs (PRNs 00625w and 02207w) which were originally found in the churchyard, the curvilinear nature of the churchyard itself and possible outer enclosure (PRN 05666w), and the dedication to a Welsh saint. This suggests continued activity along the Neath valley during the early medieval period but the layout of settlement areas and interconnecting transport routes is little understood at present.
- 5.6.3 More extensive settlement in Neath was established during the medieval period. A castle was established by Richard de Glanville in the 1120s alongside a river crossing, possibly partly reusing earlier Roman defences. This had been dismantled by 1207, but a second castle (PRN 00624w) had already been built on the east side of the river by the 1180s. This castle remained in use until the mid-17th century, the ruins of which still stand. Associated settlement in Neath (PRN 02782w) is first referenced in the 1160s when it was attacked but it is likely to have been contemporary to the new castle, laid out around it. The town may also have been defended (PRN 02784w), but poorly so, leading to a rapid decline in the 13th century. A new timber bridge was built in Neath but too far from the castle to be easily defended, and a weir across the river built further downstream by the monks of Neath Abbey (established in 1129-30) limited river traffic to the town. However, the castle remained an important stronghold, rebuilt in the 13th century, and the town continued, with a water mill (PRN 00634w) and quay (PRN 06885w) also recorded. The focus of this settlement is likely to have been largely confined to the lower-lying areas of the valley surrounding the castle and alongside the river.

- 5.6.4 As previously mentioned, St. Illtyd's Church (PRN 00628w) was first mentioned in the 13th century but was likely to have been well-established by that time, lying to the north of the town. A chapel of ease (PRN 00635w) associated with St. Illtyd's was established within the relatively new town by the 13th century and later became St. Thomas's Church (PRN 01754w).
- 5.6.5 Some of the lands surrounding Neath, such as the upland areas around Cefn Saison, were granted to Neath Abbey (established in 1129-30) and managed as a grange (PRN 05279w). It is likely this grange would have included extensive grazing lands, possibly extending into the current parkland area although no clear medieval boundaries or agricultural features have been identified within the park. Coal was being mined on Abbey lands in the Neath area during the medieval period, the first records of which come from the 13th century (Trott 1969; 48). Later coal mines are recorded throughout the area, including some within the park, although no medieval mining has been identified.
- 5.6.6 There is no clear record of activity within the proposed development area during the medieval period. A medieval arrowhead (PRN 01419w) was apparently uncovered within the Gnoll grounds but the exact location and significance of this find is unclear. A medieval house (PRN 06105w) is recorded within the grounds but this record actually refers to a later post-medieval building.

5.7 Post-medieval and Modern periods

- 5.7.1 A large number of the HER records from the 1km search area relate to the 18th to 20th century industrialisation and development of Neath and Tonna. They include collieries and their associated infrastructure, iron foundry, canal and tinplate works, as well as many 19th century municipal buildings within the centre of the town. These records indicate the rapid growth of the town during this period as a result of the industrialisation of the Neath valley, but this is also intrinsically linked to the development of the Gnoll Estate.
- 5.7.2 The history of the Gnoll Estate (PRN 02783w) spans the entirety of the post-medieval period. The earliest recorded owners were the Earls of Pembroke. Henry Herbert, 2nd Earl of Pembroke, was gifted the estate by Queen Elizabeth I. The Earls of Pembroke did not live in the area and by the early 17th century the estate was being leased to the Evans family who appear to be a successful local family. One of the most prominent early members was Evan yr Halen (possibly also known as Evan ap David) who, as his names suggest, made his money through the salt trade and was made high sheriff of Glamorgan in 1565. In 1612 the Earls of Pembroke granted Leyson Evans (and others) the right to mine coal from the area (Trott 1969; 51), adding to their wealth. Leyson's son, David Evans (1576 – 1638), is recorded as leasing the Gnoll estate from the Earls of Pembroke in the early 17th century and was the first to be referred to as 'of the Gnoll'. In 1620 David Evans was also granted a lease to mine coal on lands adjacent to this estate (Trott 1969; 51), and it is likely that coal mining around the later Gnoll Colliery (PRN 08619w) and Cimla area may have started around this time. David's son Edward considerably expanded coal mining activities in the Neath area, including mining on the Gnoll estate, although the exact location of these mines is not recorded.
- 5.7.3 It is possible David Evans built the first house at the Gnoll. A lease agreement in 1658 mentions that a 'new house' should be built at the

Gnoll, suggesting a house may already have been in existence (Green 1979). A management plan (Green Flag 2018) suggests 1621 as a likely date for the establishment of such a house although it is unclear where this date comes from. David Evans was clearly a prominent member of the local community; he had married Ellen Price, daughter of Sir Richard Pryse of Gogerddan and was made High Sheriff of Glamorgan in 1632. David's grandson, Sir Herbert Evans (c.1626 – 1679) bought the estate from the Earls of Pembroke and was recorded as the owner in 1658 when his uncle, Thomas, leased the estate from him. It was part of this lease agreement that stipulated a 'new house' should be built at the Gnoll. A date plaque of 1666 was reputedly found at the house (Green 1979), which may be associated with this 'new house' built by Thomas Evans.

- 5.7.4 The 1666 house has been identified as a hall house, which was located on the site of the current mansion remains (PRN 00618w), having been re-used as a laundry within the later mansion. The Gnoll estate was also clearly expanding at this time. As well as his purchase, Sir Herbert Evans was also leasing a further 20 acres of land as part of the estate from the Earls of Pembroke, which included the lands of 'Harle' (PRN 06103w) to the north of the Gnoll. Harle was a farm and remained a complex of buildings until the 20th century. Its lands lay to the north of the farm and presumably included the area of the current car park, golf course and Upper Fishpond/Guinea Pond. These lands were purchased outright as part of the estate in 1663 (Trott, 1969; 53). The coal mining activities of the Evans family also extended across the Harle lands and by this time the Evans family controlled the majority of coal reserves throughout the Neath area. These 17th century mines are likely to have been relatively shallow, extracting the most easily accessible deposits, which may have been worked on a seasonal basis. The location of these early mines throughout the Gnoll estate have not been identified.
- 5.7.5 Sir Herbert Evans died in 1679, the estate passing to his daughter Mary. She however was still a minor and it appears the estate was being managed by David Evans, who had married Sir Herbert's widow (Hayton et al 2002). In 1686 Mary Evans married Sir Humphrey Mackworth, although he was not able to take direct control of the Gnoll estate until the death of David Evans in 1696. Sir Humphrey set about reviving the coal mines which had fallen into disrepair in the final decades of the 17th century due to issues around flooding and ventilation. He brought in skilled miners from Shropshire and elsewhere, invested in the mines, and by 1695 Neath was noted for its coal exports (to the west of England, the Channel Islands, France and Ireland) (Locock 1992). Mackworth also installed one of the first tramways in Wales to transport his raw materials. These mines were now able to work deeper seams and a number of shafts were sunk, largely concentrated in the area between the Gnoll/Neath Brook to the southwest of the Gnoll and the present Cimla Road.
- 5.7.6 Sir Humphrey Mackworth had also invested heavily in metal mining operations in Ceredigion, helping establish the Mine Adventurers Company, and was keen to establish sites to process the ore coming from these mines. The coal was needed to smelt the metal ores, and as the volume of coal required was greater than that of the metal ores it was cheaper to send the ore to the coal. The first processing mill that Sir Humphrey Mackworth set up was built in Melincryddan to the southwest in 1695, using local coal to smelt imported copper, lead, silver and 'litharge' (a lead oxide).

- 5.7.7 In the early 18th century, possibly around 1703, the 'Great Pond' was established in the valley immediately south of the Gnoll to provide a regulated source of water-power for Mackworth's industrial concerns. This allowed further industrialisation of both the Melincryddan watercourse and the Neath/Gnoll Brook. It included a brass battery mill (using water-powered hammers to 'batter' plate copper) immediately below the pond (PRN 03307w), which continued to operate into the 19th century. Further mills were established along these watercourses and housing was established in Neath for the workers at these enterprises. In 1705 a second pond was added, the 'Upper Great Pond', also now known as the Fishpond (PRN 06900w), to both aid in the industrial enterprises and enhance the estate itself.
- 5.7.8 Between 1695 and 1704 Mackworth introduced a number of key developments to the house and estate. In 1702 he carried out alterations to the house (PRN 00618w), adding buildings to enclose a courtyard to the north, a coach house, servants' quarters and a water storage tank. In the immediate grounds he introduced a formal terrace, parterres (a symmetrical layout of ornamental planting beds, hedges and paths) and an avenue of sweet chestnuts (Baggott 2022). A small reservoir (PRN 03309w) was built above the house and fed by water pumped up from the Upper Great Pond, possibly to provide water to the house and grounds although this may have been short-lived.
- 5.7.9 By the 1720s Sir Humphrey Mackworth's son Herbert was more actively involved in the estate, and in 1724 he commissioned Thomas Greening to design a new parkland landscape (PRN 02783w). Greening produced an 'exceptionally interesting early transitional layout' in the style of Stephen Switzer, with formal and informal elements, including a formal cascade. This transitional style bridged the formality of the typical 17th century French style of gardens and grounds and the late 18th century English style of which Capability Brown was a famous proponent. This design included the laying out of the main visual corridor from the house eastwards, towards a new ha-ha, across the Upper Great Pond and towards the new formal cascades (PRN 02890w). A letter of 1727 indicates that much of the work had been done by that time, with trees planted along the main views. A question of how to plant the hills surrounding the formal cascade suggests that Fishpond Wood and surrounding slopes had not yet been established.
- 5.7.10 Herbert inherited the estate on his father's death in 1727 and continued his improvements to the Gnoll estate. In the 1730s he extended the house (PRN 00618w) and it is possibly during his tenure that the ice house (PRN 06104w) was built to the north. Herbert also employed 28 men to beautify the gardens, and the kitchen gardens to the south of the Gnoll were laid out during this period. In the 1740s natural (informal) cascades (LB 22870) were created in Mosshouse Woods, fed by a smaller pond, followed by the construction of the grotto (PRN 01948w/07364w). A circular structure (PRN 01950w) visible on contemporary estate maps (see section 6.3) may indicate the location of the Moss House after which the woods were named.
- 5.7.11 In 1765 Herbert Mackworth died. Between 1776 and 1778 Herbert's son, also called Herbert, extended the house again, adding crenellated north and south wings to create the impression of castle towers in the Georgian style and adding domestic offices and a servants hall. The architect was John Johnson of Leicester. At this time the house had three-storeys, with an attached glass conservatory. In the 1770s the Upper Great Pond was enlarged, which cut off the former Harle Lane through the estate and led

to a minor flood, resulting in a legal challenge to Herbert in Parliament. By 1780, further follies had been built (PRN 01952w), as had a gatehouse on Gnoll Avenue (LB 11782) and the Ivy Tower (PRN 01951w). The Ivy Tower, originally called the Belvedere, housed a caretaker and/or gamekeeper on the ground floor, with a dance floor and banqueting area above. The interior was destroyed by fire in 1920. The late 18th century is seen as the heyday of the grounds. Cefn Morfydd Castle was added as an eyecatcher, presumably to the ridgeline to the east of the park.

- 5.7.12 Herbert died in 1791 and was succeeded by his son, Sir Robert Humphrey Mackworth. He however died only a few years later, in 1794, leaving his 18-year-old widow Mary Ann (also known as 'Molly') in charge of the estate. She remarried in 1797, to Capel Hanbury-Leigh, and it is possible they subsequently spent much time at his family properties in Pontypool. This may have led to some decline in the estate, and its sale in 1811 to Henry Grant.
- 5.7.13 Henry Grant lived at the Gnoll until his death in 1832, and appears to have invested in it, with the house being referred to in 1822 as a "delightful mansion" and "one of the finest in the principality". Henry's son, Henry John Grant, remains at the Gnoll after his father's death but a period of downsizing begins. In 1845 the northeast wing of the house was demolished. In 1857 or 1861 he sold a substantial part of the estate, and proposals were put forward to use the house as the college of the Western University of Great Britain. Henry John died in around 1861, the estate passing to his cousin, Charles Evan Thomas. The Thomas family apparently had lavish tastes, including an impressive wine collection, but did not appear to possess sufficient funds to go with it. In 1881 the castellations were removed from Gnoll House and the east wing demolished, due to money shortages and tax liabilities. There are also references in 1909 to part of the house being pulled down.
- 5.7.14 19th century maps show the gradual loss of some of the estate features, including the formal cascades (PRN 02890w). Two new gardens were introduced during this period however; a rose garden and an herbaceous garden on the south side of the Gnoll. Tree and rhododendron planting also continued. In the later 19th century Charles Evans Thomas came to an agreement with the Neath Corporation for the building of the Mosshouse Wood reservoir (PRN 06094w), dated to 1889. By the early 20th century two tennis courts had been added to the grounds around the Gnoll, visible as rectangular areas on the 1918 Ordnance Survey map. During the 19th century it would appear that coal mining activity returned to the estate. Coal mining had continued in the surrounding area throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, but later 19th century and early 20th century maps show a spread of coal shafts and levels (PRNs 06100w, 06102w and 07366w) largely around the periphery of the estate.
- 5.7.15 In the early 1920s the Neath Corporation, or Borough Council, purchased the estate and the war memorial gates (PRN 08925w) were erected in 1921. It is not clear if the estate was purchased from Charles Evan Thomas or from his inheritors, Edmund and Llewellyn Evan Thomas. By this time the house had ceased to be a private residence and in 1925 a health clinic was established there. In 1928 public open-air baths were officially opened on the lower pond (Great Pond) at the western end of the estate, with a concrete apron and bathing hut added. During the Second World War the house was turned over for use by ARP personnel for exercises and training, which presumably included some of the surrounding grounds as well.

- 5.7.16 The mid-20th century appears to have been a period of general neglect for the house and grounds. In 1957 the house, having stood derelict for some years, was demolished. By the early 1960s the open air swimming pool had closed after a new swimming pool was built in the town in 1963. Since the 1980s there have been attempts at restoring the estate. The formal cascades were restored in 1984/5 and the grotto in Mosshouse Woods was rediscovered and uncovered. Country Park status was granted in 1987 but it was not until 1995 that a visitor centre and adventure playground were built, along with improved car parking facilities. In 1996 a nine-hole pitch and putt golf course was established on the parkland to the north of the car park, and an accessible children's playground was also built. In 2008 the facilities were overhauled, redesigned and improved, the visitor centre was refurbished in 2009 and the golf course was reconfigured in 2010. In 2021 an outdoor seating area was added to the visitor centre.

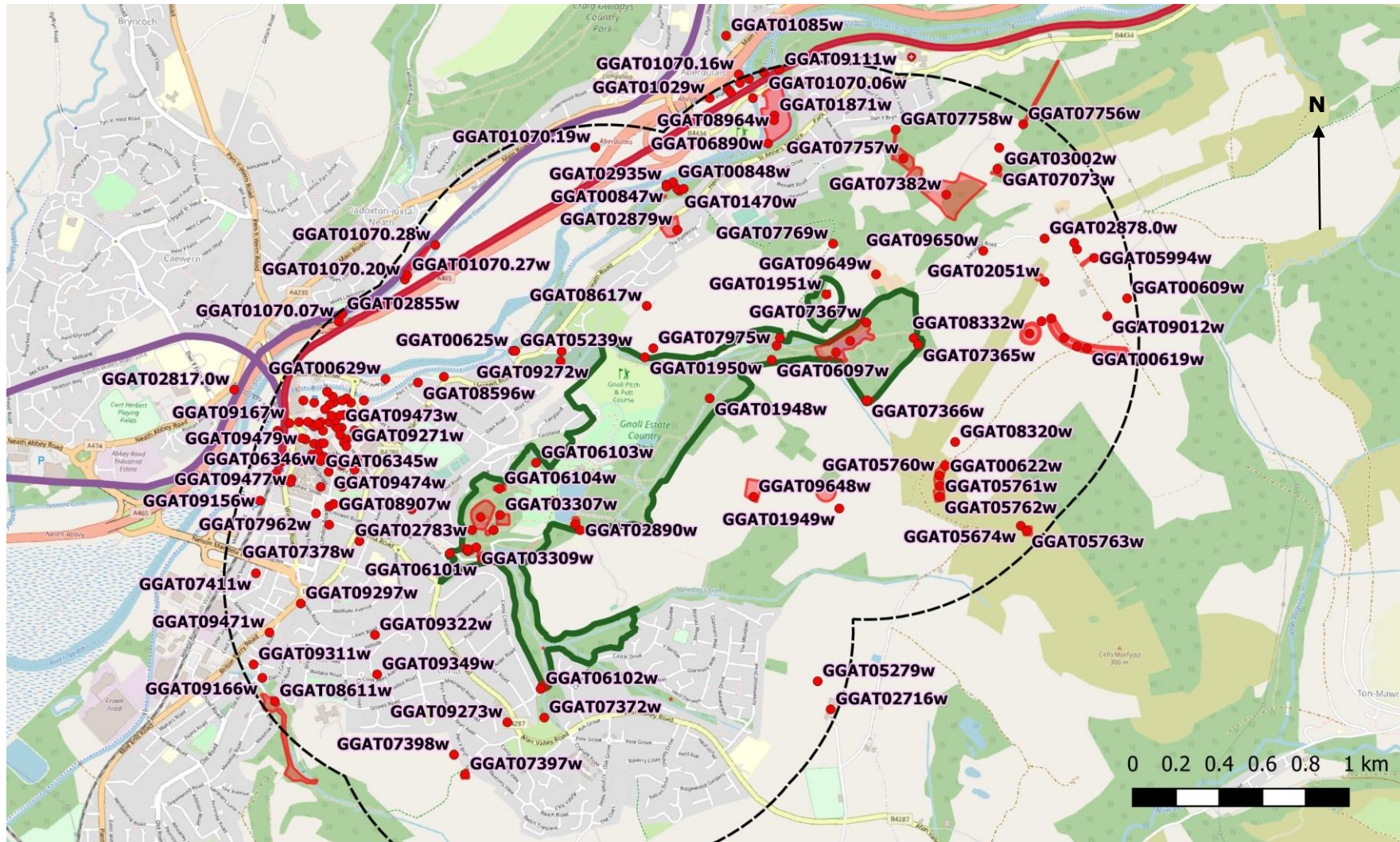


Figure 4: Map showing all sites recorded on the HER in the 1km study area (dotted line), labelled by PRN. Due to the density of sites, not all are labelled.

Map data from OpenStreetMap (OSM) <https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright> 09/06/2023

The Gnoll, Neath Port Talbot:
Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment

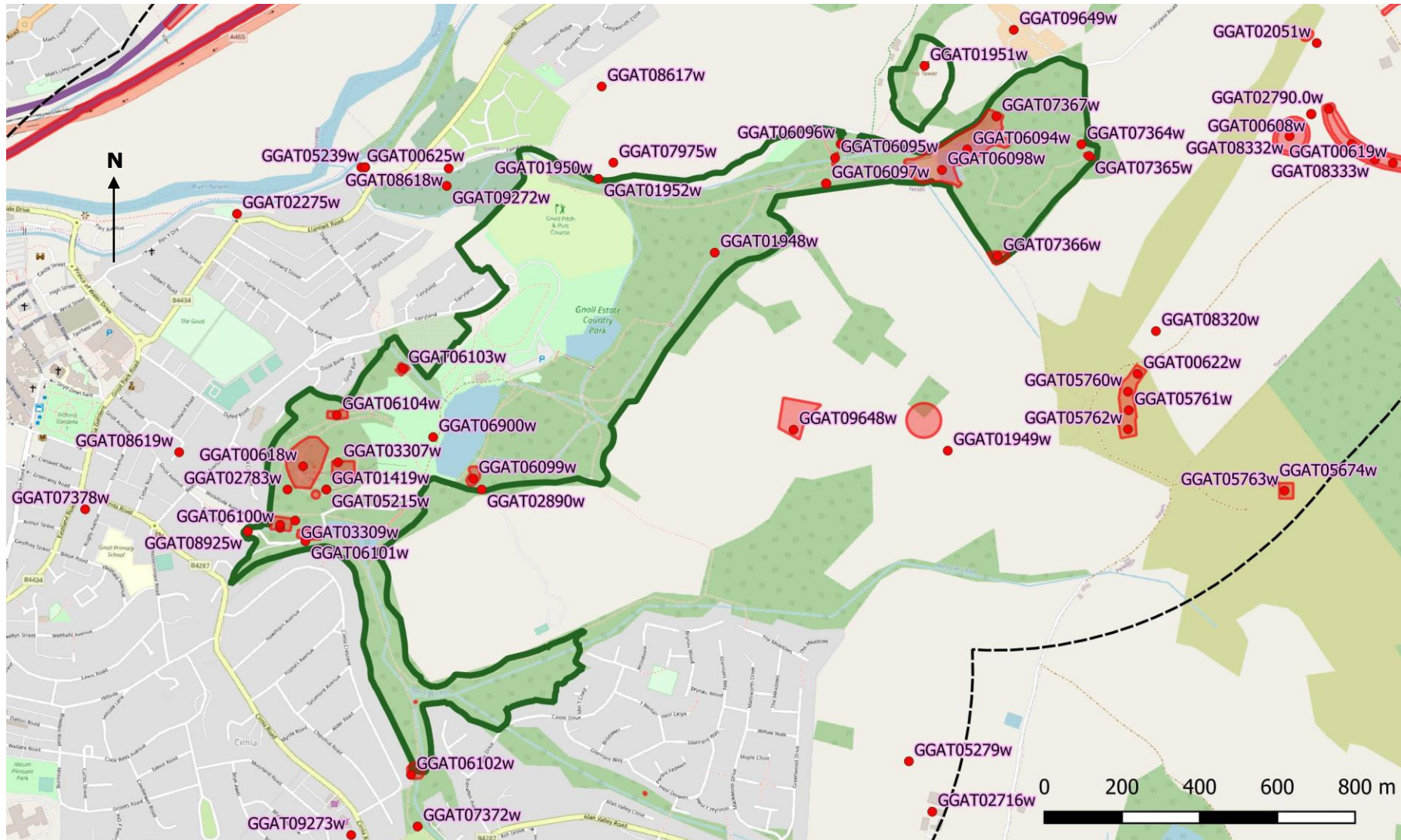


Figure 5: Map showing sites recorded on the HER within the limits of the registered parkland, excluding sites in Neath town centre, labelled by PRN.

Map data from OpenStreetMap (OSM) <https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright> 09/06/2023

6 ASSESSMENT OF EVIDENCE

6.1 General

- 6.1.1 Sections 4 and 5 have described the known archaeological resource for the area, recorded on the regional databases of historic assets. The following section examines some of the main sources of information that could expand the current understanding of the archaeological resource and highlight previously unrecorded historic assets. Additional assets have been given the prefix 'GP' and numbered concurrently for ease of reference in the assessment.

6.2 Previous Archaeological Work

- 6.2.1 In 1992 Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation and assessment of the Gnoll Park estate (Locock 1992). The evaluation concentrated on two areas; Area 1 comprised the valley to the south of Gnoll House, below and to the west of the Great Pond, and Area 2 comprised the circular bowling green/croquet lawn to the east of Gnoll House.
- 6.2.2 Area 1 was known as a former industrial area, the site of a series of 18th century water-powered mills (PRN 03307w). No standing remains were visible and the valley had been the location of rubble dumps following the demolition of Gnoll House in the 1950s. Two trenches were excavated, revealing a stone-lined channel thought to be a late 17th century mill tail race, covered by at least two phases of masonry building, thought to be the remains of the 18th century mills. The building had been demolished and was overlaid by a 19th century iron water pipe.
- 6.2.3 Area 2 comprised a levelled circular area on the summit of the Gnoll. It had been suggested as the possible location of 'Gnoll Castle' and a reservoir (PRN 03309w) is shown on the site on a 1720 plan. Two trenches were excavated in this area, revealing a large rock-cut feature, at least 15m wide and 3m deep, thought to be remains of the reservoir. This was infilled with rubble and the bowling green laid out above. No evidence of any castle feature was uncovered.
- 6.2.4 To supplement the results of the evaluation, a desk-based assessment was carried out, which also examined 18th century estate plans. This concluded that the rock-cut feature under the bowling green/croquet lawn was a reservoir, extant in 1720 and fed by a pipe (GP01) from the Upper Pond. This was likely used to provide a constant water supply to Gnoll House, or possibly just for ornamental purposes, and it was suggested the water was pumped from the Upper Pond via a horse gin-powered mechanism. The assessment goes on to provide a potted history of Sir Humphrey Mackworth and his impact on the industrial landscape of Neath.
- 6.2.5 In 1993 GGAT undertook a survey of the remains of the 18th century formal cascade (PRN 02890w) at Gnoll Park prior to reconstruction works (Currie et al, 1994). A detailed description of the cascade was provided, which was split into two main functions. The upper part was concerned mainly with water management, including a reservoir and the lower part was for display, the two separated by a leat and bank pierced by a brick culvert. The lower section comprised a series of steps, glides (gently sloping pools) and tumbles (sloping channels with protruding stones) with a complex spout arrangement towards the base. The cascade was built almost entirely of local stone, with some brickwork and timber spouts partially surviving at the base. It appeared to be mainly drystone with

clay bonding and mortar used only occasionally. The upper part included three phases of construction, demonstrated by a series of intercutting leats, small stone and brick structures and a reservoir, all bringing and controlling the flow of water to the cascades. An earlier artificial water course and a road (GP02) were revealed below the cascade. The road ran east to southeast up the hillside, 5m wide, with a stone-lined drainage trough along one side.

- 6.2.6 In discussing the importance of the cascade the report highlights the relative rarity of such features in the UK. Drawing on Roman inspiration, cascades were more common in Renaissance Italy, spreading, less frequently, to France. In the UK, those at Chatsworth and Dyrham appear to have been the largest examples in the late 17th century, with that on the Gnoll estate constructed in a period of slightly later cascades, which included examples at Harrow in Middlesex, Shireoaks in Worksop, Bramham and Castle Howard in Yorkshire, Stanway House in Gloucestershire and Drumlanrig Castle in Scotland. In terms of comparisons, the Gnoll cascade is considered to be one of the finer examples. Cascades appear to have fallen out of fashion by the later 18th century before the idea became firmly established in grand landscape designs.
- 6.2.7 In 2012, as part of a Cadw-funded project assessing mills and water power in Glamorgan and Gwent, a field visit was carried out to the site of the previous evaluation to the south of the Gnoll (Bowden and Roberts 2012). No further detail regarding the former mill site in this area was recorded. In 2009 the Gnoll Park area fell into a wider assessment examining woodlands to produce management advice for new and existing sites under the Better Woodlands for Wales scheme. The report highlighted the park as a distinctive area but provided little further detail on the park (Thomas 2009).
- 6.2.8 Multiple further archaeological investigations have been undertaken within the 1km wide study area surrounding the site, but no further archaeological work has been recorded within the bounds of the park. Whilst providing valuable information illustrating the archaeological development of the wider area they are of little direct relevance to the proposed development area itself.

6.3 Historic Mapping

- 6.3.1 Gnoll Park is both fortunate and somewhat unusual in the range of historic mapping available for the site. The parkland area is covered by several estate maps dating from the 1720s through into the 19th century, available in the West Glamorgan Archives, with detailed tithe and ordnance survey mapping from the mid-19th century onward. These maps capture details of the early Mackworth landscaping and subsequent changes to the site, through to its acquisition by Neath Borough Council in the earlier 20th century and have also been examined both in the Conservation Management Plan (Baggott 2022) and supporting documents produced by Hiraeth Architects.

Plan of the town and port of Neath, part of the Mackworth Estate 1720

- 6.3.2 This estate map gives an indication of the early 18th century layout of the estate and developments following Mackworth's acquisition of the estate but before Greening's 'transitional' design of the estate grounds. It captures the setting of the Gnoll, the establishment of the initial lakes, and the interdependence of the estate grounds and industrial development of Neath.

- 6.3.3 The house (PRN 00618w) is shown, with woodland spreading down the hillslope to the west. The 'Upper Great Pond' (PRN 06900w) which lies to the east of the house, and the 'Great Pond' (GP03) which lies at a lower level to the south, had both been established by this time. A watercourse (GP01) runs from the Upper Great Pond (PRN 06900w) to a small reservoir east of Gnoll House. This is the reservoir (PRN 03309w) identified by archaeological evaluation in 1992 underlying the current bowling green/croquet lawn (Locock 1992, see section 6.2). It was linked via pipework to the pond, with a possible horse gin structure next to the pond (not illustrated on the map) allowing the water to be pumped to the reservoir. A further watercourse (GP04) is shown that runs from the Upper Great Pond to the Great Pond, curving around the north and west of the Gnoll, possibly also providing water to the house. This watercourse has subsequently been lost; but likely ran just to the south of the current watercourse running off to the northwest of the pond. A prominent tree-lined feature appears to encircle the Gnoll, described as 'The Walks made out of the Hill', roughly following the line of the present drive. The main approach seems to come from the north to northwest, following a circuitous course on the inside of the wood-lined walks, before seeming to finally approach the house from the south.
- 6.3.4 A road (GP05), referred to elsewhere as 'Harle Lane' leads across the estate, running northwest (from Neath) to southeast, crossing just to the north of the Upper Great Pond and lost to subsequent pond enlargement. The Upper Great Pond (PRN 06900w) is fed by two streams, one presumably passing along the valley and through the site of the later Fishpond/Guinea Pond, the other from the east, possibly the stream (GP06) that now feeds the northern end of the Upper Great Pond. These are labelled as 'Several Water courses brought at great expense to supply the upper great Pond', which would suggest some degree of artificial channelling. The southern end of the Upper Great Pond is crossed by a bridge (GP07), presumably where the current dam/bridge is located. Two further watercourses then feed into the eastern end of the Great Pond in the valley below, both described as 'Water Courses with small pond for feeding the said Pond'. The southernmost is marked with a series of dammed ponds along its length, likely the watercourse that passes through Preswylfa Dingle, the smaller ponds no longer extant.
- 6.3.5 The western end of the Great Pond (GP03) is crossed by a bridge (GP08), again presumably in the location of the current dam/bridge. Just before this bridge a watercourse is shown running southward, labelled as 'Melin Grythan water'. This is likely a route running alongside the current drive that emerges onto Cimla Road, continuing south-westerly to feed Mackworth's new mills in Melincryddan. The main watercourse from the Great Pond forms the Neath/Gnoll Brook, which runs west into the centre of Neath. Located in the valley along this watercourse and immediately below the Great Pond are a series of mills, including a 'Double Battery Mill' (PRN 03307w) just below the bridge, a 'Single Battery Mill' further along, outside the current parkland in the Woodside Avenue area, and a 'Mill for Rolling and Slitting of Iron and Brass' possibly in the Gnoll Avenue/Victoria Gardens area.
- 6.3.6 Further afield, outside the current park boundary, coal pits and a new wagon way are marked to the south. A watercourse crosses the fields to the west of the Gnoll, through Ty'n-y-caeau, with the now vanished St Michael's Well (PRN 05215w) to the west of it (not within the park boundary, as erroneously depicted in the HER data).

Gnoll demesne and lands belonging to H. Mackworth esq. (B. Jones), c. 1741-1768 (Fig 6)

- 6.3.7 This map depicts the house and immediate grounds in greater detail and accuracy, as well as showing the Greening-designed landscape.
- 6.3.8 The house (PRN 00618w) layout is as described in section 5.7, the main vista looking out over the valley and Neath to the west. The formal view across the estate is laid out as an avenue (GP09) that extends from the northeast corner of the house, southeast to the ha-ha (GP10). Clumps of trees line this avenue along its northern edge. South of this avenue lies a series of sinuous pathways across the Gnoll, incorporating the circular croquet/bowling lawn that has replaced the previous reservoir (PRN 03309w).
- 6.3.9 There are a number of additional buildings that now lie in the grounds surrounding the Gnoll. To the north is a building within an L-shaped enclosure (GP11) which no longer appears to be extant. Northeast of this lie two buildings, one associated with a curvilinear enclosure. These appear to be located in the area of the ice house (PRN 06104w) and are presumably related. On the south side of the Gnoll, just beyond the boundary wall, a small building is marked (GP12) which no longer appears extant. East of this, Gnoll Cottage (GP13) has been established with outbuildings adjacent.
- 6.3.10 To the north of the Gnoll, further pathways are partially marked crossing the open parkland, between the Gnoll and the current visitor centre. Harle Lane (GP05), depicted on the previous map as crossing the northern edge of the Upper Great Pond (PRN 06900w), now stops at the edge of the enlarged pond, the line continuing on the opposite side. North of this line lies Harla Cottage (PRN 06103w), with the adjacent watercourse (GP14) marked for the first time, draining off the Upper Great Pond (PRN 06900w).
- 6.3.11 South of the Gnoll, wood-lined footpaths descend the hillside. To the east of Gnoll Cottage (GP13) the basic outline of the walled gardens (GP15) are marked, although internally there may have been some rearrangement. The Upper Great Pond (PRN 06900w) has been enlarged, with a spiral to the southwest reminiscent of a carp trap and a building (GP16) standing against the southern side of the dam/bridge (GP07). The formal cascade (PRN 02890w) is marked to its east, with a rectangular reservoir at its upper east end, fed by a water channel from the north. A small square structure (GP17) is marked on the trees to the south, the tree plantation now surrounding the cascade. The Fishpond/Guinea Pond (GP18) has also been established to the northeast.
- 6.3.12 In the valley below the Gnoll, the Great Pond (GP03) is shown surrounded by woodland. Below the bridge/dam (GP08) lies the battery mill complex PRN 03307w built in the early 18th century. A short distance to the south of the pond within Preswylfa Dingle, a building (GP19) that is no longer extant is marked alongside the watercourse. Later maps indicate this building is a tithe barn. To the west of the battery mill complex dispersed buildings are shown, one of which may be GP32, although it is difficult to locate these precisely. Just beyond the parkland is an area marked as coal pits (GP20).
- 6.3.13 The parkland extending to the northeast of the Upper Great Pond (PRN 06900w) and Harla Cottage (PRN 06103w) is labelled as Pleasure Grounds, open parkland interspersed with stands of trees and bounded by a watercourse to the west and north. In the northern corner lie two

buildings (GP21); comparisons with subsequent mapping suggest they may be related to coal mining. At the western end of the current Mosshouse Woods, between the watercourse and road, lies Lletty'r Guinea farmhouse (GP22), no longer extant. Mosshouse Wood itself appears largely confined to the banks of the various watercourses in this area. There appears to be a small building (GP23) close to the location of the present Forest Lodge, with a pond adjacent, possibly a sluice structure. The informal cascade (LB 22870), related to structure PRN 07365w, is marked. Adjacent to the line of a stream to the south lies a building (GP25) in an area described as 'Cascade Wood nursery'.

6.3.14 Beyond the current parkland boundaries, this map indicates that the parkland extends further to the southeast, with open ground and stands of trees up to the lower slopes of the Cefn Morfudd ridge, backed by plantation woodland on the slopes. To the northeast, a pond had been installed on the main watercourse into the estate, near Castell Fforchnant, presumably part of the water management of the whole estate. Harle Lane (GP05) that crossed the estate is shown in greater extent to either side of the park. The road is relatively straight, doglegging around a square field currently covered by Brynau Woods. This road may be of interest given the known presence of a Roman fort and settlement in Neath, as straight roads can be an indicator of Roman origins. The dogleg around the field is also therefore interesting as a potential contemporary feature such as a small fort or marching camp. However, given the presence of a fort in Neath, and the known marching camp on high ground to the northeast, it would seem unlikely to have a similar feature so close. The presence of coal mining activity is labelled in the valley below the Great Pond, but also indicated in the name Kimly'r Glo to the south, the current Cimla Crescent area.



Figure 6: Extract from the estate map of 1741-68 by B.Jones. West Glamorgan Archive Service Gn/E/1.

Map of part of Gnoll estate, property of Capel Leigh, Esq (P.Padley) 1801
(Figs 7 and 8)

6.3.15 Gnoll House (PRN 00618w) is shown in some detail, with a glass conservatory added to the south side. A painting of the house is also included on the map. The grounds immediately surrounding the house

are shown in less detail which may in part be due to a downgrading of the formal view across the park to the east. The outline of the ha-ha (GP10) is still marked but the tree lined avenue (GP09) is not, and the formal cascade (PRN 02890w) itself is no longer marked on the opposite side of the Upper Pond (PRN 06900w), although the surrounding woodland is still called Cascade Wood. The main drive that curves around to the north of Gnoll House is marked, largely following its current route. The ice house is marked with a larger building adjacent (PRN 06104w). The field to the north is dotted with tree stands, and Harla ('Harley') Cottage is also shown (PRN 06103w). The small building with the L-shaped enclosure (GP11) to the north of Gnoll House, and the small structure (GP12) to the south, are no longer marked.

- 6.3.16 Gnoll Cottage (GP13) and outbuildings to the east are marked, with both the outline of the gardens (GP15) to the east and the enclosure extending across the hillslope to the west (GP26), shown as gardens. North of Gnoll Cottage, a walled enclosure (GP27) is marked with an internal building; later references indicate this was an herbaceous garden.
- 6.3.17 The Upper Great Pond (PRN 06900w) retains its carp trap at the southwest end and building (GP16) below the bridge/dam (GP07). As noted, the cascade (PRN 02890w) is no longer marked within Cascade Woods although trackways, including the original road (GP05) across the estate, are shown.
- 6.3.18 In the valley below the Gnoll, the Great Pond (GP03) and mill (PRN 03307w) are marked. A small building is shown overlooking the Great Pond to the south (outside the park boundary), and within Preswylfa Dingle the tithe barn (GP19) is marked, as are a building and enclosure to the west of the mill (possibly PRN 06105w). Further buildings to the west may lie just outside the parkland, including GP32, labelled as cottages tenanted by William Denston. The hillside to the south is lined with a fir plantation.
- 6.3.19 Towards the eastern end of the park, Fairyland House is first shown (GP28), built around 1795. Lletty'r Guinea Farm (GP22) is now labelled as 'cottages', a building is marked (GP29) near Forest Lodge, and the structure in Mosshouse Woods (GP25) is labelled Ty-n-ferch, appearing to consist of one long range with a collection of enclosures surrounding it. A circular structure is shown at the base of the informal cascades and is thought to be the possible moss house folly (PRN 01950w). Moss Houses were ornamental buildings set within 18th century parkland over which moss or roots were allowed to grow to add to the picturesque effect.
- 6.3.20 Further afield, the Ivy Tower (PRN 01951w) is marked for the first time, described as a 'Banqueting room'. A small tree nursery was located just to the east of Mosshouse Wood and the pond is still shown further to the east just above Castell Ffroch Nant. To the southeast, the parkland on the lower slopes of Cefn Morfudd is labelled as a deer park, with woodland on the steeper slopes. To the east of Brynau Farm, occupying a high point at approximately SS778973, is a curious hexagonal sheepfold. The design is unusual, although not unique, with a small number of examples known from Welsh and Scottish upland settings. To the west, development in Cimla is visible, as is some development on the Neath/Gnoll Brook which is possibly industrial in nature, relating to Mackworth's single battery mill and all lying outside the park boundaries.

Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment



Figure 7: Extract from the estate map of 1801 by P Padley, showing Gnoll House to the left and the three ponds. West Glamorgan Archive Service Gn/E/5/1.

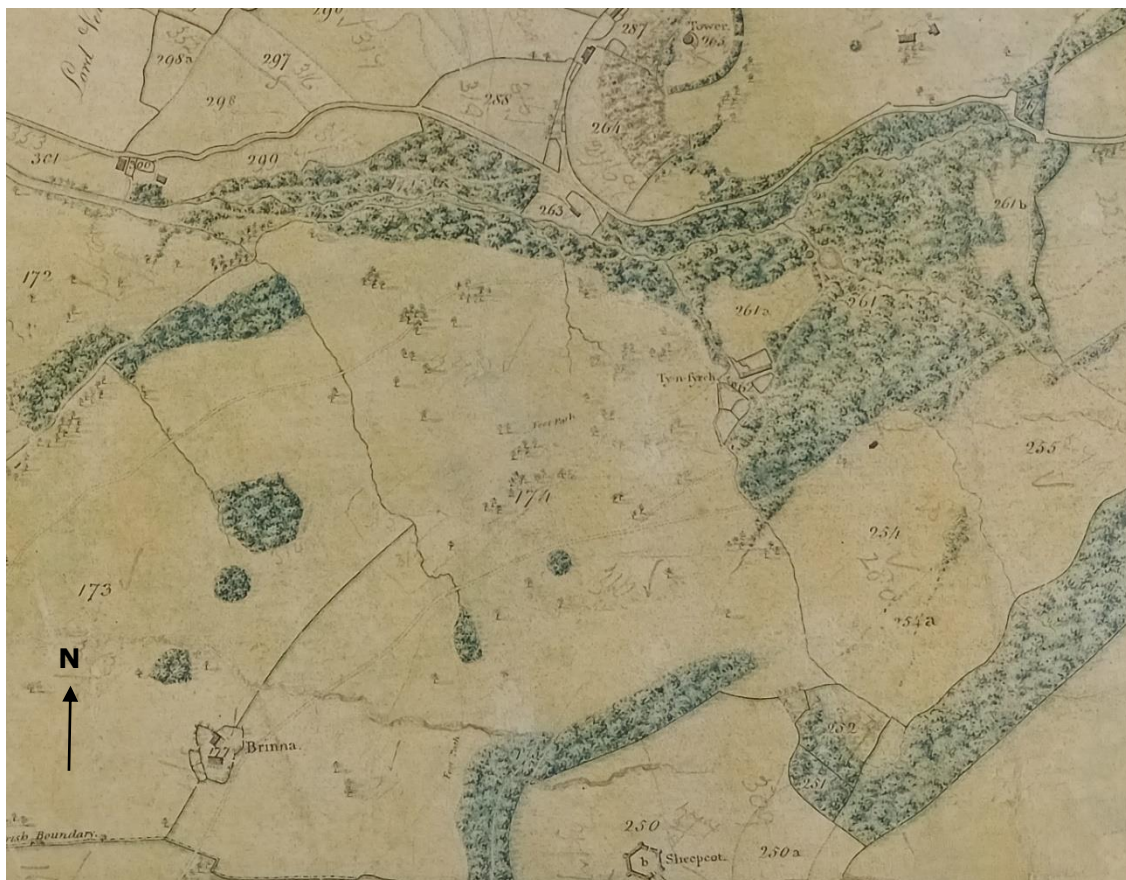


Figure 8: Extract from the estate map of 1801 by P Padley, showing the Mosshouse Woods area to the top right. West Glamorgan Archive Service Gn/E/5/1.

Plan of the Gnoll estate at Neath belonging to Capel Leigh Esq 1812 (Figs 9 and 10).

- 6.3.21 In contrast to the previous plan, the avenue (GP09) and ha-ha (GP10) are clearly shown, although the formal cascade (PRN 02890w) is still no longer marked. The grounds, including the circular bowling green/croquet lawn (PRN 03309w) are laid out to the east and south of Gnoll House (PRN 00618w). Gnoll Cottage (GP13) and outbuildings, along with the walled kitchen gardens (GP15), are visible to the southeast. Similarly, the walled enclosure (GP27) to the north, with the building range against the west wall can also be seen. The small building (GP12) to the west of Gnoll Cottage appears to be marked once more.
- 6.3.22 To the north of Gnoll House, the ice house complex (PRN 06104w) is marked, as is Harla ('Harly') Cottage (PRN 06103w). Stables are included within one of these complexes. It is not clear from the map and corresponding lists which one contains the stables, although they are listed separately from Harla Cottage which would suggest they may have been included in the ice house complex.
- 6.3.23 Little change is noted in the Upper Great Pond (PRN 06900w) and associated features (GP07 and GP16). The woodland to the east is described as 'old cascade wood', further indication the cascade is no longer functioning. The current road along the southern edge of the wood is marked, as is the old route (GP05). To the north, the fishpond (GP18) is visible and the open parkland is described as 'Harley Field'.
- 6.3.24 In the valley below the Gnoll, little has changed. The tithe barn (GP19) is more clearly labelled and building PRN 06105w may be marked, although the changing boundaries make it difficult to accurately locate.
- 6.3.25 At the eastern end of the estate, Lletty'r Guinea farmhouse (GP22) is marked, as is the cottage (GP29) to the east and 'Ty'n-y-ferch Cottage and Garden' (GP25) within Mosshouse Woods. The informal cascade is still labelled but the associated Mosshouse folly (PRN 01950w) and grotto (PRN 01948w/07364w) are not marked, although a track leads to and through the grotto from the road to the north. A structure (GP30) at the road entrance is likely to be a lodge.



Figure 9: Extract from the estate map of 1812 showing the area around Gnoll House.
West Glamorgan Archive Service Gn/E/5/2.



Figure 10: Image of Gnoll House depicted on the estate map of 1812. West Glamorgan
Archive Service Gn/E/5/2.

Llantwit-juxta-Neath tithe map 1845-6 (Fig 11)

- 6.3.26 The tithe map does not just focus on the estate lands, therefore giving a good representation of the area in the mid-19th century. At this point the estate was under the ownership of Henry John Grant, and Gnoll House is labelled as Gnoll Castle.
- 6.3.27 The tithe map shows little obvious change around Gnoll House (PRN 00618w) but also shows little detail of the surrounding grounds. The ha-ha (GP10) and the outline of avenue (GP09) is visible. To the east, Gnoll

Cottage (GP13) and walled kitchen garden (GP15) are clearly visible, as is the herbaceous garden (GP27) to the north with its building on the western wall. The ice house complex (PRN 06104w) and Harla ('Harley') Cottage (PRN 06103w) are marked. The Upper Great Pond (PRN 06900w) is described as 'Lower Fishpond' and still shown with its carp trap and building (GP16) below the bridge, which lies within a garden. The route of the old road (GP05) is still marked. A new track to the south has been added, accessing Preswylfa House (and farm), which may be a new build.

- 6.3.28 Whilst the Great Pond (GP03) is marked in the valley to the south of the Gnoll, the adjacent mill (PRN 03307w) and tithe barn (GP19) are not. House PRN 06105w is shown within an enclosure but it is not labelled. The access drive onto Cimla Road (currently the B4287) is shown with a lodge (GP31) at its entrance. The cottage to the north (GP32) is marked but not labelled and may have been functioning as a lodge by this time.
- 6.3.29 To the northeast, Fairyland House (GP28) is shown but the buildings to the east including GP22, GP29 and GP25 are not marked, although the name Lletty Guinea has been preserved in some of the field enclosures. No detail is shown in Mosshouse Woods, although estate features are unlikely to appear on a tithe map and not even the Ivy Tower is marked.

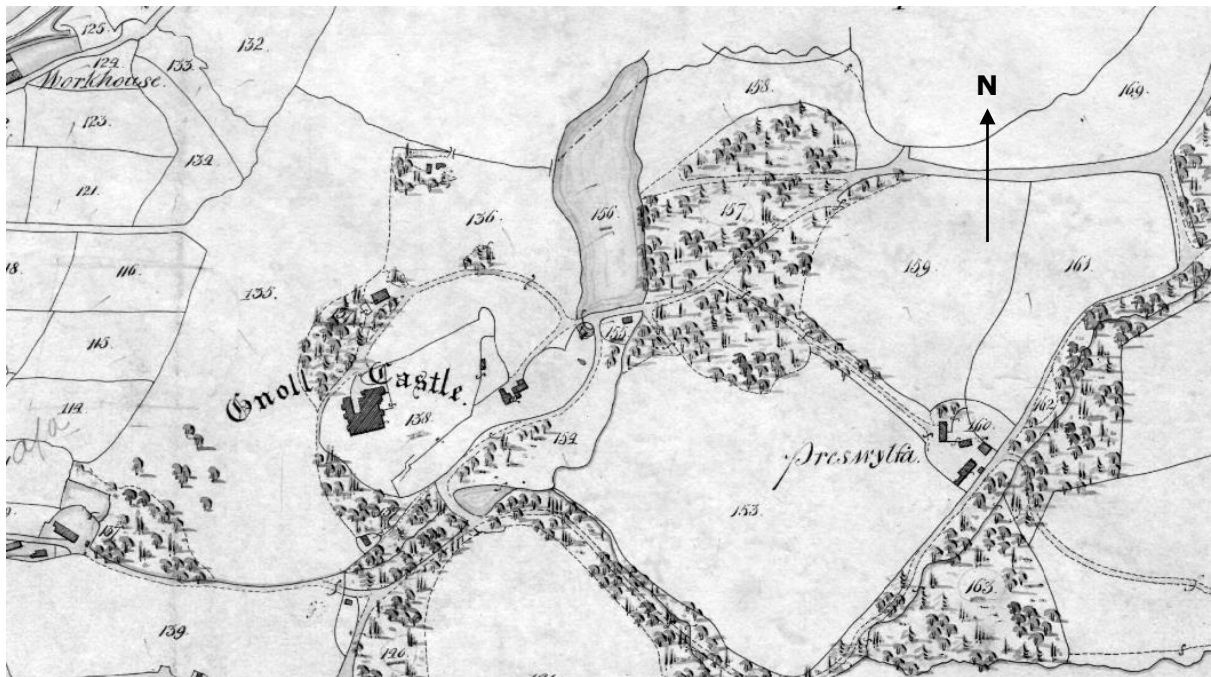


Figure 11: Extract from the parish tithe map of 1845-6.

Gnoll House plan, 1880, redrawn 1987

- 6.3.30 A series of plans were produced in 1880 covering proposed alterations to Gnoll House. These provide a detailed layout of the ground, first and second floors of the house. The originals appear to have been lost, but reproductions redrawn in 1987 survive in the county archives. The individual rooms are also labelled and these can be matched with the surviving ground floor remains visible at the site.

1st edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map 1877-81 (Fig 12)

- 6.3.31 The Ordnance survey maps capture the site in great detail and record the final decades of the estate.
- 6.3.32 Gnoll House is described as 'On Site of Gnoll Castle', although this is thought to perhaps be a reference to the 17th century hall house rather than a medieval castle. The house sits within its wooded ground, traversed by a series of sinuous pathways and the linear avenue, GP09. To the southeast, Gnoll Cottage and its outbuildings (GP13) are visible, and for the first time, buildings within the walled kitchen garden (GP15) are shown. The garden has become separated into four main compartments. Within the northern compartment, some of the Gnoll Cottage outbuildings lie in the southwest corner and a standalone glasshouse (GP33) lies in the centre. Three compartments lie to the south, the potting shed range (GP34) is marked with a matching attached glasshouse range along the south and a detached glasshouse sits to the north. The herbaceous garden (GP27) to the north no longer has its building but the small building (GP12) to the west of Gnoll Cottage is still marked.
- 6.3.33 To the north of Gnoll House the ice house complex and possible stable complex (PRN 06104w) still stand, as do Harla Cottage (PRN 06103w) to the northwest and a well to the northwest of the cottage. To the east, Upper Great Pond (PRN 06900w) and associated features (GP07 and GP16) appear unchanged. The old road (GP05) is no longer marked in the woods to the east. At the southern end of the Fishpond/Guinea Pond (GP18), a small boathouse (GP35) is shown.
- 6.3.34 In the valley below the Gnoll, the house (PRN 06105w) is clearly marked at the western end of a rectangular enclosure, with an outbuilding on the eastern side. Building GP32 is marked as a lodge for the first time, and the lodge to the south (GP31) still stands. Just outside the park Gnoll Collieries (PRN 08619w) are operating.
- 6.3.35 To the northeast, Fairyland House (GP28) is the only building within the park. Few features are shown within Mosshouse Woods, although the structure (PRN 07365w) at the top of the (former) cascade is marked, as is an adjacent structure relating to the grotto (PRN 01948w/07364w). The lodge (GP30) has gone, and the pond near Castell-fforch-nant is greatly reduced in size.
- 6.3.36 The spread of the town along the Neath valley is evident to the west of the park, although at this time the park still extended as far west as Park Road/Victoria Gardens.

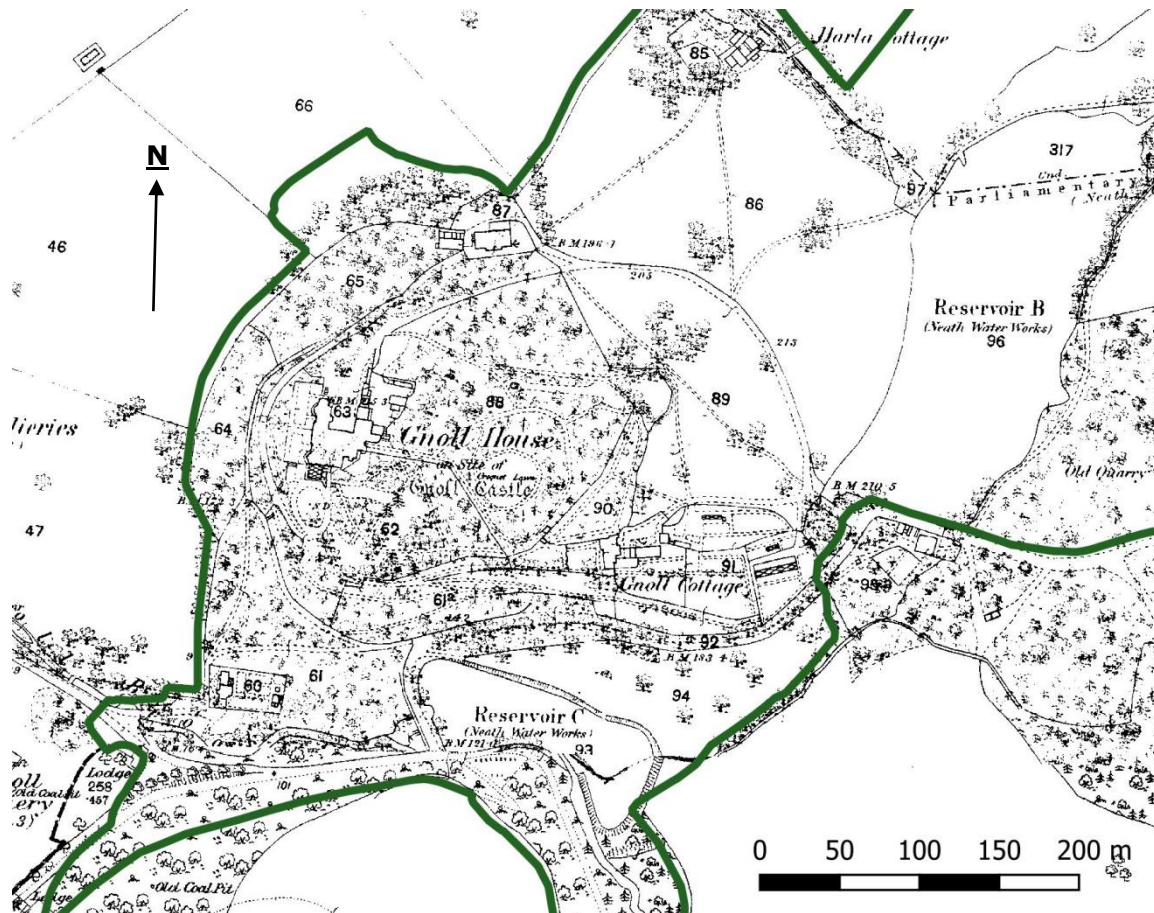


Figure 12: Extract from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1877-81 showing the area around Gnoll House. The outline of the registered parkland is shown in green. Landmark Information Group.

2nd edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map 1899 (Fig 13)

- 6.3.37 The subsequent Ordnance Survey map shows a few additional details of interest. Within the grounds of Gnoll House a tennis court (GP36) has been added on the line of the former avenue (GP09). Within the kitchen gardens (GP15), the glasshouse range north of the potting shed (GP34) had expanded, and to the east Pond Cottage (GP37) is shown for the first time. To the north, some additional outbuildings had been added both to the ice house complex (PRN 06104w) and Harla Cottage (PRN 06103w). A row of filter beds (GP38) had been added to the east. The boathouse (GP35) had been removed from the Upper Fishpond, with a boathouse (GP39) now appearing on the east side of the Upper Great Pond/Fishpond (PRN 06900w).
- 6.3.38 To the northeast the Mosshouse Woods reservoir (PRN 06094w) is marked, along with a series of quarries (GP40, GP41 and GP42) in the surrounding area that are likely related to its construction.
- 6.3.39 This map indicates a spread of recent coal mining activity, showing numerous collieries, levels, shafts, drifts and pits in the surrounding landscape. Several also lie within the bounds of the park. In the southern corner of Mosshouse Woods lies a disused coal pit (PRN 07366w). To the west of Fairyland House an old coal pit is marked on the stream edge, presumably the site of (GP21). A disused coal level (GP43) is marked on rough ground between the park and the expanding Llantwit cemetery.

Former coal pits (GP44) are marked within Fishpond Woods. An old shaft (PRN 06100w) is marked within the grounds of house PRN 06105w. These various coal mining features all appear to be disused by this time, and even the Gnoll Collieries (PRN 08619w) to the west are shown as disused.

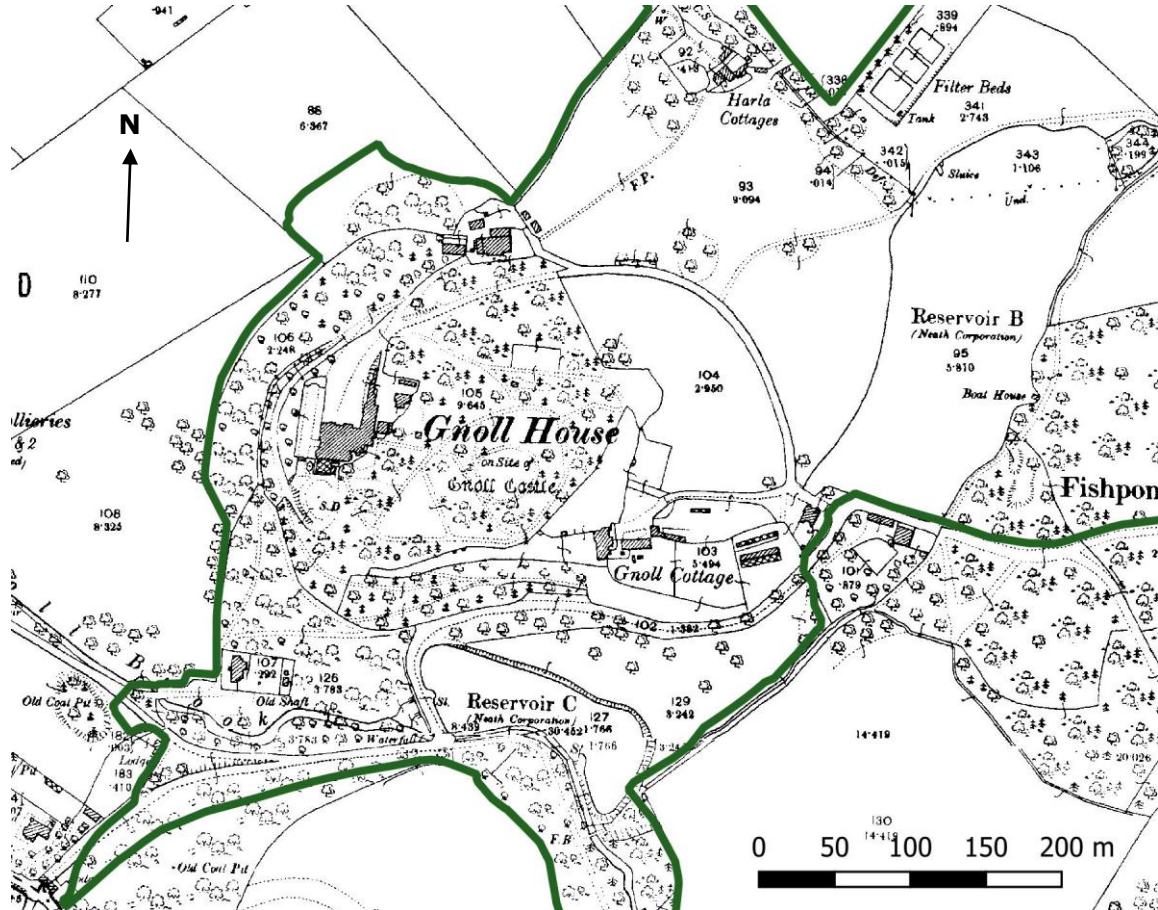


Figure 13: Extract from the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1899 showing the area around Gnoll House. The outline of the registered parkland is shown in green.
Landmark Information Group.

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map 1918/19

6.3.40 At this point Gnoll House was unoccupied, although a second tennis court (GP36) is shown. Little other alteration around the main Gnoll House area is noted. To the northeast valves (PRNs 06096w and 06097w) and an aqueduct (PRN 06095w) are marked carrying supply pipes across the valley.

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map 1937

6.3.41 This map depicts the area subsequent to the acquisition of the estate by the Neath Borough. The southern tennis court (GP36) appears short-lived and had gone by this date but the area of park between the wooded Gnoll and the drive to the east is marked as a recreation ground. The area around Gnoll Cottage, the kitchen gardens and Pond Cottage appear unchanged. In the valley to the south, the open-air swimming pool had been established on the Great Pond (GP03). The urban spread of Neath had now reached the current western end of the park and the war

memorial gates (PRN 08925w/LB11784) had been built. The boathouse (GP39) had been removed.

6.4 Aerial and Historic Photography

- 6.4.1 A search was made of available historic aerial photographs and modern aerial photographs. Historic images of the house have been included in the Conservation Management Plan (Baggott 2022) and record the house in the late 19th century, prior to its demolition in 1957. There are some early images of the estate included within the Francis Frith collection, dated to 1898, including the ponds and woodland walks but little detail of archaeological interest is recorded.
- 6.4.2 A good sized collection of aerial images from the 1940s and 1950s was examined. Images from the 1940s still depict the house (PRN 00618w) which was reoccupied during the war (Photo 1), but much of the northeast ranges of the house appear to have been demolished to ground level (Photo 2). The surrounding grounds are largely wooded, although the croquet lawn (PRN 03309w) is still open. Gnoll Cottage (GP13) and the kitchen gardens (GP15, GP33 and GP34) are still in use, with planting beds laid out. Other buildings, such as Pond Cottage (GP37), the ice house complex (PRN 06104w) and Harla Cottage (PRN 06103w) are visible as extant structures. A relatively large hipped-roof structure is visible in the ice house complex (PRN 06104w). The Upper Great Pond (PRN 06900w) and Fishpond/Guinea Pond (GP18) appear slightly silted. A series of buildings (GP47) are visible alongside the main drive to the house, visible on images from 1944 and 1946 but beginning to be removed by 1947-9. Given the date, these buildings may be temporary military structures.
- 6.4.3 By 1946 the grounds around the house are becoming more wooded. The parkland between the Gnoll and Harla Cottage appears to have come under horticultural use and is laid out for planting. The parkland north of Harla Cottage is subdivided into fields and appears to be in agricultural use. By 1949 a football pitch had been laid out next to the Gnoll House drive (Photo 3).
- 6.4.4 A series of photographs from the mid-1950s record a children's play area on the lawns on the west side of the upper great pond, just to the north of the kitchen gardens.
- 6.4.5 No clear evidence of any earlier archaeological features unrelated to the parkland estate have been identified from these aerial photographs.

The Gnoll, Neath Port Talbot:
Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment



Photo 1: Oblique aerial photograph taken by the RAF in 1944 showing the Gnoll. The house is visible towards the top, with Gnoll Cottage and kitchen gardens to the left between the Great Pond and Upper Great Pond. The ice house complex is visible on the right, with Harla Cottage to the bottom right.

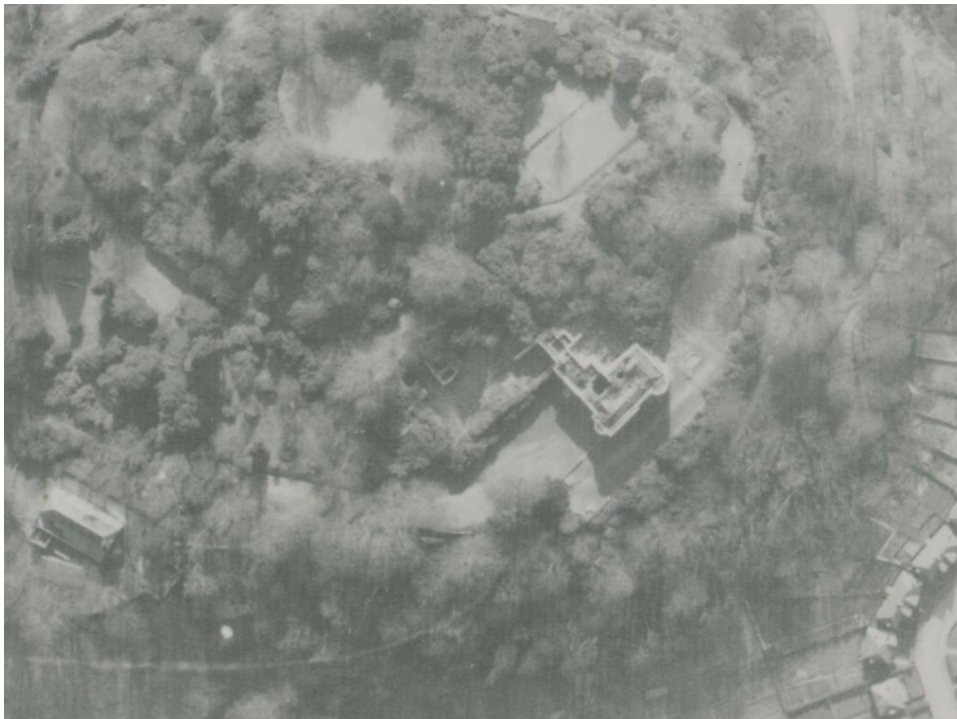


Photo 2: Vertical aerial photograph taken by the RAF in 1944 showing Gnoll House, with the open croquet lawn and tennis court above and the ice house complex building to the left.



Photo 3: Vertical aerial image from 1949 showing the Gnoll with cultivated strips below (to the east) of the Gnoll and a football pitch alongside the driveway.

6.5 LiDAR

- 6.5.1 LiDAR data at 1mDTM/DSM is available for the site area. No clear features of archaeological interest are noted.

6.6 Site Visit (Photos 4-37)

- 6.6.1 A site visit was undertaken on the 18th May 2023, comprising a walk-over of the entire park grounds. A second visit was undertaken on the 26th May 2023 and focussed on the areas of proposed development around the visitor centre, car park, Gnoll House, kitchen gardens and Pond Cottage. The weather conditions on both occasions were bright and dry with good visibility. Access to all sites of proposed development was possible.
- 6.6.2 The parkland remains as described in sections 3 and 4.2. The main road access to the site is currently via Fairyland, with the entrance via a set of modern gates on a tarmac road (Photo 4) to a car parking area spread between the two Fishponds PRN 06900w and GP18. This access passes through an open park landscape of grassland interspersed with trees on north-westerly facing slopes (Photo 5). Golf tees and putting areas have been terraced into the hillside. The car park comprises landscaped areas

of hardstanding and tarmac roads. A children's play area lies to the southeast.

- 6.6.3 The visitor centre lies to the southwest of the car park on the northern edge of the larger pond PRN 06900w (Photo 6). A children's play area lies adjacent. Walks surround the pond, the west side of which largely comprises grass interspersed with trees on level areas and gentle slopes. The path crosses watercourse GP14, channelled down a cascade along a small valley (Photo 7). A disused bridge marks the site of Harla Cottage PRN 06103w, which comprises a series of tumbled vegetation-covered walls in an area of scrubby woodland (Photo 8). There are no surface traces of watercourses GP01 and GP04, or road GP05 in this area, and former 18th century paths, 20th century allotments and recreation areas are also no longer visible.
- 6.6.4 To the southwest, the tarmac drive curves around to enter the wooded area of the Gnoll. This passes by the Ice House complex PRN 06104w on the north side, currently comprising two walled enclosures and overgrown terraces, with the ice house on the west side with a gated entrance (Photos 9 and 10). The drive continues to the Gnoll House ruins PRN 00618w (there are no visible remains of building GP11). The ruins comprise a series of ground-level mortared masonry walls with concrete paving caps demarcating the layout of the later 19th century house (Photos 11 – 13). Some taller sections of walling remain around the northern entrance and in the southeast corner, the latter including a stairway to an elevated observation area. A modern building encloses remains of some of the cellars, not currently accessible, with three further cellar entrances amongst the ruins, all currently closed off. A terraced lawn runs along the west side of the ruins, with an oval lawn to the south. Trackways are terraced into the steep hillslopes to the west and south and paths climb into the wooded grounds to the east. These paths lead circuitously through the woods and to the circular bowling green/croquet lawn PRN 03309w (Photo 14), still identifiable but with vegetation encroaching. To the north, the route of the avenue GP09 is visible as a wide levelled path which opens out into the ha-ha area GP10 (Photo 15), currently separated by a low metal fence. Relatively young trees line the main view towards the restored formal cascade PRN 02890w.
- 6.6.5 To the southeast lies Gnoll Cottage and its outbuildings GP13 (Photo 16). This building is under separate ownership and was therefore not accessible. The outbuildings still stand but appear abandoned and in a deteriorating condition. To the east lie the walled kitchen gardens GP15. The northern part is heavily overgrown and inaccessible. The southern part has been used as a storage area. At the east end the potting shed GP34 still stands, with a range to the north (Photo 17). Associated greenhouses have been removed. The potting sheds are surrounded by levelled ground, with new services added to the east. To the west, the interior of the gardens have been terraced and levelled with hardstanding (Photo 18) and only the dividing wall along the northern edge remains as a visible historic feature (Photo 19). The herbaceous garden enclosure GP27 lies to the north, surrounded by a low stone wall to the east and high stone walling to the west and north. The area was overgrown and largely inaccessible, although a stone-built gateway lies in the southwest corner on one of the park walks.
- 6.6.6 Pond Cottage GP37 (Photo 20) lies on the edge of the park road adjacent to the kitchen gardens. The building is currently disused but appears in relatively good condition, as a late 19th/early 20th century estate house,

built of random rubble with rear (south) render, brick headers over the openings, ground floor bays and a slate cross gable roof. A small lean-to extension lies to the rear with a small garden area surrounding. A drive runs to the east of Pond Cottage, descending the hill to the Great Pond below and on to Cimla Road. A further road also crosses the bridge/dam GP07 to give access to farm houses to the east. A yard area lies in front of the bridge/dam, including some buildings (GP16) (Photo 21).

- 6.6.7 The east side of the Upper Great Pond/Fishpond (PRN 06900w) lies in woodland, with a pond-edge footpath. The former quarry (PRN 06099w) is a prominent feature (Photo 22), largely due to the tree regrowth around it. The restored formal cascade (PRN 02890w) lies in the wood, although no longer functioning (Photos 23 and 24). No remains of the boat house (GP39) were visible and no trace of former coal pits GP44 were located, although the area is overgrown and features could easily be missed. A series of linear banks (GP45) were identified in the ground in this area of unknown function (Photo 25). The banks, of which four were visible amongst the bracken, were around 1m wide and at most 0.2m high, running parallel and set approximately 0.5m apart. It is possible they are related to the road GP05, coal mining activity associated with GP44. or part of the woodland plantations.
- 6.6.8 Further from the main areas of proposed development to the northeast, the southeast side of the valley, to the east of the smaller Fishpond/Guinea Pond GP18, is covered in recent woodland plantation. A track runs along the eastern edge past the site of Halfway House folly PRN 01952w. Formerly approached by a series of wooden steps, these have recently been removed, presumably for safety reasons. The folly comprises a stone-built shelter, with a curving front with open arches overlooking the valley and estate to the west (Photo 26). The site is currently partly fenced off to discourage vandalism. Fairyland House (GP28) is a private residence on the north side of the park and was therefore not accessible. The situation of the house next to a fast-flowing stream did suggest a good location for a mill site, but this does not appear to be supported in historical documentation. To the east, the path runs alongside the stream, with a series of tumbles that may be part of a designed estate walk into Mosshouse Woods. Remains of stone walling are visible on the north side of the stream, but no clear evidence of farmhouse structures GP22 or GP29 were visible. Reservoir PRN 06094w (Photo 27) appears in good condition, with its own cascading overflow to the west (Photo 28) and a drive crossing the reservoir dam via a gated entrance from the road to the north (Photo 29). Footpaths run to the south of the reservoir, around quarry GP40, with a path climbing the slope to the southeast. Remnants of feature GP46, comprising a part buried iron stanchion and fragments of masonry surrounding it, were noted adjacent to the quarry, overlooking the reservoir. It is unclear what this represents, it may be structural or it may simply represent the remains of a former seating area overlooking the reservoir. No remains of building GP25 were noted, although the area is overgrown and the location of rhododendron suggested an overgrown, designed woodland or garden area. No remains of coal pit PRN 07366w were identified. The informal cascade LB 22870 is partly lost amongst the tree cover, but the pipework and supporting structure PRN 07365w are visible at the head of the cascade, with rock cut terraces below (Photos 30 and 31). Towards the base the water channel now passes over a steep weir (Photo 32). The restored grotto PRN 01948w/07364w lies to the north, accessible and as described, with the remains of a structure above now used for seating (Photos 33 and 34).

- 6.6.9 South of the Gnoll, the drive descends the hill and crosses bridge GP08 at the west end of the Great Pond (GP03) (Photo 35). Timber platforms line the south side, on the site of the former open air swimming pool structures, but this area is now largely occupied by a small car park. Footpaths run off south down Preswylfa Dingle and no remains of tithe barn GP19 were identified. Below the pond to the west, no remains of the mill PRN 03307w are visible above ground. Some surface masonry indicates the location of house PRN 06105w (Photo 36) and its associated enclosure. It is not possible to distinguish house and mine shaft (PRN 06100w) from the tumbled remains. The driveway splits past this point, one section running through the memorial gates PRN 06100w (Photo 37) and along Woodside Avenue, the other running south to access Cimla Road. Lodge GP32 survives as a private residence, but no trace of lodge GP31 was identified. The surrounding area is now fully developed.



Photo 4: The current entrance to the park from Fairyland. Looking northeast.



Photo 5: Parkland area alongside the entrance to the park, with landscaped golfing tees. Looking northeast.



Photo 6: View north across the Upper Great Pond PRN 06900w with the visitor centre at the top.

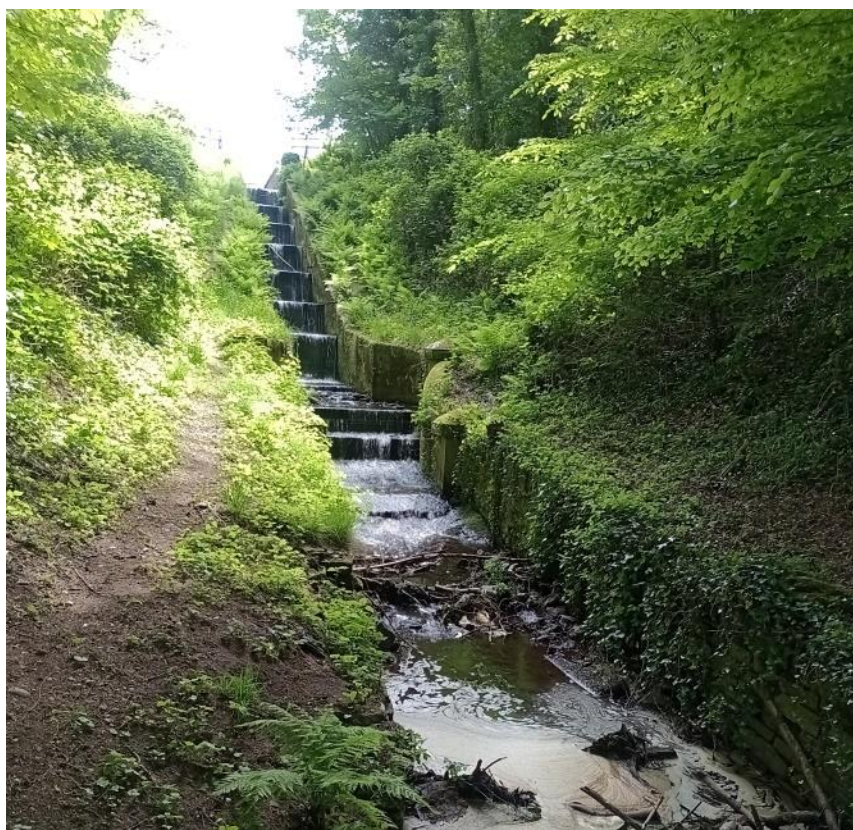


Photo 7: View southeast of watercourse GP14.



Photo 8: View north of the tumbled and vegetation covered ruins of Harla Cottage PRN 06103w.



Photo 9: View west of the path through the Ice House complex PRN 06104w. The path to the right leads to a lower terrace, the ice house itself lies to the rear, not visible in this shot. 1m scale.



Photo 10: View west of the gated entrance to the Ice House (PRN 06104w). 1m scale.



Photo 11: View west looking over the ruins of Gnoll House PRN 00618w. The roofed structures mark entrances to surviving cellars.



Photo 12: View south looking at some of the standing remains to the rear of Gnoll House PRN 00618w.



Photo 13: View north along the terrace in front of Gnoll House PRN 00618w, which is represented by the masonry on the right.



Photo 14: View northwest across bowling green/croquet lawn PRN 03309w.



Photo 15: View northeast of ha-ha GP10.



Photo 16: View west of Gnoll Cottage GP13.



Photo 17: View southwest of the potting sheds GP34 with the walled kitchen garden GP15.



Photo 18: View northwest of the terracing at the western end of the walled kitchen garden GP15.



Photo 19: View northeast of the upstanding remains of the kitchen garden walls GP15.



Photo 20: View southwest of Pond Cottage GP37.



Photo 21: View northeast of buildings GP16 below the bridge/dam to the Upper Great Pond (on the left).



Photo 22: View west of quarry PRN 06099w, showing mature trees growing on quarry rock outcrops.



Photo 23: View east along the formal cascade PRN 02890w.



Photo 24: View west along the formal cascade PRN 02890w.



Photo 25: View northeast along some of the low linear banks (GP45) with Fishpond Wood. 1m scale (lying across one of the banks).



Photo 26: View east looking up towards the Halfway House Folly PRN 01952w.



Photo 27: View southwest across the Mosshouse Woods Reservoir PRN 06094w.



Photo 28: View southeast up the overflow for Mosshouse Woods Reservoir PRN 06094w.



Photo 29: View south of the gate entrance to the north part of the estate across the Mosshouse Woods Reservoir (PRN 06094w) bridge/dam. 1m scale.



Photo 30: View southwest of structure PRN 07365w at the head of the informal cascades LB 22870.



Photo 31: View east of the structure PRN 07365w at the head of the informal cascades LB 22870. 1m scale.

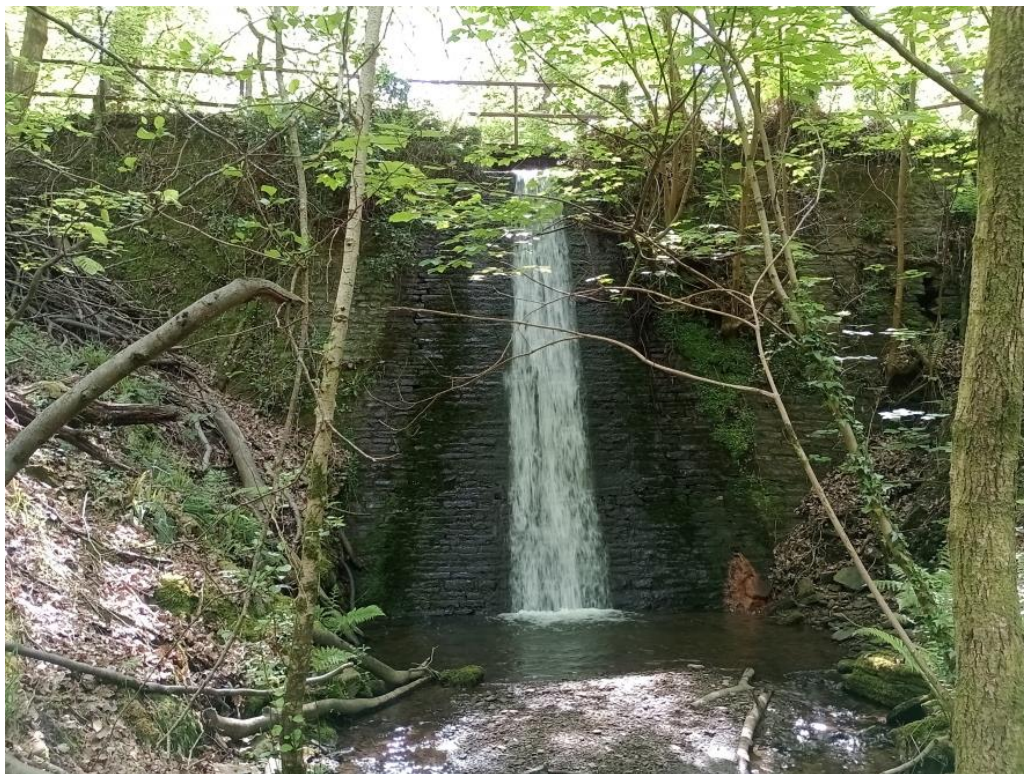


Photo 32: View east of the base of the informal cascade LB 22870.



Photo 33: View northeast of the entrance to the grotto PRN 01948w/07364w.
1m scale.



Photo 34: View east of the entrance to the grotto with the remains of a structure above (PRN 01948w/07364w).



Photo 35: View east across the Great Pond (GP03).



Photo 36: View north across fragmentary masonry remains that mark the site of the house PRN 06105w and coal shaft PRN 06100w. 1m scale.



Photo 37: View southeast of the memorial gates PRN 08925w entrance to the park from Woodside Avenue.

7 ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL, IMPORTANCE AND SETTING

Table 3: Site potential definitions

Archaeological Potential	Definition
High	Known archaeological remains of the period within the site area or an abundance of remains of the period within the near vicinity
Medium	A number of archaeological remains of the period are present in the vicinity or wider area and/or the topography or location of the site would be typical for remains of that period
Low	Few sites of a specific period are known in the wider area or where the topography of the site is unlikely to contain remains of that period or where no archaeological records of a certain period are present but the location of the site is one that would be considered suitable or typical for remains of that period to exist
Negligible	Where there is no evidence for archaeological remains of a certain period to be present and the location/topography is most unlikely to contain remains of that period or where a site area has already been totally disturbed

Table 4: Site importance definitions

Site Importance (SI)	Definition of Site Category
High	Features of national importance - Scheduled monuments, listed buildings Grade I and II*, well preserved historic landscapes, registered parks and gardens and historic battlefields
Medium	Non-scheduled sites of regional or county importance. Listed buildings Grade II, reasonably preserved historic landscapes
Medium / Low	Features of district or local importance but generally common features at a national or regional level
Low	Minor sites or sites so badly damaged that too little now remains to justify their inclusion in a higher grade
Uncertain	Features about which insufficient is known to attribute them to a higher rank or which cannot be sufficiently accurately located to justify their consideration
Negligible	Where a site area has already been totally disturbed by previous development or natural processes

7.1 Potential and Value

- 7.1.1 Research suggests there is little current evidence for any significant Palaeolithic, Mesolithic or Neolithic archaeological activity in the area. Whilst there is an increased potential for Bronze Age and Iron Age archaeology given the presence of sites of these periods along the Cefn Morfudd ridge to the east, on current evidence there would still appear to be a relatively low (negligible) potential for such remains within the park.
- 7.1.2 There is greater suggestion of Roman, post-Roman and early medieval activity in the area. A Roman fort and civilian settlement were located in Neath, and a section of possible Roman road has been identified on the ridgeline to the east with a large marching camp further to the northeast. Research also highlights the potential for an early road line crossing the estate (identified as GP05) as a route of possible Roman origin, although this remains untested. The presence of an early medieval dyke system on Cefn Morfudd ridge to the east and the possibility of early medieval origins to St. Illtyd's Church to the west, also suggest an increased potential for activity in the area during the early medieval period. There is therefore considered to be a **Low** potential for Roman and early medieval archaeological remains in the area, the value of which remains uncertain.
- 7.1.3 Settlement in Neath was established during the medieval period, focused on and around the castle, although St. Illtyd's Church may also have been a focal point. Given the proximity of some parts of the parkland to these focal points, but the lack of identified medieval features within the park (other than a reported findspot), there is a **Low** potential for medieval archaeological remains within the park, the value of which at present remains uncertain.
- 7.1.4 The recorded history of Gnoll House and the surrounding estate dates from the 17th and possibly the 16th centuries. As the house was built and the estate laid out in this period, there is a **High** potential for archaeological remains dating to the post-medieval period. Two main elements to these remains have been identified, the first relates to the general estate landscape and works, buildings and features associated with establishing this landscape from the 17th through to the 19th centuries. The second relates to industrial activity. Coal mining in particular has been underway across the area since the 17th century but no pre-19th century remains have yet been positively identified within the park. Due to the availability of historic mapping, previous archaeological investigations and a variety of other historical sources, many of these post-medieval features have been individually identified. These are presented in the table (Table 5) below and their locations illustrated in Figures 14 and 15.

The Gnoll, Neath Port Talbot:
Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment

Table 5: Sites of archaeological interest identified within the Gnoll Park area, including sites previously recorded in regional databases (HER, NMR, Cadw) and new sites identified during the current assessment.

Reference	Site name and Type	Description	NGR	Potential	Value
LB 22870	Mosshouse Wood Cascade	Informal cascade built in c.1740. Part rock cut, part built, series of cascades, ending in a rustic bridge.	SS 7796 9808	High (extant structure)	High (Grade II listed)
PRN 00618w	Gnoll House; Gnoll Castle	18 th century mansion house complex, incorporating 17 th century structures, with possible 16 th century antecedent. Demolished 1957.	SS 7602 9727	High (surface remains and cellars extant)	High
PRN 01419w	Findspot - medieval arrowhead	General location, no further information.	SS 7609 9720	Low	Low
PRN 01948w PRN 07364w LB 22860	The Grotto Folly	Mid-18 th century artificial cave grotto with former gazebo structure above. Buried in a late-18 th century landslide, re-excavated in 1984.	SS 7804 9808	High (extant structure)	High (Grade II listed)
PRN 01950w	Folly; Structure	18 th century circular structure, possibly a Moss House.	SS 7783 9807	Low/Medium (buried remains possible)	Medium
PRN 01951w LB 11768	Belvedere; Ivy Tower Folly; Tower	Late 18 th century tower (c.1780), housing the caretaker/ gamekeeper and banqueting hall/ dance floor.	SS 7763 9829	High (extant structure)	High (grade II listed)
PRN 01952w	The Temple; Halfway House Folly	Late 18 th century folly	SS 7700 9761	High (extant structure)	Medium
PRN 02783w	Gnoll Park Registered Park & Gardens	18 th & 19 th century estate parkland	SS 7608 9725	High	High (registered parkland)
PRN 02890w	Cascade	Formal cascade, designed by Greening and installed by Herbert Mackworth in the 1720s. Out of use by the 19 th century, restored in the 1980-90s.	SS 7652 9726	High (extant structure)	High
PRN 03307w	Battery Mill Complex	Late 17 th / early 18 th century industrial complex, using water-powered hammers to process copper or brass.	SS 7604 9709	Medium (buried remains identified)	Medium/High
PRN 03309w	Reservoir; Bowling Green; Croquet Lawn	Late 17 th /early 18 th century rock cut reservoir, infilled and used as bowling green and croquet lawn from early 18 th century on.	SS 7614 9724	High (surface and buried remains identified)	Low

The Gnoll, Neath Port Talbot:
Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment

Reference	Site name and Type	Description	NGR	Potential	Value
PRN 06094w	Moss House Reservoir	Reservoir constructed by the Neath Borough Council in c.1889.	SS 7774 9807	High (extant structure)	Medium
PRN 06095w	Aqueduct; Bridge	Part of a water management system associated with early 20 th century water supply.	SS 7741 9805	High (extant structure)	Low
PRN 06096w	Sluice Valve	Part of a water management system associated with early 20 th century water supply.	SS 7742 9808	Medium/High (presumed to be extant)	Low
PRN 06097w	Air Valve	Part of a water management system associated with early 20 th century water supply.	SS7738 9798	Medium/High (presumed to be extant)	Low
PRN 06098w	Air Valve	Part of the reservoir workings	SS 7768 9802	High (extant)	Low
PRN 06099w	Quarry	Marked on the 1877 OS map (as 'old'). Possibly associated with 18 th century pond/cascade construction.	SS 7649 9723	High (extant feature)	Low
PRN 06100w	Mine Shaft	Late 19 th century mine shaft, probably associated with Gnoll Colliery	SS 7598 9710	Medium (no surface remains, buried remains likely)	Low
PRN 06101w	Waterfall	Late-19 th / early 20 th century artificial waterfall.	SS 7607 9705	Low (area redeveloped)	Low
PRN 06102w	Coal Pit	19 th century coal pit on the edge of the Preswylfa valley	SS 7633 9645	Low (outside park)	Low
PRN 06103w	Harla Cottages; Harley; Harle Farm	'Harle' Farm is mentioned in the mid-17 th century. On maps through the 18 th and 19 th century, still visible in the mid-20 th century. Now demolished.	SS 7629 9750	Medium (buried remains likely)	Medium
PRN 06104w	Ice House complex	18 th century complex of buildings including an ice house and probable stables.	SS 7613 9739	High (surface remains and extant structures)	High
PRN 06105w	House	Late 18 th /early 19 th century house within a rectangular enclosure with outbuildings	SS 7596 9711	Medium/High (some surface masonry)	Low / Medium
PRN 06900w	Upper Pond; Upper Great Pond; Fishpond; Second Pond	Early 18 th century (c.1705) estate pond. Enlarged to its current limits in the mid-18 th century and also used for fishing.	SS 7644 9734	High (extant feature)	Medium

The Gnoll, Neath Port Talbot:
Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment

Reference	Site name and Type	Description	NGR	Potential	Value
PRN 07365w LB 22870	Structures	Rebuilt cairn, pipework housing and bridge structure, part of the early 18 th century (1740s) informal cascade through Mosshouse Wood.	SS 7807 9805	High (extant structures)	High (part of a Grade II listed structure)
PRN 07366w	Coal Pit	Late 19 th century coal pit.	SS 7780 9782	Low	Low
PRN 07367w	Sluice	Sluice structure related to the late 19 th century reservoir.	SS 7782 9816	High (extant structure)	Low
PRN 08619w	Gnoll Collieries	Coal mining area probably developed by Herbert Mackworth in the mid-18 th century. By the mid-19 th century Gnoll Colliery was operating, split into Nos 1-4 by the late 19 th century. Worked until the late 1920s.	SS 7572 9729	Low (main colliery area redeveloped, but appear to extend under park lands)	Medium
PRN 08925w LB 11784	War Memorial gates	Marble memorial gates, designed by Edwin Lutyens, completed 1921.	SS 7589 9708	High (extant structure)	High (Grade II listed)
GP01	Pipework; Horse Gin	Late 17 th /early 18 th century pipe connecting reservoir PRN 03309w with pond, and suggested horse gin to power pump. Approximated location from 1720 plan.	SS 7636 9729	Low (remain unknown)	Low
GP02	Road	Revealed through evaluation (Currie et al 1994), 5m wide road partly overlaid by 18 th century cascade.	SS 7653 9725	Medium (buried remains identified)	Low
GP03	Great Pond Reservoir; Swimming Pool	Built by Humphrey Mackworth in the late 17 th or early 18 th century to help power industrial enterprises. Open-air swimming pool from 1928 – 1960s	SS 7615 9709	High (extant structure)	Medium
GP04	Watercourse	Water supply, possibly to the ice house and Gnoll House, marked on the 1720 plan.	SS 7636 9739	Low (remains unknown)	Low
GP05	Harle Lane; Road	Road from Neath to Efail-Fach, mentioned in 17 th century documents, marked on the 1720 plan, suggestions of potential Roman origin. Blocked by mid 18 th century pond enlargement, but sections survived into the 19 th century.	SS 7631 9744	Low/Medium (buried remains possible)	Medium
GP06	Watercourse	Marked on the 1720 plan suggesting artificial channelling.	SS 7658 9720	High (extant feature)	Low

The Gnoll, Neath Port Talbot:
Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment

Reference	Site name and Type	Description	NGR	Potential	Value
GP07	Bridge; Dam	The dam and bridge at the southern end of the Upper Great Pond, early 18 th century.	SS 7638 9722	High (extant structure)	Medium
GP08	Bridge; Dam	Dam and bridge at the west end of the Great Pond below the Gnoll, early 18 th century.	SS 7609 9709	High (extant structure)	Medium
GP09	Avenue	Formal avenue to frame view of 18 th century gardens	SS 7614 9731	Medium (largely extant)	Medium
GP10	Ha-Ha	Walled ha-ha at end of formal avenue, to provide viewpoint across 18 th century landscaping.	SS 7624 9729	High (extant structure)	Medium
GP11	Building	Building and L-shaped enclosure marked on the mid-18 th century estate map, function unknown.	SS 7606 9735	Low/Medium (buried remains possible)	Low
GP12	Building	Small 18 th to 19 th century structure, function unknown.	SS 7608 9718	Low/Medium (buried remains possible)	Low
GP13	Gnoll Cottage	Estate cottage with a range of outbuildings to the east. First marked on mid-18 th century estate map.	SS 7620 9720	High (extant building)	Medium
GP14	Watercourse	Mid-18 th century overflow built for the enlarged pond.	SS 7639 9743	High (extant structure)	Medium
GP15	Walled Gardens; Kitchen Gardens	Early to mid-18 th century walled garden area.	SS 7627 9720	High (extant walls)	Medium
GP16	Building	Building below the bridge/dam, unknown function. First marked on the mid-18 th century estate map. Storage buildings still stand in the area.	SS 7640 9720	Medium (possibly still extant)	Low
GP17	Building	Small building marked on mid-18 th century estate map, function unknown.	SS 7652 9720	Low (remains unknown)	Low
GP18	The Fishpond; Guinea Pond; Third Pond Reservoir	Mid-18 th century pond, providing water storage and fishing.	SS 7678 9758	High (extant feature)	Medium
GP19	Building; Tithe Barn	18 th century tithe barn.	SS 7622 9694	Low/Medium (buried remains possible)	Medium

The Gnoll, Neath Port Talbot:
Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment

Reference	Site name and Type	Description	NGR	Potential	Value
GP20	Coal Pits	Area of coal pits marked on mid-18 th century estate map, possibly related to the Gnoll Collieries PRN 08619w.	SS 7586 9708	Low (area redeveloped)	Medium
GP21	Colliery	Building marked on mid-18 th century estate map, later (19 th century maps) shown as coal pits.	SS 7662 9805	Low/Medium (buried remains possible)	Low
GP22	Lletty'r Guinea Farmhouse	Farm marked on the mid-18 th century and later estate maps. Gone by the mid-19 th century. No further information.	SS 7702 9797	Low/Medium (buried remains possible)	Low
GP23	Building; Sluice	Small building marked on the mid-18 th century estate map with pond adjacent. Marked as sluice on later maps.	SS 7750 9804	Low	Low
GP25	Ty'n-y-ferch Cottage	Marked on the mid-18 th century estate map, possibly associated with woodland management. Occupied into the 19 th century, gone by the mid-19 th century.	SS 7777 9794	Low/Medium (buried remains possible)	Low
GP26	Enclosure; Garden	Elongated garden enclosure marked on 1801 estate map to the west of Gnoll Cottage.	SS 7616 9719	Medium (walling extant)	Low
GP27	Enclosure; Garden	Enclosure marked on the 1801 estate map, with a building along the western side.	SS 7620 9723	Medium (walling extant)	Medium
GP28	Fairyland House	Fairyland house, built in c.1795.	SS 7676 9800	High (extant structure)	Medium
GP29	Building	Building marked on the 1801 estate map but gone by the mid-19 th century. Function unknown.	SS 7754 9806	Low/Medium (buried remains possible)	Low
GP30	Building; Lodge	Building at the entrance to an estate track, marked on the 1812 estate map. Gone by late 19 th century.	SS 7805 9827	Low/Medium (buried remains possible)	Low
GP31	Lodge	19 th century lodge spanning the estate entrance from Cimla. Still visible in the mid-20 th century, since redeveloped.	SS 7584 9696	Low (area redeveloped)	Low
GP32	Cottage; Lodge	Marked as a cottage off the main estate on 18 th and early 19 th century estate maps. Marked as a lodge on late 19 th century OS mapping.	SS 7590 9705	High (extant structure)	Medium
GP33	Garden Building	Late 19 th century garden sheds.	SS 7626 9722	Low/Medium (buried remains)	Low

The Gnoll, Neath Port Talbot:
Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment

Reference	Site name and Type	Description	NGR	Potential	Value
				possible)	
GP34	Garden Building	Mid/late 19 th century potting shed, with early 20 th century glasshouses attached to the south. Detached glasshouse lay to the north.	SS 7630 9719	High (extant structures)	Low
GP35	Boathouse	Mid/late 19 th century boathouse.	SS 7673 9753	Low	Low
GP36	Tennis Court	Late 19 th – mid-20 th century tennis court.	SS 7614 9730	Low/Medium	Low
GP36	Tennis Court	Late 19 th – early-20 th century tennis court.	SS 7607 9721	Low/Medium	Low
GP37	Pond Cottage	Late 19 th century two-storey cottage with garden.	SS 7634 9721	High (extant building)	Low/Medium
GP38	Filter Beds	Late 19 th century filter beds built for the Neath Water Company.	SS 7641 9750	Medium	Low
GP39	Boat House	Late 19 th to early 20 th century boat house.	SS 7649 9729	Low/Medium (no visible remains)	Low
GP40	Quarry	Late 19 th century quarry, presumably related to reservoir construction	SS 7772 9797	Medium	Low
GP41	Quarry	Late 19 th century quarry, presumably related to reservoir construction	SS 7777 9817	Medium	Low
GP42	Quarry	Late 19 th century quarry, presumably related to reservoir construction	SS 7809 9808	Medium	Low
GP43	Coal Level	Late 19 th century coal level. Out of use by the early 20 th century.	SS 7647 9789	Low (area redeveloped)	Low
GP44	Coal Pits	Late 19 th century coal pit, and possible shaft. Disused by the early 20 th century.	SS 7667 9733	Medium (remains not located)	Low
GP45	Banks	Series of parallel banks in Fishpind Wood of uncertain date and function	SS 7660 9733	Medium (surface remains visible)	Low
GP46	Structure	Remnants of iron post and masonry, possibly associated with late 19 th century reservoir.	SS 7770 9799	Medium (surface remains visible)	Low
GP47	Buildings	Possible temporary wartime structures relating to WWII activity.	SS 7631 9729	Low	Low

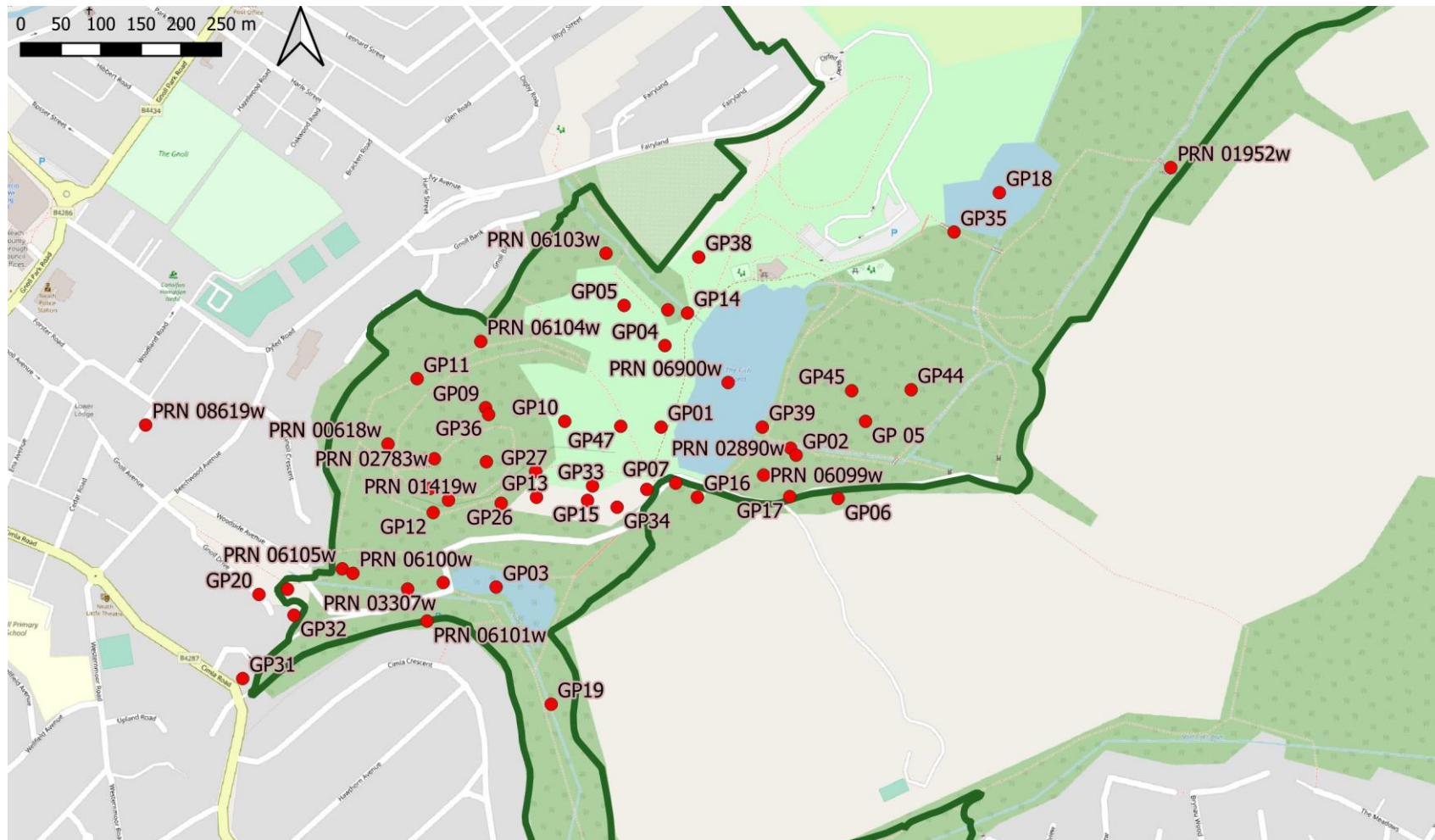


Figure 14: Location of sites identified within the park or associated with it, focusing on the western end of the park around Gnoll House.

Map data from OpenStreetMap (OSM) <https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright> 06/07/2023



Figure 15: Location of sites identified within the park or associated with it, focusing on the eastern end of the park around Mosshouse Woods.

Map data from OpenStreetMap (OSM) <https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright> 06/07/2023

7.2 Setting

- 7.2.1 Setting of Historic Assets in Wales (Cadw 2017) offers guidance on defining and analysing the setting of designated heritage assets to allow the impact of development to be appropriately assessed. The setting of such assets includes “the surroundings in which it is understood, experienced and appreciated, embracing present and past relationships to the surrounding landscape. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve” (Cadw 2017). As such it often extends beyond the physical boundaries of the monument itself. This may include physical elements in its surroundings, such as boundaries and other monuments, relationships with other historic assets and natural features, or associated agricultural, industrial or other surroundings. Less tangible elements are also included, such as function, sensory perceptions, historical, artistic, literary and scenic associations.
- 7.2.2 A detailed analysis of setting was not required as part of this assessment, however, and as such has not been included. As discussed, the site incorporates the Grade II* listed park and gardens of The Gnoll (PGW(Gm)50 (NEP)) and the setting of this park is explored in detail in the Levelling Up Fund Application Proposals produced by Hiraeth (Hiraeth 2022). That document examines the history and features of the park and the listed buildings that are associated with it, identifying the main aspects and significance of the site and its setting. No further addition to the analysis presented in that document is required here.
- 7.2.3 There is only one identified listed building not discussed in the above document, the Grade II* listed Parish Church of St. Illtyd. The church sits on a terrace overlooking the lower river valley to the west, with views focussing in that direction. The surrounding graveyard is itself surrounded by mature trees, with a busy road to the east. The positioning of the church on this road is likely an important element of its historic setting. On the opposite side of the road lies an extensive modern cemetery, backed by 20th century housing, with the wooded periphery of Gnoll Park lining high ground behind and providing a backdrop to views to the east. The entrance to Fairyland Road which accesses the northeastern part of the estate is located beyond the cemetery, with no visible association to the church.
- 7.2.4 Five scheduled monuments have been identified in the surrounding landscape. Two (GM264 and GM447) are located on Cefn Morfudd to the northeast of the park with both occupying a similar upland position on a prominent ridge overlooking the Neath valley. GM264 is potentially early medieval in date and likely defensive in nature, with a setting that is focused on its topographical locality with adjacent archaeological sites. No link to the Gnoll Park area, other than the parkland forming an established part of the surrounding visual landscape, has been established. GM447 is an industrial site, built in the mid-19th century as a transport route linking with the Neath canal to the north. The topographic location provides its immediate setting and gives an understanding of the challenges faced in the 19th century industrialisation of the region and the investments required to overcome them. The link to nearby contemporary industrial sites is also important given its original function but it was not linked to the various industrial enterprises undertaken on the Gnoll Estate or the owners of the estate, and the visual setting provided by the estate is also of little relevance to this site.
- 7.2.5 Two scheduled monuments are located in Aberdulais to the north (GM505 and GM506). Both are associated with the Tennant canal, opened in 1824

but linking with the late 18th century Neath canal. They have historical links to the industrialisation of the Neath valley and the canal routes extend further along the valleys, although their current setting is more confined as modern development has obscured many of the traditional industrial sites in the locality. The aqueduct (GM505) is a relatively low structure across the river and both monuments are now surrounded by modern roads to the north and south; visually therefore their setting is also limited in range. Gnoll Park does not feature in the setting of either site.

- 7.2.6 The final site, Neath Castle (GM039) lies in the centre of Neath. Its current setting includes urban development of the late 19th and 20th centuries which now surround the site, also serving to limit views of and from the castle remains. This is in contrast to its historic setting, where an association with the medieval town spread out to the southwest would have been important, as well as its physical and visual connections to the important river crossing to the northwest. Gnoll House once formed an important aspect in the setting of this castle with the two sites often chosen as the main focal points of 18th and 19th century landscape images, indeed it is rare to find an historical image of one without the other. There was a further link in the 18th century with the owner of Gnoll House, Sir Humphrey Mackworth, becoming constable of Neath Castle. These historic links, both visual and personal, have been lost to 20th century developments.

8 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 Development Details (Fig 16 and 17)

- 8.1.1 A variety of proposals have been put forward for the restoration and enhancement of the park, these have mostly focussed in the western part around the site of Gnoll House and the Upper Great Pond. These proposals have evolved from those initially outlined in the Levelling Up Fund documents (Hiraeth 2022). The intention is to submit five separate planning application as part of this project, these are outlined below and broadly illustrated in Figures 16 and 17.
- 8.1.2 **Zone 01** - Around the Gnoll House area the intention is to repair the visible remains, open up the cellar area, establish a new viewing platform and introduce new lighting, surfacing and interpretation. Many of the footpaths and the main drive will be resurfaced with a new hoggin surface. Other works include woodland and shrub management to open up historic vistas and other appropriate views.
- 8.1.3 **Zone 02** - Towards the northern end of the Upper Great Pond the visitor centre will be rebuilt upon the existing footprint.
- 8.1.4 **Zone 03** - Proposals include the restoration and extension of Pond Cottage and its change of use to a café area.
- 8.1.5 **Zone 04** - Within the kitchen garden area, holiday lodges and cabins will be constructed, some built on the footprint of the current potting shed, with other new cabins and associated infrastructure installed throughout the walled garden area. Garden areas will also be reinstated, and two new entrances will be inserted through the main east-west kitchen garden wall.
- 8.1.6 **Zones 05 and 06** - The main car park will be improved and enlarged, with the installation of EV charging points. A new children's play area will be installed within Fishpond Woods, the woodland will be better managed and a new footbridge will be installed to the east.
- 8.1.7 Other general works that have been discussed include footpath improvements, woodland management and the possible restoration of the formal cascade to bring it back into functioning order. This is likely to involve some repointing works, pump repair/installation and access improvements.
- 8.1.8 Generally, any of the following activities typically associated with a construction activity could have a physical impact upon historic assets by potentially exposing, damaging or destroying archaeological remains:
- Landscaping and terracing works;
 - Enabling works, such as the construction of access roads, parking and storage areas, associated services;
 - Surface stripping and levelling;
 - Foundation excavations;
 - Service installation;
 - Any other ground disturbing works.
- 8.1.9 Development works could also have the potential to generate other impacts upon historic assets, by altering elements of the setting as discussed in section 7.2.

The Gnoll, Neath Port Talbot: Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment



KEY

Projects requiring Planning Permission Outlined in red

- A1: Improvements to main drive (continue surfacing through to Gnoll House including resin bond/ bound gravel finish)
- A2: Restore vista through to Fishpond Woods Cascade
- A3: Gnoll Woodland - Woodland Management (Carry out Year 1 & 2 objectives) includes opening up views where appropriate
- A4: Gnoll House - repair of footprint, including opening up cellars for interpretation
- A5: Gnoll Gardens - Ornamental/ shrub planting Management (Carry out Year 1 & 2 objectives)
- A6: Gnoll Gardens footpaths - resurfacing where appropriate, create logical flow for visitors including interacting with designed vistas
- A9a: Pond Cottage restoration
- A9b & A10: Kitchen Garden Holiday Lodges with restored Kitchen Garden & Improvements to service yard to create more appropriate storage facilities and car parking for accommodation proposals
- B2: New bridge to connect with Woodland Trust Land
- B3: New woodland play area in the heart of the woodland making best use of the topography and woodland setting
- B6: Improvement of connection to Woodland Trust entrance
- B8: Fishpond Woods - Woodland Management (Carry out Year 1 & 2 objectives)
- B9: Repair formal cascade (masonry, pump and access)
- C1: Additional car parking (mainly overflow), alongside EV Charging points
- C2: Entrance/arrival point from the car park - rationalise footpath network/ improve quality of materials/ consider key views
- C3: Demolition of existing Visitor Centre and construction of new Visitor Centre and associated connecting bridge

Notes:
Responsibility is not accepted for errors made by others scaling from this drawing.

All construction information should be taken from figured dimensions only. Dimensions are in millimetres unless otherwise stated.

All dimensions and conditions are to be checked on site prior to preparing drawings or commencing any work.

Any variations or supplementary drawings are to be approved by The Architect.

PRELIMINARY

Hiraeth.

2223 VC EX 002 Rev.

Neath Port Talbot CBC
GNOLL PARK

EXISTING
Interventions Plan

Scale: 1:5000 @ A1 Date: 06/23

02920025614 office@hiraetharchitecture.co.uk
The Maitlands 11 Red Lyndell St Cardiff CF1 2YB A

EX 002.1 INTERVENTIONS PLAN
COMPILED BY: HIRAETH

Figure 16: Outline development proposals. Plan provided by the client, not reproduced to scale.

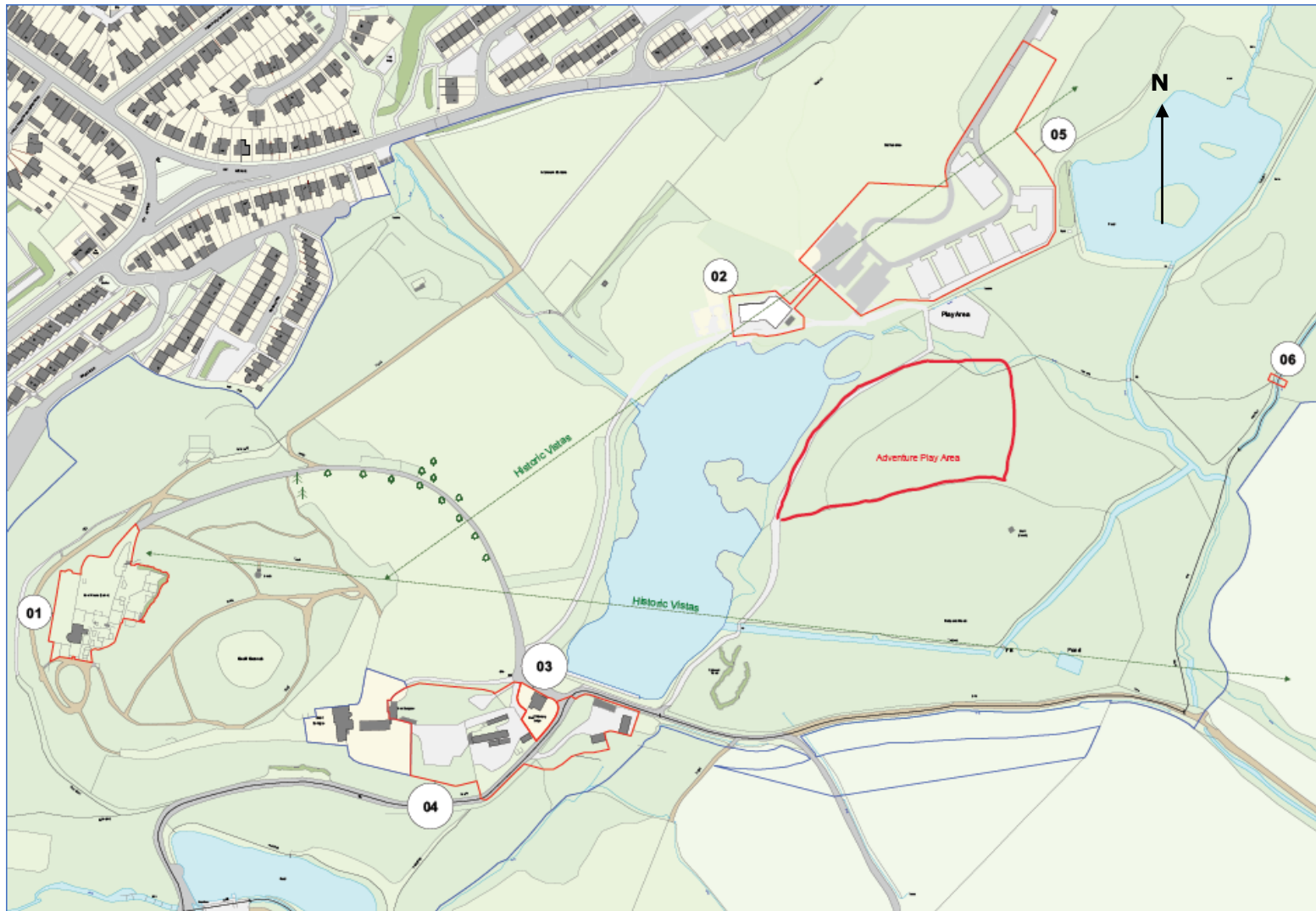


Figure 17: Enlarged and annotated image from Figure 16, highlighting areas of proposed works.

8.2 Impact Assessment Criteria

8.2.1 The criteria for the assessment of impacts, both direct and indirect, on historic assets is based on The Department for Transport 'Transport Analysis Guidance' (TAG), Unit A3 'Environmental Impact Appraisal: Section 8 Impacts on the Historic Environment', of May 2019, with additional information based on professional judgement. In addition, however, the guidance offered in the Setting of Historic Assets in Wales (Cadw 2017) has been utilised.

8.2.2 The TAG criteria divides the impacts into seven categories:

- Large Adverse (negative)
- Moderate Adverse (negative)
- Slight Adverse (negative)
- Neutral
- Slight Beneficial (positive)
- Moderate Beneficial (positive)
- Large Beneficial (positive)

8.3 Physical Impacts upon the Historic Assets

8.3.1 Section 7.1 has highlighted the areas of general archaeological potential and identified specific sites of interest. Those sites that lie within the areas of proposed development as outlined on Figures 16 and 17 are presented in table format below, with possible physical impacts indicated, and illustrated on Figure 18.

Table 6: The potential physical impact on sites and features of archaeological interest lying within proposed development areas.

Reference	Site name & type	NGR	Potential	Value	Possible effect	Impact
ZONE 1 – GNOLL RUINS						
-	Roman to Medieval archaeological potential	-	Low	Uncertain	Any groundbreaking activity	Slight Adverse
-	Post-Medieval archaeological potential	-	High	Uncertain	Any groundbreaking activity	Slight Adverse
PRN 00618w	Gnoll House; Gnoll Castle	SS 7602 9727	High (surface remains and cellars extant)	High	Wall renovations, path resurfacing, ground clearance, service installation, interpretation panels	Slight Adverse (groundworks) to Moderate Beneficial (repair works and interpretation)
PRN 03309w	Reservoir; Bowling Green; Croquet Lawn	SS 7614 9724	High (surface and buried remains identified)	Low	Pathway improvements, woodland management	Slight Adverse (groundworks) to Moderate Beneficial (woodland management)
PRN 06104w	Ice House complex	SS 7613 9739	High (surface remains and extant structures)	High	Pathway improvements	Neutral to Slight Adverse (groundworks)
GP04	Watercourse	SS 7636 9739	Low (remains unknown)	Low	Driveway improvements	Neutral
GP09	Avenue	SS 7614 9731	Medium (largely extant)	Medium	Vista improvements, woodland management	Moderate Beneficial

The Gnoll, Neath Port Talbot:
Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment

Reference	Site name & type	NGR	Potential	Value	Possible effect	Impact
GP10	Ha-Ha	SS 7624 9729	High (extant structure)	Medium	Vista improvements	Slight Beneficial
GP11	Building	SS 7606 9735	Low/Medium (buried remains possible)	Low	Pathway improvements	Neutral
GP12	Building	SS 7608 9718	Low/Medium (buried remains possible)	Low	Pathway improvements	Neutral
GP26	Enclosure; Garden	SS 7616 9719	Medium (walling extant)	Low	Pathway improvements	Neutral
GP27	Enclosure; Garden	SS 7620 9723	Medium (walling extant)	Medium	Pathway improvements, woodland management	Neutral to Slight Beneficial
GP36	Tennis Court	SS 7614 9730	Low/Medium	Low	Pathway improvements, woodland management	Slight adverse (groundworks)
GP47	Buildings	SS 7631 9729	Low	Low	Driveway improvements	Neutral
ZONE 2 – VISITOR CENTRE						
-	Roman to Medieval archaeological potential	-	Low	Uncertain	Any groundbreaking activity	Neutral - Slight Adverse
-	Post-Medieval archaeological potential	-	High	Uncertain	Any groundbreaking activity	Neutral - Slight Adverse
PRN 06900w	Upper Pond; Upper Great Pond; Fishpond;	SS 7644 9734	High (extant)	Medium	Woodland management, opening	Slight Beneficial

Reference	Site name & type	NGR	Potential	Value	Possible effect	Impact
	Second Pond		feature)		vistas, visitor centre construction	
ZONE 3 – POND COTTAGE						
-	Roman to Medieval archaeological potential	-	Low	Uncertain	Any groundbreaking activity	Neutral - Slight Adverse
-	Post-Medieval archaeological potential	-	High	Uncertain	Any groundbreaking activity	Neutral - Slight Adverse
GP07	Bridge; Dam	SS 7638 9722	High (extant structure)	Medium	Pond Cottage renovations	Neutral
GP37	Pond Cottage	SS 7634 9721	High (extant building)	Low/Medium	Restoration, café conversion	Slight adverse (internal works) to Slight Beneficial (repairs and maintenance)
ZONE 4 – KITCHEN GARDENS						
-	Roman to Medieval archaeological potential	-	Low	Uncertain	Any groundbreaking activity	Slight Adverse
-	Post-Medieval archaeological potential	-	High	Uncertain	Any groundbreaking activity	Slight Adverse
GP15	Walled Gardens; Kitchen Gardens	SS 7627 9720	High (extant walls)	Medium	Establishment of lodges and cabins, garden restoration	Slight to Moderate Adverse (groundworks, new entrances) to Slight

The Gnoll, Neath Port Talbot:
Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment

Reference	Site name & type	NGR	Potential	Value	Possible effect	Impact
						Beneficial (garden restoration)
GP33	Garden Building	SS 7626 9722	Low/Medium (buried remains possible)	Low	Establishment of lodges and cabins, garden restoration	Moderate Adverse (groundworks and clearance)
GP34	Garden Building	SS 7630 9719	High (extant structures)	Low	Establishment of lodges and cabins, garden restoration	Moderate Adverse (clearance and rebuild)
ZONES 5 & 6 – CAR PARK, BRIDGE, ADVENTURE PLAY AREAS						
-	Roman to Medieval archaeological potential	-	Low	Uncertain	Any groundbreaking activity	Slight Adverse
-	Post-Medieval archaeological potential	-	High	Uncertain	Any groundbreaking activity	Slight Adverse
GP05	Harle Lane; Road	SS 7631 9744	Low/Medium (buried remains possible)	Medium	Pathway improvements, new play area	Slight Adverse
GP44	Coal Pits	SS 7667 9733	Medium (remains not located)	Low	New play area, woodland management	Neutral - Slight Adverse (groundworks and clearance)
GP45	Banks	SS 7660 9733	Medium (surface remains visible)	Low	New play area, woodland management	Neutral - Slight Adverse (groundworks and clearance)

Reference	Site name & type	NGR	Potential	Value	Possible effect	Impact
OTHER WORKS						
-	Roman to Medieval archaeological potential	-	Low	Uncertain	Any groundbreaking activity	Slight Adverse
-	Post-Medieval archaeological potential	-	High	Uncertain	Any groundbreaking activity	Slight Adverse
PRN 02890w	Cascade	SS 7652 9726	High (extant structure)	High	Repointing, improved access	Slight Adverse (groundworks) to Moderate Beneficial (repair works)
PRN 06099w	Quarry	SS 7649 9723	High (extant feature)	Low	Woodland management	Slight beneficial
GP02	Road	SS 7653 9725	Medium (buried remains identified)	Low	Cascade restoration	Neutral
GP39	Boat House	SS 7649 9729	Low/Medium (no visible remains)	Low	Pathway improvements, woodland management	Neutral

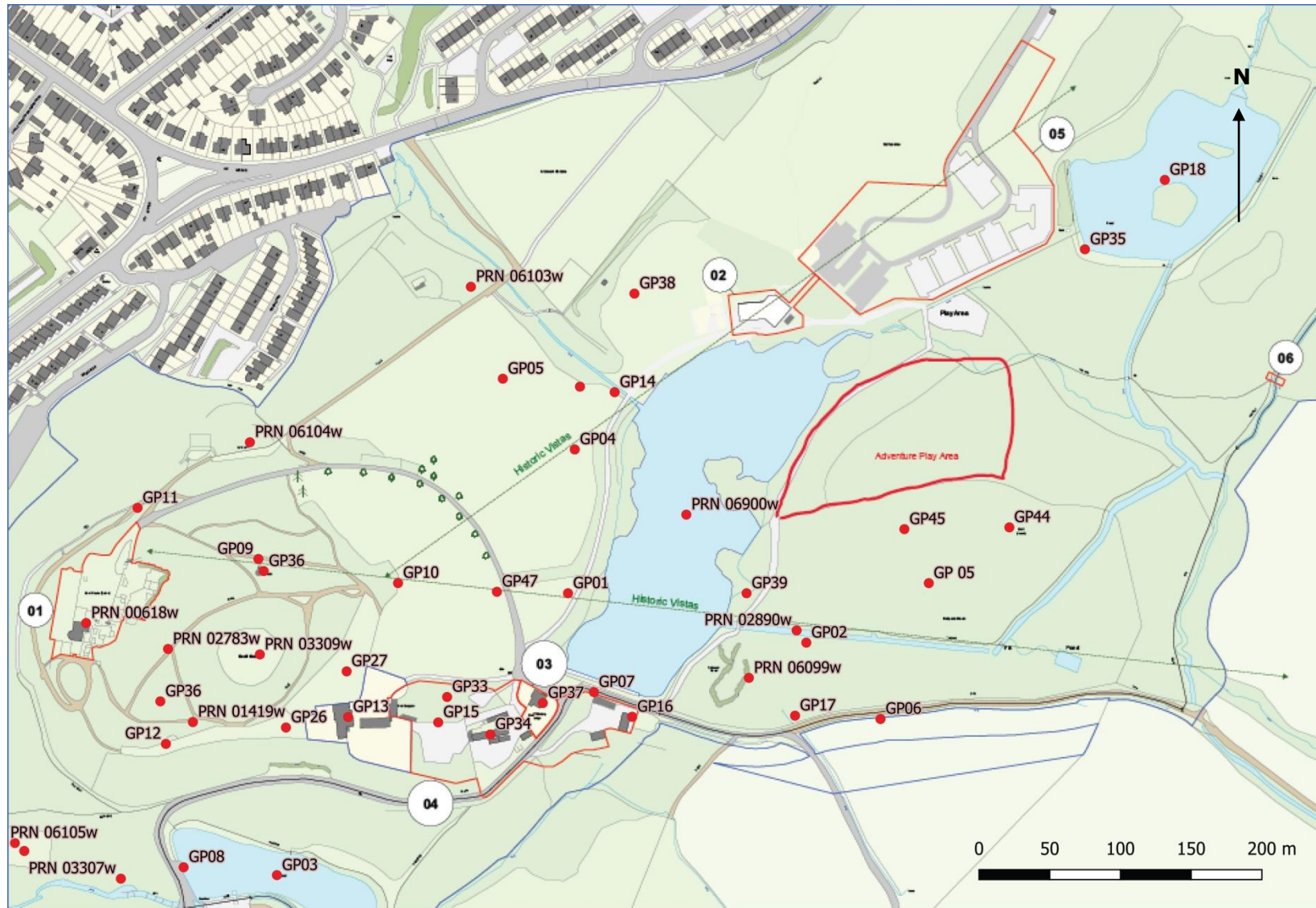


Figure 18: Proposed development zones overlaid with locations of sites and features of archaeological interest.

8.4 Impacts to the Settings of Surrounding Designated Features

- 8.4.1 The definition of setting, how it contributes to the significance of a historic asset, and why it is important are outlined in Setting of Historic Assets in Wales (Welsh Government 2017a; available online) as follows:

The setting of a historic asset includes the surroundings in which it is understood, experienced and appreciated, embracing present and past relationships to the surrounding landscape. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of an asset.

- 8.4.2 As stated in Section 7.2, the proposed development lies within the Grade II* listed park and gardens of The Gnoll (PGW(Gm)50 (NEP)), which also includes a number of associated listed buildings. The impact of the development on the setting of these features has been assessed and addressed as part of the LUF documents (Hiraeth 2022) and through ongoing discussions with Cadw; these impacts will not be further analysed here.
- 8.4.3 The settings of other outlying assets are also included in Section 7.2, which includes the Grade II* listed Parish Church of St. Illtyd (LB 11797) and the scheduled monuments of Neath Castle GM039, Cefn Morfydd Dyke and Earthwork GM264, Glynccorwg Mineral Railway GM447, Canal Boat at Aberdulais Basin GM505 and Aberdulais Aqueduct GM506.
- 8.4.4 Of these sites, only Neath Castle GM039 shared any elements of its setting with Gnoll Park, based on historical links to the former owners of the estate and artistic depictions of the two sites. No elements of this, or its current setting, will be affected by the proposed works within the park.

9 CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Archaeological Potential and Impact Assessment

9.1.1 The proposed development sites lie in a general area that has a high potential for archaeology relating to post-medieval development of the estate and coal mining activity. Alongside this, a low potential for archaeological sites of a general Roman to Medieval date have also been identified.

9.1.2 Research has been able to identify a large number of specific sites related to the post-medieval activity within the park as a whole, although the majority of these sites will remain unaffected by the proposed works. Individual sites within the proposed development areas are listed in Table 6. A total of 25 sites are identified, of which eight will be unaffected, and four will have a beneficial impact. Thirteen sites therefore have the potential to be adversely affected by proposed works.

9.1.3 In the area around the Gnoll House ruins (**Zone 1**) affected sites include:

Reference	Site name and Type	Potential	Value	Impact
-	Roman to medieval archaeological potential	Low	Uncertain	Slight Adverse
-	Post-medieval archaeological potential	High	Uncertain	Slight Adverse
PRN 00618w	Gnoll House; Gnoll Castle	High	High	Slight Adverse to Moderate Beneficial
PRN 03309w	Reservoir; Bowling Green; Croquet Lawn	High	Low	Slight Adverse to Moderate Beneficial
PRN 06104w	Ice house complex	High	High	Neutral to Slight Adverse
GP36	Tennis Court	Low/Medium	Low	Slight adverse

9.1.4 An adverse impact has been highlighted for these sites due to the possibility of ground-disturbing works largely through the installation of drive and pathway surfaces, and through repair works to the masonry of the Gnoll House ruins and opening up the cellar areas. This is considered to largely be a slight impact as groundworks are assumed to be relatively minimal. Consolidation works to the masonry and improved woodland and shrub management in this area is also considered to ultimately have a beneficial impact on two of these sites.

9.1.5 In the area around the Visitor Centre (**Zone 2**) affected sites include:

Reference	Site name and Type	Potential	Value	Impact
-	Roman to medieval archaeological potential	Low	Uncertain	Neutral - Slight Adverse
-	Post-medieval archaeological potential	High	Uncertain	Neutral - Slight Adverse

9.1.6 No individual sites have been identified in this area that would be adversely affected, only the general background areas of archaeological potential. As proposed development in this area will be built over the footprint of the current building it is possible that any potential archaeological remains have already been disturbed through previous development.

9.1.7 In the area around Pond Cottage (**Zone 3**) affected sites include:

Reference	Site name & type	Potential	Value	Impact
-	Roman to Medieval archaeological potential	Low	Uncertain	Neutral - Slight Adverse
-	Post-Medieval archaeological potential	High	Uncertain	Neutral - Slight Adverse
GP37	Pond Cottage	High	Low/Medium	Slight adverse to Slight Beneficial

9.1.8 Works to Pond Cottage GP37 to create a café area is considered initially adverse due to requirements to convert internal ground floor areas and potentially remove a small rear extension. This is considered slight as the internal layout will remain, and the ongoing maintenance of the structure is considered beneficial. The potential for groundworks to affect the general background archaeological potential is considered to be relatively minimal.

9.1.9 In the area around the Kitchen Gardens (**Zone 4**) affected sites include:

Reference	Site name & type	Potential	Value	Impact
-	Roman to Medieval archaeological potential	Low	Uncertain	Slight Adverse
-	Post-Medieval archaeological potential	High	Uncertain	Slight Adverse
GP15	Walled Gardens; Kitchen Gardens	High	Medium	Slight / Moderate Adverse to Slight Beneficial
GP33	Garden Building	Low/Medium	Low	Moderate Adverse
GP34	Garden Building	High	Low	Moderate Adverse
GP37	Pond Cottage	High	Low/Medium	Slight adverse to Slight Beneficial

9.1.10 An adverse impact has been highlighted for these sites due to demolition works on structures GP34, new entrances through the garden wall GP15, groundworks associated with the construction of lodges and cabins within the walled garden GP15, and clearance and levelling works required to restore the garden areas within the walled garden GP15 and site of GP33. Due to the level of groundworks required and the removal of existing structures this is considered to be a moderate adverse impact. Ultimately

the restoration of garden areas from its current condition will be a beneficial impact to the walled garden GP15.

- 9.1.11 In the area around the car park and adventure play area (**Zones 5 & 6**), as well as potential additional works in Fishpond Woods, affected sites include:

Reference	Site name & type	Potential	Value	Impact
-	Roman to Medieval archaeological potential	Low	Uncertain	Slight Adverse
-	Post-Medieval archaeological potential	High	Uncertain	Slight Adverse
PRN 02890w	Cascade	High	High	Slight Adverse to Moderate Beneficial
GP05	Harle Lane; Road	Low/Medium	Medium	Slight Adverse
GP44	Coal Pits	Medium	Low	Neutral - Slight Adverse
GP45	Banks	Medium	Low	Neutral - Slight Adverse

- 9.1.12 An adverse impact has been highlighted largely due to potential groundworks associated with the installation of new children's play area close to sites GP05, GP44 and GP45. These sites may however lay beyond the areas to be affected by associated groundworks. Restoration works and the intent to bring back into partial working order also has the potential to impact on the remains of the formal cascade PRN 02890w. These impacts are considered slight as groundworks are assumed to be minimal, and restoration of the formal cascade will ultimately have a beneficial impact.

9.2 Mitigation

- 9.2.1 A slight to moderate adverse impact has been identified on sites within the proposed development area which may require further archaeological mitigation. Any recommendation for archaeological mitigation rests with the archaeological advisor to the local planning authority.
- 9.2.2 Proposed works will impact upon the material remains of buildings and structures of varying value within the kitchen garden area (Zone 3 & 4) and Gnoll House itself (Zone 1). Such structures may benefit from some proportionate levels of historic building recording to gain a record of their structures prior to alterations taking place.
- 9.2.3 Groundworks across the site have the potential to disturb archaeological remains. These sites are either of low value or in areas likely affected by previous works (such as the kitchen garden and visitor's centre). Groundworks with the potential to disturb archaeological remains may therefore benefit from an archaeological watching brief to assist in identifying and recording archaeological remains should they be present. Development plans would need to accommodate, particularly in terms of

The Gnoll, Neath Port Talbot:
Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment

time and resources, the potential requirement for further archaeological works should significant remains come to light during the archaeological watching brief.

10 SOURCES

Database

Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record

National Monument Records for Wales, housed with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Aberystwyth.

Published

CIfA. 2014. Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment, [online] available at http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CIfAS%26GDBA_3.pdf Accessed 05.07.2022

Currie, C.K., Locock, M, Howes, L & O'Donovan, S. 1994 'Fishpond Wood Cascade, The Gnoll, West Glamorgan' in *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, Vol.143 pp 236-271

Eaton, G. 1990. *Mackworths of the Gnoll – A century of domination*. Neath

Hayton, D, Cruickshanks, E & Handley, S. (Eds) 2002. 'Mackworth, Sir Humphrey (1657-1727), of Gnoll Castle, Neath, Glam' in *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1690-1715*:. Boydell and Brewer, Martlesham

Lewis, S 1849 *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*. London

Ordnance Survey 1877-81 1:2500 County Map of Glamorganshire

Ordnance Survey 1899 1:2500 County Map of Glamorganshire

Phillips, D R. 1925 *The History of the Vale of Neath*. DR Phillips.

Pigot & Co 1844 *Directory of South Wales*. London

RCAHMW. 1981. *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan. Vol IV: The Greater Houses*. HMSO, Cardiff.

Trott, CDJ. 1969 'Coal Mining in the Borough of Neath in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth centuries' in *Morgannwg, transactions of the Glamorgan Local History Society, Vol.XIII*, pp 47-74

Welsh Government. 2017. Planning Policy Wales: Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment. Cardiff: Cadw, [online] available at <http://gov.wales/docs/desh/policy/170531tan-24-the-historic-environment-en.pdf> Accessed 05.07.2022

Welsh Government. 2017a. Setting of Historic Assets in Wales. Cardiff: Cadw, [online] available at <http://cadw.gov.wales/docs/cadw/publications/historicenvironment/20170531Setting%20of%20Historic%20Assets%20in%20Wales%2026918%20EN.pdf> Accessed 05.07.2022

Watkins, G. 2013. *The Welsh Folly Book*. Kindle (G.Watkins)

Whittle, E. 1992. *The Historic Gardens of Wales*. HMSO, London.

Unpublished

Baggott, I, Avins G & Laidlaw, C. 2022. *The Gnoll, Neath. Conservation Management Plan*.

- Bowden, R & Roberts, R. 2012. *Mills and Water-Power in Glamorgan and Gwent*. Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Report
- Hiraeth Architecture. 2022. *Levelling Up Fund Application Supporting Document: Gnoll Estate Country Park*.
- Locock, M. 1992. *Archaeological Field Evaluation, Gnoll Estate, Neath*. Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Report
- Thomas, C. 2009. *Better Woodlands for Wales Management Plan: The Gnoll Country Park (WHE1) 4892*. Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Report
- Tuck, M 2018 *Nidum. Excavations at the Roman Auxiliary Fort 2010 to 2012: Neath*. Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Report

Websites

- BGS. 2023. Geology of Britain Viewer, available at https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/?_ga=2.92628061.198019860.1657025306-1432895420.1657025306 Accessed 01.06.2023
- Cof Cymru – National Historic Assets of Wales <https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/cof-cymru> Accessed 01.07.2023.
- Google Earth Maps satellite imagery.
- Griffiths, M.J. 2023. 'The Development of Cimla Road' Neath Antiquarian Society News <http://www.neathantiquariansociety.co.uk/news.asp>
- Natural Resources Wales LiDAR Composite Dataset, available at <http://lle.gov.wales/Catalogue/Item/LidarCompositeDataset/?lang=en> Accessed 01.08.2022
- Portable Antiquities Scheme. Available at: <https://finds.org.uk/> Accessed 01.07.2023
- Welsh Tithe Maps, available at <https://places.library.wales/> Accessed 15.06.2023
- Gnoll County Park (Neath Port Talbot Council) <http://www.gnollestategroup.co.uk/> Accessed 14/06/23

Archives

- D/D T 2297. Neath: A plan of the town and port of Neath. 1720.
- Gn/E/1 Gnoll demesne and lands contiguous belonging to H. Mackworth esq., MP for Glamorgan, by B. Jones. c. 1741-1768
- Gn/E/5/1 Map of part of Gnoll estate...property of Capel Leigh, Esqr. Surveyed & drawn by Paul Padley. 1801
- Gn/E/5/2 Plan of the Gnoll estate at Neath ... belonging Capel Leigh Esqr. 1812

