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GNOLL HOUSE AND POND COTTAGE, THE GNOLL, NEATH PORT TALBOT HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING



Prepared by DAT Archaeological Services
For: Andrew Scott Ltd



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DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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GNOLL HOUSE AND POND COTTAGE, THE GNOLL, NEATH PORT TALBOT: HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

by

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TALBOT:
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**DUNRAVEN COURT, BEACH ROAD, SOUTHE GNOLL HOUSE AND POND
COTTAGE, THE GNOLL, NEATH PORT TALBOT RD NDOWN:
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SUMMARY

Dyfed Archaeological Trust - Archaeological Services were commissioned to undertake an archaeological scheme of historic building recording of the ruins of Gnoll House and the extant remains of Pond Cottage within the Gnoll Estate and Country Park, Neath (centred on SS 76030 97273 and SS 76347 97218). Both lie within Grade II listed parkland (PGW(Gm)60(NEP), Gnoll House is also recorded on the regional Historic Environment Record as PRN 00618w. The survey was carried out to Level 3 requirements.*

Research suggests the first house at the Gnoll may have been built in the early 17th century. A new house was built in c.1666 and a further house in the early 18th century. In the 1770s a larger house was built, expanding the early 18th century house, subsuming the 1666 house, and presumably removing any earlier houses. Various alterations were made to the house throughout the late 18th and 19th centuries, with a period of gradual reduction beginning from the mid-19th century onwards before its eventual demolition in 1957. Below ground cellars survive, some elements of which may date to the early 18th century, but they largely date to the house of the 1770s with some 19th century alterations. Above ground remains comprise low walling, which appears largely modern with some original elements, outlining the layout of the house as it was in the late 19th century. Some higher standing remains survive to the periphery.

Pond Cottage is a late 19th century estate cottage, retaining many original external features but largely modernised internally.

CRYNODEB

Comisiynwyd Gwasanaethau Archeolegol DAT i ymgymryd â chynllun archeolegol o adeilad hanesyddol yn cofnodi adfeilion Tŷ Gnoll ac olion Pond Cottage yn Ystâd a Pharc Gwledig y Gnoll, Castell-nedd (yn ganolog ar SS 76030 97273 a SS 76347 97218). Gorwedd y ddau o fewn parcdir rhestredig Gradd II (PGW(Gm)60(NEP), mae Tŷ Gnoll hefyd wedi'i gofnodi ar y Cofnod Amgylchedd Hanesyddol rhanbarthol fel PRN 00618w. Cynhaliwyd yr arolwg i ofynion Lefel 3.*

Mae ymchwil yn awgrymu y gallai'r tŷ cyntaf yn y Gnoll gael ei adeiladu ar ddechrau'r 17eg ganrif. Adeiladwyd ty newydd tua 1666 a thŷ arall ar ddechrau'r 18fed ganrif. Yn y 1770au adeiladwyd ty mwy, gan ehangu'r ty o ddechrau'r 18fed ganrif, gan gynnwys ty 1666, a chael gwared ar unrhyw dai cynharach yn ôl pob tebyg. Gwnaethpwyd newidiadau amrywiol i'r tŷ trwy gydol y 18fed ganrif hwyr a'r 19eg ganrif, gyda chyfnod o leihad graddol yn dechrau o ganol y 19eg ganrif ymlaen. Dymchwelwyd y tŷ yn y pen draw ym 1957. Mae seleri islaw'r ddaear wedi goroesi, y mae rhai elfennau ohonynt efallai'n dyddio o ddechrau'r 18fed ganrif, ond maent yn dyddio'n bennaf i dŷ'r 1770au, gyda rhai addasiadau o'r 19eg ganrif. Mae olion uwch ben y ddaear yn cynnwys waliau isel, sy'n ymddangos yn fodern i raddau helaeth gyda rhai elfennau gwreiddiol, sy'n amlinellu cynllun y tŷ fel yr oedd ar ddiwedd y 19eg ganrif. Mae rhai olion uwch eu traed wedi goroesi i'r cyrion.

Bwthyn ystad o ddiwedd y 19eg ganrif yw Pond Cottage, sy'n cadw llawer o nodweddion allanol gwreiddiol, ond wedi'u moderneiddio'n bennaf y tu mewn.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Dyfed Archaeological Trust - Archaeological Services (DAT-AS) were commissioned by Andrew Scott Ltd to undertake an archaeological scheme of historic building recording works on the ruins of Gnoll House and the extant structure of Pond Cottage (Photos 1-4) within the Gnoll Estate and Country Park, Neath (centred on SS 76030 97273 and SS 76347 97218).
- 1.1.2 The sites lie 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) and includes numerous parkland features, listed buildings and structures, as well as the site of the original mansion associated with the parkland. The Gnoll estate can be dated back to the Evans family in the mid-16th century, but the visible mansion remains were built by Humphrey Mackworth in the early 18th century, extended in the late 18th century, reduced in the later 19th century and finally demolished in 1957 with only the foundation and cellars surviving. The formal gardens were developed by the Mackworths in the early 18th century with the introduction of features from the French tradition, including a formal terrace, parterres and chestnut-tree avenue. In the 1720s Thomas Greening was engaged to redesign the grounds, with the introduction of new views, a ha-ha and cascades. Further features were added in the 1730s and 1740s, including a grotto and gazebo, and other 18th century features include Gnoll Cottage and the Grade II listed Ivy Tower. During the 19th century tennis courts and a unique circular bowling green were added, and in the early 20th century white marble memorial gates were erected to commemorate World War 1.
- 1.1.3 Planning permission will be sought for a variety of projects throughout the park to assist in the restoration and enhancement of the Gnoll Estate and Country Park. 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. To the east lies Pond Cottage, currently unoccupied. The intention is to restore this cottage and convert it into a café.
- 1.1.4 A number of documents have been prepared to assist in these projects, including a Conservation Management Plan (Baggott 2022) and a Desk-Based Assessment (Poucher 2023), which will be submitted with the planning application. Alongside this, consultations have been ongoing between Andrew Scott Ltd and Cadw due to the Grade II* listed nature of the parkland. Neither Gnoll House nor Pond Cottage is individually listed but both lie within the registered parkland. The former is recorded on the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) as PRN 00618w and both structures have been identified as features of archaeological and historic interest within the Desk-Based Assessment (Poucher 2023). Cadw have advised that historic building recording to a Level 3 standard, as outlined in Historic England's guidance for Historic Building Recording, would be required for the Gnoll House remains and Pond Cottage prior to any works being undertaken on the structures.
- 1.1.5 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the historic building recording and analysis was produced by DAT-AS.
- 1.1.6 The historic building recording scheme has been undertaken to a Level 3 standard as defined in the Historic England 'Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice' (2016), which is described thus:

Level 3 is an analytical record, and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. The record will include an account of the evidence on which the

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analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and to support an historical analysis

- 1.1.7 An initial site visit was undertaken to examine the cellars of Gnoll House and the interior of Pond Cottage on the 11th August 2023. A second visit was made to the above ground remains of Gnoll House and the exterior of Pond Cottage on the 6th September 2023.
- 1.1.8 The historic building recording has been undertaken in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings and Structures* (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), 1996, revised 2001 and 2008).

1.2 Site Location

- 1.2.1 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.
- 1.2.2 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.
- 1.2.3 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.
- 1.2.4 The underlying geology largely comprises the grey-green sandstone of the Brithdir Member, rising to similar sandstones of the Hughes Member to the east and the 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).
- 1.2.5 The site of Gnoll House lies on an elevated promontory (hence the name 'gnoll') on the valley side. Parkland, woodland, formal walks, gardens and vistas are spread across the gnoll; the house itself lies on the western side of the gnoll with formerly extensive views west across the Neath Valley and over the town of Neath, though these views are currently blocked by mature trees. Gnoll House comprises a series of low stone walls marking the outline of the house in its later 19th century form, with some surviving below-ground cellars across the main footprint of the house and some higher standing walls around the periphery. The gnoll continues to rise to the east, with the outbuildings to the east of the house set into a partly-quarried rock face. The main driveway entrance curved around the gnoll and approached the house from the north.
- 1.2.6 Pond Cottage comprises an extant building within the park to the east of the gnoll, built at the junction of the driveway from Cimla/Neath and the 'great pond' to the west, and the main drive through the park which crosses the southern end of the 'upper pond'. The house looks out over the upper pond to the north, with the entrance to the former walled garden to the west, now part used as a storage area. The house itself is currently unoccupied.

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Photo 1: View west over the Gnoll House ruins. The roofed buildings cover cellars and their entrances.



Photo 2: View south from the main drive approach to Gnoll House. The arched entrance to the left led to the rear service yard.

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Photo 3: View south towards Pond Cottage (on the left) with the entrance to the walled gardens in the centre, the ground rising up to the gnoll on the right and the upper pond lying off to the left.



Photo 4: View north from the front of Pond Cottage, looking out over the upper pond.

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1.3 Scope of the Project

The building recording was designed to record the existing fabric of the structures (at the time of the survey) through a combination of a photographic survey, site notes, drawings and historical research.

1.4 Report Outline

This report describes the location of the site, its known archaeological and historical background and includes photographs of the site. A description of the structures is included, along with a discussion on their form, function and date. Sources are referenced within the text or as footnotes.

1.5 Abbreviations

- Regional Historic Environment Record – HER
- Primary Reference Number – PRN
- National Grid Reference – NGR
- Written Scheme of Investigation – WSI
- Dyfed Archaeological Trust (DAT-AS)
- Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales - RCAHMW

1.6 Illustrations

Record photographs are included throughout the text. Printed plan, elevation and map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale and are illustrative only. Fully scaled plans and elevations are included within the site archive.

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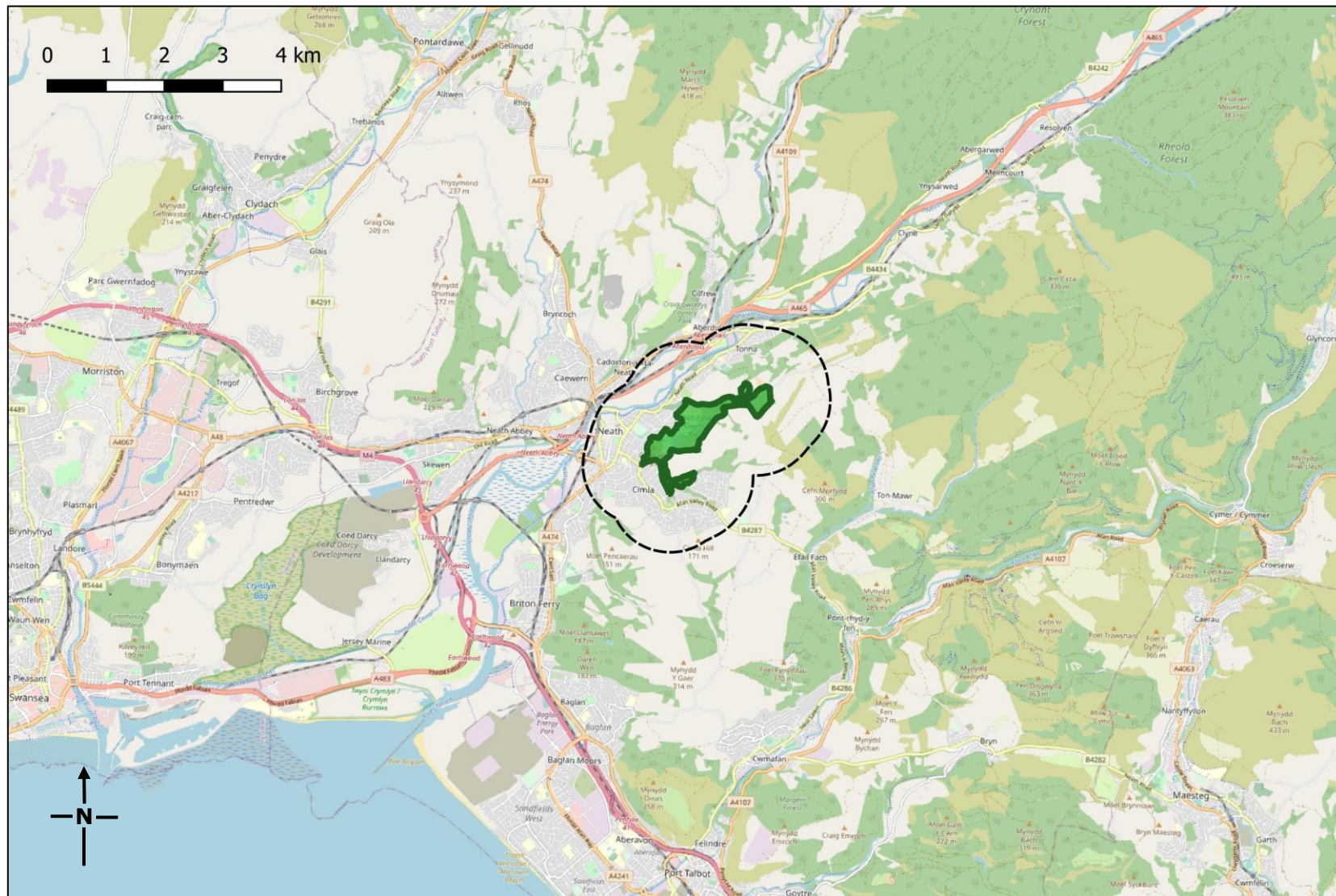


Figure 1: Site location of Gnoll Park in green.

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

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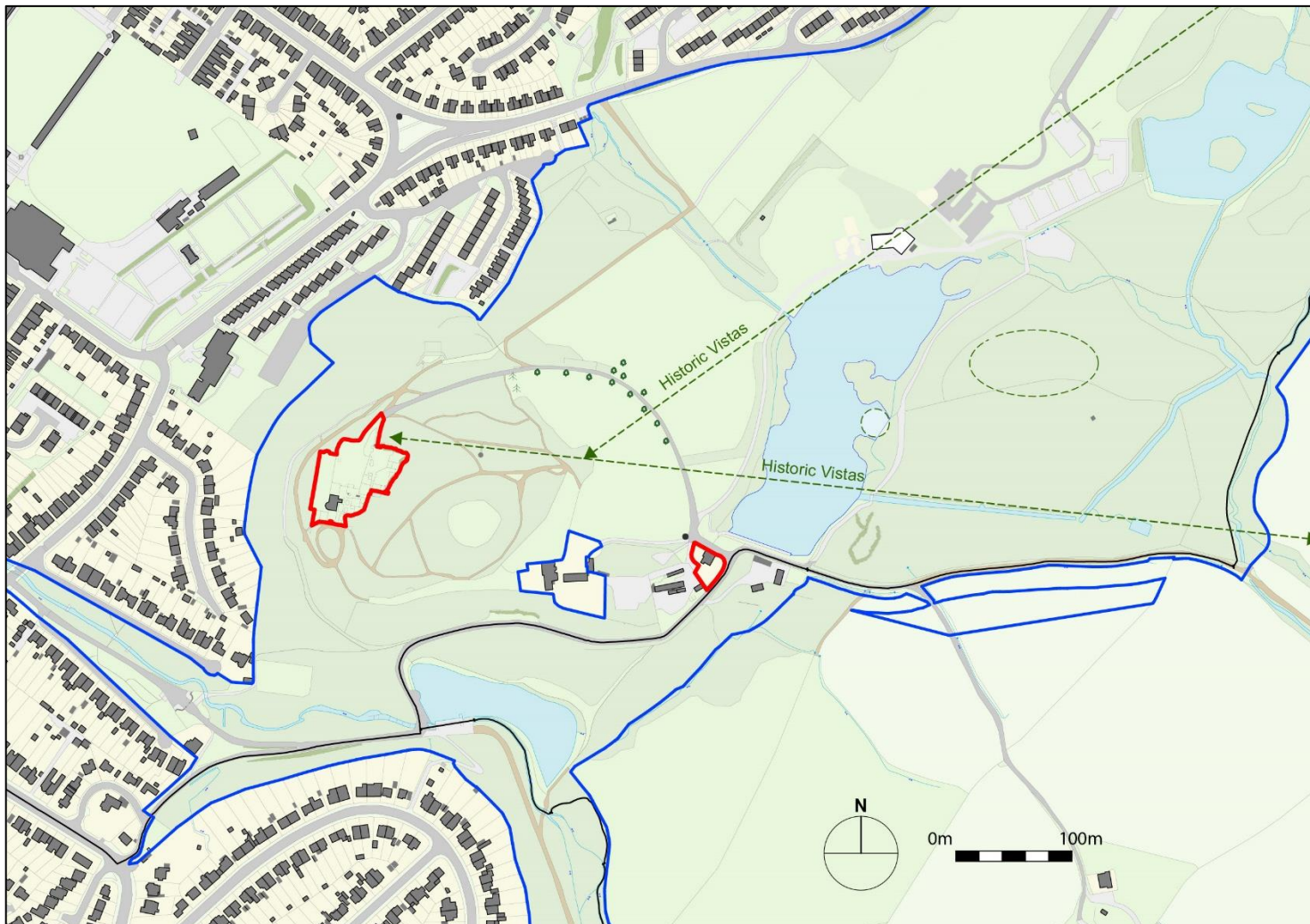


Figure 2: Detail location plan showing the two sites in red, with Gnoll House to the left and Pond Cottage to the right. The Gnoll Park boundary is outlined in blue. Extracted from a plan produced by Hiraeth Architecture, drawing no.2223 VC EX 002.

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2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The historic building recording scheme has been undertaken to a Level 3 standard as defined in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (Historic England 2016). This level of recording is described thus:

*Level 3 is an **analytical record** and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. The record will include an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and to support an historical analysis.*

The information contained in the record will for the most part have been obtained through an examination of the building itself. The documentary sources used are likely to be those which are most readily accessible, such as historic Ordnance Survey maps, trade directories and other published sources. The record may contain some discussion the building's broader stylistic or historical context and importance. It may form part of a wider survey of a number of buildings which will aim at an overall synthesis, such as a thematic or regional publication, when the use of additional source material may be necessary as well as a broader historical and architectural discussion of the buildings as a group. A Level 3 record may also be appropriate when the fabric of a building is under threat, but time or resources are insufficient to allow for detailed documentary research, or where the scope for such research is limited.

- 2.2 Based on the Level 3 record as defined in the Historic England (2016) guidelines the following have been undertaken:

Written Record

- The building's precise location, as a National Grid reference and in address form.
- A note of any statutory designation (listing, scheduling or conservation area) and non-statutory designations (historic parks and gardens registers, local lists etc).
- The date of the record, the name(s) of the recorder(s) and, if an archive has been created, its location.
- A summary of the building's type or purpose, historically and at present, its materials and possible date(s). The names of architects, builders, patrons and owners will be given if known.
- An introduction briefly setting out the circumstances in which the record was made, its objectives, methods, scope and limitations, and any constraints.
- An account of the building's overall form and its successive phases of development, together with the evidence supporting this analysis.
- An account of the past and present uses of the building and its parts, with the evidence for these interpretations. An account of any fixtures or fittings associated with the building, and their purposes.
- Any evidence for the former existence of demolished structures or removed features associated with the building.

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- Copies of historic maps, drawings, views or photographs illustrating the development of the building or its site (if readily available and permissible).
- References to all sources consulted.

Drawn Record

- Measured plans (to scale) as existing of all floors, including significant structural detail and phasing elements. Plans will be georeferenced to the OS national grid.
- Measured external elevations, including significant structural detail and phasing elements.
- A site plan, typically at 1:500 or 1:1250 relating the building to other structures and to related topographical feature and landscape features.
- Copies of earlier drawings throwing light on the building's history, if available.

Photographic Record

- A general view or views of the building (in its wider setting or landscape).
- The building's external appearance. Typically, a series of oblique views will show all external elevations of the building, and give an overall impression of its size and shape.
- Views reflecting any original design intentions where these can be established.
- The overall appearance of the principal rooms and circulation areas of the building.
- Any external or internal detail, relevant to the building's design, development and use.
- Any dates or other inscriptions, any signage or graffiti.
- Any building contents or ephemera which have a significant bearing on the building's history.

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3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Gnoll Park

- 3.1.1 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) and the Desk Based Assessment (Poucher 2023). 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

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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.

3.2 Gnoll House

- 3.2.1 The earliest recorded owners of the Gnoll estate were the Earls of Pembroke in the later 16th century. Henry Herbert, 2nd Earl of Pembroke, was gifted the estate by Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603) but did not live in the area, and by the early 17th century the estate was being leased to the Evans family, a local family that had become successful merchants and business people. One of its more prominent early members was Evan yr Halen (possibly also known as

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Evan ap David) who, as his name suggests, made his money through the salt trade and had been 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 the Evans family 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 itself.

- 3.2.2 It is possible that David Evans built the first house at the Gnoll in this early to mid-17th century period. A lease agreement associated with the estate 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, like Evan yr Halen before him, was made High Sheriff of Glamorgan in 1632, at which point the Gnoll appears to have been his residence (RCAHMW 1981). David's grandson, Sir Herbert Evans (c.1626 – 1679) bought the estate outright 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, referencing Rhys Phillips 1925), which may be associated with this 'new house' built by Thomas Evans.
- 3.2.3 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 (Green 1979). Green suggests this mid-17th century house was depicted on a print by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck in 1741, as was the original house, which he described as Elizabethan, although there is no clear evidence of there being such an early dwelling on this site (Fig 3). The 'Elizabethan' house, depicted as a tall three-storey block flanked by lower ranges, appears to sit on a lower terrace. The site of this house has not been identified and may have been lost to 18th century terracing. Green suggests the mid-17th century house stands to the rear, depicted as a single to two-storey pitched gable range with a lateral chimney. The outline of this building is identified on later 19th century plans of the house (Fig 9) through its thicker east and south walls, at that point having been subsumed into the larger later house and used as a kitchen and scullery (and later laundry). Green also suggests this house is visible on postcards of the house in 1917, which show a lower, flat-roofed east-west range on the north side of the main house which he claims is an adaptation of this mid-17th century hall house.
- 3.2.4 At the time the mid-17th century house was built the Gnoll estate was clearly expanding. As well as his purchase of the estate, Sir Herbert Evans was also leasing a further 20 acres of land from the Earls of Pembroke, which included the lands of 'Harle' (PRN 06103w) to the north of the Gnoll. 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.
- 3.2.5 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

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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. 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 and 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 first processing mill that Sir Humphrey Mackworth set up was built in Melincryddan to the southwest of the Gnoll estate in 1695, using local coal to smelt imported copper, lead, silver and 'litharge' (a lead oxide). 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, which included a brass battery mill (using water-powered hammers to 'batter' plate copper) immediately below the pond (PRN 03307w). 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.

- 3.2.6 Between 1695 and 1704 Sir Humphrey Mackworth introduced a number of key developments to the house and estate. In 1702 he began 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 a diary entry of 1702 Mackworth laments that he may not live long enough to see the building work completed but it is likely many of these additions were in fact completed within his lifetime. 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.
- 3.2.7 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 this work had been done by that time, with trees planted along the main views. Herbert inherited the estate outright on his father's death in 1727 and continued his improvements. He employed 28 men to beautify the gardens (the kitchen gardens to the east of the Gnoll were laid out during this period) in the 1740s when natural (informal) cascades (LB 22870) and a grotto (PRN 01948w/07364w) were created in Mosshouse Woods at the northern end of the estate, and it is possibly during his tenure that the ice house (PRN 06104w) was built to the north of Gnoll House.

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3.2.8 In the 1730s Herbert also extended the house but it is not clear what additions he made. The first recorded image of the house comes shortly afterward, in a print by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck from 1741. This image (Fig 3) shows a collection of buildings occupying the Gnoll. Green (1979) suggests it shows three main phases of building on the site, as described in section 3.2.3, including an early house (which Green suggests is Elizabethan), a mid-17th century structure and the Mackworth house of the earlier 18th century. The accuracy of the depiction can be questioned, and angles were often adjusted in order to show a more comprehensive illustration of buildings than would otherwise be visible from the given viewpoint. However, the buildings on the left of the image do resemble later images of the 18th century house, with an early Georgian square profile, suggesting these may well have been constructed by the Mackworths. The remaining structures are therefore presumably parts of the 17th century buildings, but exactly where these were located and how they were arranged remains open to interpretation.



Figure 3: An extract from Samuel and Nathaniel Buck's engraving of Neath Castle looking northwest in 1741 which depicts Gnoll House. According to Green (1979) this shows an Elizabethan house (red arrow), a hall-house of 1666 (blue arrow) and Mackworth's house of the early 1700s (green arrow).

3.2.9 In 1765 Herbert Mackworth died and was succeeded by his son, also called Herbert. Between 1776 and 1778 Herbert extended the house again, commissioning the architect John Johnson. Crenellated wings were added to the north and south of the main range to give the impression of rounded castle towers. A domestic office and servant's hall were also added, presumably to the rear of the main range. A servant's hall is marked on later annotated plans to the rear (east) of the new southern wing. At this time the house had three-storeys, with an attached glass conservatory on the southern side. An estate map dated to some point between the 1740s and 1760s shows the layout of the house and grounds in plan form (Fig 4). Despite the stated date however, it appears to show the extended north and south wings of the Herbert/Johnson house of the 1770s, suggesting the map may be a little later than stated. The plan shows the main range with two curving bays facing westward across the valley. The southern end appears slightly enlarged, presumably to

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accommodate the attached conservatory. An L-shaped range extends to the east of the main range, the north-south element likely to include the mid-17th century house. A building is attached to the east of this which appears to roughly correspond to a building marked as a coach house on later maps. A further building is attached to the north, with a small detached building east of this. These two buildings do not appear to correspond to later annotated maps but may have been part of the service buildings to the rear of the house. The attached building however may also front the main entrance to the house from the north, suggested by the main driveway approach to the house, entering through a gateway in an enclosure on the northern side. Curvilinear boundaries around the service area on the east side appear to become part of the formal vista that extends from the house to a ha-ha to the east, with views of the ponds and cascades. The plan suggests the house has developed into a largely single structure, changing the appearance from the collection of structures visible on the Buck print of 1741. Presumably the possible Elizabethan structures had been cleared in the 1760-70 developments, with the 17th century house subsumed and largely hidden by the Mackworth/Johnson house.



Figure 4: An extract from an estate map by B Jones, dated to sometime between 1741-68 although in plan form the house (red arrow) appears to match the layout as designed by John Johnson and Herbert Mackworth in the mid-1770s. West Glamorgan Archive Service Gn/E/1.

- 3.2.10 The architect of this house was John Johnson, originally of Leicester. By the 1760s Johnson had moved to London and begun a career as a speculative builder in Marylebone. His talent for architecture and design was clearly recognised as throughout the 1770s he was employed as an architect on a number of fine country houses, including Terling Place (1772-8) and Bradwell Lodge (1781-6), both in Essex, Woolverstone Hall in Suffolk (1776), Sadborow Hall in Dorset (1773-5), Holcombe House in Middlesex (c.1775-8) and Kingsthorpe Hall (1773-5) in Northamptonshire (Oxford DNB 2023). These houses exhibited many characteristic features of Georgian architecture, with Johnson also noted for making use of neoclassical designs. The use of rounded crenelated wings appears unique to his designs for the Gnoll, although rounded

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bays were also used at Sadborow Hall. Johnson was also noted for developing an alternative form of stucco to adorn his buildings, as well as his use of Coade Stone (a stoneware used largely in neoclassical statues) and for his staircase designs. Unfortunately it is not clear if any of these were particular features of Gnoll House. Herbert Mackworth was a relatively early sponsor of Johnson, and Gnoll House represents a relatively rare foray into Wales (he was later to become county architect to Essex). Mackworth and Johnson clearly maintained a connection and the two were later, in 1785, to partner in a Bond Street banking enterprise, although this was ultimately to prove unsuccessful.

3.2.11 The late 18th century is seen as the heyday of the house and grounds. As well as the house improvements, the Upper Great Pond was enlarged in the 1770s, and further follies (PRN 01952w) had been built by 1780, as had a gatehouse on Gnoll Avenue (LB 11782) and the Ivy Tower (PRN 01951w). Cefn Morfydd Castle was also added to the ridgeline to the east of the park, presumably as an eye catcher. A second estate map of 1801 also includes an image of the house (Figs 5 and 6) which shows its west face with a protruding squared central unit and two projecting corner bays, castellated throughout. The southern bay is rounded, as on the previous estate map but the northern bay appears squared, although this may just be a peculiarity of the drawing. In plan there appear to have been some adjustments to the east of the main range. An additional range is attached on the south side, although the shading distinguishes it from the main house. This appears to be roughly located across rooms that were, by the later 19th century, being used as a servant's hall and kitchen (Fig 9). There also appears to have been a significant addition of buildings to the northeast, in what was presumably the service wing. It is not immediately apparent how these buildings correspond to later annotated plans, but as the southern face appears to have enclosed the main entrance it is likely they would have been suitably designed, with an entrance to the rear yards on the northern side of these buildings. A small building is shown on the eastern side with a rounded eastern end. This appears to correspond to the outline of the current viewing platform across the site, later maps suggesting this was an upper storey garden entrance.



Figure 5: An image of Gnoll House taken from an estate map of 1801 by P Padley showing the appearance of the Herbert Mackworth/John Johnson adapted house of the 1770s. West Glamorgan Archive Service Gn/E/5/1.

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Figure 6: Extract from Padley estate map of 1801 showing Gnoll House in plan form. West Glamorgan Archive Service Gn/E/5/1.

- 3.2.12 Herbert Mackworth died in 1791 and was succeeded by his son, Sir Robert Humphrey Mackworth who 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.
- 3.2.13 Henry Grant lived at the Gnoll until his death in 1832, appearing 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" (Neale 1822). An estate map produced during his tenure in 1812, includes a clearer depiction of the house (Figs 7 and 8). As with the 1801 map, the image shows the west face of the house with the protruding central square bay and the two rounded corner towers, and the typical Georgian detailing of the windows. The stepped surround in front of the windows is also apparent, with the lawn and treeless area to the west allowing clear views to and from Neath. The plan of the building shows little change in the outline of the house, suggesting any improvements made by Henry Grant are likely to have been largely internal.

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Figure 7: The west face of Gnoll House depicted on the estate map of 1812. West Glamorgan Archive Service Gn/E/5/2.

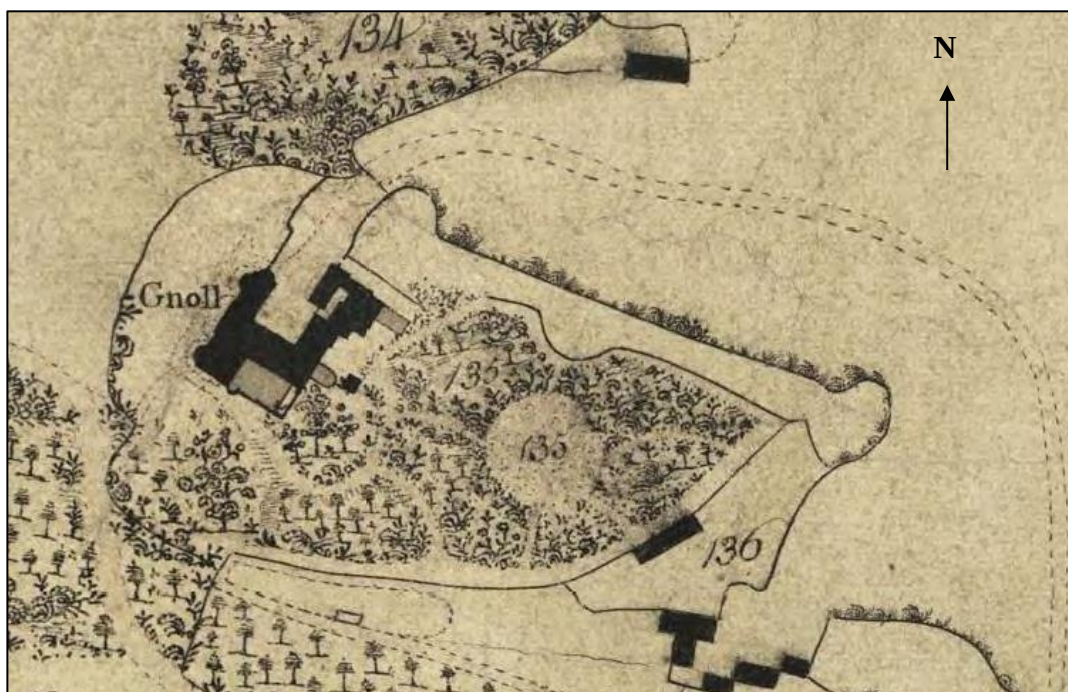


Figure 8: Extract from the estate map of 1812 showing the plan of the house and grounds. West Glamorgan Archive Service Gn/E/5/2.

3.2.14 Henry's son, Henry John Grant, remained at the Gnoll after his father's death but a period of downsizing began. In 1845, the northeast wing of the house was demolished which must have facilitated the re-arrangement of the service yard and buildings. It may have been during this period that the current approach and arched gateway to the eastern service yard was added. In 1857 or 1861 Henry John Grant 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. These proposals never came to fruition but highlight the fact that the upkeep of the house was clearly a strain on the Grant finances. Henry John died in around 1861, the estate passing to his cousin, Charles Evan

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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 north wing of the main frontage was demolished, due largely to money shortages and tax liabilities.

- 3.2.15 Plans of the proposals to reduce and rearrange the house survive. A plan of the pre-existing house in 1880 shows the layout of the ground floor with internal rooms annotated (Fig 9). The main late 18th century west range is clearly distinguishable, with its projecting central unit and flanking semi-round towers. At ground floor level the central unit contained dining rooms flanked by libraries, with drawing rooms occupying the two towers. A staircase occupied a projecting northern bay. The main entrance porch to the house is shown in the eastern side of this range, entering a linear vestibule. The main east-west range of the late 18th century house is shown containing a saloon, school room, hall, store room and pantry, and stairways. Additional rooms on the south side include a kitchen, halls and service rooms. A large conservatory is shown on the south side with a rear entrance alongside. Whilst a conservatory is mentioned in the 18th century, comparisons with earlier estate plans suggest this conservatory may be an early to mid-19th century addition. The possible pre-existing mid-17th century house is shown as part of a north-south range on the eastern side of the house, containing a kitchen and scullery. This is suggested by the noticeably thicker eastern and southern walls. The thinner western wall may be a later rebuild to front the entranceway, although Green (1979) suggests it is illustrated as an earlier segment of wall on further annotated plans of circa 1920, and a postcard of the early 20th century suggests the windows of this wall were not built to match the Georgian windows in the adjoining north face of the late 18th century house and therefore may belong to a different period. To the north of this earlier segment extended a narrow range of buildings to the entrance to the service yard, including a larder, coach house, harness room and toilet. This range must relate to the post-1845 arrangement of buildings. Detached buildings to the east included a coach house, stable and pony shed, all of which may be 18th century in origin.
- 3.2.16 The subsequent plans of the reduced building (Fig 10) show the loss of the north wing and main entrance. The west range now contains an amalgamated dining room with a northern bay window, the library and drawing room to the south remaining the same. To the east a new entrance porch has been added to the north face of the east-west range, opening into a hall and replacing the school room. A further galleried hall replaced the saloon to the west, and a smoking room replaced the store room to the east. The staircase from the saloon also appears to have been removed to accommodate the galleried hall. To the south the rooms appear largely unchanged, although the servant's hall has acquired an angular eastern bay. To the northwest the windows of the kitchen in the former 17th century building are shown as blocked, although windows are clearly visible in a later postcard so these plans may have been adapted. The first floor plan shows the building rising over the main west range, the adjoining east-west range (including over the southern part of the former 17th century building) and the rooms to the south (excluding the conservatory). This included at least four bedrooms, a housekeeper's room and the hall gallery. The second floor rose over the main north-south and east-west range but excluded most of the southern rooms. This floor included a further five bedrooms, a smoking room, and a garden entrance on the eastern side which would have accessed the current viewing platform at its western side.

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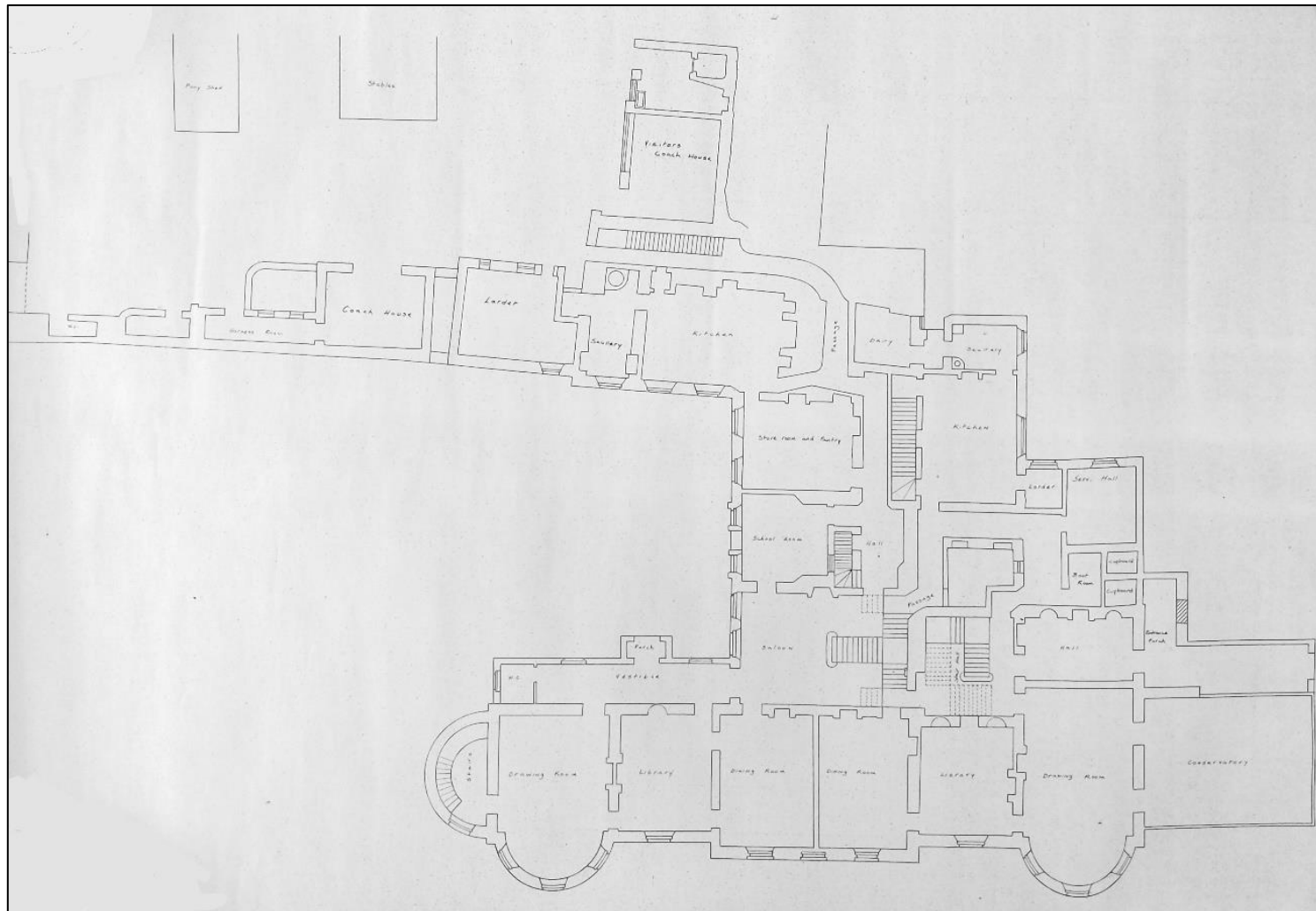


Figure 9: Annotated plan of Gnoll House prior to reduction in 1881. West Glamorgan Archive Service B/N/115/1.

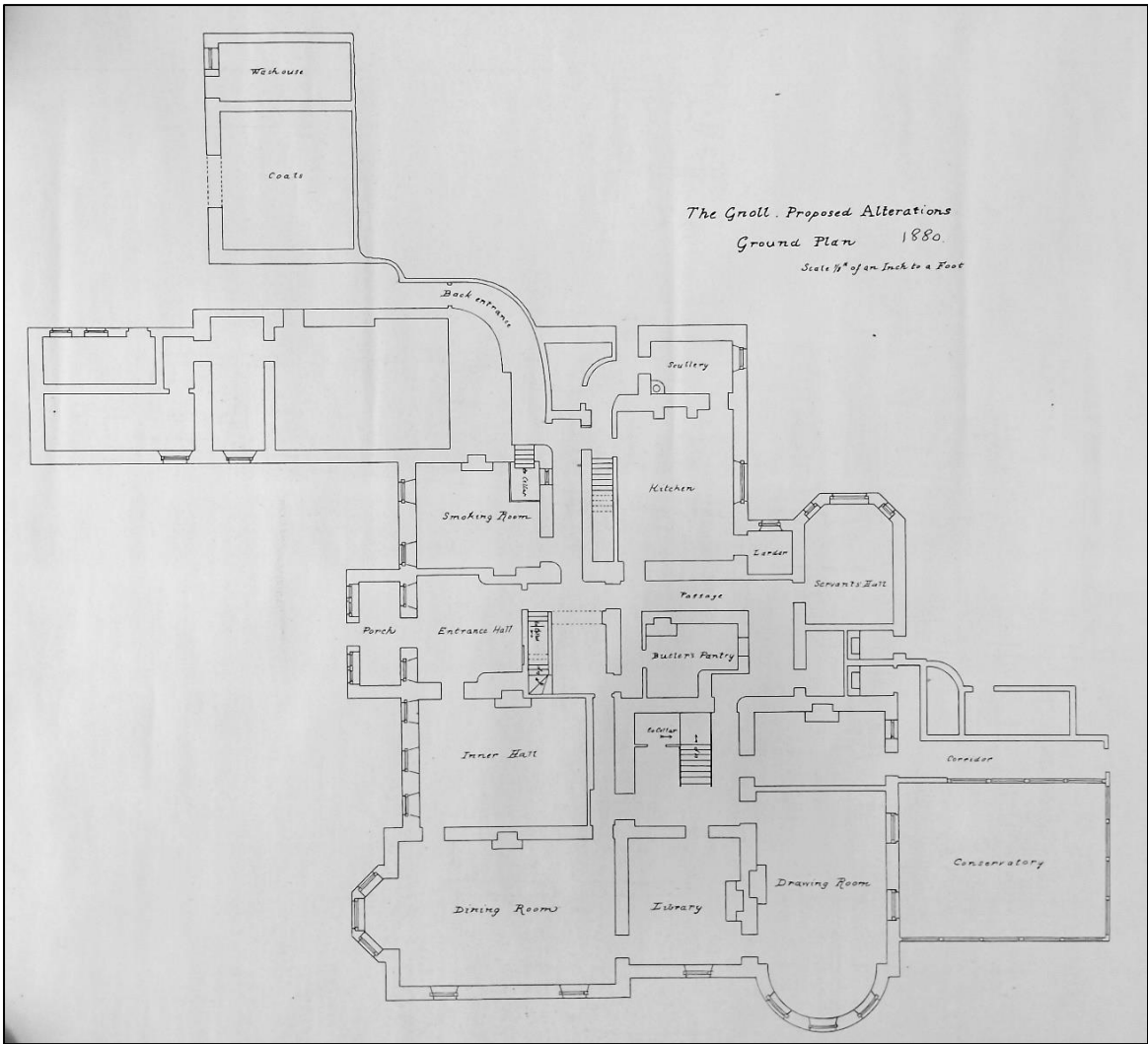


Figure 10: A ground floor plan showing the initial proposals for the reduced house of 1881. West Glamorgan Archive Service B/N/115/1.

3.2.17 Despite the reduction of the house there was still some investment into both it and the grounds. During the later 19th century a rose and herbaceous garden were introduced on the south side of the gnoll and tennis courts were also added. Generally however there was a reduction in scale, with part of Mosshouse Woods sold to the Neath Corporation for the construction of a reservoir in 1889, the abandonment of the formal cascades, and the opening of small-scale coal mining within the estate boundaries. The Ordnance Survey map of 1899 (Fig 11) shows the layout of the reduced house, but otherwise little change in the immediate grounds.

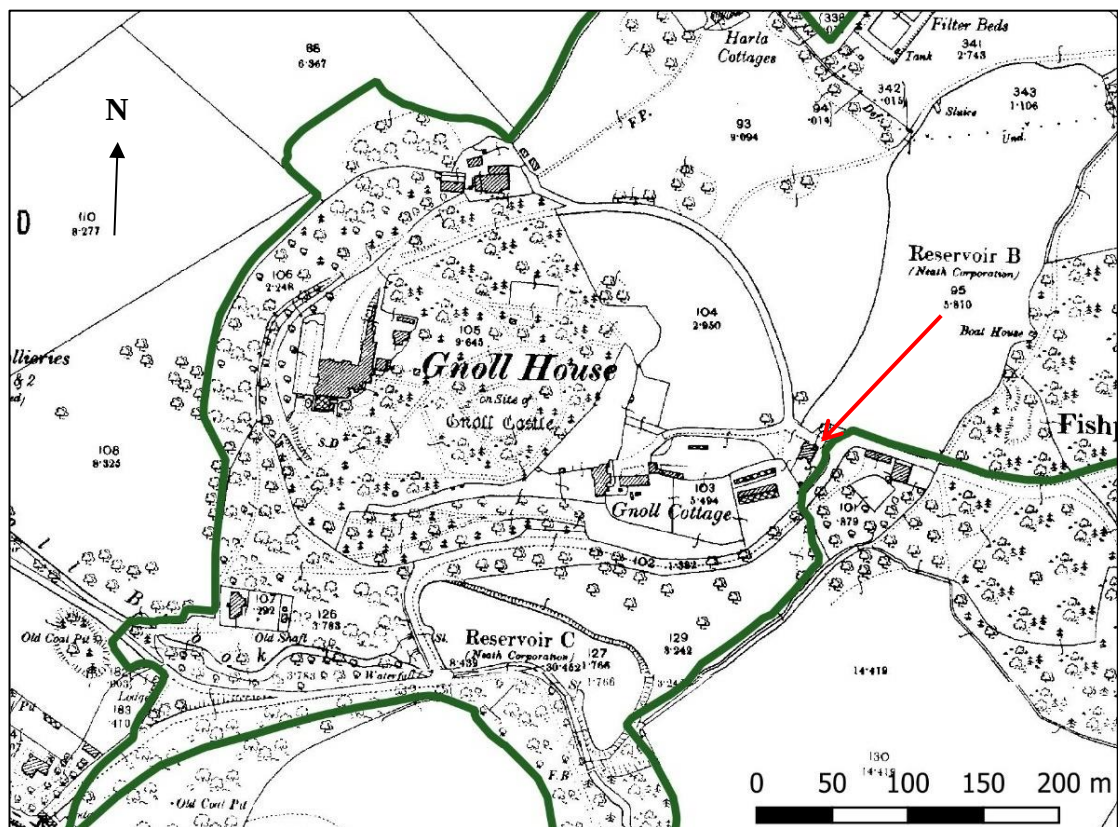


Figure 11: Extract from the second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1899 showing the reduced Gnoll House and surrounding grounds. The location of Pond Cottage is marked by the red arrow. The outline of the registered parkland is shown in green. Landmark Information Group.

- 3.2.18 Charles Evan Thomas died in 1902, although his widow and son Edmund continued to live at Gnoll House until 1909. The estate had passed to Charles's inheritors, his sons Edmund and Llewellyn Evan Thomas, who appear to have ceased using the house as their residence in 1909 and set up trustees to rent the property out.
- 3.2.19 The house was leased to Herbert Eccles, J.P. and founder of the Britton Ferry Steel Company. Together with the house, he rented gardens and a cottage, all for £300 a year, and was said to have vastly improved the house (Cambrian Daily Leader 16/10/1919), presumably with the upkeep of the interior. Eccles continued to live at the house until his death during the First World War in 1916. The premises were then left vacant for two and a half years before being rented out to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company who used the house as offices and accommodation for their managers and staff engaged in the proposed new oil works in Skewen (Cambrian Daily Leader 16/10/1919).
- 3.2.20 In the early 1920s the house and grounds were purchased by the Neath Corporation, who erected the war memorial gates at one of the estate entrances in 1921. A health clinic was established at the house in 1925. 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. Generally the mid-20th century appears to be a period of general neglect for the house and grounds. The house is visible on aerial photographs taken during the 1940s (Photo 5), which show the main block of the house as intact but with the southern conservatory removed. The service

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wing to the northeast also appears neglected, with outlying buildings lying roofless.

- 3.2.21 After the war the house was presumably left largely derelict, and was eventually demolished in 1957. During the 1980s there were attempts at restoring the estate. The formal cascades were restored in 1984/5 and the grotto was rediscovered and uncovered, and it may have been during this period that the layout of the house was established through the use of low walling across the site. Country park status was granted in 1987.



Photo 5: Vertical aerial photograph taken by the RAF in 1944 showing Gnoll House, with the open croquet lawn and tennis pitch above.

3.3 Pond Cottage

- 3.3.1 Unlike Gnoll House there are remarkably few available records related to Pond Cottage. Estate plans and maps indicate that the site of the cottage was the location of a probable carp trap at the southern end of the upper pond until the mid-19th century. By the time of the first edition map of 1877-81 this area had been infilled and the area is marked as a small stand of woodland.
- 3.3.2 Pond Cottage itself is first marked on the second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1899 (Fig 11), indicating a construction date within the 1880s or 1890s. The location, adjacent to the walled gardens, upper pond and drive entrances, suggest it was likely built as accommodation for the gardeners and grounds keeper. It is shown on the 1899 Ordnance Survey map as a square block with a bay window and porch to the northern frontage, and small extensions on the rear southern face at both the west and east sides. The gardens lie to the east and south, divided by a curving wall. A small shed lies in the southeast corner of the gardens. The site appears relatively unchanged in plan since this depiction.

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4 GNOLL HOUSE BUILDING DESCRIPTION

4.1 Cellars (Figs 12 – 13, Photos 6 – 39)

4.1.1 The surviving cellars of Gnoll House comprise a series of rooms and interconnecting corridors laid out north to south beneath the main frontage range of the 18th century house, with a further corridor extending eastwards underneath the entrance to the house. There are four current access points to the cellars:

- via a u-shaped stairway accessing rooms to the south that have been enclosed with modern roofing (this is the main access).
- descending a linear stairway at the northern end of the cellar range, currently enclosed by a locked metal bar door.
- descending via an L-shaped stairway to access the eastern corridor at a midway point. This is part blocked by a concrete structure and is in some disrepair.
- via a stairway at the eastern end of the east corridor, currently enclosed by a modern structure.

4.1.2 Room 1 lies at the southern end of the main range. It comprises a squarish room (5.7m north-south by 8.2m) with a curved western frontage (Photo 6). A flagstone floor is surrounded by faced random-rubble masonry walls 3.8m high, internally whitewashed. The upper circa 1.3m comprises a later rebuild of smaller masonry including a series of brick ventilation points below the modern timber roof covered in metal sheeting. A masonry shelf topped by stone slabs sits within the bay, itself topped by a series of brick supports for a removed shelf. A rectangular opening (0.7m by 0.5m) lies in the south wall, part brick lined and internally whitewashed with a stone lintel but otherwise open above. The shaft is built of unfaced random rubble. The northern wall is featureless apart from a central squared doorway (1.2m by 1.95m) with a modern electric light fixed to the upper heightening above it. The door accesses Room 2 (Photo 7).



Photo 6: View west of bay front of Room 1. 1m scales.

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Photo 7: View north of north wall and doorway in Cellar Room 1. 1m scales.

- 4.1.3 Room 2 measures 4.8m north-south by 5.6m and has a modern brick floor and whitewashed walling as in Room 1, topped by modern roofing. The western wall is featureless with the central squared doorway to Room 1 in the southern wall. The eastern wall contains a squared opening (1.1m by 2.1m) to Cellar Entrance 1 (Photo 8), offset slightly to the north. Brick repairs to the top of the opening support a concrete lintel. A masonry stand (1.2m by 1.3m, circa 0.9m high) stands in the northeast corner, with brick inclusions. A centrally placed doorway (1.2m by 2m) lies in the north wall, accessing Corridor 1 (Photo 9). The entrance has a splayed opening into Room 2, with a low arched head of stone voussoirs.

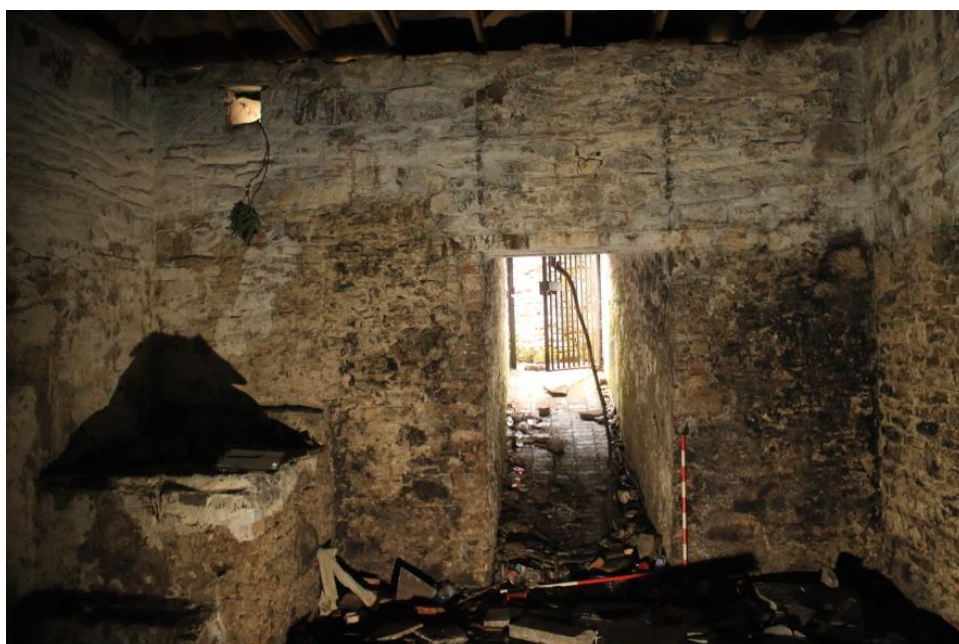


Photo 8: View east, Cellar Entrance to Room 2. 1m scales.

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Photo 9: View northwest of the doorway between Room 2 and Corridor 1.
1m scales.

4.1.4 Entrance 1 (Photo 10) comprises an L-shaped set of stone stairs, bounded by mortared random rubble walling, to a metal bar gate. Beyond this a modern brick tile floor slopes gradually down to Room 2, with whitewashed masonry walls.



Photo 10: View south of Entrance 1 to cellars.
2m and 1m scales.

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- 4.1.5 The entrance from Room 2 to Corridor 1 (5m north-south by 1.8m) is cement rendered and whitewashed (Photos 11 and 13). There is a butt joint between the room and corridor, which is set at a slight westward offset from the room. Corridor 1 has a floor of brick, partly covered by stone slabs, and whitewashed walls of roughly coursed masonry and brick, 2m high to a low arched masonry roof. 1.1m of the roof at the western end, where it butts against Room 3, has been replaced by brickwork (Photo 12), and at the southern end the roof partly blocks the top of the door arch. A 0.1m wide vertical groove at the doorway possibly marks a doorframe to Room 2 (Photo 14). In the west wall lies a squared opening (0.45m by 0.75m) with an arched head, built into the wall and roof. This is fronted by stone slab shelving on brick supports which line the west wall. A small, squared recess lies in the east wall and is internally rendered (Photo 15).



Photo 11: View south down Corridor 1, looking into Room 2. 1m scales.



Photo 12: View north, replaced section of roofing in Corridor 1 as it enters Room 3.

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Photo 13: View north, detail of roof alignments at the entranceway between Room 2 and Corridor 1.



Photo 14: View southeast. Detail of former door jamb between Corridor 1 and Room 2. 1m scale.

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Photo 15: View west of the recess in the west wall of Corridor 1.
0.5m scale.

4.1.6 Room 3 is a rectangular space (5.5m north-south by 3.6m) with a slight eastward offset to Corridor 1 (Photo 16). It has a stone slab floor with a central passageway circa 1.3m wide, rougher to the east and delineated by a drainage groove to the west. The northern half of the floor slopes downward slightly. The faced random rubble walls are whitewashed and meet arched masonry vaulting. A supporting wall protrudes 0.8m from the west wall. There is a butt joint in the ceiling 1m from the northern end against a slightly narrower vaulted masonry ceiling. This in turn butts against the low arch of masonry voussoirs that frame the entrance to Corridor 2, placed centrally in the north wall (Photo 17). The walls and ceiling are otherwise featureless.



Photo 16: View south of Room 3 looking into Corridor 1. 1m scales.

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Photo 17: View northwest of changing roof structures at the northern end of Room 3 and entrance to Corridor 2.

- 4.1.7 Corridor 2 is rectangular, measuring 1m wide, 2.8m long and 1.8m high with a stone slab floor, whitewashed random rubble walls and a flat concrete ceiling held on rusting steel/iron beams (Photos 18 and 19). The floor has a central north-south groove, and a threshold stone at the north end into Room 4.



Photo 18: View north of the roof structure in Corridor 2.

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Photo 19: View north of the stone slab floor through Corridor 2.

1m scales.

4.1.8 Room 4 is a rectangular area (7.5m north-south by 4m) separated into three uneven compartments (A, B and C):

- A - (1m to 1.8m north-south by 4m) has a stone slab floor, whitewashed random rubble walling to the west (Photo 20), south and east, and an inserted angled brick wall to the north, creating a wider space at the eastern end. A rendered vaulted ceiling lies above and a small stone and brick plinth lies in the northwest corner. An open doorway (0.8m wide) lies at the east end of the south wall, accessing Corridor 3 (Photo 21).
- B - lies centrally (2.2m north-south by 3.2m) and is accessed from Compartment A via a squared doorway in the inserted brick wall (Photo 24). The stone slab floor continues. The west wall is a whitewashed brick insert or facing, with a centrally placed opening (0.4m by 0.7m at floor level) with a low arched head of brick (Photos 22 and 23). A small brick and masonry plinth stands adjacent. The opening extends 1.3m to the west. Part of the masonry vaulted ceiling survives within the south wall, which is otherwise built in brick. The east wall is similarly brick built, with a central vertical brick buttress, presumably an insert as it sits to west of the wall-line in the neighbouring compartments. Pipework emerges from the northeast corner. The north wall contains some masonry in the lower courses but is otherwise also brick built with a narrow squared central doorway to Compartment C. This wall is set at the same angle to the south wall, neither of which are perpendicular to the room. The walls support a timber ceiling, 2.4m high.
- C is the largest of the three compartments (2.6m to 3.8m north-south by 4m) with squared brick tile flooring to whitewashed brick walls and a vaulted brick ceiling, 2.6m high. An electrical box is attached to the south wall. Two small squared openings, possibly for former

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pipework/wiring, lie in the west wall. A slightly offset opening lies in the north wall, accessing Entrance 2 (Photo 25). The opening is 1.3m wide, 2m high, with squared grooves for a door frame and a low arched head.



Photo 20: View west of Room 4 (Compartment A). 1m scale.



Photo 21: View southeast of the doorway leading from Room 4 (Compartment A) to Corridor 3. 1m scale.

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Photo 22: View west of the opening in the west wall of Room 4 (Compartment B).
1m scales.



Photo 23: View west of the interior of the opening in the west wall of Room 4 (Compartment B).

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Photo 24: View south from Room 4, looking from Compartment B, through Compartment A and into Corridor 2, showing the timber ceiling and remnants of the masonry arched ceiling in the inserted brick wall.
1m scales.



Photo 25: View north from Room 4 (Compartment C) looking into Entrance 2. 1m scales.

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- 4.1.9 Entrance 2 comprises a linear set of stone steps down to a 7.6m long corridor. The corridor (Photo 26) is 1.1m wide and 1.7m high, with a stone flag floor and drainage channel along the eastern edge. Whitewashed random rubble walls rise to a curved continuous brick vaulted ceiling. At the eastern end is a 1.8m long section where it adjoins Room 4, set at a slightly offset angle to the rest of the entrance corridor. The vaulted ceiling ends with brick walling rising to a concrete rafter ceiling with stone slabs above.



Photo 26: View north looking down the corridor to Entrance 2.
1m scales.

- 4.1.10 Corridor 3 runs east-west for 9.6m, with an angled access to the southeast corner of Room 4 (Photo 27) and abutting archways of differing widths. A stone slab floor with drainage grooves to either side rises gradually to the east. Whitewashed random rubble walls rise to an arched vaulted masonry ceiling, 1.9m high (Photo 28). At the western end of the corridor the vaulting stops short of Room 4, with masonry and brickwork rising to a squared opening above, covered by a concrete capping or floor (Photo 29). Pipework (drainage) runs off to the north along an opening formed under the eastern end of a brick vaulted ceiling, presumably a continuation of the ceiling of Room 4 (Photo 30). The eastern end of the corridor turns a right angle to the south into Corridor 4. At the junction the ceiling rises to an unsupported brick arch 2.3m high running into an opening occupying the upper half of an eastward extension for 1.3m. The lower part of the opening is formed by masonry, the northern wall with inserted brickwork. A large stone slab blocks the rear (east) of the opening (Photos 28 and 31).

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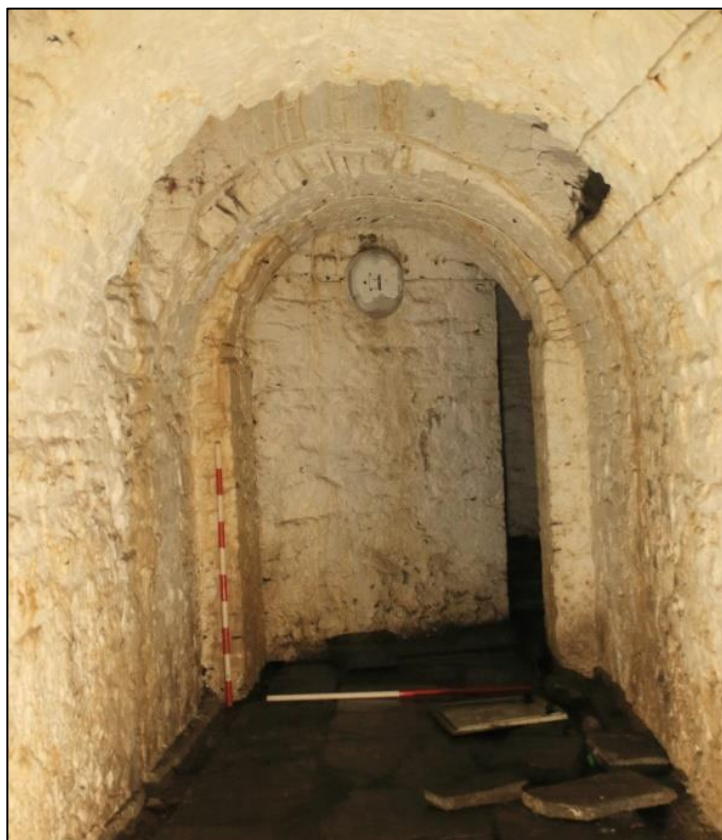


Photo 27: View west, looking down Corridor 3 and the abutting and angled entrance to Room 4.

1m scales.



Photo 28:

View east, looking down Corridor 3, with the blocked opening at the turn.

1m scales.

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Photo 29: The ceiling at the western end of Corridor 3, showing a blocked vertical shaft.



Photo 30: View north of pipework running to the rear of the eastern wall of Room 4, opening into the western end of Corridor 3.

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Photo 31: View east of the blocked opening at the eastern end of Corridor 3.
1m scales.



Photo 32: View south, looking down Corridor 4 towards Entrance 3.
1m scales.

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4.1.11 Corridor 4 forms a continuous corridor with Corridors 3 and 5, but running at a right angle (Photos 32 and 33). The stone slab floor continues but the lower part of the walls are rock-cut, with white-washed roughly coursed masonry above, topped by a flat concrete ceiling. A roughly vertical butt joint is visible on the west wall, approximately 1.2m from the northern end, with a rendered vertical repair in the eastern wall opposite. The floor continues to rise gradually to Entrance 3 at the southern end and a right-angled turn to Corridor 5.



Photo 33: View southeast of the western wall of Corridor 4 showing the vertical butt joint and rock-cut walling. 1m scales.

4.1.12 Entrance 3 (Photo 34) is an off-set L-shaped stone stairwell accessing the southern end of Corridor 4. The stairwell is surrounded by whitewashed rock-cut walling at its base with roughly coursed mortared masonry as it rises, then a band of brickwork just below current ground level and mortared random-rubble walling at surface level and above. The stairs are enclosed by a modern metal bar gate and partly roofed by damaged concrete slabs.



Photo 34: View northwest of Entrance 3 at surface level. 2m scale.

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4.1.13 Corridor 5 runs continuously from Corridor 4 in a easterly direction for 7.8m with a gradual curve to the south (Photo 35). The walls are rock-cut along the northern side and built of roughly-coursed masonry along the southern side for 3m before doglegging slightly back to the south onto rock-cut walling. The corridor is topped by a flat concrete ceiling and accesses Entrance 4 at its eastern end. On the north side at the eastern end it opens into Room 5. A doorway infilled with roughly coursed masonry lies in the south wall opposite, 1m wide with rock-cut edges lined in brickwork and stone steps at the base.



Photo 35: View west along Corridor 5 to the right-hand turn into Corridor 4, with Entrance 3 on the left. 1m scale resting against blocked doorway.



Photo 36: View east of the stairway of Entrance 4. 1m scale.

4.1.14 Entrance 4 comprises a linear series of concrete and brick steps with rock cut edging (Photo 36). A rectangular structure in random rubble masonry has been built at ground level to enclose a doorway access to the steps.

4.1.15 Room 5 comprises a low rectangular room (3.5m north-south by 3m) with a stone slab floor and two central brick-lined drainage channels running north-south. Whitewashed rock-cut walls support a masonry vaulted ceiling. A centrally placed doorway opening in the north wall contains a series of brick steps ascending to a blocked opening, covered by concrete ceiling, with side walls in brickwork (Photos 37 and 39). Against the west wall stands a stone-slab shelf on brick supports (Photo 38).

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Photo 37:
View north
from Room 5
towards the
blocked stair
access.

1m scales.



Photo 38:
View
northwest of
shelving
within Room
5.

1m scales.



Photo 39:
View south out
of Room 5 and
across
Corridor 5,
with the
blocked
doorway
visible on the
right.

1m scales.

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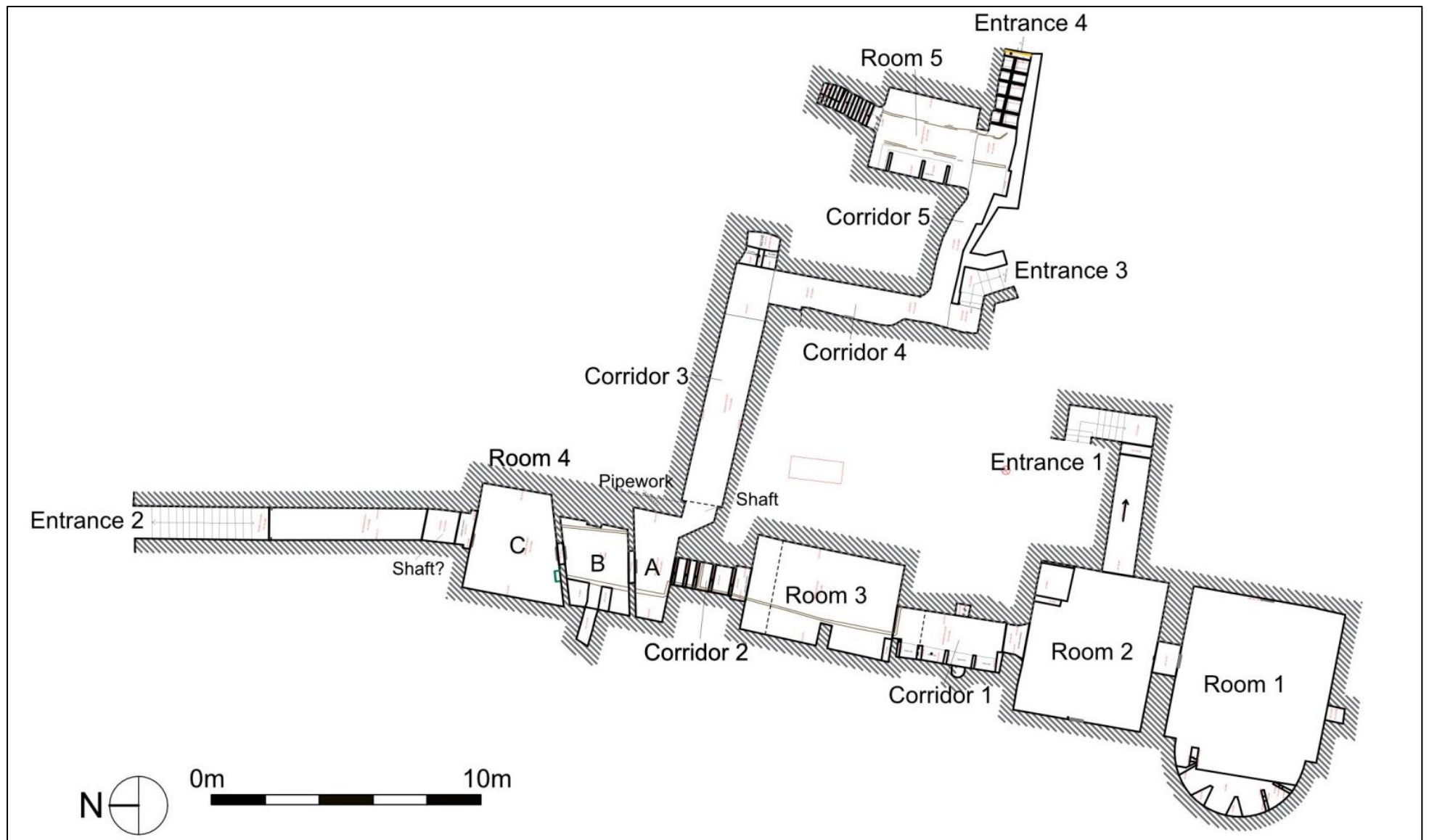


Figure 12: Plan of Gnoll House cellars. Based on drawings produced by Hiraeth for Andrew Scott Ltd (drawing 01300/S2/P1) with annotations by DAT-AS.

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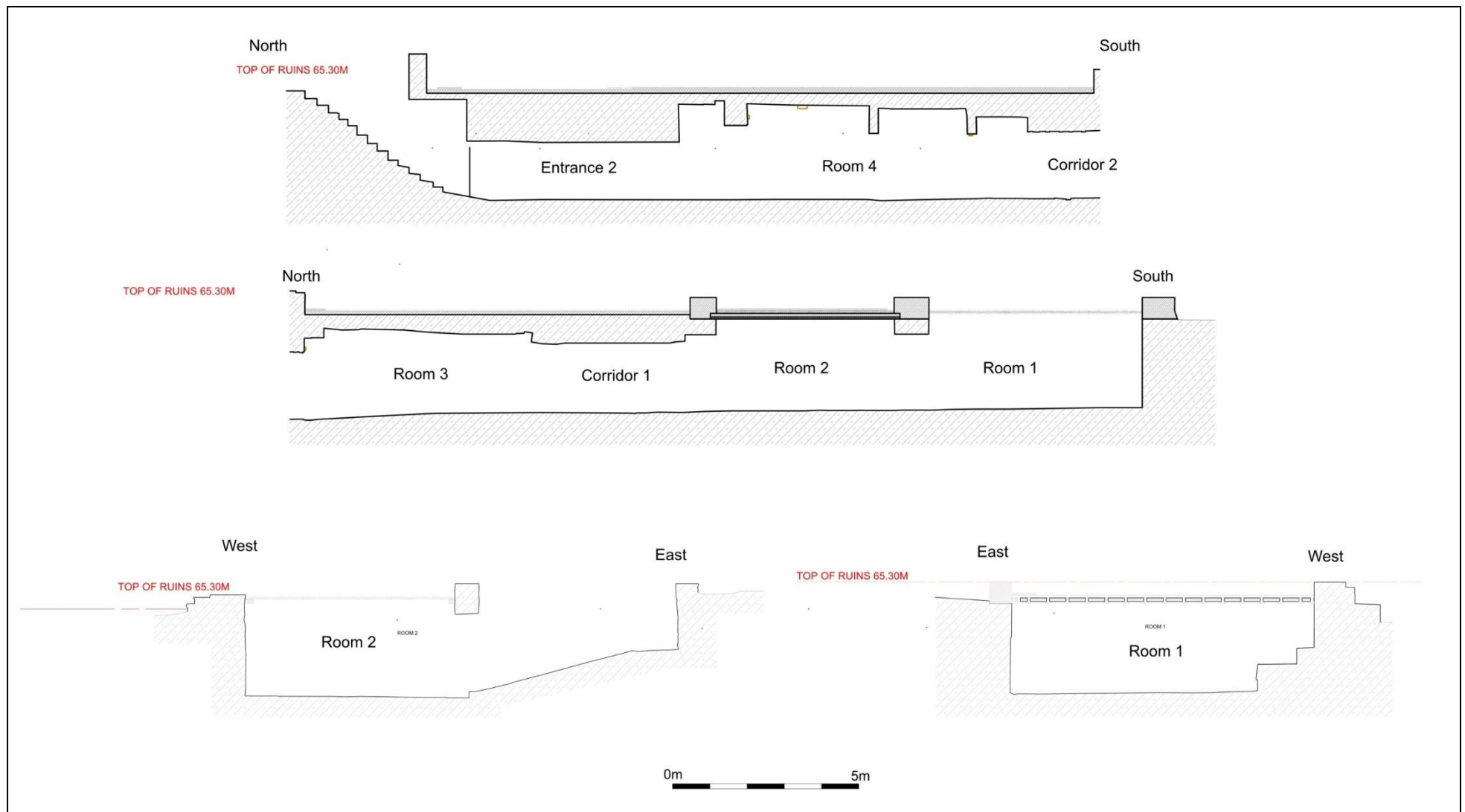


Figure 13: Section through Gnoll House cellars. Based on drawings produced by Hiraeth for Andrew Scott Ltd (drawing 03501/S2/P1 and 03502/S2/P1) with annotations by DAT-AS.

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4.2 Gnoll House Surface Remains (Figure 14, Photos 40 - 80)

- 4.2.1 Gnoll House was demolished to ground level in 1957. The outline of the late 19th century building has been preserved, or reproduced, in a series of low walls demarcating the outline of the building and its internal ground floor rooms (Photos 40 and 41). Unless otherwise stated the walls stand between 0.1m and 0.5m high, 0.3m to 0.4m wide, are built of faced and mortared random rubble, and capped by concrete and concrete paving slabs. Modern structures have been added to provide a roof to some of the exposed cellar areas and their entranceways, and some higher standing remains also survive to the east of the main house. Comparisons with building plans of the later 19th century would suggest that although many of these wall lines accurately depict the layout of the building, some openings and wall thicknesses are largely modern recreations of the building rather than remnants of the original building itself. This relationship is however difficult to establish with certainty.

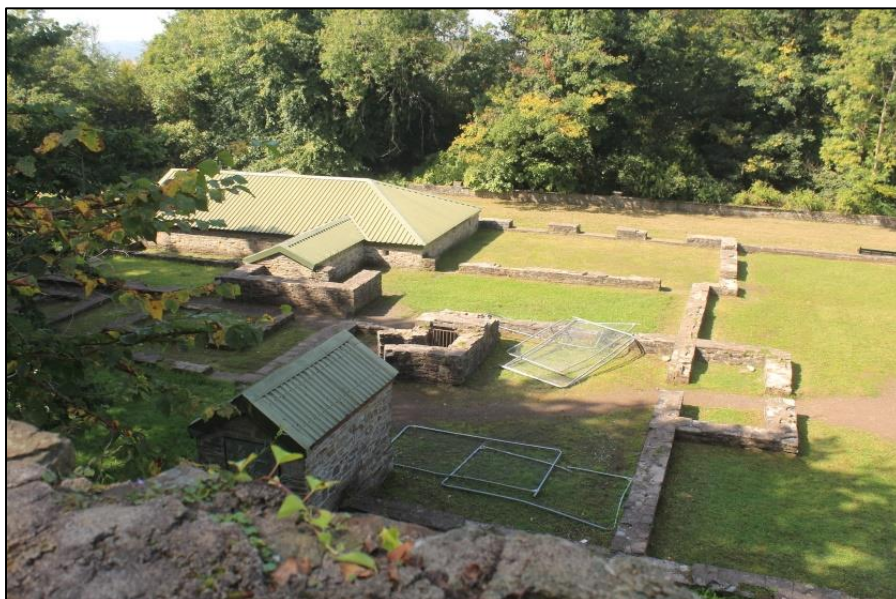


Photo 40:
View west
across the
surface remains
of the Gnoll
House ruins.

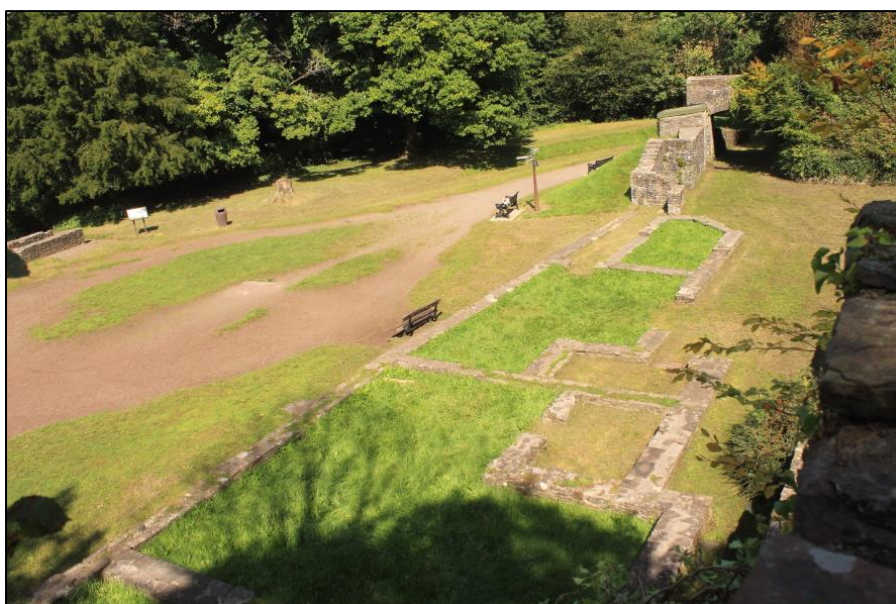


Photo 41:
View north-
northwest.
Looking across
the service
wing and
entrance to the
Gnoll House
site.

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- 4.2.2 The walls form the outline of a central porch in the north face (Photo 42), with central openings through into a large room (7.5m north-south by 16.3m), partially sub-divided by the walling around Cellar Entranceway 3. This room comprises the former entrance hall and smoking room to the north of the cellar entranceway wall and former inner hall to the south.



Photo 42: View south. The entrance porch to the house. 2m and 1m scales.

- 4.2.3 To the west, two 1m wide openings at either end of the west wall access a western room (the former dining room), 10m north-south by 7m (Photo 43). Three openings along the western wall represent former window openings, large dressed stone blocks lie along the lower face of this wall, with each opening fronted (to the west) by dressed stone steps (Photo 44). Along the eastern wall two rectangular recesses, each 0.85m wide, are cut back into the wall.



Photo 43: View south. Looking at the former dining room, with the roofed cellar area behind. 2m and 0.5m scales.

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Photo 44: View east. The stone steps fronting the former dining room windows. 2m and 1m scales.

4.2.4 To the north of the former dining room a 0.6m high, coursed masonry wall butts against the dining room wall, continuing its line northward for 24m (Photo 45). Only the northernmost section follows the original line of the Gnoll House building, the section that abuts the dining room is on a new alignment. A set of stone steps have been built into the original line of walling to the west; two 0.25m deep steps of stone slabs set on mortared masonry (Photo 46).



Photo 45: View east of the wall abutting the former dining room. 2m and 0.5m scales.

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Photo 46: View east of stone steps leading down to the lower terrace. 0.5m scale.

4.2.5 To the south of the former dining room lies the modern roofed structure enclosing Cellar Rooms 1 and 2. These rooms demarcate the former library (northernmost) and drawing room (southernmost), with mortared random rubble masonry walling, 0.95m high, topped by a pitched roof of corrugated steel. The library is fronted to the west by dressed stone steps with protruding rounded tread marking the site of a window (Photo 47). The western wall of the drawing room curves outward in a bay/tower base (Photo 48), also fronted by two stone steps. The lower step comprises squared stone slabs topping coursed masonry, the upper step comprises dress stone treads with a rounded protruding edge, over a cement-rendered step. The south wall of the drawing room includes a lower course of finely dressed grey stone (Photo 49).



Photo 47: View east of dressed stone steps marking the site of a former window in the library. 2m and 1m scales.

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Photo 48: View east of the curved bay/tower base of the former drawing room. 2m scale.



Photo 49: View northeast of the south wall of the former drawing room, showing the lower course of dressed stone. 2m and 1m scales.

- 4.2.6 East of the former library lie the stairs to Cellar Entranceway 1. East of the drawing room a north-south wall marks the original northern end of the drawing room, with a rectangular room beyond (6.5m north-south by 3.5m) representing a former hall. A small, squared recess is built centrally into the eastern wall, flanked to either side by rounded recesses. Doorway openings lie at the western end of the north and south walls. East of these rooms lies a north-south path laid to gravel, partly along the line of an original passageway, and partly passing through original rooms.

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Photo 50:
View
northeast
across the
southern
rooms of the
east-west
range of
Gnoll House,
with a hall in
the
foreground.
2m scales.

4.2.7 To the east of the cellar stairs lies a small room (3.7m north-south by 2m) with an eastern wall incorporating two irregular rectangular recesses and partially open to the west, surrounded by pathways. This represents a former butler’s pantry, the northernmost recess in the east wall marking the location of a fireplace. A path, along an original passageway, runs north-south to the east of the butler’s pantry, east of which lies a large 6.5m square room with entrances in the west wall, the western end of the south wall and the southern end of the east wall. Small stubs of walling protrude westward from the east wall. This represents the former kitchen, incorporating the site of a set of stairs to the north. The wall protrusions to the east mark the site of a kitchen fireplace. The entrance to the south accessed a former larder, the current wall marking out a larger area (1.5m north-south by 3.5m) than the original room. The entrance to the east accessed a former scullery, marked out by a room (3.5m north-south by 2.5m) with an entrance to the north. To the north the walls mark out three sides of a similarly sized room (4.5m wide), open to the east, marking the site of a former dairy (Photos 50, 51 and 52).



Photo 51:
View north.
Looking
across the
rooms on the
east side of
the former
drawing room
and library.
2m and 1m
scales.

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Photo 52: View north over rooms at the east end of Gnoll House, including a former scullery and dairy. 2m and 1m scales.

4.2.8 To the east of the former hall the walls demarcate two small square rooms (1.75m² and 1.8m by 2m), partially representing a former boot room and cupboard, with a passage to the north, a new path inserted and a new entrance on the south side. East of this lies a room (4m north-south by 5.5m) with a chamfered southeast corner and an entrance to the north. This represents a former servant's hall, originally with a matching chamfered corner to the northeast (Photo 53). The southern entrance is a new addition and adjoins the former larder described above.



Photo 53: View east from a former hall towards the servant's hall to the rear. 2m scale.

4.2.9 A further range of buildings lie to the south. Attached to the south side of the former drawing room (represented by the roofed section of the site) lies the outline of a large room (9.1m north-south by 6.9m) with a wide entrance at

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the northern end of the east wall and a central entrance in the south wall, fronted by a set of very shallow steps built of flat slabs of mortared masonry. Internally the area is subdivided into rectangular compartments by lines of brickwork laid at ground surface level. The steps to the south are flanked by two low rectangular compartments (2.5m by 1m) of mortared masonry which represent the site of the former conservatory (Photo 54).



Photo 54: View north of the outline of the former conservatory. 2m and 1m scales.

4.2.10 To the west, a 6.7m long stretch of wall runs east-west. Up to 0.6m high, it is built of mortared random rubble and is concrete capped. Acting as a retaining wall as ground falls slightly from south to north, it has a set of wide concrete-slab steps to the south accessing the terrace to the west of the building (Photo 55). An area of turf-covered concrete, 2.9m wide, lines the west side of the former conservatory wall, in the angle with the retaining wall. A square (0.5m²) stone plinth lies a short distance to the west of this.



Photo 55: View southeast showing the retaining wall and steps to the west of the former conservatory. 2m and 1m scale.

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4.2.11 Along the east side of the former conservatory a wide gravel-laid path follows the line of a former corridor, with a stone step marking an external door at the southern end. On the east side of this lies a sunken, part brick-built room divided into two compartments (Photos 56 and 57).

- The southernmost compartment (2.4m north-south by 2.9m) is sunk 0.4m below the surrounding ground level, with a west wall of mortared masonry sat on brickwork in a running bond. The south and east walls are built in brick, with an entrance on the east side fronted by two brick and stone steps. The north wall butts against the west wall, with brickwork built on a mortared masonry base and a central opening onto a set of four brick and stone steps that descend into the northern compartment (3.3m north-south by 3m).
- The northern compartment is set 1.1m below the surrounding ground level and the west wall continues to enclose this area. The north wall is built of mortared random rubble, largely vegetation covered, but appearing to continue at an angle to the northeast. The south wall returns to the north to butt against this masonry wall, forming the east side of the compartment. A rectangular brick-built base stands in the northeast corner, with a central sub-oval masonry feature at ground level in the centre of the compartment. To the south, low masonry walling defines an attached rectangular compartment 1.4m wide. To the north, walling defines another attached compartment; 1.5m wide, with an angled east wall.

This structure is not labelled on the plan of the late 19th century building but the sunken nature and brick stand would suggest a former boiler house or oil tank store.



Photo 56: View west across the brick structure at the southeast end of Gnoll House. 2m and 1m scales.

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Photo 57: View south across the brick structure at the southeast end of Gnoll House. 2m and 1m scales.

4.2.12 A north-south range of rooms are laid out to the east of the main house as part of the continuous outline of the building. Adjoining the former smoking room and dairy is a large room (8.6m north-south by 7.5m) with a rounded southeast corner and entrance through the south wall. There is a butt joint midway along the east wall with the latter increasing in thickness to the north. This marks the site of a former kitchen, shown on late 19th century plans with substantially thicker east and south walling, identified as part of a mid-17th century building (Green 1979) (Photo 58).



Photo 58: View north across the site of a former kitchen and mid-17th century building. 2m scales.

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- 4.2.13 To the north lies an adjoining room (7.9m north-south by 7.4m) accessed via a doorway at the eastern end of the dividing wall. There is a dog-leg in the east wall, and a smaller room (3m by 1.8m) has been inserted into the northeast corner, with an entrance to the west (Photo 59). This area formerly comprised a larder and scullery, and was part of the mid-17th century building.
- 4.2.14 To the north the wing gets narrower, dog-legging in from the east. The adjacent room (7.4 north-south by 4.8m) is L-shaped and accessed via a doorway to the east. To the southeast lies a small room (2.9m by 1.5m) built within the recess and accessed from the north. These rooms would appear to represent a modern re-arrangement of the former coach house. At the west end of the north wall is an access to a long narrow room (6.8m north-south by 1.4m), representing the former harness room. East of this is a small room (5.5m north-south by 2.5m) with a chamfered northeast edge and no entranceway marked (Photo 59).



Photo 59: View south across the eastern service wing of Gnoll House. 2m scale.

- 4.2.15 In addition to the layout of the main house, there are a range of outbuildings built into and against the rock face to the east, with an entranceway at the northern end.
- 4.2.16 Starting at the southern end, a set of seven stone steps approximately 2m wide ascend the hillside to the rear before narrowing and continuing to climb off to the south to access the grounds around the gnoll (Photo 60). The initial steps are built of square dressed large stone blocks and the upper step has a protruding rounded tread. The steps are set between low walls of mortared random rubble, roughly faced, with squared pillars (0.9m high) flanking the entrance. To the south the area is covered in vegetation but it is assumed some form of retaining wall runs in that direction. To the north lies a wall of roughly faced mortared random rubble which rises steadily to 2.8m in height. This wall runs to the east of the brick-built former boiler/oil tank house, before curving around to the east, acting as a retaining wall/frontage to the rapidly rising ground behind.

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Photo 60: View east showing the stairs and retaining wall to the southeast of the house. 2m scale.

4.2.17 As the wall curves around to run west-east it is seen to contain a recessed room (1.7m² and 1.8m high) with a low arched ceiling and open to the north, facing the former servant's hall (Photo 61). The side walls of the room are largely brick-built with masonry inclusions and the rear wall is largely masonry with the occasional brick inclusion. There is a butt joint on the west side of the room between the brick and the curving masonry of the corner section of wall. The ceiling is partially cement rendered over brick, the facing masonry carried over the gentle curve with no lintel or voussoirs visible.



Photo 61: View south of a small room within the retaining wall adjacent to the house. 2m and 1m scales.

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4.2.18 The west-east wall continues into an area of heavy vegetation. Butting against this wall is a lower wall (1.65m high) of mortared random rubble running to the northeast before curving round to the north (Photo 62). This wall runs for approximately 25m, butting against an earlier wall at the north end. The latter continues the line north, is 1.4m high, and forms the east side of a back entrance passage to the house. The wall is built of roughly faced random rubble but laid in three broad courses. After approximately 15m there is a 1m wide entranceway through the wall where the floor is laid with irregular stone slabs, before a short continuation of the wall for around 3m.



Photo 62: View northeast of retaining wall along the eastern side of Gnoll House.
2m and 1m scales.

4.2.19 On the eastern side of this wall lie two rooms aligned east-west. The southernmost wall of the rooms stands to approximately 5.5m in height and is built largely of thin blocks of roughly faced mortared rubble laid in very rough courses, with areas of brick edging and infill. The western end of this wall appears partly tumbled and largely vegetation covered, but from a height of approximately 2.6m there is a vertical brick-lined edge that marks the edge of a recessed corner carried up to the top of the wall where it encloses a viewing platform above (Photo 63). There appear to be bands of repaired walling along the upper courses, and a segment of brickwork approximately 0.5m wide and 1.2m high which is potentially part of a former chimney.

4.2.20 The wall appears continuous between the two rooms, although vegetation obscures this. Within the confines of the eastern room a small brick-built fireplace is built into the wall at ground level, fronted by an iron grill, with a protruding brick-built surround supporting a mortared masonry hood over a stone lintel (Photo 64). The whole structure measures 1.9m wide and 1.75m high. Just to the east of the fireplace is a beam slot (0.3m by 0.2m), level with the top of the fireplace hood. Two angled lines of stone slabs set into the wall and infilled with brickwork mark a possible roofline above the fireplace, although this stops abruptly midway over the fireplace hood. Further angled roof flashing is suggested to the west but largely obscured by vegetation. Towards the top of the wall a vertical butt joint just beyond the northern wall may mark an original end to the wall which was therefore topped and extended

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further east at a later period, potentially to accommodate the viewing platform above.

- 4.2.21 The eastern room (5.4m north-south by 3m), which contains the fireplace, is enclosed to the east by a wall of mortared random rubble with an angled top to provide the edging to a rising stone staircase on the east side (Photo 63). Placed centrally within the wall is a square recess (1.4m²) with brick edging to one side (Photo 65). It has a concrete lintel and an opening to the bedrock face behind. A 1m wide opening at the top of the wall, where it joins (the join obscured by mortar) against the south wall, may represent a former access point to an upper storey. This is now enclosed by metal bars as the rising stairs run past this opening. The west wall of the room, dividing the two rooms, is built against the west side of the fireplace structure, is 1.1m high and built of mortared random rubble. The north wall butts against this dividing wall and is built of roughly coursed mortared rubble with an entrance at the east end. The floor of this room is paved with squared stone slabs.
- 4.2.22 The western room (5.4m north-south by 6.5m) is formed by the high southern wall, the western boundary wall, the eastern dividing wall and a north wall that butts against the dividing wall. These walls are largely featureless although the northern wall stops approximately 1.8m from the west wall with an internal concrete floor the width of this opening and may indicate the site of a removed stairway. These rooms would appear to represent a former coach house and washhouse.



Photo 63: View south of the north and south walls of a former coach house and washhouse, with steps to a viewing platform above. 2m and 1m scales.

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Photo 64:
View south of
the fireplace
within the
former
washhouse.
2m and 1m
scales.



Photo 65:
View east of
the squared
recess in the
eastern wall
of the former
washhouse.
2m and 1m
scales.



Photo 66:
View
southwest
showing the
paved floor
of the former
washhouse.
1m scale.

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- 4.2.23 To the north, two rooms have been built against a partly quarried rock face on the east side, currently vegetation covered (Photos 67 and 70). The larger room (4.5m north-south by 9m) is built against the bedrock on the eastern side which has been faced with a wall of mortared brick and masonry, approximately 2.5m high and internally covered in a lime render. The northern wall is 0.9m high and built of mortared random rubble with two doorway openings in the western half (Photo 68). The relationship with the east wall is obscured. The south wall is built of mortared random rubble with a cement rendered internal face. This extends for 3m, before being stepped down and ending in a doorway opening. The wall then continues as a 0.9m high wall of mortared random rubble, partially cement rendered to the interior. The wall appears to return to form the west wall, which has largely been rebuilt in sections, with a block of random rubble butting against the return (Photo 69). The northern end of this west wall is built of rough brickwork and butted against the north wall, leaving a 1.6m gap between the two sections of wall which has subsequently been infilled in rough random rubble with an additional heightening and capping of masonry and cement mortar. Internally a partial concrete floor is visible, with remnants of a north-south cross wall roughly midway between the two door openings visible in the north wall.
- 4.2.24 A room (3.1m north-south by 5m) lies on the south side, formed by an L-shaped abutting wall, up to 2.2m high, of roughly coursed mortared rubble. This room is open to the west, with surface level stonework of a possible threshold in line with the western end of the wall. Squared stones on the ground surface suggests possible stone slab flooring in front.
- 4.2.25 Extending south from the southern room is a retaining or boundary wall of mortared random rubble, 5m long, 1.1m high, 0.35m wide and otherwise featureless. On the south side of the wall lie the partial remains of a carved stone circular plinth (0.6m in diameter), set 0.15m in front of the wall. The plinth is carved in a yellow sandstone with a central hole, from which it has broken radially (Photo 71).



Photo 67: View east of the eastern wall of a detached room built against the quarried rock face. 1m scale.

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Photo 68:
View south
of the
northern
wall of the
detached
room.

2m and 1m
scales.



Photo 69:
View east
of the
heavily-
patched
west wall
of the
detached
room.

2m and
1m scales.



Photo 70:
View east
of the
smaller of
the two
detached
rooms
against the
rock face
to the east
of Gnoll
House.

2m and
1m scales.

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Photo 71: View north showing the plinth set in front of an eastern retaining/boundary wall. 1m scale.

4.2.26 To the north lies a further set of vegetation-covered walling built into or against the rising ground (Photo 72). An east-west wall built against the face is up to 2.5m high and built of mortared random rubble. Only small sections of this wall are visible amongst the vegetation cover. A 1.1m high wall of random rubble and with a brick-edged terminus extends 3m south from the east-west wall. A line of bricks is placed at ground level to define an eastward return, extending 4.1m to the east. To the west the northern wall doglegs back to the north slightly, before returning at a right angle southward to enclose an area of roughly 3m by 4.8m. Positioned centrally within this area, close to the north wall, is another carved sandstone circular plinth (Photo 73).



Photo 72: View northwest of walls against the northern side of the service yard area. 1m scale.

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Photo 73: View north of a stone plinth close to the northern edge of the service yards area. 1m scale.

- 4.2.27 The north wall returns west to form a curving retaining wall that then forms the east edge of the entranceway structures to the rear service yard of the house (Photo 74). The wall butts against a 2.1m wide arched gateway structure. Squared blocks of faced mortared random rubble form either side of the entrance, with a central opening 2.5m wide (Photo 75). Central vertical grooves to either side suggest a door structure in the middle (Photo 77). Dressed quoins are visible along the northern edge on the east side of the entrance, in the lower courses on the north edge of the west side, and almost to full height on the southern edge. These blocks carry a low arch of mortared masonry above, with dressed stone voussoirs to either side. The arch forms an opening approximately 2.4m high, with an additional 1.4m of masonry above, enclosing a viewing platform.
- 4.2.28 On the east side a high boundary wall butts against the north side of the entranceway structure, and forms a gently curving boundary to a sloping approach. This is mirrored by a lower wall on the west side (Photo 76).
- 4.2.29 On the internal (east) side to the south lies an open doorway (1m by 1.9), topped by a low brick arch but otherwise in a structure of mortared random rubble. This opens into a small room (1.2m by 1.5m) that drops 1.5m below the external ground level, although protruding stonework and beam slots indicate a raised floor within. This structure has been topped by a modern metal roof. Annotated late 19th century plans suggest this was a w.c. (Photos 78 and 79). The internal face of the wall continues for 3.3m to a western return, with large roughly dressed corner stones. The upper part of the wall falls gradually to the south but has been levelled off with later infill. The wall returns once more to the south and then dog-legs to the east, forming a possible room (3m by 1.4m). A small section of walling has then been butted against the southern edge (Photo 80).

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Photo 74: View north showing the retaining wall running up the entrance structure on the left.
2m and 1m scales.



Photo 75: View north of the archway entrance to the rear service yard.
2m and 1m scales.



Photo 76: View south of the entrance drive to the rear service yard area.
2m scale.

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Photo 77: View east of the door jamb groove in the entranceway structure to the service yard.
2m scale.



Photo 78: View west of the doorway and entrance to a former w.c. on the internal side of the entranceway structure.
2m and 1m scales.

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Photo 79: View west of the interior of the former w.c.



Photo 80: View west showing the wall on the south side of the entranceway structure. 2m scale.

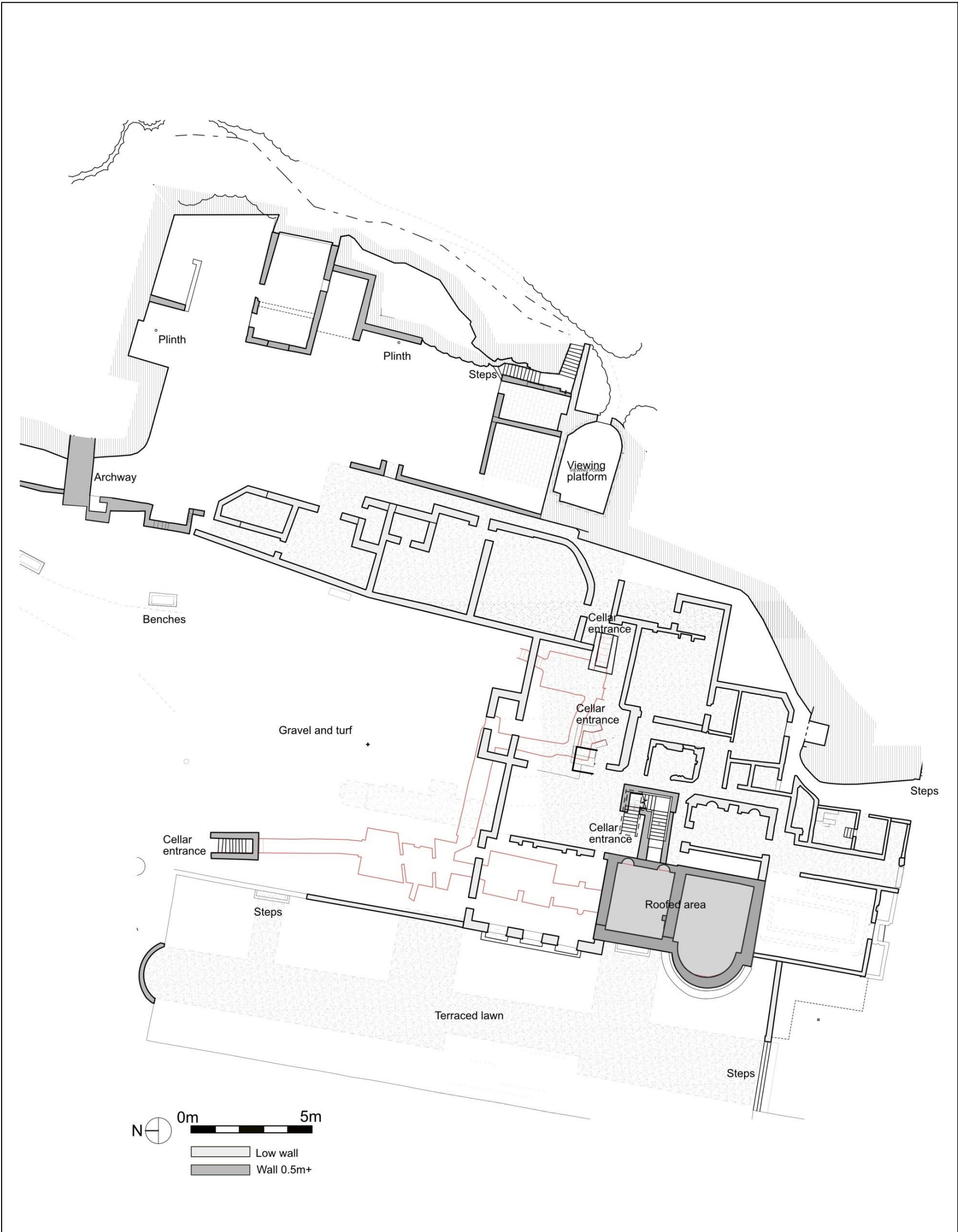


Figure 14: Gnoll House ruins ground plan. The outline of the surviving cellars is also shown in red. Based on drawings produced by Hiraeth for Andrew Scott Ltd (drawings 01310/S2/P1 and 01311/S2/P1) with adaptions and annotations by DAT-AS.

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4.3 Pond Cottage External (Figures 15 and 16, Photos 81 - 100)

- 4.3.1 Pond Cottage (Photo 81) is a two-storey dwelling, 9.8m east-west by 9.5m north-south, built of mortared random rubble, roughly faced and squared, and rendered to the rear (south). The building is 4m high to the apex, with a cross-gabled roof of slate with clay-ridge tile and a centrally placed octagonal chimney stack in black brick (Photo 82).



Photo 81: View southwest showing the front elevation of Pond Cottage.



Photo 82: View northeast of the octagonal chimney.

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- 4.3.2 The front elevation of the building (Photo 83) faces north-northeast and the front door sits towards the east end; a black-painted timber panel door within a wooden frame, flanked by large squared masonry with a low arched header in red brick (Photo 84). Adjacent, to the west, sits a casement window in a white-painted timber frame above a projecting painted cast stone sill. The single-glazed windows have a rectangular central panel, topped by a smaller pair of glazed panels above and below. These smaller panels are replicated in the upper openings and this window design is repeated throughout the building. Both door and window sit beneath a projecting porch canopy of a hipped slate roof with rolled lead joints, held on an open frame of black-painted squared timber posts with chamfered corners, split into angular m-shaped braces at the top.
- 4.3.3 To the west at ground floor level sits a projecting squared bay (Photo 85) with a continuous line of windows below a hipped slate roof, and above a projecting cast stone sill with smooth cement-rendered facing below. Brickwork frames the join between the bay and the main wall.
- 4.3.4 At first floor level above the bay window sits another window within the cross-gable, flush to the rest of the building face. The brick window header is topped by a projecting line of brickwork in a mock-Tudor style. To the east lies a dormer window (Photo 86). The roof is lined by black-painted timber fascias and barge boards, with finials at each roof apex.



Photo 83: View south of the front elevation of Pond Cottage. 2m scale.

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Photo 84: View south of the front door.
1m scale.



Photo 85: View southwest of the front facing bay window.
1m scale.



Photo 86: View southwest.
First floor dormer window
and roofing detail.

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- 4.3.5 The east elevation includes an end gable wall and side wall of the rear cross gable, presenting a continuous face of exposed masonry with stippled quoin stones to the front and rear (Photo 87). At ground floor level there is a projecting squared bay in the gable end, mirroring the style of the front wall. To the south lies a casement window with brick mock-Tudor header.
- 4.3.6 At first floor level a casement window sits centrally in the gable end (Photo 88). To the south a smaller dormer window sits at the angle in the roof at a slightly lower level, giving light to an internal staircase (Photo 89). Black-painted timber fascias, barge boards and finials are continued across this elevation.



Photo 87: View west of the east elevation of Pond Cottage. 2m and 1m scales.



Photo 88: View west showing the detail of first floor window on east elevation.

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Photo 89: View west of detail of stairway window on east elevation.

4.3.7 The west elevation (Photo 90) has a projecting gable end in exposed masonry with corner quoins. A ground floor casement window with a brick mock-Tudor head is mirrored by a slightly shorter window at first floor level above. The cross gable is set back slightly and includes a centrally placed three-panelled casement window at ground level, with a two-panelled dormer window above. An integral lean-to with single pitched roof extends the line of the wall to the south. A gas meter box is attached to this section of wall (Photo 91).



Photo 90: View northeast of the west elevation of Pond Cottage.
2m and 1m scales.

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Photo 91: View east of the rear west elevation of Pond Cottage. 2m scale.

- 4.3.8 The south (rear) elevation is covered in smooth cement render (Photo 92), painted white. The rear door is a white-painted panelled timber door within a plain squared surround, sitting off-centre to the west. A three-panelled casement window with a protruding brick sill but no brick header lies to the east. A wide single-panel fixed first floor window with awning lies above, also lacking the brick header, but with a typical painted cast stone sill.
- 4.3.9 At the western end of the elevation lies an integral ground-floor lean-to with slate pitched roof and cement rendered walls (Photo 93). A white-painted timber shed door accesses from the east and a plain fixed single-glaze window in a timber frame sits centrally in the south wall.



Photo 92: View north of the rear, south elevation of Pond Cottage. 2m and 1m scales.

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Photo 93: View northwest of the rear lean-to attachment.
2m and 1m scales.

4.3.10 Externally the front north elevation is fronted by a tiled patio 1.4m wide and laid with red-clay octagonal tiles with small black diamond clay-tile infill. A decorative iron rail fronts this area with a gateway in front of the main door, dividing it from the drive in front (Photo 94).



Photo 94: View north of tiled patio fronting the building.
1m scales.

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- 4.3.11 A rear garden lies to the south and east of the building (Photos 95 and 96). To the east this area is largely laid to grass with a mature cherry tree. A 2m wide concrete apron fronts the building and a 0.8m wide L-shaped concrete path extends into the lawn. This area is surrounded by timber fencing to the north and east.
- 4.3.12 To the south the concrete apron wraps around the building, in part bounded by low brick walling and concrete breeze block walling. Beyond this lies a largely lawned area, stepped up slightly, with a stone-slab garden path, small hedges and planting beds enclosed by low stone walling. The area is enclosed by a wall of mortared random rubble with an inserted masonry wall enclosing the western side which has a timber garden gate set between brick pillars.
- 4.3.13 Built against the angle of the south and east masonry boundary walls is a shed structure (Photo 97). A low wall of concrete breeze blocks supports large timber-framed windows, with gable end walls of red brick. Red brick also tops the windows to support gently sloping corrugated sheet roofing. Internally, an external doorway is visible in the east boundary wall as it meets the south wall. The doorway has a timber lintel and is blocked in concrete breeze block and red brick (Photo 98).
- 4.3.14 On the west side of the building lies a further garden area, largely of grass with some mature trees and bushes. The north and west sides are enclosed by a hedge, the southern side interrupted by a wooden fence (Photo 99). South of this lies a short tarmac drive in front of the garden gate to the rear garden, with the masonry wall of the adjacent walled garden forming the southern edge.



Photo 95: View north of rear garden area on the east side of the building.

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Photo 96: View south of rear garden area to the south of the building.



Photo 97: View south of garden shed in the southeast corner of the rear garden.

2m and 1m scales.



Photo 98: View southeast of blocked doorway through the external boundary wall, within the garden shed.

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Photo 99: View east of rear garden gate. 2m and 1m scales.



Photo 100: View north of garden area to the west of the building.

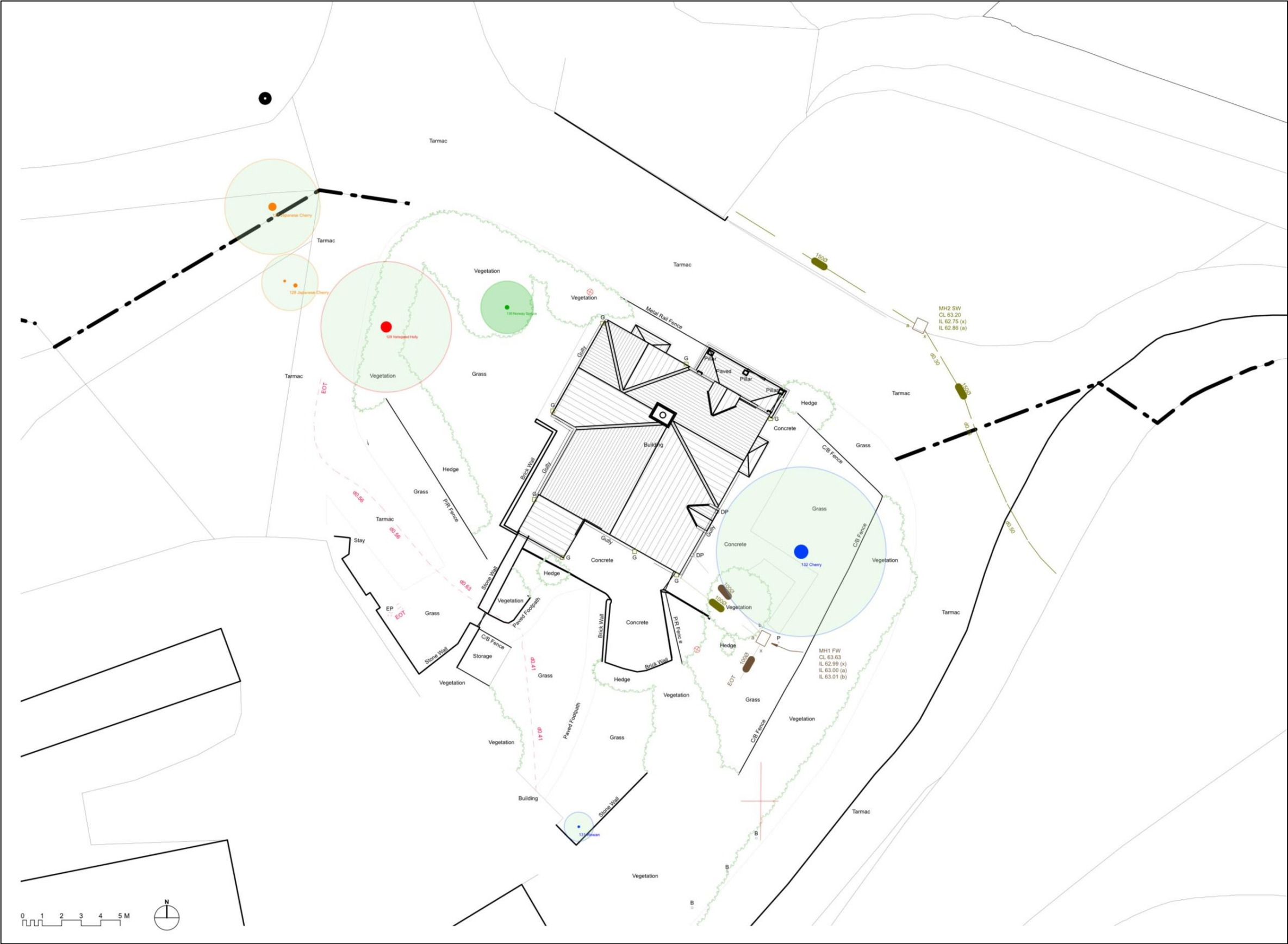


Figure 15: Plan of Pond Cottage and its surrounds. Based on drawings produced by Hiraeth for Andrew Scott Ltd (drawing 00020/S2/P2) with annotations by DAT-AS.

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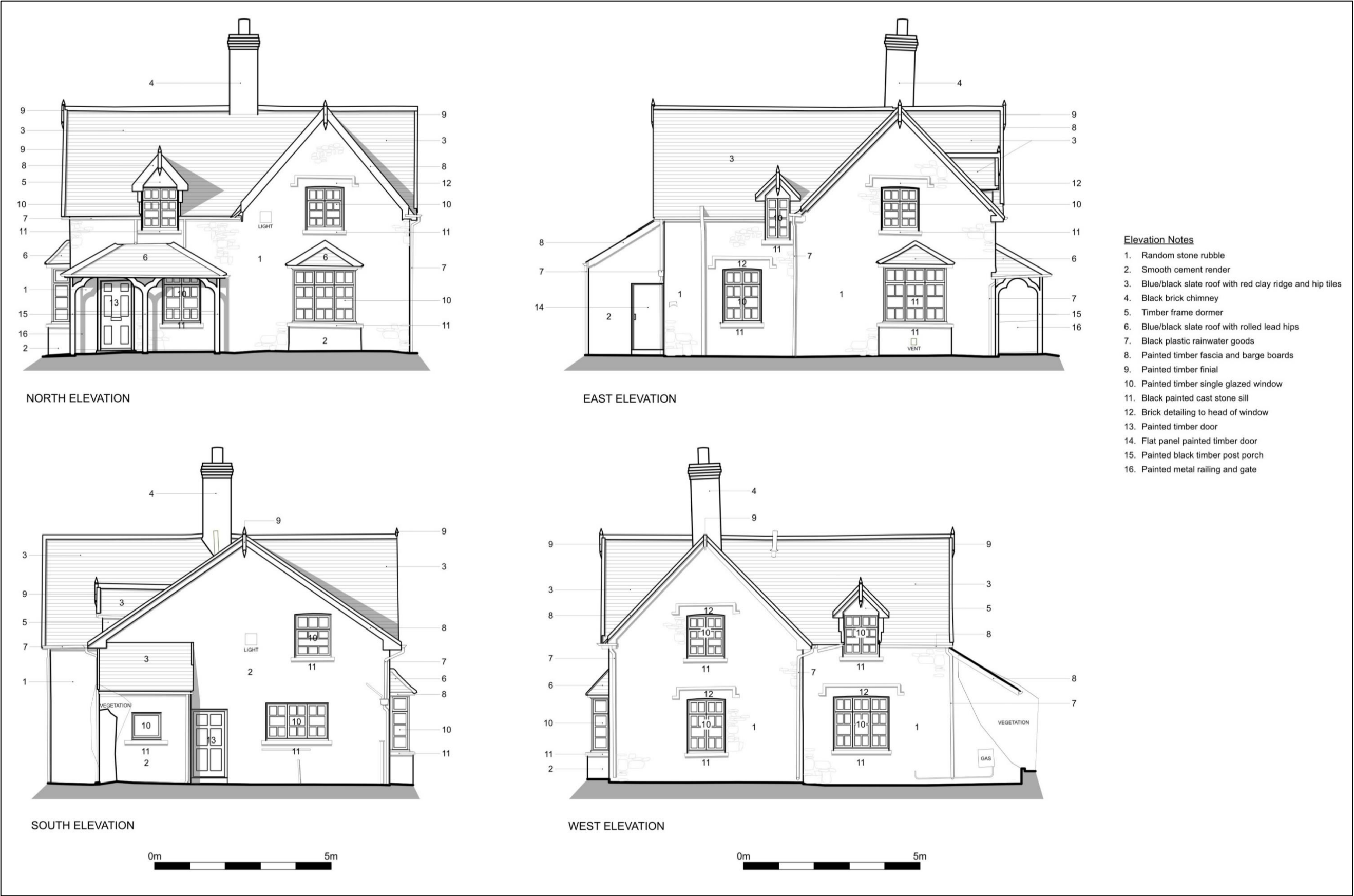


Figure 16: Elevations of Pond Cottage. Based on drawings produced by Hiraeth for Andrew Scott Ltd (drawing 03040/S0/P3) with adaptations and annotations by DAT-AS.

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4.4 Pond Cottage Internal (Figure 17, Photos 101-116)

- 4.4.1 The interior of Pond Cottage comprises two floors and an attic space although the latter was not accessed during the survey. The ground floor consists of a living room, parlour/bedroom and kitchen/dining room. The first floor contains a bathroom and three bedrooms.
- 4.4.2 The main entry to the building is via the front door in the north elevation, directly into the living room (5.8m north-south by 4.3m) (Photo 101). The floor is carpeted, with low plain skirting to papered walls with a mid-level plain timber dado and an artex ceiling in a repeating fan pattern. The front door sits in a plain squared surround. The room is lit by a window in the north wall and a squared bay window in the east wall, both within splayed openings.
- 4.4.3 A fireplace sits centrally within the chimney block on the west side (Photo 102). A plain squared opening with coursed squared masonry visible behind contains a modern free-standing log burner on a concrete base fronted by a modern marble-effect hearth.
- 4.4.4 A plain painted timber door gives access through to the parlour/bedroom on the south side of the chimney block. A similar door opens to the dining room/kitchen at the southern end of the west wall, with a further door accessing the stairway in the southeast corner of the room and an understairs cupboard adjacent.
- 4.4.5 Modern radiators lie on the north and south walls and all sockets, light switches, lights and smoke alarms are modern.



Photo 101: View north of living room. 1m scales.

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Photo 102: View west of living room fireplace.
1m scales.



Photo 103: View south of living room, showing stair access and door to kitchen/dining room on the right.
1m scales.



Photo 104: View northwest. Ground floor parlour/bedroom.
1m scales.

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- 4.4.6 To the west lies a parlour/bedroom (4.2m north-south by 4m) (Photo 104). The floor is carpeted, with a low plain skirting to plain papered walls and plain plastered ceiling with a central modern light fitting. The room is lit by a window in the west wall and a squared bay window in the north wall, both in splayed openings.
- 4.4.7 A plastic vent cover on the east wall marks the site of a blocked fireplace which has been papered over (Photo 105). The door access lies on the south side of this chimney block and the recess on the north side of the chimney block has an arched head with beaded edging. A modern radiator lies on the west wall and all fixtures are modern.



Photo 105: View east of ground floor parlour/bedroom, showing blocked fireplace. 1m scales.

- 4.4.8 On the south side of the building lies a combined kitchen diner (Photos 106 and 107) occupying an L-shaped space (3.7m north-south by 7m) with access to the living room to the north and an external rear door to the south. The floor is covered with linoleum, with low plain skirting to a plain painted plaster wall, mid-level moulded timber dado and papered walls above to a stippled artex ceiling.
- 4.4.9 The room is lit by three windows. A window in the west wall sits within a splayed opening, a window in the south wall sits in a steeper splay and has a tile sill, and a window in the east wall sits against the north wall with a splay only to the south. A modern sink unit lies underneath the south window, with modern kitchen units against the north and south walls and modern cupboards built into the northwest corner. Two radiators lie against the north walls and all fixtures are modern.

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Photo 106: View east of the kitchen with doorway to the living room on the left. 1m scales.



Photo 107: View west of the western end of the kitchen/dining room. 1m scale.

4.4.10 The stairway is accessed via the living room. A half-turned staircase rises to the first floor landing (Photo 108). The steps are carpeted with low ridge-topped skirting to either side. A plain wooden handrail lies on the east and south walls. The staircase is lit by a narrow casement window in square opening with pointed dormer head. The staircase opens onto a small L-shaped landing with plain painted timber doors accessing three bedrooms and a bathroom. The landing is carpeted over floorboards, with low beaded skirting, plain papered walls and a plain plastered ceiling with loft access above.

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Photo 108: View east, looking down the stairway.
1m scales.

4.4.11 The bathroom (2.1m north-south by 3.6m) occupies the southeast corner (Photos 109 and 110). The floor is carpeted over floorboards, with low plain skirting to papered walls with mid-level plain timber dado, and a plain plastered ceiling with plastered roof beams visible. The room is lit by a window in the south wall, within a splayed opening with tiled sill. A modern bath, sink and toilet suite occupy the east end of the room. A modern radiator lies on the west wall and all fixtures are modern.



Photo 109:
View east of the first floor bathroom.
1m scales.

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Photo 110: View west of the entry to the first floor bathroom. 1m scales.

4.4.12 Bedroom 1 (4.6m north-south by 3.6m) occupies the northwest corner (Photos 111 and 112). The varnished floorboards are topped by low plain skirting, plain papered walls and a textured artex ceiling. Plastered roof timbers are visible in each corner, with loft access just in front of the north wall. The room is lit by two matching windows, one in the west wall, one in the north wall and both set in splayed openings. A modern cupboard is set centrally on the east chimney block wall. A small vent towards the northern end of this wall suggests a possible former offset fireplace, now blocked. A modern radiator lies on the west wall and all fixtures are modern.



Photo 111: View west in Bedroom 1. 1m scales.

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Photo 112:
View east of
Bedroom 1
with the vent in
a possible
former
fireplace to the
lower left.
1m scales.

4.4.13 Bedroom 2 (4.6m north-south by 3.8m) occupies the northeast corner (Photos 113 and 114). The floor, wall and ceiling decorations are consistent with Bedroom 1. Plastered roof timbers are visible in the southeast and southwest corners and the northern part of the ceiling is sloping to accommodate the roof line. The room is lit by two windows, one in the north wall in a splayed opening with a dormer head, the second in the east wall in a splayed opening. On the west (chimney block) wall a small vent towards the northern end may mark the site of a blocked fireplace. An airing cupboard with modern boiler is inserted into the recess on the south side of the chimney block. Modern radiators lie on the north and east walls, all fixtures are modern.



Photo 113:
View north in
Bedroom 2.
1m scales.

4.4.14 Bedroom 3 (3.3m²) occupies the southwest corner. The floor, wall and ceiling decorations are consistent with the other bedrooms. The west part of the ceiling slopes to accommodate the roof, with plastered roof timbers visible. The room is lit by a window in the west wall, in a squared opening. A modern radiator lies on the north wall, all fixtures are modern.

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Photo 114: View east in Bedroom 2.
1m scales



Photo 115: View west in Bedroom 2 showing the airing cupboard to the left and lower vent to the right possible marking a blocked fireplace.
1m scales.



Photo 116: View west. Bedroom 3.
1m scales.

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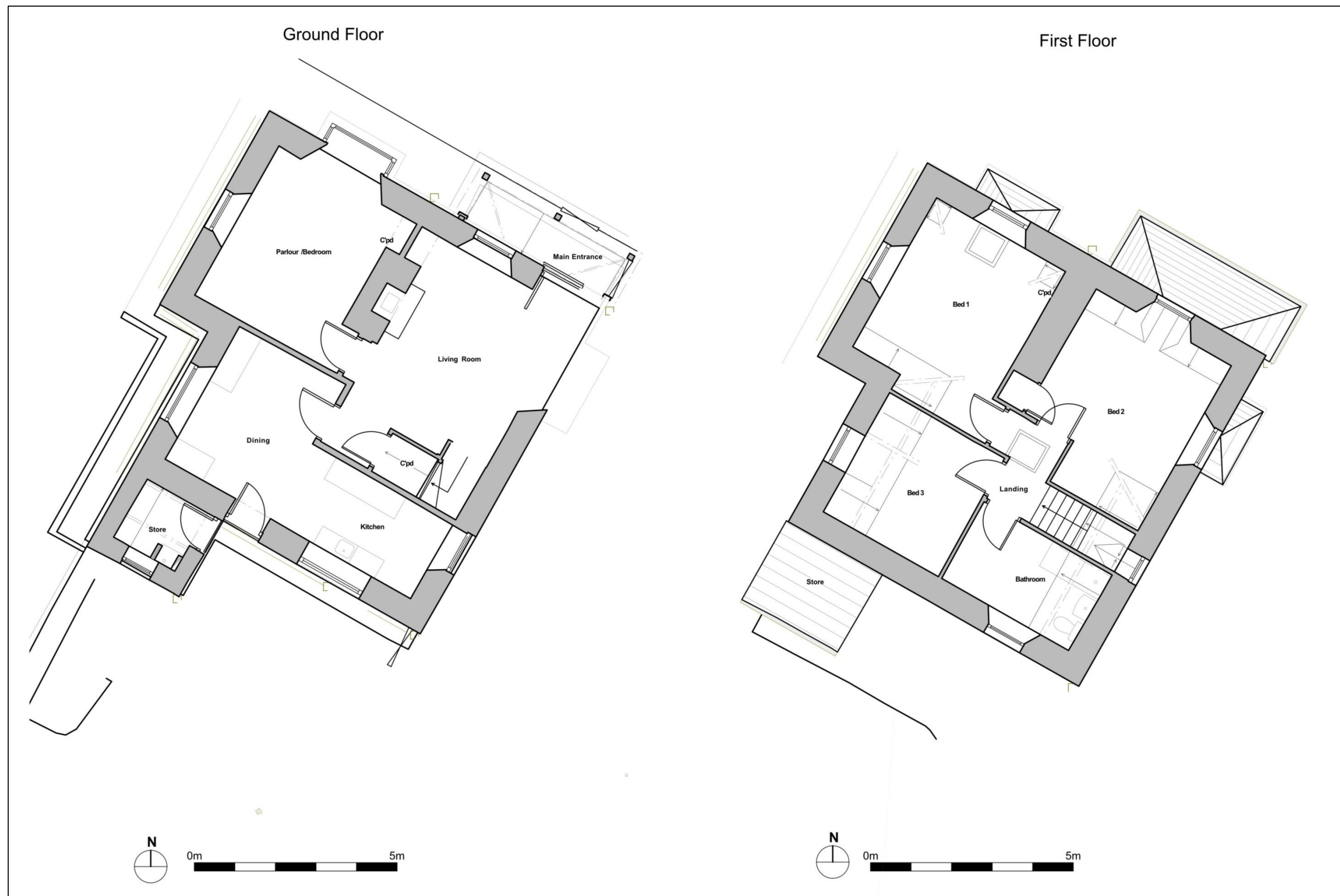


Figure 17: Plan of the ground floor and first floor of Pond Cottage. Based on drawings produced by Hiraeth for Andrew Scott Ltd (drawings 01031/S2/P2 and 01032/S2/P2) with adaptations and annotations by DAT-AS.

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5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The ruins of Gnoll House and the extant remains of Pond Cottage both lie within the Grade II* listed parkland of the Gnoll Estate and Country Park, Neath (centred on SS 76030 97273 & SS 76347 97218). The Gnoll House ruins occupy a terraced platform on high ground overlooking the town and valley of Neath and are the remains of what was formerly a largely 18th century country mansion house, demolished in 1957. The ruins comprise a range of intact cellars and a series of low surface level walling marking out the layout of the building, with some higher building remains around the periphery of the site. Pond Cottage is located within the estate to the east of the house and represents the intact remains of a late 19th century estate cottage, currently unoccupied. Neither site is individually listed but the Gnoll House ruins are recorded on the regional HER as PRN 00618w. A comprehensive Level 3 historic building survey has been carried out, with the site visited on the 11th August and 6th September 2023.
- 5.2 Historical research suggests an initial house was built at the gnoll in the early 17th century, possibly by David Evans. A new house, possibly a hall house, appears to have been built in around 1666 by David's grandson, Sir Herbert Evans. In the early 18th century Sir Humphrey Mackworth added a further grand house, a Buck print of 1741 suggesting the houses formed a collection of buildings on the site. Sir Humphrey's son, Herbert Mackworth, employed the architect John Johnson to design a larger house which was built in the mid-1770s. This expanded Sir Humphrey's house with the addition of rounded castellated wings and appears to have subsumed the mid-17th century building, turning it into a kitchen range and possibly removing the initial early 17th century house to create a single grand country house. The latter is recorded on 18th and early 19th century estate maps as a grand Georgian-style house with rounded towers on the main west facing wing, castellated across this frontage, with the main approach and entrance from the north. The main block was of three-storeys, with two-storeys to the south and a service range of one to two storeys. Early 19th century maps show a redevelopment and extension of the presumed service wing on the northeast side and the possible addition of rooms on the south side of the main house. From the 1840s onward a period of downsizing began, with the service range to the northeast rebuilt and reduced. A conservatory was included in the 18th century house but map evidence suggests the large conservatory on the south side was added in the mid-19th century. In 1881 the castellations were removed and the north wing of the main frontage demolished, with the ground floor rearranged to accommodate a new entrance arrangement. The owners ceased living at the house in 1909, renting it out to Herbert Eccles, J.P., who appears to have maintained some upkeep of the house and grounds. Following his death in 1916 there was a short period of abandonment and renting out to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company for offices and accommodation. In the early 1920s the house was sold to the Neath Corporation. A health clinic was established in the house in 1925, and during the Second World War it was turned over for use by ARP personnel. Following a subsequent period of dereliction it was demolished in 1957.
- 5.3 The surviving cellars underlie the extent of the house as was laid out by Herbert Mackworth/John Johnson in the 1770s which likely provides a date for their construction, although some elements may relate to the early 18th century house of Sir Humphrey Mackworth. Butt joints and brickwork indicate sections of the cellars have been repaired and adjusted throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Cellar Room 3 and Corridor 1 underlie the early 18th century (Humphrey Mackworth) part of the house and may be the original elements of the cellar. Cellar Rooms 1 and 2 to the south are clearly part of the 1770s

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extension, their larger size, very slight offset angle and lack of vaulted ceiling may be an indication of their different construction dates. Room 4 to the north may originally have been a larger, early vaulted cellar but it lies under the 1770s wing of the house. This cellar was subsequently reduced and subdivided by brick walling, presumably during the 19th century. To the east Room 5 also likely represents a late 18th century cellar, the blocked doorway to the south may indicate a further range of cellars to the south, although this area is more likely to have required excavation into bedrock. Corridor 3 and Entrance 4 may be later 19th century additions. The access to Entrance 4 only appears possible after the adjustments of the 1880s. The east of Corridor 3 aligns with a porch added in the 1880s, although there is likely to have been some earlier connection between the eastern and western cellars.

- 5.4 The layout of the rooms at surface level appears largely to have been created subsequent to the demolition of Gnoll House in 1957, possibly part of the parkland restoration works of the 1980s. The walls themselves include modern concrete and paving elements, with doorways, windows and fireplaces lacking original elements. Some of the lower courses, particularly to the south around the roofed elements of the ruins, included dressed stone which may be part of the original house but generally the walls appear to be rebuilds roughly following the outline of the original ones. The outline broadly replicates that of the post-1880s house, although this includes elements of the mid-17th century, early 18th century and 1770s houses. There are some standing elements, such as the entranceway to the eastern service yard, and walls around the eastern periphery. The service yard entranceway is likely mid-19th century in origin, although it may also have been repaired and rebuilt more recently. Some of the standing walling around the periphery may include 18th century and early 19th century elements but again, much appears to have been repaired and potentially rebuilt more recently. An approximate phase plan showing the development of the house overlaid with current walling is illustrated in Figure 18.
- 5.5 The history of Pond Cottage is, in contrast to Gnoll House, not well-documented. Map evidence indicates it was constructed at some point in the 1880s or 1890s, likely as a residence for the estate gardener/groundskeeper. The building has remained in use until recently and appears to be in relatively good condition. Externally the house includes architectural elements typical of the late 19th to early 20th century, such as the octagonal chimney, window designs and bay and dormer windows. There appears to have been little alteration to the exterior of the building since its construction, suggesting it retains much of its original appearance and form. The interior however has been modernised throughout. The internal layout may not have been altered, but wall, floor and ceiling coverings are all modern, as are all fixtures and fittings.

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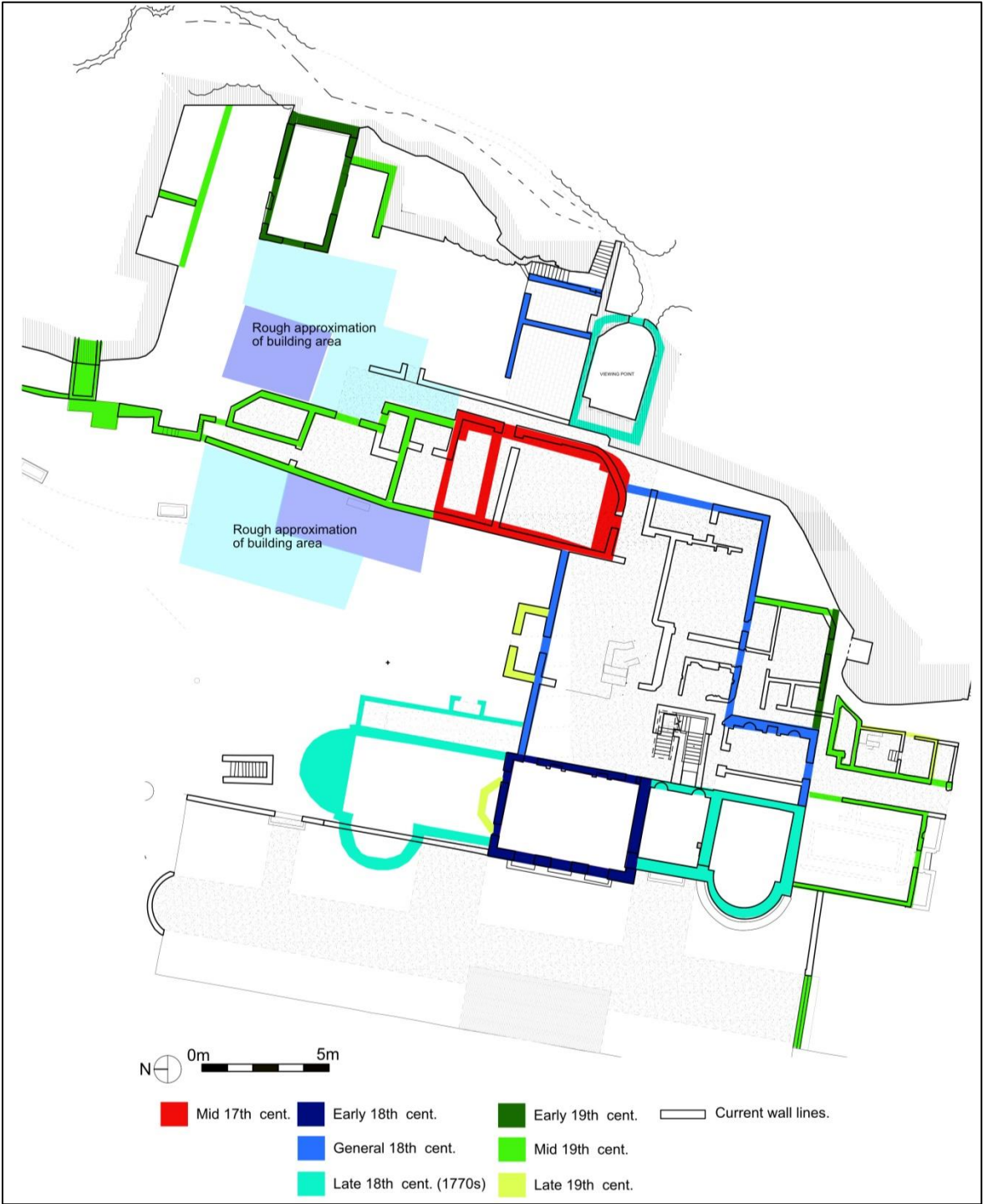


Figure 18: A broad phase plan showing the development of Gnoll House from the mid-17th century to late 19th century, overlaid with current wall lines.

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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.

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