

Gnoll Country Park

Cellar Hibernation Surveys (Addendum to Cellar Bat Survey Report)

Gnoll Country Park is currently the focus of a Levelling up Fund grant which has been approved to improve multiple features in the Park (for full details please see The Stage 2 Report. Rev_B. Hiraeth).

An NRW Protected Species License will be required for this work. The bat roost designs will be finalised during the license application process. NRW requested that hibernation surveys were carried out on the Cellars prior to the Planning Application being validated.

Internally there will be extensive repair works to ensure that the space becomes safe for human access, is water tight and preserved for the future. The cellars will be subdivided up and two areas will create bat roosts. Bat Roost A uses the cellar access which the bats use to enter/leave the cellar currently. A small cold room space will be created in this roost to enhance roosting potential and create microclimates within.

Bat Roost B is located at the opposite end of the cellar, access to the surface will be reinstated as part of this development.

Figure 1 below shows the current indicative layout however this may slightly change.

The rest of the internal space will be used for public interpretation of the historic grounds and house that were present at Gnoll Country Park.

Externally the space is going to be used as a public space for events. There will be repair works to the external features of the Gnoll House Cellars.

There will be a small amount of surfacing works in the immediate vicinity of the ruins.

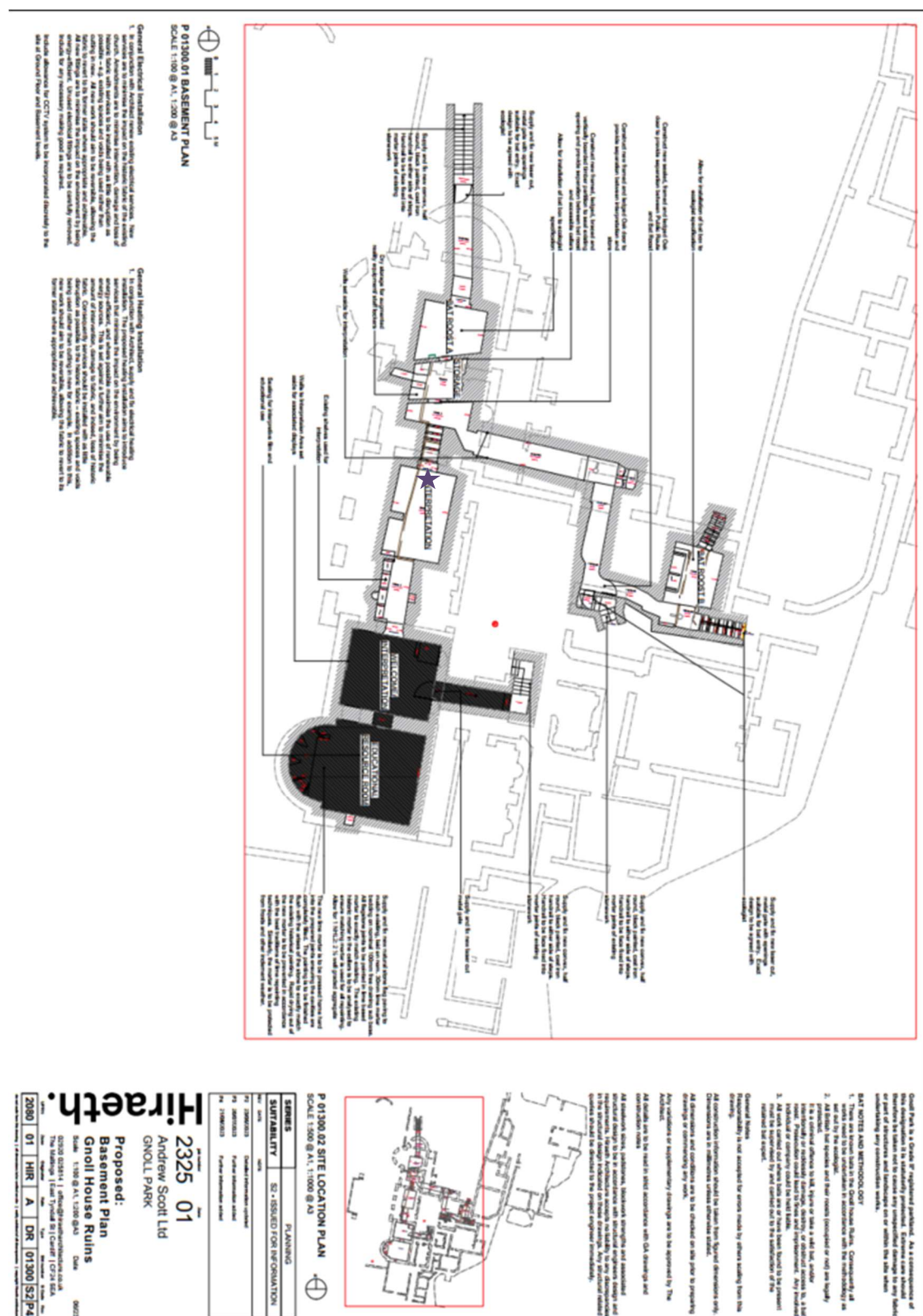


Figure 1 Indicative Cellar layout design showing proposed bat roost areas. Purple star shows location of dropping pile

Survey Methodology

As requested by NRW, a winter hibernation survey was undertaken of the Cellar complex in accordance with The Bat Conservation Trust, Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition).

A detailed inspection was undertaken of the structure in winter (between November and February) to look for and identify hibernating bats and other evidence of occupation. Any droppings were also recorded (see Figure 1 for further information).

Three surveys were carried out on the 5th December 2023, 12th January 2024 and the 29th February 2024 by Megan Price (Ecologist for NPTC).

Survey Constraints

Surveys were conducted during the coldest spells possible during the winter of 2023/2024, however the winter was abnormally warm with few prolonged cold spells. This is the reason for three visits rather than two as specified in the best practise guidelines, the aim was to try and survey the cellar during the coldest periods possible.

Results

Three surveys were undertaken, no bats were recorded in the cellars during any of the surveys. One pile of dropping was recorded during the three surveys, however this did not change in appearance during the surveys and it was under a location where Brown Long-eared bats had been observed during the summer months so is not a sign that the cellar is used for hibernation.

Conclusion

As no bats were recorded using the cellars for hibernation, the original proposals to create two bat roost areas within the cellars will still be appropriate and provide suitable maternity and hibernation roosting potential for the local bat population.