

# Historic Environment Scotland

## Àrainneachd Eachdraidheil Alba

### **BOTHWELL CASTLE, CELLARS BELOW GREAT HALL RANGE PROPOSED HANDRAILS TO STEPS AT NORTH, MID & SOUTH CELLAR ACCESS DOORWAYS ANNEX A SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

1. The Scheduled Ancient Monument of Bothwell Castle is one of the outstanding buildings of the medieval period in Scotland. This application relates to the C15 Great Hall Range, specifically the three cellars and their entrances on this range's west elevation to the Courtyard
2. The site is a staffed Historic Scotland site open to the public attracting around 10,000 visitors annually. The cellars house a range of uses; the north cellar houses a stone display open to the general public, the mid cellar provides a meeting and education space for school and other groups, and is also used for wedding ceremonies in inclement weather. The south cellar formerly provided MCU works squad mess facilities, is currently used for storage, and is being considered for public use in the medium term.
3. Each Cellar Doorway's threshold is higher than the adjacent external ground level and short flights of steps provide access from the courtyard to each of the doors. The steps' masonry build suggests these are all additions, probably C18 'Laird's Work' or later. Headroom passing through the doorways themselves is restricted, though volume does open up immediately beyond the arched head external facing masonry. Internally rough, rubble masonry built steps within the wall thickness provide access back down to Cellars' floor level. Modern metal doors are provided to each Cellar, fitted within a metal frame set behind the internal stone rebate of the doorways.
4. The combination of external steps, low doorway headroom, uneven internal steps surface and change from bright external conditions to darker interior have been assessed as posing a risk to Visitor safety when entering and exiting Cellars. Indeed in 2012 a schoolgirl suffered a serious broken ankle at the Mid Cellar doorway.
5. A plywood surface was installed over the North and Mid Cellar internal step after the 2012 incident. To further improve access to an acceptable standard, internal and external handrails are now proposed to each Cellar doorway in line with 2012 Health & Safety Action Plan recommendations. Provision would be consistent with established estate-wide *Managing Visitor Safety* policy to install handrails as a means of addressing identified risk, achievable here with no physical impact on significant historic fabric and limited visual impact. By way of precedent handrails have been installed recently to Bothwell's Donjon turnpike stair. Proposed Cellar handrails would adopt a similar design language. Complimentary artificial lighting improvement proposals for North and Mid Cellars are the subject of a separate SMC application

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