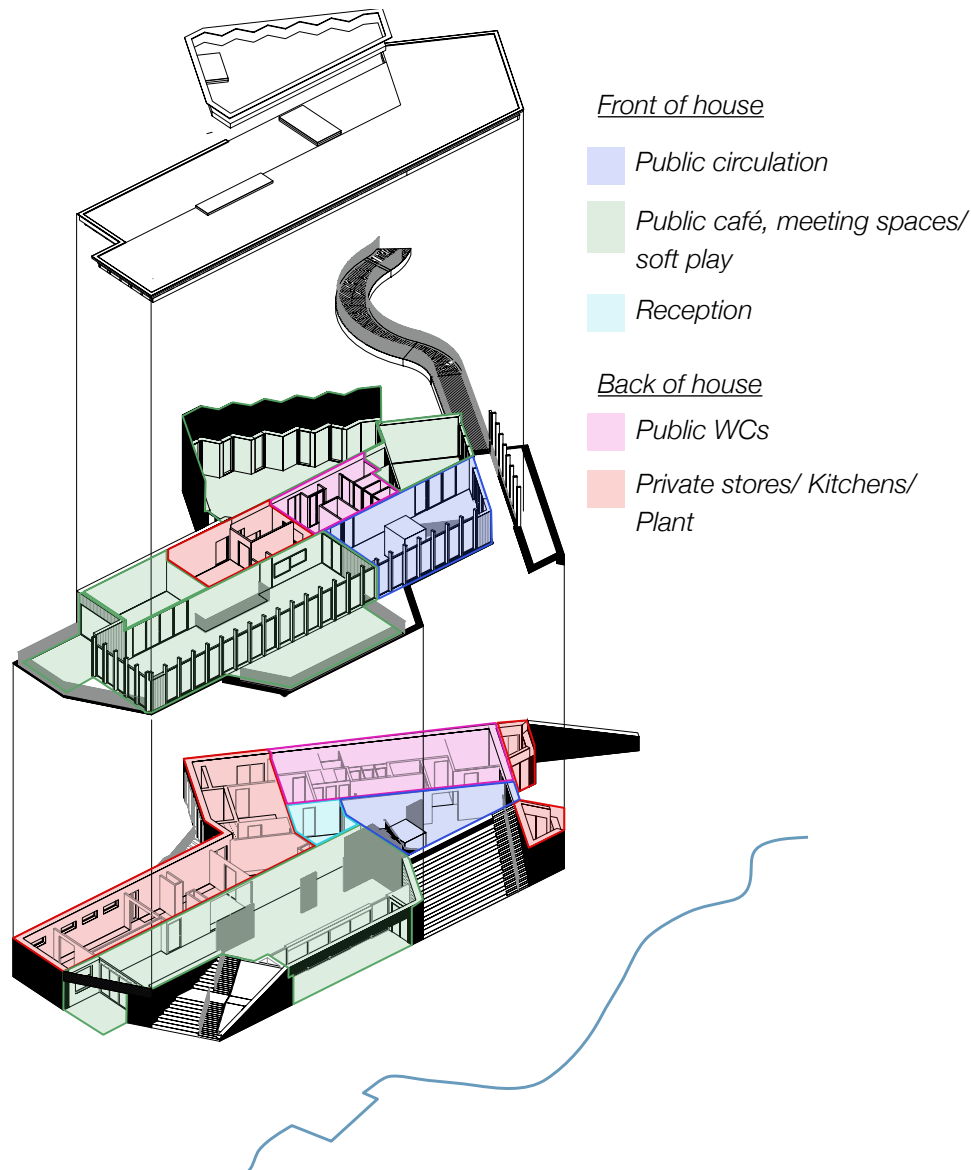




Layout

Strategically, the principal, southern elevation becomes a permeable façade, with increased levels of glazing and access. This space houses a ground floor café space suitable for muddy boots, and a principal entrance foyer with reception acting as an orientation and management point for the park. Key internal connections are made over the circulation space, in which a first floor entrance space will provide visual connection to the reception area below. A first floor café and terrace sit above the ground floor cafe providing a relaxed and comfortable environment linked to complimentary event spaces and external terrace areas providing wonderful views to the south and west.

WCs at ground floor level are located to the eastern edge of the building, utilising existing drainage routes. They will be accessible both internally and externally to increase the flexibility of the park and WC facilities in relation to the Visitor Centre opening hours. In addition, a higher number of accessible WCs will be provided, alongside a Changing Places WC. At first floor level there are additional toilets.

Both floors are arranged with a simple spine of accommodation to the north including service accommodation, kitchens, plant etc. Placing back of house functions in this location help to further define this elevation as the rear of the building, which will once more increase the legibility of the centre.

At first floor level a large volume set into the trees in the north east corner, houses an indoor play area. Entrance to this area can be achieved quite independently of other zones, with access available directly from the first floor entrance foyer. The indoor play will be staffed and controlled via a lobbied entrance area with a servery doubling up as a ticket-purchasing

Key public and private spaces are arranged to respond to physical context, including views, pedestrian routes and topography

desk for the soft play and a purchase point for drinks and snacks. Set within a double height space, the play equipment will provide a stimulating environment for indoor play. Conceived as a treehouse, the outlook will focus on the surrounding mature copse of trees and be further reinforced through the use of exposed natural materials. This will create an interesting volumetric space which will be occupied by bespoke play equipment, incorporating topography, woodland, reservoirs and industries of the parkland and its history. Seating within the indoor play area will allow parents/carers to watch their children at play.

A directly accessed meeting / party room overlooking the entrance terrace will provide an opportunity to offer party / event packages whilst also being capable of independent hire.

The location of the kitchens provides the flexibility for food to be served directly to café spaces, external terraces and party / meeting spaces adjacent to the indoor play area. Both cafes are proposed to be addressed by serveries, linked by a dumb waiter to ensure functional connectivity between areas of food preparation. Although complimentary, the paired cafes offer the flexibility and opportunity to diversify the food offer via different general environments and management options. At peak times, an external servery will provide an additional outlet adjacent to the play-park at ground floor level.

Party rooms can double up as meeting spaces for local groups or for educational purposes, whilst the autonomy of the first floor café provides great flexibility in terms of use and rentable opportunities. The circulation spaces at ground and first floor level double up as interpretation and gallery spaces. Generally the building has been design to enable a diverse flexible multi-function offering in order to enable and encourage a wide variety of commercial and community opportunity.

At ground floor level, large openings are cut in to the ground floor plinth creating cave like external covered spaces. These will be secured out of hours but will otherwise provide an extension to the internal spaces with further seating and tables. Adjacent to the principal entrance, integrated store areas can be directly accessed from outside providing secure and easily accessed points for Trampers to be stored and charged.

Access and movement

The Local Authority are committed to creating an inclusive and supportive environment. The proposed visitor centre provides universal access to all floors through the provision of a lift within the building. In addition, a level access raised walkway provides direct access from the car park to the first floor, whilst existing paths within the landscaping of the parkland provide an accessible route from the car park to the ground floor of the proposed building.

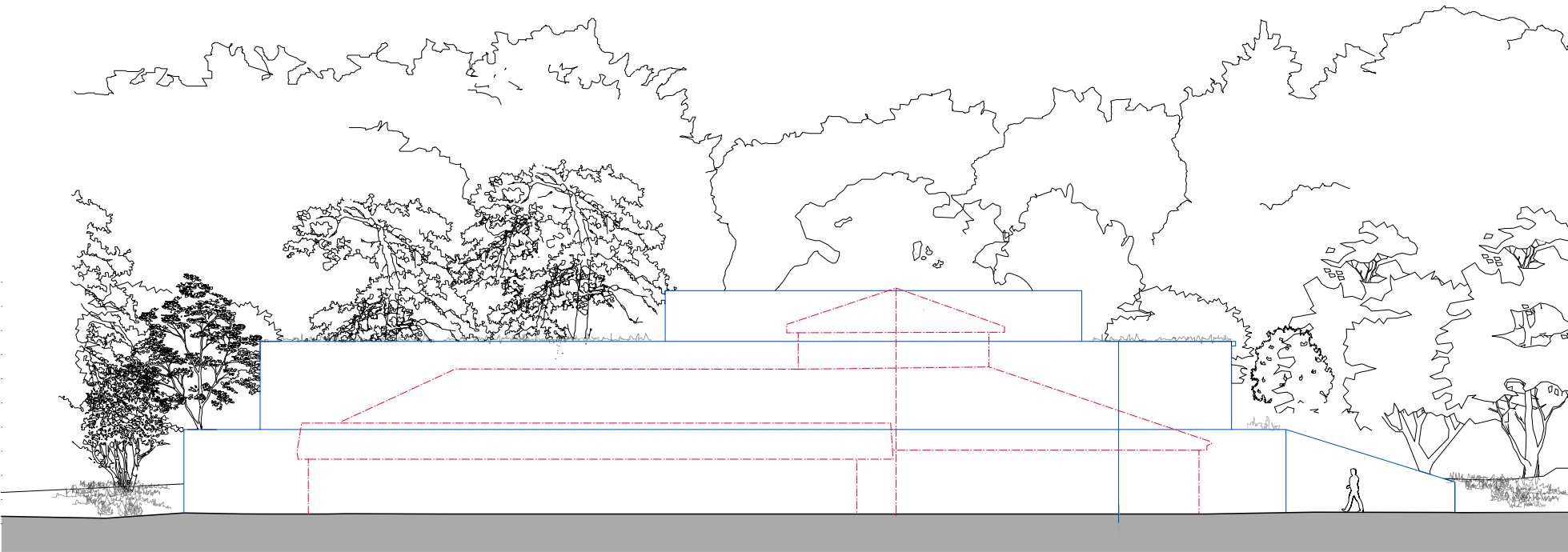
The building has been designed to be legible, with key access points evident through the form of the building.



New cafe space with generous views of Fishpond and purpose designed servery. The lattice roof structure introduces the idea of a lightweight canopy

Scale, Massing and Form

The scale of the building has been informed by the mass of the existing building and purposely restrained by the adjacent tree line, in order to create a building respectful of, and subservient to, its surroundings.



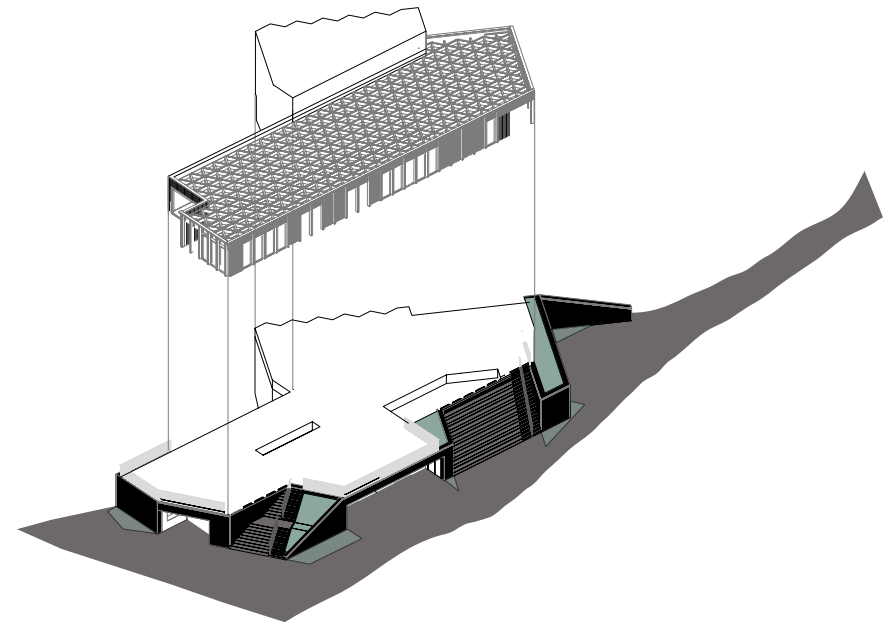
- Existing Tree Line to sloped bank to north of Visitor Centre
- Existing Visitor Centre Outline - South/East Elevation
- Proposed Visitor Centre Outline - South/East Elevation

Diagram showing heights of new building in relation to the tree line and massing of the current visitor centre

The concept which envisaged a lightweight pavilion sitting on a solid base (as described in the design development section) has been carried through into the final design. This breaks down the mass of the building by forming the ground floor level as something that is part of the ground scape. This has been further reinforced through the form of the building.

The form of the building has been developed to ensure ample external seating areas - both formally on furniture arranged on an external terrace; and informally on generous areas of amphitheatre steps, which connect the two levels externally, and flow down from the upper level terraces, reflecting the cascades within the wider parkland. These steps also form part of the built fabric and define the southern façade at ground floor level. This stepped ground floor plane is interspersed with areas of planting, which further emphasise the concept of a ground floor mass, on which a lighter pavilion sits.

The pavilion like structure will be accessed directly from the car park, with visitors being delivered to first floor level via an access walkway. The principal accommodation will sit under a single horizontal volume composed of a timber lattice roof structure. The final element of the composition is the 1.5 storey volume housing the indoor play capped with a parapeted roof top plant area. This rises above the glazed facade of the canopy and is set back with dark and textured materiality, further reinforcing the idea of the tree canopy.



The ground floor is envisaged as being 'of the ground', with a light weight first floor sitting lightly above, envisaged as being 'of the canopy'.



Impression of the proposed Visitor Centre across the fishpond showing the simple form set against the backdrop of the existing tree line

Appearance: Materials and Details

An Historic Link

An element of the park's history is the rich resource of the surrounding area, exploited by Sir Humphrey for his industrial endeavours. Local coal was being used for smelting at the time and Mackworth decided to focus his business activities on copper smelting. Potentially as early as 1695, he began to smelt copper at Melincryddan, and by 1702 mills and furnaces had been established at the estate. These included:

- A double and single battery mill which made brass battery and kettles;
- A mill for rolling iron and brass making 'black latern' (thin plates or sheets);
- A mill to manufacture brass wire;
- Several workhouses for swadering, turning, lantering & finishing (soldering kettles & shining them).

A large water supply was necessary for these processes and, as a result, several reservoirs were constructed at the estate, preceding the industrial revolution by 50 years. An opportunity therefore exists not only to present these stories through written and drawn interpretation, but to create a subtle, visual link through the materiality employed on the Visitor Centre and new interventions within the park.

The proposals therefore explore subtle reflections of this industrial heritage -

- Bronze effect window and door frames and deep reveals frame views of the lake, helping to draw connections between the water and the industries it supported.
- Blackened grillage/ perforated sheet metal and metal bar will be employed to provide privacy and shading, and form balustrades.

- Black linear brick provides a textured ground floor plinth.

A Contextual Link

The parkland includes vast swathes of wooded landscape, which form an immediate foreground to the wider context of the valley landscape. This is furthered through the improved links that the scheme will deliver to the neighbouring Woodland Trust land. Timber is a key resource within the park and as a building material sequesters carbon, helping to improve the carbon footprint of built interventions. It is therefore proposed to use natural timber at first floor level, to embed the centre within its canopy environment, expressed both internally and externally, forming structure and finishes.



The ground floor is envisaged as being 'of the ground', with walls finished in linear black brick, creating a stratified aesthetic. The first floor will be timber in contrast. Precedent Image: Joseph Bricks - Franklin.