

Design and Access Statement

Visitor Arrival Centre – Margam Country Park

Full Planning Application

TE, May 2026

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a Full Planning Application for the replacement of an existing visitor arrival building at Margam Country Park.

The proposal involves:

- Demolition of the existing gatehouse structure
- Construction of a new Visitor Arrival Centre
- Associated landscaping, access adjustments, and drainage works

Margam Country Park is a Grade I Registered Historic Park and Garden, and the proposal has been developed with careful regard to its historic, environmental, and landscape context.

2. Site Context

The application site is located within the main visitor arrival area of Margam Country Park, adjacent to key features including:

- Margam Castle
- The Orangery
- Estate access roads and visitor infrastructure

The existing structure is a small timber gatehouse building, which is:

- Of limited architectural merit
- In poor condition
- Functionally constrained

The site sits within a managed parkland landscape, characterised by:

- Open grassland
- Mature trees
- Estate infrastructure (paths, fencing, signage)

3. Design Principles

The key design objectives are:

- To replace a deteriorated building with a higher-quality, durable structure
- To create a functional and welcoming arrival point for visitors
- To ensure the design is subservient and appropriate within a historic landscape
- To minimise visual and physical impact on the park setting

- To integrate biodiversity enhancements and sustainable drainage

4. Amount and Layout

The proposal introduces a single-storey building with:

- A shop/information area (insulated)
- A visitor arrival space (uninsulated)

The layout has been designed to:

- Maintain the existing pattern of movement
- Retain established access routes
- Avoid encroachment into sensitive landscaped areas

The proposed footprint remains modest and appropriate to its location.

5. Scale

The proposed building is:

- Single-storey in height
- Comparable in scale to the existing structure
- Designed to sit comfortably within the landscape setting

Section drawings demonstrate that:

- The structure remains visually unobtrusive
- The height is controlled to reduce prominence in key views

6. Appearance

The architectural approach is simple, contemporary, and restrained, comprising:

- A lightweight metal-framed structure
- Timber boarding and muted finishes
- Aluminium glazed elements

The chosen colour palette (including chestnut tones) has been selected to:

- Reflect parkland management guidelines
- Blend with surrounding natural materials

The design avoids overly ornamental features, ensuring it:

- Does not compete with nearby historic buildings
- Reads as a subordinate park structure

7. Landscape and Visual Impact

The proposal has been designed to integrate with the existing landscape by:

- Retaining existing trees and features wherever possible
- Limiting new hardstanding

- Using permeable and gravel surfaces
- Maintaining existing spatial relationships

The visual impact is considered low, due to:

- Modest scale
- Recessive materials
- Location within an existing developed arrival area

8. Heritage Considerations

The site lies within a Grade I Registered Park and Garden, and the design has been informed by this designation.

The proposal:

- Replaces a non-designated, low-quality structure
- Does not affect listed buildings directly
- Preserves key views and spatial characteristics of the park
- Maintains the designed landscape setting

The development is therefore considered to:

- Preserve the significance of the historic park
- Deliver a minor enhancement through improved design quality

9. Access and Movement

Vehicular Access

- Existing access arrangements are retained
- Minor improvements to kerbs and circulation are proposed

Pedestrian Access

- Clear pedestrian routes are maintained
- Level thresholds and surfaces are provided

Inclusive Access

The building has been designed to ensure:

- Step-free access
- Level entrance points
- Functional internal layout

10. Sustainability and Drainage

Sustainable Drainage (SuDS)

Surface water will be managed via:

- A subsurface soakaway system
- Infiltration in accordance with BRE 365 and SAB standards

Environmental Performance

- Insulated shop area designed to meet Building Regulations
- Minimal energy demand due to scale and use

11. Biodiversity

The proposal incorporates biodiversity enhancement measures, including:

- Bat access to a dedicated roof void
- Integrated bird nesting boxes
- Provision of an insect habitat

These measures ensure:

- Compliance with biodiversity duties
- A net ecological benefit

12. Conclusion

The proposed Visitor Arrival Centre represents a sensitive and appropriate intervention within Margam Country Park.

The scheme:

- Replaces a poor-quality existing structure
- Enhances visitor facilities
- Respects the historic park setting
- Incorporates sustainable and ecological design principles

The development is therefore considered to be:

- Appropriate in scale and design
- Policy compliant
- Acceptable in heritage and landscape terms