

Heritage Impact Assessment

Visitor Arrival Centre – Margam Country Park

Neath Port Talbot CBC – Full Planning Application

TE, May 2026

1. Introduction

This Heritage Impact Assessment supports a Full Planning Application for the replacement of an existing visitor arrival building within Margam Country Park.

The proposal comprises:

- Demolition of the existing gatehouse structure
- Construction of a single-storey Visitor Arrival Centre
- Associated access, drainage, and landscape works

The site lies within Margam Country Park (Grade I Registered Park and Garden).

2. Heritage Assets and Significance

Designated Asset

- Margam Registered Park and Garden (Grade I)

The park is of national significance, deriving from:

- Its planned historic landscape
- Formal features and designed views
- Relationship between buildings (e.g. Castle, Orangery) and the wider parkland

The application site lies within a managed visitor arrival area, which has evolved to accommodate modern access and infrastructure.

Non-Designated Asset

- The existing gatehouse is a modern timber structure of limited architectural or historic value
- It makes no meaningful contribution to the significance of the park

3. Proposed Development

The proposal introduces:

- A modest, single-storey replacement building
- Internal layout comprising:
 - Shop/information space
 - Visitor arrival area

Works remain within the existing developed arrival zone, maintaining established access and circulation patterns.

4. Assessment of Impact

4.1 Demolition

The removal of the existing structure:

- Results in the loss of a low-quality, non-designated building
- Does not harm the significance of the Registered Park

Impact: Neutral to minor beneficial

4.2 Proposed Building

Scale and Form

- Single-storey, modest footprint
- Comparable in scale to the existing structure

Impact: Negligible

Layout and Position

- Retains established siting within the arrival area
- Does not encroach into sensitive parkland

Impact: Neutral

Materials and Appearance

- Timber boarding and muted finishes
- Aluminium elements in subdued tones

The design is intentionally recessive and functional, ensuring it:

- Does not compete with historic features
- Integrates with the park setting

Impact: Minor

Landscape and Setting

- Existing spatial relationships retained
- Limited new hardstanding
- Works contained within an already active visitor zone

Impact: Negligible

4.3 Setting of Listed Buildings

The proposal:

- Is physically and visually separate from key listed structures
- Does not affect important views or relationships

Impact: None

4.4 Archaeology

- Site contains potential made ground of historic origin
- Limited excavation proposed
- Provision for archaeological observation included

Impact: Low and manageable

4.5 Biodiversity

The scheme delivers enhancement through:

- Bat roost provision
- Integrated bird boxes
- Insect habitat

Impact: Beneficial

5. Compliance with Local Planning Policy

The proposal has been assessed against the **Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP)**:

Policy BE1 – Design

- Development should be of high quality and respond to local context

The proposal:

- Is modest and appropriately scaled
- Uses materials that reflect the park setting
- Maintains the established character of the arrival area

Policy BE6 – The Historic Environment

- Development affecting heritage assets must **preserve or enhance their significance**

The proposal:

- Retains the character of the Registered Park
- Avoids harm to key features and views
- Replaces a non-contributory structure with a higher-quality building

Policy SP14 – The Countryside and Coast

- Protects landscape character and historic landscapes

The proposal:

- Is contained within an existing developed area
- Does not intrude into open parkland
- Maintains the wider landscape setting

6. Conclusion

The proposed Visitor Arrival Centre has been designed with full regard to its location within a Grade I Registered Park and Garden.

The assessment demonstrates that:

- The existing building is of no heritage significance
- Its removal results in no harm
- The replacement structure is:
 - Modest in scale
 - Appropriately sited
 - Designed to be visually recessive