

Trentham Gardens

Monkey Forest

Five very different aesthetically pleasing structures provide all the facilities for visitors to the Monkey Forest, Trentham Gardens, Staffordshire.

The Client

Monkey Forest, which is home to 140 free-roaming macaques, covers 60 of Trentham Gardens' 750 acres. This recently regenerated visitor destination near Stoke-on-Trent also includes Italianate Gardens, lakeside and woodland walks, adventure playgrounds and a retail village.

Following the successful construction of Trentham Gardens' main visitor centre and retail units, Plus Design and Build (PDB) was commissioned to provide five further buildings which together provide all the visitor facilities at Monkey Forest.



The Brief

All the buildings are based on original concepts prepared by architects, Peter Hing & Jones, but PDB's design team was asked to complete the technical detailing to ensure that they would sit perfectly in their woodland setting and meet stringent planning constraints imposed by Staffordshire County Council.

The Specification

PDB buildings within Monkey Forest include –

Main Building including the Banana Cafe and Jungle Shop

The visitor centre is a contemporary T-shaped building combining environmentally friendly architecture and modern design. It comprises two clearly defined connected structures, one single storey and a second, double storey.

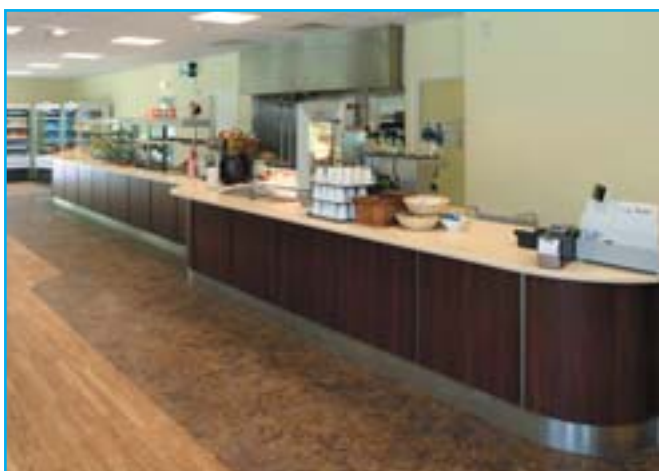
Both are of timber frame construction, externally clad in tongue and grooved Siberian larch, derived from sustainable forests. Slow growing, close-grained larch is very durable and requires no preservatives or coatings. It ages naturally over time, turning silvery grey, an appropriate colour for this woodland setting. Both buildings have a low pitch roof clad in



The Main Building, Banana Cafe and Jungle Shop



The interior of the Banana Cafe



Serving Area - Banana Cafe



Jungle Shop

metal sheeting – contrasting with the cladding and Douglas fir laminated window and door frames.

The Banana Cafe is contained within the single story building. Here diners enjoy high levels of natural light and excellent views thanks to large windows and glazed doors running along three elevations. The doors slide open allowing access to a terraced area. Internally the walls are clad in plaster board and the ceiling in timber.

The Jungle Shop is located on the ground floor of the adjoining two storey building. A suspended ceiling has been fitted to the shop to conceal the many services and the internal walls lined with plasterboard to accept fittings and displays. Timber columns carry the load of the staff flats on the first floor. As the shop and cafe are always very popular, bustling places, the floor of the apartment is double skinned with glass fibre quilt insulation trapped between it and the ceiling of the shop. This ensures that any noise entering from below is kept to an absolute minimum.

Education Centre

Although constructed from the same materials this functional building is strikingly different. It contains a 60-seat theatre with a range of audio-visual equipment and is used for a range of activities, talks etc and to show documentaries to visitors, youth and school groups.



Education Centre

As Monkey Forest is an ideal location for schools to be innovative with topics within the National Curriculum a fully equipped classroom is included to assist teachers.

Entrance Kiosks

Again of timber frame construction, externally clad in larch, two kiosks have been provided at the main entrance. They are connected by a glass canopy and despite being sited between two Grade II listed stone lodges, they sit very well in their environment.



Entrance Kiosks

Information Building

This open building which contains interpretative displays and notices, is sited at the entrance to the monkey enclosure and provides visitors with lifestyle information on the macaque monkey.

Picnic Shelter

This mono-sloped, open sided, timber framed enclosure has an opaque corrugated plastic roof and is complete with picnic tables. Those wishing to eat outdoors are therefore protected from the sun and rain.



Information Building



Picnic Shelter

Client Benefits

Monkey Forest is managed by Guillaume de Turckheim who brought the macaques from similar forests in France and Germany. These have been run by his family for over 30 years and during this time over 600 of these endangered monkeys have been returned to Morocco. Eventually, Guillaume hopes to be able to add to this number with macaques from Trentham Gardens.

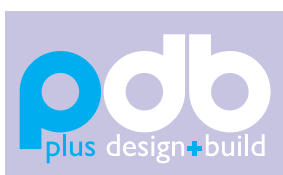
“It is all about creating the correct ambience so our visitors feel they have had an enjoyable day and have learned a little more about these endangered animals. The PDB buildings certainly help; they are aesthetically very pleasing and fit well in their parkland setting. Visitor reaction has been excellent” he said.

Client: St. Modwen Properties PLC
 Location: Monkey Forest, Trentham Gardens, Staffordshire



Education Centre

Main Building



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