



The American Garden Deli Case Study

Client: The American Museum and Gardens
Location: Claverton Manor, Bath
Industry: Hospitality and Leisure
Project Time Frame: 5 Week Fitout inc. 1 Week Training

Summary

The American Museum asked us to design and build a new café that was not only smart and efficient, but reflected the character of the Museum.

Background

The American Museum and Gardens, near Bath in England, is a Grade I listed building within 125 acres of beautiful grounds and gardens in the Limpley Stoke valley. The Museum houses a permanent collection of artefacts from historic American life, plus a gallery for temporary exhibitions, stables, a coach house and a café.



Customer Needs

Because the Museum is in the country rather than in a town centre, visitors are likely to spend a day or half-day there, rather than a flying visit. The café has a 'captive market': there's no alternative near the site, so the quality of the café is part of the visitor experience. Many visitors come to walk in the gardens, so the café is a refuge before or after a walk; many are repeat visitors, so variety is important.

The Museum has a broad demographic appeal: young families, retirees, and coach trippers (who need quick service to avoid queues). There is also a semi-permanent population of students, volunteers, staff, and Friends of the Museum, who hold regular events. Each visitor group has different needs, ranging from accessibility and comfort, to cost and available time.

Our plan was to support the year-on-year increase in visitor numbers. The new menu and interior design will speed up the ordering process: the style of the café, quality of the food, and comfortable seating should encourage visitors to return again and again.

Style

The old café was transformed into the new American Garden Deli, offering American-inspired food, drinks and atmosphere. The ingredients are mostly locally sourced, but prepared and presented in a way that reflects the theme of the museum.

We wanted to reflect the relationship between the beautiful gardens, the American identity and the English countryside setting.

Rather than simply re-creating an old-style diner, we went for something more sophisticated. We collaborated with Carinthia West (pictured right), renowned photographer of rock icons and Hollywood stars. A series of Carinthia's photographs are featured on the walls of the Deli. The collection combines portraiture with landscape photography, and often features British stars relaxing in an American setting. You can look into the eyes of Helen Mirren in the American countryside, then compare and contrast with the English valley outside the windows.





Design

The new design is an expansion of the previous facility, designed to maximise the narrow space available. The servery has been extended and a new entrance to the patio has been added to facilitate access.

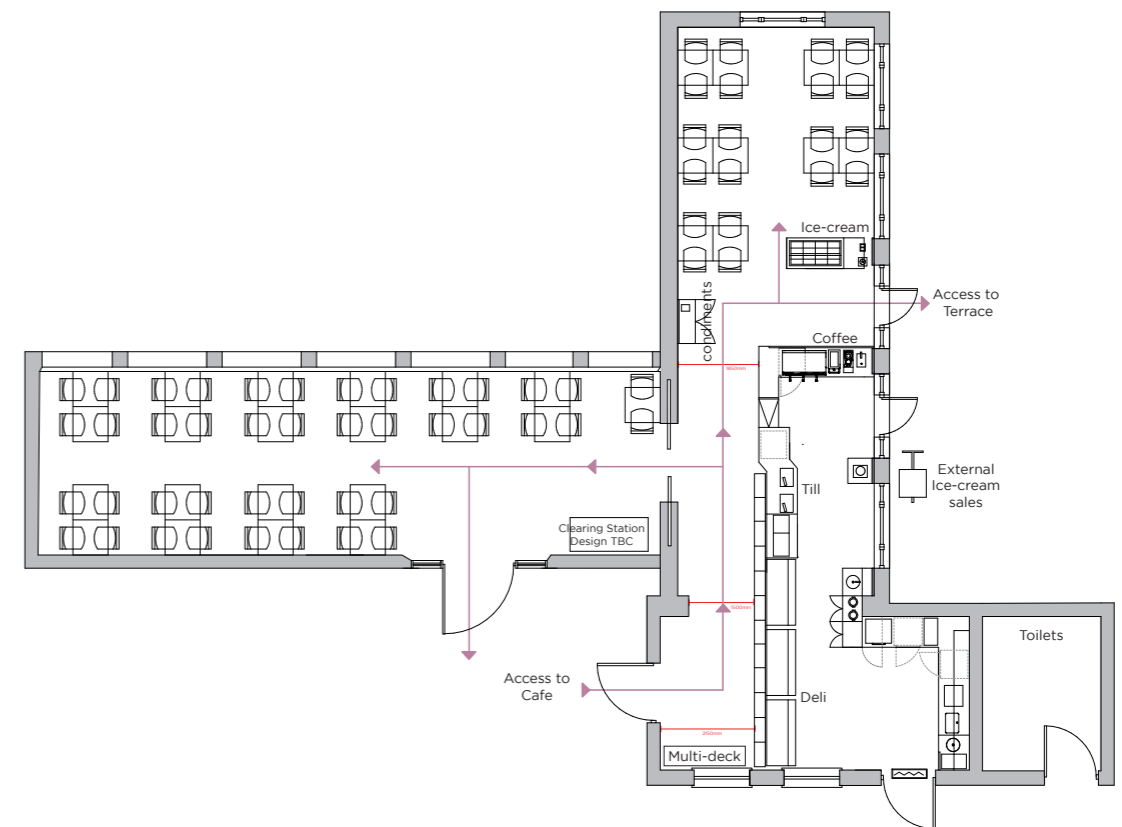
The counter incorporates both cold and hot Deli units, cake displays, EPOS, a Barista coffee station and a standalone ice-cream counter, offering both soft scoop and milk shakes.

The counter construction includes a solid oak slatted fascia. The wood-effect vinyl finish of the surrounding joinery helps create cohesion within the space.

This is also true for the flooring: oak effect herringbone plank maintains design continuity, whilst creating the effect of a wider space.

The furniture: oak table tops and red faux leather upholstery help achieve the retro American feel, whilst also being eminently practical.

Backbar counter design provides a refrigerated hold and preparation space for the catering staff, whilst minimising down-time spent walking outside to the main kitchen.



Plan layout at American Garden Deli

Opportunities

The existing café hosted a book swap area which was popular with the Museum customers. We created a new design for this area, incorporating a clearing station within it: the book corner now disguises the less aesthetic clearing area.

The counter also incorporates additional retail and merchandising space for catering and wider gift take-home items. This is in addition to American-sourced snacks and confectionery.

The Process

Our team did very much more than Design and Build: we created a brand. We came up with the new American Garden Deli logo, designed the embroidered uniforms, and assisted with the menu development, staff training and mobilisation. We wanted to ensure that we preserved the brand identity and ethos consistently throughout the entirety of the project.

To achieve this, we worked closely and collaboratively with the client team to ensure that everyone's ideas were heard, and that the client team were equally enthusiastic about the changes.

Having the client team on board with us was also important in ensuring that we understood the needs of the site, from the visitor demographics, to the customers' go-to orders.

Our team saw the project through from the very start to the very end, even helping out with the first Deli service!



