Design Statement
Registration Number: 2018-14

Joshua Tree National Park Visitor Center is located on an unblemished two-acre site that provides spectacular views of the surrounding desert environment. Upon arrival, visitors have ample parking on both sides of the existing roadway adjacent to the park site. On the east side of the site you have access to the Cap Rock Nature Trail and on the west, access to the Visitor Center.

Visitors to the Center begin their journey from the parking lot along a designated path, which itself mimics a winding desert trail. Designed and located to take advantage of the vast desert landscape, guiding visitors and reinforcing views of the Center which mimics the many canyons within the Park. The path is lined with the flora of the Park designed as an educational experience as one traverses the site.

As visitors approach the two buildings, they enter a narrow canyon, a gorge, a gathering point, that leads to the main entrance of the Center. Looking up, visitors will see a boulder wedged between the two curvilinear buildings, designating this important portal. Underneath the boulder the space fully opens up giving visitors access to all the resources, information, and facilities that the Center provides.

The building forms were designed to replicate the look and feel of a rock outcropping within the Park. The roof forms are irregular in design. One roof form ascends while the other descends, simulating the convergence of two rock outcroppings to form a man-made canyon in the desert. Rammed earth walls anchor the buildings to the desert floor and the CorTen steel roof mimics the intense color of the surrounding desert mountains linking the building aesthetic to dormant mining equipment now left to rust and decay in the Park.

Exterior spaces are designed to take advantage of the proximity to the desert landscape. The main exhibit building on the north includes an area with amphitheater seating for lectures and performances. The exterior space to the west, between the two buildings, includes permanent concrete benches and a fire ring that can be utilized for formal educational gatherings and night sky viewing. The exterior space to the south is an informal space for relaxation and casual dining. Shading for these exterior areas, a critical element in the desert environment, is resolved naturally through the use of Palos Verdes trees, commonly found throughout the desert.

Legend
1. Information/Reception Desk Area
2. Lobby
3. Educational Exhibit Space
4. Public Unisex Restroom
5. Storage
6. Custodial Space
7. Shower Room
8. Mechanical Space
9. Electrical Space
10. Refreshment Space
11. Rangers Office
12. Unisex Restroom with Shower
14. Amphitheater
15. Five Pit
16. Permeable Pavement
17. Educational Flora
18. Video Wall
19. Pedestal
20. Flora and Fauna
21. Concrete Bench

Floor Plan

Visitor Center for Joshua Tree National Park
Visitor Center for Joshua Tree National Park