

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (Kew Gardens)

Right on Kew at world-famous Gardens

£50m

/ Project value

July 2017

/ The project commenced

June 2019

/ The project was completed

Illustrating our sensitive approach to working within a live heritage environment, we are the Programme Contracting Partner for the major capital development programme at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The UNESCO World Heritage site, which attracts over two million visitors per year, is famous for its gardens, water features, botanical glasshouses and Grade I and II listed buildings of architectural and historic significance. Across the 121ha estate, we have embarked upon a complex programme of works with a value of £5m and £10m per annum.

The brief

Royal Botanic Gardens required a single partner to deliver maximum works over a five-year period within the available budget while maintaining business continuity. Essentially, the ambitious programme of refurbishment, reconfiguration and new build construction is to support the delivery of the estate's vision to "create a vibrant community of world-class science research, horticulture, conservation and education".



"The Royal Botanic Gardens is a much-loved destination for visitors and tourists and we are committed to delivering the estate's vision in order to guarantee its long-term future and success,"

Rob Joyce
GRAHAM Development Director

"I have worked on many capital projects during my 40 years at Kew, but this has been the easiest, most enjoyable and most satisfying of them all. It has been a pleasure to work with the Construction Manager and all the GRAHAM team, who have respected me as the client and ensured that what has been built has been to the highest standard and will serve the needs of Kew and the Arboretum,"

Tony Kirkham
Head of Arboretum, Gardens and Horticultural Services at RBG Kew

The challenges

With approximately 200 mixed use buildings, 48 of which are listed, and boasting a living collection of more than 30,000 varieties of plants, and seven million preserved plant specimens located in the world's largest herbarium, the protection of Kew Gardens' irreplaceable assets is the focal point of all of our operations.

The solution

As the single contractor, we undertake the refurbishment of historic buildings, fabric and structural repairs, heritage specialisms, repair and replacement of M&E systems and the replacement of nursery and external works. We are also responsible for projects at Wakehurst Place in West Sussex – a 500-acre site that is home to the world's largest wild seed conservation scheme.

Examples of our work at Kew include:

Arboretum Nursery (£4.8m – 48 weeks): This project involved the construction of a new 1,241m² state-of-the-art facility. It is now one of the most technically advanced glasshouses in the UK.

Evolution House (£820k – 22 weeks): A refurbishment scheme comprising of the removal of the existing internal slab, the formation of an internal plant room and the installation of a new heating system via a perimeter of cast iron radiators.

Pavilion Restaurant (£4.7m – 58 weeks): Housing 100-year-old vines and a unique horse chestnut tree, the first of its kind planted in the UK, we constructed the new steel framed Pavilion Restaurant which boasts a 400-cover capacity. It opened in May 2019. Its striking appearance is capped by a floating roof over a glass façade on all elevations. The catering kitchen is also visually encased within an aged brass clad feature wall.

Outputs & Benefits

- Programmed Delivery:** The diverse programme schedule includes works at the Herbarium, Palm and Water Lily Houses, Princess of Wales Conservatory, Pavilion, the Family Landscape area, Mansion Wakehurst and the Sir Joseph Banks Building
- Heritage Environment:** A UNESCO World Heritage site, our works are completed with sensitivity and empathy in recognition of the estate's irreplaceable assets and Grade I and II listed buildings
- Critical Works:** With an estimated backlog of circa £100m, we also undertake statutory compliance, such as fire risk assessments, and complete urgent works, including repairs to glasshouse, residences and roads/paths
- Risk:** During temporary works we maintain and replicate the existing critical environments in order to protect Kew's assets



For more information on how we're delivering lasting impact:

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