

THE SACKLER CROSSING AT KEW GARDENS

Case Study 2006

Kew Gardens is a major international visitor attraction and its 132 hectares of landscaped gardens attract over one million visitors per year. Kew was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in July 2003 and represents over 250 years of historical landscape.

The site houses over 40 listed buildings and other structures including the Palm House, Temperate House, Orangery and Pagoda as well as two ancient monuments, Queen Charlotte's Cottage and Kew Palace. RBG Kew is a world famous scientific organisation, internationally respected for its outstanding living collection of plants and world-class herbarium as well as its scientific expertise in plant diversity, conservation and sustainable development in the UK and around the world.

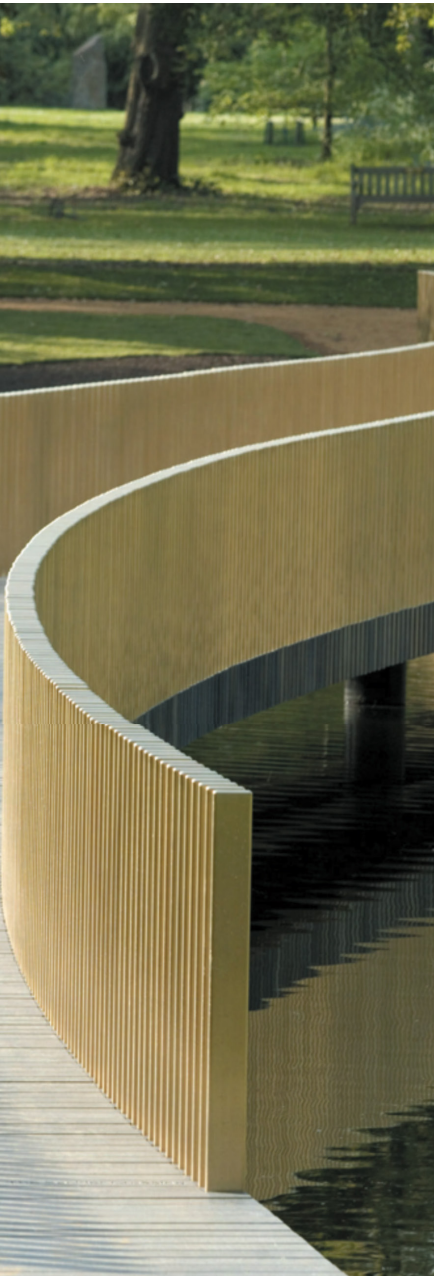
Designing with granite

As a well respected and reliable company, Stonepave UK Ltd were nominated as the supplier of black granite for the new Sackler Crossing at Kew Gardens. Working closely with John Pawson Architects, Stonepave were able to offer various options for the type of granite available on this prestigious scheme. Ultimately a Chinese granite was chosen for its natural beauty and strength. An exemplary material palette of granite and bronze reinforces the elemental character of the design. Rhythmic bands of dark granite laid like railway sleepers form the deck, while cast bronze vertical cantilevers set flush between the granite treads act as simple balusters.



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Having considered the best interests of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, and all parties involved with the new crossing over the lake; it was decided that Stonepave would take a representative from John Pawson Architects to China to see the manufacture of the granite units.

A carefully structured visit over three days enabled a full list of questions prepared by the client to be answered. The questions involved subjects such as, ethics, sustainability, manufacturing processes and ultimate quality. The manufacturing process of taking raw block, sawing it down to size and finishing it to the specification set by the design team was recorded.

Having satisfied all the necessary requirements from the client, the next step was construction. A fairly tight schedule had been set for the project, with many parties involved with the build. From draining the lake, through piling, steel work, granite installation, lighting and bronze baluster installation the lake was refilled from the Thames, and the bridge was opened on May 16th 2006 exactly to schedule.

The Sackler Crossing is now open to the public, enabling previously unseen views of the lake to be enjoyed by everyone.

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