

The Hive at Kew

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Stage One is delighted to have played such a major role in bringing the multi-award-winning Hive to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Originally conceived as the UK Pavilion at the 2015 World Expo in Milan, this complex structure was designed by artist Wolfgang Buttress and highlights the important role bees play as pollinators in feeding the planet.

The design of the Hive means that it is readily demountable allowing it to have a life beyond the Milan Expo. The structure was carefully dismantled after the Expo closed, before being shipped back to the UK and re-installed in the beautiful new setting at Kew. All 169,300 individual components that comprise the 32 layers of the Hive were manufactured in Stage One's workshops in Yorkshire over an intense five month production period. Manufactured in specific batches, each item was etched with its own reference number relating to its specific position within the complex warren of hexagonal cells that form the Hive. This aided the efficiency of the original installation as well as future re-installations.

Stage One's involvement with this project dates back to early 2014 when it was awarded the role of Main Contractor and also advised on the selection of the winning design.

Stage One Sales & Marketing Director Tim Leigh commented: "This project played perfectly to our strengths. It combined our engineering and construction capabilities with our experience of creating large-scale and unique creative installations. We undertook both the original build in Milan and the re-installation at Kew confident we had everything in place to work efficiently on site despite ambitious schedules."

Inspired by scientific research into the health of bees, the 17 metre high Hive provides an immersive, multi-sensory experience where orchestral sounds and over a thousand LED lights respond directly to activity within a real beehive. The glass floor allows visitors to view the structure from within, providing a unique perspective from which to experience the swarm simulation provided by the combination of software and LEDs that were developed in our workshops.

The Hive has won twenty awards, including the coveted Bureau of International Expositions gold medal for Best Architecture and Landscape Design at the Milan Expo.

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