



Bespoke scaffolding for a Grade II listed glasshouse

WATERLILY HOUSE

Specialist scaffolding for the restoration of Waterlily House at Kew Gardens

Waterlily House at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew is a Grade II listed glasshouse and one of the garden's most recognisable historic structures. The building is currently closed as part of a major refurbishment programme aimed at transforming it into one of the world's first net zero heritage glasshouses.

The extensive renovation focuses on structural repairs, improved glazing and sustainable heating systems, ensuring the long term preservation and environmental performance of this iconic Victorian structure. During the works, the Waterlily House collection has been relocated to the nearby Princess of Wales Conservatory, allowing visitors continued access to the plants.

Alltask was appointed by DBR Limited, the principal contractor for the project, to design, supply and install a complex scaffolding solution. DBR Limited is a specialist contractor with experience in the refurbishment and conservation of historic and complex buildings, and is

leading the delivery of renovation works at Waterlily House. Alltask's scaffolding is designed to provide safe and effective access for restoration activities while carefully protecting the historic fabric of the structure and its sensitive surroundings.

The Challenge

Waterlily House presented a number of logistical and technical challenges:

- A heritage glasshouse with a curved roof profile and fragile glazed surfaces
- Restricted working space within a live, high profile public garden environment
- The need for full access to the roof, elevations and structural elements over an extended programme
- Strict requirements to avoid damage to historic fabric and surrounding landscape

Alltask delivered a bespoke, fully independent scaffolding structure designed to follow the distinctive shape and geometry of Waterlily House.



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LOCATION • RICHMOND, SURREY



01634 298000
enquiries@alltask.co.uk
www.alltask.co.uk



Key elements included:

- Full perimeter access scaffolding, providing safe working platforms around all elevations
- Shaped lattice roof beams and bridged sections to mirror the curved glasshouse roof and allow unrestricted access to high level areas
- Temporary roof access systems, enabling maintenance and replacement works without placing load onto the existing historic structure
- Multi level working platforms, allowing multiple trades to operate safely and efficiently at the same time
- Non invasive fixing methods, ensuring no damage to the listed structure or glazed elements

Heritage and Environmental Considerations

Given the significance of Waterlily House and the wider project objectives, Alltask worked closely with DBR Limited and the project team to protect historic materials and detailing. Impacts on surrounding trees, lawns and visitor routes were minimised through careful sequencing of the scaffold erection.

Outcome

The scaffolding solution has successfully provided safe and reliable access to support the ongoing renovation of Waterlily House, enabling essential conservation and sustainability upgrades to progress as planned.

Alltask's involvement forms a key part of this landmark project, contributing to the preservation of one of Kew's most important buildings and supporting its transformation into a net zero heritage glasshouse set to reopen to the public in 2027.



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