

IN THE LIGHT OF DAY

RUTH WILLMOTT ASSOCIATES

Maximising space and light was key to transforming this small Chiswick garden

The client for this property in Chiswick desired the rear garden to become an extended space of the contemporary kitchen. The small garden was dark and uninviting, and the clients said they didn't enjoy looking at or spending time in it. They wanted to maximise the space and be able to sit outside comfortably without feeling claustrophobic.

Design

The aim was to make the garden inviting, which was achieved through the choice of stone and the design itself; in order to give the client a full view of the space, thus opening it up, keeping the garden as open as possible was key.



PROJECT DETAILS

Project value
£50k

Build time
Design: Dec 2015
Completion of build: July 2016

Size of project
48m²

WINNER
Design Excellence
Award, Overall
Scheme over
£50k category



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- 1 Buxus cubes and sculptural cube stone seats
- 2 Infinity bowl water feature
- 3 Borrowed planting view on boundary

Despite appearing dark and unwelcoming, it was only shady on one side of this east-facing garden, and this was the place for the Buxus cubes and Acers. The shadiest area was the corner nearest to the house, making it easier to deal with.

The garden needed to blend with the contemporary aesthetic of the kitchen, so we went for a 'modernist block' feel that echoed the kitchen and took it outside. We put in the evergreen structural components, such as the buxus cubes, to make it pictographic during the winter, and then in summer when there would be pockets of colour. Practical seating on stone cubes doubled as sculptural blocks within the planting scheme.

Build

Regular site visits were made during the project



to support the build progress with the contractor, David Wallbridge Outdoor Living. Access was difficult as the garden could only be reached through the house; this was pre-empted in the CDM documents prepared for the contractor. This meant they could adjust the price accordingly, taking into account the protection of flooring and the labour implications of having to move more slowly and carefully through the house.

The most challenging aspect of the installation proved to be moving the three concrete cube seats, around 50cm each side →

and each weighing about 280kg, with matching steps through the house without putting anyone at risk or causing damage to the property. This took the best part of two days.

The raised beds and rear wall were covered in a white render by a subcontractor as the rear wall was not quite straight, making it difficult to get a straight finish without using a specialist contractor.

The external porcelain tiles were a textured version of those used inside the kitchen, albeit more weather resistant and non-slip. It took almost six weeks from ordering to delivery, and the tiles were so large they had to be cut freehand using a tile blade and mini grinder – a time-consuming process which increased the possibility for human error. It was key to order extra from the same batch to avoid colour inconsistencies and to have spares. The tiles were installed by floating a solid concrete floor and using a rapid-setting external tile adhesive to set the tiles directly to it.

- 1 Space for planned new lounge furniture
- 2 Before view from kitchen – dark and overgrown
- 3 Before – space was small and dark



BEFORE

ABOUT RUTH WILLMOTT ASSOCIATES

Ruth Willmott followed her passion for garden design and qualified from the English Gardening School in 2009. In 2010 she set up her garden design practice, Ruth Willmott Associates, undertaking residential and commercial projects in the UK and abroad. At RHS Chelsea Ruth was awarded a Silver medal in 2012, Gold in 2013 and most recently a Silver-Gilt and Best Fresh Garden (voted People's Choice) in 2015.
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REFERENCES

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www.ruthwillmott.com
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www.dwoutdoorliving.co.uk
- Porcelain tiles
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www.domustiles.co.uk
- Steps and seating cubes
Schellevis
www.schellevis.nl
- Wood panelling
The Garden Trellis Company
www.gardentrellis.co.uk
- Coloured render on walls and beds
K-Rend
www.k-rend.co.uk
- Lighting
Lightmaster
www.lightmaster-direct.co.uk