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GARDEN MAKEOVERS

Quick fixes and designer
secrets to transform
your garden



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Photography by Steve Gorton

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Terrace

One of the main problems for the owners of this garden was that it was overlooked from all sides. All around windows peered into the garden, and with a raised terrace coming from the rear of the newly refurbished house, the problem was acute – on the terrace it felt like you were on a stage where the whole world could see you. The garden was also a building site from all the work the owners, who run the architect firm Trevor Lahiff Architects, were doing in the house – it needed to be transformed and made private.



Before



All around the garden James Lee, the designer they brought in, has built up the boundaries and unified them using sleek horizontal battens. On the terrace he has used very tall bamboos which instantly screen off the overlooking houses to one side. The other method of screening James has used is standard trees. These are bought from the nursery with a six foot high straight stem and the branches only start from this point up. So you don't use up precious space on the ground but you get screening just where you need it – above the lines of the walls. They also look wonderfully architectural with their strong upright forms.

As well as this screening round the garden, James has created a seating area with added shelter from the outside world. Standard trees are used around this inner area as well, and a huge water feature makes up one of the walls of its enclosure.

The tall trees are a great secret for an instant makeover. They are expensive but you don't need many of them and they give immediate height and maturity to the garden as well as screening above the line of fences and hedges.



Garden Plan

The influence of the far wall of the garden has been decreased by putting in a low retaining wall with greenery above.

At the end of the sitting area is a large water feature, so large it effectively forms a complete wall for this area, increasing the feeling that you are in another room here.

The lawn is surrounded by Chinese limestone edging to give it a really sleek finished look.

A line of a single type of architectural plants (euphorbia) has been put in to form the second long boundary of this sitting area.

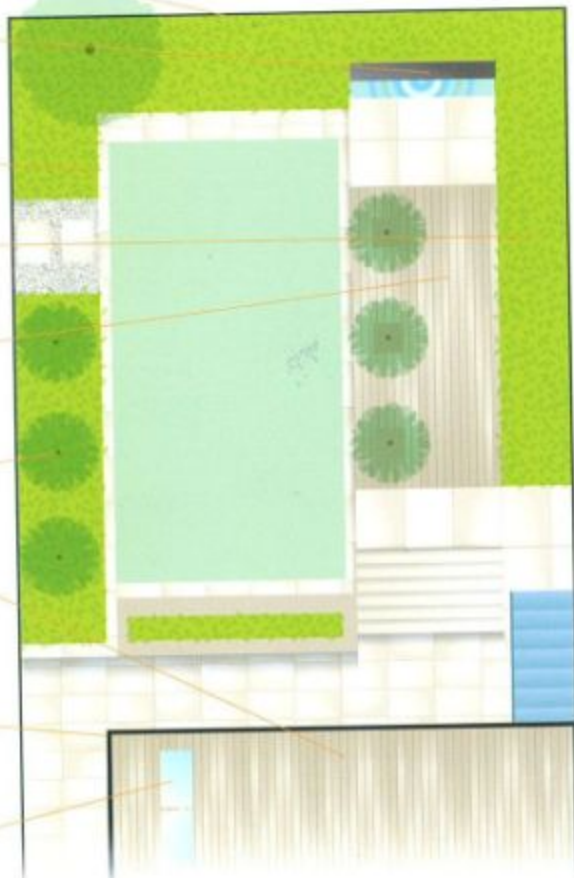
A shady sitting area has been created on the right of the garden with an implied division between it and the rest of the garden by using a line of tall trees.

Three trees with clear stems along the wall mirror the ones used to enclose the sitting area on the other side of the lawn.

The raised terrace was already in place when garden designer James Lee started to look at this garden. The building had been completely refurbished and the garden had been used as the store yard and workroom for the house.

Toughened glass has been used as a safety barrier for the raised terrace to allow as much light in to the property as possible and to make the most of the views out to the garden.

Set into the wooden deck are frosted toughened glass panels to allow light down into the room below. They also act to give structure to the large terrace, delineating the area where the table and chairs go.



► The trees have been planted within the deck – a great idea to bring life to an area of decking.



▲ The trees in the garden were put in large. It is possible to buy trees like this, you ask for ones with a clear stem to 2 metres and you get this lovely, immediate, repeated upright pattern.



▲ The six trees planted are katsuras, with lovely heart-shaped leaves, great autumn colour, and when the leaves fall to the ground in autumn, they smell of toffee apples.



▲ Below the terrace is a raised bed which mimics the one at the rear of the garden. This one helps to break up the line of the retaining wall seen from the lower level of the house.

◀ The water wall at the end of the lower sitting area is designed by James Lee. Made of limestone strip cladding, the water falls over the jagged surface to a reservoir below.

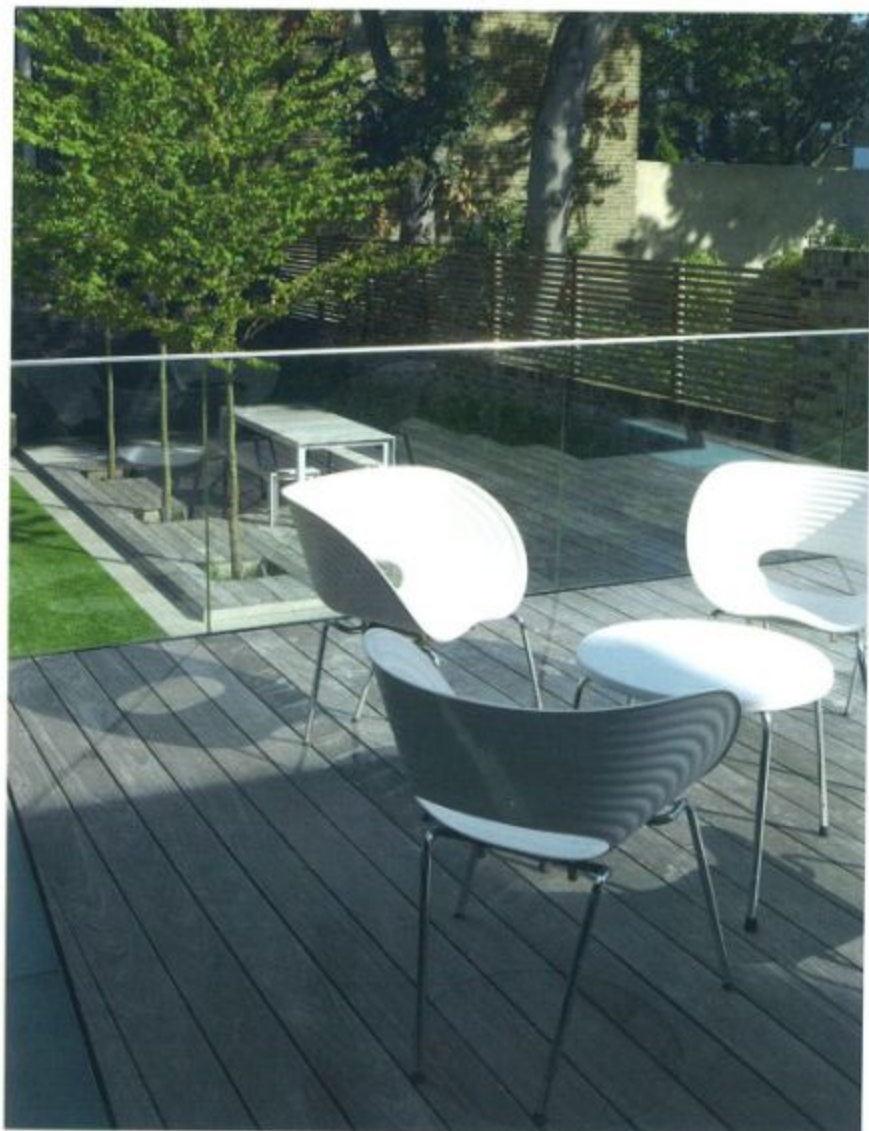
▼ At the rear of the garden, horizontal cedar slats and a raised bed help to almost obscure the wall.





▲ If you want simple and you want style, use a single line of plants. Choose something like this euphorbia which will look good all through the year.

▼ Two distinct sitting areas, both secluded from the world, have been formed in the garden – one on the terrace and one in the garden below.





▲ The deck sitting area is raised above the surrounding Chinese limestone to reinforce the feeling that it is a discrete area.

▼ Neatly spaced planters containing huge bamboos fill up one end of the terrace and give instant evergreen screening.

► Lawn is a great material for an immediate makeover garden. If you use turf rather than seed, you get an absolutely instant effect that transforms the garden.

