

Client:

Grosvenor

Project:

Chester Square Garden Review

Date:

24.02.2009



Contents

	Page No
1.0 Introduction	2
2.0 Significance	3
3.0 List of Achievements	3
4.0 Principles of Management	4

Appendices

A Recommended Species List

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The Landscape Agency has been commissioned by Grosvenor and the Gardens Committee to undertake a review of the gardens at Chester Square, London SW1W.

The aim of the review is to provide a working document which will allow the gardens to continue as an important amenity asset for the residents of Chester Square and at the same time retain the elements which are historically important to the development of the London Squares.

Garden based recommendations for the resolution of the issues outlined above, changes in planting or layout or for the future management of the garden are outlined on our drawing no. 354-D-001 Rev B Chester Square – Garden Review.

The garden review was undertaken by John Sales and Sarah Cotter Craig on the 21st January 2009 accompanied by Stephen Smith, Landscape Manager of the London Estate.

The gardens are located in the centre of Chester Square and consist of two gardens; West Garden and East Garden. The West Garden is the main amenity garden of lawns surrounded by a perimeter shrub bed. A more formal Flower Garden in the style of the Arts and Craft movement is located in the centre of the West Garden. The East Garden is used mainly by residents to walk their dogs.

The gardens are maintained in an excellent condition by the garden staff and it is recommended that this standard of maintenance is continued as it adds considerably to the value of the gardens as an amenity asset to the residents.

2.0 SIGNIFICANCE

2.1 The key value of the Square has always been as an amenity to residents, both as a green space seen from the houses and for the precious opportunity it provides to experience the qualities offered by well-designed and well-tended gardens – refreshment, repose, relaxation, enjoyment, seclusion – in central London.

The gardens are highly significant as part of the development of London squares and for the history and continuity they express. In a very English way they have continued to respond to the changing needs of the residents while retaining their historic structure and iconic planting, especially trees. In doing so they have adapted successfully to radical change in the environment of the city over more than 150 years.

As part of the distinctive network of London squares Chester Square plays an indispensable role in the character of the cityscape of green spaces and trees and for the wildlife they contain.

On a practical level the gardens to the west of Eccleston Street provide play space for young children and the gardens to the east provides a place for exercising dogs. They are no doubt important for the informal social contact they offer and for the opportunity they provide for residents to be involved in a continuing creative process.

3.0 LIST OF ACHIEVEMENTS

3.1 Since our last visit to Chester Square 5 years ago

- The garden has matured well.
- The gardens are being conserved in a very positive way.
- The maintenance standards have improved which reflects in the appearance of the gardens.
- The shrub pruning regime is particularly well executed in these gardens.

4.0 PRINCIPLES AND AIMS OF MANAGEMENT

4.1 While retaining their historic structure and fabric as well as conserving and renewing their iconic plants, the gardens should continue to respond to the needs of residents, changing in ways that are compatible with their evolved character. Change, development and enrichment should continue to be gradual and should avoid stamping the gardens with any indelible features that clash with the traditional layout and planting.

The main aims of management should be to minimise the cost of upkeep while presenting gardens that provide some privacy and which are always fresh, colourful and interesting, especially in spring and early summer and to a lesser degree in late summer and autumn, with some winter interest.

The gardens should provide appropriately attractive views from the terraces and should continue to contribute to the local cityscape; also to give enjoyment to the public when passing and occasionally when the gardens are open.

Inessential elements should be removed whilst those that are valued and appreciated should be retained, renewed and improved. So as to make the best use of labour and resources the strategy should be to concentrate labour-intensive features where they will be best appreciated. Nevertheless there is scope for less labour-intensive improvement and enrichment elsewhere e.g. bulbs and ground cover plants.

As far as possible sustainability should be improved by maximising permanent planting, by timely tree care and renewal, by reducing inputs and outputs as well as maintaining and enhancing wildlife habitat.

APPENDIX A

A RECOMMENDED SPECIES LIST

ICONIC PLANTS

The plants listed below form the structural back-bone of the garden.

Platanus x hispanica	London Plane
Phillyrea sp.	
Buxus sempervirens	Box
Taxus baccata	Yew (hedges)
Fatsia japonica	
Hedera helix	
Hedera colchica	Arborescent Ivies
Digitalis purpurea 'Alba'	Foxglove
Hydrangea sp.	
Helleborus sp.	

GENERAL SPECIES LIST

The plant species included in the list below have been recommended to improve the amenity value of planting in the garden but should not be considered an exhaustive list.

Trees and Shrubs

Magnolia wilsonii	
Magnolia x loebneri	
Camellia sp.	
Lonicera sp.	Honeysuckle
Skimmia japonica	
Rosa sp.	Shrub and climbing roses
Viburnum sp.	
Ceratostigma willmottianum	
Cornus kousa	
Daphne sp.	
Kolkwitzia sp.	
Mahonia sp.	
Callicarpa bodinieri	
Berberis sp.	
Catalpa bignonioides	Indian Bean Tree
Gaultheria mucronata	

Hypericum sp.

Pieris sp.

Osmanthus sp.

Eucryphia sp.

Aralia elata

Clerodendron trichotomum

Abelia sp.

Herbaceous plants

Athyrium sp.

Ferns

Dahlia sp.

Bergenia sp.

Aster x frikartii

Anemone 'September Charm'

Anemone 'Honorine Jobert'

Crocsmia 'Emily Mackenzie'

Eryngium x zabelii

Fuchsia magellanica 'Versicolor'

Geranium 'Rozanne'

Salvia 'Blue Enigma'

Strobilanthes sp.

Yucca flaccida

Bulbs

Lilium sp.

Fragrant lilies

Fritillaria imperialis

Fritillaria persica

Agapanthus sp.

Camassia sp

Gladiolus colvillei

Gladiolus byzantinum

Tulipa sp.

Tulips

Tritelia sp.

Eremurus sp.

Foxtail Lily

SIGNIFICANCE

The key value of the Square has always been as an amenity to residents, both as a green space seen from the houses and for the precious opportunity it provides to experience the qualities offered by well-designed and well-tended gardens – refreshment, repose, relaxation, enjoyment, seclusion – in central London.

The gardens are highly significant as part of the development of London squares and for the history and continuity they express. In a very English way they have continued to respond to the changing needs of the residents while retaining their historic structure and iconic planting, especially trees. In doing so they have adapted successfully to radical change in the environment of the city over more than 150 years.

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While retaining their historic structure and fabric and conserving and renewing their iconic plants, the gardens should continue to respond to the needs of residents, changing in ways that are compatible with their evolved character. Change, development and enrichment should continue to be gradual and should avoid stamping the gardens with any indelible features that clash with the traditional layout and planting.

The main aims of management should be to minimise the cost of upkeep while presenting gardens that provide some privacy and which are always fresh, colourful and interesting, especially in spring and early summer and to a lesser degree in late summer and autumn, with some winter interest.

The gardens should provide appropriately attractive views from the terraces and should continue to contribute to the local cityscape; also to give enjoyment to the public when passing and occasionally when the gardens are open.

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As far as possible sustainability should be improved by maximising permanent planting, by timely tree care and renewal, by reducing inputs and outputs and by maintaining and enhancing wildlife habitat.

ICONIC PLANTS

Plants that have a historic association with Chester Square and should be used to conserve the structure of the garden are;

- London Plane
- Phillyrea sp.
- Box
- Yew (hedges)
- Fatsia
- Arborescent Ivies
- Foxgloves
- Hydrangea sp.
- Hellebores

CHESTER SQUARE - LIST OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Since our last visit to Chester Square 5 years ago;

- The garden has matured well.
- The gardens are being conserved in a very positive way.
- The maintenance standards have improved which reflects in the appearance of the gardens.
- The shrub pruning regime is particularly well executed in these gardens.

This section of the West Garden is very shaded and contemplative with the dramatic backdrop of St Michael's Church.

To compliment the setting it is recommended that the planting is developed in a more gothic style, with dense evergreen planting. Variegated and deciduous shrubs are to be removed and if possible relocated in other areas of the garden. The dense planting will reinforce the sense of enclosure and also screen the compost bin from view.



West Garden January 2009: Looking towards Flower Garden from north east end of West Garden.



East Garden January 2009: Looking towards north east end of square.



West Garden January 2009: Flower Garden.



West Garden January 2009: Looking towards St Michael's Church.



PERIMETER SHRUB BORDER – WEST AND EAST GARDENS

Retain the current mix of 30-40% evergreen to deciduous plants. Maintain current excellent pruning regime of all shrubs in garden. A mix of shrubs, bulbs and ground cover plants should be used in border to provide year round interest, colour and scent. Increase bulb planting in the perimeter borders of the gardens. Remove container planting from amenity areas of the garden to the Flower Garden. To replace colour from containers by increasing the herbaceous planting around the perimeter of the park.

Prunus padus 'Watereri'

Liquidambar

Lime

London Plane

Bay tree

Remove grasses from perimeter shrub beds.

Remove poorly established London Plane.

EAST GARDEN
This garden is mainly used by dog walkers. It is recommended that the planting in this garden is mainly evergreen using plants with interesting textures and fragrance.

Create an evergreen screen to Eccleston Street. It is proposed that existing ground cover and grasses are removed and the new proposed shrub planting should include winter flowering shrubs such as Camellia.

Create an evergreen screen to Eccleston Street. It is proposed that the Mortimer Sackler roses are relocated to the border to the south of the Flower Garden, that existing ground cover is removed and the Cherry laurel is reduced in size. Proposed new planting to include winter flowering shrubs such as Camellia.

This section of West Garden has a sunnier, more open aspect and it is recommended that the planting in this area should concentrate on colour and fragrance.

Relocate bench within shrub beds and replant with soft textured and fragrant shrubs behind and to the side of the benches.

Hornbeam – recommend crown lifting to allow more light into this end of the garden.

The proposed shrub bed at the end of the garden will give a point of destination and feeling of enclosure to the users of the garden. Scented and flowering shrubs are to be used within the planting, together with flowering herbaceous plants in the foreground.

Remove central bed and reseed with grass.

Relocate bench within shrub beds and replant with soft textured and fragrant shrubs behind and to the side of the benches.

Creation of path to mirror path on other side of central garden.

FLOWER GARDEN

Pots of Lilies and Agapanthus to be clustered in the Flower Garden.

CENTRAL BORDERS

Remove the grasses from the south border. To retain an effect of height to the planting in both borders, it is proposed that Mortimer Sackler roses are grown on obelisks in the south border and honeysuckle is grown on obelisks on the north border.

Recommended obelisk: Agriframes large obelisk.



Roses grown on pillars.

London Plane

Weeping Plane

London Plane

Sycamore

Create a conservation pond in front of the proposed shrub bed in the south western garden to attract newts, frogs and invertebrates to the gardens.

The addition of water will add to the sense of drama creating the effect of a grotto with the 'stumpery' beyond thereby creating a valuable wildlife habitat in the centre of London. The water feature has been designed as a shallow pond with shrubs to the rear to act as barrier for children. A boggy/marsh edge will be densely planted at the front to deter children walking into the pond. On either side it is recommended that the grass is managed as meadow grass to create a further habitat for invertebrates.

The proposed shrub bed at the end of the garden will give a point of destination and feeling of enclosure to the users of the garden. Scented and evergreen shrubs are to be used within the planting.

Create 'Stumpery'.

Allianthus

Remove grasses from perimeter shrub beds.

KEY

- Grass
- Herbaceous bed
- Shrub borders
- Broadleaf tree
- Coxwell gravel paths
- Paved area
- Green recycling area
- Desire path
- Pond
- Bog planting
- Meadow grass planting
- Box hedging
- Yew hedging
- Entrance gates
- Benches

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS CHESTER SQUARE

ENTRANCES TO GARDENS

It is recommended that more robust planting is used at all entrances into the gardens. Shrubs and herbaceous material to include; Pieris sp., Arborescent Ivies, Gautheria, Strobilanthus. During establishment of these plants, particularly in the East Garden, it may be necessary to fence the area from dogs.

TREES

General principles regarding trees:-
• The crowns of the larger trees should be kept raised to let light through and under.
• There should be a presumption against the planting of small - medium trees on the perimeter to retain views in.

COLOUR

Concentrate labour intensive flowering plants and containers within the central Flower Garden for maximum impact.

PATHS

Paths to be top-dressed with Coxwell Gravel.

GREEN RECYCLING

Improve screening to green recycling areas.

WILDLIFE

Introduce water, 'Stumpery' and bird nesting boxes to encourage wildlife.



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Avenue M
Stoneleigh Park
Kenilworth
Warwickshire CV8 2LZ
United Kingdom
Tel: 08450 345 390
Email: enquiries@landscapeagency.co.uk
Web: www.landscapeagency.co.uk

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REVISIONS

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A	22.01.09	Amendments made following client meeting.
B	26.02.09	Amendments made to text size.