



Plan & photos: Catherine Clancy

GREENWICH, LONDON

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BY VOL. 2, PART 2

Garden details

Size	50m L-shaped garden
Aspect	North facing
Soil	London clay, sand and imported soil
Project started	February 2008
Project completed	June 2008
Cost	Approx £15,000
Design fee	10 per cent
Contractors	SS Landscapes



Brief

Like many others in London, this garden was small, overlooked, exposed to noisy traffic, with poor soil and a difficult aspect. The New Zealander clients wanted a private, family-friendly garden that was bright, open and contemporary. They wanted a piece of their New Zealand homeland in their back garden, along with a vegetable patch. The challenge was to create this garden using only New Zealand natives – except for the vegetable patch of course.

Design

One of the first tasks was to repair the crumbling soil-retaining wall along the back boundary of the garden, so that the lattice-style trellis screening could be secured to it. This created the much needed privacy in the garden. This courtyard garden is built on three levels to break up the space, create visual interest and provide for a cosy, private, sunken corner paved area. Designing the garden at a 45-degree angle to the house helps the garden seem bigger. Sleeper raised beds provide the planting areas, and double up as seats. To avoid cluttering the garden an additional small bench was built against the back wall. A soft grey-blue limestone paves the lower sunken area and the area around the

house. Two southern pine deck areas link the paved areas, and provide the wide, child-friendly steps down to the sunken corner. Subtle spike spot lights enhance the garden for evening use.

Planting is green and abundant to increase the sense of enclosure and privacy. The plants are all New Zealand natives, with the exception of the vegetable area. Planting is dramatic and simple to keep to the contemporary, uncluttered theme. The palette is limited to mostly greens and silver, with a few purple and yellow shrubs for contrast. The north-facing aspect of the garden is used to an advantage for the shade-loving ferns. A large *Phormium* is planted in the windy corner. Two kiwi fruit vines, strawberries, vegetables and herbs are planted in the raised bed nearest the seating area, which is the sunniest bit of the garden. A special soil mix of composted bark and topsoil has been created for this garden, to ensure that the ferns will thrive. A leaky-hose irrigation system has been installed to supply the thirsty ferns. The New Zealand native ferns are from Rickards Ferns in Wales, one of the few fern suppliers in the UK who has the range, size and quality of NZ natives needed for this project.