

The Archive

OF GARDEN DESIGN

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Beth Chatto, c.1986

‘I have watched this ancient church, grey and deserted, transformed through the love of living plants into a bright, welcoming environment, maintaining the original, uplifting architecture, introducing warmth and light. The Garden Museum has become an oasis of peace and quiet where visitors are immediately tucked away from the noise and bustle of the city racing around outside. It is the ideal place to relax and meet a few friends who welcome the chance to meet and talk plants.

One of the most important responsibilities the Garden Museum has undertaken is to collect and store safely records of innovative ideas, now, and in the future. This will be made possible through modern technology. What a thrill it would have been to hear the voices of our gardening idols of the past.’

Beth Chatto
2012

Introduction

Christopher Woodward

This Journal describes our project to set up the country’s first archive of garden design, and give you a glimpse of what it will contain. In May 2014 the Museum was awarded planning and listed building consent for a project to restore and refurbish the interior of the church, and to build an extension in the form of a cloister around the knot garden. The Lambeth Councillors’ vote was unanimous. The Diocese of Southwark – who own the building – have also given their support to the designs.

This is the conclusion of the Development Phase of a Round One award funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, who have given a Round One Pass for a grant of just over £3 million. A dozen experts on education and access, trees and bones, have fleshed out the scheme. And this autumn the HLF will decide whether or not we can progress to the ‘Delivery’ phase, beginning the process of going to tender in readiness for construction to begin next summer. The outstanding concern is whether we will raise the matching funding of £3,069,000. It is a daunting sum of money for a small independent charity. But at the time of writing we have just passed the halfway mark, with £1,661,000 in pledges or donations. It’s a cliché but it feels true: every donation we receive is a step towards an end which is suddenly (blink) coming into focus.

The extension will comprise two new pavilions for education, and a third for a bigger and brighter café; Lady Salisbury’s knot garden will be preserved, and a new garden created adjacent, with a design by Dan Pearson. Inside the church there will be five new galleries forming a circuit on the first-floor, telling the story of garden history since Tradescant’s birth in Elizabethan England; over 1,200 objects in the collection will be on display for the first time. The ground-floor will be opened up for events, and so that the stories of the church and its monuments can breathe again. In the chancel will be Tradescants’ Ark – or, to be precise, artefacts on loan from The Ashmolean Museum which will be displayed in a way which recaptures the experience of stepping into the Tradescants’ house and collection over 300 years ago.

In the south-east aisle of the church will be the archive study room. It was originally the Leigh Chapel, built in 1552, and after World War One was re-dedicated as a memorial chapel. For a long time this has been a staff office and blocked from public access, and this scheme is an opportunity to open the room up again. In this room the archivist – a new role – will look after biographers, garden historians, and students of horticulture, rustling through letters and uncrinkling old photographs at handsome new desks. Above, a tower will rise three-stories into the vault, containing storage for over 100,000 items, from a freezer glowing with photographic transparencies to chests of planting plans. This archive will become a collective memory of British gardens, and also record the process of their making, the personalities of their creators, and the writing and photography which made their reputation.

The gardener's natural – and healthy – tendency is to look forward. We open the curtains, and wonder what can be done in the weather ahead, whether it is pricking – out lettuce leaves in the greenhouse, or addressing the dank brambles between the shed and the railway embankment. 'Can you preserve a garden?' is one of the subjects debated time and time again. The consensus is that you can preserve the architecture of a garden – the spatial design, the hedges, sculpture, and vistas – but it is only in rare examples such as Great Dixter in Sussex and at Kiftsgate in Gloucestershire that a flower garden is renewed and re-interpreted by succeeding generations of planstmen and women.

But the great majority of planted gardens will vanish, or change, quickly eluding our image of what they should be, or might have been. A museum of gardens is, at one level, a paradox: no one wishes the tangling, hopeful thing that is a garden to be frozen forever in the unchanging light of a vitrine.

Visiting the great John Brookes, my impulse as a historian is to delve into the 1950s sketches and plans which record his introduction of Modernism to the British garden. Quickly, he becomes impatient to show the sketch for his newest commission: a fountain square in Azerbaijan. And that's how we'd like to be at eighty, I think. It is an attitude celebrated in Sir Roy Strong's new book, *The Laskett Transformed* (2014), in which he describes how at his wife's death in 2003 he chose not

to preserve the garden as the paired icon they'd made, but to begin again: the book exults in destruction, and in newness.

But, I think, this acceptance of change and loss has led – unconsciously, perhaps – to a carelessness about records. (Strong is, as ever, an exception, recording in words and photographs the 'lost' Lasketts, and depositing these at The Bodleian Library, Oxford, as an element of an archive which records a wider personal achievement as a curator and historian).

This carelessness – or oversight, or indifference – is particular to gardens. If you are a great architect your archive will be in the RIBA Drawings Collection, today contained within the efficient gleam of the V&A. Tate Britain carries below its waterline the National Art Archive, with artefacts varying from Turner's paint box to private view invitations. And libraries and Universities bundle up the papers of our great writers. Closer to home, the RHS looks after the great horticulturalists, and the Landscape Institute work of selected members.

But the makers and designers of modern gardens? Famously, Gertrude Jekyll's plans are at the University of Berkeley in California, owing to the vision of Beatrix Farrand, an American landscape architect who stumbled across a book sale in 1948; more recently, the plans of Russell Page and Rosemary Verey left Britain, as there was no institution on these shores to accept the responsibility. (And hats off to the New York Botanic Garden, which took Verey's plans, beside



Janet Jack, right, hands over designs to Nicola Waddington (archivist) and Christopher Woodward (director) at the Garden Museum, 4 March 2014

which are filed the client interviews conducted by Barbara Robinson, whose *Rosemary Verey: The Life and Lessons of a Legendary Gardener* – already in its second printing – shows how a clever and careful biographer can catch a person's life before memories fade).

There is no institution with a strategy to collect a coherent archive of the making of the modern garden. We were inspired to address this challenge by the reaction to our Beth Chatto exhibition in 2008, in which thousands of visitors peered avidly at the biro notebooks, typescripts, and handful of black and white photographs which gave an insight into the making of Great Elmstead. At the end of the exhibition fifty years of materials returned to a cupboard in her office, as her future biographer Catherine Horwood Barwise describes.

The archive we propose to set up is not, I emphasise, a repository of modern research. What historians (like me) produce is 'secondary material'. This is incorporated into Conservation Plans; in the English Heritage Register of Gardens; and, most accessibly, in *Parks & Gardens UK*, the on-line resource. We have focused on the 'primary material' produced by designers and garden makers which records how and why ephemeral masterpieces were conceived and made. And it is this material which is often at most immediate physical risk, whether it is Joy Larkcom's annotated *Beijing Vegetable Production Book* or Janet Jack's slides of playgrounds in 1960s Denmark which inspired the spaces in which, right now, children scamper over the Alexandra Estate in Camden, her masterpiece of public landscape.

The process of making an archive is also of value to future historians as it requires the key individuals in the story of the modern garden to look back on their life. Before going to see Penelope Hobhouse, I asked writers such as Noel Kingsbury and Stephen Lacey what they considered her significance to be, to inform what we selected (you can't take everything). At Hadspen itself Penny talked for two exhilarating and emotive days, as the light stretched across the sheep-cropped terrace into the leather-lined drawing room and filtered over the stack of files which embodied her career as a designer and writer.

Penelope is also the subject of one of a series of films we have commissioned, together with John Brookes and Beth Chatto. These films are short portraits, not comprehensive

CVs, which aim to give a glimpse of the spirit of a person or a place. 'What was Gertrude Jekyll really like?' we wonder; if only we had a few minutes of film of her clumping around the garden at Munstead Wood. A garden is also, of course, the perfect subject for the moving image, capturing the spatial discovery but also its changing life through the weather of a day. Our lasting memories of places can be of the most transient things: in foreign cities the ice cream or the coolness of marble on sore feet as much as we remember the bronze monuments or the name carved pompously in marble. Film can capture the light of a garden, its volume of wind, and the crunch of footsteps.

If only we could capture smell: wouldn't it be good to know what Sissinghurst smelled like as late-Vita?

Peoples' lives are the poetry of an archive, and the emotive momentum of this project is the vitality of the individuals who have given their support: not just the designers but the writers who interpreted their work – so that we find Hugh Johnson's aperçus on the garden of Frederick Gibberd, his neighbour in the archive – and photographers such as Andrew Lawson and Jerry Harpur who rose at dawn, year after year, to distill places into images.

But an archive is also a very complex challenge. Transparencies are incredibly delicate, as Andrew Lawson wrote in the *Financial Times* on 2nd May 2014, and must be housed in a purpose-made freezer. Digitisation of existing archives (see 'Questions') opens up huge possibilities for access to material, but a digital scan is a substitute for an original, not a replacement. The coming challenge is the preservation of what is called 'born digital' material. Tom Stuart-Smith has let us use his practice as a case study of digital records: he has produced designs as computer-generated files since 1998. Digital records – including emails – can vanish as quickly as quicksilver, the moment that a computer is upgraded or an email account changed. And are increasingly hard to access: The National Art Archive at Tate Britain resembles a Museum of audio-visual technology in places: forty years of changing models of cassette players, VCRs, and computers are required to unlock the lips of the past.

The answer to all this is expertise, and money. We have been lucky with expertise – funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund,

and the Foyle Foundation – and in the time given by partners from the Landscape Institute to the Royal Horticultural Society in shaping the ‘niche’ in which we collect. But it is very expensive, from freezers and scanners and software, to plan chests and acid-free packaging, and the cost of making films for an audience who deserve the standards of BBC4. The construction and set-up of the archive adds up to half a million pounds of the bigger capital project. There is also the on-going cost of an expert archivist, who will welcome students and visitors but first and foremost make the material meaningful through cataloguing.

Right now, people are munching through salad dishes flavoured by Joy Larkcom’s journeys to Portugal and China, recorded in her archive in a salty barn on the west coast of Ireland, perhaps in the ‘rooms outside’ whose introduction to Britain is expressed in John Brooke’s sketches for liveable Modernism. We can justify the campaign for an archive by pointing out such causes and effects. But does it need to be as literal as this? These are the heroes and heroines, and the archive is a salute by Britain’s gardeners.

The records are at risk of physical loss, or inaccessibility. But there is another kind of risk: misunderstanding. You cannot let posterity look after itself, an archivist will tell you: without a project the process of what is forgotten or remembered is too random. The archive is also a means for the makers of gardens to tell the story in their own words.

What survives of us is love, we like to quote, but Larkin’s final line was a bitter-sweet reflection on how what we understand people to be changes after death (‘Time has transfigured them into untruth’). What survives of us is love, dust (easier to quantify: just under 3 kilogrammes if you are cremated) and the paper and electronic trail of an archive.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is collecting what?

This is not the only archive of gardens and designed landscape. The Landscape Institute has a large archive of work by its members housed at the University of Reading, and is actively collecting. The Royal Horticultural Society has a vast, world-renowned horticultural archive; it holds collections of early printed books on gardening, botanical art dating back to the 17th century, and photographs giving an insight into the social history of gardening. The Royal Institute of British Architects Drawings Collection has garden designs by architects, as glimpsed in a lovely exhibition, *Great Drawings from the Collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, in 1983. The National Trust’s garden designs were assembled into another exhibition in 1991, *An English Arcadia 1600–1990*, at Hazlitt, Gooden and Fox in London, (then York and Bristol, before touring the States), while many great estates have deposited their archives in Record Offices.

The HLF development funding included a national survey, which brought to light many surprising collections: the Thomas Mawson archive at Cumbria is famous, less so the gift from Lady Allen of her radical playground designs to Warwick Modern Records Centre. As Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan observed in a report funded by a grant from the Foyle Foundation, there has been variable coherence and gardens have often been collected for other reasons: for example there are Board of Health maps for Coventry, Warwick and Stratford which include, often quite elegant, plans of gardens.

If you picture this as a Venn diagram there is a major gap, and that it is the designers and makers of modern gardens. We began the collection with the gift or long-term loan of the figures who led their generation: Beth Chatto, John Brookes, and Penelope Hobhouse. (Christopher Lloyd is a happy exception: his papers snug and alive in the creaking, oiled air of Great Dixter). Quickly, however, we realised that their work was inseparable from writers and photographers, such as Hugh Johnson, Andrew Lawson and Jerry Harpur. (And of

course boundaries blur, as Hugh Johnson made at Saling Hall a perfect garden – a landscape with Kentian flashes of light and shade). And there is a chain reaction: Beth Chatto wrote to tell us of her friend Joy Larkcom's collection, and during research into *From Garden City to Green City* we got to know Janet Jack, the architect whose work at the Alexandra Road Estate is admired as the most inspirational modern example of how social housing can be integrated with private gardens and green space running free in meadows and playgrounds. Finally, we held a seminar with over fifty expert attendees and a formal meeting with institutional partners. These defined a collecting policy focused on the makers of the modern garden.

What will be in the archive?

Archival material is defined as material which is secondary to, but explanatory of, the original artefact – so, a manuscript for a book, a rough sketch for a building.

In this case it is whatever explains a garden, or a garden designer: design drawings, photographs, letters, plant lists, and marked-up catalogues. And personal artefacts: Sir Frederick Gibberd's widow gave us his gardening hat together with his lecture notes and it somehow illustrates the point made in his lecture, 'I like designing and I like labouring. And to live with one's own garden is a discovery.'

We have concentrated on individuals' collections as the archive is primarily biographical.

A professional designer's archive is perhaps more as you would expect. (And should include financial records too: they are particularly important in understanding the development of a garden design profession). The archives of individual garden makers can be more fragmentary, and John Sales reminded us that gardens are made in such a way that their records are not as diagrammatic as, say, for an architectural commission. Many modern masterpieces of gardens are the work of self-taught individuals; a small circle on a sheet of A4 might be the only drawn evidence of a much-loved masterpiece.

We also have collected a small number of specific project records, such as Dominic Cole's design drawings for the Eden project which show the conceptual dialogue between site, ecology, and architecture.

Photographs will cut through designers' archives, of course, but we will begin with a focus on two great contemporary photographers. Jerry Harpur and Andrew Lawson have between them photographed the great majority of significant modern gardens – and Jerry, in particular, has brought international gardens to British designers' eyes – but in the archive these will not be treated simply as a visual database but as the oeuvres of two individuals with their own artistic story to tell.

We also have over 1,500 photographs of gardens dating back to the 1860s in the art collection of the Museum.

Who's next?

The idea is that we keep in touch with our partners, and consult each other if a collection is looking for a home.

And we look ahead: we have an Archive Council to debate – together with our institutional partners – which designers of the next generation should be collected: it is made up of Christopher Bradley-Hole, Joanna Fortnam, Stephen Lacey, Todd Longstaffe-Gowan, Dan Pearson, Tom Stuart-Smith, Andy Sturgeon, and Cleve West. Who of the next generation should be included? And which projects?

Will you collect older material?

We've chosen to concentrate on modern material because it is most at risk, and because we can actively collect. Precious, older material tends to have already found a home. But we will collect earlier material when appropriate archives come to light, and have included the archive of the designers and contractors William Wood and Sons which show a century of changing taste up until the closure of the firm in 1995, from Edwardian tennis courts and rock gardens to swimming pools and garden tractors.

What has happened so far?

The majority of material illustrated here has been gifted, or agreed to be placed on long-term loan, in the three years since we resolved to build the archive.

When the HLF gave a Round One award for the masterplan it supported the principle of an archive, and has funded two expert consultants and a part-time archivist. The first consultant Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan is an expert on collecting

policies, and on ideas about how we make the archive alive to new audiences: so, for example, teenagers will use the archive to imagine how a garden, and a park, can be. The second consultant is Chris Woods, the master of conservation, and who chaired the Committee which drew up modern regulations on design (BS5454). He has worked with the architects to design a tower which is a safe, and sustainable, environment. Finally, our archivist Nicola Waddington has worked closely with the key depositors, each of whom has varying needs as regards copyright, cataloguing, and so on, and has defined what is confidential. She has also installed a new Collections Management System which can record thousands of entries, and make these accessible to external searchers. It's a team which has encouraged us to think bigger – Nicola can list 101 uses for an archive – but has also delineated the cold, clinical realities of the responsibility of preserving fragile, personal materials for ever.

A number of archives are already on site; the majority will arrive when the capital project is complete.

And we have been fund-raising: one stunning individual gift of £50,000, and a hundred smaller gifts through events in gardens across the country. In 2015 and 2016 we hope to have a garden open in every single county in support of the project. This is a national campaign to preserve the collective memory of the modern garden. If we meet our fund-raising target for the scheme as a whole, we hope to close in the summer of 2015 and re-open approximately a year later.

What about digitisation? And digital collections?

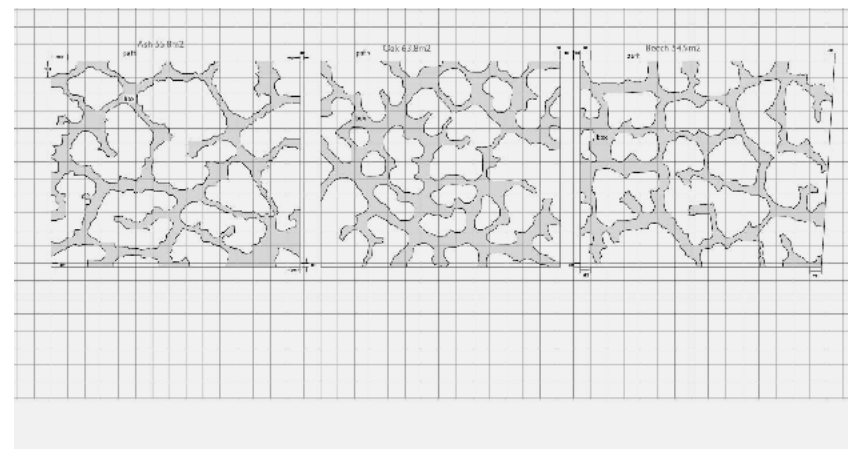
There are two issues. One is the digitisation of existing material. The great advantage is to increase access: the archive can be used by a national audience. Students at horticultural colleges across Britain, for example, will be able to study Beth Chatto's work and influence through her plant lists, writings, and her unseen personal archive of photographs over 50 years, and volunteers of the Kent Gardens Trust will have access to Anthony Du Gard Pasley's plans for gardens he designed in Kent and Sussex, some now open to the public.

The HLF grant and funding campaign includes a major investment in the systems and skills required to make the key elements of the archive accessible, and easily searched: an entry for every item in the archive will be searchable on-line.

And we will digitise items on demand: if someone wants a scan of a letter, or design, we'll have the kit.

The V&A have created on-line Study Boxes, which package images and information up thematically. We will create Study Boxes around a project such as Janet Jack's Alexandra Road Estate – which is studied by students across the world – on a theme such as 'how garden designers draw'.

However, digitisation is not such an easy answer as you might think. First of all, it is very slow: a major national collection we consulted explained that after three years 50,000 of over 4 million items had been digitised, and at great expense. And whatever is digitised must be upgraded year after year. A scan of a slide, for example, will only last for a short time before it is obsolete, and need to be upgraded. The original slide must be preserved. In the end – and whatever the technology – the most robust standard of preservation is a piece of paper placed in an acid-free envelope, in a drawer, in a climate-controlled store.



Design for lower terrace parterre, Broughton Grange, Tom Stuart-Smith, 2000

No major collection aspires to digitise everything; only 5% of the National Archives in Kew have been digitised so far.

A second challenge is the collection of material which was generated in digital form: email, CAD drawings, reports in Word, and digital photographs.

The majority of the older collections include a born digital element – Jerry Harpur switched to a digital camera in 2008,

and Beth Chatto began emailing – and in future we may expect to accession collections which are 100% born digital. We took Tom Stuart-Smith's office as a (hypothetical) case study of the size of the challenge; he has worked with digital files since 1998.

The advantage is that bigger design archives have applied their minds to the issue for more than a decade, and there is a science of digital cataloguing and preservation in place; the HLF is also very experienced in its guidance. The costs for initial hardware and the specialist software are included in the capital project; the Business Plan includes an annual budget for upgrading software, annual storage, and for operation post re-opening.

Who will use the collections and how?

The archive room will be large enough for individual researchers, or for small groups of students in study sessions.

The ante-room will be a small gallery with miniature exhibitions drawn from the collection: a lesser-known designer in focus, perhaps, or a theme such as how the back gardens of British homes have changed in recent decades. The pieces will be chosen to show the range of material that makes up an archive, and to prompt both gifts from visitors and study visits.

Archive material will also be integrated into the five permanent galleries which will be built on the first floor: it will play a major role in illustrating stories such as the changing styles of garden design, the profession of the gardener (we have several fascinating diaries) and the history of the horticultural trade.

Every year, therefore, tens of thousands of people will engage with the archive.

We also hope that the archive will be a catalyst for published research: every issue of the Garden History Journal has excellent articles inspired by the discovery of specific collections of material. We want students on MA courses in garden history to burrow in search of subjects for dissertations.

And, finally, there will be an unlimited audience through digital access, whether through the 'Study Boxes' described above or simply searching our on-line catalogue. The collection of c.4,000 photographs is a unique treasure, and we will work closely with Parks & Gardens UK in using these to illustrate the hundreds of gardens on its on-line database.

Where will donations go?

The cost of the archive is, above all, in its construction, servicing and environmental controls, but also in making the room into a space that tempts research. (We will be looking for Friends to adopt a table, a plan chest, or a chair!). As for storage of up to 100,000 items, there are a multiplicity of small costs, from acid-free wallets for photographs to Solander boxes. And, finally, there is the cost of the archivist, who will be part-funded by the HLF for three years, so the cost is included above.

As discussed above, whatever we raise from Friends and supporters will unlock a matching sum from the HLF: our target is £3,069,000 to reciprocate an HLF award of £3,510,000 and, so far, we have just over half. But the HLF also take account of the number of people who donate – whatever the figure – and expect us to demonstrate that the archive is a cause with national support.



Dominic Cole

Landscape masterplan development (detail)

Detail from a plan, 125 × 85cm

Crayon over a CAD drawing

c.1998

This is an extract from a much larger drawing exploring ideas for the Eden Project; the original would cover roughly half the wall of a portakabin.

The relatively short timescale for the design of such a complex scheme meant that the landscape masterplan and topographical form were ready in advance of some of the building designs. This meant that the visitor centre design responded to the new landscape forms; the building fits snugly into the side of the pit.

This design is a work in progress, around two thirds into a two year design process. I am working up contours, which parts of the landscape can be flat, where there are slopes and how the connecting paths work, and enclosure, for example where to use hedges, tree blocks and how each enclosure will be entered.

I avoid using green and have no intention at this design stage in representing real colours. I use colour to think about

the spatial arrangements, boundaries and how the exhibit spaces could work. At this stage, the job of arranging the exhibits in relation to one another is a sort of jigsaw puzzle: the writing on the drawing names each exhibit.

The underlying fine lines are a computer drawing showing the digitised version of an earlier hand drawn plan, made at a much smaller scale. As soon as the computer drawing is enlarged it becomes obvious where contours and spaces do not work, or have not been thought through in detail. I do not believe it is possible to design landscape using a computer. Once the design reaches a certain point, and is digitised, the computer acts as a powerful tool for costing and communication with the design team. However, a computer is not a tool that can communicate the feel of a landscape design.

Dominic Cole 2014



Andrew Lawson

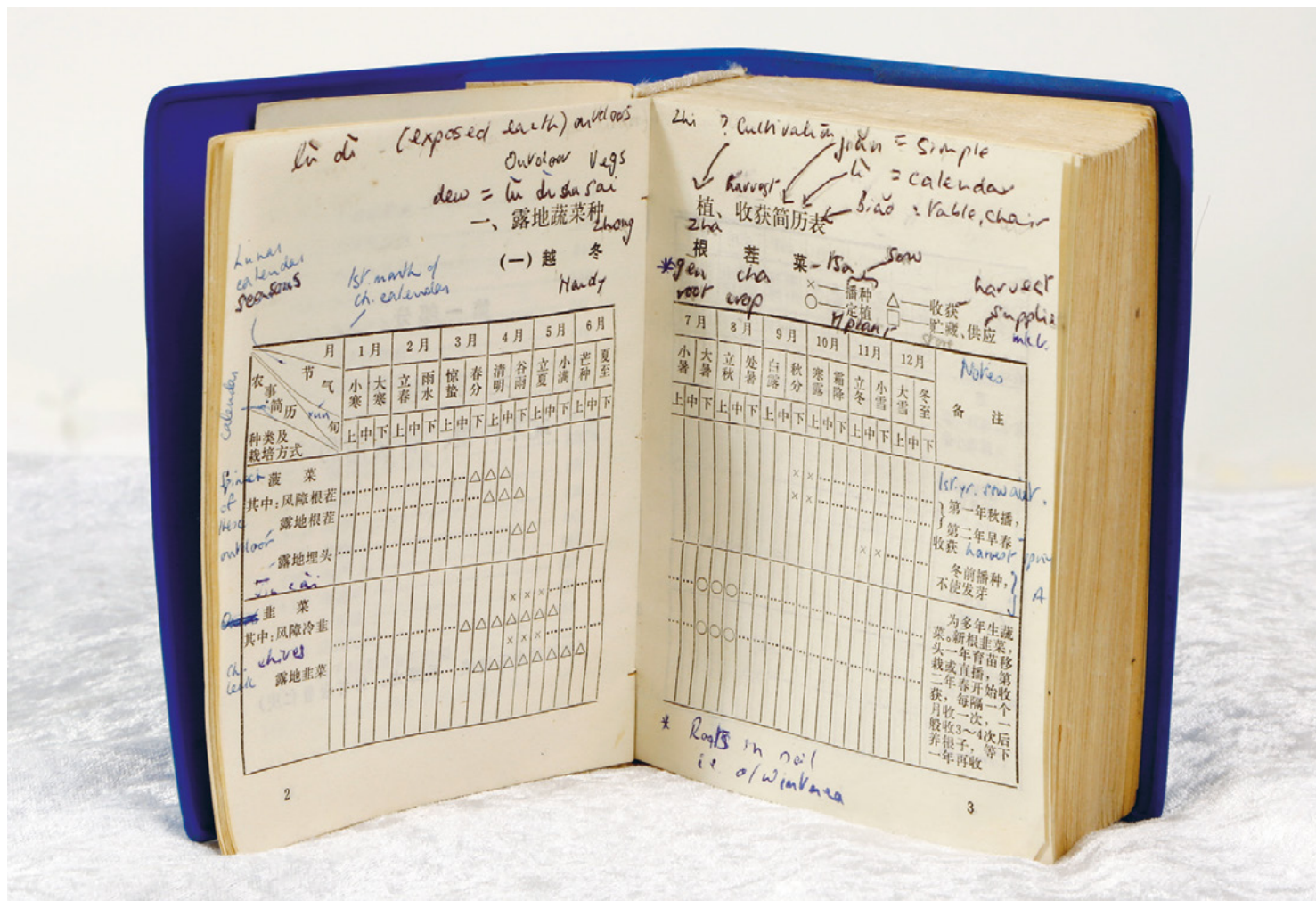
Mr and Mrs Skelton, Farm Road, Rowley Regis,
Warley, Warwickshire
Photographic print
c.1989

As a garden photographer, I have been travelling the world for 30 years, seeking out the most inspiring gardens. This has involved unusual working days, starting before dawn to catch the magic of early morning light, then travelling to the next location during the day, and finishing up with a session in a new garden at dusk. In midsummer this would make a 16-hour working day. Some winters I would travel in the southern hemisphere to repeat the process.

Somehow I have been driven to pin down ephemeral moments of an ephemeral subject – gardens and plants. It feels like a way to keep a living thing alive and to share it with other people. As a child, I had the same feeling for butterflies, although then I was mistaken in trying to catch them, kill them and pin them down to preserve them.

My photographic career coincided with a golden age of garden making. Think of the most influential gardens of the time – among them Rosemary Verey's Barnsley House, which I was lucky to photograph almost every week for several years; Penelope Hobhouse's Tintinhull; Miriam Rothschild's wild flower experiments at Ashton; Christopher Lloyd's Great Dixter; Powis Castle under Jimmy Hancock; Sissinghurst in the days of the incomparable gardeners Pamela Schwerdt and Sibylle Kreutzberger; Nancy Lancaster's Haseley Court; Nori and Sandra Pope's astounding garden at Hadspen, now vanished altogether; and 20 years of expansion of the Prince of Wales's Highgrove. That's not to mention countless small gardens, from cottages to council estates and many abroad.

Andrew Lawson *Financial Times*, 2 May 2014



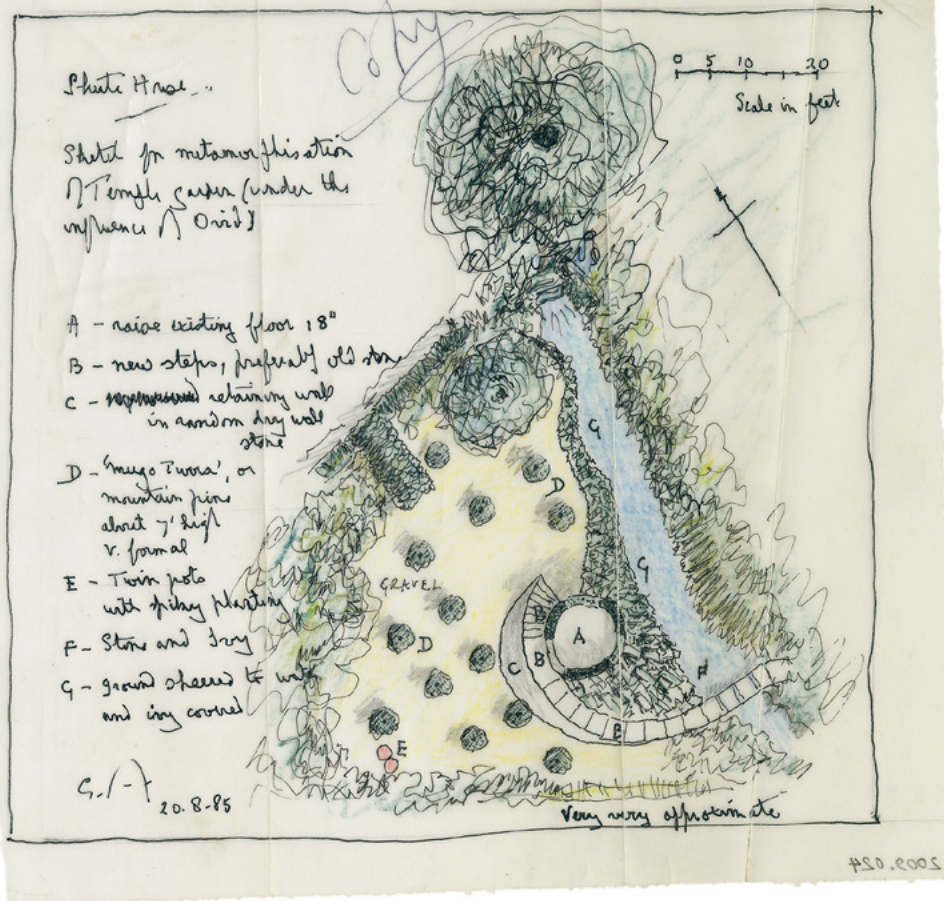
Joy Larkcom

'The Little Blue Book', officially the *Beijing Vegetable Production Handbook*
10 x 15cm
c.1985

Joy Larkcom's 'Grand Vegetable Tour' in 1976-7 took her, her husband Don Pollard and their two young children across Europe in search of unusual vegetables and intensive cultivation systems. Self proclaimed 'wanderers' at heart, they were inspired by Lawrence Hills, founder of the Henry Doubleday Research Association and his energetic campaigning on the urgent need to collect seed of old vegetable varieties, which could be conserved in the recently established National Vegetable Gene Bank in Warwickshire. In researching her first book Joy had heard of intensive vegetable production systems in Europe, and wanted to learn more. On both counts they were successful. They made significant discoveries: the 'cut and come again' technique in Belgium, new varieties of lettuce such as 'Lollo' (common today) in Italy, and unknown brassicas and beans in Portugal. The trip, and their resulting business – growing and marketing mixed salads – led to supermarkets starting to sell mixed salad, something Joy had first seen in Italian hillside markets, and something we now take for granted.

Joy continued her research into productive vegetables and vegetable growing. She developed a personal fascination with oriental vegetables, experimenting with them in her own garden for many years before visiting China, Japan and the US on research trips for her book *Oriental Vegetables*. Joy discovered the huge diversity of Chinese and Japanese greens, and how well they lend themselves to being grown as low energy winter crops.

Prior to her research trip to China in 1985, Joy had Chinese lessons in Cambridge with the Chinese scholar Charles Aylmer, concentrating on everyday conversation and acquiring horticultural vocabulary. One of the tools they used was the *Beijing Vegetable Production Handbook* which a friend had brought back from China. Its size and stocky format were identical to that used for Chairman Mao's pocket sized *Little Red Book*, designed to fit into a workman's overall pocket. (Huge numbers of Chinese printing presses were geared to printing this format). With its shiny blue cover it inevitably became 'The Little Blue Book'.



Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe
Plan for The Temple Garden
Ink and crayon on tracing paper
22 x 22cm
1985

Shute House, Dorset is one of two late masterpieces by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe; the other is Sutton Place. Working closely with the owners of the house, Lady Anne Tree, a skilled plantswoman, and Michael Tree, an artist whom he had known since childhood, Jellicoe drew together a lifetime's experience in one site.

The Temple Garden, one of a series of six linked areas within the garden, particularly preoccupied Lady Anne and Jellicoe. The space was developed between 1988 and 1993 and represents one of the final flourishes of the garden's creators.

Jellicoe has written his own descriptions of the garden, and its later revision at Lady Anne's request:

The Temple

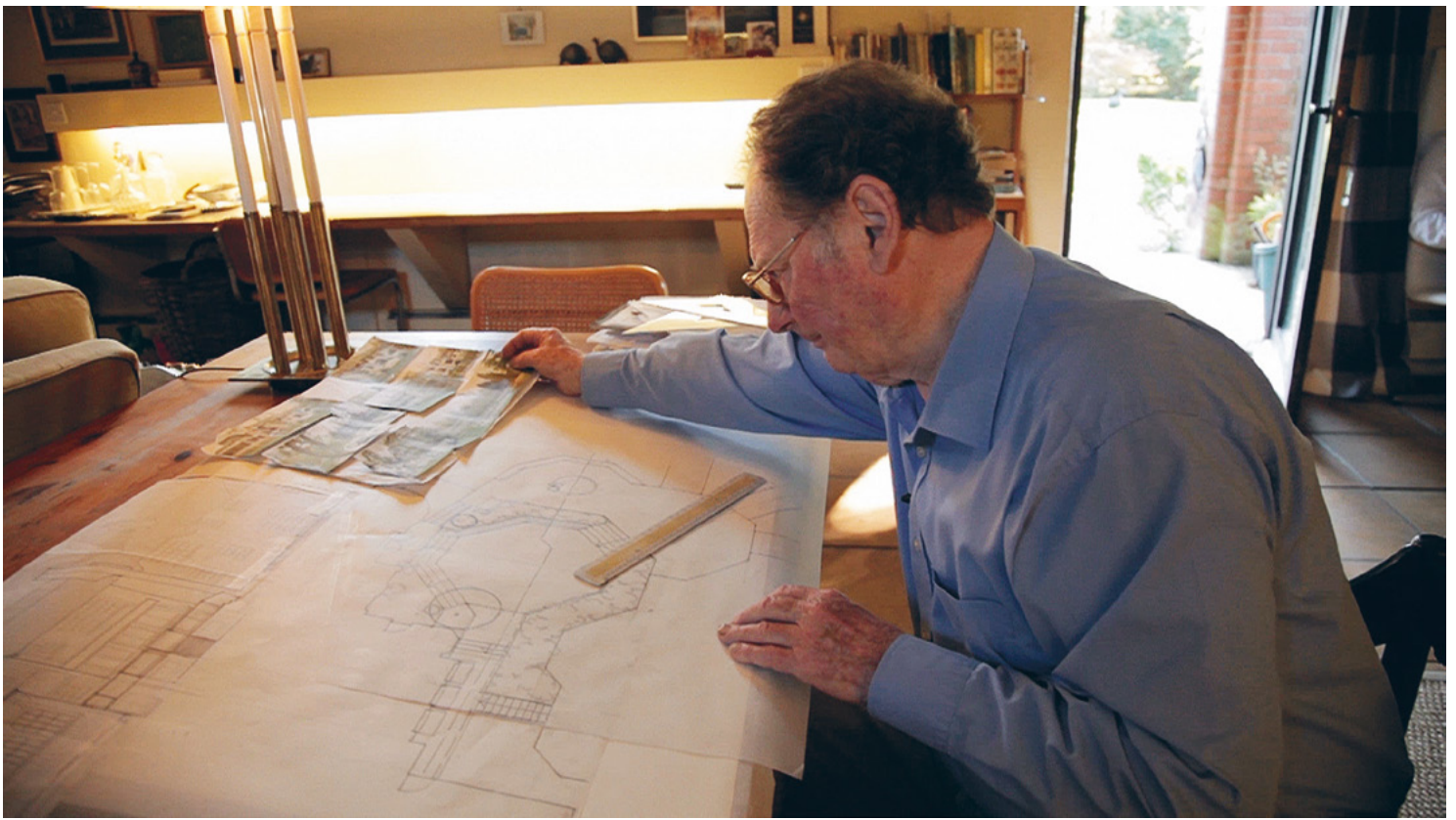
The path continues through woodlands with two accidental glimpses of the garden across water. You emerge beside a lower lake and plunge immediately into a green tunnel. Beyond, in a small exclusive enclave in the woods and open to the agricultural landscape beyond, is a hexagonal ivy temple.

This is the second step backwards in time. One balcony overlooks the dark recesses of the largest of the cascades and the rivulet below, another looks towards the outer landscape, and the third (in due course) to the present-day equivalent of a mythological urn. You leave this temple by hazardous stepping stones across a lower cascade – hazardous because no eclectic landscape can be complete without an element of peril, real or imaginary.

The Temple Garden (Revised)

Lady Anne brought a rock crystal to catch the rays of the setting sun and she wanted to put it somewhere remote and mysterious to be a 'magic' stone. I had previously designed a temple garden with a quasi-gazebo made of unclipped ivy, approached through a green tunnel. Lady Anne and I evolved the idea of mystical shapes made of clipped yews. It should be a place where a child might be slightly frightened. Already the iron skeletons which will form the base for topiary are on site – abstract chessmen, perhaps, or still figures from another planet. Not a place for the timid on a dark night.

From *Jellicoe at Shute*, Michael Spens (1993) †



John Brookes

Still from *John Brookes – A Portrait*

gardenmuseum.org.uk/page/john-brookes-a-portrait

An extract from the film *John Brookes – A Portrait*, in which John describes working with clients across the world:

‘I worked quite a lot in Chicago in the rather smart bit called Lake Forest. And I did a house on it for a year or two and these are the people over the fence, and they saw what was going on and they said would I come help them. I used the architects plan and cut it out and underneath it I have produced this terrace on plans. And it helps me because I have the character of the house in front of me; these are the photographs I took. Each job you do – and it doesn’t have to be a vast thing, it can be a just quite small one – is a sort of challenge in a way, because the house, the site, and the client are always different, wherever you go, and that combination I find very exciting, always.

Rhode Island, Japan, California, Illinois, Deutschland, this one is Azerbaijan (a sort of market place), Brazil. It was interesting doing some work in Azerbaijan, they definitely weren’t sure if they were east or west. And they didn’t want any Islamic patterns anywhere; on the other hand, they had very Turkish influences in them. I love exploring that sort of area of my plants.

I have this obviously English background, and I use plants in a softer gentler way. One of the things people like about English planting, and English gardens, is that they are relaxed. We allow things to self-seed and to romp a bit. Where as there are not many gardens you could go in in Germany or Japan and say they were relaxed. They’re all trained and combed, where everything is absolutely immaculate and one says ‘no, hands off, hands off, let it flop’, and people don’t know quite what that means.’

People who have influenced me, who are now dead!
 Cedric Morris, (Beth Haines, Elizabeth David)
 Graham Stuart Thomas, (Graham Rose Chelsea)
 Christopher Lloyd.

People who know me now and my garden, nursery, writing.

Alan Titchmarsh,
 Dan Pearson,
 Penelope Hobhouse
 Stephen Anderson
 John Brooks
 Helen Dillon, Dublin
 Tracy Di Sabato - Amot
 Fergus Garrett
 Germaine Green
 Sue and Wol Strasser (Fitz Chantry)
 Terry Harper
 Erica Haverigh - editor
 James Hitchmough - Sheffield Univ.
 Hugh Johnson
 Peter Sanke
 Lady Mary Keen - journalist
 Carol Klein
 Stephen Lacey -
 Roy Lancaster
 Anna Pavard
 Diana Ross
 Jessica Spalding
 Yuko Tanabe
 Steve Woster
 Matthew Wilson
 Nigel Slater
 Paul Barker?

Fred Whitsey.

Overseas.

Dr. Ulrich Fischer
 Dr. Maria Merwede
 Ronke van der Kaa
 Francis Peckers, Belgium

Daniel Ward.

Overseas students?

Dan Hoerr
 Jack Henning

In the Damp Garden
 by Beth Chatto
 Chapt. 8.

"The Homes of some Hardy
 garden plants."

Andrews summary

of his ecological
 research.

Beth Chatto

'People who have influenced me'
 2008

When the Garden Museum re-opened after its first phase of refurbishment in 2008, there was a unanimous decision that the first exhibition should be a celebration of plantswoman Beth Chatto and her work. The exhibition gave us a tantalising glimpse of Beth's life, dedicated to promoting horticultural ecology and the careful use of species plants in our gardens. So when the idea for an archive of garden design materialised, once again, eyes turned towards Essex. There were whoops of delight when Beth was one of the first horticultural luminaries to agree to passing over her nursery and gardening records.

With that transfer in mind, for three years I have been working with Beth, going through files, boxes, even cupboards, packed with memories. Every week I arrive to find an envelope with my name on with new treasures. 'Just throw away what you don't want - it's probably not important,' Beth says with her implicit modesty.

No need to worry - nothing gets thrown away. Photographs of Beth's first garden in her childhood home show the earliest horticultural influences. Thick diaries kept assiduously during cold winter months describe planting plans, successes, failures, and worries about nursery and staff. But then suddenly months of blank pages as life becomes just too busy with visitors, talks, tours - and the garden, of course. Memories of bringing home seedlings from Cedric Morris's garden at Benton End, faded photographs of early flower arrangements from the 1950s with not a gladi in sight. Diaries list endless demonstrations to flower clubs across the country - lonely drives with a car packed full of plants to promote the nursery. Scraps of paper list the major influences in her life. Everything contributes to painting a picture of her dedication and determination.

One thing has lead to another and I am now writing Beth's official biography. I have the privilege of being able to talk to her about her memories. But for future researchers, access to Beth's papers, diaries, plans and photographs will open windows of understanding of her thinking and her inspiration.

Dr Catherine Horwood Barwise 2014

Penelope Hobhouse
The Taubman Garden, Detroit

‘What was nice about it was that they bought a double house setting on a main street in I think, was it called Bloomfield just outside Detroit? Instead of buying one house they bought two so we had a double lot to work on, but it was right on a public road. There were difficulties about this because in America very often the front garden on the roadside is communal lawn that you can almost walk over, but you don’t because it actually belongs to other people, but it’s open. And of course, the Taubmans specifically wanted an English garden. So you walked along the street and then you suddenly came to a garden that was in your way. And that was difficult for me because I hadn’t realised how much people didn’t really like this idea, the idea of privacy which we are so keen on. Of course, the back of the house was completely private but the front really wasn’t.

They were quite young, and they both worked for Sotheby’s. And they were very nice and she became passionately interested in plants and had a very good eye for recognising good plants. And she sent me all the plans, her pictures of the house and the whole layout and actually it became so obvious that I designed it before I got there. I did a rough drawing of what it was going



Looking into the garden from the road, 1990
Photographic print



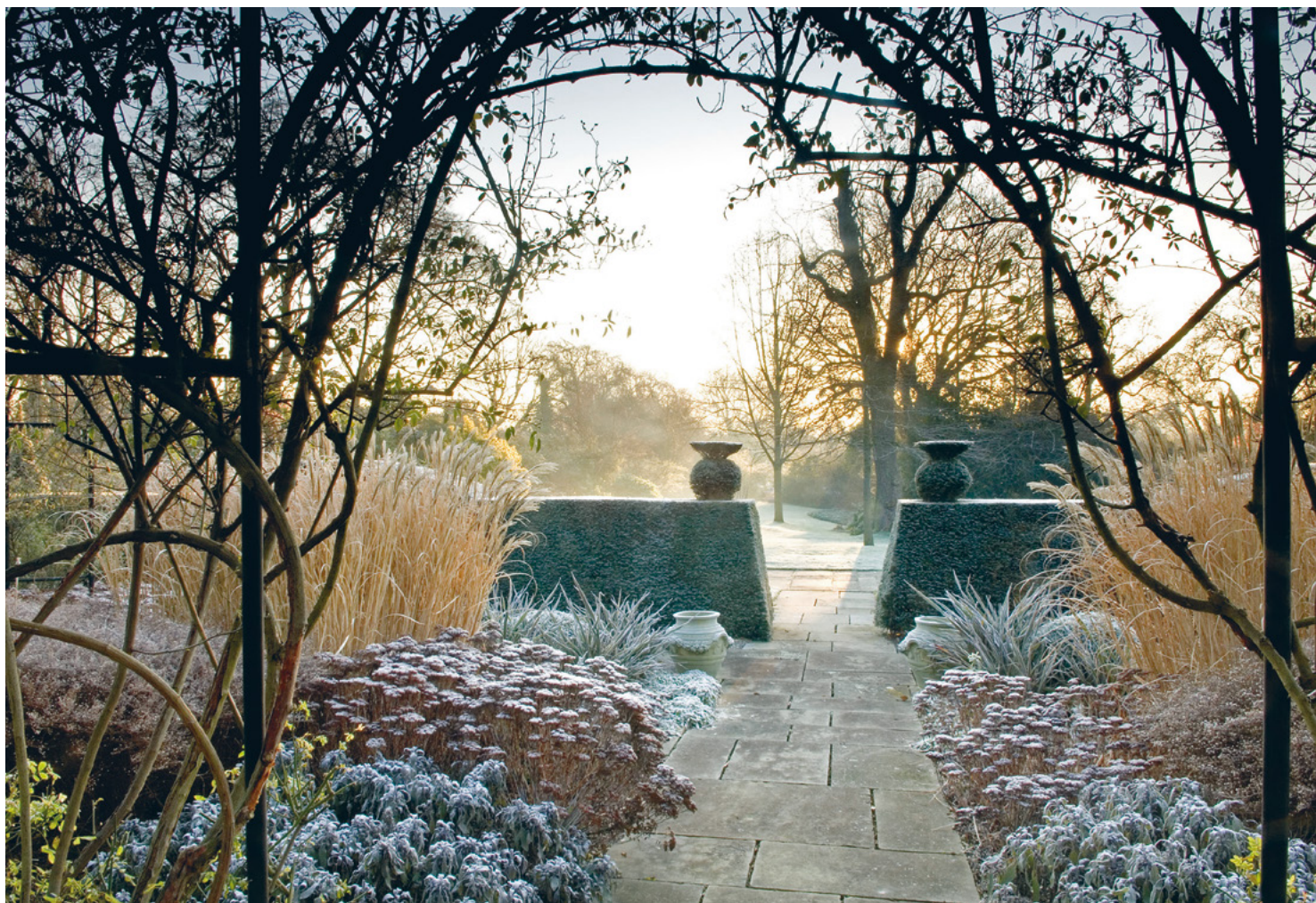
The view from the back garden, 1992
Photographic print

to look like and that’s actually what we did. So I really had a wonderful few days with them because all we had to do was discuss the details of the planting because we’d, I’d, got the structure right. The one thing I really mind about is having a very strong structure and then I like to make what I call a jungle inside. We found a very good gardener, because the other problem in America was finding a gardener who understood my sort of English planting. But we did; we always did manage to find somebody in the end.

And then after about eight or nine years they said there was nothing more they could do with this garden, and they were really interested, but they thought we’d just take it all out and start again and would I make a new design? And I said ‘I just don’t think I can do that, I think you better get somebody else, it isn’t going to work, it’ll be too painful for me to destroy it’. And I think I would just, if I did a new garden, I would do the same thing all over again. So I didn’t do it.’

Extract from a talk by **Penelope Hobhouse** at the Garden Museum, 2012

Overleaf: Sketch of proposed garden layout for Mr & Mrs Taubman
Pencil on tracing paper
84 × 59cm
1990



Jerry Harpur
 Winfield House, Regent's Park, London
 Digital photograph
 January 2008

Twenty-eight years ago, gardener Stephen Crisp arrived for interview at Winfield House, the American ambassador's residence in Regent's Park, to find that the established 12.5 acre garden was past its best. He took it on as head gardener, to rescue it at first, restoring its sweeping lawns and treescapes. After that came the creative influences of both American and English garden thinking.

Here is the Summer Garden, designed by Crisp in 2004: a square surrounded by cleanly-cut yew hedges, it is the most intriguing part of Winfield House's landscape. During lecture tours of America he was continually searching for ideas and became inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's 'stained-glass' effects. Stephen obtained a strong sense of symmetry and colour and determined to include some of these ideas into this new garden. They provide a distinctive summer show.

The immaculate style of the Summer Garden turns it into a wonderfully-structured Winter Garden, when frost settles on the hedges, on the maroon-flowered sedums, the orange-stemmed miscanthus grasses and their blue-leaved spikes. From this point, the tight view has depth; framed by the rose arch, your eye is drawn to the two ceramic pots, to the cut hedge and then out into the early February light on the sunlit lawn.

Jerry Harpur 2014

Improving the Thyme

By V. SACKVILLE-WEST

ABOUT nine years ago, to be exact on June 18, 1950, I wrote an article in this column about two little lawns I had planted with thyme, the creeping thyme, *thymus serpyllum*, the sort commonly used between paving stones.

This idea was taken up by quite a lot of OBSERVER readers and I believe reproduced in corners of their own gardens. After so long a lapse of time, it may be permissible to return with a few comments on the mistakes I made and such success as I achieved.

Mistakes first. It was an error to plant some small bulbs amongst the thyme. I had put in crocuses, and fritillaries, and some corms of the autumn cyclamen. They grew all right and loved being where they were, but they made the thyme lawn look untidy by breaking the flatness. They have now been eliminated and replanted elsewhere. The thyme lawn looks much better without them.

Another mistake I made was to mix a white variety with the red and purple thymes. This made it look too patchy. A carpet of only red and purple and mauve would have been more homogeneous.

Or so I think. Other people might disagree. One cannot arbitrate for

everybody's taste. One can only make suggestions, and I now regret having put some white thyme into my red and purple bed.

Another mistake was not to make up the soil thoroughly in the first instance. It ought to have had a lot of grit incorporated for drainage. After all, if you think of where thyme grows wild, on the Downs for instance, the drainage is pretty sharp. And, so far as is possible, one should try to reproduce the conditions that plants enjoy.

★

FOR nine years the two little thyme lawns gave me much pleasure. Nine years is a long time to leave any plant growing in the same place: it exhausts its soil and needs renewing.

They have not given much trouble. They never needed mowing, and they needed weeding only about four times a year. Now the time has come to dig them up and renew their soil to freshen them up when I hope they will go on for another nine years.

How generous they are in their growth! You dig up one clump and divide it into ten or twenty rooted plants, which you can dibble in six inches apart and make as huge a bed as you wish, with lots left over to plant among paving stones as an overspill.

IN YOUR GARDEN

by V. Sackville-West

Saying good-bye

THIS will be the last article I contribute to THE OBSERVER under the title In Your Garden.

I am sad to say good-bye to all the kind unknown readers who have written me so many charming letters, and to whom I can only express the hope that I answered them promptly and was sometimes able to reply helpfully to their queries. But I feel that I have been writing these articles quite long enough, perhaps only too long, for ten or twelve years, and that it is time I gave myself and my readers a rest.

Small and brave

May I use this last article to mention the flowers I have found in bloom on my return home from a very different part of the world with a very different climate—Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina? Mid-summer weather there, and Turkish-bath-steamy hot at that. England looked very cool, misty and soft. How soft she lies, my native land, I thought, in the embrace of her northern seas.

Through her damp soil pierced the little flowers I had longed to see. Not orchids, not the Bird of Paradise, not the great swagger Flamboyant tree, but the white and green snowdrops,

the miniature crocuses, the pale mauve and dark purple irises, the golden aconites, the pink *cyclamen coum*, the blue hepaticas, a few very rather primroses—all the low, brave small things cowering close to the ground, so modest, so humble, and so very, very authentic.

I looked back on to the flowers I had generously been given to fill my cabin on board ship, wonderfully long-stemmed roses, gloxinias, camellias, carnations, gladioli, florist's flowers, all so stiffly wired as to make them look artificial; in fact my little Italian cabin steward, bringing them in, had no greater praise than to say "They are so beautiful, they might be made of plastic." Well, I thought, that is the last thing that I myself would ever choose to say in praise of a flower.

I don't want to sound ungrateful, but how much I preferred the little bunch, the tussie-mussie, I was able to pick myself, costing no dollars, no cruzeros, no pesos—and certainly not made of plastic.

It is good to get home, to one's own garden, even in February.

See Table Talk: Page 13

Miss Sackville-West's garden—Sissinghurst Castle, near Cranbrook, Kent—is open daily throughout the spring and summer, from March till the end of October.

Vita Sackville-West

'Improving the Thyme', *The Observer*, 1959

'Saying good-bye', *The Observer*, 1961

Vita Sackville-West's papers are held at the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University, together with linked contemporaries such as Robert Byron and James Lees-Milne. However, the Garden Museum holds a collection of her articles written for her gardening column in *The Observer* from the late 1940s to 1961. The Museum also holds the manuscript of a poem written by Vita about the first garden she made in Constantinople in 1915, a gift to the Museum by Nigel Nicolson. The first verse reads:

We had a garden on a hill,
We planted rose and daffodil,
Flowers that English poets sing,
And hope for glory in the spring.

Together, the poem and articles provide a glimpse of Vita's writing. Leafing through her articles you pick up on the reciprocal relationship between Vita and her readers; indeed she sometimes received over a hundred letters a week. She often quotes readers, and offers their advice. She answers specific requests and is careful to appeal to all gardeners – from those with large gardens like her own, to owners of country cottage gardens, to town dwellers 'condemned to live between bricks and stones'.

She writes with a freshness and immediacy, as if she has just walked in from her garden to discuss it with a friend.

Introduction

Gardening is at the same time the most
complex and demanding of the arts, and
the only ~~art~~ ^{one} universally practised by
natives without training by ordinary
men & women.

For both reasons its literature is endless.

Comprehension is impossible.

Comprehension is essential.

My reason for writing is just because there is
so much to read.

My qualification for this is that it is new
to me, too. I have had unusual opportunities
to travel & draw wide conclusions.

The Principles of Gardening was one of the most significant gardening books of the 1970s. Forty years later, leaving Saling Hall and the famous garden he'd made there, Hugh Johnson delivered a battered wine box of his papers to the Garden Museum which reveal the ideas behind the book.

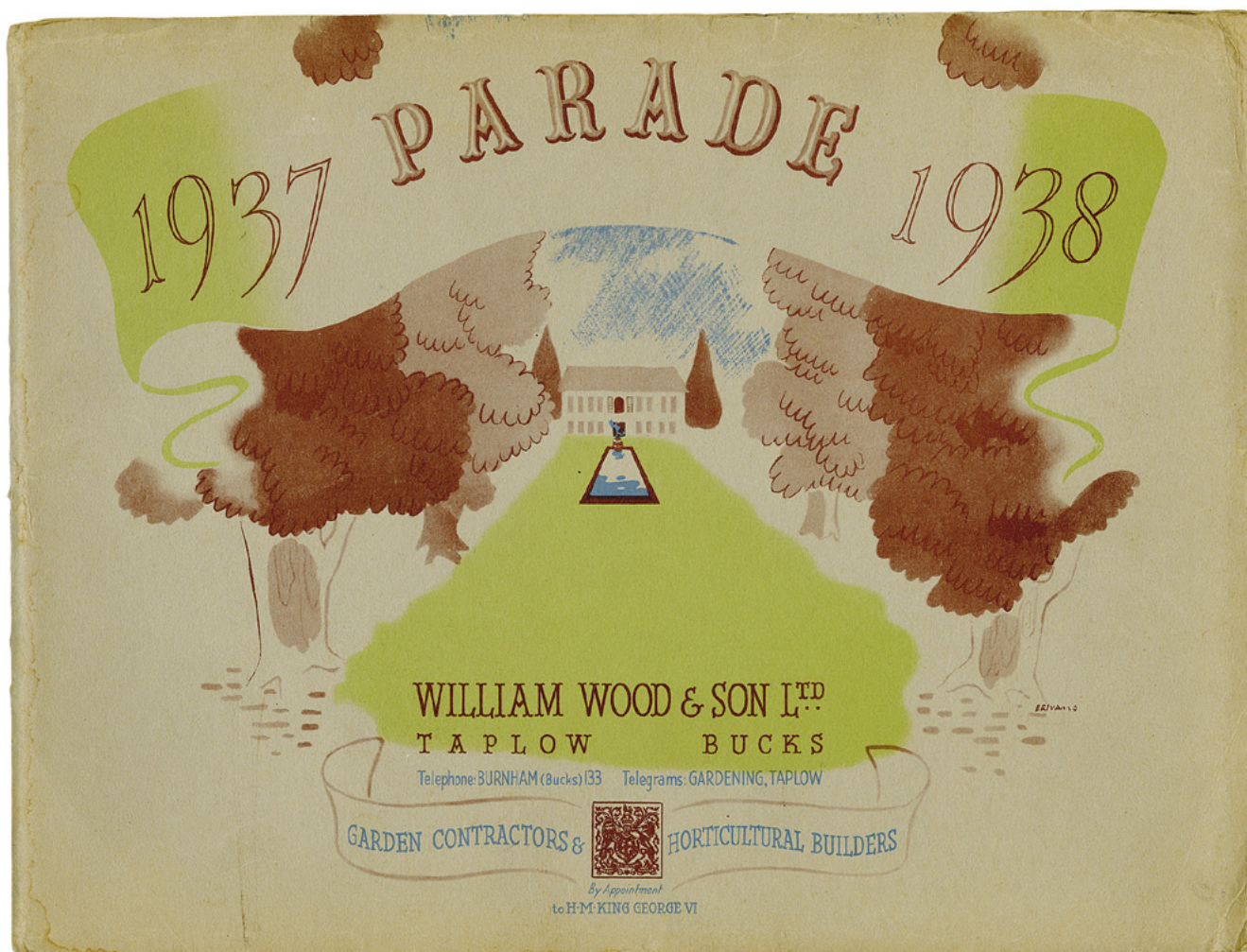
From early musings on contents lists, title changes (the book was originally to be called *The Art of Gardening*), and scribbled introductions, the archive reveals the organic development of a book that would be lost in a digital age, where deleted files replace crossed out words.

The sheer amount of work that went into researching, writing, editing and laying out a book pre-computers is an insight in itself: page charts filled in by hand and type written boxes each containing a set amount of words.

Overleaf are Hugh's first jottings for an introduction to the book, the basis of the preface which made the final edit; 'It would never occur to most gardeners to write a poem or paint a picture. Most gardens are the only artistic effort their owners ever make. Yet the one art that everyone chooses, or feels in some degree qualified to practise, is paradoxically the most complex of all.'

Hugh Johnson

Original notation for the preface to *The Principles of Gardening*
1979



William Wood & Son Ltd

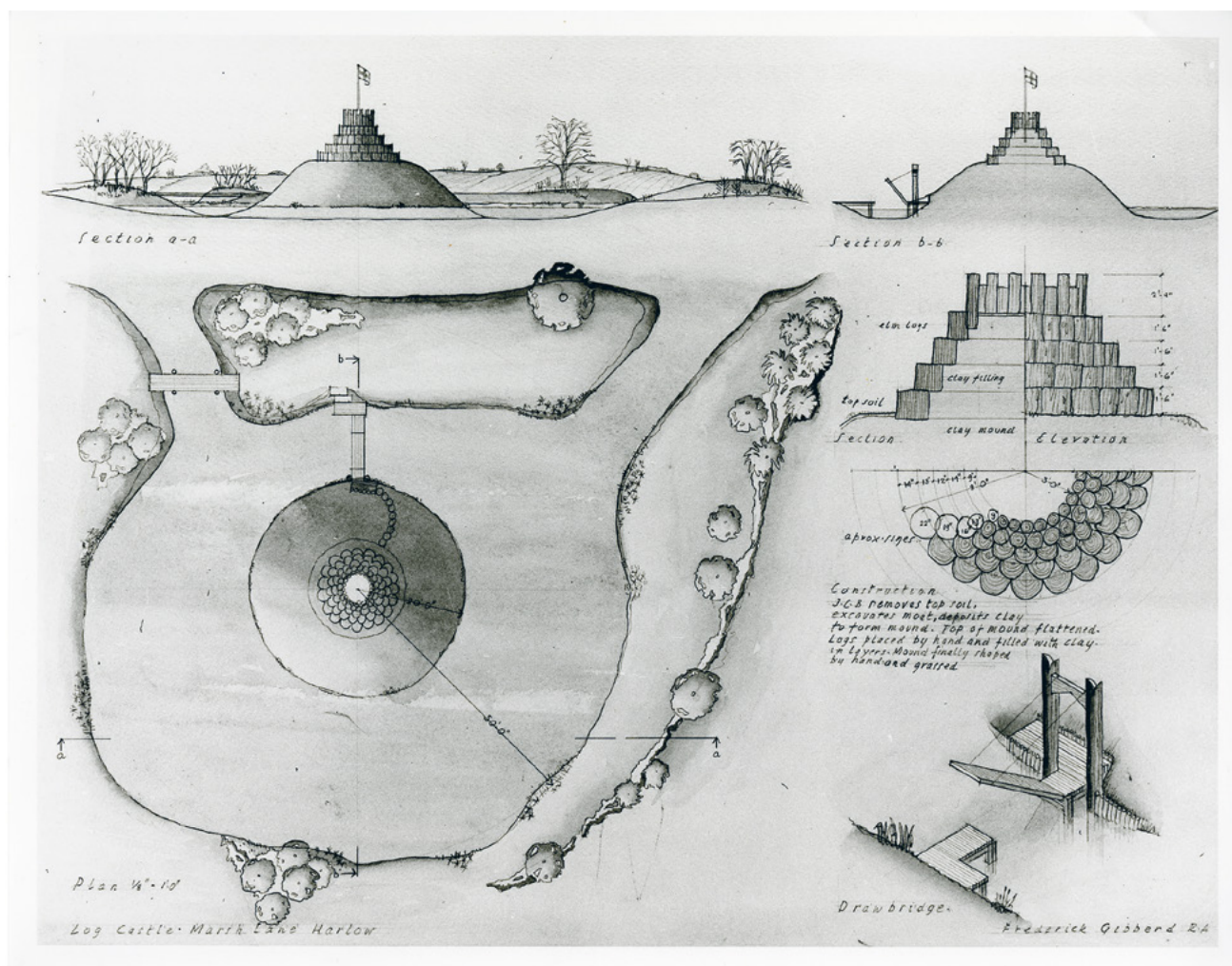
Parade, 1937-38

Catalogue of landscaping, gardens and buildings

29 x 22.5cm

The Garden Museum holds the archive of William Wood & Son Ltd, which charts the development of a garden design business from coal merchants in 1850 to the 'Harrods of landscape designers' in the 1990s. The bulk of the archive was given to the Museum when the company closed in the 1990s. A more recent donation by Lucy Wood, a descendant of William Wood, includes early 20th century documents showing the emergence of the business.

The archive collection charts changes in horticultural consumption over a century from a company that diversified in reflection of a changing society – rock gardens to swimming pools, tennis courts to garden tractors, factory gardens to playgrounds.



Frederick Gibberd

Black & white photograph of a plan of Log Castle, Marsh Lane
29 x 22.5cm
c.1980

Frederick Gibberd was one of the most prominent architects of his time, famous for designing Harlow New Town and Didcot Power Station, each inseparable from their designed landscape. The small Gibberd archive at the Garden Museum is a gift of his widow and comprises material relating to his home outside Harlow, Marsh Lane, now open to the public. It is the archive of a very personal project. Gibberd made the most of being his own client, 'no brief, no presentations, no lack of appreciation'. He created waterfalls, a wild garden with a tangle of paths, an arboretum and an island fort defended by a moat. A particular treasure of the archive are his lecture notes and slides, *On Making Gardens and Landscapes*, which describe the creation of the garden at Marsh Lane while also providing a window onto his wider work:

Perhaps I ought first to explain my attitudes to the design of the garden.

The object was to make a garden, and if possible a landscape, that would give pleasure to look at. 'My Pleasure', other people's taste is disregarded.

It was not to be a flower garden, a natural garden, a formal

garden, a sculpture garden, or any other kind of garden.

All I wanted to make was an original garden.

The closer a garden is to nature the more I like it.

But the geometry of architecture can extend into its surroundings.

To me, a garden design is the art of enclosing space by land form and plants.

But design must recognise that the enclosure changes with the seasons and it changes with time.

Finally, my garden was not to be for displaying attractive plants, or collecting species.

It was to be a work of art embracing all the raw materials.

Why make a garden at all?

Sir William Bragg said, 'I can't imagine how a man could live without a laboratory.'

I feel the same about gardening.

I like designing and I like labouring.

And to live with one's own garden is a discovery.

With a garden (unlike Architecture) there is no responsibility for the future.

You remember Dr Evans' epitaph on Vanburgh, 'Lie heavy on him earth.

For he laid many a heavy load on thee.'

No fear of that with a garden – all is transitory – poor

Ellen Willmott and her 104 gardeners. Only the word "Willmottae" to remember them by.



The Alexandra Road Estate in Camden is recognised as one of the finest examples of integration of landscape and social housing in modern London. The landscape was designed by Janet Jack and was the youngest post-war housing estate to be listed. Residents enjoyed a public realm: a large meadow, a circular lawn 'amphitheatre', and a series of outdoor 'rooms' were designed as play spaces for different age groups of children as they grew up on the estate. Each flat has a built in balcony trough or window box, with the aim that plants would cascade down the stepped face of the building. Janet Jack's planting, in her own words, 'carpets the concrete'.

By the 1990s the landscape was neglected and subject to vandalism: out of the playground features only two swing sets remained. ('I was asked to design for low maintenance, but I hadn't expected no maintenance' Jack commented). However residents, together with Camden Council, applied to the HLF for funding and the estate is currently being restored by J&C Gibbons, landscape architects, using Jack's archive.

Janet Jack has deposited her original drawings and design schemes from the project in the archive. She has also donated a series of annotated slides taken from the late 1970s to the 1990s which reveal what was lost, what changed, and what survived.

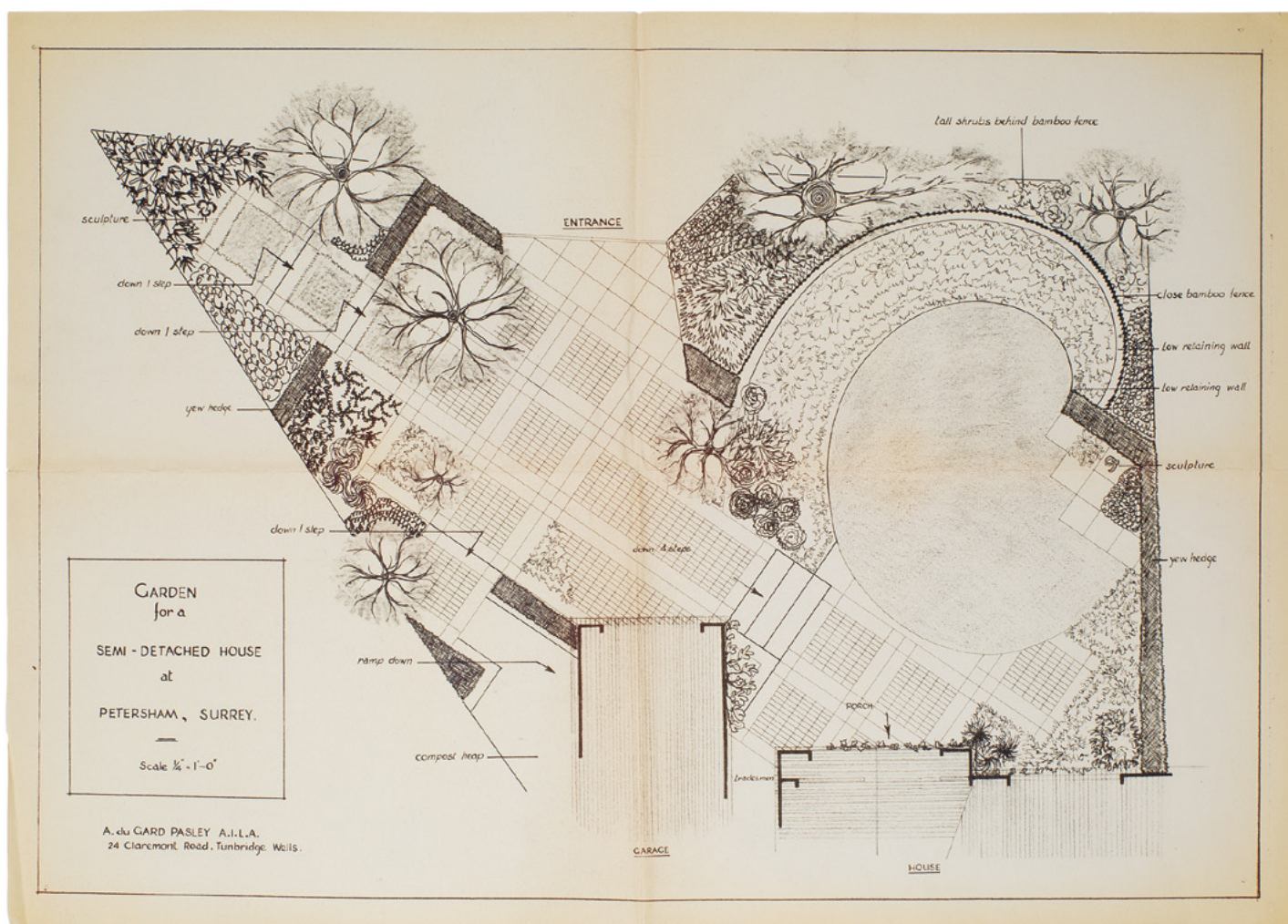
Janet Jack

Annotated slides of the Alexandra Road Estate

Photographs by Janet Jack

5 x 5 cm each

1979-90



Anthony du Gard Pasley

Plan for a garden for a semi-detached house in
Petersham, Surrey

Facsimile copy of original ink on paper

56 x 40cm

c.1958

Anthony du Gard Pasley had always wanted to be a garden designer. Rosemary Alexander remembers him in his obituary as 'always impeccably dressed, whatever the weather, in thorn-proof tweed plus-fours, cape or kilt, and with a mischievous sense of humour'. After completing his military service he became a paying pupil at the landscape architect practices of Breda Colvin and Sylvia Crowe in Gloucester Place, where he met John Brookes. Pasley's career was long and successful: he was a popular teacher who was able to demonstrate a deep knowledge of what actually worked in the making of a garden, and his designs ranged from large private gardens, such as Wadhurst Place in Sussex, to small suburban gardens such as the design shown here.

This 1950s design illustrates the principles he later set out in his teaching at the English Gardening School:

'In order to make the garden seem larger than it actually is, emphasis must be placed on the longest dimension, or, for example, on the diagonal from the near right-hand corner to the far left-hand corner. Try not to reveal the whole of the garden at once, but to change direction and position plants so as to heighten the sense of mystery.'

From *The English Gardening School: A Complete Course in Garden Planning and Design*. Rosemary Alexander and Anthony du Gard Pasley, 1987. (p174)



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† 'The Temple' by Sir Geoffrey
Jellicoe first appeared in The Guelph
Lectures on Landscape Design,
University of Guelph (Canada),
1983, pp8–23. 'The Temple Garden
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