



garden before

### Taking the retrofit to the next level

After 14 years of living in and renovating the house we wanted to tackle the garden with the same ambitious pragmatism, rigour and attention to detail. This phase provided an opportunity to explore ecological issues in a small urban garden. We wanted to look at ways we could combine issues of food growing, biodiversity, appropriate materials, water management and precasture with a strong architectural approach that solves many problems at once.

The site is small and constrained, with the rear garden north facing and lacking in sun for 6 months of the year. The solution was to create raised beds and living roofs to allow more light from all directions and increase productivity. This raising up of the landscape has not only maximised growing potential but also by exploiting the vertical metre has allowed new social relationships and a multilayered richness to infect the garden. At the same time much of the space has become disabled friendly. Much needed external storage for wood fuel, garden tools and bicycles has been provided in a way that is both practical and beautiful. The design evolved out of our vision, those of the landscapers and their skills with and access to a good source of green oak. This collaboration involved fewer drawings and more sketching and frequent discussions on site, rather than in the traditional way behind a desk.

The garden feels more spacious despite being more densely packed. The interplay and layering of volumes, planes and spaces create constant interest and delight.

- 1 • overflows from rain harvesting tanks and runoff that doesn't make it to the tanks fed into new storm attenuation tanks  
• these store excess water allowing it to percolate into the ground at its own pace, thus reducing flood risk at the storm drain.  
• no water discharged to storm drain, qualifying for reduced sewage standing charge  
• permeable grass reinforcement paving filled with sand/soil mix and gravel edges
- 2 • front entrance defined by raised beds and overhead frame in green oak  
• plants will be trained up the structure with the aid of wires and small pergola  
• low gate will be added
- 3 • raised beds make for easier gardening  
• increase sunlight levels available to food plants, particularly in rear garden  
• used mainly around site boundaries
- 4 • materials carefully combined  
• new green oak adjoining existing masonry walls  
• reclaimed azobe railway sleeper edging  
• reclaimed Yorkstone paving and regency bench from same stately home  
• UK sourced pebbles
- 5 • green oak detailing expresses how structures are put together  
• connections screwed and plugged with wood dowells  
• louvres create openness, transparency and ventilation for wood storage  
• post bases and edging carefully designed and executed  
• using sustainably sourced durable timber sequesters CO2
- 6 • greater feeling of space despite more major structures in garden  
• generous permanent seating in front of raised beds  
• outdoor fire and cooking  
• outdoor projection area  
• excellent multi-layered play area
- 7 • untreated durable eucalyptus from E Brazil with full Forest Stewardship Council Chain of Custody certification. Smooth finish with continuous 'pin stripe' non-slip strips, finished with OSMO decking oil  
• water feature will create will increase biodiversity and allow for growing water based food plants
- 8 • wood stores, shed and animal shelter (for rabbits or chickens) include living roofs, in effect raising up the landscape and allowing more light for growing food plants and native flowers, maximising biodiversity and productivity  
• epdm single ply roof membrane plus combined root fleece and water retention 'egg crate' matting followed by special lightweight growing medium with recycled content  
• accessible living roofs create vertical relationships and add new dimension to garden
- 9 • house and garden now work together as one productive living unit to enjoy

### small urban permaculture garden



1 suds water management



9 integrated house & garden

front garden



rear garden



side garden



2 making an entrance



8 vertical layering • living roofs



7 decking & water feature



6 social space & woodstore



5 green oak detailing



4 old, new & reclaimed



3 raised beds