

PRO LANDSCAPER

SEPTEMBER 2022

LET'S HEAR IT FROM

Mark Lane,
Mark Lane Designs Ltd

A CITY IN NATURE

Gardens by the Bay
a Decade On

DEBATING THE DECISION

Who is president of
the Landscape Institute?



Could the
COST-OF-LIVING
CRISIS *burst the post-COVID bubble?*

IN THE SHADE *of the* CATALPA TREE

STEFANO MARINAZ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

ALEXANDER SQUARE

PROJECT DETAILS

Project value

£101k

Size of project

62m²

Awards

Currently shortlisted
for SGD Award 2022

Before Stefano Marinaz Landscape Architecture got its hands on it, this garden in southwest London was mainly paved with Yorkstone and there was very little in the way of planting beds. A large catalpa tree stood tall over the garden, providing a lot of shade. This tree became a standout feature for the finished look of the space.

Split onto two levels, the garden corresponds with the ground floor and the basement of a Grade II listed

building in Chelsea's Alexander Square. Stefano Marinaz decided to increase the planting beds, whilst retaining enough space for a small dining table for the clients to enjoy al fresco dining in the summer. Above the circular dining table, pendant lights were hung from simple stainless steel wire whilst also allowing for climbers to be grown on them. Spike lights light the rest of the garden, positioned to highlight pots, trees, paths and other features. ►

For the fence, Stefano Marinaz used iroko, an African wood typically a warm golden colour with an interlocked grain, which can make it difficult to work with at times. It is an extremely durable wood which is rot-resistant.

The paving was partially from the existing site and partially reclaimed.

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On the lower level, a disused pond was transformed into a water feature, offering sound and visual interest to the client's basement office, which faced out into the garden.

A rotting fence was also swapped out for a new, slatted fence using iroko vertical elements of different width and depth to avoid monotony and add drama to the garden boundary. Decorative bronze details were added which resemble a wooden pattern and appear in the spaces between the large pots aligned against the fence, creating a striking visual axis.

Shady successes

Opposite the fence sits a camellia hedge, with dark green leaves studded with white flowers in spring, to enclose the other side of the garden. Despite the garden being southwest facing, the shade from the large catalpa tree influenced the types of plants chosen. On the left-hand side of the tree, for instance, shade-loving perennial were planted.

The top of the steps to the basement are framed by a multi-stemmed, flowering tree, and



in the basement, an existing pool has been transformed and filled with the same shade-loving plants used at street level.

The entire planting palette portrays a woodland planting where ferns, helleborus, *Viola labradorica*, *Anemone nemorosa*, *Gallium odoratum*, *Epimedium*, *Rodgersia pinnata*, *Holboelia latifolia* and other shade loving perennials have found home.

In the details

Whilst the finish of the garden is seamless, Stefano Marinaz had to overcome a few obstacles throughout the project, such as the house being under renovation by ►

- 1 Gorgeous sights at the central seating area
 - 2 Stairwell and seating area with iroko fencing
 - 3 Water feature as seen from above
 - 4 A spot to relax together amongst the greenery
- Photographs ©Alister Thorpe



The plant selection included some special and unusual plants such as: *Cardiocrinum giganteum*, *Arisaema tortuosum*, *Disporum longistylum* 'Night Heron', and *Beesia calthiflora*, as well as the climber *Schisandra rubriflora* the flower of which resembles the pendant lights over the dining table.

Smallwood Architects. While the refurbishment work was taking place, the team only had access from the front, and everything – including heavy pots – had to go through a limited route that required going through the house and out the rear via the garden door, which was only around 80cm wide.

It was also the first time Stefano Marinaz was testing the bronze inserts as part of the

iroko fence, and so there was a bit of concern at the start as to how well it would work and last. But details such as this have given the garden an edge and have enabled the team to create a green, shaded oasis within central London.

5 Atelier Vierkant pots provide luxurious colourways across the garden
Photographs ©Alister Thorpe

REFERENCES

Landscape contractor
Bamboo Landscaping
bamboolandscaping.co.uk

Pots
Atelier Vierkant
ateliervierkant.com

Pendant lights
and table
Paola Lenti
paolalenti.it/en

Chairs
Tribú
tribu.com/en

Bronze details
Officina Coppola
officinacoppola.com

Plants
Hortus Locī
hortusloci.co.uk

ABOUT

Stefano Marinaz Landscape Architecture was set up 10 years ago, inspired by the vision of giving as many people as possible the opportunity to have a beautifully designed garden. Today, it can offer all the design, landscaping and installation services you need to transform your open space into a wonderful garden. It is a chartered member of the British Landscape Institute, members of the SGD and of the Dutch NVTL. With offices in both London and Utrecht, it manages projects all over Britain, Italy and the Netherlands. And thanks to the recommendations and referrals it receives from clients, its international portfolio is always expanding.
stefanomarinaz.com