



CREATING A VIEW

inside outside - garden design

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Introduction

Extending your home out into the garden is a wonderful way to bring you closer to nature. It offers up the opportunity to design a beautiful space for outdoor living and create the perfect view out into the garden, enhancing the quality of everyday life and your sense of wellbeing.

In this booklet I hope to both inspire and help you to get started, whether you just have a small patio or a more extensive country garden. All photos are from my own projects.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch, I would be happy to help you.

Jo Connolly

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The prominent trend to open up our walls and bring the outside in has fundamentally changed the way we approach home renovations.

Interior and garden design have traditionally been seen as related but quite separate disciplines.

No longer. Our vision has shifted, and we are firmly focused on linking the two together to create a single, seamless design.

The best solutions are achieved when ideas for the home and garden are considered as one from the very beginning.





Create a Beautiful View

Opening-up the back of your house with large glass doors and windows, not only transforms the garden into another room outside but also creates a new, and potentially beautiful view from inside. It offers is an exciting opportunity to compose an outlook that gives you pleasure every day. Taking time to consider what you would like to see and allowing the budget to implement it at the beginning of your extension project, will help ensure that this dream becomes a reality.

Here, combining tables and chairs with greenery, provides functionality whilst retaining the beauty of the garden. A carefully positioned tree disguises less attractive aspects you wish to remain hidden and draws your eye down the length of the garden, making a small space seem more extensive.



The Physical Space

The shape and size of your space will make a difference to the choices you make. Courtyards and smaller spaces are more complex to design and achieve good flow, but it is entirely possible to create a jewel of a design.

Narrow passageways can be opened up by adding mirrors on the walls, much as you would do in the interior of your home, for example. Creating groups of pots and planting in the center of a patio demands attention, distracting you from the walls and fencing if they are nearer than you would like..



Your Taste & Style

The view of the garden can impact your mood and improve your wellbeing. It can be a real sanctuary in our busy lives. This is most easily achieved when your garden reflects your personal taste and style and that of your interior, flowing seamlessly outside.

We are well used to considering the look and style we want to achieve in our interior design, but often we do not give as much time to thinking about this aspect in our garden design. Do you prefer contemporary, minimalist lines, a monochromatic colour palette and informal green and white planting? Perhaps, you prefer a more traditional space with pots, planters, colourful borders and more relaxed materials? The choice is yours.



More is Less

Changing the shape on the ground with layers and breaking up the boundaries with careful placement of planting and furniture creates a more open look and feel. Adding more on the ground can create a greater sense of space than if it were left open as your main view is not just the boundary walls or fences.

A single stunning piece of carefully lit garden artwork e.g., a piece of sculpture or large urn, can be a very worthwhile investment, adding beauty to the garden whether you are viewing it from inside or out.





Complimentary Materials

Using complementary materials will help to achieve a gentle calming and cohesive effect, particularly when combined with soft planting.

Here, the stunning feature wall colours have been picked out in the neutral grey tones in the paving, the painted wall colours and the warmer rusts in the shower piping.





Floor levels

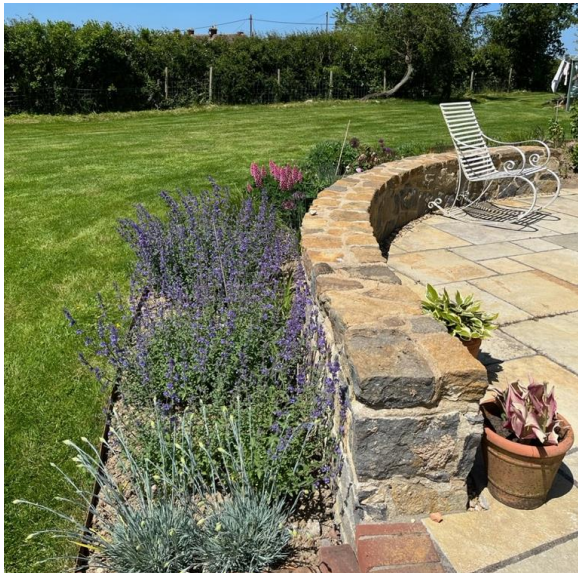
Creating different floor levels is a great way to maximise your space and zone areas for different activities. It is particularly relevant for smaller urban gardens where every inch of space is at a premium.

Levels also have an important role to play in larger spaces adding to the journey of discovery as you explore every area, from sunken seating for cozy entertaining to discreet play zones or spaces for sports or swimming pools.

The ground level outside your home is usually lower than the house, so you will need to consider if you would prefer steps down or to build up an area of patio. Where a house is built on a hill you have a fabulous opportunity to build in areas water features, planting and entertaining areas at different levels, which can be really interesting.

There are selection of beautiful materials to choose exterior porcelain tiles, perhaps to match with your interior kitchen, to natural stone and wood or long-lasting composite decking. Here we can see work in progress on decking in one of my London projects. Note the wires for integrated lighting about to be added.





Fit For Purpose

What do you want to use the space for? Are you someone who likes to spend a lot of time outside in the garden or is it more important to create visual impact from inside the house, with occasional use from time to time? Is it important to you to create an additional living area?

Answering these questions will direct you to create a design that is fit for purpose, with the boundaries of space and budget.

You might like a larger dining table for family & friends, a quiet spot with bench and sofas to sit and read or simply a small table and chairs for two to enjoy a cup of tea.



Privacy

Feeling a sense of privacy is key to enjoyment of using the space. Consider increasing the height of boundaries may help with this? Planting can also create screening & soften fences. Think about your boundaries, what can you do to them to increase your privacy?.....adding greenery also creates a more interesting backdrop.

A small, deciduous tree or hedge on stilts may help with higher level screening whilst still letting in ample winter light.





Vertical Treatments

What is the shape of the space? Small areas can feel even smaller and more enclosed surrounded by hall walls and fences. Mirrors are a useful tool to reflect light and open up the space visually.





Informal seating with a fire-bowl or a table and chairs, blur the lines of the boundaries to create a more interesting layout.



Overall Design Layout

The success of the overall layout will ensure the functionality & flow of the space. Here are a few tips for creating a successful overall garden layout:

- Maintaining space around door openings and dining tables and chairs will allow for continuous access and flow.
- Built in furniture can also save space in smaller areas, if it is comfortable for you.
- Ensuring that there is space around the BBQ to put food & drinks might be useful for outdoor eating.
- The location of a small shed or storage area that won't dominate your view might be nicely screened should be considered.
- Locate shrubs & plants where they will allow enough light, create shade or screening, a lovely backdrop or possibly as a feature.





Protection from all weather

There are many types of protection from the weather depending on your requirements.

A permanent roof allows all year use but how to let light through is an important consideration, especially in the dark winter months. Retractable & louvered covers give flexibility.

An open pergola with deciduous planting are lovely for enjoyment in good weather or an umbrella that can be tucked away when not in use may suffice.





Use complimentary materials, create focal points and highlights with planted urns, sculpture, feature plants, walls/screens.

This creates a harmonious flow throughout the space. Repetition also works well linking materials, furniture, accessories and beautiful planting.





Greenery

Green up & soften fences with climbers, shrubs & garden beds.
Think texture, shape & form to create an interesting plant palette.





Pots, urns & planters

There are a myriad of choices.

Modern, rustic, patterned, monochrome, round, square and everything in between.

Group pots together in different sizes for interest. Large pots are a must for larger shrubs and small trees to sustain them over time and watering is essential.

Pots are great for feature plants and seasonal interest. They can be moved around the garden seasonally to create year round interest.





Features

Sculpture, freestanding or attached to walls command interest in a space. Water features have soothing sounds & a cool environment.

Freestanding or planted urns combine planting and impact. Set features in garden beds or within hard landscaped areas for real impact.



Outdoor Seating

Dining seating might need to be stacked & stored when not in use & tables with extensions can create flexibility in tighter spaces.

Relaxed seating can be heavy & more solid or have a lighter feel. Consider where to store cushions over the winter or select all weather fabrics for year-round use.





A quiet place to relax and enjoy your outdoor space can become a real haven in our busy lives. Locating that spot requires special thought to catch the sun or sit in the cool shade on a sunny afternoon.

The furniture you select will allow you to use the space as you would like so take time to see what fits physically, suits your purpose and links with overall look of the space.



Outdoor Cooking

A basic BBQ will always benefit from somewhere in the immediate vicinity to place food, drinks, trays etc.

Hiding or storing a gas bottle or a small woodstore might need to be considered also if mains gas is not plumbed in.

Outdoor kitchens top budget items so consider how often & what you will mostly cook outside to decide exactly what you need.

Perhaps a bar or high-level table would be fun! Putting furniture like this on castors allows great flexibility and multipurposing in a small space.





Materials

Selecting the right flooring materials for your lifestyle & the overall look of the space is key.

Rustic pavers, honed porcelain, timber or composite decking will all give a different overall look which should compliment your interior flooring.

Consider who and how it is being used when selecting the paving. Very pale, smooth paving might require more maintenance to keep stain free in high use areas which you may not have time to maintain.





Gravel

Gravel, pebbles and stones are permeable and allow water to penetrate the ground below thus reducing run off.

It creates a softer, informal feel without requiring formal edges and can be planted into without requiring defined garden beds.

There are many colours, sizes & finishes so compliment your interior with your selection.

Gravel can travel and be carried in shoe treads so consider some paving immediately outside the doors inside to avoid scratches on wooden floors.

Paving steppers set in gravel can reduce your hard paving whilst still allowing a solid tread underfoot.

Wood & Composite Decking

There are many new options available now to traditional wood decking which can get slippery in shade & wet conditions as well as requiring regular manual maintenance.

Composite decking & battening for walls & fences are available in a great range of colours, tones & textures & requires minimal upkeep once laid.



Decking is really useful for level changes in a garden without the expense of walling & built in steps. It can hide uneven ground, pipework & drains below whilst still allowing access.

Decking material can also be used for built in seating and wall treatments which can link the horizontal and vertical planes.

As with other materials, select from a more modern feel with a smoother finish or wider, rustic size board for a more rustic feel & colour coordinate with your interior.



Level Changes & Access

Changes of level in a space require access & can range from informal, simple wooden steps to masonry walling.

Consider the heights & width of the steps to link the upper & lower levels and create flow between the two levels. A ramp may be more useful for a wheel barrow or wheelchair access if the space allows.



Garden Lighting

Garden lighting adds such ambience to a garden space, much like lamps and feature lights do inside the home.

Lighting a garden ensures you can enjoy it all year round, especially though long winter months. It creates a room with a view which really adds to your outlook from within the home.

Light key features, trees for impact and on steps and paths for safety. A small amount of LED lighting goes along way, so less is more is my advice.





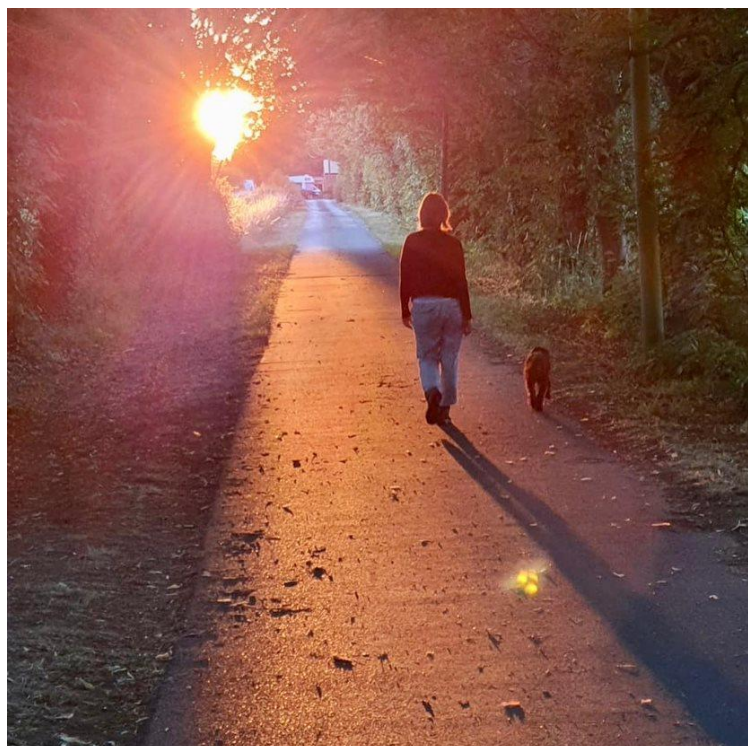
Larger Spaces

Larger spaces are not restricted by a limit of space but still require thought as to what will be located where. Even the most low-maintenance garden beds require some upkeep so their size & planting selections require careful consideration.

Location of main entertaining areas should be linked to the house for regular use whilst a path leading to a quiet, private seating area can lead you through the garden on an interesting journey. Pools, ponds, tennis courts & other outdoor activities also require careful thought for location in the overall garden layout.



Creating a beautiful view has never felt so important and worth considering at the beginning of your home and garden project.



Jo Connolly

Working across London and the home counties, Jo started her business in Adelaide, Australia, before returning to the UK in 2017.

A perfectionist in all that she does Jo continues to research and build her knowledge for selecting plants to withstand all soil and climate conditions.

She supports clients on both sides of the world, and has great experience in working remotely, whilst visiting Australia in December each year when the world of garden design is relatively quiet in the UK.

All featured gardens are designed by
Gardenbuddi Jo Connolly.



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