

**PROJECT  
DETAILS**

**Project value**

£150k+

**Build time**

6 months

**Size of project**

0.5 acres

**S**panning one and a half acres, this Buckinghamshire property needed a new lease of life. The existing house was knocked down and redesigned by Spratley & Partners Architects, and the half-acre garden needed to match the new, more modern exterior. Angus Thompson Design was tasked with creating a family garden with both entertaining spaces for the adults as well as a lawn for the young children to play which could also serve as an event area in the future, with space for a marquee. ▶

1 Poolside lounge seating

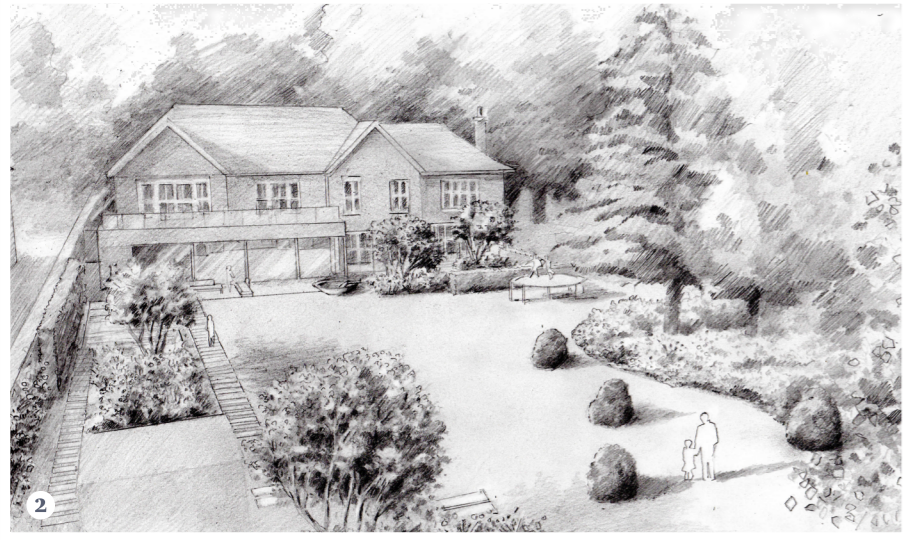
*From city to*  
**SERENITY**

**ANGUS THOMPSON DESIGN**

**PRIVATE GARDEN, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

1





The end of the garden backed onto the woodland beyond and so the clients wanted to add privacy whilst also creating the impression that the woodland was part of their outdoor space. They also wanted the children's play equipment and an existing playhouse to be accommodated, and the design of the terrace to suit al fresco dining for around eight people.

A pool room or storage option was to be considered, as was relocating the pool if necessary. For the materials, the clients preferred sawn stone and a grey colour scheme. For the front garden, granite setts or similar were discussed, and the idea of a curving drive with garden elements around the house proved popular, providing there was space to turn a vehicle comfortably.



**Taking the plunge**

It was decided that the existing pool would be retained, despite being in a "challenging position," says Angus Thompson. "It's not quite aligned with the house, which has strong geometry." A bold design response was needed, so Thompson used strong axial gestures of sawn and tumbled Yorkstone around the pool to link to the architecture of the house and seamlessly flow into the path leading to it.

For the children's play equipment, it was decided that a dedicated space would not be required as it would not be relevant in a few years' time as the children would outgrow it. The existing playhouse was kept, and the equipment left within view of the kitchen window, though off centre with the trampoline screened by planting heads whilst still being visible from the kitchen.

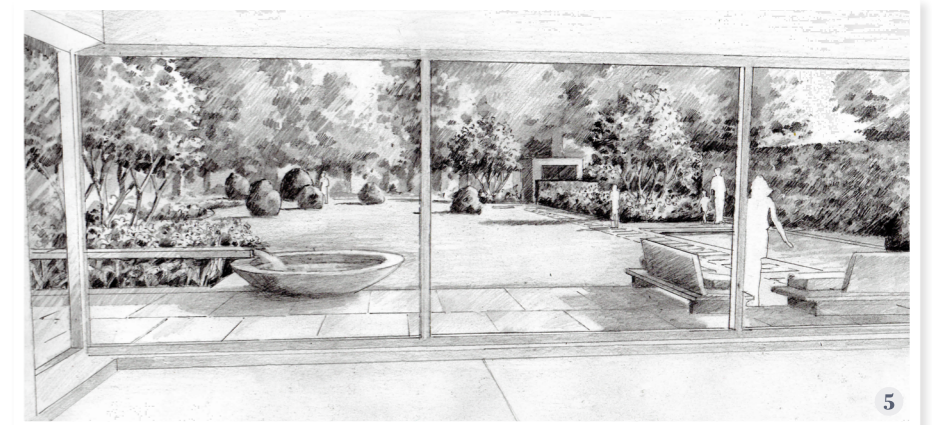
The large 'zonal' terrace takes its cue from the architecture, using sawn stone where seating and dining are positioned, whilst

softened with cobbles for a more traditional feel with sawnstone paving beneath the table and chairs, responding to the architecture and including planting such as *Amelanchier* multi-stems and perennial underplanting.

*Iris sibirica* and *Astrantia 'Roma'* help to add colour to the garden, whilst herbaceous perennials such as *Heuchera villosa*

'Autumn Bride' and *Allium nigrum* provide a paler, more contemporary tone. ▶

- 2 Axonometric sketch of rear garden
- 3 Swimming pool framed in 'Combedale cobbles'
- 4 Sawn stone 'tongue' within larger terrace by perennial borders and multi-stem *Amelanchiers*
- 5 Kitchen view of the new Spratley & Partners house







**Budding gardeners**

The existing mature woodland at the end of the garden allowed the garden to feather out from formality closer to the house to informality towards the end; from manicured lawn to wildflower fringe to woodland. Holly hedging was used to subtly mark the boundary to the woodland.

Driven by sun and semi-shade requirements, the planting scheme had an emphasis on length of season, seasonality and relatively low maintenance, though the clients were keen to learn and to introduce their children to gardening.

The clients had moved from London and were new to gardening, but Thompson says they were open to introducing seasonality and softness to the garden. They have even started a herb garden to teach their children to grow their own. This, for Thompson, was the most satisfying part of the project; to see the clients take pride and invest in their new outdoor space.

- 6 Terrace path of Combedale cobbles
  - 7 View back to house from wider woodland garden
- Photographs ©Rachel Warne



**REFERENCES**

Contractor  
**Gardenlink**  
 gardenlink.co.uk

Hard landscaping  
**Artorius Faber**  
 artoriusfaber.com

Trees  
**Deepdale**  
 deepdale-trees.co.uk

Perennials  
**Arvensis Perennials**  
 arvensisperennials.co.uk  
**Crocus**  
 crocus.co.uk

Furniture  
**Cane Line**  
 cane-line.co.uk

**ABOUT**

In 2004, Angus graduated from the Inchbald School of Garden Design with the Principal's Award, where he is now a guest lecturer. His Oxford studio has built a reputation for creating beautiful, multi-layered gardens of quiet elegance, and holds an RHS Gold for the 'Nature Ascending' garden at Chelsea Flower Show.  
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