



Working with what you have

Fox Whyte Landscape Architecture & Design Inc. create a warm garden space despite size and budget constraints.

The design development for this garden in Toronto started in the spring of 2005. Although an avid gardener, the client was finding the maintenance on the back garden overwhelming and the space impractical for how she wished to use the garden. A Norway maple in a neighbouring yard was also proving to be a challenge.

The original intent was to try to salvage some of the existing brickwork and stone paving. But, on close inspection and after review with the contractor, it was determined that complete replacement of the existing materials was required.

Demolition of the existing garden took up a large portion of the budget because of difficult access to the site and the discovery of a buried concrete fountain that had to be removed.

Providing a usable space within the client's budget was challenging, but was achieved by keeping some of the existing elements including the fence, concrete

planters and a wood deck off the house.

The heavy concrete planters, which would have been difficult to move, were incorporated into the garden and highlighted by the stone bands, which help define the different areas of the garden. Combining accents of higher end materials, like the stone banding and stepping stones in combination with the pea gravel and unit paving, give the space interest through the varying textures, while the use of the brick-hue unit paving ties the patio in with the brickwork of the neighbouring house at the end of the garden.

With an east-west alignment and little cover, the garden receives a substantial amount of sun. To cool things down a bit, the contractor was careful to dig around an existing Virginia creeper; the mature vine lent a sense of establishment to the garden once the construction was completed.

Two river birches were added to provide the space with a much needed

vertical element and shade; they also help softening the look of the imposing brick wall.

A raised terrace at the rear of the garden provides additional interest and definition to the space and provides a platform to display a special urn with seasonal arrangements. Extensive bulb plantings of daffodils below the trees provide a wonderful hit of interest first thing in the spring, carpeting the back planter in white.

A palette of neutrals, based on whites and chartreuse, is accented by purples and lavenders. Grasses and shrubs add structure and seasonal interest to the garden.

By consolidating the hard paving to one area and surrounding it with the softening effects of planting on a smaller scale, the client now has a functional and pleasant spot for breakfast outdoors as well as a manageable garden she can take pleasure from working in. ❧

