

A lush garden scene featuring a stream with moss-covered rocks and various plants. The water is clear, reflecting the surrounding greenery. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

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STOCKHOLM HIGHLIGHTS
DESIGNER PROFILE: VICTOR SHANLEY
THE STEPPES OF SOMERSET
STUDENT SHOWCASE
CHARMED BY CHAUMONT
DECKING WITH STYLE AND SUBSTANCE



STATUTORY APPROVALS

A deck would not normally require planning permission or building regulations approval. However if the deck overlooks neighbours, or if the main building is listed or in a conservation area, then planning permission may be required. If the deck is set at a first floor level, planning and building regulations approvals should be sought. To avoid problems before proceeding too far with the design it is prudent for all deck proposals to approach the local authority for an informal comment on regulation requirements. Advise your client accordingly if permissions are required.

To customise your design, look out for unusual items or create them yourself — a focal point fire pit, a spa pool and automatically watered flower boxes topping balustrades. Decks are here to stay!

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GARDEN BY THE RIVER THAMES IN RICHMOND, SURREY

DESIGNER ANDREW FISHER TOMLIN, CONTRACTOR PAUL ALDER LANDSCAPED GARDENS

The client, a practising artist, commissioned Andrew Fisher Tomlin to create a new garden for her own sculpture but also as an innovative space in its own right. The brief merely asked that the garden be new, different and exciting.

A number of concepts were generated and one idea was chosen as the most original and exciting to develop and build. The design uses a structure of decked levels radiating out from a central circle and includes deep, mysterious pools. The decking is used to provide seating, walks through the space and a strong axis which, combined with water, lights and planting, emphasises the overall garden structure and its connection with the house. In particular the views down onto the garden from the first and second floor balconies, crucial to the client, are dramatic and focus the eye into the garden.

The view out of the garden towards a wide stretch of the River Thames is maintained. The focus created within the garden complements this, using water in a stylised way against the natural progress of the river beyond the garden's boundaries. Striking blue uplighters have been sunk into the decking in continuation of the pools and to emphasise the radial structure. These provide a very different atmosphere at night.

A simple palette of soft colours has been used for planting, restricted to just a few different species planted in radiating arcs to complement the structure of the decking and to create a calming environment.

While the layout of the decking was simple and clear the radial nature of the design required timber to be sawn on an angle, each plank narrowing towards one end. Much of the work involved in preparing the timber was carried out off-site. The decking was then laid down on site bringing, together the different elements in much the same way as a stage set might be built.

It was essential that each piece of timber be laid and fixed on a uniform angle radiating from a central point. Each level was then boxed in for both aesthetic and practical reasons. The underlying structure often misled the eye and thus constant checking of angles, both real and perceived, was carried out. In combining the fibre glass pools and lighting within the structure of the decking, the attention to detail shown by the contractor, Paul Alder Landscaped Gardens, was vital in order to achieve a high quality finish.

The design of the decking created a number of challenges. However, with close liaison between the designer, contractor and the specialist companies brought into the project, these challenges were successfully met to provide the client with a striking new space complementary to the house, sculpture and surrounding landscape.

Andrew Fisher Tomlin