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OUTSIDE ROOM

Rattan furniture makes the best of a third room for a similar set, top level. Planters from Christmas Day and purple Porosax screens from The Garden Centre and a selection of plants. Suitable for public areas. (Information is provided by the relevant local authority. From the Garden Centre.)



NIGHT AMBIENCE

The lighting scheme has been designed and installed by Earth Designs to highlight the features of the new space. The modern planters are filled with Lush plants (see www.earthdesigns.co.uk) and Christmas trees (see www.earthdesigns.co.uk).

'Our outdoor area is perfect

Emma and Paddy Foyle followed expert advice to turn their small yard into a garden with wow-factor, maximising space with separate zones

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPH BY MARCUS HAMPUR

FACT FILE

THE OWNERS

Emma Foyle, a housewife, and her husband Paddy, an account manager for an IT company, live here with daughters Daisy, 11, and Erin, eight

THE PROPERTY

An Edwardian terraced house

THE LOCATION

Sewmoats, Kent

WHAT THEY SPENT

The couple's garden project cost around £27,500



Emma and Paddy Foyle (left) sit around the table, which sets the scene for the garden design by Earth Designs.

After 10 years of living in our terraced house, my husband Paddy and I realised we could make so much more of our outdoor space,' explains Emma. With their two daughters, Daisy and Erin, past the age of playing with sandpits and swings, the Foyles decided to go for a radical change and made a big decision that would revolutionise their enjoyment of their home and garden.

A passionate gardener for many years, Emma also grows vegetables on the family allotment next to their home, so she didn't feel the garden needed to include lots of areas of planting or provide space for growing food. Instead, the couple wanted a stylish but functional eating, lounging

for summer entertaining'

and entertaining area with plenty of wow factor. The problem they faced was how to create it in a narrow plot that measured only five metres wide.

Emma realised that to achieve their dream, they would have to call in expert help. Having typed 'small garden designer' into her favourite internet search engine, she quickly found Earth Designs, a design and build team from north London that specialises in urban outdoor living, and they immediately struck the right chord with Emma. 'I don't usually go for "wow" ideas, but I was open to suggestions about the design,' she says. 'I didn't want a small lawn with a shed. And, as the house is quite old, I was keen to have a new design that would complement the property by mixing both old and new.'

Kateina Geller-Wells, who runs Earth Designs with her husband, Matt, says it is important for her to know her clients' ideas

and to find out if they prefer traditional designs or would be happy to accept a more modern look. 'The Foyles gave me free rein with the design of the space,' recalls Kateina, who created several mood boards and spent time with Emma looking through a range of design books as part of the planning process.

Taking Emma and Patrick's desire for an eating, lounging and entertaining place as a starting point, the challenge was how to cram it all into the plot, which measured 15 by five metres. 'Most of the gardens that I work on are that sort of shape, and there are plenty of techniques that can be used to maximise the space,' says Kateina.

The principal technique was to divide the garden into three sections. Nearest the kitchen is a bespoke table, surrounded on two sides by food seating and raised, herb-filled beds. 'This is my favourite part of the garden,' says Emma. 'We sit outside

at the large table all the time, especially for breakfast. It's so easy to just take a plate outside and sit on the big bench.'

The second section contains most of the soft planting, with beds bisected by paths made from decking. The paths are set on the diagonal, which helps provide more room for plants and creates the illusion of space. Much of the planting area is covered with shingle, alternated with banks of cobbles – a practical choice that took into consideration the family's two dogs.

The final third of the space is given over to comfort and relaxation, with the creation of an outdoor living room complete with a rattan furniture set and coffee table. This area has a glamorous feel, featuring a giant stainless-steel planter, stylish mesh partitions and dramatic lighting, which provides a relaxed ambience in the evening.

As the garden faces east, the end nearest the house is in shade in the afternoon. ▶

ORIGINAL GARDEN

Right The narrow shape of the space was one of the main design elements.

BEFORE



DINING SPACE

Left A zig-zagging pathway made from decking leads from the doorway to the kitchen through the garden. The outdoor wet cushions are from Parawatch Interiors.

SEPARATE ZONES

Above Dividers made with mesh from Birch Street define the areas. In the centre, Suzi's cabinet from Spaceline Aggregates offers a decorative alternative to bark mulch.

Katrina's team finished the garden project within the six-week schedule, and Emma can now look forward to a summer of entertaining alfresco. 'It was a very good investment to create such a fantastic space,' she says. 'It was definitely worth going for the best we could afford. Skirting always catches up with you further down the line, especially with features such as lighting.'

'Thanks to Katrina's input, we were able to maximise the amount of space,' she continues, 'and we've created a garden with the wow-factor we were after.' ☺

THE COSTS

Perplex screens	£5,400
Sandstone paving	£8,900
Decking	£3,600
Planters	£3,400
Planting	£2,900
Lighting	£2,800
Raised bed	£2,400
Decking seating	£1,200
Clearance and preparation	£1,268
TOTAL	£27,468

while the far end is sunny, so the family can alternate between the two seating areas depending on the time of day.

Mounted on wooden frames, the screens made from purple-coloured Perplex and stainless-steel mesh are one of the most striking features of the finished design. 'The screens help to break up the long space as well as providing privacy,' explains Emma, 'while the bright people shade ensures there is plenty of interest in the garden, even on dull days or during the winter months.'

The lighting scheme adds yet another dimension to the garden design. 'Lighting is quite expensive,' explains

Katrina, 'so it's vital to get it right and have it installed by a qualified electrician. Often, people place lights facing upwards in their outdoor space, but the light has no impact

and just disappears.' In the 'Suzi's' garden, the lighting illuminates Emma's lavender purple planters and is also used to backlight the Perplex screens.

The planting is designed to create long-lasting colour and movement, so grasses move in the breeze, and *Alchemilla* and *Phlox paniculata* provide evergreen interest. *Echinacea* give touches of colour and last for weeks, offering shape both in the summer and then in the autumn, when they

have sculptural seed-heads. As part of the illusion of space, planters have been sandwiched between the screens to create

a multi-layered effect. Not only does this help to make the garden seem larger, but the planters also make striking shadows on the screens when they are lit at night.

“The screens help to break up the long space as well as providing privacy”

THE PLANS

AFTER



The garden has been divided into sections, with a dining and party space nearest the house, an area of planting in the centre, and a raised bed design at the south.

THE CONTACTS

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Containers
Plant Pot
Plant Landscaping
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