

FIVE X FIVE SERIES (projects smaller than 25 sq.m.)

Patio in Lymington, Hampshire completed Summer 2006

The rear garden of this semi-detached property was on two levels. The upper level at the back of the garden, was reached by stone steps and laid to lawn. My client wanted to reduce maintenance time in the garden and the decision was made to replace the lawn with a simple paved area.

My client was keen to keep the irregular shape that the lawn had formed in order to match the informal style of the garden and so I opted for a loose slab arrangement in parallel lines with wide, unmortared gaps filled with fine shingle.

This arrangement was deliberate as it ensured that rain water could drain through the shingle rather than run off down to the lower level near the house (the garden is on heavy clay).

I also offset each slab row and made them finish short of the rockery surrounds at both ends so that there would be no cuts in the slabs.

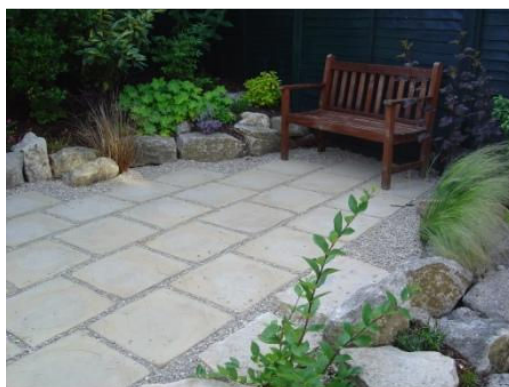
This effectively subordinated the paving to the surrounding features, which included fine rockery terrace work. I also carefully chose the slab range and colour (Saxon Natural) to blend well with the existing Purbeck stone.

The area around the slabs was laid with the same fine shingle over membrane and included some infill planting (mainly grasses, *Carex buchananii* and *Stipa tenuissima*) in the larger gaps.

The finished effect is of an informal, unfussy and irregular upper patio area that aims to accentuate the attractive design of the pre-existing rockery outcrops. Maintenance time is dramatically reduced to occasional weeding of seedlings that have grown in the shingle gaps.



^ BEFORE: the lawn removed, area levelled and prepared for slabs. Purbeck stones were resited.



^ v AFTER: slabs laid in rows at an offset angle with wide gaps between slab rows filled with fine shingle

