

Sway, Hampshire, UK completed Summer 2006

This New Forest cob-built cottage sits in a mature garden that slopes quite steeply across the plot. A small brook bisects the garden and adds a wonderful dimension to the garden experience.

My clients felt that the garden was a little tired and wanted a sympathetic design that would 'lift' it and make the most of the garden's considerable natural assets. They also wanted the new patio area to be retained at approximately the same size and in the same place.



I like gardens with slopes! In this case, though, I felt that the slope was too powerful – the house was working against it, in some way. By using a strong horizontal theme near the house I aimed to bring back some balance in the garden. Now, the house seems to stand tall in its plot.

A curving theme softened the large paved areas and the new lawn laps around the whole structure like a green sea, uniting all the various elements. A combination of pale, creamy orange sandstone paving and brick (to match the existing brick on the double garage base) and oak for the pergola structures was adopted throughout the garden and really brought out the warm colour wash on the house walls.



I also sculpted away some of the bank to reveal the stream and replaced an old sleeper bridge with an attractive focal point. The view from the bridge across the garden is sublime.



< The combination of sandstone and brick complements the house colour wash

> An old bridge was replaced by a custom-designed version. The new bridge alerts the garden visitor to the stream in the gully below

I feel the garden has succeeded in its aim to lift the whole property and allow my clients to maximise their time in the garden, entertaining, gardening or simply pottering. The sloping site has been harnessed to provide the garden with a strong sense of movement and flow.

