

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT



IN RESPECT OF:

INSTALLATION OF A NEW ENTRANCE, METAL GATE AND ASSOCIATED PATHWAYS AND STEPS.

AT:

FITZROY SQUARE GARDENS
LONDON
W1T 6EP

CLIENT:

FITZROY SQUARE FRONTAGERS AND GARDEN
COMMITTEE
FITZROY SQUARE
LONDON
W1T 6EP

PREPARED BY
DATE
DOC REF

- N G Rickard BSc MRICS
- 14th April 2015
- NGR/5069/d&a statement



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1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This statement forms part of a Planning Application for the installation of a new entrance with matching metal access gateway to the central gardens to include the associated entrance, pathways and steps.
- 1.2 This Supporting Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Brittain Hadley on behalf of the Frontagers and Garden Committee.
- 1.3 The new gate has been designed so that it blends fully with the existing railings.
- 1.4 A fully designed entrance with associated pathways and steps has been provided by John Brookes MBE Landscape Architect.
- 1.5 The new entrance will provide improved access to the private garden amenity for all residents within the Square.
- 1.6 The Drawings that accompany this statement and the application are: -
- 5069 – Site Location Plan
 - 5069/01A Proposed Plan
 - Metalcraft (Tottenham) Ltd drawing numbered FG-003
 - John Brookes Plan A (Rev 13.05.14) – showing new gate and brick entrance path
 - John Brookes Plan B (Rev 16.06.14)– showing new gate and brick entrance path

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND RELEVANT HISTORY

- 2.1 The gardens in question sit centrally within the Square of Grade I and II* Listed Buildings with the roadways around the gardens being pedestrianised in the 1970's.
- 2.2 A brief history of the Square and the gardens follows for information:
- 2.3 **Fitzroy Square**
- 2.3.1 Fitzroy Square was the centrepiece of a speculative development between 1793 and 1798 designed by the eminent Scottish architects Robert and James Adam. The buildings on the east and south sides of the square are Grade I listed. With the exception of no 14, the buildings on the north and west sides of the square are Grade II* listed.
- 2.3.2 The east and south sides of the square were designed by Robert Adam, as one of his last major works before his death in March 1792. Several months later the building leases for the east side were granted by Lord Southampton with Nos. 3 to 8 being leased to Robert's younger brothers – James and William Adam. Construction of the south side of the square began in 1794. Work on the north and west ranges began in 1827.

FITZROY SQUARE GARDENS, LONDON, W1T 6EP

- 2.3.3 The east and south sides was designed as a unified composition in subdued relief that bore greater similarity to Robert Adam's Edinburgh work than his London terraces. The composition of the principle elevation took precedent over the arrangement of the houses behind, and often the party walls did not correspond to the main structural features of the range.

2.4 Fitzroy Square Garden

- 2.4.1 A circular communal garden with shrubberies and perimeter walk was planted in the centre of Fitzroy Square by 1798.
- 2.4.2 In the 1960s, the London Transport Board used Fitzroy Square Garden as a construction staging area and excavation access point for the construction of the London Underground Victoria line, the first deep-level underground line to be built across central London since the beginning of the 20th Century. The local authority took the opportunity to pedestrianise Fitzroy Square and, in 1972, commissioned Geoffrey Jellicoe to draw up landscape plans.
- 2.4.3 At this same time, John Brookes developed a comprehensive redesign of Fitzroy Square Gardens, which had been significantly damaged during the Victoria line construction works. Brooke's plans for the garden took into account the setting of the gardens relative to the nearby listed buildings, and the mature London plane trees around the perimeter of the garden. Brooke's design focused on creating an open, undulating landscape with grassy banks for sitting and sunbathing, with additional shrub planning under the plane trees on the perimeter to provide the Frontagers with privacy. Denser shrub planting inside the garden entrance on the north side of the square housed a garden store and service area, screened from the main central area of the garden by a contoured mound. A curved gravel path led from the main garden entry to a paved area with seating. Based on an underlying pattern of concentric circles, ground contours, formal planting beds and drifts of bulbs are mingled to create an informal garden landscape. The plan is attached as an Appendix to this report.
- 2.4.4 As the project neared completion, Brookes and Jellicoe made further alterations to the garden to allow the planning of an abstract sculpture, *View* by Czech artist Naomi Blake, to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977. Brookes reshaped the mounds on the south side of the garden (where a plane tree had already been removed), designing a low retaining wall plinth of old stock bricks into a bank above and beyond which the sculpture would sit. An uninterrupted view of the sculpture from across the garden and from outside the garden railings is provided for both Frontagers and visitors.

3.0 THE DESIGN

- 3.1 The design in the formation of a new entrance with matching metal gate, entrance, pathways and steps is based solely on protecting the historic landscape to the gardens, with a gate designed to be discrete and blending fully with the existing perimeter railings. The stone plinth on which the current railings sit will be neatly cut away to provide level access from the pavement areas.

3.2 The design for the entrance pathway has been undertaken by John Brookes MBE, Landscape Architect, who as noted earlier in this report has had a long standing working relationship with the gardens and he has developed the design in consultation with English Heritage as noted in their letter of support dated 20th November, 2013, attached to this statement.

3.3 The positioning of the gate is shown on plan 5069/01A.

3.4 The new metalwork will match entirely the surrounding railings in terms of decorative finish.

4.0 THE CASE FOR PERMISSION

4.1 The proposal has taken into account the relevant council policies and guidelines:

4.2 The square has significant history and the proposals have been designed to be discrete and in keeping with the square and the current gardens.

4.3 The entrance pathways and steps to the garden areas have been designed by Landscape Architect John Brookes MBE and these are supported by English Heritage.

4.4 There will be no loss of amenity to square and adjoining areas.

4.5 The proposed works will not have any effect on flooding.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The proposals are to form a new entrance to the gardens from the Southern side of the Square by installing a matching gate with level access entrance, associated pathways and steps within the gardens.

5.2 The proposals have been designed to consider the Councils Policies and guidelines and to protect the significant history to the Square and the central private garden areas.

5.3 The formation of the new entrance will benefit all residents within the square and enhance the use of the amenity.

5.4 The proposals will have no adverse effect on the amenity to the Square.

5.5 The proposals will have no adverse effect on possible flooding of the area.

5.6 This concludes our statement. Should you have any queries, please call us.

APPENDIX I

ENGLISH HERITAGE SUPPORT LETTER



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Mr C. Neil Phoenix
Chairman
Fitzroy Square Frontagers' & Garden Committee
24 Fitzroy Square
London W1T 6EP

Our ref:
Your ref:

Telephone 020 7973 3000
Fax

20 November 2013

Dear Neil

re: **Fitzroy Square landscape proposals**

Thank you very much for inviting me to the site visit and meeting this morning. English Heritage is always glad of the opportunity for informal consultation prior to a planning submission. It was also a great pleasure to meet your Garden Director Edward Turner and your appointed landscape architect John Brookes.

As we discussed the open space is not a Registered Park and Garden the perimeter railings are not listed. I would be happy to support a simple contemporary design that is sympathetic to the surrounding Conservation Area. You are obviously in excellent hands with John Brookes as your designer. There is no need to consult English Heritage further however it may be helpful for you to know of my other main comments.

A key attribute of the square is the view across the open space towards the Grade I listed terrace designed by Robert and James Adam. Any new landscape proposals must retain this visual link. I would support the addition of one simple gate on the south side and feel that having more than two gates is excessive. The long term care and replacement of the Plane trees is an important legacy issue. I would urge you to obtain comprehensive advice from arborists to both reduce and thin the tree crowns by say 30%. This will balance the trees better in relation to both the proportion of the square and the open space and there may also be benefits in reducing the risk of Massaria.

I hope these comments are useful and please do let me know if I can be of further help. With best wishes for a successful project.

Yours sincerely

Zosia Mellor
Landscape Architect
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cc Tim Jones, English Heritage

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Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available



APPENDIX II
JOHN BROOKES
PAPER ON
FITZROY SQUARE

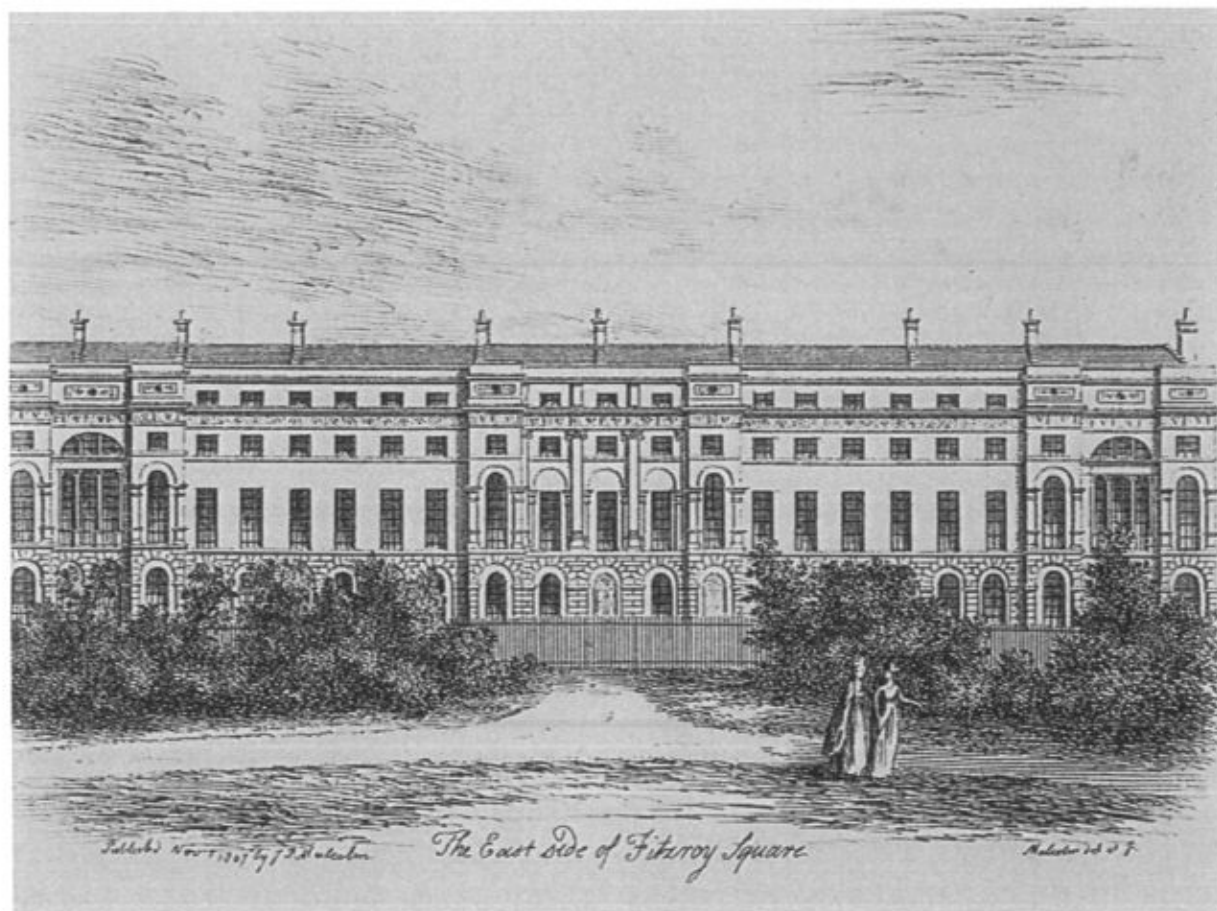
Fitzroy Square

LOCATION: London, England

DATE: 1972



John Brookes Garden and Landscape Designer



As a young landscape designer in the 1960s working in the London office of Brenda Colvin and Sylvia Crowe, Brookes was first introduced to the architect and landscape architect Geoffrey Jellicoe and his wife Susan. They encouraged him to establish his own garden design practice, worked together on the ILA committees and promoted his early work. Jellicoe remained Brookes's mentor and, when he was commissioned to prepare a landscape design for the development of Fitzroy Square in the early 1970s, he asked Brookes to work with him on the redesign of the communal garden (Figures 3.1 and 3.2).

Figure 3.1 (opposite) Residents relax on Brookes's grassy undulating mounds in Fitzroy Square (1983).

Figure 3.2 (above) View of Fitzroy Square's east side with two women walking in the foreground. James Peller Malcolm, 1807.



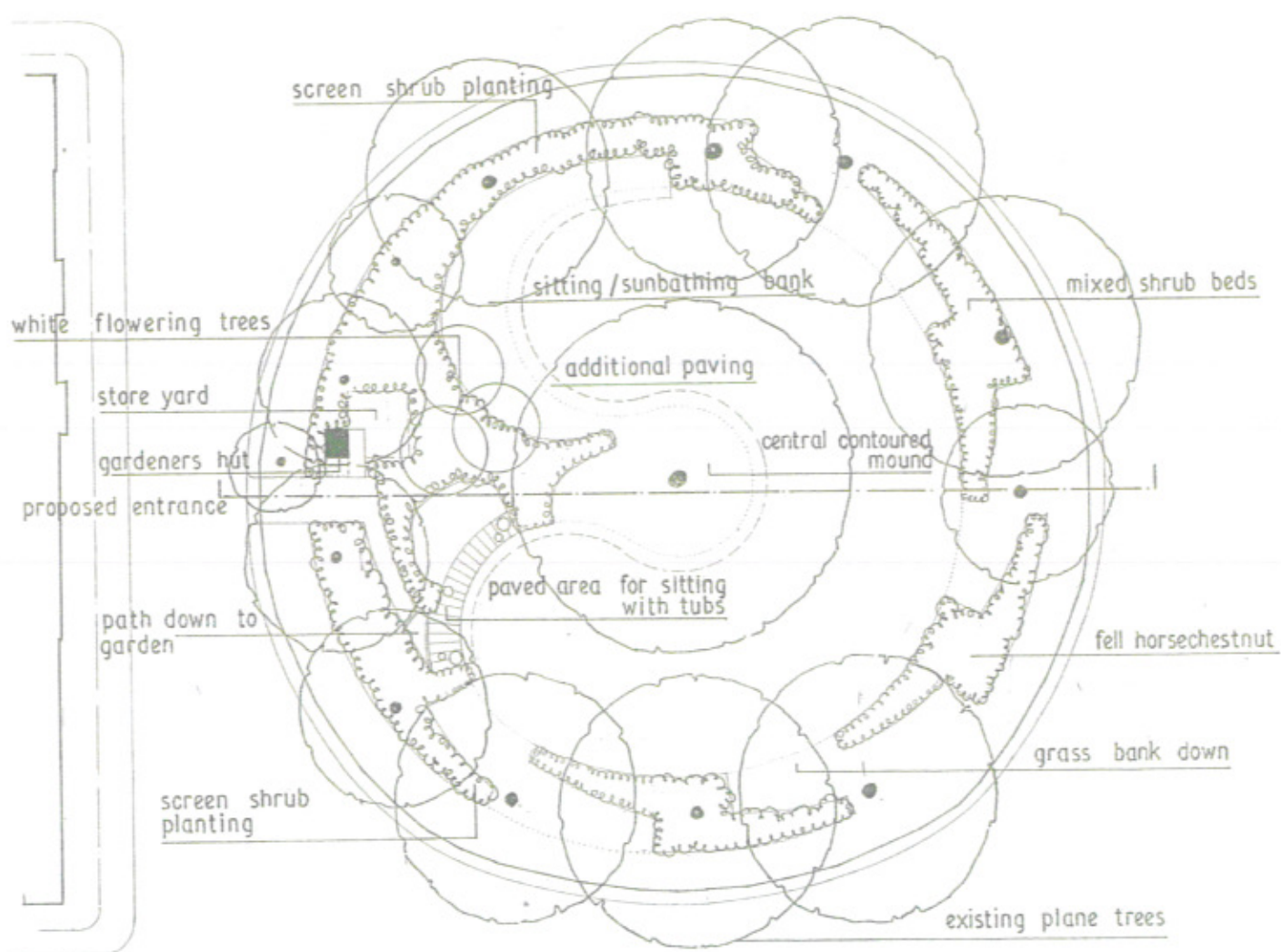
Figure 3.3 (opposite) The plans of Fitzroy Square gardens and environs before and after 19th-century improvements. Watercolour dated 1818.

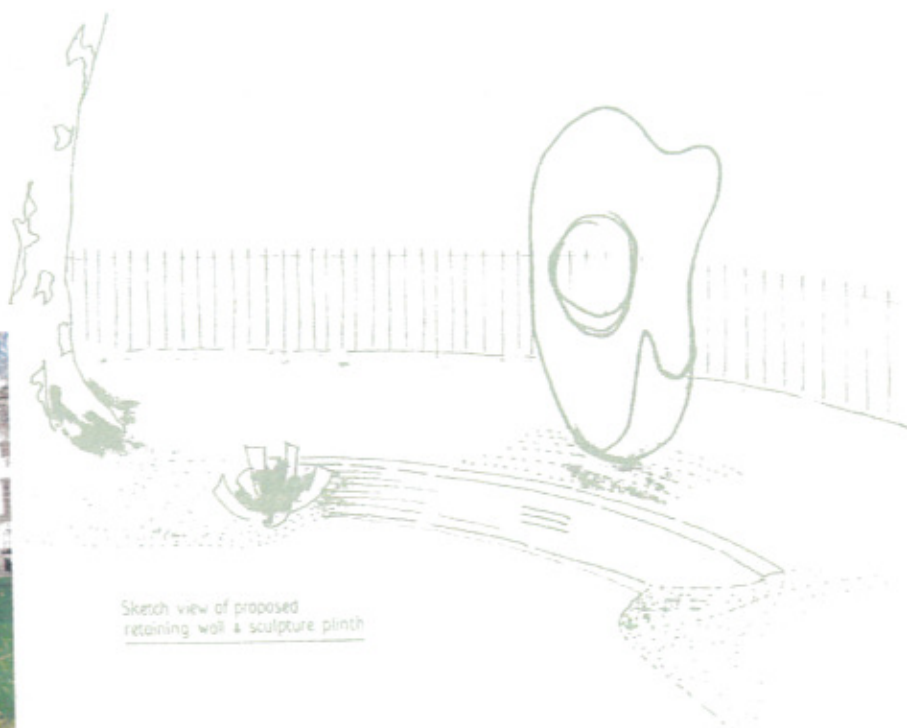
Figure 3.4 (above) Banks of flowering shrubs create intimate areas in the square (1980).

Figure 3.5 (left) Informal shrub planting on the perimeter provides a green space all year round (1983).



Section across square





daffodils, *Narcissus* and *Crocus* studding the grassy mounds to provide a spring display. Denser shrub planting inside the proposed entrance to the garden on the north side of the Square (including *Pyracantha atalantioides*, *Cotoneaster lacteus*, *Hydrangea 'Hortensis'* and variegated holly) also housed a garden store and service area, screened from the main garden by a contoured mound. A curved gravel path led down to a paved area with tubs of plants, and the facility to seat larger groups to accommodate corporate activities and the lunchtime picnics of the employees of the increasing number of offices in the Square. Based on an underlying pattern of concentric circles, ground contours, formal planting beds and drifts of bulbs are mingled to create an informal garden landscape.

As the project neared completion, Brookes and Jellicoe discussed further alterations to the garden to allow the placing of an abstract sculpture, *View* by the Czech artist Naomi Blake,

Figure 3.6 (opposite) 'Fitzroy Square, W1. Sketch landscape plan', dated (erroneously) '28 August 1967', c.1977.

Figure 3.7 (above left) View, Naomi Blake's sculpture (2007).

Figure 3.8 (above right) Sketch view of proposed retaining wall and sculpture plinth, dated 7 February 1977.

to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977. Brookes reshaped the mounds on the south side of the garden (where a plane tree had already been removed), designing a low retaining wall of old stock bricks into a bank above and beyond which the sculpture would sit. The sculpture was uplit through a grille (for safety reasons) and additional bulb planting and a simple complementary planting of *Euphorbia characias* subspecies *wulfenii* were proposed. An uninterrupted view of the sculpture from across the garden and from outside the railings in Fitzroy Square is provided for both residents of and visitors to London's best-preserved Georgian square (Figures 3.7 and 3.8).