

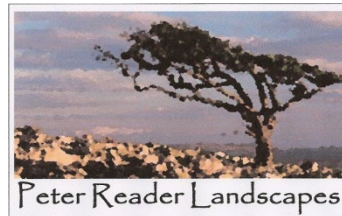
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Re: Screening trellis at 1 The Old Orchard, Hampstead, London, NW3 2TR

To whom it may concern,

My client, Jason Doll-Steinberg first contacted me in May 2021, when I visited him at his home. He was concerned because his neighbours were installing a new staircase from their garden to their first floor. This was being sited so close to the boundary fence, that anyone walking up the stairs would look directly into the living area of his house, even if looking straight ahead. Glancing around whilst on the stairs would give them a complete overview of his garden and into a number of the other rooms of his house. He was understandably upset by this intrusion of his privacy, particularly within his own house and wished to discuss options to restore his previous level of privacy.

We debated a number of options over this visit and indeed several subsequent meetings as we explored various options. The key options were:

1. A small square trellis panel just by the kitchen window.
2. Posts and wires that an evergreen climber could cover in time.
3. Planting medium sized trees near the house to screen the window.
4. A more refined trellis, styled to echo the new steps and restore privacy to its previous levels

Whilst discussing these options we were also acutely aware of the architectural heritage of the Old Orchard houses and were keen to come up with a solution that blended with their design and would complement their style.

Our deliberations concluded the following:

- Option 1 – this would look like an ugly addition just ‘stuck on’ to the house and would also not restore or deliver the required level of privacy

- Option 2 – Again posts and wires would be initially ugly and not in keeping with the house style. Additionally, this solution would take a long time to become effective as the climbers would be required to climb to over 4.0m and to get to a sufficient density to provide the screening. This could easily take up to 5 years. Climbers of sufficient vigour to achieve this also deliver a number of maintenance problems. Due to their relatively swift growth, they would need clipping and pruning several times a year. This would be difficult to undertake at the height required, and climbers can also cause building problems by climbing into roof spaces and gutters.
- Option 3 - The planting of trees so close to the house would not have been a good idea due to root growth and possible damage to the foundations and patio areas of the house. Additionally, a tree crown would quickly grow so wide as to obscure the view from the whole kitchen window area and beyond, as well as blocking light into the house. Again, to achieve a quick result we would have had to plant a fairly mature tree that would have been too large to manoeuvre through the house and into the garden.
- Option 4 - The careful designing of a refined trellis design therefore appeared the best option. It would provide instant screening that could be designed to restore the level of privacy, and also to be sensitive to the appearance of the property.

As the neighbour's new steps had required my client to look at changes to the garden to retain his privacy, he also took the opportunity to upgrade the wider garden as part of the works as some areas were in poor condition. This also enabled us to take a wider consideration of the new trellis solution to ensure it was not only complementary to the house, but also the wider garden.

Looking at the design of the house and the wider fencing that is contiguous to the front and sides of the properties there is a strong horizontal theme delivered by wood beams. We decided that it would be good to pick up on this design theme and echo it in our solutions in the garden. With this in mind a horizontal baton trellis fence seemed a great solution. This style of fence is quite modern and very popular in more contemporary settings where it blends in nicely, delivering a smart finish. For our purposes it also had other important advantages. Firstly, the trellises are constructed of horizontal batons around 40mm thick with a 6mm gap between each one. This means that they deliver a very effective instant screening, whilst still allowing some light to filter through the gaps. Additionally, the gaps allow for the wind to pass through the trellis making it a very stable prospect in high winds. Whilst traditional trellis designs also deliver these 'open features', they do not deliver any real screening and they are not in keeping with the house design.

The horizontal trellis as built, picks up the strong horizontal elements in the wider design of these architect designed houses. To add to this effect, we also chose a new fence with a strong horizontal look. The Jacksons 'Shadow Line' fence is

constructed in such a way that the horizontal planks of the panel deliver a thin line of shadow onto the planks below them. This creates an effect not dissimilar to that of the horizontal trellis. To finalise the blending of the new structures we also ran a shallow depth of horizontal trellis across the top of the garden fence (but keeping it below 2.0m), that merges with the screening trellis nearer the house, so the two blend together. Finally, we were keen to minimise the screening required, and so after an initial step out to cover the top steps, the screening trellis slopes away in line with the slope of the neighbour's steps. The trellis is then topped off with an attractive line of beading to give it a smart finish. The final height of the trellis has proven to be very accurate as you can see the tops of people's heads as they walk out on the top of the neighbour's steps, but not their eyes.

In summary the trellis is a proportionate response to an intrusive addition to the neighbour's house, robbing my client of privacy. Its design has been carefully considered from both an aesthetic consideration, being in keeping with the design of the house and from a stability and robust construction point of view. It delivers the screening required (with one exception – see below) and has been carefully designed to only be as high as is required.

The one exception is that at the bottom of the neighbour's steps they have built a brick landing and steps which is at least 300mm higher than the ground level (taken at the neighbour's lawn level– see photo below) and extends approximately 1.0m beyond the steps end. People standing on this landing can therefore see over into my client's garden. When approaching this landing and steps it is usual (due to the orientation) for people to be facing the fence and therefore looking over into my client's garden. He would like this to be resolved by the addition of a short rhomboid shaped extension of the fence trellis (perhaps 30-40cm high) where the brick landing is sited.

Yours sincerely

P Reader

Dr Peter Reader MSGD, Dip KLC.

Photo of brick steps base of flight of steps

