



PUBLIC FACELIFT

Improving the environment and people's lives

Landscape architect John Tizzard is adamant that opportunities exist for garden designers 'prepared to look beyond private gardens'. Designers working in smaller scale public spaces can turn their expertise to great advantage for both themselves and their client. This project surrounds a block of flats in a problem suburb of Trollhättan, Sweden and is home to a large immigrant community. Years of neglect have taken their toll and Tizzard was brought in by the local housing association to give the area a long-overdue facelift, thereby encouraging greater social responsibility and cohesion.

This first phase of an ongoing environmental improvement scheme sees the completion of two linking gardens, with four more to come. Tizzard has connected the two spaces by removing old freestanding buildings that created physical barriers and replacing them with strongly sculptural rendered concrete blocks. The blocks come directly from the factory as straight units or in standard radiuses of 1.25m, 2.5m and 9m. These divide the space by snaking through the design, but allow for informal meetings and socialising with fellow residents.

Fifty per cent of the asphalt areas have been ripped up and a softer solution presented. Reinforced grass achieves a visually improved hardwearing surface, while larger areas of planting use a mixture of shrubs and perennials in a naturalistic style, including calamagrostis and molinia grasses. Evergreen conifers, such as taxus and juniperus species, and a new hardy variety of box, *Buxus sempervirens* 'Polar' hold the structure together through the long, dark winters. Ground-recessed light fittings breathe life into the planting during the winter.

John Tizzard has opened out this communal space by replacing obstructive buildings with concrete forms that provide year-round interest and a focal point for informal meetings with neighbours.

GARDEN FACT FILE

Designer: John Tizzard Trädgårdsarkitekt. Tel: +46 521 63913.

Website: www.fizzard.se

Location: Trollhättan, Sweden

Size: 0.4ha

Aspect and soil: west facing; imported soil

Project started: September 2006

Project completed: September 2007

Cost: over £25,000

Design fees: 9 per cent

Hard landscape: 73 per cent

Soft landscape: 18 per cent

Contractor: Vänersborgs Famarjänst