

RAISING THE ROOF

Rooftop space for corporate entertaining

Roof gardens throw up a number of unique challenges: exposure to high winds, load-bearing abilities of the roof, and health and safety considerations. Add to this a tight timeframe for design to completion of just six weeks and you have a potentially stressful project!

Sara Jane Rothwell was called in to take charge of this roof garden by a corporate client looking for day and night entertaining space to hold up to 30 people at any one time. Careful project management was essential given the time constraint. A structural engineer was immediately appointed and all heavy materials that could be ordered in time were lifted up to the fourth-storey garden by crane in a single day.

The key elements of the garden are a split-level Balau deck, reflected in a Balau trellis, wrapped around the perimeter parapet wall as a safety barrier. A built-in seating area is sheltered by a hyperbolic shade sail and acts as a central area from which to enjoy the space, which includes



the terrace for dining or playing games, and a 1.5x10m strip of artificial grass for green relief.

Eight underplanted, multi-stemmed *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* in powder-coated, ply-lined containers are invisibly secured using the Platipus wire and ratchet system and form the axis of the garden, framing views out on to the City of London. Only half the roof space was developed due to the limited budget and a wall of bamboo screens this side. Additional containers house a mix of structural and herbaceous planting. The biggest concern for Rothwell was the wind loading, so all planters and furniture are securely bolted and tensioned in place.

Balau wood brings together this City of London roof garden by Sara Jane Rothwell. Planting is chosen to withstand the buffeting of strong winds.

GARDEN FACT FILE

Designer: Sara Jane Rothwell. Tel: 020 7700 4354.

Website: www.gloriousgardendesign.co.uk

Location: Shoreditch, London

Size: 100m²

Aspect and soil: south facing; imported soil

Project started: June 2007

Project completed: July 2007

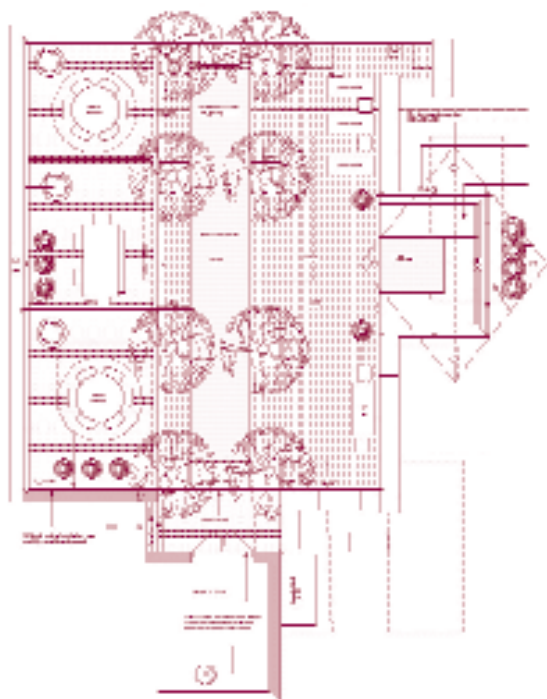
Cost: over £50,000

Design fees: ten per cent

Hard landscape: 85 per cent (inclusive of 10 per cent lighting)

Soft landscape: five per cent

Contractor: Vince Robertshaw New Look Gardens



IMAGES: SARA JANE ROTHWELL