



IMAGES: KAREN O'KEEFFE

Southern pine is repeated in this Manchester city courtyard garden by Karen O'Keeffe to draw the space together.

INSTANT GARDEN

Courtyard for alfresco dining

GARDEN FACT FILE

Designer: Karen O'Keeffe Tel: 0161 8629031

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Location: Manchester **Size:** 42m²

Aspect and soil: south facing; poor soil

Project started: June 2006

Project completed: June 2006

Cost: £8,000

Design fees: 5 per cent

Hard landscape: 84 per cent

Soft landscape: 11 per cent

Contractor: The Manchester Deck Company

Turning around projects in good time means an efficient business and ultimately greater profit for the designer. This scheme for a young professional couple seeking more space for alfresco dining was completed in just over one week.

Work started with the replacement of parts of the existing 1.5m-tall fence, which was then clad with southern pine (directly imported from sustainable sources in the US) to a height of 1.8m to give a contemporary feel. Decking, a 600mm-high planter, slatted screening and bench seats are of the same timber to tie the space together. The design features two built-in seating areas made from rendered blockwork, one of which acts as a retaining wall for planting. The black slate patio is raised one step up from the decking with the 300 x 600mm slabs laid in a stretcher bond pattern running with the lines of the deck and end wall.

The planting is low maintenance, relying on a *Cornus kousa* and *Phyllostachys aureosulcata* f. *aureocaulis* for height and seasonal colour, while a *Phormium* 'Yellow Wave' and *Yucca gloriosa* provide the structure. Six low-voltage LEDs in stainless steel fixtures are set into the decking to extend use of the garden into the night.