



City Sanctuaries: Two London Gardens Reimagined

September 14, 2026

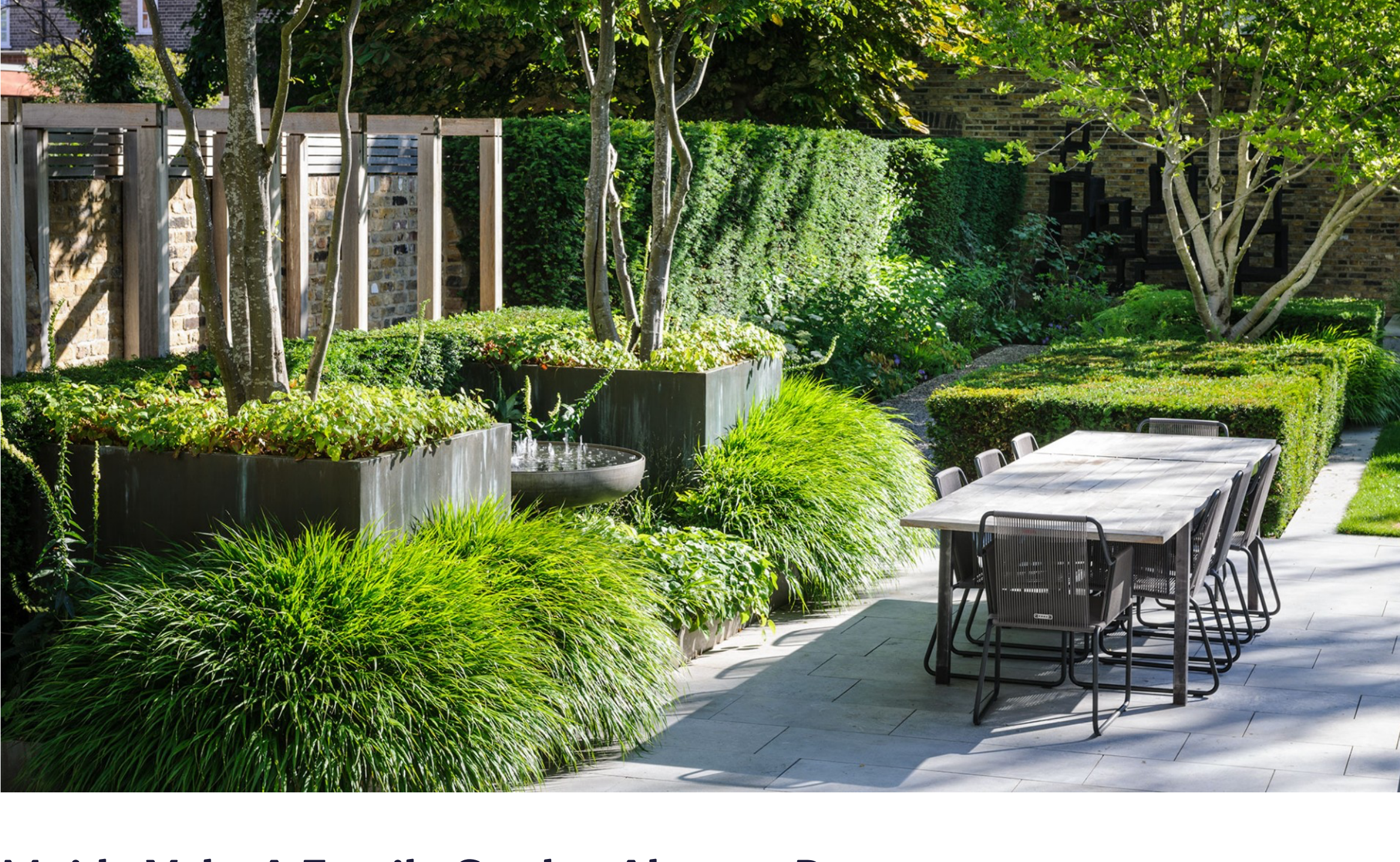
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Designing gardens in London is always an exercise in ingenuity. Space is precious, neighbours are close, access is challenging, and engineering constraints often sit just beneath the surface.

Yet these challenges are what make city projects so compelling. With the right balance of experience, design, planting and practical problem solving, even the most complex urban site can become a wonderfully atmospheric sanctuary.

We have made gardens all over London, from roof terraces in Notting Hill and Covent Garden to larger gardens in Holland Park, Highbury, Islington and East London. Two recent projects, a family garden in Maida Vale and a courtyard in Farringdon, explore contrasting expressions of city living. One is generous and sociable, set above a substantial basement extension; the other an intimate courtyard conceived as a seamless extension of an apartment interior. Both show how thoughtful design can turn constraint into character, translating a client's lifestyle into a space that feels effortless to use.



Maida Vale: A Family Garden Above a Basement

In Maida Vale, we were asked to create a garden that could accommodate family life while remaining elegant enough for entertaining and the display of art and sculpture. The property had undergone extensive renovation, including the construction of a large basement beneath the garden, and as is often the case in prime London neighbourhoods, the space was overlooked from multiple sides.

The brief called for a garden equally suited to children's games or long summer lunches, the children quite explicitly requiring a football pitch, and we embraced it. In central London, the ability to kick a ball freely in one's own garden is a rare luxury. Working closely with engineers and architects, we ensured the structural slab could accommodate a flat plane of turf that creates openness at the centre of the plot and a sense of generosity.

The lawn sits at the heart of the garden. Its spaciousness allows the planting around it to feel layered and abundant. Raised planters in patinated bronze provide the soil depth required for trees while introducing sculptural rhythm. Multi-stemmed hornbeams and magnolias rise lightly from these beds, offering height and a natural veil of privacy without heavy screening.

Robust evergreen Pittosporum in large clay pots absorb the occasional wayward ball, while clipped yew hedging and carefully placed pathways bring structure and rhythm, providing a perfect foil for sculptural pieces.

For this client, who has multiple residences, the garden also needed to offer interest across the seasons. A textural green palette, lifted with cool blues, lemon yellows and whites, is built on combinations of foliage and form rather than fleeting colour, ensuring the space feels as composed in January as it does in June.



Farringdon: A Fern-Covered Courtyard

If Maida Vale is about openness and sociability, our Farringdon project is about intimacy. This ground-floor apartment sits above a car park, creating a podium condition with strict loading limits, and access, as with many London gardens, is constrained. The challenge was to design a garden that felt lush while remaining structurally viable and visually light when viewed from both the apartment and surrounding flats.

We began with story. Farringdon's name derives from "fern-covered hill", and the area has a long tradition of craftsmanship in precious metals and jewellery. We embraced a fern-rich planting palette suited to the dappled courtyard light, incorporating subtle bronze detailing as a nod to the area's heritage.

Tree ferns form a delicate canopy, casting shifting light across the courtyard and softening views from above. Beneath them, layered green planting creates depth and privacy. The ambition was to create an outdoor room — a space that works as a natural extension of the apartment, developed in close dialogue with the interior designer.

Because the garden is experienced as much from inside as out, sightlines were carefully composed. Materials echo the interior palette, ensuring a seamless transition across the threshold. The terrace operates almost as a living room without a roof - a place to sit with morning coffee, entertain into the evening, or retreat into greenery. In a bustling part of the city, it offers a rare moment of calm and is used throughout the year.

Designing for the Modern City

What links these two gardens is not a singular aesthetic, but an approach. In London, gardens are rarely blank canvases. Where interior space is so carefully considered, the garden becomes an extension of the architecture, shaping how a home is lived in and enjoyed - a place where everyday life moves effortlessly between inside and out.

For our clients, a city garden must work quietly but powerfully: private yet open, robust yet refined, beautiful in every season and from every angle. In Maida Vale, that story is one of family life unfolding within a stylish, structured green frame. In Farringdon, it is of history and privacy translated into ferny foliage and bronze detail.

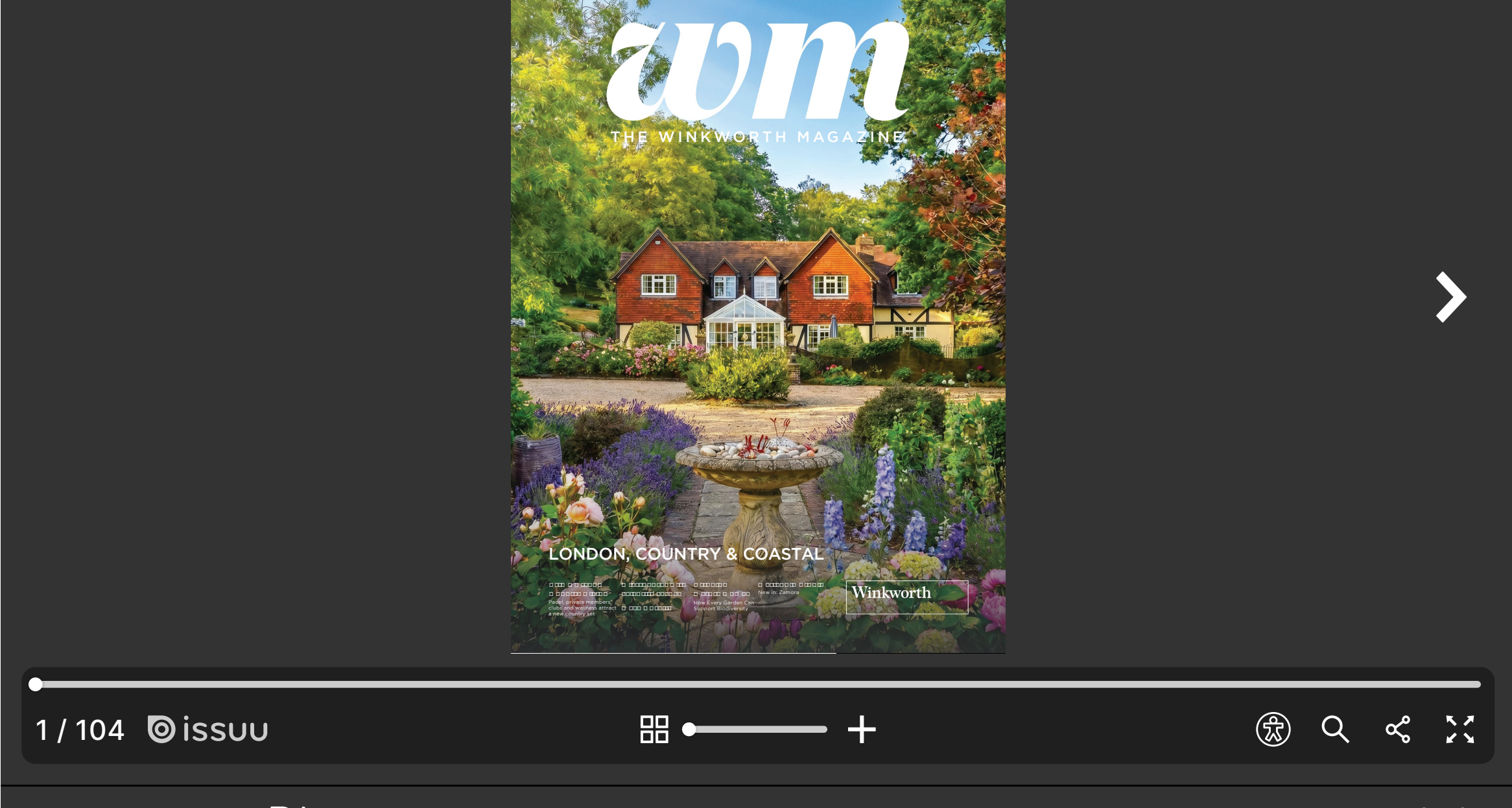
Both demonstrate that even in the densest urban setting, it is possible to create stylish, atmospheric spaces that become true sanctuaries in the city.

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