

On a Different Level

Landscape designer Kevin Cooper gives a glimpse into the many design techniques he uses to deal with sloping and difficult gardens.

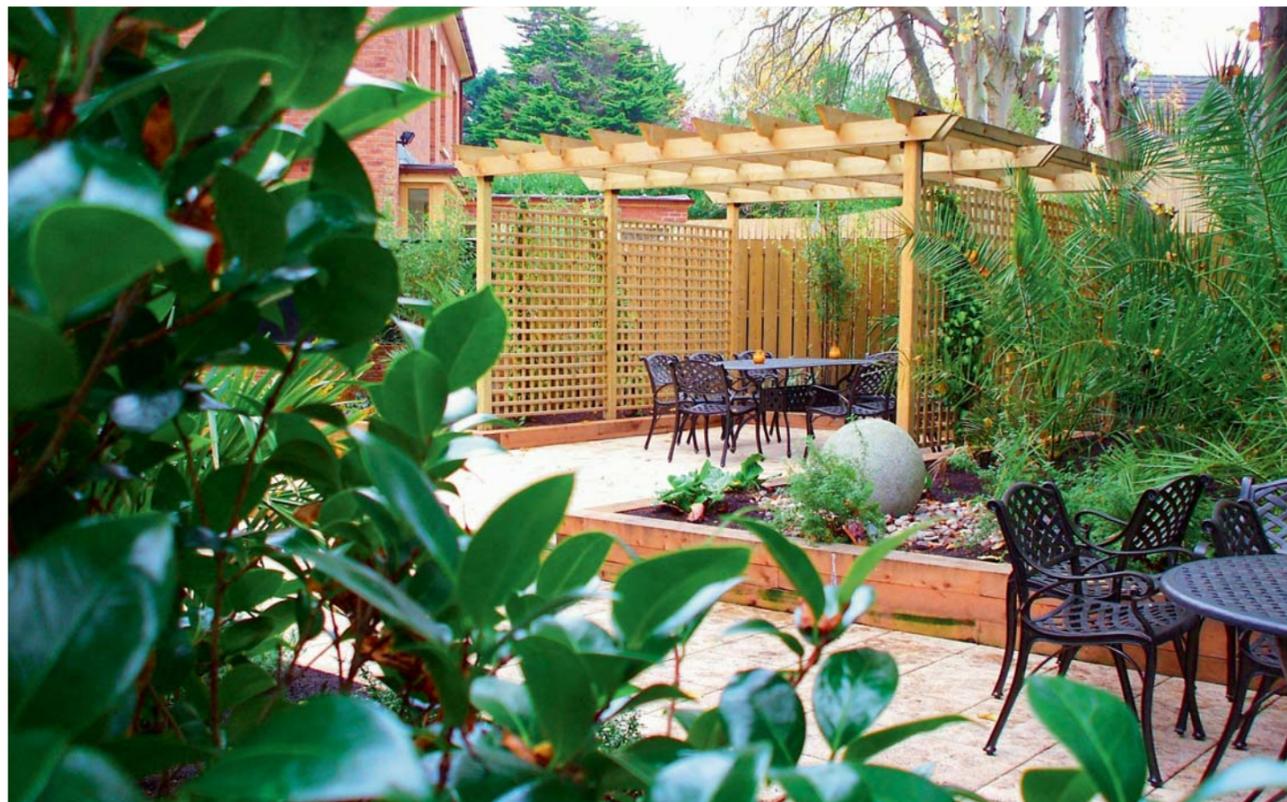


When faced with a large sloping garden like the one pictured above, the trick is not to draw attention to the severity of the slope, rather distract away from it. In this case we used bold specimen planting to pull the eye from side to side and give the space some three dimensional height to balance and soften the effect of the slope. One key element to the success of this garden was the design of the lawn, meandering its way up the garden in a relaxed and inviting way, allowing one to stroll around the garden rather than climb it! Thanks have to go to John and his team at Evergreen Lawns in County Derry, for the supply of the excellent Lawn Turf used in this garden, and indeed all of our projects this last twenty years.

The lovely Gentleman's residence pictured below had quite a change in level to contend with at the front of the house, so a series of subtle terraces were constructed to create level and usable spaces. The use of beautiful reclaimed Fermanagh stone in the walls built by local craftsmen turned this into a timeless feature in its own right, with a centrepiece stone fountain from Wilsons Conservation Building Products giving the space its contrasting height and glory. Sweeping lawns and subtle planting complete the picture of a garden that will stand the test of time.

The cottage in the country pictured opposite was an exciting challenge. Immediately outside the back of the house was a large retaining wall





The secret is to look for the positive, to take what could be perceived as a problem and turn it into something of beauty and character which will enrich the home and lifestyle.

followed by a high bank of a garden which created a claustrophobic effect and very much restricted the use the garden could be put to. A bold approach was needed to create this outdoor room, with machinery brought in to excavate into the bank to form a lovely and sheltered extension to the lounge which, thanks to some wonderful bi-fold glass doors now seamlessly flows into the garden space, it being hard to know where one ends and the other begins. Some broad and inviting steps then lead one to the upper terrace where one can avail of the sunshine and the views the property enjoys, the perfect spot for relaxing with friends. To complement the stylish interior of the home, a sharp and clean lines approach was taken to the design layout with striking Blue Limestone paving used throughout, with

lovely stone walling providing not just a strong contrast but creating a sympathetic link to the surrounding landscape. The overall combination has come together to form a wonderful and relaxing extension to the home and the client's lifestyle, and thanks go to them for having the courage to undertake this challenging project.

The new build pictured above had a slight slope, but because of large mature trees in the garden it could not be levelled, so a split level courtyard style garden was created, with the space split in to a series of different level rooms to provide the opportunity for both large scale and intimate entertaining. The use of raised beds constructed from heavy timber sleepers gave the space a real feeling of depth and character whilst dealing with the level issues. Strong use of design also took away the very square feeling of this space and increased the perception of size, with strong architectural planting completing the picture.

When first faced with this new build project, pictured right, the challenge was daunting to say the least for the site at the back of this new build could best be described as mountainous with just one very large bank of soil. Once again the machines were brought in to create a series of usable levels so one could enjoy the garden and the lovely views and location. The height that was to be climbed was so great that a series of subtle walls of Donegal quartz were constructed so as to reduce the size and impact of the banks of soil required, these banks were then quite boldly planted to not only disguise and soften their impact but create what is a glorious garden into which one can escape and relax in the beauty of nature. Enjoy! 🌿



Kevin Cooper Garden Design, 07791 560519.
www.kevincoopergardendesign.com