



Oliver Neaves and Chris Valiantis own and run Tectonic, an award winning landscape, architecture and garden design business operating across the UK and internationally. Their projects are executed with the highest level of care and detailing, working with clients to bring their creativity, fun and passion for plants and design to life
● tectonicuk.co.uk

Meet the EXPERTS

Oliver Neaves and Chris Valiantis, co-founders of Tectonic, describe the process of working with them on your dream garden project...



Q What would you say is the most important consideration for a homeowner in their choice of designer for their dream garden?

A It's vital to find designers who have an extensive range of design skills, a professional attitude and an understanding of what the client's brief is and how to create something beyond their expectations.

Q When a prospective client first contacts you about a garden design, what information would be helpful for them to have to hand?

A Ideally what they wish to achieve from their garden; how they see themselves using their outdoor space; the size of their garden; what sort of proposed work they are considering; and, most importantly, a realistic budget.

Q Depending on size and complexities, what sort of timescales can prospective clients expect from concept to completion of their project?

A Most of our projects are scheduled into the diary at least six months in advance of the proposed build. This allows the time required to undertake all the necessary steps such as measured

site surveys, client meetings, production of sketch scheme proposals, material choices, 3D visualisations, construction drawings, and putting the project out to tender with nominated contractors.

Q When you are commissioned to provide a design, what can the client expect to see in the way of concepts, visuals and designs?

A We pride ourselves on producing the highest level of drawings and 3D visualisations which represent the level of design provided in the final project. We consider all elements of the design down to the finest details, including dimensioned paving layouts, lighting/sound installation designs, bespoke detailing and planting design and installation down to the millimetre in some cases.

Q So you've presented your ideas to the client, and settled on a design – how do they find a landscape

contractor? Do you recommend or employ the landscaper on the client's behalf or will they have to find someone themselves?

A We use a number of contracting teams that we can put the projects out to tender with, depending on timescales and their availability. Sometimes clients will have their own landscapers in place, and whilst we're happy to work with client's landscapers, we always

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liaise with the suppliers and the contractors on a regular basis, ensuring that if any queries come up, then we as designers make the design decision and not the contractor or client. Ultimately, we strive to create the vision of our design for our client's best interest.

Q Do you provide an ongoing consultation service – like tips for maintenance/replanting and minor adjustments as the garden matures?

A We like to have continued interest in our projects, and at least for the first few years we oversee the development of the planting to ensure it flourishes as intended. We find that the great relationship we develop with our clients means that they always turn to us in the future for ongoing design advice. **DG**

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try to ensure that our design is not compromised in the process. Our main goal is to ensure that our vision becomes a reality for our clients and changes are not made without our involvement.

Q Is there anything about the process that you find potential clients aren't generally prepared for? And how do you deal with any anxieties they may have about embarking on a project?

A Some clients are surprised by the amount of work and thought that goes into the design and installation process and how achieving the best results comes at a cost for materials, skilled

contractors and quality established plants. By setting out the process and the cost associated from the offset and handling the management of the project, we take most of the burden away from our clients' shoulders. We try to alleviate their anxieties by dealing with all aspects of the build and providing them with the best options to consider on the rare occasions when unexpected situations may arise on site.

Q How much involvement can a client expect from you once the project starts?

A This depends on whether we're appointed to project manage the design and build process. We would therefore



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