



Hardy Plants and Plantings for Repton and Late Georgian Gardens (1780–1820) Case Study: Sandycombe Lodge

Introduction to the site

Sandycombe Lodge was built by 1813 to the designs of one of England's great landscape painters, J. M. W. Turner. Working as his own architect, he created a quiet rural retreat on about two acres of land near the River Thames at Twickenham, away from the pressures of the London art world.

Turner's sketches for his villa nearly all show the garden façade with its dramatic sloping site, and with masses of picturesque foliage and climbing plants emphasising the link between the house and the garden.

Aims of the project

Although Sandycombe Lodge was in open country when it was built, only a small area of garden immediately around the Lodge survives today. The challenge for the conservation project was to re-create the grassy knoll on which the house sits, and as far as possible, to return a rural character to this now suburban corner of Twickenham, whilst meeting the contemporary needs of a multi-functional setting for the house. Turner's House Trust raised £2.4m for the restoration of the house, which was completed in Summer 2017.



Figure 1

After William Havell, Sandycombe Lodge, Twickenham, Villa of J.M.W. Turner, engraved by W.B. Cooke, published 1814. (Tate, London 2018: image released under Creative Commons CC-BY-NC-ND (3.0 Unported))



Planting design

Planting is used to frame views of the villa from the street and from within the garden, and also to direct long views eastwards from within the house, and thus promote the sense of being in a wider landscape. Planting decisions also take into account the need to allow light into adjacent gardens while screening closer views between the garden of Sandycombe Lodge and neighbouring properties.

- **Mature trees** provide the present day setting for the house and their conservation is important in creating a softer, more rural character for the garden, as well as providing screening and framing views. The current aspect of the garden, overshadowed by these extensive mature tree canopies, is, however, very different to the open aspect in Turner's time. Today's planting has to embrace the challenges of very dry, dense shade. Planting design therefore responds to both historical precedent and to current conditions.
- **Shrubs** provide structure and form year-round, with an emphasis placed upon achieving a natural 'hedgerow' character rather than an overtly designed, more traditionally horticultural, shrubbery. New fruit trees – apple, pear and damson - are included, as well as a number of herbs, to enliven the 'hedgerow' character and to allude to the garden's former culinary purpose.
- **Informal groups of medium height flowering shrubs and herbaceous plants** frame the garden façade, provide ground cover, and add a lower layer of interest and detail. These include smaller shrubs, herbaceous perennials, and hardy annuals, typical of cottage gardens. Bulbs provide more seasonal visual variation and interest.
- Many plants were selected for their rural associations and hence **native wildflowers** – which some people may regard as 'weeds' – are included. The intention is that many of the herbaceous plants will seed themselves and migrate around the garden to find a spot where they are happy when left to their own devices, which will in time loosen up the planting and promote the rural character, within a 'gardened' framework.
- Specialist **flowering lawn turf** with a range of some 30 species of native grasses and wildflowers was grown to order to re-create the 'grassy mound' on which the house is sited, to echo the character of an 18th Century flowering grass sward.
- **Climbers** are being established to create living screens and backdrops, and to soften and disguise varying styles of neighbouring boundary fences.



Figures 2, 3
Views looking up towards the house, and away towards the garden. (*Turner's House Trust*)



Issues and challenges

The Trust's gardening volunteers had an important role in making the final selection of plants, having a wealth of knowledge about local conditions and having previously trialled many of the plants on the site. They have the ongoing job of controlling vigorous hybrid bluebells, survivors from the former 20th-century garden.

The layout and structural planting of the new garden was carried out by contractors appointed by the Trust, while the smaller shrubs, herbaceous planting and bulb planting was undertaken as a joint exercise by the Trust's gardening volunteers, the landscape architect and the contractors. This has helped gardening volunteers to understand the planting design and to take ownership, since gardening activity over the coming years is what will, ultimately, enable the garden to achieve its intended character.

Species selected are either native, or were known to be in regular garden use by the early 1800s, or are 'as close as possible' available modern cultivars. The greatest challenge in achieving the planting has been obtaining some of the species and varieties selected. Plants that appeared to be accurately labelled at the time of planting have, upon flowering, turned out to be modern cultivars and subsequent replacements continue to be sought. Even seed sources for some varieties have been elusive, and planting will not be completed until 2019 when varieties currently being grown to order will be planted out.



Figure 4

The Trust's gardening volunteers have an important role in the upkeep of the garden. (*Turner's House Trust*)

Acknowledgements

This case study was written by Ellen Bramhill, [Bramhill Design](#), one of the consultants working with the [Turner's House Trust](#) on their project.

Images courtesy of the Turner's House Trust and the Tate/Creative Commons.

Further reading

Historic England 2018. *Hardy Plants and Plantings for Repton and Late Georgian Gardens (1780–1820)*.

Media coverage

The Guardian, 14 June 2018 'Turner's house and garden smell of roses after restoration. [Artist's listed building, Sandycombe Lodge, rescued from threat of collapse](#)'

The Telegraph, 19 April 2018 '[A look around Turner's newly restored garden](#)'

BBC Radio 4 [Gardeners' Question Time](#), 8 July 2018



Sandycombe Lodge Garden planting list	
Shrubs and trees	<i>Berberis darwinii</i>
	<i>Camellia japonica</i>
	<i>Daphne odora</i>
	<i>Daphne pontica</i>
	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>
	<i>Fuchsia magellanica</i>
	<i>Hydrangea macrophylla</i> 'Joseph Banks'
	<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i> 'Vera'
	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>
	<i>Malus domestica</i> 'Golden Pearmain'
	<i>Myrtus communis</i>
	<i>Philadelphus coronarius</i>
	<i>Potentilla fruticosa</i> subsp <i>fruticosa</i>
	<i>Prunus institia</i> 'Shropshire Prune'
	<i>Pyracantha coccinea</i> 'Red Column'
	<i>Pyrus communis</i> 'Jargonelle'
	<i>Rosa</i> 'Alba Maxima'
	<i>Rosa</i> 'Austrian Copper'
	<i>Rosa</i> 'Great Maiden's Blush'
	<i>Rosa gallica</i> 'Versicolour' (syn. <i>Rosa mundi</i>)
	<i>Rosa pimpinelifolia</i>
	<i>Rosa rugosa</i> 'Alba'
	<i>Rosa x alba</i>
	<i>Rosa x centifolia</i>
	<i>Rosa x damascena</i> var. <i>semperflorens</i> (syn. <i>Rosa</i> 'Quatre Saisons')
	<i>Rosa x odorata</i>
	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>
	<i>Salvia officinalis</i>
<i>Syringa x persica</i> 'Alba'	
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	
<i>Viburnum tinus</i>	
Climbers	<i>Clematis vitalba</i>
	<i>Jasminum humile</i> 'Revolutum'
	<i>Jasminum officinale</i>
	<i>Lathyrus latifolius</i>
	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>
Perennials, annuals and ferns	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>
	<i>Ajuga reptans</i>
	<i>Alcea ficifolia</i> 'Single Mix'
	<i>Alcea rosea</i> 'Simplex'
	<i>Anemone coronaria</i> 'De Caen mixed'
	<i>Aquilegia viridiflora</i>
	<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>

Sandycombe Lodge Garden planting list

Perennials, annuals and ferns

Artemesia absinthium
Asplenium scolopendrium
Aster novl-belgii
Astrantia major
Athyrium felix-femina
Campanula medium (Single, blue)
Campanula persicifolia
Campanula pyramidalis
Centranthus ruber
Consolida ajacis
Delphinium elatum (True wild form; or 'Black Knight')
Dianthus barbatus 'Scarlet Beauty'
Dianthus barbatus atrosanguineus
Dianthus plumarius 'Single Flowered Pink'
Dictamnus albus
Digitalis purpurea
Erigeron karvinskianus
Geranium pratense
Geum rivale
Helenium autumnale (Wild form; or 'Helena Gold')
Helleborus niger
Iris germanica
Iris germanica 'Byzantine Purple'
Iris pallida 'Variegata'
Kniphofia uvaria
Lamium maculatum
Leucanthemum vulgare
Liriope muscari
Lunaria annua
Nepeta fassenii
Nigella damascene 'Moody Blues'
Oenothera biennis
Paeonia officinalis
Papaver paeoniflorum 'Antique Shades'
Papaver somiferum 'Pepperbox'
Pilosella aurantiaca
Polygonatum multiflorum
Polystichum setiferum
Primula veris
Primula vulgaris
Pulmonaria officinalis
Reseda odorata
Salvia argentea



Sandycombe Lodge Garden planting list	
Perennials, annuals and ferns	<i>Salvia sclarea</i>
	<i>Salvia verticillata</i> 'Purple Rain'
	<i>Silene coronaria</i>
	<i>Sisyrinchium striatum</i>
	<i>Stachys byzantina</i>
	<i>Thymus polytricus</i>
	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>
	<i>Verbascum nigrum</i>
	<i>Verbascum phlomoides</i> 'Spica'
	<i>Verbena patagonica</i>
	<i>Viola odorata</i>
<i>Zantedeschia aethiopica</i>	
Bulbs	<i>Convallaria majalis</i>
	<i>Crocus sativa</i>
	<i>Crocus vernus</i>
	<i>Cyclamen hederifolium</i>
	<i>Eranthis hyemalis</i>
	<i>Fritillaria imperialis</i>
	<i>Fritillaria meleagris</i>
	<i>Fritillaria persica</i>
	<i>Galanthus nivalis</i>
	<i>Gladiolus communis subsp byzantinus</i>
	<i>Lilium bulbiferum</i>
	<i>Lilium martagon</i>
	<i>Narcissus jonquilla</i>
	<i>Narcissus poeticus</i>
	<i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i>
	<i>Nerine sarniensis</i>
	<i>Scilla hyacinthoides</i>
	<i>Tulip Alba Regalis</i>
	<i>Tulip</i> 'Columbine'
	<i>Tulip</i> 'Duc van Tol Red and White'
	<i>Tulip</i> 'Duc van Tol Rose'
	<i>Tulip</i> 'Duc van Tol Violet'
	<i>Tulip</i> 'Duc van Tol White'
	<i>Tulip</i> 'Insulinde'
	<i>Tulip</i> 'Lac van Rijn'
	<i>Tulip</i> 'Rembrandt'
<i>Tulip</i> 'Saskia'	
<i>Tulip</i> 'Silver Standard'	
<i>Tulip</i> 'Striped Sail'	