



Main Avenue Show Garden

The Octavia Hill Garden by Blue Diamond with the National Trust

Blue Diamond and the National Trust are delighted to be working with multi-award-winning garden design practice Ann-Marie Powell Gardens to create a prestigious show garden for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2024.

The Octavia Hill Garden by Blue Diamond with the National Trust will celebrate pioneering social reformer Octavia Hill (1838-1912), a founder of the National Trust, who believed that 'the healthy gift of air and the joy of plants and flowers' were vital in everyone's life [1].

Octavia worked tirelessly to improve urban housing and protect green space, yet today, one in three people in Britain still don't have access to nearby nature-rich spaces. While celebrating Octavia's legacy, the garden also aims to inspire people to create innovative gardens that connect people with the beauty and complexity of the natural world.

Octavia Hill - the inspiration for our Main Avenue Show Garden at RHS Chelsea 2024

One of the three founders of the National Trust, Octavia Hill was a pioneering thinker and social reformer whose ideas were ahead of her time and are still relevant today.

She worked to improve urban housing and to protect green spaces and held strong beliefs on the importance of access to nature for human wellbeing and the need to stop the destruction of the natural landscape.

Octavia and 'Open-Air Outdoor Sitting Rooms'

Octavia believed that a garden should be the complement of every home and that, 'The healthy gift of air and the joy of plants and flowers' were vital in everyone's life.

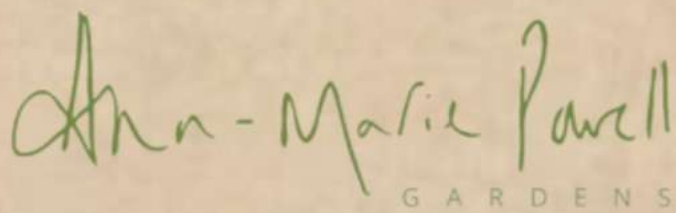
She campaigned to save even the smallest neighbourhood open space as an 'Outdoor sitting room' providing 'pure earth, clean air and blue sky' leading to the creation and retention of numerous urban and national open spaces.



Blue Diamond, along with the National Trust believe in gardens for all – for people, for nature and for wildlife. Research shows that spending time outdoors, whether it be in public green spaces or your own garden, results in better physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

This was one of the main reasons why Blue Diamond and the National Trust decided to create a Main Avenue Show Garden so they could collectively raise awareness of the life and work of Octavia Hill and highlight the importance of nature and of being outdoors.

Together, we approached Ann-Marie Powell (Left of image), a multi-award-winning garden designer, who shares our passion and belief that gardens should be for all. Ann-Marie and her team were appointed as lead designers to create this wonderful garden along with the Blue Diamond Team (Left to right) Anna King, Kevin Flemming, and Jim Teague.



Website: <http://www.ann-marielowell.com/>

Blue Diamond, The National Trust and Ann-Marie Powell Gardens believe that gardens have the power to transform lives. This is reflected in the garden's design as an urban community wildlife garden set on a brownfield site. The beautiful, plant-filled garden has been created with wellbeing, biodiversity, sustainability and accessibility firmly in mind.

The garden has a relaxed feel and natural planting style. It is laid out as a series of 'outdoor sitting rooms' – a core idea from Octavia Hill – where each individual garden compartment has its own atmosphere. Visitors are invited to feel they are part of nature, a fundamental need as important today as in Octavia's lifetime.

Dividing the space in this way echoes the 'winding ways' that Octavia often referred to, offering the opportunity to wander, both physically and emotionally.

Now the work begins...

Our application was accepted by the RHS and now the hard work begins. We look forward to sharing our journey to the flower show, as the garden takes shape.

Next summer we will bring the show garden back to Blue Diamond owned Bridgmere Show Gardens, in Cheshire where it will be rebuilt in its entirety for it's visitors to enjoy.



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Photo Gallery

The contracts are signed!



Welcome Ann-Marie!



Research begins!



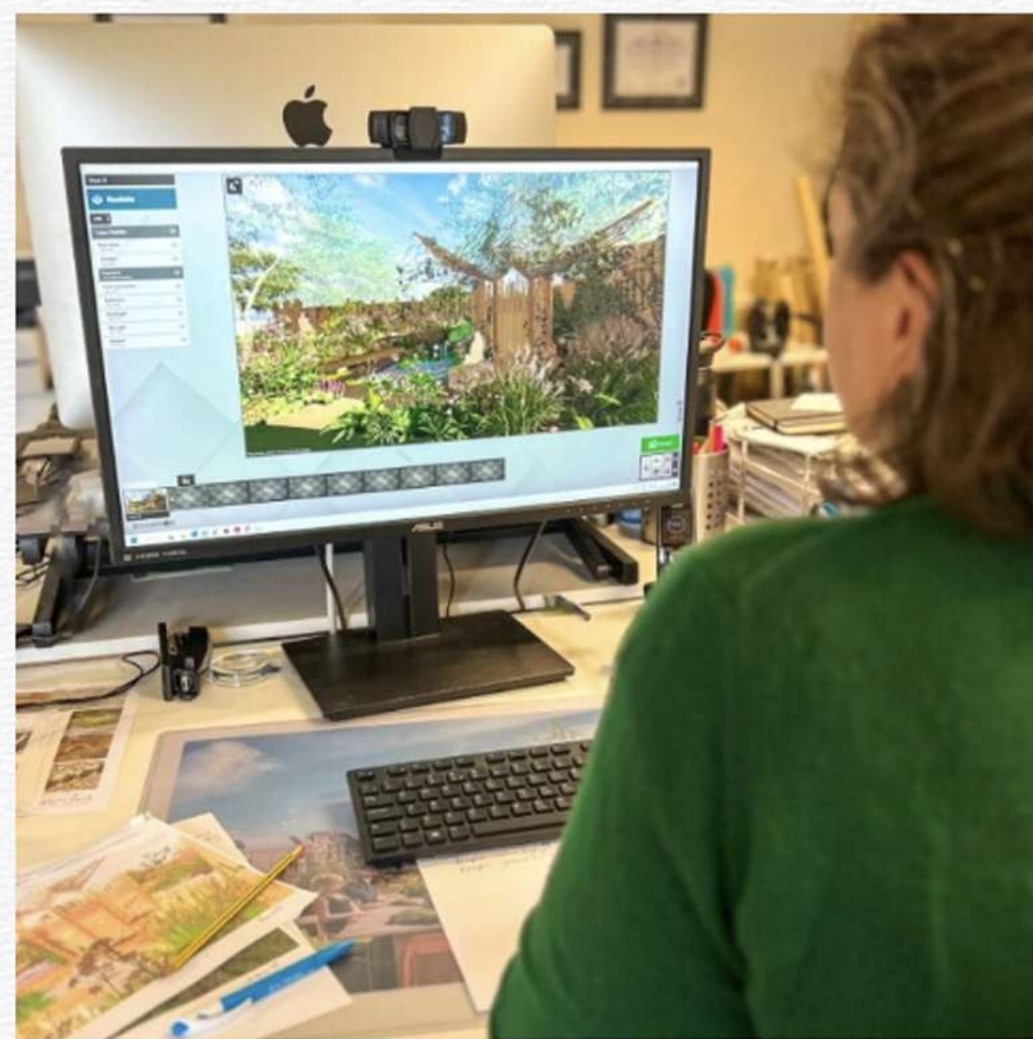
Seeking inspiration...



From original sketches...



...to 3D plans!



Working together for the love of Nature...

Blue Diamond has been working with the National Trust for the past year to develop an exclusive collection of plants, bulbs and seeds inspired by the historic gardens that the charity cares for.

Through sales generated from the National Trust collections by Blue Diamond, a minimum of 10% of the retail sales price will be given to the Trust.

Blue Diamond has committed to give £1million over the next three years to help the Trust look after nature, beauty, and history for everyone, for ever.

[READ MORE](#)

Footnotes

[1] One of the three founders of the National Trust, Octavia Hill was a pioneering thinker and social reformer. She worked tirelessly to improve urban housing and to protect green spaces and the impact of her life and work is still being felt. Her belief in the importance of access to nature for human wellbeing and the need to stop the destruction of the natural landscape are even more relevant today.

With Robert Hunter and Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley, she founded the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty in 1895. For the next 17 years until her death in 1912, Octavia continued to fight for the preservation of the countryside. She helped the National Trust buy and protect its first land and houses and campaigned for the preservation of footpaths to ensure everyone had right of access to the land.

[Read more about Octavia Hill's life and legacy](#)

About the National Trust

The National Trust cares for more than 250,000 hectares of countryside, 780 miles of coastline, 1 million collection items and 500 historic properties, gardens and nature reserves. The National Trust is for everyone, and our 5.7 million members, funders and donors, and tens of thousands of volunteers support our work to care for nature, beauty, history for everyone, for ever.

About Ann-Marie Powell Garden Design

Ann-Marie Powell's multi-award-winning garden design practice has seen outdoor spaces as places with exciting possibilities for over twenty years. Based in the U.K., her studio can't get enough of plants, bold colours and textural contrasts, creating garden habitats that invite an evolving ecology instead of the traditionally decorated garden. Sustainability is a fundamental value of the studio's approach; Ann-Marie and her team strive to design naturally energetic and bold landscapes to become havens for an abundance of insects and wildlife where our clients live in harmony, up close and personal with the natural world.



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