Before designing your garden you will be asked to provide an appropriate level of base information. Typically this will be in the form of the building Architects site layout drawings and floor plans. For larger gardens or gardens with complicated terrain a site survey may have to be carried out by a qualified surveyor. We will advise you of the appropriate level of information required.

A good knowledge of the geographical and climate conditions of the site is vital in producing an appropriate design for your garden. The checklist following shows the type of information we look for in analysing the site, to produce suitable sketch designs. This checklist is normally for the Landscape Architects benefit, bringing to light the characteristics and problems of the site, before the design process begins.

**Site Survey and Analysis**

S & A is the first stage of the design process and should be thorough, recording and analysing all the environmental aspects affecting the site. The more comprehensive the S & A, the more effective the solutions to be incorporated into the design. Often times a photographic survey can be the most important for a Landscape Architect, helping identify plant material, and visual aesthetics, views and aspects for analysis back in the office.

**Survey**

The survey is the information normally requested of you the client. The Landscape Architect may have additional information to add to this, but we will only present further Survey drawings when specifically requested.

Additional information recorded by us is normally represented on the Garden Layout Plans, showing what is to be retained or removed.
Survey Checklist

**Surfacing**

**HARD**
- Tarmac (type, condition)
- Slab paving (type, colour, size)
- Block pavours (type, colour, pattern)
- Cobble sets
- Gravel (grade)
- Granite slabs (texture, colour)
- In-situ concrete
- Timber decking
- Reclaimed stone (colour, size)
- Crushed stone (grade, colour)
- Safety surfacing

**SOFT**
- Grass (length, type)
- Scrub (condition, species)
- Ornamental planting
- Herbaceous
- Bulbs
- Deciduous shrubs (species, size, etc)
- Evergreen Shrubs
- Autumn/Spring interest
- Ground cover planting
- Wildlife value

**WATER**
- Pond (natural, man-made, depth)
- Stream (depth, speed of flow)
- River (water quality, direction)
- Ornamental pool
- Weir (height)
- Waterfall (height, construction)
- Speed of water flow
- Edge treatment (hard, soft)
- Water qualities (reflective, clear)
- Wildlife value (scale)

**Elevated form**

**HARD**
- Walls (material, height, condition)
- Fences (type, material, height)
- Railings
- Telegraph poles (height, spacings)
- Pylons (line of wires, visibility)
- Gates (swing, height, material)
- Baffiers/screens (height, function)
- Street furniture
- Sculpture/focal points
- Shelters/Canopies (height)
- Pergolas/Arbors
- Buildings - height, facade, function
- Access points, views of front, profile

**SOFT**
- Trees - Age / height / width of canopy / health / diameter of trunk
- Species
- Deciduous / evergreen
- Planted in paving / grass / border
- Trees to be removed
- In need of surgery
- Autumn / Spring colour
- Multi-stemmed
- Areas of woodland (type, species)
- Underplanting

**Landform**
- Slope
- Steepness (gradient)
- Direction (aspect)
- Uniformity
- Elevation above S.L.
- Spot heights
- Contours (spacing, units)
- Colour coding
- Direction of drainage
- Steps (threads, risers, dimensions)
- Ramps (gradient, direction)
- Cliffs / Ridge / Outcrop (geology, height)
- Kerb (height)
- Ditch / gully
- Cutting / embankment
- Hill / valley

**Function / ownership**
- Site boundary
- Ownership boundary
- Planting boundary
- Function (label or key)
- Intended / actual function
- Commercial / residential / educational / religious / retail / industry / open space
- Pedestrian / vehicular / equestrian / cycle / disabled route ways
- Pedestrian / vehicular access points
- Focal points / points of interest
- Gathering areas
- Toilets / information / car-park / visitor
- Function at different times of day
- User groups
- User time schedule
- User distribution

**Context**
- Land ownership around site
- Land / building function around site
- Ped / vehic. circulation around site
- Location of site, within town / city / county
- Location of residential, commercial, etc
- Location in relation to similar sites
- Orientation
- Geology / soil type
- Transport method to site
- Origins of users
- Catchment area

**CLIMATE**
- Areas of sun / shade
- Windy / sheltered areas
- Direction / strength of wind
- No. hours sunlight
- Annual temp. variation
- Rainfall over site
- Frequency / location of frosts
- Extent of growing season
- Tracking of sun

**Sensory impact**

**SIGHT**
- Views of / from site
- Views within site
- Interesting / pleasant views
- Eyesores / ugly views
- Areas of light / dark
- Positive / negative features
- Extent of views
- Controlled views / vistas
- Enclosed / open areas
- Viewing points
- Patterns / textures / colours

**TOUCH**
- Textures affecting user
- Planting texture (prickly, lush)
- Paving textures (riven, coarse, smooth)
- Rough / smooth / jagged / sharp features

**SMELL**
- Sources of pollution / smells
- Air currents
- Planting as air filter
- Odorous features (bins, tips)
- Level of pollution / smell (scale)
- Type of smell

**SOUND**
- Sources of noise (roads, factories, river), obtrusive / pleasant
- Noisy / quiet areas
- Sound barriers
- Extent / level of noise (scale)
Analysis

The analysis takes the form of an interpretation of the information collected during the survey. It usually takes the form of a diagram, using bold symbols and shapes to divide the site into analytical areas. One may comment on the design of the site or features within it, suggesting areas where further design is needed to satisfy the brief; the way spaces or features interact with one-another; the way the site functions within it’s context; the ‘success’ of areas of the site or the site as a whole; the possible location of extra features to combat problems noted during the survey; the highlighting of spaces features or views to be enhanced....

The Analysis often takes the form of an overlay presented as an extra ‘layer’ to the hard information of the Survey. It will bring to light those issues to be tackled during the next stage of the Design Process - the drawing up of a Concept Sketch Design. Again as in the Survey but we will only present Analysis drawings if specifically requested. Vital information that arises is normally represented on the Garden Layout Plans, developing the opportunities and tackling constraints that arise from analysis.