

Influences on Oliver Hill as a Garden Designer

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The Architect¹

Acclaimed as a successful architect, Oliver Falvey Hill (1887–1968) was a complex character and equally varied in his professional commissions. His biographers described a man who enjoyed hunting, sailing, fast cars, swimming outdoors (preferably in the nude) and entertaining, both in his London homes and at his country retreats: Valewood Farm, Haslemere, Surrey, from 1926, and then Daneway House, Sapperton, Gloucestershire, from 1948. Both were vernacular buildings but adapted to his many collections and his desire for outdoor living in a garden setting. Outlandish clothes, especially hats, and a wide variety of pets enhanced his exotic extrovert persona.² Teasing masked an underlying shyness, perhaps partly due to deafness.³ He sought solitude and privacy as well and was a workaholic bachelor until his marriage in 1953 to Margaret Beverley, forty-three years his junior. Following Hill's usual practice, he gave her a new name: Titania. 'She brought 'fun and fantasie' into his life but also worked hard at ... sustaining the idyllic life at Daneway.'⁷

Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869–1944) was a family friend and was consulted when Hill decided to become an architect after leaving Uppingham School. Rather than taking Hill into his own practice, Lutyens advised experience in a builder's yard, where Hill is thought to have developed his sensitivity to materials and texture, alongside training his colour sense by sketching on Saturdays in the Victoria and Albert Museum. After eighteen months, Hill became a pupil in the architectural practice of William Flockhart (1852–1913) in 1907 and attended evening classes at the Architectural Association. Flockhart adapted his design style to suit his clients, a skill that he passed on to Hill. While a pupil, Hill drew 'A Prospect of a House near Cambridge' in 1908.⁴ The Arts and Crafts design was framed by silver birch trunks, beautifully detailed and suggesting a shared fondness for this elegant tree, which became a Hill signature plant. The Hills came originally from Aberdeen and Flockhart himself

was Scottish, fostering Hill's 'life-long romantic attachment to Scotland, and its architecture'. In 1910 Hill went into practice on his own and his major pre-1914 commission was an elaborate baroque garden design for Moor Close, Binfield, Berkshire. There were strong links to Lutyens' style with a pergola and sunken garden, as at Hestercombe, near Taunton, Somerset, but Hill introduced the blue beach pebbles which characterised many of his designs and included five water features, another favourite theme.⁵

Hill served throughout WWI in the London Scottish Regiment, attaining the rank of captain; he appreciated and fostered the comradeship with his men in the trenches. Country houses were the initial basis of Hill's post-war architectural practice; he delighted in being able to build in stone. At Cour (1921–3) on the Mull of Kintyre, Argyll, the solid mass of its castle style was enhanced by his characteristic tapered oval chimneys and round towers; his passion for Scottish castles underpinned the design. Marylands, Hurtwood, Surrey (1929), was of honey-coloured stone with green tiles. Curving thatch with timber inside and out were the hallmarks of three houses: The Thatched House, Knowle, near Birmingham (1923–9); Woodhouse Copse, Holmbury St. Mary, Surrey (1924–6); Cock Rock on the coast at Croyde, Devon (1925–6). Fox Steep, Crazies Hill, Wargrave, Berkshire (1923), was not thatched but shared their waney elm board cladding and use of traditional building methods (Figure 1). An open loggia, a thatched summer house, circular and dormer windows were other recurring features. These houses were among those that justified the inclusion of Hill in a Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Drawings Series book on *Architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement*.⁶ However his interiors were often extravagant and reflected 1920s fashions and luxury rather than those of the late nineteenth century. Hill was an accomplished interior designer with an inclination to yellow and green colour schemes, the use of gold leaf, decorative tiles, stone furniture and luxurious marble or blue mosaic bathrooms. He often included a window pane inscribed with a record of those involved in the creation of the house.

While the influence of Lutyens on Hill was the dominant one, other Arts and Crafts architects have also been cited. Ernest Gimson (1864–1919) designed Coxen, Budleigh Salterton, Devon in 1910, unusually in cob and thatch

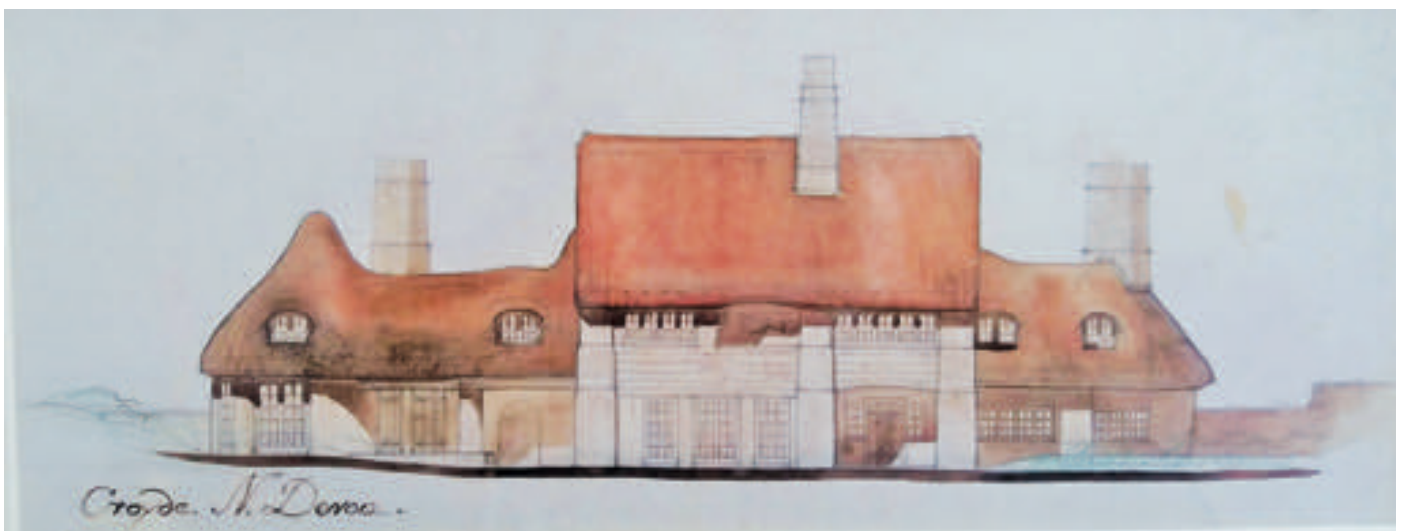


Figure 1. Watercolour of Cock Rock about 1925 (courtesy Paul Petrides)



Figure 2. *The Barn, Exmouth* (courtesy John Clark 2006)

with a separate round thatched building. C. F. A. Voysey (1857–1941) was the architect of the cottage hospital at Halwill, Devon (1899), with its tapering chimneys.⁷ The Barn, Exmouth, Devon (1896–7), established Edward Prior (1852–1932) as the first architect to use the ‘butterfly’ plan in England. Many features link it to Hill’s treatment of Cock Rock, including its sea view and use of thick Slapton reed thatch with walls and two huge circular chimneys of both large local pebbles and smaller rubble. The Barn burnt down in 1905 but was rebuilt the following year (Figure 2).⁸

Early town houses in London by Hill were close to Lutyens in style. Wilbraham House, D’Oyley Street (1922–3) was on a narrow plot for which Gertrude Jekyll (1843–1932) created a garden cleverly designed to soften the enclosing high walls and enhance the limited vistas. Venice Yard House in Gayfere Street (1923–6) was for Brenda Girvin and her mother. There were later alterations and decorations in 1927 and 1933–6, by which time Girvin was sharing it with her friend, Monica Cosens, and they employed Hill to build Cock Rock. Early in 1929 Hill was one of a group formed by Richard Sudell and Stanley Hart that became the Institute of Landscape Architects, confirming that his garden design work was important to him.⁹

However from 1930 Hill embraced Modernism, at its best a movement that could be summarised as: convenience and fluency in design; strength with economy and precision; pleasure in space; surface rhythm. Hill’s approach to Modernism was epitomised by his design for the LMS Midland Hotel, Morecambe, Lancashire (1932–3), with strong curves on a steel frame and concrete walls rendered in sparkling green ground bottle-glass, pierced by strongly rectangular windows. The sumptuous interior displayed Marion Dorn rugs and work from a variety of artists, including Eric Gill and Eric Ravilious. The seaside theme continued in his plans for a modern development at Frinton Park, Essex (1934–8), where only a few sites were actually occupied by appropriate houses. Landfall, Crichel Mount Road, Poole, Dorset (1936–8), had views over Poole Harbour from two recessed loggias with slim metal posts and rails and also from a rooftop room and terrace, reached by a curving stair. When the owner’s wife and children were being photographed on the terrace, ‘Hill characteristically said “Wouldn’t it be nice if you all took your clothes off?” immediately after the picture was taken, but the nurse replied “I’m a Presbyterian”’.

Hill’s first modern house, Joldwynds, Holmbury St. Mary, Surrey (1930–2), was settled into its hillside site by his use of curving steps, terraces and loggias. However the render was faulty and the dissatisfied owners rebuilt more conventionally higher up the site. Hill House, Redington Road, Hampstead, London (1936–8) also made the most of its elevated position. A bastion wall supported a level lawn on the south side but there was a steep approach from the roadside garage to the entrance portico. The garden was designed by the modernist landscape architect, Christopher Tunnard (1910–1979). Whitwood Mere School, Castleford, South Yorkshire (1938–9) was the only one of Hill’s school plans to be built. A long curve of windows with sections to fold back separately under a sun canopy gave easy access from the spacious rooms to the open air. It was a logical extension of Hill’s delight in entertaining children in his own home and garden. Hill continued to build some semi-traditional houses in the 1930s with such features as thatch and cedar shingle cladding but retaining the modernist purity of line and sometimes its fittings, such as Crittall metal windows.¹⁰ Whatever the style, Hill studied the setting of his buildings so that they were in harmony with the landscape and the gardens were usually an important element in achieving this. He created a mood of ‘pleasure and playfulness’ in all his designs.¹¹

The second North Devon site was developed at Higher Trayne, near Ilfracombe, in 1941 and was a farmhouse conversion that displayed both originality and a deep sensitivity to the beautiful isolated setting (Figure 3). However Hill’s career never recovered from the gap caused by WWII. Many designs were not executed but a few of his



Figure 3. *Higher Trayne on the cover of The Ideal Home, August 1944*

houses were built, including a rebuild of Cock Rock (1951–5) after it burnt down in 1943 and a flat, also for Brenda Girvin, from the ballroom of her pre-war London house. His Newbury Park bus station, Essex (1949), was completed; Uppingham School Library and war memorial, Rutland (1949), was one of his last successes. Hill had achieved prominence before WWII with prestigious exhibition designs, including two of British industrial art at the Dorland Hall, London in 1933 and 1934. He was the architect of the British pavilion at the Paris exhibition of 1937 and was deeply involved in designing and choosing the exhibits. In 1951 he organised the Cotswold Tradition exhibition at Cirencester; it was followed by the award of an OBE.¹² Since Daneway had been the home and workshops of Arts and Crafts architect-designer Ernest Gimson, Hill's career had completed a full circle.

Gardening Influences

Hill traced the influence of Gertrude Jekyll back to his mother's collection of her garden books and placed her alongside Lutyens as two important influences on the early stages of his career; a pairing which would have pleased them both. During his first visit to Venice, Hill had visited Mrs. Eden in her beautiful and unusually large garden. Carrie Eden was Jekyll's older sister and this led to Hill meeting Gertrude, 'at whose feet I sat for the rest of her life'. A shared admiration for Lutyens must have given Jekyll and Hill an initial sympathy, which expanded into friendship. There were also similar contrasts of character: 'she could be her intimidating or eccentric self and yet be known to be considerate, amusing and affectionate' might also be applied to Hill. He perceived that 'her appearance seemed at odds with her character, the one "lumpy", the other "light and witty"'.¹³

Hill was clear that he 'came to know most of the famous gardeners: Ellen Willmott; William Robinson, who with Gertrude Jekyll, championed the naturalistic school; Reginald Blomfield, who advocated the formal, and Harold Peto, who blended both'.¹⁴ Hill visited Peto at Iford Manor, delighting in the sensitively planted Italianate garden. When Hill was invited to stay at the Hanbury's 'La Mortola', after building their London house, he visited all the Peto gardens on the Riviera. Christopher Hussey (1899–1970) wrote widely on architecture and garden history, becoming architectural editor of *Country Life*. During a visit to Colonel Reggie Cooper at Cothay, Somerset, Hussey was invited by Hill to share weekends at his Sussex farmhouse. Having renovated the house and garden at Cothay, Cooper went on to do the same for three other properties, including Knightstone, near Ottery St. Mary, Devon.¹⁵

Christopher Tunnard was a bold choice to design the garden of Hill House; Hill presumably wanted to carry his conversion to modernism into the landscape through Tunnard's 'functionalism'. Tunnard left the area to the west as a lawn at natural levels but included a heath garden and a small area for roses. Three terraced grass walks on the east were separated by banks of flowering shrubs. The first plant order included privet, hypericum, irises and lupins. After his move to America just before WWII, Tunnard's career changed from landscape architect to city planner.¹⁶

Hill recalled that 'the first time I saw Sissinghurst ... it so captured my heart that for the rest of Vita Sackville-West's life I returned for successive birthdays'.¹⁷ Evidence for this is owned by Devon Gardens Trust member and garden historian Jonathan Lovie. He purchased a handsomely bound volume of *Garden Craft in Europe* by Inigo Triggs and found a signed inscription inside: 'Oliver Hill for his birthday June 15th on the wrong date, June 12th 1952, at Sissinghurst'.



Figure 5. Inscription inside the book given by Vita Sackville-West to Oliver Hill (courtesy Jonathan Lovie)

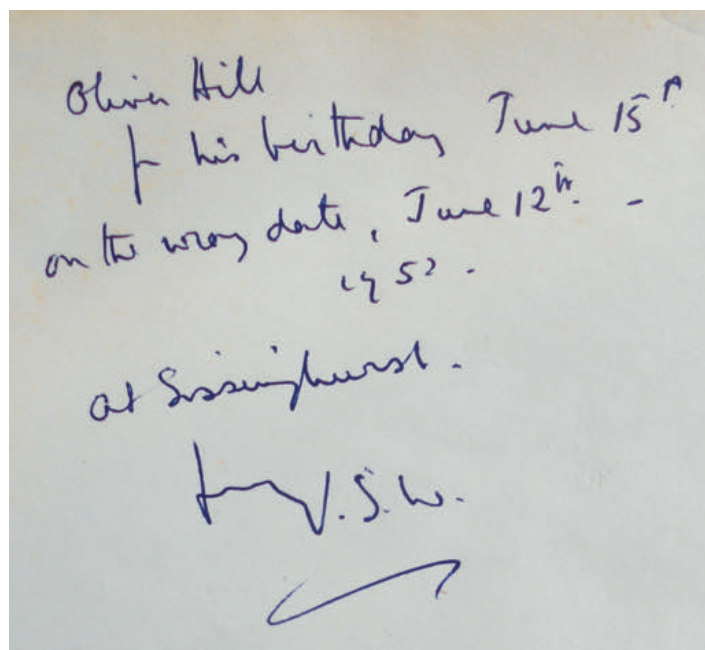


Figure 4. Spine of Inigo Triggs, *Garden Craft in Europe*, B. T. Batsford, 1913 (courtesy Jonathan Lovie)

(Figures 4 & 5). There were also two manuscript letters tucked in. One was to Oliver on 23 December 1955, thanking him for ‘a very seldom (in the sense of rare) present’ for Christmas of ‘a pretty, virginal, “première communion” angel’ with a wire frame and wings of magnolia leaves. The other on 24 December 1961 was to Titania and Oliver, thanking them for ‘a heavenly lump of shortbread’. Both expressed her hope of seeing him/them at Sissinghurst on Oliver’s next birthday.¹⁸ Oliver proposed to Titania in the White Garden at Sissinghurst. ‘Vita’s comment was “Oh Oliver, but will it last?”’ Vita’s visits to Daneway would have shown her that it did!¹⁹

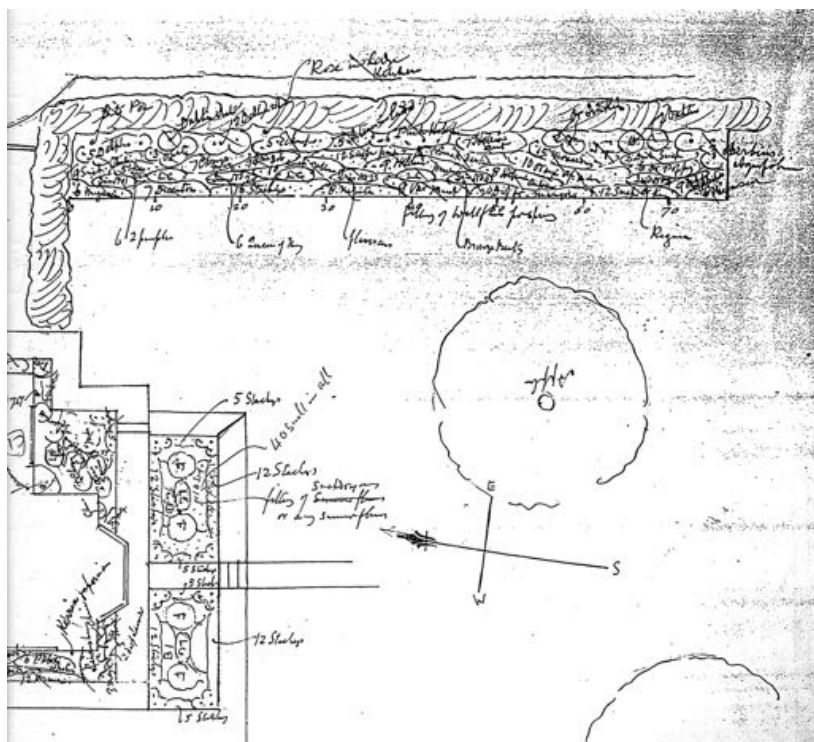
Jekyll Planting

Since Jekyll played an important part in shaping Hill’s knowledge of plants and their roles in design, it is useful to examine the five sites where Hill designed the house and landscaping but Jekyll was employed to create the planting. These were all towards the end of Jekyll’s life and therefore represent her mature style and confidence; Hill must have learnt much from her. Even at Moor Close in 1911, Hill was already reflecting Jekyll’s influence with tubs containing agapanthus and hydrangeas and plantings of *Yucca*, *Funkia* (*Hosta*) and lilies. Vines and figs added a Mediterranean note: the ‘Garland’ roses and narrow beds of iris and lupin(e)s were Jekyll favourites.²⁰ The feature that linked the two directly was at the very top of the plan; a flight of straight ‘grass steps’. At The Manor House, Upton Grey, Hampshire (1908), Jekyll had designed semi-circular grass steps to link the forecourt through wrought iron gates to the wild garden.²¹

At Fox Steep, near Reading (1923), Hill offered Jekyll a design that included her favourite elements. A short brick path straight to the front door came through a gate and arch with a suggested ‘Garland’ rose over it. The arch was set in a double drystone wall, which curved northwards round to another brick path, which led down from the garage yard through more planting to the trade’s entry of the house. The path then followed the exterior of the house, leaving room

for generous planting on the walls and nearby. A herbaceous border was backed by a thorn hedge, south from the front gate. The whole was set within mature fruit trees and yews (Figure 6). Detailed plans from Jekyll were listed and costed, including her fee of 10 guineas (£10. 10s.); her standard modest charge in the 1920s for several beds, but she was always keen to supply the plants from her nursery, which in this case totalled over £30.²²

In the same year, Jekyll planned the planting at Wilbraham House. Here she had to cope with narrow beds beneath high walls. A comparison of the two sets of plans and lists offers an insight into her ‘signature’ plants and therefore to those made familiar to Hill. Corners were almost always filled with *Megasea* (*Bergenia*), often backed by invasive *Nordmannia* (*Trachystemon*) for its ‘huge, bristly, pale green leaves’ and early purple-pink flowers.²³ Height was given by shrubs and *Artemisia lactiflora*, *Acanthus*, *Echinops*, *Doronicum*, mulleins and hollyhocks in stipulated colours. In the middle were heleniums, asters, campanulas, *Hemerocallis* in yellow and orange. Flag-leaved iris were repeated along the beds, these were named cultivars, many now lost to cultivation, but probably most were the single colours still to be seen in country gardens. Tough *Iris pallida dalmatica* with violet flowers and tall *Iris florentina* (pale blue orris root) were favourites. These were valued also for their stiff fans of grey-green foliage; a similar colour combination was offered by *Nepeta* and lavenders. Whereas red could be Oriental poppy, *Tritoma* (*Kniphofia*) or *Monarda*. Lent hellebores, ferns, phlox, Japanese anemones, *Aquilegia* ‘Munstead White’ and columbines (probably the old-fashioned ‘Granny’s bonnets’) were stalwarts for shady sites with the shiny, almost round, leaves of *Asarum* in front. Other edgings included London pride, *Polygonum affine*, *Stachys lanata* (*byzantina*), *Dicentra* (presumably the short dusky pink forms), blue-purple hardy geraniums and *Alyssum* (*saxatile*). *Lilium candidum* was regularly supplied by her: at Fox Steep 36 for £1. 2s. 6d. Short-lived *Myosotis*, snapdragons and dahlias contributed specific colours plus African and French marigolds, *Calendula* and *Pelargonium* ‘Paul Crampel’ to increase the ‘hot’ range.



Jekyll’s artistry as a garden designer did not need unusual plants, although she grew rarities and always chose the best (for her) forms of common subjects. Her skill was to use the colours and textures of both flowers and leaves to paint the pictures she saw in her mind’s eye.²⁴ Her own famous long border graded the colours from soft to strong at the centre and then back again but that was 200 feet long and 14 feet wide.²⁵ At Fox Steep she had only 77 feet by 8 feet, so she halved the system and moved outwards from pale to ‘hot’ colours.²⁶ The planting was still in the generous drifts that she always used, together with the occasional clump of strong colour, such as *Kniphofia*, or of strong shape, such as yucca. Even in the very narrow borders at Wilbraham House,

Figure 6. Part of the garden plan by Gertrude Jekyll for Fox Steep, near Reading, 1923 (Godalming Museum: courtesy of Gertrude Jekyll Collection, Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley)

she paired wall shrub or climber with the planting below and graded the colours along the wall e.g. the simple dark leaves of *Pyrus japonica* (*Chaenomeles x superba*) 'Knaphill Scarlet' above *Tritoma* (*Kniphofia*) and oriental poppies, followed by *Pyrus japonica* (*Chaenomeles speciosa*) 'Apple Blossom' next to the pinnate leaves and rose-pink racemes of *Robinia hispida* above pink phlox and *Polygonum affine*.²⁷

The double drystone wall at Fox Steep allowed Jekyll to use some of her favourite plants; she had written numerous articles on the subject and her book on *Wall and Water Gardens* (*Country Life*, 1901) was equally divided between the two contrasting situations. On this site two 4 foot walls, which sloped inwards to leave a gap of 18 inches at the top, were 'probably ready for planting about Jan 22 1924', according to Hill's annotated plan. Jekyll's planting plan showed 'small ivy, some planted hard up against foot and others a few courses up wall', designed to climb up the roadside wall. The existing mature yews were in alcoves on the house side of the wall and hollies were added on the top of the wall between them, presumably to increase privacy. These were lightened by the addition of *Teucrium chamaedrys*, lavender and *Centranthus* (valerian). Jekyll envisaged generous drifts of a reliable selection of rock plants to be planted in the wall, mainly on the garden side: rock pinks, white thrift, *Cerastium*, *Sedum spurium*, *Iberis*, *Silene alpestris*, *Aubretia*, various *Helianthemum*, *Achillea umbellata*, *Erinus*, *Campanula carpatica*, *Abyssum*, alpine phlox and veronica plus shrubby hyssop and santolina. In shady spots she suggested polypody, male and hart's tongue ferns plus *Meconopsis* and *Asarum* (Figure 7). By 5 March 1924, the gardener was asking Jekyll to send a considerable number of plants which had not yet been received.²⁸

Woodhouse Copse was in Holmbury St Mary, also the site of the ill-fated modernist Joldwynds. Completed in 1926 and built around the stem-post from a windmill, it had all the characteristics of Hill's Arts and Crafts style: solid stone chimney and walls under thick thatch with elm cladding on the top half, and using more timber from the mill inside. A pergola linked the house to a circular thatched gazebo and the opposite wing contained a thatched loggia and study with a circular window, while other windows had leaded panes. One pane in the living-room recorded all those involved in the building process, including the dog and the 'gardener and

pond digger'. A spacious forecourt on the entrance side led to a front door in the angle of the main house and service wing; millstones sunk on either side echoed Lutyens. On the garden side in front of the pergola there was a pool lined with turquoise blue mosaic on the terrace and lavender specified in front of it. The pool was 'another of Mr. Hill's playful conceits' as it was lit through a hidden glass panel 'making a wonderful effect at night with gold and silver fish in the water'. Steps led down to the lawn and a herbaceous border. Interlinked semi-circular steps cleverly moved down from the loggia level to an angled lower terrace edged with rose beds and more lavender. A drift of 'heaths & berberis, broom etc.' partially enclosed the lawn but were altered later to rose beds. There were hints of more to come with an arrow to the lake and a grass walk edged with herbaceous borders leading away from the main steps behind a yew hedge.²⁹ This ended at a stream with a small woodland garden on the rising slope beyond.

However, the contribution by Hill to the garden beyond his plan was minimal.³⁰ The clients were Mr. and Mrs. W. Deane Brand but she was the actress known as Amy Brandon Thomas or Amy Barnes-Brand, inevitably altered by Hill to 'Brass-Band'. Surprisingly, she managed to strike the right combination of a genuine eagerness to learn from Jekyll's wisdom with her own lively and witty personality to establish a close friendship with Jekyll. This extended to Brand visiting the by then reclusive Jekyll as well as exchanging gifts: plants such as rosemary came from Munstead Wood as part of the contract but also tarragon ('for love) and for you to pot & keep in a kitchen window for the winter'. They worked together on plans for the garden until the spring of 1929 and their correspondence continued almost up to Jekyll's death in 1932.³¹

Hill built La Bastide de la Roquette near Cannes (1929–31); a sprawling house in 'Provencal vernacular' on a solid terrace with a tower at one end and a loggia at the other, continuing the central arches. Like Peto, he could transfer echoes of the Mediterranean to English soil, particularly in the 1929 design of Marylands, Hurtwood, which was also influenced by a trip to Spain. There were sleeping loggias at the end of both the arched wings, which framed a formal courtyard and a pool, which was lined with turquoise blue mosaic

and fed by green terracotta frogs manufactured by Messrs. Doulton. Both were almost always included in his plans. Christopher Hussey drew parallels with Oswald Milne's design at Coletton Fishacre, Kingswear, Devon (1925–6) and praised Hill's 'grasp of plastic form'. Curved Lutyensesque steps tied the house into the sloping site and the garden was the last that Jekyll designed for Hill. The 'birch and rhododendron scrub' already on site would have pleased them both; Hill retained a lovely mature silver birch on the terrace.³² Jekyll had felt the loss of silver birches at Munstead Wood in a gale as 'almost personal'.³³ By this

Section	Plant	Quantity	Price
Wall A	7 Holly	13	1/6
	15 Rock Pink	7	3/6
	Helianthemum	15	1/6
	24 Sedum	15	1/6
	Small Ivy	3	1/6
	Teucrium	7	6
	Holly	10	10
	Veronica	12	12
	Rock Pink	7	12
	Small Ivy	15	15
Wall AA	Teucrium	7	6
	Holly	10	10
	Veronica	12	12
	Rock Pink	7	12
	Small Ivy	15	15
	Teucrium	7	6
	Holly	10	10
	Veronica	12	12
	Rock Pink	7	12
	Small Ivy	15	15
Wall B	Teucrium	7	6
	Holly	10	10
	Veronica	12	12
	Rock Pink	7	12
	Small Ivy	15	15
	Teucrium	7	6
	Holly	10	10
	Veronica	12	12
	Rock Pink	7	12
	Small Ivy	15	15
Wall C	Teucrium	7	6
	Holly	10	10
	Veronica	12	12
	Rock Pink	7	12
	Small Ivy	15	15
	Teucrium	7	6
	Holly	10	10
	Veronica	12	12
	Rock Pink	7	12
	Small Ivy	15	15
Wall D	Teucrium	7	6
	Holly	10	10
	Veronica	12	12
	Rock Pink	7	12
	Small Ivy	15	15
	Teucrium	7	6
	Holly	10	10
	Veronica	12	12
	Rock Pink	7	12
	Small Ivy	15	15

Section	Total
Wall A	11 4 7
Wall AA	16 6
Wall B	13 6
Wall C	8
Wall D	1 6
Summary	2 6
Final Total	10 12 3
Final Total	4 3 6
Final Total	11
Final Total	13 7
Final Total	10
Final Total	2 3
Final Total	2 3
Final Total	1 8
Final Total	3 7 1

Figure 7. Part of Jekyll's notebook entry for planting the drystone wall at Fox Steep (courtesy Godalming Museum)

time, Jekyll was not undertaking many commissions and Hill tempted her tactfully. The undergrowth had been cleared to leave grass slopes.

... the existing birches, cypresses, and clumps of pine have been left at the sides, the idea being to place the house in its lovely natural surroundings without any formal demarcation of house and garden beyond the forecourt steps.

Evergreen shrubs, such as prostrate juniper, cotoneaster, berberis, broom and heath were suggested by Hill and he indicated two positions for junipers at the sides of the steps, where 'the soft grey colour ... will tone admirably with the blue green of the roof'. Jekyll added *Cotoneaster microphyllus* around them. In the courtyard Jekyll suggested 'Brown Turkey' fig and 'Royal Muscadine' vine above *Skimmia japonica* and *Andromeda (Leucothoe) axillaris*. This last was also used below the steps with *Andromeda (Leucothoe) catesbaei* and beyond that a large planting of *Gaultheria shallon* (Figure 8).³⁴ The local hunt was called in by Jekyll at Munstead Wood to remove a fox that had 'made a home in a strong growth of an American undershrub named *Gaultheria shallon*', so she was well aware that it would form a 'close mass of vegetation'.³⁵ The owner, Mr. M. C. Warner, was urging Jekyll to supply her promised plants in the spring of 1930 and her shaky reply on lined paper revealed her failing eyesight and confirmed her claim to having been 'very ill' (Figure 9).³⁶ In a *Country Life* article on 24 October 1931, a photograph showed the junipers in position but only a few pots of plants around the steps.³⁷

It is difficult to determine how much of Jekyll's approach was absorbed by Hill but there are clear indications that he did appreciate and use her ideas. When he had altered Valewood to suit his tastes, he asked Jekyll to plan some borders for him in 1928. The plans do not seem to have survived but a *Country Life* article of 13 October 1928 highlighted the loggias

around the courtyard, centred on the oval turquoise blue swimming pool with its colour enhanced by the addition of copper sulphate. It was spring-fed through the mouth of one of Hill's trademark jade pottery frogs.

Miss Jekyll schemed ... the planting plan, and gave many plants from her own garden ... The needed soil had to be transported by hand-barrow from the kitchen garden at the back, a job in which Mr. Hill himself took a stalwart part.³⁸

There were silver birches beside the pool and a bed of blue anchusa and grey foliage around the sun-room, made from the old granary. Jekyll wrote that 'grey is the setting for blue flowers... Delphinium, Anchusa, Salvia patens and the like.' She went on to describe the greys: yucca, rue, *Stachys lanata*, *Artemisia stellariana*, *A. ludoviciana*, *Cimeraria maritima* and *Santolina*.³⁹ In 1935 Christopher Hussey wrote that 'The garden, which Mr. Hill has designed and largely planted himself, is interesting for the pictorial use made of ordinary plants and common materials'. This was illustrated in a photograph of the entrance: beside a path of grey ironstone laid on edge were junipers, clipped rosemary and two cypresses ('legacies of an earlier farm tenant') with the lower stems pruned bare. Photographs showed delphiniums in the courtyard, setting them with *Artemisia* and mulleins and also campanulas and eryngiums.⁴⁰ The text added *Salvia virgata* and pink sidalcea, as well as anchusas and more grey foliage. 'These blues harmonise with the blue of the bathing pool ... and equally well with the russet tones of the tiled roofs.' A dwarf weeping elm and tubs of agapanthus were growing beside the pool. In spring the carmine tulip 'Étoile de Hollande' set off two red maples and another harmony was *Prunus x pissardii* against the barn with shimmering palest pink flowers in spring and 'in summer its copper leaves melting in with the roof'. A climbing rose and vine were trained over the loggia above phlomis, beside the path to the rose garden.

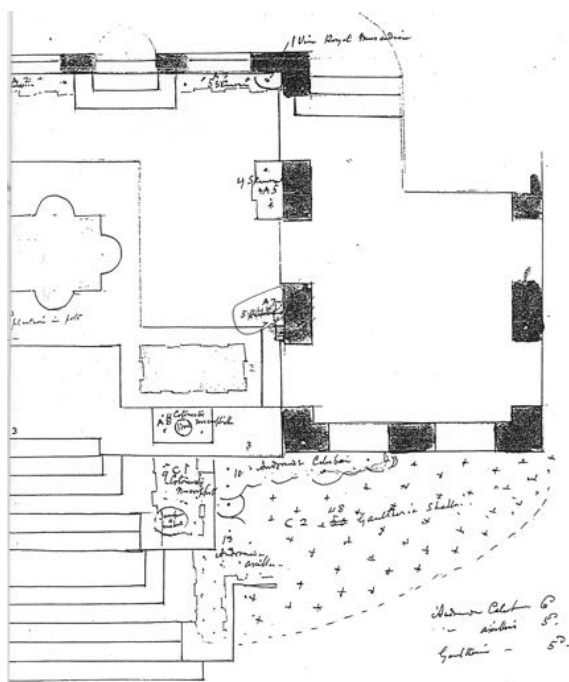


Figure 8. Half of Jekyll's garden plan for Marylands, Hurtwood, 1929 (Godalming Museum: courtesy of Gertrude Jekyll Collection, Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley)

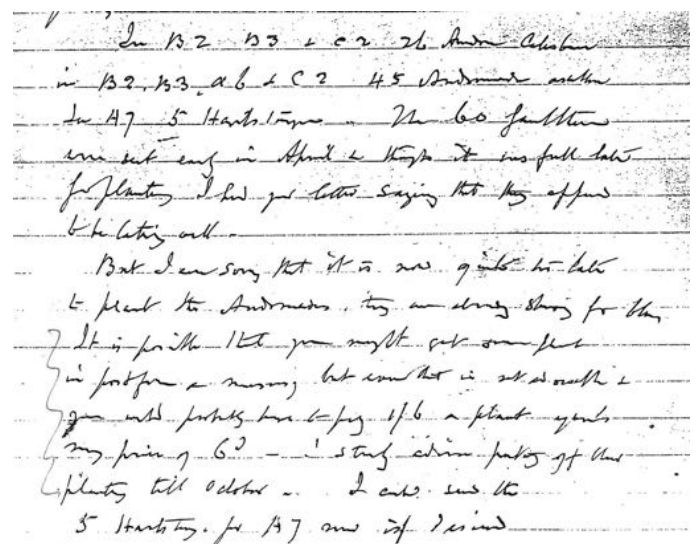


Figure 9. Jekyll's reply to Mr. Warner in 1930 (Godalming Museum: courtesy of Gertrude Jekyll Collection, Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley)

Through the barn, a grass walk rose steeply to a ha-ha, above the meadow ‘park scene’ beyond. ‘A device that ... is an extremely effective way of ending a vista and might well be more generally employed.’ The beds on either side of the walk contained evergreens and ‘evergreys’ with lupins and a backing of brooms, lilac, gorse and beech plus giant cow parsley (hogweed) – ‘a noxious but handsome weed that has to be kept under careful control’. Jekyll regularly planted *Heracleum mantegazzianum*, presumably unaware that it is phototoxic.⁴¹ The birds devoured annuals and wallflowers, pinks, stocks and aubretia, all plants that Jekyll might have used: Hill kept peacocks and white pigeons, a brace of geese and a flight of budgerigars. Hussey’s closing verdict on the garden he knew so well is a convincing argument for Hill’s debt to Jekyll.

The garden is a small but notable example of the “impressionistic” style associated with Miss Jekyll, who, indeed, supplied the original planting plan for the main beds. This has been largely departed from in the course of time, but her formal-informal principles and insistence on effective plant-relationships have been assimilated and carried on with good effect.⁴²

References

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