

To: ALL RESIDENTS
From: LADY MARSHALL

MONTPELIER SQUARE GARDEN REPORT
FEBRUARY 1989 - FEBRUARY 1990

Last year I reported the garden required remedial work. Trees needed pruning, the soil was undernourished and uncultivated, the planting unpruned or in need of replacement and the garden furniture broken and neglected. A new garden contractor was recommended and at the AGM extra money was made available. Most of this work is now completed.

The original choice of contractor was not successful and the agreement with the company was terminated by the Treasurer, Mr. Eckhardt. No cost was involved other than the loss of six valuable Spring working weeks. We were fortunate that Spikes, a small landscaping company recommended to me, were able to accommodate the contract and additional work in April made up the time lost. Spike Jackson, the owner of Spikes, is a talented and qualified landscaper who gives personal service and attention. To date the arrangement has proved very satisfactory.

Tree work was top priority and after a survey by Westminster City Council thorough pruning and surgery was efficiently carried out by Boward Tree Surgery. Unless we suffer accidental damage the trees are now in good condition for some years. Westminster have notified us that two ailanthus trees (opposite Nos. 29 and 16) should be felled by 1992. Replacement trees will be planted as appropriate.

Signs saying "Private Gardens Residents Only" were made and fitted and have been helpful. The gates were painted to improve

their appearance until they can be replaced.

Mrs. Bredenkamp very generously arranged for complete repair and oiling of the garden furniture. This was a big job and it was returned looking immaculate. With careful use and regular maintenance it should now last for many years.

Only a minimal amount of border planting was attempted in the Spring. Given even normal Summer conditions maintaining adequate water for young plants will always be a problem and Autumn/Winter planting is preferable. Extensive pruning of existing shrubs was carried out and is now part of the annual maintenance programme. To provide Summer colour, five oak half-barrels were purchased and planted with mixed bedding plants. This proved successful. An urn was purchased and erected in the Autumn. It will be planted to give seasonal colour.

During the Summer the garden was surveyed and a comprehensive planting plan drawn up. With the exception of the South border and the SE corner all the replanting has been completed during the Winter. The borders were thoroughly prepared by hand digging or rotovating and four tons of dried manure was applied to the planting areas. The garden contract includes an annual Spring mulch and this with the initial preparation should ensure healthy growth for the future.

The lawn needed feeding. Fertiliser was given and will be repeated annually in the Spring. Use of the sprinkler system was very beneficial.

Mixed daffodils and narcissi bulbs were planted in the SE corner and yellow crocus on the west side. Planting plans for next Autumn include more daffodils and narcissi in the NW corner and daffodils in the South border. Combined with the existing mixed bulb display in the NE corner this should give balanced Spring colour.

Past custom has been to burn leaves. Composted they make excellent mulch and valuable fertiliser. Whilst tidying up the

rubbish area compost bins were made and all compostable material is now saved. The large mound of earth left in that area by the previous contractor was sorted and all good soil returned to the borders.

The hot, dry Summer caused root movement and major work became necessary to the paved areas. This was not foreseen and budgeted for last Spring. The two main paved areas were lifted, new base material added, paving relaid and pointed and retaining walls and edging renewed or restored. It was a big undertaking and time consuming. Large tree roots are a constant hazard but it is hoped that these areas will now be problem-free for many years.

Watering proved a major task. The existing sprinkler system covers the lawn area only. I am investigating the possibility and cost of extending the system and I recommend that this should be done if at all possible. An adequate garden hose should also be purchased.

The garden shed roof was damaged by children and re-roofing is now necessary. A quotation has been obtained for this work together with repainting and it is hoped to do the work in the Spring.

The perimeter fencing is in need of urgent attention. The paths are in poor condition. It would be excellent if both these areas could be dealt with in the coming year but, if not, the fencing is the more necessary.

The Committee agreed to experiment with a Christmas tree. Considerable electrical work was necessary and lights had to be purchased. If it is decided to repeat this in future years I estimate the cost to be approximately £200.00 per year.

1989 was a difficult gardening year but good progress was made and I am confident that all the work has been thorough and should give excellent results in the future.

February 11th 1990