

HorticultureWeek

Jo Thompson Qatari Diar Chelsea Flower Show garden to go to Royal British Legion Village

22 February 2016, by Matthew Appleby,

The Chelsea Barracks Garden, designed by Jo Thompson for the 2016 Chelsea Flower Show, is being donated to the Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI) and will be permanently relocated at the Royal British Legion Village in Aylesford, Kent.



The Chelsea Barracks Garden will form the centrepiece of the RBLI's new housing development, which will provide permanent homes for injured, wounded and sick veterans.

Qatari Diar, the sponsors of the Chelsea Barracks Garden, will also be supporting two veterans, resident at the Royal British Legion Village, who are interested in pursuing a career in horticulture to undertake training and gain formal horticulture qualifications, enabling them to carry out the ongoing maintenance for the garden in its new location.

“We are absolutely delighted by this generous donation,” said James Rudoni, director of RBLI Living. “It will be wonderful to have a garden designed by Jo Thompson at the heart of our new housing development, where it will contribute to the rehabilitation and recovery of veterans who have sacrificed so much to serve their country. One of the RBLI's core missions is to help former members of the Armed Forces learn new skills and improve their employability as they transition to civilian life, so we are extremely pleased that Qatari Diar is also providing an opportunity for two veterans to receive horticulture training as part of this donation.”

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The RBLI is a national charity which was founded after World War One in 1919 to support army veterans returning to civilian life. Today it provides support, care and employment for hundreds of ex-servicemen and women each year, particularly those affected by disability, health conditions or social welfare needs. The new development where the garden will be located at the Royal British Legion Village will comprise of purpose built apartments, specifically designed to support mobility needs of the wounded veterans and to help them to live independent lives.

“I am thrilled that the garden will be going to such a worthwhile home after the Chelsea Flower Show,” said Jo Thompson. “The Chelsea Barracks Garden will be a traditional British rose garden, reimagined for the 21st century. I very much hope it will provide ex-service personnel with a beautiful place to enjoy and a tranquil setting to reflect, as well as offering the chance for residents to get involved with a range of activities to aid their recovery.”

Thompson is one of the UK’s leading garden designers and this will be her eighth year at the Chelsea Flower Show. Her design is inspired by the heritage of the Chelsea Barracks site in London, the former British Army barracks, with cues taken from the architecture and landscaping of the new development, which neighbours the Royal Hospital (where the Chelsea Flower Show has been held since 1913). Roses, with perennial planting between, will be a main feature of the garden. They reference the listed Garrison Chapel, with its beautiful Rose Window, which is preserved at the heart of the new development on the Chelsea Barracks site.

“We have been very impressed by the valuable work done by the RBLI to support ex-service men and women as they transition to civilian life,” said a spokesperson for Qatari Diar, the sponsors of the Chelsea Barracks Garden. “Given the important military heritage of the Chelsea Barracks site, the Royal British Legion Village in Kent seems the perfect home for the garden. We are delighted to secure a permanent legacy for the Chelsea Barracks Garden and to know it will make a positive contribution to this community of veterans for years to come.”

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