

Yale spring  
& summer 2012



This lively, informed and perceptive narrative charts the vicissitudes of London's squares and brings the social and building history of these often eccentric places into focus

J. B. Papworth, *Soho Square*, 1816, aquatint, from his *Select Views of London: With Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Some of the Most Interesting of its Public Buildings* (1816).<sup>7</sup> City of London Corporation, London Metropolitan Archives.



## The London Square

*Gardens in the Midst of Town*

Todd Longstaffe-Gowan

Modern-day London abounds with a multitude of gardens, enclosed by railings and surrounded by houses, which attest to the English love of nature. These green enclaves, known as squares, are among the most distinctive and admired features of the metropolis and are England's greatest contribution to the development of European town planning and urban form. Traditionally, inhabitants who overlooked these gated communal gardens paid for their maintenance and had special access to them. As such, they have long been synonymous with privilege, elegance and prosperous metropolitan living. They epitomise the classical notion of *rus in urbe*, the integration of nature within the urban plan – a concept that continues to shape cities to this day.

Todd Longstaffe-Gowan delves into the history, evolution and social implications of squares, which have been an important element in the planning and expansion of London since the early 17th century. As an amenity that fosters health and well-being and a connection to the natural world, the square has played a crucial role in the development of the English capital.

Todd Longstaffe-Gowan is a landscape architect with an international practice based in London. He is gardens adviser to Hampton Court Palace and is currently redesigning the gardens of Kensington Palace. He is the author of *The London Town Garden*, published by Yale.

May  
304 pp. 285x245mm.  
160 colour + 100 b/w illus.  
HB ISBN 978-0-300-15201-2 £30.00\*

Published for The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art