

Rare Map Dealer Brings Britain's Great Garden Designs to Life at Firsts London 2025

An immersive exhibition of antique estate plans and garden maps reveals the visionary roots of Kew, Chelsea Physic Garden, and other iconic landscapes

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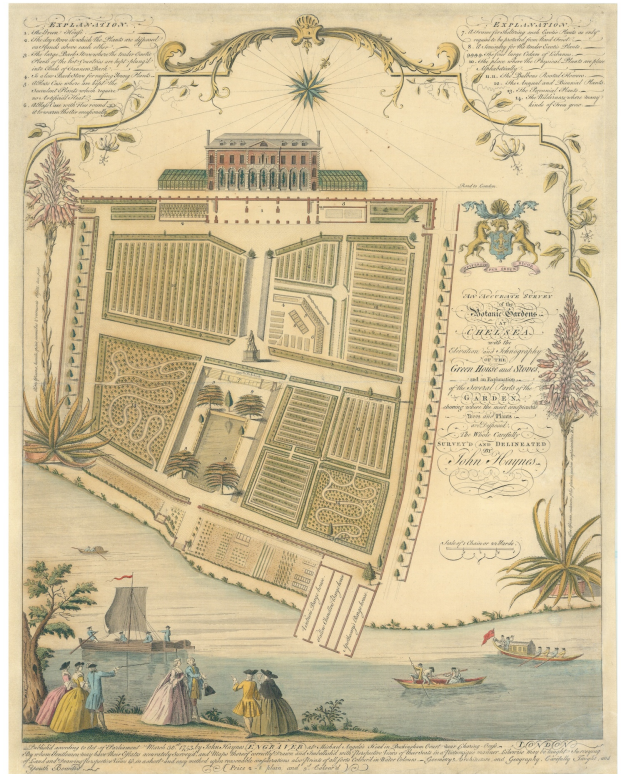
/EINPresswire.com/ -- Visitors to [Firsts London](#), the UK's premier rare book and print fair, will have the opportunity to step into the golden age of British garden design, thanks to a captivating new installation by renowned map dealer [Daniel Crouch Rare Books](#).

Staged at the Saatchi Gallery from 16–19 May, the exhibition – "Gardens in Print: Visions of Landscape and Legacy" – brings together rare and richly detailed estate plans that reveal how Britain's great gardens were once conceived on paper, long before they were realised in earth and stone.

Among the highlights is an exquisite 18th-century plan of Kew Gardens by master cartographer John Rocque, illustrating the ambitious landscape vision of Prince Frederick and Princess Augusta – the royal founders of what would become the world's most famous botanic garden. The plan traces the origins of Kew's formal avenues and naturalistic plantings, elements that still define the garden today.

Another rare treasure is an unrealised 18th-century design for the gardens at Eton College, created under the patronage of Queen Anne and engraved by John Pine, known for his collaborations with artist William Hogarth. This fascinating 'what might have been' offers a glimpse into the period's grand landscape ambitions.

Visitors can also marvel at Rocque's monumental estate plan for Wanstead House, a grand project intended to rival Blenheim Palace. The map reveals a sweeping landscape of amphitheatres, tree-lined drives, and ornamental lakes, evoking the theatricality and scale of aristocratic garden-making at its height.



An 18th century survey of the Botanic Gardens at Chelsea (later the Chelsea Physic Garden) by John Haynes



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Daniel Crouch

Equally captivating is a richly illustrated map of Chelsea Physic Garden, depicting strolling figures among prized botanical specimens including African aloe plants, reflecting the garden's role as a centre of medicinal and exotic plant collecting in Georgian London.

Completing the display is a birds-eye view of Cambridge University by David Loggan, whose intricate engraving

captures the architectural and botanical splendour of the colleges, their quadrangles flanked by formal plantings that speak to the enduring relationship between scholarship and landscape.

"This exhibition celebrates the artistry of mapmakers and the vision of garden designers who shaped Britain's most cherished landscapes," says Daniel Crouch. "These works not only chart land and ambition but offer a window onto the evolving relationship between people, plants, and place."

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