

FOOTBALL TYCOON BANKROLLS COURTYARD TO BE NAMED IN HIS HONOUR

Reading FC chief gives V&A £2m to build new garden

THE multi-millionaire owner of Reading Football Club has donated £2million to the V&A for the creation of a new garden to be named in his honour.

John Madejski was today named by the gallery as the financial backer of the transformation of its central courtyard into a "stylish, elegant place to meet".

It is the latest in a long line of acts of philanthropy by Mr Madejski, the partner of entertainer Cilla Black, 61. Last year he gave £3 mil-

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lion to the Royal Academy, along with the loan of a Degas painting. He has also made large donations to Reading Museum and the Royal Theatre in Windsor. Mr Madejski, 64, said: "I am delighted to be involved in this very important project to give the people of London a fine place to go and sit and contemplate their thoughts, away from the hustle and bustle of the

Light fantastic: the John Madejski Garden will be transformed at night with dramatic illumination

busy streets." Work is almost complete on the John Madejski Garden, created by designer Kim Wilkie. It will open on 6 July.

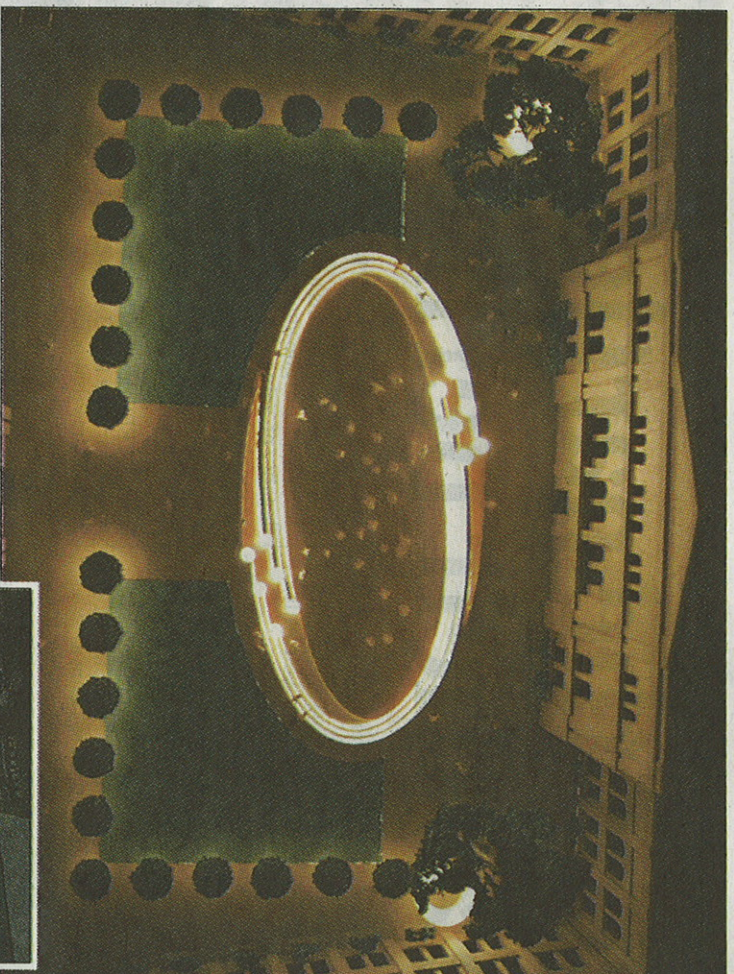
The central focus of the garden will be a water feature. The V&A said it would be a "stone-paved ellipse, with surrounding steps and water jets, which can be filled with water as a reflecting pool or drained to an oval for displays and receptions."

The oval will be surrounded by a lawn and there will be seasonal flower dis-

plays. By night, the square will be illuminated by a scheme created by Patrick Woodroffe, who has designed concert lighting for the Rolling Stones.

Mark Jones, director of the V&A, said: "Thanks to the generous support of John Madejski, we are creating a beautiful new garden providing a welcome focus for visitors at the centre of the museum."

● For more information about the new John Madejski Garden, visit www.vam.ac.uk



Philanthropist: Reading FC boss John Madejski with his partner Cilla Black