

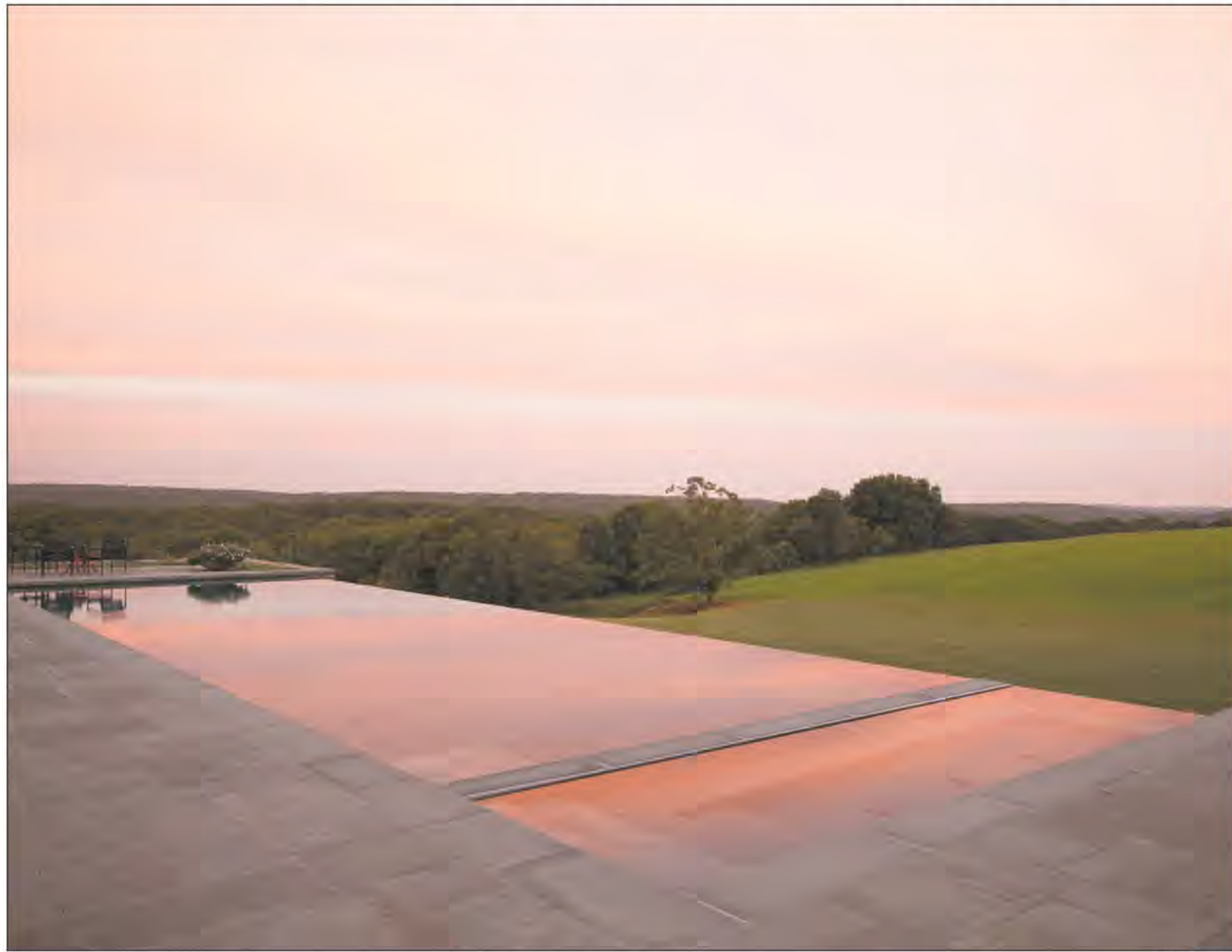
# Real Estate

GREENWICH TIME | GREENWICHTIME.COM | Friday, July 1, 2016 | Section R

## LUXURY LIVING

# Breathtaking outdoor spaces

Janice Parker Landscape Architects turn nature into art **R2**



Neil Landino

Janice Parker Landscape Architects created this infinity-edge pool and surrounding terrace, interspersed with low to the ground plantings. The water perfectly reflects the sky above and seemingly spills out to the expansive lawn beyond.

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## REAL ESTATE

## LUXURY LIVING

# Landscape architect creates magnificent outdoor spaces

By Gretchen A. Peck

"Some people like to do word jumbles or crossword puzzles. I like to drive up to a property and challenge myself to redesign the landscape in under 60 seconds," Janice Parker said.

Parker is a landscape architect and has been for more than 31 years.

"Landscape architects are licensed through a national board exam. We have rigorous training in the technical aspects of civil engineering, grading, drainage, ecology, environmental sustainability and conservation biology," Parker said.

These multidimensional and highly skilled professionals find work in all matters of private and public life. They belabor over coastal management and wetlands. They are stewards of woodlands. They work for private firms and public or governmental agencies.

Parker, who began her work as a sole proprietor but has built a team along the way, has created a number of spaces for the public good. It was her firm that brought the A Million Trees Project to New York City and cherry trees to the Harlem River Esplanade. But it's private, residential projects that Parker called her "real love," and she's completed an impressive number of them here in Greenwich where her firm is based.

"With residential projects, there's great collaboration between the client and the team, which is really rewarding. There's also much more creative freedom compared to public projects," she said.

A landscape architect offers services and expertise that surpasses those of a landscape designer. A landscape architect should be engaged whenever there is new architecture being built, when there's some need for site disturbance to create the outdoor space or when major changes are being made to the plot of an existing parcel.

"These types of projects always require special permitting and engineering," Parker said.

Creating an outdoor space is similar to creating an interior design. Building a room doesn't

begin with questions about what couch to buy or what fabrics to use.

"That's like the parsley around the roast," Parker offered as an analogy.

Rather, a room is first created architecturally. Does it have a good floor plan? Is there proper circulation? How does light fill the space in the daytime and the evening? Where are the windows, and what's their exposure?

Though landscapes are inherently outdoors, a landscape architect pays attention to how they're viewed from the interior, as well — what it looks like from the window over the kitchen sink, or from high up through the master bedroom windows, for example. Parker noted that many home architects and builders today are tasked with creating a front-to-back view, so that when guests enter the front of the home, they can see all the way through it and out to the back of the property.

"Think of that like a painting," she suggested. "How is the light hitting it? How will it change with the seasons? What is in the foreground, mid-ground and background of the painting? We think about all those things, and we use 3D modeling, which is a great creative tool for us."

"While paintings are two-dimensional, our designs are in four dimensions, with the added layers of movement, weather, wind or birds flying by — things that attract your attention and make you look at that painting in a different way," she said. "In the winter, there's snow. In the summer, it's lush. With residential projects, it's a fantastic opportunity to study these things. ... Mother Nature is a constant learning experience."

Another consideration is the history of the land. During the creative process, Parker tries to strip away "the suburban effect," to see the land for how it existed and was used historically and to pay homage to that with her plan. Her team also places great emphasis on sustainability. If the plantings chosen grow too quickly or don't retain their shape or health, it can be expensive to maintain, and so clients will be more inclined not to care for



Durston Saylor

Above: This elegant and serene pool scape designed by Janice Parker Landscape Architects is both a place for calm solitude and sophisticated gatherings. Below: A well-planned landscape design considers not only the aesthetic elements like plantings and sculpture, but also drainage, lighting, navigational orientation, sustainability and cost.



Neil Landino

them. She's cognizant that landscaping maintenance and tree pruning can be expensive, so she begins the conversation with clients by talking about the long-term investment — not only what their budget is for the design and implementation, but also for yearly upkeep.

"That's also important to consider when you're buying a piece of real estate," she said. "What

are the landscaping requirements? Will you find that you need to take out plants? What is the cost for tree care, because they do get bigger every year. What may have seemed like a nice privacy hedgerow to the previous owner may become your bane as it grows to 40-feet high and shades out everything that you plant near it."

Parker still plays the "redesign

## THE LIST

### Highest-priced listings of the week

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Stanley Jesudowich

## HOT PROPERTY

### Vintage-style meets modern amenities

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## AGENT PROFILE



Realtor is an area icon known

as a problem solver

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a site in 60 seconds" game, on her own and with her team. It's not just a fun creative exercise, it prepares them to work quickly and decisively when an actual project calls for it.

"I'm not suggesting that you can design a perfect landscape in a minute," Parker said. "But there's something to improve upon even with designs that we immediately love. We ask ourselves things like: What would we have done differently to showcase the driveway? What different plantings would we have chosen? How is the house sited directionally — facing north, south, east or west — and do the different plantings allow for great views of the surrounding landscape? What does it look like at night? What does it look like in the day?"

"The actual creative process is far more rigorous than this game we play. There's more study, more analysis, but it prepares us to do it comprehensively and strengthens our ability to use what's in our toolkit," she said.