

The Goal: Efficiency and Sustainability

By Helen S. Rattray | April 24, 2015 - 12:43pm

The East Hampton house that the architect Michael Haverland designed for himself and his partner, Philip Galanes, was featured in an East Hampton Star HomeBook a few years ago. Now, almost 11 years since it was constructed, the house and grounds have been “greened,” to use a catchall term for changes that have redefined the landscape and reduced the need for maintenance and overall consumption of energy.

The house has 12-foot ceilings and walls of glass that invite the outside in. From the first, drapes were necessary. Now, a second layer — of heavy chenille curtains — has been installed throughout the house. Not only do they help provide energy efficiency, they prevent sun damage to furniture and floors. When the house is going to be vacant for a day or more the drapes and curtains are closed, creating a blanket that moderates the indoor temperature regardless of whether it is hot or cold outside.



The lawn has been reduced by 43 percent and areas around trees and along walls are now beds for native and evergreen plants.

In addition to being treated with organic products, the lawn is no longer what Mr. Haverland described as a default carpet. Grass areas have become large planting beds with mulch and native plants that require little maintenance.

Technical upgrades were also part of the makeover. Equipment for the pool, whose size was modest to begin with, was replaced with a variable speed pump. The chlorine system gave way to saltwater and a cartridge filter, and solar coils on the roof of the garage replaced a gas heater. A rechargeable electric lawn mower and electric trimmers were purchased.

Inside the house, hot water heaters were replaced with state-of-the-art tankless heaters and a switch put in a handy place so that the hot water can be easily stopped from recirculating when the house is empty. To avoid the kind of fire that recently consumed a venerable house on West End Road in East Hampton, the original electrical breakers were replaced with ones more sensitive to faulty wires.

The East End may not some day have to face a drought like that now plaguing California, but our future as a place we can be proud to live and work in may depend on the preservation of our natural resources. Michael Haverland has taken a step in that direction.



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To keep deer from hopping over the antique gate, seen in the image at left, aluminum frames, containing mesh printed with landscape images, increase the gate's height to eight feet.



Tall grasses, seen from the kitchen, look good year round.

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A second layer now accompanies the original drapes, seen above in 2012.

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