

After our homeowners remodeled a few interior spaces, they turned their focus to the outside. The outside spaces were stuck in the 1990s. Mr. Homeowner said "The entire landscape was failing. It wasn't our style at all. This wasn't a landscape project; it was a complete remodel."



Client Goals:

To bring the landscape into this century, here is what topped the list:

- Redo Swimming Pool. Square it with the house, make it bigger.
- Gazebo with TV and kitchen - a destination space.
- Make the outside spaces reflect the homeowners' interior taste and lifestyle.
- Add a fireplace and water feature.
- Front - redo entry, add retaining walls, and lighting.
- Fewer steps & well-defined spaces.

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Before: Too many unconnected spaces. Wasted space. Too many materials. Not much color.

This is where we started - in the 90s.

Too small pool, paver pool deck & steps, unused fire pit, high maintenance koi pond.

Pool not squared up with the house.

Boulder walls do not complement the home.

Too many steps. Risers under 6".

Outdoor kitchen overrun with critters.

Fire pit never used.

Why is there a tree in the middle of the pool deck?



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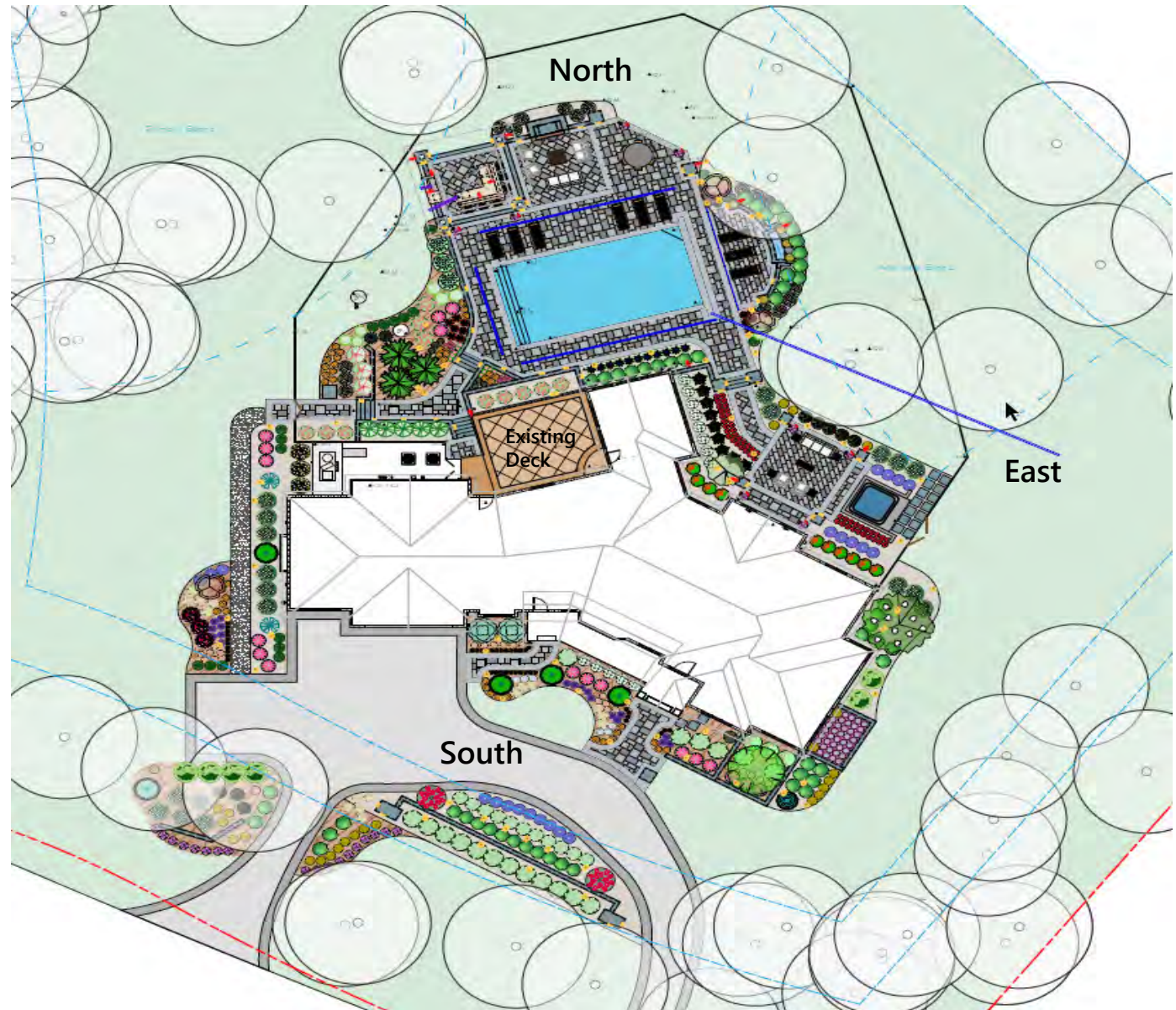
Landscape Plan. Consistent use of materials around entire home. Full color Bluestone.

North side: Well-defined spaces - outdoor kitchen, living space with fireplace, and dining space, and a swimming pool.

South side: New front entry walkways, stone retaining walls in front of the semi-circular driveway, and on the southeast corner of the home.

East side: Sank the hot tub with access panel facing the double fence gate, added columns to define the side entry, new stone steps, add gas fire table.

West side: New plantings on either side of the backyard entry walkway.



Before/After: Front plant beds partially-covering the house & no night lighting >>>Clean lines color.



- New front entry bluestone walkway.
- Added bluestone retaining walls with accent colors complementing the brick on the home.
- New brick column topped with a carriage lantern.
- Fresh plant material - across the entire front yard.



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Before/After: Too many materials, oddly-placed spaces >>>Open outdoor living.



We brought in our builder partner to build the gazebo. It was engineered to withstand high winds. Footings are 42" deep and the posts are filled with concrete.

The gazebo is a destination space for the homeowners. It's their favorite space to have a beverage and watch the Twins.

Mr. Homeowner said, "This is our dream resort. It's so beautiful at night. We spend more time outdoors."

- Bluestone pool deck, retaining walls , and fireplace masonry. Darker stone colors mixed in to complement the brick on the home.
- Pool entry steps extend across the width of the pool.
- Lighting under wall and column caps highlight color and texture.
- For continuity, gazebo columns match the front entry columns.



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Construction Details.



- Completely gutted the landscape.
- New 20 x 40' pool with new plumbing & electrical. Rebar around the pool edge for poured concrete -preparing for the stone pool deck.
- Recycled the old lanterns.

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Before/After: When entering the backyard from the driveway gate, it's hard to choose where to go first. From the gazebo on the left to the chaise lounges and water feature at the far end, each living area has its draw.



Bluestone sidewalk and pool deck. The lighting below the bluestone wall and column caps adds ambiance in the evenings.

Additional plant bed lights - path lights and up lights provides some depth perspective, drawing your gaze to the far end.

Before: The only lighting at night was either on the house or the arbor columns.



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Detail shot/Challenges: Weirs and three challenges.



Challenge #1: With acorns raining down on the back yard, debris was clogging the water feature. Adding a pool filter and screening manages the tree debris.

Challenge #2: Finding the brick became a mission. The existing brick on the home is no longer manufactured. Searching the country, we found brick close in color and texture to the home's brick. It was in North Carolina.

Challenge #3: The next challenge came in getting it all back to Minnesota. Not surprisingly, the company had no driver. The designer was ready to make the trip when we found a N.C. driver.

- The water feature and columns at either end are in brick, matching the house. The wing walls and caps are bluestone.
- There's lighting under the bluestone caps but also one up light in the water on the weirs.
- Large garden containers bring a riot of color.
- Spa-like atmosphere with shaded loungers and the sound of water.



Craftsmanship/Functionality: Renovating the side yard. Look #1



Functionality: Another destination space.

The side yard was not used very often. The doors on the right lead to a lower level game room, a natural stone fireplace, and a bar with a natural stone column at one end. Outside: Added a gas fire table for ambiance. Dropped the hot tub in a 3/4 surround made it easier to get in/out of the tub. The backside of the tub faces a double gate for easy access to the tub panels.

Trees were removed just outside the fence to improve the distant view across the side yard.

Craftsmanship: The brick columns are a design element, meant to designate "entry" into outdoor spaces such as, the hot tub area, the side yard, the water feature, or the entry into the pool area.

Aesthetic. Fire and water. Two elements we are drawn to when we need to relax.



Fire Table surrounded by comfy chairs, draw family and friends to spend some time in conversation. You can see the pool in the distance, up the stairs. Hard to resist.

Note: Large garden containers top the columns for an even larger entry presence.

Functionality/Aesthetics/Craftsmanship: The tongue and groove ceiling matches the interior 3-season porch ceiling. The cove lighting provides soft light - on a dimmer switch.



- The homeowner insisted on sealed cabinets to prevent field mice from making themselves at home.
- By request, there is no refrigerator or sink with running water - a minimalist but functional kitchen.
- Ceiling fan provides a breeze even on the calmest of days during the heat of summer.
- The aluminum cover on the left end of the counter is a cooler that drains into the yard.

Functionality/Aesthetics. Not a bad view.



- Seating for six at the bar.
- Granite countertops and shiplap cabinets.
- On the left, the "living room" and just beyond that dining space.
- With wetlands beyond the fence, wildlife frequently provides a show during dinner.
- Deer, sandhill cranes, herons, wild turkeys stroll along the outside of the fence - curious about their human neighbors.



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Functionality/Craftsmanship: Gas fireplace is the focal point for the "living room". Homeowners did not want the fireplace inside the gazebo.



- Bluestone veneer on the fireplace with brown colors added to complement the brick columns.
- The TV is positioned so the homeowners can watch the Twins or Vikings from the living space.
- Frost footings at 42", core filled, and 6" wider than the finished fireplace.
- The patio pattern is angled to mimic an area rug, defining the living space.

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Details.



- Before: Ground level beds with occasional boulder edging, sloping toward the pool deck, and step risers under 6".
- After: Raised plant beds surround the pool deck. Pool deck all one level. Cleaner, neater appearance.
- Homeowner said he watches the Twins from the pool. Audio speakers are scattered throughout the back yard.



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Before and After - Front entry update.



- Path lights, up lights, wall lights, and wash lights. Homeowners wanted to light up the front of the home, giving it a grander presence from the street.
- New bluestone walkways at the front and side entries.

Right: Bluestone retaining walls stretch across the semi-circular driveway - left, center, and right sides - "extending" the front of the home closer to the street. Wash lights highlight the texture of the stone.





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