

*Windermere on the Lake  
is a majestic green  
village of lakefront homes  
and glorious gardens  
in back-country Stamford*

# Beside the Lake Beneath the Trees

BY ERIKA ALEXIA TSOUKANELIS PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER KOLK

William Wordsworth was inspired to write his famous poem “*I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud*” by a great belt of blooming daffodils that he came upon while walking in the bucolic Lake District of England. Many artists and writers over the centuries have been moved by the same rolling landscape, and the blueprint for Windermere on the Lake in North Stamford, Connecticut, was similarly inspired by this picturesque area. England’s Lake District is a cluster of villages well-known for their Arts and Crafts style of architecture and integrated landscape

*I wandered lonely as a cloud:  
That floats on high o’er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.*  
—William Wordsworth

design, amid a verdant natural setting. Windermere on the Lake is a luxury development set to emulate those historic English villages, houses and gardens.

“We wanted to build something truly remarkable,” says Mark Robbins, Windermere’s president. “Something of historical importance. We wanted to make a classically inspired neighborhood space.”

To this end, Windermere’s developers brought in the gifted Roger Bartels of Bartels-Pagliaro Architects in Norwalk, who was motivated to create a community where there would be a fusion of homes and gardens, each individual plot flowing into the next. The completed whole



**EXTERIOR** Windermere on the Lake’s first model home is distinguished by a bold, tiered-triangle design and front-facing courtyard.





A yacht-like, shingle-style exterior characterizes the model home.

There is a large freshwater lake at the center of the Windermere property. A Habitat Management Plan mandates on-site wetland restoration and preservation.

would be greater—more lavish and warm—than the sum of its parts. Internationally acclaimed Simon Johnson, sometimes gardener to the Queen of England, was also invited to join in Windermere’s holistic formation, making it the first American development to benefit from his landscaping expertise. The houses will also benefit from handmade, personally designed cabinetry and kitchens by the exceptional Christopher Peacock, and Waterworks will do most of the tiling and fixtures. Karen Houghton and her team have been called to conceive restful, sophisticated home interiors that complement Bartels’ architectural efforts.

The upscale development will eventually contain 24 semi-custom homes on 73 acres of protected land, with a large freshwater lake at the center. As a gated, resort-like community, Windermere will offer its residents a score of amenities. Security will be assured. Grounds will be professionally maintained and snow

removal included. Pressurized municipal water will be available and all utilities will be underground, including conduits for fiber optics. A swimming pool, tennis court, clubhouse with fitness room and lakefront dock will all be enjoyed. Residents will boat and fish on the property. There are also two ponds, an old stone bridge and miles of walking trails to meander.

Houses in the community will be constructed following one of four design plans: the Cumbria, Durham, Lancashire or Westmorland. Each is named for a Lake District locale and inspired by turn-of-the-century architect C. F. A. Voysey. His work sought to harmonize man-made structures with the natural world. It featured continuous rooftops that blended into one another and the environment. Voysey was part of the Arts and Crafts movement, which began in the 19th century as a reaction to the staunch Victorian era. Arts and Crafts followers were against



**MODELS** Four architectural house styles are available (right, from top to bottom): Cumbria, Lancashire, Westmorland and Durham.



the soulless mass production of the Industrial Revolution, and romanticized the pride craftsmen took in their trades. Windermere’s four house plans and its village milieu celebrate the earthiness of the Arts and Crafts movement, its architecture honoring the wonders of nature and incorporating courtyard and pocket gardens into each home.

The first completed model home is done in the Cumbria style. At 8,000 square-feet, it demonstrates the largest Windermere

home footprint. It has a cedar-shingled roof, five bedrooms and four baths, state-of-the-art Sub Zero and Wolf appliances, a mirrored exercise room, wine cellar, home theater and three-car garage. There are breathtaking lake views from almost every window, and these many windows allow for an influx of copious sunlight. All of the homes will be as such: open to light and dazzling vistas.

As Windermere’s structures will be semi-custom-made, new home owners will work in cooperation with architect Bartels

and landscape designer Johnson to fashion homes and gardens that suit their specific lifestyles. Houses will range from 4,600 to 8,000 square feet. Sixteen interior and exterior options will be offered. Custom features include radiant heat, elevators, his and her offices, and the landmark tower, Windermere’s signature architectural element. There is also a green package obtainable to home owners, a geothermal heating and cooling system being part of that selection. Geothermal systems work by directing

hot air from the earth into a structure during colder seasons, and extracting heat from the interior as the weather warms. No fossil fuels are burned in this process.

“The geothermal energy system option is just one of 60 points that make these houses green,” says Windermere’s president Robbins. “Being eco-friendly is in line with our holistic approach to this project.”

The Cumbria model home will almost certainly be the first





**CUMBRIA** model home interior features a grand central staircase.



**ABOVE** A view from the living room into the dining room of the model home. Karen Houghton of Nyack is interior design consultant for Windermere.

luxury abode to obtain certification from the United States Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. This is the federal and legal equivalent of being granted an environmentally friendly stamp of approval. Windermere's developers see a green attitude to be in line with the highest quality of building. Aside from the geothermal heating and cooling system (which favorably cuts down on utility costs), the house has superior insulation (which means excellent sound insulation as well). Paints, finishes, furnishings and carpeting are all absent of toxic out-gasses. There was no waste associated with construction because of the way the lumber was purchased and cut. Only sustainable resources were used.

And it's not just the Cumbria model that is green.

Windermere's entire design was approached in an eco-conscious manner. To minimize waste, old stone walls on the property were dismantled and reconfigured by a European stone mason. A linear cobblestone passageway will connect architectural elements, while drawing water from the lake and channeling it into the ponds, encouraging oxygenation and biodiversity there. Great overall respect has been taken for ecological balance. A Habitat Management Plan mandates wetland restoration and preservation. No pesticides will ever be used. Special plantings and enriched topsoil will be set in place to protect habitats. Invasive, destructive plants such as garlic mustard, black locust and bamboo will be removed when necessary. Wildlife preservation efforts involve wildflower and butterfly plantings, and bluebird nesting boxes. Log-crib habi-





tats in the lake and ponds will function as incubation boxes to foster the viability of protected species like box turtles and salamanders.

Windermere has 56 acres of forever open space, only half of which will be built upon. Twenty-five acres of the total property were donated to the Stamford Land Conservation Trust. That this is the largest gift of its kind ever given to the organization is indicative of Windermere's commitment to responsible development. They will maintain the gifted land in perpetuity.

Another gift of \$830,000 was given to New Neighborhoods, Inc. of Stamford. The funds will be used to create 50 units of affordable housing. Windermere thus marks itself as a community within the greater community of Stamford. As an environmentally conscious luxury development, it distinguishes itself as a unique part of the community of our planet.

Roger Bartels says, "The American suburban

mindset has been one of expansion, of everyone needing to have their own space. The result has been sprawl. The truth is that most people prefer the smaller, older towns, where they can go out their doors and talk to people."

Windermere on the Lake is intended to be such a place. In resort-like splendor, residents will have the opportunity to be members of a united, eco-friendly village. They will live within distinctive, personalized, light-filled interiors. They will appreciate the exquisite gardens that are part of their homes and the abundance of natural beauty surrounding them. Beside the lake, beneath the trees, they may just discover within themselves something akin to Wordsworth's awe of those daffodils he came upon years ago on a country hillside in the Lake District of England.

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**ABOVE** (left) Every Windermere living room will feature hardwood floors and a wood-burning fireplace. Windermere president Mark Robbins says of architect Roger Bartels, "He is exceptional at mastering the light and bringing it into the homes." The bright master bedroom of the Cumbria model (right) exemplifies this statement.

**LEFT** Twenty-five acres of the total Windermere property were donated to the Stamford Land Conservation Trust, making it the largest gift of its kind ever granted.





**ALL KITCHENS** and cabinetry are hand-made and specially designed by Christopher Peacock.. Gardens are verdant and lush in summertime.

The rear of the majestic Cumbria model faces the lake. It will likely be the first luxury home to obtain LEED certification for its many eco-friendly design points.



#### RESOURCES

**Windermere on the Lake**  
191 Erskine Road  
Stamford, CT 06903  
203-322-0055  
windermereonthelake.com

**Bartels-Pagliaro Architects, LLC**  
203-838-5517  
bartels-pagliaro.com

**Christopher Peacock Cabinetry**  
203-862-9333  
peacockcabinetry.com

**Karen Houghton Interiors**  
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**Waterworks**  
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