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DESIGN

## Student Landscape Designers Tackle Brooklyn Project

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For the students, it is an opportunity to design a landscape in real-world conditions, accounting for a client's needs. For the developers, it's a source of fresh ideas that's cheaper, too. Real estate developers Ken Horn and Joel Breitkopf of Alchem Properties are scheduled to sit on a panel of judges today for a design

competition they organized in conjunction with Columbia University. The developers will sift through the renderings and models of 16 Columbia landscape design students for the backyard of their 11-story Lookout Hill condominium project in Brooklyn Heights.

As part of a semester-long studio class, the students built models and made renderings of their

ideas for the garden behind the building. Their task was to provide Lookout Hill residents, who will be paying between \$500,000 and \$950,000 for a condo, a space for relaxation and an area for children to play.

"They went beyond what I expected," Mr. Horn said.

The Columbia students, who are all enrolled in a yearlong landscape design master's program,

will be offered \$2,000 for first place in the competition; second and third place winners get \$1,000 and \$500, respectively. With a \$50,000 budget in mind, students aimed to convert a long, narrow space flanked on three sides by tall buildings into an area that, Mr. Horn said, had to serve two very different functions.

"It was great for us to interact with something real," a landscape

student, Rachel Williams, 39, said.

"I think these developers are interested in the kind of designs that students think about which are maybe more risky," fellow classmate Barbara Batcheler said.

Many of the student's submissions included water. Ms. Williams designed a wading pool, which she thought would be peaceful for adults and fun for children.

An instructor in the program, landscape architect Adrian Smith, estimated that there are around 400 registered landscape architects in the greater New York City

area, and many more landscape designers. Landscape architects and designers figure into most development projects, he said.

"I like to say that a rule of thumb is that 10% of your architect's budget should go to your landscape designer," Mr. Disponzio said. Landscape designers in New York usually charge an hourly rate of between \$85 and \$175 an hour. And there is an extra financial incentive

Alchemy to use student design. "It's probably a little less," Smith said. "But it depends on whom you hire and what the scope of their work is."