



# CUSHMAN DESIGN GROUP

Specializing in creative and enduring design

BY MARY GOW

A burgeoning interest in fly-fishing led the owners of a large and remote tract of land in Northern Vermont to seek a new relationship with their property. A lovely stretch of river on the land, complete with pools and cascades, beckoned. The landowners wanted to spend time there fishing, snowshoeing in winter, and being close to nature. They envisioned a small but comfortable retreat in harmony with its idyllic surroundings.



Above: The main living space of Butterfly Ridge awash in natural light. Photo by Susan Tearé.  
Above right: The Cahill Cabin's living room opens to the surrounding forested landscape. Photo by Derrick Barrett.  
Right: A recent kitchen renovation provides a comfortable, functional space for the owners of this New York home. Photo by Susan Tearé.



The landowners turned to Cushman Design Group of Stowe. Founded by Milford Cushman in 1988, Cushman Design Group has built its superb reputation over 30 years by providing personalized architectural, interior, landscape, and master-planning design services for residential and commercial properties. The firm specializes in creative and enduring designs developed through close communication and understanding of their clients' lifestyles and desires.

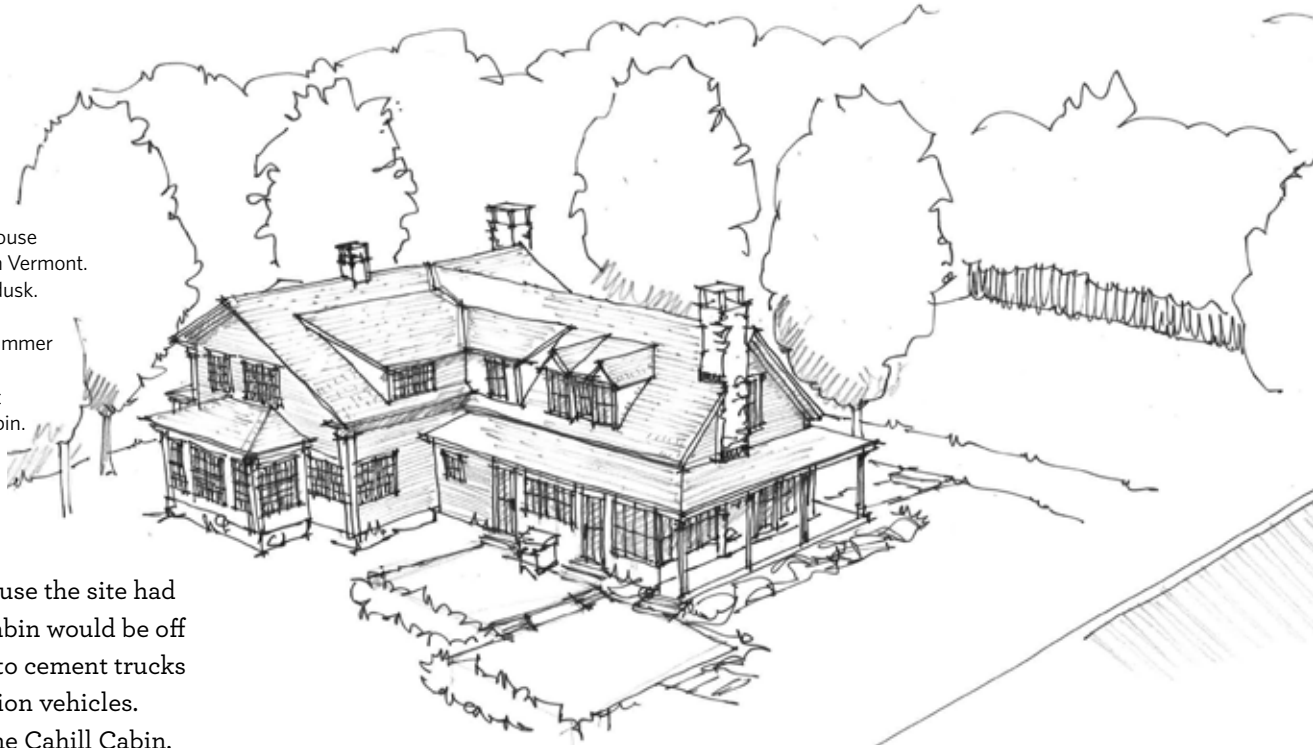
"The most important role we have as designers is to help guide our clients through the process of design, budgeting, and construction in a way that achieves their goals in a meaningful and efficient way," says Chad Forcier, CDG project manager. "We help define goals through thoughtful conversations with our clients, where we prioritize listening with intention before proposing a solution or design." The collective experience from having worked on hundreds of projects allows CDG to bring keen

insight into how to tailor the design process to each individual client.

#### CAHILL CABIN

The fly-fishing property owners were familiar with the firm's approach. They had previously worked together on a residence, a much larger scale property with a very modern aesthetic. With the fishing cabin, the owners still wanted uncluttered clean lines but an ambience that fit the setting. Focusing on the river, including its soundscape, was a priority.

Right: Concept sketch for a farmhouse renovation project in rural northern Vermont.  
Middle right: The Cahill Cabin at dusk.  
Photo by Derrick Barrett.  
Lower right: Butterfly Ridge on a summer evening. Photo by Susan Teare.  
Opposite: Silhouetted brown trout over the fireplace at the Cahill Cabin.  
Photo by Derrick Barrett.



Complications arose because the site had very limited access; the cabin would be off the grid and inaccessible to cement trucks and other usual construction vehicles.

Developing a plan for the Cahill Cabin, as it came to be known, Chad and Kelley Osgood, the project managers on the team, turned to one of CDG's time-tested tools. As they worked with the clients, they hand-sketched possible designs. "We find hand-drawing (sketching) to be an enduring technique that maintains its relevance alongside some incredibly powerful computer drafting and modeling programs. The timelessness of a hand-drawing's ability to convey a concept and capture one's imagination has long cemented its place within the craft of architecture and design," says Chad.

"Sketching and hand-drawing are frequently used to fulfill two distinct needs. First, we are able to rapidly explore the merits of a concept visually, whether a construction detail or an entire architectural scheme. This can be done at any level of design, from loose sketching of forms and massing to a fully resolved detail we propose to be built," says Chad. "Free-flowing design thinking and creative problem-solving happen concurrently with a free-flowing pencil or pen, unburdening one's mind from exacting constraints to allow for the rapid iteration of concepts before choosing those to resolve fully.

"Second, our hand-drawings and sketches are used to present schematic design work to clients for their input and the continuation of the collaborative design



process. The inherent imprecision of working by hand preserves the perception of an idea's malleability for us when working through a design, as well as for our clients when they provide feedback," says Chad.

Now complete, the "Just Big Enough" cabin brings together rustic and contemporary elements. Rough-sawn wood framing and interior walls complement ample windows with sleek trim. The outdoors literally comes in as a large, glass overhead door opens to transform the combined living, dining, and kitchen area from interior to al fresco. The river, changing with the seasons and the daily weather, provides the cabin's soundtrack. Aware of the homeowners' angling impetus for the cabin, CDG included an artistic detail—the silhouette of a brown trout cut into the wood shingles swims above the fireplace.

In addition to new construction, Cushman Design Group brings its attention to clients' needs and changing lifestyles to remodeling and renovation. "One of our greatest strengths as a design studio is our ability to create intimate spaces regardless of the architectural style requested by our clients," says Kelley. "We have developed an intuitive ability to create design solutions that transform tired, dark, and dysfunctional areas into comfortable and inviting light-filled spaces. Unique detailing within these refreshed spaces enables our clients to express their own personalities and put their signature on the space."

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