



A screened porch for gathering and making memories lies at the heart of this lakefront property.

BY MORGAN CLARK  
PHOTOS BY SUSAN TEARE  
UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

# Collaborative Learning *as a means of creation*

## CUSHMAN DESIGN GROUP'S

*clients join the creative team to realize their projects*

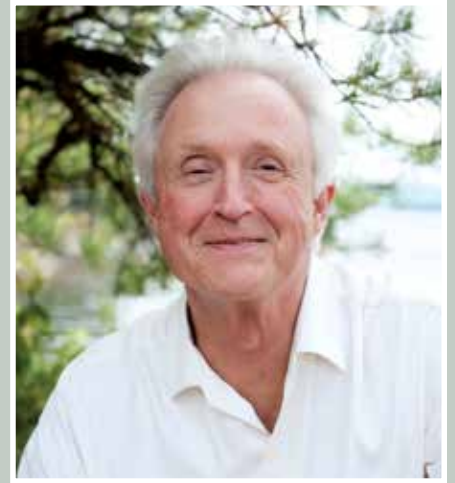
Whether solving a problem or realizing a dream, perhaps both, you begin with an intention. A creative, intuitive, and emotional seed that has the potential to actualize. You long to create something. Thoughtfully designed spaces manifest the sacredness of everyday life. They inspire us and hold us. They help us to live healthier lives by connecting us to the natural world and to each other. As a collaborator in the ecosystem of contractors, engineers, and designers it takes to create a building or space, Cushman Design Group has supported clients in translating their intentions into beautifully crafted architectural forms since 1988.

### WHY CUSHMAN DESIGN GROUP?

After more than 30 years in business and 1,000-plus projects, Cushman Design Group's team of professional designers and architects is still thirsty—thirsty to learn who their clients are, thirsty to lead meaningful conversations and to expertly guide the design process, and thirsty for the rich collaboration between client, designer, and craftsperson that creates beautifully unique architecture, interiors, and landscapes.

Founder and president Milford Cushman thinks of his colleagues and himself as a jazz band, with each member of the ensemble contributing to make CDG's work and relationships with clients "sing." "Not only do we each have to master our own 'instruments,' we have to be able to play with the other members of our band to create beautiful music together," says Milford.

The anchor of CDG's process is listening to clients so that they are prepared to offer client-centric and site-specific solutions that are



### MILFORD CUSHMAN

Founder and President

Milford Cushman is a professional designer with over 30 years of practice committed to creative, functional, intuitive, and efficient design solutions. "My skills and intuition to fully appreciate the unique qualities and features of land were developed over the accumulated two and a half years of living outdoors as a wilderness guide and Outward Bound Instructor. With each of our client's projects, their land is the most sacred of the voices at the design table and the location, placement, and integration of their building(s) into the land is where we cohesively and seamlessly connect the architecture with the landscape."



### TERRI L. GREGORY

Interior Design Specialist

Terri trained and worked as a studio potter for 29 years before joining CDG in 2006 to concentrate on providing clients with personalized interior design solutions. "I love the work of

collaborating with clients as their projects move from the architectural design into the interior design phase where selected colors, textures, and materials will reflect their unique personality and tastes.”



## DAVID KOSCHAK

### Designer

David’s interest in architecture arises from asking how our homes and communities reflect the stories of our lives, and how these stories impact what we build. Through graduate studies in the Pacific NW, work as a Historic Architect in Alaska, 5 years designing with the nationally recognized firm BCJ, and various design work throughout New England, he aims to “find designs which speak to our current lives with a combination of simplicity, thoughtful composition, and respect for our humanness and history.”



## CHAD FORCIER

### Project Manager

With 20 years of experience at CDG, Chad’s primary design philosophy is facilitation of design as a process, and stewardship of the relationship with the client and the built environment. “The highest compliment I’ve received from a client was that



Above: This kitchen renovation removed several interior walls and added larger windows, exterior doors, and skylights to create a wonderful social space for family gatherings.

Below: The Albany Community Store is a community led project to revive the town’s general store, upgrading the structure and adding character to the existing 1970s building.

Bottom: In Bristol, Vermont, Cushman has designed this pocket neighborhood consisting of single-story cottages, two-level cottages, and row houses. Each two-bedroom home is “just big enough,” from between 846 and 1,100 square feet with all ground level homes accessible to owners with disabilities.



a synthesis of experience, talent, and technical know-how. By working collaboratively to listen and educate, CDG aims to align each client’s design goals with technical and emotional qualities fundamental to an intentionally designed

space, including efficient use of space, thermal comfort, energy efficiency, sustainable and local materials, as well as quality daylighting, nurturing refuge, and a sheltered vantage point from which to view the world.

they felt not that I had designed a home for them but rather that I had facilitated their process of designing their own home. Many of our clients have a vision but need help prioritizing and developing their project, along with guidance toward functionality and cohesion of design. Deep knowledge of building systems, years of project planning, and compositional vision provide the background knowledge to execute the work.”



**JONATHAN SEVERINGHAUS**

Drafter

Jon’s interest in architecture began with observing the buildings near his family’s home in Vermont’s Upper Connecticut River Valley. Building his own home in 2014 reinvigorated this passion, and in May 2018 he completed a degree in Architectural & Building Engineering Technology from Vermont Technical College. “I am continually fascinated by the interplay between creativity and technical expertise in our field, and using this dynamic as the catalyst for exploratory problem solving with our clients.”



**MICHAEL PERPALL**

Architect

Michael is an Architect and LEED Accredited Professional who holds licenses in Massachusetts and Vermont. Since graduating from Tulane

University with a Master of Architecture in 2001, he has worked for several esteemed architecture offices in the northeast. “I think that collaboration always leads to better design outcomes. Having input from the client and the builder (among others) allows our designs and detailing to be more thoughtful, and helps the project establish its own identity.”



**NITA HULTSTROM**

Business Manager

For the past 22 years, Nita has brought strong organizational and financial skills as well as a detail-oriented mindset to CDG while overseeing the business and marketing aspects of the firm. “I enjoy the collaborative process that is an integral part of CDG’s culture, and I embrace how the firm’s work enables environmentally conscious design decisions to have a lasting impact on the built environment.”



**KELLEY OSGOOD**

Project Manager

A 1997 graduate of Vermont Technical

College, Kelley knew he wanted a career in architecture from as early as the sixth grade. He honed his architectural skills at Wiemann Lamphere Architects before joining the CDG team in 2006. Kelley grew up in a family of masons and worked in the trade into his college years. This field experience has been invaluable in solving practical problems in building designs. “I love the strong team ethic at CDG and working hand-in-hand with contractors and artisans.”



**RYAN BEAULIEU**

Designer

Ryan holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Norwich University. After graduating in 2000, he worked for a firm in the Mad River Valley until he joined CDG in 2010. He appreciates the harmonious balance the firm achieves among collaboration, project leadership, and good business sense. “A visit to Europe in high school struck me with what great architecture can do for people. I found the Old World buildings and pedestrian-centric streets astounding in their beauty and detail. I feel that good architecture gives people a sense of comfort.”



This approach of creating “architecture for people” has given CDG the opportunity to engage with a diverse group of clients with requests from the humble to the extraordinary, whose unique passion and curiosity for their projects are equally enlivening. As the firm’s president, the “leader of the band,” Milford draws upon a lifetime of experience designing for people to continually reinvigorate this core ethos of listening, and he finds sustaining energy

in seeing the firm’s guiding philosophy shared by CDG’s talented and committed team.

#### LISTENING DEEPLY

“We want our clients to tell us their ideas, what details matter and why, how important is a connection between indoor and outdoor spaces, are they morning or evening people, is cooking a social activity for them, and much more.” By using the more tangible and readily apparent

Above: Breathing new life into a Stowe home, this renovation and addition project dramatically connects the home renovation to the surrounding mountain views while the telescope in the silo connects the homeowners to a more celestial view.

Left: Built in the 1950s in the central Adirondacks, this multi-generational lake front camp was envisioned as a summer refuge from the hustle and bustle of city life. The Cushman team is working with the family to stabilize, preserve, and eventually renew the property’s main house, boat house, and outbuildings.

aspects of how a space is designed as the basis for beginning a conversation, CDG’s designers are able to address a multitude of questions and establish trust and common ground to truly learn who their clients are and how they will use their space. Empathy, compassion, enthusiasm, and an open mind are the catalysts that enable their clients to become their best design inspiration.

#### COST OF CONSTRUCTION AS A CONSTITUENT

Necessarily, design decisions will depend upon the client’s budget. “Because CDG understands and appreciates what it costs to build today, cost can become an informed constituent of the design process whose voice is constantly respected and relied upon,” Milford says. “As a firm with up to 30 projects active at one time, we have accurate cross-referencing information about the current cost of construction at varying levels of finish, which helps us develop an opinion of



Above: Set in a remote location high above a pristine Vermont trout stream, this off-grid fly fishing camp is completely self-sufficient. Photo by Derrick Barrett.  
Below: The deliciously detailed open floor plan of this “just big enough” home speaks to how Cushman uses their design skills to integrate material selection, craftsmanship, natural and artificial lighting solutions, and color to create refuge and beauty for the owners.

cost for our clients at every stage of the design process, beginning with the first time we meet them. Being able to have a discerning eye as to what it actually costs to build has become even more critical.”

To balance costs and client’s dreams, Milford and his team rely on a concept they call the “just big enough house,” a twist on the book *The Not So Big House* by architect Sarah Susanka. He explains, “We vigorously set out to determine what ‘just big enough’ may mean for each client. It can be about detail, artistry, beauty, energy efficiency, volume, space within a space, materials, and more. This approach is always about optimizing a unique combination of priorities to use the client’s financial resources to give them the space they want for what they want to spend.”

Milford says, “I consider CDG’s job fulfilled and satisfied if our client, the building, and the land are content.”

## Cushman Design Group

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