

BY KIRSTEN GEHLBACH  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MCKERNON GROUP

# THE MCKERNON GROUP

## *Makes Dreams a Reality*

FROM THE GROUND UP, THEY DO IT ALL





Opposite: The house faces the water, and its two balconies afford great views of the lake. From top: View of Lake Bomoseen overlooking the boathouse. The kitchen features an open floor plan with painted cabinets, stone countertops, and a view of the lake. A wide, welcoming front hall faces the front entrance of the house.



The McKernon Group continues to stay ahead of the curve with innovative trends in distinctive home designs, in-house construction crews meeting tight deadlines, highly efficient spray-foam insulation and solar energy alternatives, reclaimed antique and green building materials, and smart-home technology. McKernon is known for customer service and attention to every detail, start to finish, to successfully achieve customers' visions.

"We envision the future and do the research on what's coming down the pike. We put the right people in place to do the work," says Kevin Birchmore, president and a partner at McKernon.

Kevin co-founded the company with the late Jack McKernon, a craftsman and visionary in design/build and technology for energy-efficient construction. When Jack retired in 2011, Justus Cameron became vice president and a partner.

The company started with two employees in 1987 and has grown to 50 cross-trained employees who can do anything that needs to be done to meet the full design/build requirements.

The McKernon Group builds custom homes, often for second-home owners, and does renovations and additions, light commercial construction, and solar and spray-foam insulation for projects other than their own.

**A COTTAGE-STYLE LAKE HOUSE**

The company occasionally invests in a piece of property to build or renovate, and then offers the home for sale. Their newly built cottage-style





Above: A charming two-story boathouse with cathedral ceiling, living space, and docks. The 1,200 square feet of living space is ready to be modified to house a kitchen or sleeping quarters. Below: The home's large center upstairs hall looks out on the second-floor balcony. To the left is one of the three bedrooms on the second floor.

lake house on Lake Bomoseen, available for sale, is an example of architectural design that makes the most of the location and living space, energy-efficient construction, and attention to detail.

The original 1920s camp was torn down. In its place stands a modern cottage-style lake house with decks on both floors to take in the breathtaking views. The 2,100-square-foot house occupies approximately three-quarters of an acre, with 135 feet of lake frontage and a unique two-story boathouse. The lower level has an additional 1,000



Left: The view from the home's front yard overlooks the charming two-story boathouse and the lake beyond.

during the schematic phase was to reduce square footage but still have a home that is functional, comfortable, and appealing.”

The highly energy-efficient envelope for this home has the latest technology in spray-foam insulation, radiant heat in the basement, and a heat recovery and ventilation system (HRV) that allows the tight house to breathe by exchanging heated outside air with interior air. The house has a new well and septic system, a 200-amp electrical service, and a security system.

#### A SPECIAL BONUS

The boathouse is unique on this lake as it was grandfathered in for continued use. With water access on all sides, there's room to put a small boat under the two-story structure.

Reusing the original framing, the boathouse has been renovated with a Gunitite concrete-encased foundation and a waterfront deck area. The enclosed boathouse has 1,200 square feet of living space with open space on the upper deck ready to be modified for a kitchen or sleeping quarters. A cathedral ceiling with a cupola offers additional light and ventilation as well as windows for stunning views of the lake.

#### PROJECT TO RENOVATE GRANDPARENTS' CAMP

Building a home on a site that's associated with childhood memories involves more than just building a house. It's building a dream, and a dream requires custom work. “We have a unique aspect to our company. Our well-seasoned crews are prepared to do the work from the ground up to the finish nail in a piece of crown molding, and we listen carefully to the wishes of our clients,” says Justus.

The McKernon Group turned a property that had been in a client's family for many

square feet of potential living space. The property has access to the Point of Pines common beach, meadow, and picnic area.

#### SIGNATURE DETAILS

With its open floor plan, the home uses McKernon's signature details such as locally sourced and reclaimed materials for a timeless interior with wide-pine flooring, repurposed barn doors, and a gas fireplace in the living room. The kitchen opens into the dining area and features painted cabinets and stone

countertops. The living room area is L-shaped to create separate sitting areas while keeping the open plan. There's a half-bath on the first floor, and three bedrooms and two full baths upstairs. The walkout basement is designed to include a laundry and a full bath with the potential for finished living space.

“The trends associated with the design and layout of this home were to create an open floor plan while keeping an efficient footprint,” says Adam Pelkey, architect for the McKernon Group. “The key design challenge



Above: A dining room table was crafted from a maple tree that was cleared and harvested from the property while building the house. Right: The front deck is attached to the lake side of the house. The simple design places the emphasis on the large windows and the cathedral ceiling, giving an air of spaciousness.



years into a lake house that she could call “a home away from home.” She had been coming to this spot since she was little and had fond memories of her grandmother’s camp. The original house had fallen into disrepair, so with the help of project manager Justus Cameron and architect Adam Pelkey, a new 1,000-square-foot lake house was built on the property. It is a wonderful illustration of lakeside living with all the homeowner’s amenities in a small, sustainable structure offering charm and function.

The large windows downstairs have the lake views the homeowner remembered from her childhood. The living room has a cathedral ceiling and fireplace. The kitchen, half-bath, and master suite complete the

living space on the first floor. The upstairs has one bedroom and a bath. The home is tight and energy efficient with spray-foam insulation, an HRV system, and an efficient boiler system to keep operating costs low. For a natural look, wood siding was used for the exterior.

Inside, this home is all about the details, with honey-colored beams, balustrades,

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Above: The open kitchen offers a lot of space for a small home. The wooden screen door was a special request by the owner and was fashioned in McKernon's cabinet shop.  
 Left: The upstairs has wonderful lines along with custom honey-colored beams and balustrades.



and floors giving it a warm glow. The high ceilings and glass wall open up the house for a sense of living in harmony with the outdoors. From the property's wooded lot, the crew cleared and harvested timbers. A maple tree was turned into a dining room table, and the original cabin's chimney stone

was cut and reused to face the new fireplace and chimney.  
 "The house features a lot of interior wood detail, giving a warm feeling to a cathedral living space," says Adam. He notes that an open plan can be created within an efficient footprint. "The home

is sited on the property to take advantage of lake views from the large window wall in the dining room."

"One of the keys to our success is open communication. Homeowners can call anytime. We are available to listen and give timely updates by email with photos to keep the project on a fast track," Justus explains. "We develop personal relationships with our customers. Many are second-home owners who trust us to build the home they want on their timeline so they can move in and enjoy."

The homeowner shared, "It's a dream come true. After our original planning meeting, we worked together long distance until the house was nearly done. It was easy for me, and my cottage is gorgeous."