

FELECITY AND MURRAY GARDNER

GARDNER GROUP

Gardner Group creates incomparable custom homes for those who seek a perfect marriage between the Mountain West's rich natural splendor and the best building and design traditions from around the globe. In every Gardner Group home, attention to detail blends with a drive to surpass all expectations and to always, always go beyond expectations. Based in Park City, Utah, Gardner Group specializes in providing project management and owner representative services to people building in the local area. Because their service is "start to finish" and a close collaboration between architect, general contractor, and various design specialists, Gardner Group offers a one-stop shop for all your custom home needs. Murray Gardner founded the company with his wife, Felicity, the interior design specialist for Gardner Group, when they moved to Park City full time in 2006. An 18-year veteran of the Australian Air Force and US Navy and with 23 years of experience as a commercial pilot and 15 years as a contract negotiator, Murray brings a range of experience to every project—but his overall focus is quality. Murray says, "The difference between good construction and great construction is effort."





What services do you provide?

Our goal is to make the building process seamless. We build custom homes, offer design-build services, interior design, and project management.

What geographic area(s) do you serve?

We are focused on the Park City and Summit and Wasatch County areas.

What skills or experiences do you bring to your projects?

My previous experience in contract negotiation and conflict resolution in the airline industry has proven very useful in the design and build process. Felicity brings eight years of experience to the interior design aspect of what Gardner Group does as well. We have lived internationally for many years before coming to Park City and have a wide range of experiences with design and project management.

What inspired you to start Gardner Group?

In 2006 after moving to Park City, we were building our own custom home and realized that, for us, it was an exciting and immensely satisfying process. We had talked to many people whose homebuilding experience had been a nightmare, so we decided to form Gardner Group and offer our services to folks who maybe didn't have the time or inclination to oversee their own building project.

How do you see construction changing in the next five to 10 years?

Right now the drive is for efficiency. I see this trend continuing. Build costs in the Park City area are very high, and climbing, due to a tight labor market. It is important to start with a realistic budget and timeline and to focus considerable energy into both these tasks or your project can spiral out of control.

Describe your process—how do you work with clients, designers, and architects?

We like to get involved in a project early on, helping to select the lot, and then collaborating with our architect on the design and approval process. Next, we work together with our clients on the interior selections. We like to have most selections made prior to commencing construction as this simplifies the build process. During construction, both Felicity and I are heavily involved in on-site supervision, often spending six to eight hours each day on-site. Part way through construction, Felicity starts working with our clients on furniture and accessory selection. She often visits the Highpoint Furniture Market in North Carolina, the foremost showcase of furniture in the nation, and selects furniture for our projects while there.

“THE MORE PROPERLY FOCUSED THE EFFORT YOU PUT INTO PLANNING AT ALL STAGES, THE BETTER THE END PRODUCT WILL BE. YOU DON’T WANT TO BE MAKING MAJOR DECISIONS WHILE THE SUB-CONTRACTOR IS LOOKING OVER YOUR SHOULDER WITH THE HAMMER AND NAILS IN HAND.”

What is the most exciting new product or development in your field?

Felicity is excited about the trend towards contemporary interiors with rustic undertones. Our clients have been very open to her suggestions for "warming up" the classic contemporary look to make it suitable for our mountain environment. I am excited about developments in window technology. People want lots of glass in modern homes, but windows have had horrible insulation values until recently. Now, companies like Alpen HPP are producing windows that have three times better insulation values than windows produced 10 years ago.

If you weren't in construction, what would you be doing?

Felicity would be involved in Psychology, I am sure. She finished most of her degree in the first couple of years after we moved to Park City, before we formed Gardner Group. I would be flying; I am still a part time commercial airline pilot.

What places in the world do you find most inspirational and why?

As far as I am concerned, Park City, Utah, is the epicenter of the known universe. It has everything I have ever wanted in life. Felicity has grown to love it too, but she has never knocked back a suggestion to spend some time on a beach either.