

The principal of Our Designs Landscape Architects & Associates Inc. graduated with a Diploma in Nursing in 1978 and worked as Registered Nurse for over 8 years, experiencing critical care and intensive care nursing, general floor nursing and neurological care nursing. Donna left nursing for a variety of reasons, chiefly to improve on the design of healthcare facilities so that courtyard gardens and healing outdoor spaces could be incorporated in the facility programming and facility design. Eventually a combination of a love of nature and consideration for equitable access for people with disabilities, sent Donna on a journey toward acquiring the skills and experience to support her talent for evaluating spaces and creating aesthetic designs that meet the needs of seniors, people with disabilities and clients in healthcare institutions.

The majority of the work prepared by Our Designs Landscape Architects & Associates Inc. has been a collaboration between Donna and Architects who specialized in designing for people with disabilities. Donna applies her nursing education and experience, her considerable volunteer work, and a keen eye with imagination as to how people will use space, interpret space, and respond to artifacts in space. Her Human Factor Research has taken her to unusual areas of study in neurophysiology, psychology and human dynamics and she has found that there are demonstrated, quantifiable, physiological and psychological benefits between people and plants. Currently, Donna is developing a model of the human-plant interface and human factor dynamics.

Over 15 years of consulting has resulted in the preparation of medical and building code reports and design based feasibility studies for facility upgrades for public accessibility. Some of the reports have been used to acquire capital funding to, in fact, install elevators, or implement recommended redesigns of ramps, courtyard spaces, or featured landscape elements such as planters. Our Designs Landscape Architects & Associates Inc. has also prepared landscape designs for group homes that were to be integrated in residential neighbourhoods in North Vancouver and Vancouver proper and fully researched and prepared 8 courtyard landscape designs for a mental healthcare facility in Kamloops, B.C.

In 2010, Our Designs Landscape Architects & Associates Inc. expanding its healthcare planning and design platform to include mental health and psychiatric healthcare planning and design. Joining our team is a registered Psychiatric Nurse with over 25 years of experience.

Some of our areas of expertise include:

- review of building and site design for accessibility and CPTED standards
- provision of floor plan guidelines and dimensions
- provision of site plan guidelines and dimensions
- review of product information and liaison with product suppliers
- preliminary concept plan for therapeutic design for planting and planting clusters covering factors such as colour, aromas, texture, form, seasonal attractiveness, habitat enhancement for wildlife and song birds, sensory and tactile experiences
- site reconnaissance and site review prior to construction and post-occupancy evaluations

- public and conference presentations
- attendances at design panel or municipal meetings for analysis or presentation

On the other side of accessibility there is the issue of prevention of injury and crime. After taking several layers of CPTED training, attending at a few police surveillance events, speaking with police safety liaison officers assigned to schools in West Vancouver, North Vancouver, Strathcona and Coquitlam, Donna was able to put together a group of services now offered by Our Designs Landscape Architects & Associates Inc. Please go to Landscape Architecture Services for further information.

Sample projects:

- Blair Court, Multi-family Mixed Use Residential Project, CMHC Awarded, Vancouver, B.C., 1997-1999
- VRS Family Group Home, Residential Project, Vancouver, B.C., 2000
- Mental Health Facility, Kamloops, B.C., 2000

Please browse our portfolio.

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