

Patricia Michael Design Services

Patricia Michael works with clients small and large to provide sustainable designs for land use based on the principles of Permaculture. Her design services include the following:

- Brief on-site assessment
- Comprehensive design consultation
- Oversight of installation and implementation

Brief On-Site Assessment

Patricia walks the client's site with the client, finding out what the client wants and what the land is suitable for. She gives her clients lots of advice about how to meet their wants and needs, including the following:

- What aspects of the land would be suitable for meeting particular objectives
- Where to place structures, paths and roads
- Where to place gardens or agricultural areas
- How to mitigate water problems
- Suggestions for next steps

This is a verbal consultation, and Patricia does not write up anything or produce any documents. The consultation typically takes a morning or an afternoon, three or four hours, and there is a fixed fee for the service.

This assessment is often all the client needs. If the client wants Patricia to give more detailed advice, Patricia will offer a comprehensive design consultation program.

Comprehensive Design Consultation

Patricia's comprehensive design consulting engagement follows a process consisting of several phases, each with its own set of deliverables. Patricia charges an hourly rate for her work, and at the end of each phase she provides an estimate of the time needed for the next. At phase end the client has the deliverables for that phase and the information needed to decide whether and in what way to go on to the next. Here are the phases:

1. Assessment of client wants and needs
2. Site and User Analysis
3. Detailed Plan Development

During each of the phases Patricia is in continual contact with the client, showing intermediate results and getting feedback. She is very much a hands-on design consultant.

Following is detailed description of each of the phases.

Assessment of client wants and needs.

Patricia sits down with the client to define what the land design needs to accomplish. She asks the client to distinguish between needs, must-have features without which the project would not be considered a success, and wants, features that are desirable but not strictly necessary.

Some typical questions asked during this phase are the following:

- For whom is the place being made?
- For what purpose?
- Who will decide what the form will be?
- What resources can be used?
- What type of solution is expected?
- What benefits does the client want?
- What problems does the client want to avoid?

Patricia has the responsibility to:

- clarify the given objectives
- raise hidden ones for debate
- reveal new possibilities and unexpected costs
- speak for absent or voiceless clients.

The deliverable for this phase is a prioritized list of client objectives, separated into needs and wants.

Site and User Analysis

Patricia does a thorough analysis of the land under consideration, including the following:

- Personal reconnaissance, looking at the site in its own right as a living community of plants and animals. Patricia grasps the essential character of the place and may produce sketches, color samples, photos and notes.
- Researching the site for disaster proofing. She finds out what kinds of risk there are – things like drought, flood, fire, high winds, and so forth – in order to plan how the design could mitigate the risks.
- Researching things about the site that are not directly observable, such as its history, applicable legal codes, etc.

The land tells Patricia how to meet the client's wants and needs: how to place the elements and what patterns to use. Typically Patricia walks the land, investigates the neighboring land, talks to the neighbors, determines things like prevailing wind and sun, researches annual rainfall, observes the flow of animals through the land,

investigates legal restrictions and the availability of electricity, water and other utilities, and in many other ways gathers as much information as possible.

While gathering this information, Patricia works with the clients to clarify their wants and needs to design a solution that will fit the land. This is often very educational for the client; possibilities emerge that were not thought of before.

Patricia also asks how future users will act in the new configuration. What behaviors are expected to take place? Who will be on the land, and what will they do there, and for what purpose? She makes a list of behavioral settings, gathering the following information:

- The required character and equipment for each setting and how form will connect with action and purpose
- The expected intensity and timing of use
- Desirable connections with adjacent properties and communities
- Expected management and service support

The deliverables for this phase include the following:

- A graphic summary which communicates the fundamental character of the place and how it will most likely respond to the proposed intervention. The summary includes one or more schematic plans showing
 - building form and location
 - outdoor activity
 - surface circulation
 - ground form and general landscaping
- A statement of problems and potentials
- Rough cost estimates for the next phase and for subsequent installation

Detailed Plan Development

The next step is to make a detailed plan expressed in diagrams and documents. The detailed plan includes the following:

- Location of all buildings
- Roads and paved surfaces
- The planted areas by type
- Existing and proposed ground contours
- Location and capacity of utilities
- Location and nature of site details
- A list of plants to be installed
- A schedule of the timing of installation
- A detailed estimate of the cost to construct and to maintain the landscape

Patricia may consult with specialists such as engineers, horticulturalists, surveyors, etc., in order to produce as accurate and buildable design as possible.

Patricia presents this material to the client for review and decision-making and revises the plan as needed until the client is satisfied with it.

At the end, the client has a very rich design for the site, a proposed project timeline and an expected schedule of costs.

Oversight of Installation and Implementation

If desired, Patricia will act as an on-site project manager to make sure the design is built out properly. Some of her tasks during this phase are the following:

- Draw up conditions of work and bid procedures and complete specifications. Specifications may include any or all of the following:
 - A precise layout of roads and structures sufficient for their location by survey on the site
 - A complete grading plan and earthwork computation, with spot elevations for all major features
 - A utility layout with road and utility profiles
 - A planting plan with plans and sections showing all plant details as well as furniture and other built features.
- Work with the client or the client's management team to make the contract documents on which bids can be based.
- Solicit bids and review them. The client or client's management team will accept the winning bid and contract for the work to be done.
- Work with the client's law firm to be sure all required forms are submitted properly.
- Get permits.
- Supervise work on site as needed.
- On an ongoing basis compare the projected schedule and costs with actual events, evaluate the impact of any discrepancies, and advise the client on how to take corrective action.

At the end, the clients have a site that has been developed and built out to satisfy their wants and needs elegantly and beautifully.



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