

Press release

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Whistler landscape architect Tom Barratt named a 2026 Fellow of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA)

National organization recognizes local's career shaping Whistler and beyond

22 April 2026, Whistler, B.C. — Tom Barratt, of Tom Barratt Ltd Landscape Architecture (TBLLA), Whistler's longest-serving landscape architecture firm, has been recognized as an industry leader for a body of work that has shaped the landscape and lived experience of Whistler and the Sea to Sky environs, and inspired sustainable community resort planning initiatives around the world.

Landscape architecture's equivalent of a Hall of Fame, the College of Fellows is the highest honour the CSLA bestows on its members. Barratt joins 12 other new members being added to the 292 honourees who have been elected into the College since 1964. He will receive the prestigious designation FCSLA (Fellow of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects), in recognition of his body of "executed work" for "outstanding professional work, individuality and mastery of the art of landscape architecture."

"Tom designs for the everyday person: parents, young travelers, sports clubs," says landscape architect and current associate Alex van Zyl. "He understands what people need and doesn't let ego get in the way. He embraces the woolliness of daily life, allowing those rough edges to inform work that remains relevant across generations. From Tom, I've learned not just how to design, but how to build community."

Landscape architects are a curious breed of plant-loving, ecology-minded, artistic engineers, who pay attention to all the layers that underlie the fabric of an experience. Barratt understands that the most memorable moments are often in the micro moments - the drinks on a patio, the bounce of light on the Watchmen sculpture as one passes the Audain Art Gallery en route the parking lot, a lunch hour walk along the Valley Trail beside the creative expression on display at the Skate Park.

Barratt began his professional career with the Resort Municipality of Whistler as Parks Planner from 1981 to 1985, where he designed and implemented Whistler's groundbreaking Valley Trail and park system, almost losing his job for pushing to have the Valley Trail paved. This work during a crucial time in the community's development established more than 40 kilometres of interconnected multi-use trails linking parks, beaches, and neighbourhoods throughout the valley. The system became an internationally recognized model for sustainable resort community planning and continues to serve as a case study in landscape architecture programs.

In 1986, Barratt founded Tom Barratt Ltd., building a respected practice focused on resort development, parks planning, trail systems, and environmental rehabilitation in sensitive mountain landscapes.

His work putting together the maps and snow venue graphics for the Bid Book for the Vancouver 2010 Olympics was a first for a landscape architect, but meant that the technical information making the case for Vancouver and Whistler as host venues was rich in accurate maps, instead of cartoons with wrong contours. The work not only helped Vancouver and Whistler secure the 2010 Games, it won TBLLA a CSLA National Honours Award.

He won a CSLA National Honours Award again in 2017 for crafting master facility plans for the South Chilcotins Provincial Park, work celebrated as “amazing multi-disciplinary work on a monumental undertaking”.

Annie Oja, a RMOW parks planner from 2017 to 2024 and now landscape architect for Urban Systems Ltd, based in Courtney, cut her teeth working with Barratt, culminating in the award-winning Chilcotins project.

“I first met Tom when I rolled into Whistler in my third year of university looking for an internship. I literally knocked on his door, asked for a job, and he said yes,” says Oja. “From day one, he saw potential in me that I hadn’t yet learned to see in myself. He took me under his wing, challenged me, and invested the kind of mentorship that genuinely changes the trajectory of a young person’s life. His leadership has shaped my work ethic and my design thinking in ways I still carry with me. He’s been a mentor, a coach, and a friend.”

The firm has won several industry awards in planning, light engineering and landscape architecture for work done in the Chilcotins, Whistler, Campbell River and North Vancouver. (see <https://tbla.com/recognition>), and continues to shape the experience of Kicking Horse Mountain resort, Pemberton, Squamish, Vancouver Island’s Malahat Skywalk, and beyond.

Drawing on his summers as a student working on Squamish’s steepest logging cuts, and his appreciation for the raw and vital landscape, TBLLA led the design of the waterfront in Squamish that has turned an industrial dumping zone into a vibrant community commons. He continues to work on the Squamish downtown experience, with his current associate Alex van Zyl.

A swimmer, cyclist, cross country skier and native plant aficionado, Tom is currently a director for the Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council.

“I am deeply honoured to be welcomed as a Fellow of the CSLA,” says Barratt. “It is a pleasure to be recognized by peers in my profession for work that was already personally rewarding - making an actual difference to communities and enhancing people’s well-being.”

Announced today by the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA), the formal ceremony of induction will take place at the annual conference of the CSLA in June, in Halifax, Nova Scotia.