Fiona Walsh is co-founder of a social enterprise, DDS Architects, set up to design enabled environments for people living with dementia. Their mission is to ensure all professionals working in the field of dementia are aware of the benefits design can play in improving the health and wellbeing of people with dementia. Fiona designs to support people living with physical, sensory and cognitive impairments. Fiona argues that a poorly designed environment can be confusing, disorientating, disabling and even dangerous for those living with dementia, and that what we should be providing is safety, security and ease of movement to make the best of remaining abilities. For a truly inclusive society, Fiona says, we must build inclusive environments.

Fiona believes that in the United Kingdom the built environment is wholly inadequate to support the needs of the aging population, with or without the added complication of dementia.

“We should accept that a cure for dementia is not imminent. We must continue to support research and look beyond medical science for non-pharmaceutical interventions to assist the current generation living with dementia. Thirty years of evidence-based research supports design intervention. I work with policy makers and stakeholders to ensure they understand the value of inclusive design and the detrimental impact poor design can have on those living with sensory and cognitive impairment. I present the value proposition design can play in easing the economic crisis our region is facing. I bring together agencies who previously worked in silos.
to work collaboratively to plan future policy. My time spent on the program at GBHI will result in an increased awareness of the importance that design of the built environment can play in improving the health and wellbeing of people living with dementia. A global network of advocates of brain health would help disseminate this knowledge and facilitate adoption of best practice design principles for dementia into mainstream design. When not working I enjoy traveling, cooking for friends and family, painting and sculpting.

**Bio:** Fiona Walsh received her Bachelor of Architecture from University College Dublin, Ireland. She is a chartered architect and is a member of both the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland. She was an associate at the award-winning practice Richard Hurley and Associates, Dublin, Ireland, before leaving and setting up FMA Studio Designs. Fiona is co-founder and principal architect at DDS Architects, dementia design specialists, Berkshire, UK.

**Links:** [http://www.ddsarchitects.org/](http://www.ddsarchitects.org/)