

Resolution of Council

25 November 2024

Item 3.1

Vale Ian Stephenson

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

I wish to inform Council of the passing of Ian Malcolm Stephenson, curator, educator, advocate and former President of the Glebe Society, at his home in Glebe on 24 October 2024.

Ian was born in Epping on 1 December 1955 to his mother Noreen and father, Austin, a pharmacist. His lifelong fascination for the world around him began in childhood, when he attended Newington College, followed by the Scots School at Bathurst and the University of Tasmania, where he studied history.

A career in taxation at the Australian Taxation Office in Hobart followed. It was during that time, that Ian got to know Clive Lucas OBE, the architect for the Australian Government-funded Port Arthur Conservation Project and pursued his passion for history and heritage.

In 1988, Ian completed a Diploma of Museum Studies at Sydney University while living in Glebe. A highly productive career across a range of heritage organisations ensued including Senior Curator at the National Trust of Australia (NSW), Director of Historic Places in Canberra, and CEO of the National Trust of Australia (South Australia).

While at the National Trust of Australia (NSW), Ian worked closely with Clive Lucas on a re-restoration of Old Government House in Parramatta restoring much of the early 19th century detail that was discarded during works carried out in the 1960s. Ian went on to project manage the re-interpretation of Old Government House to reflect the Macquarie period. Ian's enthusiasm and commitment secured volunteers for the National Trust for over 2 decades.

Through the 1990s, Ian attended the Victorian Society Summer School in Chicago, which is dedicated to architecture, art, landscape and preservation, and the Attingham Summer School, where the Attingham Trust provided Ian with an important international professional network for the study, curatorship and conservation of historic houses.

As a custodian of historic sites, Ian formed strong friendships with leading heritage thinkers in Australia, the UK and USA and many other people who might otherwise have opposed change.

Ian's heritage advocacy continued as a member of The Glebe Society, and later he became President followed by roles as Vice President, Planning Convener and Heritage Convener.

Alongside other members, Ian prepared many well-informed development submissions on behalf of the Glebe Society and addressed the City of Sydney Local Planning Panel on several occasions making an important contribution to achieving good outcomes.

During the City's review of its 75 conservation areas, I met with Ian to discuss Glebe's significance.

A tireless contributor to the Glebe Society's Bulletin, Ian was known for the delight he took in sharing his understanding of Glebe's unique social, political and architectural heritage. His enthusiasm was infectious, frequently leading popular walks through Glebe highlighting the importance of good design and tales of past residents.

Ian was passionate about protecting and preserving heritage listed Bidura House in Glebe and ensuring that repairs and maintenance were embedded in development approval. He opposed the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum from Ultimo, successfully fought for the retention of the Franklyn Street social housing estate, and worked with Hands Off Glebe on a campaign to stop the demolition of 82 Wentworth Park Road, another at-risk social housing estate.

Ian was a trustee and later became Chairman at the Copland Foundation, which sponsors significant acquisitions and conservation of historic Australian places. He also served as the director of Historic Places, ACT, curator of collections at the University of New England, and was a board member of the National Trust of Australia in 2010.

Ian is survived by his sister, Helen Brookes and her husband Michael, who were fortunate to have been reunited with him in the UK earlier this year, and his nieces Rachel and Anthea, who will cherish many happy memories with their uncle.

Ian was good-humoured, fiercely passionate and clever and he made a positive and lasting impact in our community and will be missed by all who knew him.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor

Moved by the Chair (the Lord Mayor) –

It is resolved that:

- (A) all persons attending this meeting of Council observe one minute's silence to commemorate the life of Ian Stephenson and his contribution to heritage protection and preservation and the Glebe community;
- (B) Council express its condolences to Ian's sister, Helen Brookes, brother-in-law Michael and nieces Rachel and Anthea, The Glebe Society and the Glebe community; and
- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to convey Council's condolences to Ian's sister, Helen Brookes, brother-in-law Michael and nieces Rachel and Anthea.

Carried unanimously.

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Note – All Councillors, staff and members of the public present stood in silence for one minute as a mark of respect to Ian Stephenson.