

Item 3.2

Vale Chris Thomas

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Chris Thomas, Landscape Architect, Architect and Urban Designer and colleague on 20 March 2024, survived by his wife Patricia and children Jake, Hannah and Noah.

Chris graduated from the University of NSW with an honours degree in Landscape Architecture in 1984 and later obtained an honours degree in Architecture in 1997.

From 1985 to 1996, he worked in various roles as a Landscape Architect and Urban Designer for firms such as Ken Maher and Partners and London's Building Design Partnership. During this time, he first worked on an upgrade of George Street in The Rocks, which was awarded an Australian Institute of Architects Urban Design Award.

From 1996 to 2002, Chris was an associate at HASSELL, where he continued to work on public projects. He was involved in the design of Victoria, Tote and Joynton Parks in Zetland which won a long list of design awards. He also worked on other projects during this time, including Dixon Street in Haymarket, and Chifley Plaza in the City Centre – both award-winning projects.

In 2002, the City was pleased to recruit Chris to our City Projects division where he led the design studio. From there, over the next 22 years, Chris guided a complex portfolio of building and landscape projects and oversaw large teams of designers, but to quote one of them, they felt more like “a band of friends, on adventure to solve the riddles of our city”.

Chris contributed to almost 50 of the City's award-winning projects. There are too many to list here, but his mark will forever be left in the City's fabric through the public projects he worked on. From buildings such as Redfern Oval and Grandstand, Prince Alfred Park Pool, Eternity Playhouse, Juanita Nielsen Centre and Green Square Library, to our public open spaces like the Glebe Foreshore, Pirrama Park, Rushcutters Bay and Paddington Reservoir Gardens – we are grateful for Chris' dedication.

Chris' colleagues estimate that over his career, he was associated with projects which won over 99 Institute Awards and 220 Industry Awards. For Chris, such accolades were a mere by-product - he focused his professional career on design outcomes for others. His colleagues say he was a designer and a leader without ego, who was never distracted from the public purpose of public projects.

As its meeting on 28 March 2024, the City's Design Advisory Panel paid tribute to Chris' commitment to the public domain as well as the legacy he leaves in those projects and the expertise he has passed on to City staff.

We will all continue to benefit from the impact of that commitment and focus on the quality of our City.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) all persons attending this meeting of Council observe one minute's silence to commemorate the life of Chris Thomas and his significant contribution to the urban design and public domain of the City of Sydney;
- (B) Council express its condolences to Chris' many staff and others who worked with him who are mourning his loss; and
- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to convey Council's condolences to Chris's wife, Patricia Simms, and their children Jake, Hannah, and Noah.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor