Brian Kidd (Kirsty Bennett obituary 2017)

Brian James Kidd (1936-2017) was born 9 August 1936, the second child of James and Beryl May (nee Jesson) Kidd, who had married at Perth in 1934. Brian's elder sister Melva died in August 1937 at Collie Hospital, aged just 3 years. The child had been in the kitchen of the Darkan Hotel where Beryl was working, and suffered burns from boiling water left unattended by another kitchen hand. The Kidds were fortunate in that two-year-old Brian avoided death or serious injury when a storm at Perth in September 1938 caused a partial collapse at the family home. The Kidds were blessed to have further children, Ida b.1939, Pamela b.1946, and then twins George & Jeannette b.1948.

Brian Kidd was fortunate to survive his childhood (*Daily News*, 7 September 1938, p.1; *Sunday Times*, 11 September 1938, p.50).

In July 1940, 26-year-old painter James Kidd of 26 Dangan Street Perth enlisted for Second World War (1939-1945) service. Beryl and the two infants were left in Perth when James undertook initial training at Northam, before embarking from Fremantle for the war in the Middle-East during April 1941. One of the 'Rats of Tobruk', he suffered crippling injuries to his back and hips in July 1942, and was

evacuated to an Army Hospital in Egypt, before returning to Fremantle in March 1943, hence being admitted to the 110 Australian General Hospital at Hollywood. By September 1943 James was discharged from the army, declared medically unfit for further service.

Brian Kidd's father James (1913-1962) in Army uniform c.1940 (Kidd family).

Brian attended Highgate State Primary School from 1942 to 1948, and then Perth Modern School from 1949 to 1953 with the assistance of a scholarship, and the Soldiers' Children's Trust - as the son of an incapacitated ex-serviceman. A gifted student, he gained his Leaving Certificate with distinctions in mathematics. Brian gained entrance into the relatively-new Associateship in Architecture course at Perth Technical College (PTC) in 1954, and soon joined in with the activities of the Architectural Students Association. Kidd commenced at PTC with a class that included future registered architects in WA: Wallace Greenham (341), Peter McComish (reg no. 364), David Melsom (319), Geoff Mundy (360), John Pidgeon (327), Bill Phillips (320), Margot Smalpage-Watson (359), Bruce Tomlinson (352), and Gordon White (376). The appointment of the design-focussed F. Senior Bolland as head of the course in mid-1954 was of great benefit to Brian.

During 1956 Brian became a student member of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA), and was listed as living with his parents in the modest family home at 84 Gladstone Road Rivervale. Maintaining high standards throughout the course, at the PTC prize night in December 1958 he gained a significant financial boost - receiving a Morawetz Prize of £150 and the James Hardie Prize of £50. Having successfully completing the PTC course with an Associateship in Architecture, Brian registered with the Architects Board of Western Australia (ABWA reg no 318) on 23 December 1958. In February 1959 Kidd joined the WA Public Works Department (PWD) Architectural Division as a Grade 3 Architect, assisting with the development of his interest in hospital design.

Wallace Greenham, Duncan Richards, and Brian Kidd at the1958 Prize Night at PTC. Morawetz Prize winner Duncan Richards received £800, the two other candidates Wallace Greenham and Brian Kidd gained secondary prizes of £150 each (*The West Australian*, 12 December 1958, p.22).

At the PWD, Brian's first assignment was the design of a new paraplegic unit at Royal Perth Hospital. During this time, Brian established a close working relationship with orthopaedic surgeon and disability activist Sir George Bedbrook. He gained rare access to the world of disability that was hidden from the public by the policy of segregation that was a hallmark of the prevailing Victorian-era model of institutional care.

With his architectural career firmly under way, in 1960 Brian became an Associate of the RAIA, and in February married Lauris Anne Candy. In December 1960, he and Lauris then travelled overseas to London to work. The couple subsequently had children Paul, Martin, and Melissa in the 1960s. His life having been terribly impacted by the war, Brian's father James died in October 1962 at Rivervale aged just 49 years. His mother Beryl lived on to June 1981, able to enjoy years with the grandchildren, passing away at Rivervale aged 69 years.

When the Kidds returned to WA, Brian completed the PWD cadetship, with Bentley Hospital one of his major projects. By 1963 Brian had been elevated to a Grade 2 Architect at the PWD, on a salary of £2 296. In 1965 Brian was listed on the RAIA membership roll at 7 Nanhob Street Mt Lawley, and in 1969 at 45 Woodsorne Street Mt Lawley. Leaving the public service, he commenced sole practice c.1966 as Brian J. Kidd Architect, initially working from home, then from an office in West Perth.

In these times he was pursuing further understanding of the design of accommodation for the aged and those with special needs, and in the late 1960s Brian formed a close relationship with Dr Richard Lefroy, the pioneer of geriatric

medicine in WA. In the 1960s he undertook further studies, gaining a Diploma in Town and Regional Planning from PTC. In 1968 Brian wrote a paper titled 'Accommodation of the Aged', presented as part of the preliminary work for a thesis which he intended to submit for a Master of Architecture at the University of Western Australia. Supported in his studies by UWA academic John White (1927-2020), Kidd's discourse was published in the RAIA (WA) periodical *The Architect*, signalling his growing specialisation in the field to a wider community.

Graham Povey joined Brian's practice as a draftsman in 1968, hence registering as an architect in 1973 (ABWA reg no 695), and forming a long association. The WA State Records Office has note of some of the firm's design work for government agencies around this time; with additions to Avonvale Primary School 1969-1970, and work at Dumbleyung Hospital – a new dining room, store, and remodelling to the kitchen - also in 1970. From the office at 10 Ord Street West Perth, in August 1971 Kidd invited tenders for the Beverley Frail Aged Lodge, the facility was opened in July 1972, and in 1975 the Shire asked Brian to assist in enlarging the accommodation. Another important client was Church of Christ Homes, and Povey recalls that the firm was always focussed on delivering better design for these clients, rather than receiving large fees.

Brain and Lauris Kidd with their children in the 1970s (Pam Neesham).

In 1977 the Kidd family moved to Melbourne, as Lauris' parents were not well, and Graham took over the practice in WA. With changes to the *Architects Act* allowing the registration of companies, in December 1980 Kidd & Povey Pty Ltd (ABWA reg no 943) were listed at 107 Wordsworth Avenue in Mount Yokine. Brian joined the staff at the University of Melbourne from 1977 to 1996, becoming a Senior Lecturer in Architectural Design and Construction, also teaching universal access and aged care design. In this time, he undertook campaigns for access to public buildings, and to change nursing homes from the medical to the social model. With great personal satisfaction, Brian eventually completed Master of Architecture degree in Melbourne in 1984.
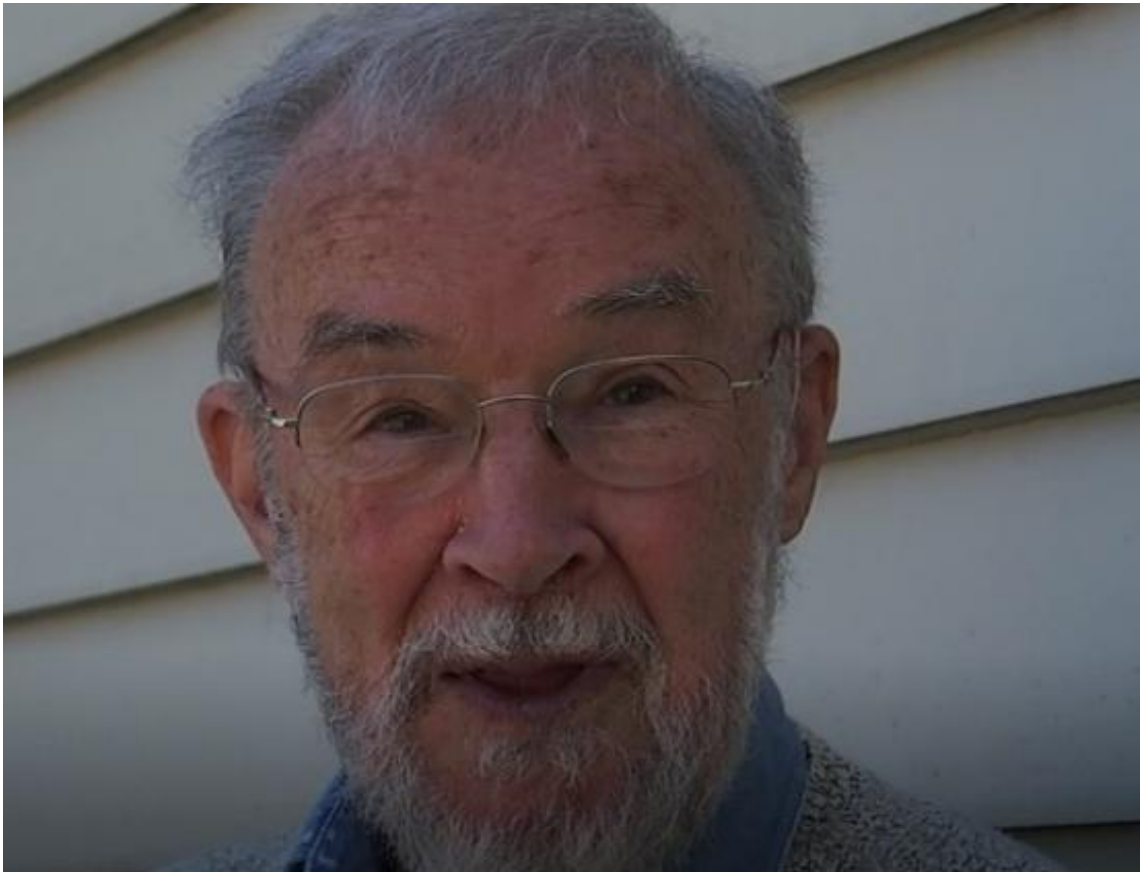
In the mid-1980s Brian partnered with one of his former students, Ross Clark, to form the practice Clark & Kidd, with Aldersgate Village one of their defining developments. Kidd was listed in the 1988 RAIA membership roll at Lot 19 Kinglake Road in St Andrews, Victoria. Brian and Lauris returned to WA in 1996, and he resumed practice on his own and in association with Graham Povey, undertaking many projects for the Brightwater Care Group (former Homes of Peace) led by CEO Dr Penny Flett, who shared many of Brian's design concerns. The ABWA registration list of 2000 notes Kidd & Povey Pty Ltd at 7 Monger Street in Perth. In 2005, Brian J Kidd Pty Ltd was registered at 42a Sulman Avenue Salter Point.

In 2013 the Kidds moved a second time to Victoria, to be closer to their children, and Brian resumed academic work as a Senior Fellow at the University of Melbourne whilst living at Ocean Grove, south-west of Melbourne. Allen Kong, Chair of the Australian Institute of Architects' National Access Working Group, summarised many of Brian's later contributions in 'Vale Brian Kidd AM': *Brian's life seemed to be destined for looking out for others: from caring for his badly-injured World War 2 veteran father and a cousin with Down Syndrome, to being a guiding spirit for the architectural community through his tireless campaign for accessible environments for all and homelike environments for older people in residential aged care. With his project Aldersgate Village in 1984 he pioneered person-centred design at a time when nursing homes were medical and institutional in character. Due to Brian's tireless work, countless residential aged*

care projects in the following decades focussed on creating a domestic rather than an institutional built environment for older people.

Brian was Senior Lecturer (ageing and human abilities) from 1977 to 1996 and Honorary Senior Fellow (designing for dementia) from 2011 to 2017 at Melbourne University, influencing the thoughts of many of today's architects. Not long before his death Brian wrote: "I feel like a proud uncle when I meet many of my former students and work colleagues and when I see the vital work you now do and the important roles you are now fulfilling. The greatest delight to me is that you have all remained such lovely natured and delightful people. I am now content to retire gracefully from the battle."

Brian Kidd in later years (2017 Allen Kong obituary)

Brian was fond of telling the story of one of his star architect mates who, after becoming disabled later in life, looked up from his nursing home bed and admitted to Brian – " Now I understand what you were on about! I wish it had been earlier…."

His buildings and articles have been featured in several international publications. Brian authored several publications relating to access and inclusion, including "Outdoor Access for All" (1982 & 1985 with Ross Clark), "Hostel Design Guidelines" (1988), "Rottnest: The Universally Accessible Island" (2000), and "Planning Community Events for All " (1988 for the Bicentennial Authority). Brian was also one of the early members of the Standards Australia committee that developed AS 1428.1 – Design for access and mobility. The high standard of accessibility into public buildings that was set by this committee has been continued. To this day, Australia has a higher level of accessibility into public buildings than other international countries. Brian's contribution of making the built environment accessible to all will be remembered.

Brian was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 1990 for "services to architectural design, particularly for the needs of people with physical disabilities and the frail aged". Brian's professional qualities were acknowledged by the RAIA's conferring of the honorific titles Fellow in 1970, and Life Fellow in 2001. In October 2017 Brian Kidd was awarded a Fellow of the Association of Consultants in Access Australia.

Brian James Kidd died 21 December 2017 at Ocean Grove aged 81, and is remembered for his tireless campaigns for accessible environments for all and homelike environments for older people in residential aged care. Brian was a pioneer in his field, one the most singularly-focussed aged care architects in Australia in his time. He was a member of the 120-plus highly-respected Western Australian architects who graduated from PTC between 1950 and 1967, when the course was transferred to the Western Australian Institute of Technology. A clear leader in his field, Brian's interests were shaped by family circumstances and a compassionate personal outlook, leading to an interest in special-needs design that was well ahead of the time.

In 2021, the WA Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects inaugurated the Brian Kidd Enabling Architecture Prize, recognizing projects that prioritize accessibility and inclusive design to create independent and home-like environments. The first award was presented in 2022 by Brian's sister Pamela.

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