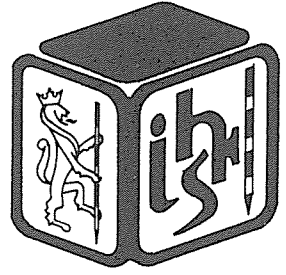


# HongKong Building Surveyors



NEWSLETTER

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# News

- This BS Division is to nominate a representative in the Basic Law Drafting Committee.
- The HKIS has submitted the TPC scheme to Government for approval and recognition.
- Exhibition to promote Building Surveyors will be held on 23rd – 28th June at West Bridge of Landmark. Please make an effort to attend and support this PR exercise by the BS Division.
- RICS Branch Annual Dinner will be held on 27th November 1986.
- RICS Ladies Night will be held on 11th April 1986.
- Professional Indemnity Insurance is now compulsory. RICS Insurance Scheme can now be obtained through Bain Dawes Dodwell here in Hong Kong.
- A dinner on Lamma will be arranged by the BS Division on Friday, 25th April. Details to be announced later.
- Mr. Wong Bay gave a CPD talk on “Management Aspects in Maintenance Management” on 28th February 1986. The event was well attended.
- RICS Branch AGM will be held on Monday, 21st April, 1986.
- HKIS AGM will be held on Tuesday, 15th April, 1986 at 5:45 p.m. in the Volunteer Officers’ Mess, 2nd floor, Beaconsfield House, Queen’s Road Central, Hong Kong.
- **IMPORTANT** – BS Division AGM will be held on Wednesday, 26th March, 1986 at 6:15 p.m. in the Club Room, 16/F., Housing Authority Headquarters Building, 101 Princess Margaret Road, Kowloon.

# **Control of Illegal Structures**

- A summary of a report prepared by the HKIS Ad Hoc Committee on Control of Illegal Structures on Buildings.—

## **A) BACKGROUND**

- 1) The Government LBAC Paper No. 4/85 drew attention to the existing problem of illegal structures and the two major unsuccessful attempts in the past 15 years to tackle the problem.
- 2) The Building Development Department (BDD) has recorded 24,000 complaints on illegal structures not having been investigated and new complaints are being received at the rate of 700 – 800 every month.
- 3) The BDD is able to make about 1,200 inspections and issue 500 removal orders a month. This only represents 20 – 30% of the efforts which are required to contain the problem.
- 4) The Lands and Works Branch and the BDD have put forward the concept of **Annual Certification** for public discussion and such proposal is also part and parcel of a proposed improvement scheme on building management.
- 5) The Annual Certification applies only to the external and the common parts of residential buildings.
- 6) The owner/owners of residential property will have to employ a “competent person” to certify annually that no illegal alterations have taken place.
- 7) Registered Competent Persons will be established to serve the need for certification work.
- 8) The proposed certification will apply to new buildings completed after a future date, say 1st January, 1987 and after wards be gradually extended to older buildings.

## **B) COMMENTS BY THE AD HOC COMMITTEE**

### **a) Need of Effective Control**

The Committee is of the opinion that the clux of the issue lines on the question of the effectiveness of Government control.

### **b) Definition of illegal structures**

Illegal Structures should be defined as:—

- i) a breach or contravention of a Crown Lease and/or
- ii) a breach or contravention of the Buildings Ordinance.

### **c) Measures of Control**

The following measures are suggested: -

- i) Owners Incorporations should assume the duty to register charge against property title when necessary. Charges will be registered on production of a Certificate issued by an Authorised Person as defined under the Buildings Ordinance.

It will then be the responsibility of the relevant owner to ensure the charge of illegal structure be removed before any assignment of a property is allowed to be registered.

- ii) Property management companies should be encouraged to report cases of illegal structures to Government for enforcement action by reviewing and simplifying existing procedure. Government should issue guidance on priority categories of illegal structures.
- iii) Government should help and encourage the formation of owners incorporations and by joint effort through the recent Home Management Schemes, achieve environmental improvement.
- iv) An educational programme on illegal structures and environmental improvement should be introduced through the mass media and district representative bodies.
- v) Government should take steps to improve building management including the registration of property management companies and the introduction of appropriate clauses in the Deed of Mutual Covenant.

# **Monitoring Properties During the Construction of the Hong Kong Mass Transit Railway**

M.R. Mann

*(A summary of the talk presented by Mr. M.R. Mann FRICS at the Hong Kong Polytechnic on 15th April 1985.)*

This paper is intended to highlight some of the experiences that have been gained in monitoring properties for nearly ten years during the construction of the Hong Kong MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY (MTR).

## **A) THE NEED FOR SURVEY**

The main purpose of inspecting a property and preparing a report in the form of a Schedule of Condition was to have a factual record of the condition of the building before railway works commenced nearby. This record could then be used later to form the basis of assessing damage and agreeing any insurance claims. It would also forewarn Engineers of the Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC) of any existing defects which could be aggravated by the engineering and tunnelling works.

Copies of the report were sent to the MTRC and its loss adjusters and also the Mass Transit Division of the Buildings Ordinance Office (BOO). Consequently, if a building was already in poor condition, the BOO could initiate action to ensure that the defects were repaired by the building owners.

## **B) LIMIT OF INSPECTIONS**

The limit on the amount of buildings to be inspected is determined by a Zone of Influence which was an area either side of the railway. From previous experience, buildings within 70 metres on either side of the railway i.e. a total distance of 140 metres, were originally suggested to be inspected. This had turned out to be excessive and a region of 40 – 50 m. either side would have been more appropriate for local conditions.

The limit had to be decided well before works started so that it could be incorporated into the MTR (Land Resumption and Related Provisions) Ordinance, section 12 of which allowed access into all buildings within 70 m. from the railway.

## **C) PLANNING THE INSPECTIONS**

Having established the Zone of Influence, the number of buildings to be inspected could be identified. Generally, the inspections closely followed the construction programme and were carried out before railway works commenced nearby.

In the initial stages, inspections were concentrated around the works sites for both the tunnel and the station contracts. Most of the station contracts involved considerable disturbance to the surrounding area particularly to the road net work. This was because of the cut-and-cover method used for the Modified Initial System of the MTR whereas for the island Line the bored tunnel method had kept disturbance to a minimum.

The inspections were carefully planned to be in line with the engineering construction programme. It was possible to survey ahead of construction because both the stations and the tunnels progressed gradually over quite a long period.

## **D) ACCESS TO BUILDINGS**

Access was one of the biggest problems as it involved not only gaining access into the building but also into the flats. For expatriate surveyors, language is another problem.

PWD Passes were issued to the inspecting surveyors to facilitate access, but the greatest help came from the

City District Offices (CDO) for the MIS inspections. For the Tsuen Wan and the Island Lines, the CDO were not requested to assist in the access but they were kept informed of access arrangement for every building so that they knew what was happening in case of complaints from residents.

The main problem of access came from individual houses or flats.

Generally, building owners or building management were given a three-week notice of the inspection.

## **E) PREPARING THE SCHEDULE**

As most buildings in Hong Kong are of framed construction, it was felt that it would be unnecessary to record the condition within every unit of every floor of those buildings. The Schedules therefore included a detailed inspection of the roof, external elevations and the surrounding paved areas. Internally, the inspection would include all common parts viz staircases, landings and life lobbies, flats or offices on the top floor under the roof, various middle floors depending on the height of the building, the top floor of the podium, the ground floor and any basement floors. For older two or three storey buildings, every floor would be inspected.

The points of the compass were used for orientation identification in the Schedule. Generally, the general direction would be stated i.e. north, south, east or west instead of north north east, etc.

The surveyor would note down all apparent defects. If structural defect was suspected, he would follow them on the floors either above or below in order to assess its seriousness. In case of serious defects, the MTRC engineers would be informed immediately.

The surveyor would note down instances when access was refused or not possible for various reasons. Similarly, he would state the fact if he could not obtain a close inspection due to close proximity of other buildings.

The equipment for the survey were dictating machines and binoculars.

When the Schedule of Condition was completed, four copies were sent to the MTRC who would in turn distribute to the Loss Adjusters, the MTR Division of the BOO and MTR engineers on site.

## **F) BUILDING DEFECTS**

Since most buildings were of framed construction, the defects were generally superficial including shrinkage cracks between infill walls and the frame, plaster cracks, concrete spalling particularly to lintols over kitchen and bathroom windows, and general disrepair of paintwork, windows, doors, etc.

Spalling is a common defect throughout Hong Kong. In cases of bad spalling, the MTRC engineers would be forewarned so that they could request BOO to order the owners to repair before part of the concrete or plaster was shaken off by vibration from the railway works.

For defects relating to movement, the damages were often found in the pavement around the building or along the joint between two abutting buildings. The survey had revealed that it was quite common for infill walls between the frame to be omitted in one of the two abutting buildings. In case of movement, the building without the infill wall would suffer water damage due to the ingress of water from the newly-opened gap between the two buildings.

At street level, many shop fronts were built beyond the building frame and obtained their support from the pavement slab. Any ground settlement would therefore cause damage to the shop front. The ground floor shops were thus given quite a detailed survey. This also applies to the back yards of some shops in older buildings.

## **G) ON-GOING MONITORING**

The MTRC level monitoring team carried out regular levelling on site. When movement occurred, as evidenced by the MTRC team, a re-survey would be carried out to see whether any defects had occurred. The survey would concentrate on the common parts of the building rather than individual units except those at ground and podium levels or where complaints had been received. A detailed examination would also be carried out at the junction between two adjoining buildings and the external cladding near the pavement.

## **H) FINAL INSPECTIONS**

Unless requested, final inspections were not normally carried out on completion of the engineering works.

# ***Future Educational Trends and the New Test of Professional Competence***

*(An extract of a speech given by Mr. Overall in the Hong Kong Polytechnic in January 1986).*

John Overall

## **A) Introduction**

This speech tries to highlight the changing nature of our profession and the role that education should play in the changing environment. In the past education served the profession but now it must lead it.

In the past decade, there has been a shift towards a graduate profession. However, the final arbiter of professional standards must be the profession itself. Therefore, the TPC becomes more and more important and the shortcomings of the present system must be put right.

## **B) History**

It was not until 1973 that the Building Surveyor established an identity. The provision of professional education had so far been activated by market forces which means a course was devised according to the fluctuation in demand for building surveyors. The obvious outcome was a lack of academic research and study and hence the building surveyor's lack of identity.

## **C) The role of Education**

The most important thing for education to do now is to devise a structure to properly serve the profession 8 – 10 years from now.

In UK education must face the reality that funds are being drastically cut by the Government. The Government has the intention to introduce "two year degrees". It may be possible to introduce a two tier profession with professionals and technicians. Yet another structure would be to produce a "generalist" chartered surveyor leaving the specialisms to be engendered by the TPC and postgraduate study.

The last scheme would have the following advantages:—

- a) a more comprehensive and through study of the fundamentals of the profession.
- b) an opportunity to include the skills the future profession would need e.g. management studies, financial control, information systems, operational research as well as the traditional subjects of law and technology.
- c) an appreciation of the expertise acquired by surveyors in other professional areas.
- d) flexibility for the individual to make career change.
- e) better job opportunities for the new graduates.
- f) vast economies in the use of educational resources.
- g) a more ready acceptance by the European Community of our profession.

## **D) The Test of Professional Competence**

The tests were introduced in 1973 and the significant shortcomings are:—

- the candidate tends to confine himself to his office and colleagues.
- the submissions are largely theoretical reviews of a task.



- the response is mostly an historical account of a project.
- the term critical analysis is seldom understood by the candidate.

Bearing in mind that the RICS will soon cease to hold examinations, it is of much concern to the profession that a proper TPC be devised.

The GP and BS divisions have now completely revised their respective Tests and the significant changes will be as follows:–

- every student is interviewed by the Institution's assessors.
- the GP candidate has a series of more practical submissions rather than a theoretical one-off.
- the BS has a practical task to accomplish in a set time but with the full resources of his office to assist.
- a more relevant record of experience is recorded.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

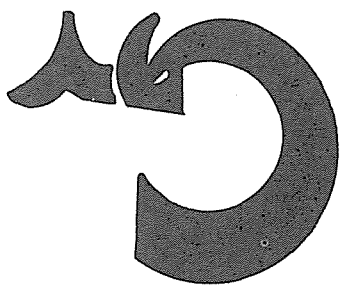
To meet the needs of the ever changing environment, the employer and the academic will need to find a solution that is different from that obtained by traditional approach. However, the RICS still has to play a vital role in the development and validation of one's professional competence.



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