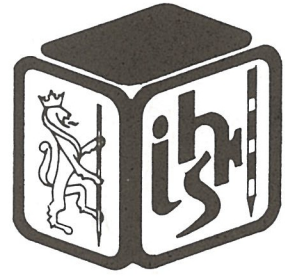


HongKong Building Surveyors



NEWSLETTER

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Members are welcome to make use of this Newsletter to express their views on any matters relating to the Division and/or the profession. These may take the form of written articles, photos or cartoons. Please send your contributions to the Editor: Victor Sinn, c/o KCRC, Rm. 919, 9/F., KCR House, Shatin Railway Station, N.T.

* * *

Advertising spaces are available to any member and income will be used to finance the publication costs. Details from the Editor.

* * *

Articles contained in this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or that of the Division.

EDITOR : VICTOR SINN
ASST. EDITOR : C. K. HUI

TEL. NO. 0-6069257
TEL. NO. 5-8324429

APRIL

1989

News

Mr. Samson Wong has been appointed as member of the AP/SE Registration Committee with Mr. Daniel Lam as the alternative.

A report on manpower study of qualified building surveyors in Hong Kong has been published in November 88. Member wishing to obtain a copy shall address to Mr. S.H. Leung, Senior Building Surveyor, C/O Buildings Ordinance Office, Murray Building, Garden Road, H.K.

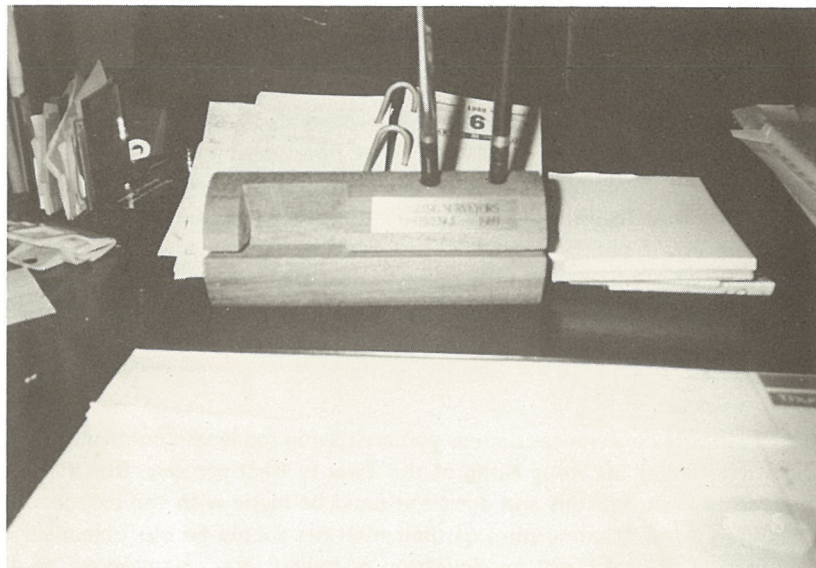
Another visit to Daya Bay will be arranged in March/April this year.

The first 4 B.S. candidates taking the TPC conducted by HKIS and RICS (H.K. Branch) respectively had all passed. Congratulations.

The Souvenir for the B.S. Conference is now offered to all members.

It takes the form of a pen-stand plus spaces for cards and papers.

Anyone interested should fill the enclosed form and return it to Mr. David Chan with a cross cheque of \$150.00



To: Mr. David W. W. Chan,
C/O Swire Properties Management Ltd.
33/F, One Pacific Place,
88 Queensway, H.K.

B. S. Conference Souvenir

I wish to purchase _____ number(s) of the souvenir.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____

Building Surveyors Conference 1989

The Building Surveyors Conference 1989 was held on the 14th January at the Excelsior Hotel. This year's conference featuring "Building Control-The Way Ahead" was well received by members as well as students from the Building Surveying Division. There also appeared a number of familiar faces of our GP colleagues and a few Architects, Engineers and Town Planners.

The Conference is an annual institutional function organized by the joint Building Surveyors' Division of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (Hong Kong Branch) and the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors. The main objective of the conference is to arouse interest among fellow members and keep them abreast of the current development of their profession. The conference also provides a ground for cross fertilisation and exchange of views and experience with other professions.

The morning session was "overcrowded". with speeches presented yet again by a number of prominent personnel in our society. They included Chairman of the Housing Authority, Sir David Aker-Jones, Chief Executive of the Consumer Council, Mrs. Chan Wong Sui, our senior member, Mr. David Lee of Sun Hung Kai Properties, Principal Government Town Planning, Dr. Peter Pun, Principal Government Land Agent, Mr. Robert Pope, Mr. Christophor Haffner of Spence Robinson (Mr. Haffner was unable to attend and his speech was delivered by Mr. H. K. Chung) and the Hon. Cheng Hon Kwan.

Various topics on building control in Hong Kong were covered by the speakers. Invaluable experience and knowledge were shared and much thoughts on the problems of building control was aroused.

- * The environmentally minded Sir David Akers-Jones had this to say: Hong Kong is full of bold and imaginative ideas: harbour reclamation, the Land Development Corporation, Metroplan. These ideas and plans have one thing in common, they all seek to put right things that have gone wrong in the past through weak lease control, weak planning and weak building control. Things which have led to high density development, insufficient infrastructure and facilities and poor and unsuitable buildings. But even today we are on the verge of repeating these errors and of having to find equally expensive solutions to them if we simply let market forces dictate matters which should properly result from effective planning and land and building control. Maximisation of revenue from land and maximisation of profit for developers without regard to good management, sensible planning and sound building design and construction will lead us to repeat the errors of the past."

He concluded that "I am sure conferences such as you are having today will contribute to the achievement of a harmonious living environment for Hong Kong of the Twenty First century. But there must be cooperation and consensus between the professions and decisions must be made with the best long-term interests of the people of Hong Kong in mind. Maximisation of their interests should be our objective; not maximisation of revenue, not maximisation of profit, not maximisation of height. But a harmonious resolution of sometimes conflicting interests."

- * On behalf of the purchasers who have experienced 'shrunken flats', delayed completion, unfair contract terms and various building defects, the Chief Executive of the Consumer Council Mrs. Pamela CHAN expressed their 'humble expectations' and urged "Could the developer keep their words, please?"
- * The rather frustrated developers' spokesman Mr. David Lee, in the desire of the developers to reduce the number of hurdles, suggested "that government looks into the feasibility of enforcing building control under one office on a district basis", and pleaded "to all officers in government departments to look more positively at the contribution made by developers". He said, "building control should not be looked upon as a cat and mouse game between government departments and developers, but should be looked upon as a joint venture between government and the private sector to build a better Hong Kong".
- * The Principal Government Land Agent, Mr. Bob Pope did not think lease conditions were the right mechanism to implement planning control.
- * In striking a balance between the extremes of too much and too little development control, the Principal Government Town Planner, Dr. Peter Pun favoured a mixture of statutory and administrative control. He described good development control as an art. "It has to be effective in achieving its objective, but at the same time it must be flexible enough to incorporate changing needs, views of the developers and characteristics of individual sites and schemes."

- * The (absent) experienced AP Mr. Christopher Haffner had in his speech (read by Mr. H.K. Chung) reflected some accounts of bureaucracy and, being "a little frightened of the civil servant of the future (after 1997) whose discretionary power may be exercised in directions which showed political motivation or personal victimisation which would be considered unbelievable today," felt that "we need legislation which is clear and precise, so that the position of the AP's design is clear in relation to approvals."
- * The Hon. H.K. Cheng touched upon the concept of self-regulation in respect of building works, and, in concluding his speech, said "Looking to the future, building control should not be restricted to new or existing buildings. The scope should cover more than safety and hygiene. Our building regulations should be more environment-oriented and legislations should provide statutory requirement for proper management and maintenance of buildings."

After a lovely lunch buffet with the breathtaking view from the "Talk of The Town", the 3 hour Open Forum session immediately followed. The Forum was chaired by Mr. Daniel Lam. As expected the Forum had generated much discussions. The following topics were widely discussed with various views put forward.

Relationship between building control, design & the end users

The practicality of using performance standards as a means of development control was raised, Dr. Pun expressed his reservation as there would be the complexity related to transport implication and the various environmental impact. He also expressed his concern on the importance of flexibility in control which might be destroyed by the use of performance standards.

Mr. Pope was of the opinion that lease conditions might not be the best means of control while other methods such as the Buildings Ordinance and other legislation were available.

Mr. Andrew Lee, as an Architect, had the experience that the attitude of B.O.O. towards projections would hinder good architectural design. Mr. H.K. Chung defended by saying that B.O.O. only impose very limited conditions which should be considered to be reasonable.

Mr. Jack Tsang was more in favour of the laissez-faire policy. He did not believe in government intervention in the purchase of properties. His view was shared by Mr. Mike Wong who added that the prospective flat purchasers of buildings under construction had already been protected to certain extent by the Registrar General.

Mr. H. K. Cheng believed that the Standard Method of Measurement of Saleable Areas was an effective means to protect property purchasers but the willingness of the developers to adopt the method would be very important. Mr. Andy Fong asked whether developers could publicise the use of the method if it had been used. Mrs. Chan responded by saying that the Consumer Council Ordinance might prohibit the use of the Council's name by the public.

Building maintenance

It was generally considered that building maintenance in Hong Kong was insufficient and that professionals should contribute in this aspect. Dr. Raymond Ho believed that maintenance should be considered during the construction period by better supervision and control. Mr. Eddie Lee was more concerned about the insufficient protection given to consumers.

Mr. Wong Bay believed building surveyors should play an important role during the design stage. He said that warranties given by contractors were difficult to enforce as contractors would find excuses to release their responsibilities.

The role of the proposed Construction Regulations amendments on supervision of construction works was being asked. Mr. H. K. Chung made it quite clear that the amendment was not meant to step up government intervention but to anticipate professionalism in supervision.

Mr. David Chan gave a much more practical view on the problem by saying that financial constraint was of paramount importance and the attitude of developers to maximize profits had hinder the improvement in building maintenance.

The recent proposed concept of certification of private buildings for the purpose of improving maintenance was mentioned by Mr. H. K. Cheng. Mr. Benson Wong considered that education was more effective than legislation.

Planning control

Mr. Daniel Lam started the discussion by asking whether the control on building design and construction, and the control on land use and density should be integrated or separated. Dr. Pun replied by saying that the Town Planning Ordinance was undergoing a thorough review. Details were not yet finalised and public opinions on the issue were welcomed.

Mr. Pope considered it being logical that town planning control should be in the hands of town planning officers, whilst Mr. Dobbins and Mr. H. K. Chung believed B.O.O.'s control was necessary in certain areas.

Mr. Andrew Lee was of the opinion that difference in interpretation of terms by Building Regulation and lease condition sometimes led to confusion. Mr. Mike Wong, on the other hand, was more concerned about the time needed for approval. He was also interested in any future control on building design. Mr. Thomas Choi added by saying that administration efficiency was considered by the developers as the most important factor. Mr. Jack Tsang saw the 3 elements of building control (Buildings Ordinance, lease and town planning control) as the yolk, white and shell of an egg and it was not easy to use one single office to control the 3 aspects.

Privatisation of building control

Mr. H. K. Chung believed that privatisation was not quite possible as there was discretionary power involved. The present arrangements of having APs, RSEs and registered contractors with the free service provided by B.O.O. did not provide sufficient ground for privatisation. Nevertheless contracting out of certain type of work, such as planned survey of old buildings, was worth considering.

Dr. Pun believed that contracting out duties was not applicable to town planning control which was a matter of value judgement and there was a need to maintain confidentiality and consistency.

While Dr. Raymond Ho also believed privatisation should be studied and might help to reduce workload of the B.O.O., Mr. N. C. Mak expressed his objection to the ideas. Mr. Wong Bay supported Mr. Mak by saying that B.O.O.'s checking process was essential as an additional safeguard measure to ensure that various conditions and regulations had been complied with.

Appeal Tribunal decisions

Mr. Daniel Lam considered that the publication of decisions of Appeal Tribunal would be beneficial to developers. However, Mr. Pope said that the Attorney General had advised that the decisions were on individual merits and did not represent a general principle applicable to other cases. Mr. H.K. Chung went on to clarify that decision which would be of public interest would in future be published. However, the decisions were not legally binding and should not be considered as precedents.

The Conference eventually came to an end amidst some more informal and private discussions. It has been assured that Building Surveyors Conference 1990 will be held again early next year.

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Continuing Professional Development

This is the second of two papers presented at the Forum following the 1988 BS AGM by David Lawrence.

Ray Bates has delivered a well constructed exposition on CPD.

As second speaker at the beginning of this Forum it would perhaps be appropriate for me to produce talking points by opposing him and playing Devils Advocate. Instead I support his comments and further propose CPD should be undertaken by all Building Surveyors.

I do however have a number of points to make to give another angle or approach to the subject. I want to ask a few questions and give a few illustrations and try to encourage a positive response to CPD.

Question 1

Do we suffer from Occupational Obsolescence?

In the 1950s, research into an engineering institute in the USA showed that in about 20 years the syllabus for the examinations had changed almost one hundred per cent to keep up with changing technology. Things move faster now. ARE YOUR PROFESSIONALLY OBSOLETE?

Question 2

DO YOU READ SERIOUSLY? Have you done any serious research into any technical/professional subjects since you qualified?

The RIBA Librarian has written that it is possible to estimate the qualification date of a professional by checking the books on the shelves by his desk.

Are you like that? No books purchased since before qualification? (Back in 1984 when I checked the validity of the Librarian's claim I discovered the last books I purchased were dated 1961!)

Question 3

Do you have any modern PERSONALLY acquired technical knowledge?

Are you up to date with technology or is your own knowledge HEARSAY from a Junior? Worse still might it come from badly written articles in newspapers?

Here are some topical questions. As Building Surveyors we should all know the answers.

- 1) Will PHENOLPHALEIN solution help establish chloride damage in concrete?
- 2) Will the presence of white or blue asbestos affect abatement technique for acoustic plaster or only affect the type of respirator?
- 3) Is a soft insulation suitable under a roofing membrane in Hong Kong – or the rest of the world?
- 4) Will infra red thermography assist in testing a new roof membrane? A repair? A leak?

Let me turn from questions relating to the PERSONAL approach to professionalism and address to the CORPORATE side.

Question 1

Do you have access to an up to date ACTIVE library with a TECHNICAL LIBRARIAN who anticipates development and obtains relevant up to date literature? Or do you have a room where books are stored a PASSIVE book collection of little relevance? (This was asked of Ted Watts (Past President BS Division) two or three years ago and he later reorganised his library and employed a part-time technical librarian.)

You may argue that we do not need libraries. You may say we have managed well in the field in the past simply by relying upon our professional/technical experience. We have kept up with overseas technology. The key words are THE PAST. There is one fundamental difference now which could affect our ability to keep up in THE FUTURE. The Government (and many private practices) used to employ expatriates because there

were inadequate local surveyors. This permitted the import of up to date overseas technology through what I call RENT-A-TECH. This has almost come to a standstill certainly in the Government.

Question 2.

What replaces RENT-A-TECH?

The new BSc in BS will help but we still have no extra-mural courses or part-time Masters degree for MID CAREER RETRAINING. Hong Kong development is rapid and in recent years we have seen many changes in construction and management techniques for buildings and maintenance. The risk now is that you could be obsolete in 4-5 years instead of 20 or 10 years.

HOW TO COPE?

Educational institutes must help with courses but I put forward four workable suggestions

- 1) RESEARCH. Mr. Eddie Lee has suggested sponsored research. Not complicated long term work. It may be a reading list and a set of extracts from relevant literature. Papers which could be made quickly and readily available to all members.

A Working Party has been formed and members will receive a questionnaire on the subject shortly.

- 2) PRESENTATIONS. The HKIE expect presentations from members. I am applying to enter the MATERIALS GROUP and I am expected to state a probable title for presentation at the time of application for membership.
- 3) PUBLICATIONS. If we can make presentations then we can group them. Editing is not a problem. The word processor makes this even easier. Hong Kong oriented texts are not available so even a simplest text could start the ball rolling.
- 4) A NETWORK. Members make themselves available on the telephone enquiry basis. Simply direct a colleague to a book or Code or specialist contractor. Prof Walker at Hong Kong University would be prepared to provide the COORDINATOR and computer.

These 4 workable suggestions are a managed CORPORATE APPROACH TO CPD.

A managed approach to CPD would avoid duplication of interesting subjects and forgetting others (which may be more important even if a little dull). We should plan the cover information we need NOW and what we perceive to be a FUTURE need.

We can help each other through

This is in line with modern industry which talks of

Research	Research	(subject)
Presentations	Development	(Hong Kong version)
Publications	Training/retraining	(presentation and publication).
Network		

There are many other points which could be put forward to support CPD. I will ask but two more leading questions.

Question 1

ARE YOU A PROFESSIONAL?

Question 2

ARE YOU A KEEN AMATEUR?

I discovered early in this decade that I was a keen amateur. Professional obsolescence had crept in. I am trying to change that. I now own technical books purchased as recently as in 1988!

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Visit to the Guangdong Nuclear Power Station at Daya Bay, P.R.C.

by Andy Fong.

With the kind assistance of the Guangdong Nuclear Power Joint Venture Co. Ltd. and the Hong Kong Nuclear Investment Co. Ltd., a visit to the Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station was held on 29 October, 1988. It was organised by the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors/Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (Building Surveying Division) as an educational event.

The 47-person party started from Kowloon at 8:20 in the morning. The 3-hour ride to the Daya Bay plant site is a long one, but the pictorial scene from Shenzhen to the site definitely made it worthwhile.

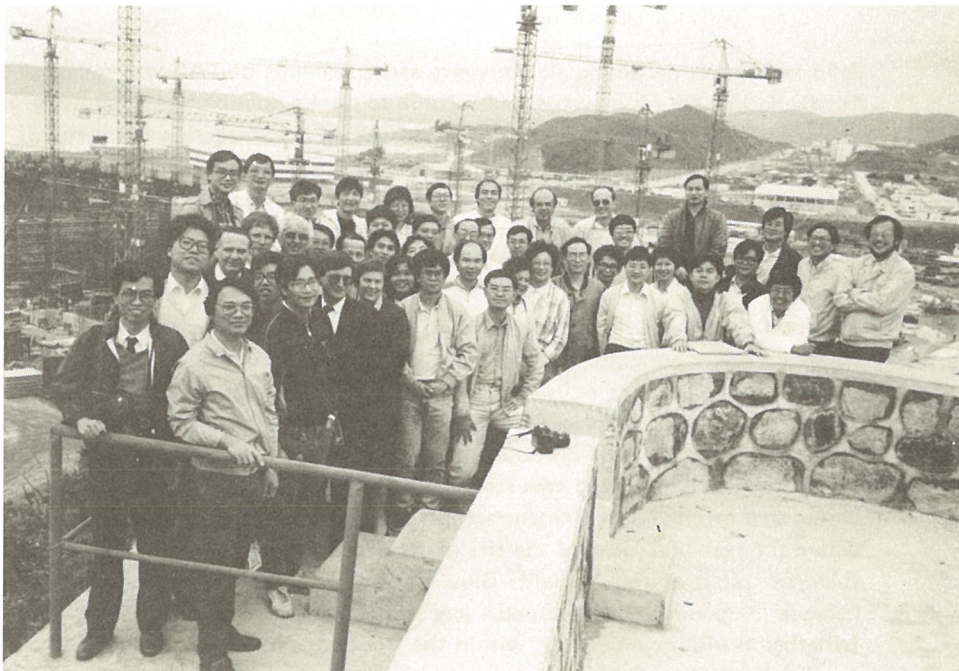
On arrival, we were greeted by a team of experts from the Guangdong Nuclear Power Joint Venture Co. Ltd., with a bilingual presentation which illustrated the history/background, main features of the plant, safety measures and programme of work. To those concerned about possible nuclear fallout, this session would have helped to ease their minds! A lunch break was held in the 'Nuclear Power Restaurant' (No lies — This is the name.) within the plant complex, with lots of seafood and Chinese beer, which energised our members for the rest of the day.

Our personal visit to an observation platform overseeing the whole construction site became the afternoon feature. According to the plant officials, more than 10,000 workers and 300 foreign consultants will be engaged in this project by 1989. The scale and complexity of this power station definitely impressed our members.

Having completed our site visit, we took a short stroll through the Tai Pang Ol Castle, a traditional walled city with rows of village houses in typical Chinese rural design. A residence belonging to a famous general in the Ching dynasty was located there. Many of the houses still retain the original style and are a good example of their kind, with detailed eaves, carved decorations, wall fresco, etc. However, perhaps due to the lack of proper care, some of the houses were so dilapidated that our building surveyors should have drawn up a lengthy maintenance programme if they were in Hong Kong!

After a 15 minute tea break in a seashore hotel, our party began its return to Hong Kong, which also marked the end of our tour.

Due to limited capacity, we regret that some members did not have the opportunity to participate in this event. However, our Divisional Council has now decided to arrange a similar event in March/April, 1989, during which we may, hopefully, witness the installation of the nuclear power plants! For advance reservation, please call Andy FONG at 5-8482180.



Our visiting team with the superstructural work of the plant in the background.

Report on Technical Advisory Group

by Samson Wong

The first meeting of the Technical Advisory Group was held on 3rd May 1988. A number of important issues were discussed at the subsequent meetings as follows:—

DATE	TOPICS
03/05/88 & 09/05/88	1-(1) Proposed Amendments to Building (Construction) Regulations — in particular, Part XVII — Fire Resisting Construciotn.
21/07/88	3-(1) Proposed Amendments to Building (Planning) Regulation (25) — Open space for domestic Building.
	(2) Charging of fees by B.O.O. for processing building plans.
	(3) Review of Registration of Building Contractors under Buildings Ordinance.
	(4) Review on Report of the Working Group on the proposed Amendments to Building (Construction) Regulations.
	(5) Architects Registration Bill.
	(6) Proposed Amendments on Miscellaneous Building Regulations.
07/09/88	4-(1) Review of the objection grounds against the proposed charging for Building plans processing.
	(2) Amendments to Building (Administration) Regulation 20 and Form 16.
	(3) Height of Storeys.
	(4) 'Mediation' option in Group B contracts & above.
	(5) Architects Registration Bill.
	A summary of status statements for those issues which can be concluded at this moment are listed below.

Topic	Statement
1-(1) & 3-(4)	A formal report collecting all the views and comments of TAG was compiled and passed to Mr. C. K. Lau for his on-ward transmission to the Legislation Sub-committee. In view of our objection raised in the report, a special working party bearing the name of 'Work Group on the Draft Fire Resisting Construction Regulations' which comprises members from both the official and un-official sides was formed. Our opinions were fully reflected in the working group. Consequently, Government accepted the said Work Group's recommendation and proposed to put up detailed amendments to the draft regulations.
3-(1)	The proposed amendment suggested to remove the existing requirements for open space about domestic buildings — B (P) Reg. 25 and the second schedule but required a set back of 1.5m from the rear boundary of the site for domestic building and a similar set back from a height 15m above ground level in non-domestic building. TAG agreed in principle but pointed out that the proposal should apply only to class A sites abutting one street and not class A sites abutting two streets, class B sites or class C sites. In the Legislation Sub-committee meeting, Government accepted that it would be unnecessary to require a set back where the rear boundary of the site abuts a street more than 4.5m wide but held the view that rear set back requirements should apply to all sites irrespective of site classification because it would at least contain any projections such as chimneys and air conditioners (whether lawful or unlawful), within the site boundary, so that minimum cross ventilation to the back of adjoining buildings may be maintained particularly in areas of mixed domestic/non-domestic developments.

- 3-(2) & 4-(1) The TAG has reviewed the B.S. council's request to make comment only on the 6-point principle established previously by the Work Party. After exchange of views and discussion at length, all members concurred that only three out of the six were acceptable but we felt that it was very difficult if not impossible to distinguish so called 'Administrative Costs' from cost of 'Professional service' in approving Building Plans. TAG reconfirmed their view that the checking and approving of building plans are not a direct service to developers, as it is a statutory duty for the Authority to ensure that safety and health standards to the public are maintained.' The above message has been conveyed to LSC through Mr. D. Lee.
- 3-(5) & 4-(5) In view that HKIA was still making effort in monopolising the term 'Architect' under the Architects Registration Bill. Upon the request of TAG, Mr. David Lee has arranged to issue a letter to Secretary for Lands & Works registering out concern. A reply was received from Mr. Graham Barnes but TAG were not impressed with the contents at all. Mr. David Lee is now consulting the legal advisors for further action.
- 4-(2) The proposed amendment required a registered contractor to further furnish the Building Authority, no less than 7 days before the actual commencement of any building works or street works, with a written confirmation of the date upon which the said works are to be commenced. The Technical Advisory Group has no objection to the proposed amendments.

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