



THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF
SURVEYORS

Your Ref: AD/EB1/97

28 September 2007

Director of Buildings
Buildings Department
12/F-18/F, Pioneer Centre
750 Nathan Road
Mongkok
Kowloon

By Fax & Post
2626 1132

Attn.: Mr. Paul Pang, AD/EB1

Dear Sir,

**Consultation on the Requirements of Registered Inspectors
for Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme**

Thank you for your letter (Ref. AD/EB1/97) of 5 September 2007 seeking our comments on the requirements of the Registered Inspector (RI) system for the proposed Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS).

Whilst we share Government's concern on the need to assure the performance of service providers, it appears that establishment of a proper regulatory system for RI is inevitable. The steer to set up a statutory registration system under the Buildings Ordinance is therefore supported. However, we would like to offer the following comments for your consideration to enable a team of professional and competent inspection experts can be set up in order to achieve the genuine need and ultimate desire of building owners.

Our comments are set out correspondingly to the headings and sequence of the consultation paper attached with your letter.

Proposed Requirements for Registered Inspector

1. We agreed that proper academic training leading to professional qualification is a prerequisite requirement of potential RIs. However, it is noted that certain academic curricula do not provide sufficient training in areas of building control and building maintenance technology, which are considered as the fundamental knowledge of building inspection. Therefore, we strongly requested that only those professionals possessing with these two areas of expertise shall be considered.

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2. In respect of core training leading to the professional qualification, it should be noted that training in connection with building construction is entirely different from building inspection and maintenance. The potential RI must be equipped with on-the-job training essentially on building control, maintenance, condition survey and diagnosis of defects.
3. Similarly, any potential RI, although being professionally qualified in respective professional institutes, they should also be continuously developing their skills and working experience with core competency in building control, maintenance, condition survey and diagnosis of defects. Although working experience in building design and construction would be an advantage, this should not be counted towards the minimum requirement of 3 years post-qualification experience.
4. Registered Professional Surveyor (Building Surveying) (RPS(BS)) are indeed the most appropriate professional to perform the function as RI taking into account their training relevant in both academic background and working experience on areas of building control, maintenance, condition survey and diagnosis of defects. If other building professionals possess similar academic background and working experience, they may also be considered as RIs. However, it is opined that only those building professionals who could fulfill the minimum requirements to become qualified as AP or RSE under the Building Ordinance are considered suitable, which should also include Registered Professional Surveyor (Quantity Surveying) (RPS(QS)).

Proposed Registration Procedures

5. Formation of a Registered Inspector Registration Committee (RIRC) to assist the Building Authority (BA) in considering applications for inclusion in the RI Register is appropriate as this could lead to objective assessment to applications.
6. Taking into account of the professional training background of RPS(BS) and considering that they are customarily being employed, by both public such as your Department, ArchSD, Housing Authority and private organizations, as professionals to perform the function of building control, condition survey, maintenance and diagnosis of defects, they should be automatically qualified as RIs without the need of further interview by the RIRC.
7. Whilst other building professionals who may not be similarly trained in such areas either relevant in academic background or working experience, an interview conducted by the RIRC in order to assess their suitability is deemed necessary.
8. The future RIRC shall only be composed of representatives from those professional institutes which are able to provide qualified RI together with representatives from the Building Authority.



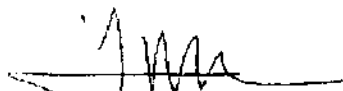
AP/RSE Applying for Registration as Registered Inspector

9. In our comments to the then Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau of 13 March 2006 in connection with the Public Consultation on MBIS, we have emphasized that AP and RSE are no doubt professionals experienced in building design and structural elements of building works whilst condition survey and building maintenance are specialized subjects for existing buildings. As described above, only those AP and RSE with academic and professional training in prescribed areas are considered competent for registration as RI.
10. If AP or RSE has only been engaged in a building construction project during the period of 7 years immediately preceding the date of application, such acceptance criteria are indeed far lower than the requirements of other registered professionals, not to mention their irrelevance of working experience. It is opined that all AP or RSE must also be required of 3 years post-qualification experience in core competencies of building control, maintenance, condition survey and diagnosis of defects. Professional interview requirement could only be waived for those candidates who possess experience exceeding the minimum requirements and who have been personally dealt with statutory repair order.
11. As a transitional arrangement at the outset of MBIS with an aim to enable a readily available RI list for procurement of services by the public, it is agreed that the first registration of qualified AP or RSE as RI can be administered by the BA on one-off basis. However, the future registration and renewal should be conducted by the RIRC similar to other candidates. It is because maintenance of two separate registration systems of RI not only leads the public to a misconception of the varying qualifications, but also adds extra public expenses in the administration.

As a professional institute which representing the qualified building surveyors for the provision of professional services in areas of building control, maintenance, condition survey and similar advice, we have offered our comments with due consideration of the current market situation and genuine needs of building owners. We do hope that the above would be incorporated in formulating the future regulatory system of RI.

Should you have any further queries, please feel free to contact the undersigned at 2526 3679.

Yours faithfully,



Raymond Chan
President

c.c. Chairman of Building Surveying Division