

Building Surveying Division Chairman's Message



Vincent Ho BSD Council Chairman

Meeting with the Independent Experts on Review of Buildings Department Report on Procedures on Inspection of Dilapidated Buildings

Members may recall that in response to the Coroner Court's recommendations on the 45J Ma Tau Wai Road building collapse tragedy, the Buildings Department (BD) has conducted a review on the BD's current work procedures and practices on enforcement action relating to building safety in late last year. Early this year, the government has also appointed 2 independent experts namely, Professor Ko Jan-ming, former Vice President of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and Mr Daniel Lam Chun, former President of the HKIS to undertake a review on the report prepared by the BD on the procedures for inspection to dilapidated buildings.

The expert review is expected to be completed by June 2012 and the experts are in the course of finalizing the review. The Institute has been very attentive to the issue and has

expressed our views in various occasions on the ways and means to improve the current operation of BD in handling the old and dilapidated buildings. In this regard, the Institute was recently invited by the Development Bureau to meet the appointed experts on 2 April 2012. Mr David Chan, Mr Kenny Tse, Mr Alan Sin and I have represented BSD to attend the meeting on behalf of the Institute.

It was a very constructive meeting which provided a unique opportunity for us to present our views and suggestions on the possible areas of improvement to the existing system, procedures, and practices of BD in this respect. We wish the final report and recommendations of the expert review could incorporate our suggestions for betterment and enhancement of the effectiveness of BD's regulatory and enforcement work on building safety.

Live programme discussion on the issue of Unauthorized Building Works (UBWs) at New Territories Exempted Houses (NTEH)

All may have paid attention to the controversial topic on UBWs of NTEH. BD has promulgated new enforcement action against UBWs at NTEH commenced on 1 April 2012. I attended a live programme "Backchat" at RTHK Radio 3 on 3 April 2012 and presented BSD's views on supporting BD's action in tackling the UBWs of NTEH.

Meanwhile, the first round of targets for such enforcement action mainly include village houses of 4 storeys or more, houses built without a Certificate of Exemption issued by

the Lands Department or the approval and consent of the BA, enclosed rooftop structures covering more than 50% of the roofed-over area of the building concerned and unauthorized projecting structures attached to UBWs, etc. A Reporting Scheme is introduced by BD for which owners of the village houses with UBWs eligible to join the Reporting Scheme may report such UBWs to the BD within 6 months starting from 1 April 2012 and appoint qualified personnel to conduct inspections and verify the safety of the UBWs.

Updates on FSD/AP liaison meeting

Fire Services Department (FSD) holds regular meetings with representatives of the industry and the building professional bodies. Mr Andrew Kung, BSD Vice Chairman, sits in the FSD/AP Liaison Meeting. The recent FSD/AP liaison meeting was held on 27 March 2012 and the following updates are reported by Andrew for members' reference:

(a) The new Registered Fire Engineer Scheme will be forward to the LegCo for endorsement after the summer break.

(b) FSD will exercise control on letting APs to make amendment on submitted drawings after a review of the procedures by ICAC. If items of amendment are not on FSD's list, disapproval letter would be issued instead of letting APs to amend them in FSD office.

(c) FSD Officials will offer to be speaker for CPD on Fire Engineering Reports and Fire Services Management Plans and details would be announced soon.

HKIS Building Surveying and Eddie Lee Memorial Education Foundation Scholarship for Secondary School Students

As you may remember, the first BSD Secondary School Scholarship Scheme has been conducted and awards granted to 6 awardees last year. Apart from providing incentives to encourage training and continuous development of surveyors, Eddie Lee Memorial Education Foundation (which was established in January this year under the auspices of BSD) has a view to motivate the secondary school students and promote building surveying as their choice for further study. This year BSD would jointly conduct this scholarship scheme with Eddie Lee Memorial Education Foundation.

A Scholarship Working Group has been set up and chaired by Dr Daniel Ho. Meanwhile, the working group is preparing final information, documents, invitation letter, school invitation list, poster and brochure, etc for distribution to the secondary schools. Tentatively invitation for nominations will be issued in June and the result is scheduled to be released by the end of 2012. I look forward to having more secondary school students to get familiar with our profession and become the future successors in building surveying. ■