



## Land Surveying Division

Sr Dr Conrad Tang LSD Council Chairman

### Smart City

During the last General Council Meeting, the President called for development themes from the various divisions. The LSD presented its theme as Smart City and the Amendment of the Land Survey Ordinance.

The LSD shall organise discussions for its younger surveyors and intends to support activities that promote and study land surveyors' participation in smart city activities. After all, it needs to tell society what land surveyors can contribute to smart cities and how it will carry out its plan.

The President commented that the LSD should not limit its reach to members only; it needs to let the general society know what it is doing. To get a smart city off the ground, the LSD understands that Hong Kong needs a policy that could be executed by government departments and utility corporations. The part that land surveyors should contribute is the government-administered 3D city model for Hong Kong. As for infrastructure, the Government should invest in the production of the 3D city model, maintain the integrity of the dataset, set a free use policy, and keep the various stakeholders updated. The LSD shall publish its views on the development of Hong Kong as a smart city in the media. Sr Chan Yue-chun, Vice Chair of the LSD, is now leading an LSD working group to work on this publication and should complete all work by June 2016.

### Land Boundary Committee

On the second development theme, the Amendment of the Land Survey Ordinance, the LSD understands that its policy bureau is tied up by the Legislative Council's slow progress. But it should not sit still and let the Government continue to work so slowly. Rather, it needs to secure the understanding and support of land-related professionals and, eventually, all of Hong Kong.

Amending the Land Survey Ordinance is of interest to land surveying professionals. Land surveying is one of the critical building blocks in land development. As a system user, the HKIS should present a united voice on the land boundary system. Improving the Land Boundary Ordinance should benefit the jobs of all land-related professionals and, ultimately, land users. Along this line of thought, the formation of a Land Boundary Committee (LBC) was requested to the General Council a couple of months ago. Immediately, the President supported the initiative and ordered further development of it.

During the General Council Retreat Meeting on 12 March, the LSD had a chance to present a primary working plan for the Land Boundary Committee. Land surveyors have a mission and vision to delineate land boundaries accurately and legally. Without a law on the re-establishment of land boundaries, one can seldom provide a satisfactory service to meet this market need. Ubiquitous land boundary discrepancies become potential hazards to all land-related professions.

As a committee under the HKIS's General Council, the proposed LBC would be the official voice on land boundary services. With

experts from all surveying specialties, the LBC can express diverse views from the user's perspective on matters related to real estate development, construction, maintenance, and related surveying fields, as well as from the provider's perspective on land surveyors' land boundary services.

The LBC shall communicate with the Lands Department on issues concerning policy on boundary definitions, operations, and standards. Its vigour comes from the amendment of the Land Survey Ordinance. The LSD will try to promote the legal sanctioning of land boundaries. On the Government side, the LBC will also communicate with the Development Bureau, legislators, and the CE, if possible. In addition, it shall contact the Law Society, Bar Association, Institute of Engineers, and Institute of Architects. Before that, it will prepare presentations on current land boundary issues and explain to its fellow professional organisations the difficulties and pitfalls of handling land boundary information. It has to point out that a definite legal boundary is needed for everyone.

On the member composition of the LBC, the LSD proposes having one chair, one General Council officer bearer, one LSD Chairman, and 1-2 delegates from each division. The LBC Chair should be appointed by the GC from a list of candidates the LSD will put forth. Sr Prof Leung Shou Chun, our past President, has kindly indicated that he would shoulder this responsibility.

Before a detailed plan and a complete set of submissions to GC can be formulated, there is still a lot of work to be done and I welcome input from members. Call me if you are interested in helping to develop terms of reference, agendas, and working plans for this new committee.

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## The Buildings Department's Site Area Working Group

This working group is chaired by an assistant director from the Buildings Department. Members include delegates from the LAO, SMO, HKIA, HKIE, REDA, and HKIS. Sr Vincent Ho is the HKIS delegate to the Working Group. In view of Hong Kong's complex land boundary issues, Vincent received the group's consent to invite one member from the LSD, Sr Dr Ken Ching, ALS, to join it. A Site area should be surveyed by ALS. Should any land boundary-related decision be made, the HKIS delegate would seek the consent of the group to release to the LSD and all members.

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## Continued Dialogue with the RICS/ICES on the Acceptance of Professional Education, Training, and Practice Experience

This has been a contentious issue for the LSD Council. The Mutual Recognition agreement with ICES expired last August and the RICS agreement ended in 2014. Recent LSD councils have tried to re-establish the external paths for admitting other qualified surveying professionals. When LSD members recently observed that major employers of land surveyors took the qualifications of RICS and

ICES members as equivalent to those of the LSD, many LSD councils voiced their objections to a continued mutual recognition agreement between the HKIS and RICS/ICES. Arguably, in a comparable situation, the intent to recruit newly-qualified members would be defeated, as external members would have no need to join the HKIS to work as professional land surveyors.

The LSD accepts RICS or ICES members with university qualifications, proof of proper APC training, and at least one year of corporate membership practice in Hong Kong. Then these candidates have to attend an HKIS professional interview arranged by the divisional Board of Membership. This process does not constitute a direct acceptance of corporate membership, but it is a recognition of one's assessed academic qualifications and professional experience. Still, one's credentials have to be vetted by a professional interview board before they can finally be accepted. Hence, the maintenance of strict entrance requirements is needed.

Land surveying today encompasses a wide spectrum of spatial scientific measurement services like remote sensing, underground and water body surveying, satellite and aerial photogrammetry, GIS, BIM, and many evolving measurement technologies. LSD members have good quality training in land boundary surveying, but the LSD does not have enough high quality probationers in the engineering surveying field, not to mention other advanced and evolving sectors. Thus, the LSD has long considered extending its professional coverage to such frontier zones. It is worth mentioning that in its Constitution, the HKIS intends to advance the geomatic information on the Earth. It represents all land surveyors in Hong Kong and has to protect the statuses and interests of its members. Expanding its influence to engineering surveying and related forefronts,

along with protecting its interests, is the duty of it and its divisions, including the LSD.

Between 2012 and 2015, the LSD welcomed 12 RICS members and four ICES members. During the same period, the LSD saw 21 members promoted from the probationary ranks. Thus, these external routes provided 43 percent of the LSD's corporate membership intake during this period, which was significant.

With cautions, the LSD will continue holding dialogue with the HKIS's brother institutions and carefully forge its future policies. To secure the employment rights of its members is, of course, its main duty. Its council does not oppose recruiting professional members from brother institutions, but the recruits must be of a quality comparable to its own. To protect its members' interests on the job-market, it has to curb the unwanted effects of 'equivalence' in the professional job market. The LSD will send a clear message to major employers of land surveying professionals that there is no equivalence of professional land surveying qualifications between the HKIS and other institutions.

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