

Surveying & Built Environment

THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF SURVEYORS

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ISSN 1816-9554



Suite 801, 8/F, Jardine House,
1 Connaught Place, Central, Hong Kong
香港中環康樂廣場1號怡和大廈8樓801室

Telephone 電話：(852) 2526 3679
Website 網址：www.hkis.org.hk

Fax 傳真：(852) 2868 4612
Email 電郵：info@hkis.org.hk

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Hong Kong SAR, People's Republic of China

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Journal Objectives

Surveying and Built Environment is an international peer reviewed journal that aims to develop, elucidate, and explore the knowledge of surveying and the built environment; to keep practitioners and researchers informed on current issues and best practices, as well as serving as a platform for the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and opinions among surveyors and related disciplines.

Surveying and Built Environment publishes original contributions in English on all aspects of surveying and surveying related disciplines. Original articles are considered for publication on the condition that they have not been published, accepted or submitted for publication elsewhere. The Editor reserves the right to edit manuscripts to fit articles within the space available and to ensure conciseness, clarity, and stylistic consistency. All articles submitted for publication are subject to a double-blind review procedure.

■ Topics

All branches of surveying, built environment, and commercial management including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Agency and brokerage;
- Asset valuation;
- Bidding and forecasting;
- Building control;
- Building economics;
- Building performance;
- Building renovation and maintenance;
- Business valuation;
- Cadastral survey;
- Commercial management;
- Concurrent engineering;
- Construction law: claims and dispute resolution;
- Construction management and economics;
- Construction technology;
- Corporate real estate;
- Education and training;
- Engineering and hydrographic survey;
- Facilities management and intelligent building;

- Geodetic Survey;
- Geographical Information System (GIS);
- Health and safety;
- Heritage conservation;
- Housing markets and policy;
- Information technology;
- International construction;
- Land law;
- Lean construction;
- Mortgage;
- Organization, scheduling and planning;
- Photogrammetry and remote sensing;
- Portfolio management;
- Procurement and contracting;
- Professional ethics;
- Project financing;
- Project management;
- Property development;
- Property finance;
- Property investment;
- Property management;
- Property market dynamics;
- Property valuation;
- Space planning;
- Sustainability;
- Securitized real estate;
- Town planning and land use;
- Urban economics;
- Value engineering.

For Submission Guidelines or enquiries, please contact the Editor of the **Surveying and Built Environment** Editorial Board at Suite 801, 8/F Jardine House, One Connaught Place, Central, Hong Kong; e-mail: editor@hkis.org.hk, telephone (852) 2526 3679 or fax (852) 2868 4612. For information on the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, please visit: www.hkis.org.hk.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND THE UNIVERSITY

'The true and adequate end of intellectual training and of a university is not learning or acquirement, but rather, is thought or reason exercised upon knowledge, or what may be called philosophy'. (Newman)

A global financial tsunami triggered the bankruptcy of the investment bank Lehman Brothers in September 2008. This event, which has hit Hong Kong investors hard, reminds us of the value of prudence and the significance of professional ethics. The danger for professional people occurs when the demand of an employer or client, rightly or wrongly, is considered a sufficient moral ground for being reckless about the public interest. That is one of the key reasons why bank employees actively solicited walk-in depositors to purchase high-risk financial products for which the bank itself was merely an agent. Such employees nowadays are likely to be university graduates.

The message is about much more than professional negligence and the solution is not subject to government regulation alone. The collapse of world-class banks and accounting firms, or rather their failure, may also be considered a weakness in standards that go into creating syllabuses and curricula of some world-class universities. This raises an important question as to the nature of modern education itself.

Closer to home more than one university is craving the acquirement of 'world-class status', thus becoming highly sensitive to outside comment and the findings of university ranking exercises. Its staff have become hyperactive in turning out papers, capturing government research grants, and hiring those capable of so doing. Sadly, what it means to attain 'world-class' status has never been discussed. Local research relevance, sorry to say, counts little in recruitment or promotion as few academics are experienced professionals. 'Local' has become bad, 'international' (meaning foreign rather than comparative) is now good, an erroneous epistemological distinction suggesting a sub-conscious rejection of universal knowledge or values.

What is certain however is that the notion of a university here in Hong Kong is far from inhering a breadth of outlook, turn of mind, habit of thought, and capacity for social and civic interaction, in other words truly *sapientia et virtus*, the motto of the University of Hong Kong.

Virtues? A world-class economist states in his work, *‘Do not say that because you are a person of principle, you will never concede on certain principles. Every person has a price, and my soul is saleable. Its price is high. But if you give me huge “benefits” and I only have to concede on some minor principle, then I will make a deal with you. And this is what we call “substitution”.*’ Indeed, much ‘substitution’ has been occurring according to prices. Absolute values and principles have few adherents.

Victims of this state of affairs are not only students and the general public but also university teachers, whose real job should be intellectual and educational, and not largely self-focused paper writing and grant hunting for promotion, larger departmental budgets, departmental fissiparousness, personal reputation, higher salary, more travel to international conferences, etc.. There must be a loftier objective beyond being graded and praised by others as ‘world-class’, a description often in reality associated with man-made disasters.

Employment demands made on the average Hong Kong academic detract from, indeed militate against being valued for ideas and reduce her/him to the condition of begging for favours from school administrators and grantors. The national history of the Manchu Dynasty in suffocating ideas for fear of the influence of intellectuals, by keeping scholars busy with documentary research which had little social or political relevance, provides an apt parallel from the past. There is a need for academics to self-examine seriously their role in the world of learning and in society. Once they start this process, the door for a better future will open.

Professor Lawrence Lai
Editor Vol 19 Issue 1

Call for Papers

PROPERTY RIGHTS, REGULATIONS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Contributions are welcome for the next issue of *Surveying and Built Environment* in 2009 in the fields of surveying and development, with a focus on property rights, regulations and sustainable development. Both theoretical and practical contributions are welcome.

Submissions must not have been published previously and should be in Word format. Submission Guidelines are given at the end of each issue.

Only articles that demonstrate novelty and a theoretical or practical contribution (in the form of propositions and/or verifiable hypotheses) in the context of a rigorous literature review can be considered. Evidence of ethics clearance by relevant institutions must be provided for papers involving human data collected by social surveys.

All submissions will be screened first by the Chief Editor before they are blind refereed. A definite decision by the Editorial Board will be made within 60 days of submission. Comments of referees and editors will be disclosed to authors if their works are refereed.

Please send contributions by email in the first instance to Professor Lawrence Lai (email address: wclai@hku.hk) or any of the editorial members.

Deadline for submission: 31 May 2009