



General Practice Division

Sr Alnwick Chan GPD Council Chairman

Merry Christmas to all fellow members!



As 2021 concludes, I am pleased to give members a summary of the GPD's highlights this year.

GPD Annual General Meeting

The GPD Annual General Meeting will take place at 6:30 pm on 1 December 2021 (Wednesday) at the Surveyors Learning Centre.

The GPD Council's current term shall end on 30 November 2021. Under the Council's Regulations, each Council Member shall be elected by those Corporate Members who are present at the AGM and voting shall be by ballot. The election of office bearers will take place during the new GPD Council's first meeting.

Opportunities to Practise in China

To enhance business and career opportunities for members, the Council has endeavoured over the years to help members expand their fields of practice into the Mainland.

On 12 March, delegates from the The Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's Department of Educational, Scientific and Technological Affairs paid a courtesy visit to the Institute and were greeted by office bearers led by President Sr Edwin Tang. The two sides discussed future opportunities to expand professional services to the Greater Bay

Area (GBA), as well as other issues that affected the livelihoods of surveyors.

There are also ongoing discussions between the Development Bureau and Mainland authorities on how to permit Hong Kong surveying firms to carry out valuation assignments in the GBA. With this objective in mind, the HKIS urges the authorities to consult the HKIS Company List (GPD) first when considering eligibility issues.

On this note, one of the many tasks that the incoming GPD Council will undertake is to review the mechanism of listing GP firms on the HKIS Company List. A working group shall be established to review the list and recommend the necessary changes to the registration criteria where appropriate. Please be assured that all GPD members will be consulted during the review process.

Standard Rates of Land Premium

The GPD has always been concerned about the existing land premium assessment mechanism and has repeatedly proposed ways to improve it to the Government.

After years of advocacy, the GPD was delighted to see the Government roll out a two-year pilot scheme for charging land premiums at standard rates for lease modifications for redevelopment of industrial buildings to expedite lease modification and encourage redevelopment of aged industrial buildings.

On 15 March, the Lands Department issued a practice note (PN No 1/2021) upon its implementation, while on 19 March, the Development Bureau expressed its gratitude for the constructive advice provided by the Institute, in particular the wise counsel the GPD gave in person and in writing.

In July, following a number of successful cases involving the use of standard rates, the GPD advised the Government to consider offering a similar standard rate option for the land

exchange premium assessment of agricultural lots, so as to expedite land and housing supplies.

In her policy address of 6 October, the Chief Executive announced that the standard rate premium assessment will be extended to land exchange cases in the New Development Areas in the near future. A meeting with LandsD on this issue will take place in early December 2021.

Lease Expiry in 2047

The challenge of coping with a large number of land leases that will expire in 2047 has elicited public unease over the last decade.

In March, I met with Sr Hon Tony Tse, BBS, and requested that he raise the issue with the Legislative Council, which he kindly did on 28 April.

The Secretary for Development replied by elaborating on the Government's ongoing efforts to address the matter. Members can find the Government's detailed official response at the link below:

<https://bit.ly/3vEgXnb>

Electoral Reform

The Improving Electoral System (Consolidated Amendments) Bill 2021 was published on 13 April. The GPD generally supports the changes. There are 56 specified entities eligible to register as voters under the Election Committee's Architectural, Surveying, Planning and Landscape subsector.

However, the specified entities do not appear to fairly represent all HKIS members, especially land surveyors and facilities managers in private practice who were not included on the list of specified entities.

To enhance HKIS members' participation in the

new Election Committee, the Institute relayed its concerns to the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs in a letter dated 28 April.

The letter stated that the HKIS wants the number of eligible entities to be increased by including firms of different disciplines so that the architectural, surveying, planning, and landscape subsectors could enjoy broader representation.

On 4 May, the Secretary for Development replied with a letter addressed to HKIS President Sr Edwin Tang, which can be downloaded at the link below:

<https://bit.ly/2RRo0dT>

Remuneration for LandsD-Appointed Expert Witnesses in Lands Tribunals

LandsD appoints expert witnesses to help the Lands Tribunal resolve disputes over valuation matters. Under the current arrangements, surveyors appointed as expert witnesses are remunerated upon the full settlement of compensation claims, which could take years. Such an arrangement has caused concern and cash flow issues among many surveyors.

Surveyors appointed as expert witnesses should be given adequate autonomy to discharge their duties as experts. Thus, the GPD has asked LandsD to review the remuneration arrangement for appointed consultants and suggested that stage payments be adopted in tender documents. This would ensure that surveyors are remunerated for their work in a timely manner.

The HKIS believes that periodic or stage payments are fair because similar compensation arrangements are offered to legal professionals. Therefore, the Government should extend this arrangement to surveyors.

Zonal Plan and Reimbursement of Professional Fees

In July, members noticed that the Zonal Plan was no longer available for viewing on the Government's website, causing anxiety among many owners and professionals.

Separately, owing to LandsD's publication of Practice Notes Nos 5/2020 and 5/2020A on the Payment of Professional Fees in Connection with Compensation Claims Involving More than One Professional, GPD members are concerned about fees incurred by their clients when seeking professional advice upon accepting or rejecting ex gratia compensation being regarded as fees reasonably incurred.

In response to these two issues, the GPD wrote to the Director of Lands to seek clarification and was invited to meet with representatives of the LandsD's Acquisition Section on 14 September. The GPD requested that the Acquisition Section formally announce the abolishment of the Zonal Plan and inform its stakeholders of its new arrangements to ensure transparency. LandsD provided an official response to this request on 21 October.

Please click on the link below for the contents of the letter:

<https://tinyurl.com/yfef97fv>

New Members

This year, the Education Committee, under the leadership of Sr Dr Lennon Choy and Sr Leo Cheung, continued to ensure that all examination-related venues practised adequate social distancing.

By strictly adhering to the Government's social distancing guidelines, the APC Part I

Assessment was successfully held on 2 and 16 October. In total, 26 candidates sat for the Part I Assessment, while 35 candidates attempted the Professional Task written assessment. In December, 55 candidates will sit for the Part II Assessment.

A diploma presentation ceremony occurred on 2 October for newly-qualified surveyors who undertook the Part II assessment in December 2020 and June 2021, when 55 candidates passed their interviews.

Under the Memorandum of Mutual Recognition of Membership, the HKIS admitted 15 new members who were also RICS corporate members.

I express my deepest gratitude to the Education Committee, HKIS/RICS Working Group, and voluntary assessors for their contributions.

CPD: Utility Facilities in Power Company and the Associated Land Issues

Sr Eric Tsang, Senior Lands and Buildings Manager of CLP Power Hong Kong Limited, together with his colleague, Sr Jolly Leung, Assistant Lands and Buildings Manager, kindly delivered a presentation, "Utility Facilities in Power Company and the Associated Land Issues," during a CPD on 27 October. They introduced the various components of a utility including power stations, distribution substations, connecting cables, etc, as well as the role of GP surveyors in handling CLP's land matters.

Tsang and Leung also highlighted the salient conditions stipulated in the land grants and the considerations behind the adoption of the shoebox approach to assess the market value of utility facilities. Digital modernisation in the form of BIM has enhanced their efficiency in calculating the volume of the facilities.

The event ended with a prolonged Q&A section that cleared up questions concerning a data centre and redevelopment opportunities. I express my thanks to Sr Eric Tsang and Sr Jolly Leung for their contribution.



CPD: Utility Facilities in Power Company and the Associated Land Issues

CPD: Visit to the Central Market Revitalisation Project

On 6 November, Sr Bruchi Nam and Mr Wilfred Au of the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) arranged a visit to the Central Market Revitalisation Project.

During the visit, the two shared the design concept behind the revitalisation project and the challenges they overcame during the handover, renovation, tender, and existing operation stages. The URA has been working with Central Market's operator, Chinachem, to inject the concept of "Playground for All" into the facility and turn the landmark piece of architecture into a vibrant community hotspot that can be described as "approachable," "energetic," and "gregarious".

On behalf of the CPD panel, I extend the GPD's heartfelt thanks to Sr Bruchi Nam and Mr Wilfred Au for sharing their valuable experiences and insights with members.



Acknowledgement

The GPD Council's affairs rely on the active, voluntary participation of its members who serve on its various task forces, panels, committees, and working groups.

The division's continued prosperity testifies to the Council's commitment and dedication. I thank all of its members, co-opted members, and YSG representatives for contributing their time, skills, and connections to help the GPD realise its potential and expand its influence throughout Hong Kong and the GBA. Finally, I thank all GPD members for their ongoing support.