

# Private practice pioneer

*Sr Raymond Chan Yuk-ming, managing director of Raymond Chan Surveyors Limited (RCSL) and a past president of HKIS, is one of the pioneers of private practices in building surveying consultancy in Hong Kong. He has been credited with shaping the local market for building surveyors, whose expertise are now highly sought after, thanks to the urgent needs of ageing buildings for repair and maintenance, facility enhancement and alteration.*

Wilson Lau



*“Utilize professional knowledge to serve our society”*

Many in the surveying field agree that Chan helped lay the foundation for the building surveyor market in Hong Kong in the 1980s, and it took off from there. After he set up his own practice, the local building surveying consultancy sector began to take shape quickly. Fast expansion ensued, driven by the rising demand for maintenance and facility enhancement, and today many property owners and developers also hire building surveyors.

When Chan started working in the early 1980s, there were very few professionally trained building surveyors in the private practice. Most either worked for the government, such as in the Buildings Ordinance Office, or private developers. “There were very few consulting firms specialising in building surveying consultancy. This market sector was almost non-existent,” he recalls. “In those days, most maintenance projects were managed by architects.”

This led Chan to identify a market niche and opened RCSL, the first locally owned consultancy practice focusing solely on building surveying services. Chan believes that building surveyors have competitive edge in overseeing maintenance and alteration projects because of their training in dealing with existing buildings. “Traditionally, the training for building surveyors has a lot of weight on maintenance and alteration projects.”

Chan's vision, over three decades ago, has proven to be correct: building maintenance projects in Hong Kong are now led by building surveyors predominantly. Professionally trained in General Practice Surveying in the Hong Kong Polytechnic, Chan first started to work in valuation and found more interest in Building Surveying area. “Then I decided to pursue my qualification on building surveying while working. Because professionals can choose to enrich their specialised knowledge in terms of breadth or depth, I opted to broaden the scope of my skills and knowledge. Over the years, I have also obtained other professional qualifications based on relevant professional knowledge and proven experience,” he explains.

Carving out a niche business is challenging initially. “There was less direct competition. It's like basketball players in a soccer match and I was the only soccer player. Nevertheless, it's very important for me to inspire confidence in clients by demonstrating my competencies and professional knowledge... Competition intensified later as more building surveyors entered the market. But the market is big and is growing,” he adds, pointing out an interesting phenomenon – many well-established building surveying firms in Hong Kong were established by his classmates.

Meanwhile the market for building alteration and maintenance is expanding at good speed,

Chan thinks. “It is interesting to note that the total expenditure in building alteration and maintenance works is much bigger than the total expenditure on the construction of new buildings in Hong Kong.”

In the future, Building surveyors can also consider to expand its scope of services to include insurance damages valuation.

When Chan was the President of HKIS, he put a lot of effort into promoting the influence and public image of surveyors as a whole. His efforts have reaped benefits. “Public awareness of surveyors and what we do has heightened,” he notes. “Increased awareness of the profession is important. It’s beneficial for all because professionals help others. It’s a win-win situation. Burnished reputation leads to increased influence. We will be relied upon to make constructive, professionally founded suggestions for the overall enhancement of our society.”

Like many other prominent surveyors in Hong Kong, Chan has been dedicated to public services. “Through my participation in various public organisations, I utilise my professional knowledge to serve our society,” he notes. “For instance, if we set a good direction for land use at the Town Planning Board, it will benefit all in the society. I have learned a great deal from the others through my involvement in public services. I enjoy the exchange of ideas with other professionals like environmentalists, accountants, artists and social workers. I have learned to analyse issues from the others’ points of view. I have come to gain a better understanding of the challenges facing the government. Some of the strategies adopted by these organisations can be adapted and implemented at my company.”

Chan believes HKIS’s Planning and Development Division has great potential for

expansion. “Public knowledge of surveyors specialising in planning and development is limited, mainly because the government does not have corresponding positions. Project planning at private firms is usually done by the owners. Some assign surveyors or architects to coordinate the projects. I think if companies are keen on enhancing the quality of project planning, they should engage specialised planning and development surveyors to be in charge of the overall project planning and coordination.”

Chan thinks the overall quality of the younger generation of surveyors is good. “They have been well-trained, especially in terms of the scope of knowledge and the ability on creative thinking. Because of the rapid market development, coupled with the constant flow of large amount of information through social media and internet and technological innovations, surveyors need to put a lot of efforts in keeping up with new developments.”

While young surveyors’ scope of knowledge is wide, it often lack depth. He advises that, when young recruits start working, they should seize any opportunity for in-depth intensive on-the-job training. Meanwhile, changes in global economic development have given surveyors more opportunities and scope for their careers. “Surveyors specialising in construction, land and properties can consider developing their career in the financial sector, particularly in those investment funds focused on property-related projects,” Chan notes.

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# 私人執業先驅

陳旭明測計師行有限公司董事總經理及香港測量師學會前會長陳旭明測量師，是本港建築測量顧問界私人執業先驅之一，為建築測量師建立本地市場。由於舊樓在保養維修、設施改善及改裝方面需要迫切，建築測量師現時炙手可熱。

Wilson Lau

測量界普遍認為，陳先生在 80 年代有助奠定本港建築測量市場的基礎，而一切以此為起點。他成立自己的公司後，本地建築測量顧問行業迅速成形。由於保養和設施改善的需求增加，行業急速擴展，目前許多業主及發展商都有聘用建築測量師。

陳先生在 80 年代初投身社會，當時私人執業的建築測量師極少，大部分人不是加入建築物條例執行處等政府部門，就是在私人發展商工作。他回憶說：「當時只有極少數的建築測量顧問公司，這個市場幾乎是不存在的。那時候的保養項目大多由建築師負責。」

於是陳先生看準這個小眾市場，創辦了首間專注提供建築測量服務的本土顧問公司——陳旭明測計師行有限公司。陳先生認為建築測量師在處理現有樓宇方面素有培訓，讓他們享有監督保養及改裝項目的優勢。「傳統上，建築測量師的培訓十分注重保養及改裝項目。」

陳先生三十多年前的看法是對的：香港現時樓宇保養項目主要由建築測量師負責。陳先生原來於香港理工學院修讀產業測量後，首先從事估值工作，但卻發現對建築測量的興趣更大。他解釋：「後來我一邊工作，一邊考取建築測量資格。專業人士可選擇擴闊或專修知識，於是我選擇擴闊技能和知識範疇。這些年來，我還憑藉相關專業知識和經驗考獲其他專業資格。」

開拓小眾業務初期考驗重重。他補充道：「直接競爭較小，情況就如足球比賽上的籃球員，而我是唯一的足球員。然而，我需要展示能力和專業知識，給予客戶信心……隨著越來越多建築測量師投入市場，競爭變得激烈，但市場規模很大，且在不斷增長。」陳先生提到一個有趣現象，就是本港很多著名建築測量行都是他的同學成立的。

與此同時，陳先生認為樓宇改裝及保養的市場發展迅速。「現況是本港樓宇改裝及保養工程的總開支遠遠多於新樓建築的總開支。」

建築測量師未來還可考慮將服務拓展至保險賠償估值。

陳先生出任香港測量師學會會長期間，致力提升測量師整體的影響力和形象，並取得成果。他指出：「公眾更了解測量師和我們的工作。對這個專業範疇加深認識是重要的，令所有人可以獲益，因為專業人士就是要讓人受惠，這是一個雙贏局面。聲譽提高了，影響力自然增加。我們將更受重用，提供實際、專業的建議，為整個社會帶來裨益。」

陳先生像許多本地知名測量師一樣參與公職。他說：「透過參與公營機構工作，我可以運用我的專業知識，為社會服務。舉例而言，如果我們在城市規劃委員會訂立良好的土地使用方針，社會各界均會受惠。我從公務中也獲益良多，我樂於與環境學家、會計師、藝術家、社工等專業人士交流，學會從他人角度分析問題，而且更明白政府面臨的挑戰。這些機構採取的策略中，某些亦會適用於我自己的公司。」

陳先生相信，香港測量師學會規劃及發展組甚有拓展潛力。「公眾對從事規劃及發展的測量師認識不多，主要因為政府沒有設立相應職位。私人公司的項目規劃工作一般由公司東主自己進行，有些公司則安排測量師或建築師統籌項目。我認為如果公司有意提升項目規劃的質素，他們應聘請規劃及發展測量師負責整體的項目的規劃及統籌工作。」

陳先生認為整體而言新一代的測量師質素良好。「他們受過優質培訓，在知識範疇和創新思維方面尤其如是。基於市場急速發展，社交媒體及網上又不斷傳播大量資訊，加上科技日新月異，測量師需要加倍努力追上發展步伐。」

年輕測量師雖然具備廣泛基礎知識，但往往欠缺深度。陳先生建議初出茅廬的年輕人須抓緊機會接受深度的在職訓練。此外，全球經濟發展轉變亦給予測量師更多事業機遇和空間。他表示：「從事建築、土地及物業的測量師可考慮向金融事業發展，特別是那些與物業項目相關的投資基金。」

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