



THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF
SURVEYORS

10 March 2005

Mrs Rita Lau
Permanent Secretary for the Housing, Planning and Lands
Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
18/F, Murray Building
Garden Road
Hong Kong

Dear *Rita*,

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to meet with the new council of the HKIS on 1 March 2005. I am particularly grateful for the personal attention that you gave to a wide range of topics. Through the frank and open discussions with you, King-chi and Olivia, we have a better understanding of the Government's views and positions on issues that are of concern to the general public and that undoubtedly have a great impact on the development of the surveying profession.

To allow our respective offices to follow up on the various subjects that we covered, may I summarize the salient points as follows:

1. Land Supply – HKIS considers that the Application List is an effective means to meet the current market demand for lands. The system will be better received if the time for listing a target site for sale by auction can be shortened. On the question of transparency, we are glad to see that in the Application List announced on 4 March, there is information pertaining to locations, site areas, and estimated available dates. We are also glad that, with regard to premium negotiation for land exchange and renewal, your office is looking into ways of speeding up the process.
2. Mandatory Building Maintenance – HKIS supports the Government's initiatives with regard to mandatory building maintenance. There is a consensus between the Government and HKIS for a need to co-ordinate and rationalize the various schemes currently managed by the Government, URA and the Housing Society. HKIS will continue our effort of educating and raising public awareness on this important subject. We are working on a standard form of contract for maintenance works, taking into consideration your suggestions for a schedule of prices / rates and indices for common work items and materials.



3. Urban Renewal – We are pleased to note the firm commitment by the Government towards urban renewal. Yet, the challenges ahead are huge. Amongst them is the percentage of owners' agreement before compulsory sales can be triggered. We note the Government's unenviable position of having to balance rule of laws, personal freedom, and community needs. However, there must be some ways of introducing flexibility into the system. We discussed the undesirable, yet not uncommon, scenario of resuming a six-storey building.
4. Town Planning and Public Facilities – The disparity between electoral and district accountabilities has imposed considerable constraints on consultation and implementation of public policies. While it may fall outside the jurisdiction of your office and indeed our Institute, this is a valid issue which must be carefully taken into account in town planning, resources allocation and provision of public facilities.
5. Building Affairs Tribunal – We are glad that our preliminary proposals of BAT have received the Government's very positive response. In our follow-up meetings with Olivia and her team, we will provide more details on the technical side, with reference to the surveyors' expertise in building surveying, facility management, procurement and dispute resolution.
6. Central - Wan Chai Reclamation – HKIS supports the proposed construction of a by-pass between Central and Wan Chai for the purpose of easing traffic congestion in Central. However, reclamation must be kept to the absolute minimum. Our Local Affairs Committee is looking into some technical aspects. We will write to you further when we have an opportunity of consulting our members.
7. Registered Professional Surveyors – While from a policy angle we will be following this up with Mr. YC Lo, Permanent Secretary for Environment, Transport and Works on this subject, I feel it is important that the Government, which is instrumental to the enactment of the Surveyors Registration Ordinance, should support the application of the Ordinance by recognizing the uniqueness of services offered by Registered Professional Surveyors. Indeed, following CEPA and the signing of agreements with the Mainland on reciprocal recognition of qualifications, there is a need for aligning the registration and licence-to-practice systems of the Mainland and the HKSAR.



8. West Kowloon Cultural District – I thank you for your assurances regarding transparency and removal of subjectivity in procedures. These in fact have been the key words in our various submissions to your office and the LegCo. We have never doubted the Government's intentions of providing good, value-for-money facilities. Nor have we understated the difficulties that the Government faced, particularly during times of financial hardship a few years ago when the project was first proposed. However, as Public Private Partnerships (PPP) is a relatively new topic in the HKSAR, there is a pressing need for the Industry to build up a knowledge-base and devise models and strategies to suit the local context. To this end, there is much HKIS can offer, through our overseas counterparts and local experts in valuation, land management, procurement, contractual arrangement and facility management. We have made some preliminary proposals for proceeding with WKCD with some modifications to address the public concerns, in particular with regard to competitive tension, risk allocation and transparency. In the longer run, we consider that there is a need for the Government to re-define the roles and duties of LegCo and the Town Planning Board for facilities to be procured through PPP.

Now that positive dialogues have been opened up, I look forward to close cooperation and continuous discussions between your Bureau and the HKIS.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T T Cheung', is written over a horizontal line.

T T Cheung
President (2004-05)