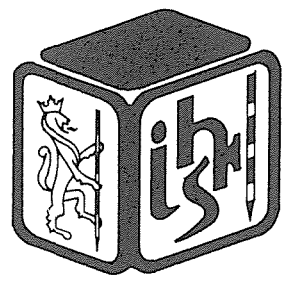


Mr. Bates

HongKong Building Surveyors



NEWSLETTER

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Members are welcome to make use of this Newsletter to express their views on any matters relating to the Division and/or the profession. These may take the form of written articles, photos or cartoons. Please send your contributions to the Editor: Victor Sinn, c/o KCRC, Rm. 943, 9/F., KCR House, Shatin Railway Station, N.T.

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The advertising space on the inside covers and the backcover is available to any member and income will be used to finance the publication costs. Details from the Editor.

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Articles contained in this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or that of the Division.

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JULY 1987

News and 87/88 CPD Events

1. Nomination of representatives:

AP/SE Registration Committee – Eddie Lee and Daniel Lam

Lands and Building Advisory Committee – Daniel Lam

Lands and Building Advisory Committee, Legislation Sub-Committee – David Lee

AP/RSE Committee – C.K. Lau

HKIS Council – Barnabas Chung and Eddie Lee

RICS Branch Committee – C.K. Lau and Jeff Dobbing

H.K. Polytechnic Building and Surveying Advisory Committee – Ray Bates

City Polytechnic Department of Building Advisory Committee – Ray Bates

H.K. University Department of Building Advisory Committee – Ray Bates

AP/FSD Liaison Group – Mike Wong

International and PRC Affairs – Kenneth Chan

Joint Sub-Committee on Property Management Registrations – Derek Stevenson

HKIS Membership Committee – David Lawrence

HKIS Education Committee – Barnabas Chung

RICS Education and Membership Committee – Graeme Baldwin

Social Function organiser – Peter W. Y. Ho

Editor for Newsletter – Victor Sinn assisted by Kenneth Lai

CPD Events – C. K. Hui assisted by Kenneth Lai

2. BS Conference is intended to be an annual function.

3. The Yaumatei/Tsimshatsui Property Management Exhibition will be held on 11th July, 1987.

4. An article on the purchase of second-hand flats will be prepared jointly by the BS Division and the Consumer Council and will be published in their journal.

5. CPD Events

The draft CPD events for 1987-88 is as follows:-

	Topic	Scheduled Date
1.	Talk by Mr. Robert Headlam, President of the RICS BS Division	5th June, 1987
2.	Curtain walling/Structural Glazing	16th July, 1987
3.	Structural and non-structural Concrete Repairs	September 1987
4.	Abatement of Asbestos	October 1987
5.	Visit to Tuen Mun Light Rail Transit	November 1987
6.	CAD, CAM Computer Aid Graphic Detailing	To be decided
7.	Visit to a wall tiles factory	early 1988

Suggestions for CPD events are welcome.

HKIS/RICS Annual General Meeting 87/88

HKIS/RICS Annual General Meeting 87/88

The 3rd HKIS and the 5th RICS Joint Annual General Meeting was held at 6:20 p.m. on Friday, 27th March, 1987 at the Club Room, Housing Authority Headquarters Building.

38 members were present with 11 apologies for absence received.

The meeting began with the adoption of the respective minutes for the last AGM (1986), followed by the adoption of the Chairman's as well as the Treasurer's Reports.

The election of Officers and Committee Members for 1987/88 then followed.

It was proposed, seconded and passed by the Meeting to increase the number of Committee Members to seven for the 1987/88 RICS Committee.

The following Officers and Members were elected:—

H.K.I.S.		R.I.C.S.	
Chairman	— Jeff Dobbing	Chairman	— Jeff Dobbing
Vice Chairman	— Eddie Lee	Vice Chairman	— Eddie Lee
Hon. Secretary	— Chip Au	Hon. Secretary	— Chip Au
Hon. Treasurer	— N.C. Mak	Hon. Treasurer	— N.C. Mak
Members	— Barnabas Chung	Members	— Barnabas Chung
	— C.K. Hui		— C.K. Hui
	— Ho Wing Yin		— Ho Wing Yin
	— David Lawrence		— David Lawrence
	— Victor Sinn		— Victor Sinn
	— Kenneth Lai		— Kenneth Lai
			— Graeme Baldwin

Election of Hon. Auditors for 1987/88

It was proposed, seconded and passed by the Meeting the appointment of Messrs. Ray Bates and Robin Howes as Hon. Auditors for 1987/88 for HKIS and RICS respectively.

Election of members to represent the BS Division in the General Council

Messrs. Barnabas Chung and C.K. Lau were nominated to represent the BS Division of HKIS and RICS respectively in the General Council. Ray Bates pointed out that the constitution of the RICS requires an open election in the AGM and the nominations were agreed by all members present and passed by the Meeting for adoption.

Any Other Business

Ray Bates suggested that it is advisable for members to give some guidance to the new Committee with respect to the type of functions which they would expect in the forthcoming year and comments on certain functions which have been taking place in past years, e.g. BS conference, CPD events, BS exhibition, etc.

Mr. C.K. Lau, the Chairman, reported that the BS Exhibition will continue to be held at places such as the New City Plaza in Shatin, in order to upgrade the image of Building Surveyors to the public. As regards the BS Conference, he has received a lot of feedback which reflect the interest of the members and it is likely that this will become an annual event. It has also been suggested that venues abroad should be considered, such as Macau. Also, the promotion has been successful and private firms are looking for more and more Building Surveyors. In addition, as the Government is endeavouring to upgrade statutory requirements on buildings in various aspects, e.g. mandatory building maintenance as suggested by Mr. Graham Barnes, the Secretary for Lands and Works, there will certainly be a need of Building Surveyors to look after buildings.

Mr. David Lawrence suggested that a one-day seminar in Hong Kong should be better than a 2-day seminar in Macau because of the additional time as well as money involved. He also suggested that the Annual Dinner should be cheaply charged in order to get more people there.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 6:50 p.m.

Forum: Is Mandatory Building Maintenance the Only Option ?

Chairman: Barnabas H. K. Chung
Time/Date: 6:50 p.m., Friday, 27th March 1987
Venue: Club Room, Housing Authority Headquarters Building
Recorded by: Chip Au

DISCUSSIONS

Chairman: The idea of mandatory building maintenance, or maintenance control, was introduced to the public by Mr. Graham Barnes, the Secretary for Lands and Works in 1986, whereby any buildings over 10 years of age would have to be inspected and certified by a recognised professional that they are in a state of proper repair, and these buildings are required to be reinspected and similarly certified once every two years. It appears that the Government is becoming more concerned with buildings which have not been well maintained, or simply not maintained. This applies particularly to those multi-ownership buildings where individual owners tend to be concerned only with the interior of their own flats, or units. Is maintenance control the only effective measure in upkeeping the building stock? Is there currently any incentive to maintain existing buildings? Should statutory requirement be placed against those not maintaining their properties, by means of say, the Multi-Storey Buildings (Owners Incorporation) Ordinance, Landlord and Tenant (Consolidation) Ordinance, or the Buildings Ordinance?

Ray Bates:
(Housing Dept.) The ideas of mandatory maintenance inspection of buildings is in fact not new to us. For instance in early 1940s, there were lease conditions stipulating that lessees have to maintain the property to the satisfaction of the surveyor. Also, the Buildings and Nuisances Ordinance of 1856 made it an offence if the owner or occupier of any building neglected its repair or permitted it to remain in a ruinous or dangerous state. For those who committed this offence would be subject to a fine of \$50. So there have been various controls relating to maintenance of buildings. Currently there are controls governing the safety of buildings, such as sections 23-24A and 26 of the Buildings Ordinance. We have also the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (e.g. s.127) and other subsidiary environmental legislations which provide for securing abatement of nuisance as a result of defects in buildings. In addition, there are occasionally conditions in Crown Leases covering the maintenance aspects. Most of these legislations, however, are not really relating to the problem, but only the consequences of the problem.

I believe that it will be very difficult for the Government to legislate for mandatory building maintenance because first of all, we must define the maintenance standards and these will vary according to different building surveyors. The increase in the building stock in recent years has been astronomical. The rate of deterioration of buildings varies according to the standard of management. Also I could see that there has been an upsurge of refurbishment activities because of changes in fashions as well as changes in uses of buildings. Because of these variances and the different standard of management, we don't know how all these buildings are aging.

The term 'Illegal Structures' is clearly defined in the Buildings Ordinance and we all understand that it is difficult to control illegal structures. The control of building maintenance will be even more difficult.

In the interim, in order to lay the foundation for any future legislation in this aspect, I

suggest that we should be looking for:

- Compilation of data on the condition of buildings in order to establish the rate of deterioration of the building. We should look at similar data recording system used overseas.
- Ways to encourage improvement of the building stock.
- Financial inducement such as tax relief, subsidies etc.
- The maintenance professional available. Who are competent?
- Researches into the subject to be carried out by academic or professional institutes.
- Any British Standards or Codes of Practice produced related to maintenance, or published maintenance materials, etc.

I consider that the pre-requisite for mandatory building maintenance is for building surveyors to establish the standard of maintenance, so that the legislation can be enforced.

Chairman: When we study the history of the Buildings Ordinance and the Public Health legislations of the old days, there in fact had been a requirement for the building inspector to check whether the kitchen is white-washed. Can we have views from the BOO regarding the current standard of maintenance?

**Robin Howes:
(BOO)** The BOO do have 5 standards of repair in dealing with buildings built in the early 60s: (i) Hazard Repair, (ii) Cosmetic Repair, (iii) Repair and Repair, (iv) Extended and repair, and (v) Repair and prevent. Except for the last standard which is planned to extend the life of building for another 50 years, the first 4 standards, being piecemeal repairs, will be excluded if building maintenance has become mandatory.

**David Lee:
(Sun Hung Kai)** Even though it is a good idea, I don't think this will work, because of the difficulty in setting the standard — what is the meaning of good repair? Also, the great quantity of work generated as a result of mandatory building maintenance cannot be handled by the limited number of professionals available. I would suggest an alternative solution. This is by setting up a list of registered maintenance contractors who are experienced and then the public is able to select contractors from this list to carry out repair works. But the basic solution would lie with the management of the building and education of the public so that they are aware of the need to take care of buildings. In practice, Incorporated Owners are often found to be unwilling to co-operate and we should consider how to overcome this problem.

**David Lawrence:
(Arch SD)** I think that we are lack of maintenance data. For example, we do not have adequate information about actual life cycles of building materials. In practice, we have concrete designed for only 20 years and cast iron pipes replaced in 8 years' time, but if replacement is impossible because of financial constraint, we have to turn to refurbishment instead. And if the building is not managed properly and refurbishment is deferred then the building will deteriorate rapidly. The result is that only patch-up works would be carried out.

Because of the lack of data on life cycles, condition surveys will have to be carried out. As regards contractors who possess the expertise in repair, there is a Concrete Repair Contractors Association being formed and it is hoped that performance standards are laid down to govern the works carried out by their members.

The Government is well aware of the problem of building maintenance but not private owners. In general the Deeds of Mutual Covenant do not necessarily work. The minimum

maintenance standards, even if they are laid down, may not be an answer and I think it is best still to educate private building owners by broadcasting the message, together with the assistance from academic institutes.

Chairman: We have been discussing 'repair' and 'maintenance'. Can we first define the term 'building maintenance' and we then move on to life-cycle studies.

Raymond Chan:
(HK Polytechnic) In text books, "to maintain" is "to keep things going in order to keep the value of the subject". I agree that research and data collection are important but even academic institutes like our Hong Kong Polytechnic are also lack of resources and information related to maintenance, sometimes because the private sector or even Government are unwilling to disclose such information.

I have attended one District Board meeting and many agreed that Incorporated Owners should be educated in order to make them aware of the problems of maintenance and things required to be done. In general, Incorporated Owners are often incapable to run their own management.

Chairman: We understand that it is difficult to measure the standard of maintenance and therefore difficult to control and enforce. Alternatively, we may aim at education of the public. In the interim, are there any incentives such as tax relief or grants, for carrying out maintenance work?

Samson Wong:
(Standard Chartered Bank) For maintenance of banks, normally we are only looking for a 7 to 10 years' life cycle and thus we are not too much concerned with long-term maintenance. I agree that it would be difficult to make building maintenance a statutory requirement, except probably aspects in connection with safety.

Victor Sinn:
(KCRC) In the past, KCRC has treated building maintenance as a very minor aspect. Repair has often been done as the last resort.

C. K. Lau:
(Henderson) The property manager of a building is often a subsidiary of the Developer who built that building. In these cases, developers are often only concerned with profits and they seldom manage in a professional way. The management may only comprise a Housing Manager plus a number of clerks, carrying out duties of rent collection, liaison with owners and attendance to minor repairs such as pipe leakage, etc. Owners are seldom concerned with management because of the lack of time and they have to rely on the management to look after maintenance. I agree that they should be educated in order that they are well aware of their rights of maintenance under the Deed of Mutual Covenant.

David Lee:
(Sun Hung Kai) I do not think that the number of Housing Managers would have any effect on maintenance because they do not possess the expertise/knowledge in repair.

Tax relief may not be very useful because most buildings in Hong Kong are residential and owner-occupied, and these owners are not required to pay property tax and this will then be invalid. The Government will be faced with a lot of opposition if we receive grants to preserve buildings. Most people are more concerned with other things like medical allowance.

Maybe we should look at how new buildings are built and BOO should exercise stringent control over new buildings in order to improve the standard of construction, e.g. banning the use of materials with a short life cycle.

There is a need of a central research organisation to determine the standard of materials in order that authorised persons and contractors are aware of the details of the materials to be used. After all, the variety of materials available and used in Hong Kong is limited. Maybe

the HKIS or RICS should exert some pressure on the Government to set up such a research organisation.

Chairman: Should we also consider compulsory structural or condition survey prior to conveyance?

Wong Bay:
(Housing Dept.) I would agree with compulsory survey and this can be similar to the survey of old cars. There are indeed problems with education of the public. Developers may be able to assist in maintenance by some means of after-sales service, e.g. to undertake maintenance for 10 years. I do not agree with David Lee's comments that there are limited variety of building materials. I consider that the HKIS/RICS could do some work on maintenance. The inadequate number of maintenance professional is not the problem. The real problem is whether the owner is aware of the importance of maintenance.

Chairman: Would you agree that we should stress on long-term education and prepare for maintenance courses in the academic institutes?

Ray Bates:
(Housing Dept.) There are at present 176 Building Surveyors in Hong Kong and only 40 of them are involved in maintenance. Architects and other professionals are also involved. I consider that Building Surveyors should have the responsibility to provide for guidance in this aspect.

The effect of exhibition appears to be limited. I would suggest that simple advisory leaflets should be produced touching on problems like spalled concrete, pipe leakage, effect of salt water problem, etc. as owners/occupiers are more concerned with these problems.

David Lawrence:
(Arch SD) HKIS/RICS may prepare publications similar to CIOB's maintenance manuals and prepare video or slides showing the Building Surveyors' involvement in maintenance for showing on TV, or presented to those who wish to borrow for reference.

Samson Wong:
(Standard Chartered Bank) The MTRC has a handbook of feedback system which record things like design faults, failure of materials, different types of defects and means of long and short-term repair. This handbook is designed for handing over to Architect for design and maintenance of buildings and will be very useful if it is available for circulation.

Robin Howes:
(BOO) I agree with David Lee that if we improve the standard of construction, we should have less maintenance problems.

Because of the limit of time, the Chairman closed the forum at 8 pm by summarising the different views and thanking the enthusiastic participation of fellow members.

The Building Surveying Exhibition

The Building Surveying Exhibition jointly organised by the BS Divisions of the HKIS and the RICS local branch had the aim of reminding the public the importance of building maintenance and management. According to one of the organising members, Mr. Eddie Lee, the main purpose of this publicity campaign was to educate building owners that it is cheaper in the long run to carry out maintenance work regularly.

The exhibition was held in New World Centre from 14th to 19th March, 1987. The first day fell on a sunny Saturday and the opening was officiated by the Secretary for Lands and Works, Mr. Graham Barnes. A sizeable crowd of reporters were attracted to the ceremony by the Government high-flyer and the event was widely covered by television news bulletin and many major newspaper in the territory.

The Secretary said during the opening ceremony that many parts of Hong Kong are fast reaching their maximum capacity for sites and building development and there is a need to maintain and improve the conditions of the old stock. "This is the stage we have reached in Hong Kong, and we have a dire need for professional Building Surveyors to take on the work", he said. He further added that it is essential that building owners do invest in both the skills and the work needed to keep their properties in good condition.

Mr. Barnes also told reporters that the Government realises that there is a need to publicise the message on building maintenance and is considering the set up of a consultative committee to perform this task. Proper maintenance of buildings might even become a statutory requirement in the not too distant future. However, a recent Government proposal requiring owners of properties completed ten years ago or more to produce "Certificate of Good Repairs" periodically has been met with strong opposition from the public. About 85% of property owners surveyed agreed that maintenance is important but are unwilling to finance the work needed. The Government is reviewing the situation and further details on this possible new piece of legislation has yet to be worked out.

During the exhibition, and for the first time running, the public was given the chance to actually try out some of the many specialist equipment used by Building Surveyors. The tools were on display throughout the exhibition and the polytechnic students who manned this corner did a very good job in demonstrating the uses of the various equipment to visitors. Apart from the usual display boards, audio-visual presentation was also employed. All in all the exhibition succeeded in its publicity and promotion functions, and was well received by the public. We hope that we can have an even bigger success in August when the all-divisions exhibition is held in the more convenient locations of the Ocean Terminal and the Landmark.



The Chairman of the RICS HK Branch, Bob Pope, shows Mr. Barnes round the various exhibits on display.

The Annual Dragon Boat Race

It is almost an annual event now for the Branch to enter the dragon boat race in Sai Kung. This year saw the fourth attempt of us trying to win the trophy and during the four weekends running up to the race practices were arranged and a highly competent and notably patient coach was employed. Unfortunately the wet month we had did not help and some practices were either participated by just a handful of exceptionally enthusiastic guys or had to be called off altogether due to the inclement weather.

Luckily the weather got miles better on the race day and members gathered well on time on the Sunday morning. Some in fact arrived as early as eight while the race was actually due to commence at 9:30. Spirit was high and the excitement gradually built up as every minute ticked away. Every member was distributed a T-shirt specially designed for the occasion. The new crowned-lion logo was printed on the front while a big HKIS insignia was on the back. Some joked that the latter resembled one of the many characters in Mahjong game and that couldn't be bad as it might bring good fortune to the team. Anyway, rumour has it that a new HKIS logo is on the way as a result of the recent design competition and we hope that we can have that on next year's T-shirt.

The time finally came for the 22 eagerly waiting chaps to get into the boat. The timber boat was somewhat different from the fibre-glass one used for practice but as every participant was getting so excited (nervous perhaps) it was doubtful if any of them noticed it. Putting the oars into the water got us moving towards the starting point. But alas, someone discovered a hole on the bottom! Water was flooding in through the 2-inch opening and the guys just got panic. The poor fellow sitting near the hole had to literally put his foot on it to save the boat from sinking. It looked as if we could never make it to the starting point and the race due to start in a few minutes' time would go ahead leaving us behind.

Fortunately our coach (who was also our helmsman) remained calm and had quickly got help from the rescue boat nearby. We received a block of expanded polystyrene and as we building surveyors are masters of leakage repairs the problem was eventually solved.

The siren was sounded. All members struggled to put their oars into and out of the water lightning fast as if their lives depended on it. The race went ahead very quickly indeed. We did not win, but we did not lose out by any significant margin either. The other five teams just arrived at the finishing point a few seconds earlier than we did.

Perhaps one thing worth mentioning is the lack of spiritual boost from senior members of the Branch. In fact none of them turned up for the occasion. Their support will be invaluable and let's hope that they do come in future. We are confident that our performance will improve and that the enjoyable event will be even more so in the years to come.



The RICS/HKIS Team which took part in the 1987 Dragon Boat Race in Sai Kung.

Headlam's Visit

The President of the RICS BS Division, Mr. Robert Headlam arrived in the territory on 4th June, 1987 for a short visit. He spent the first morning of his stay with the Housing Department and then he received a hearty welcome at the Architectural Services Department, Maintenance Branch (ASM) after lunch. He was met by the Deputy Director, Mr. Paul Corser and the rest of the afternoon was spent with a schedule masterminded by the Chief Maintenance Surveyor, Mr. David Lawrence.

The President met most of the RICS members in ASM and was given a very detailed description of the Branch's involvement in property services. A short slide show followed and after a brief chat with members, the President was taken to visit two interesting buildings that ASM look after.

Mr. Headlam first arrived at the French Mission Building in Central where the former Victoria District Courts were being converted into a conference centre and offices for the Information Services Department. The President was apparently bemused as he stepped into the conference hall where he found himself amidst the tall bamboo scaffolding. The next stop was the new Macau Ferry Terminal. The President showed great interest in the many facets of the complex such as structural form, cladding material, internal layout, etc. The visiting group also had a splendid view across the harbour and the President was even able to identify some of the outlying islands.



Mr. Headlam, flanked by David Lawrence and Bill Greaves, visits the French Mission Building.

The evening was a big occasion. Almost eighty members turned up for the CPD talk by Mr. Headlam in the delightful Ladies' Recreation Club, followed by a sumptuous buffet dinner. Prior to the talk, the President presented the first-ever Nicholas Goodwin Prize to Daniel Ho of ASM for the best Critical Analysis submitted to the BS division in December, 1986. We sincerely hope that our budding surveyors will follow the steps of Daniel by collecting more awards in future.

The talk by the President was illuminating and provided fruits for thoughts for every member. The main points are summarised as follows:—

- (i) Opportunities are still abound for BS. The projected increase in membership is from the present 7,000 to 10,000 in 1990 and is a number that the market is believed to be able to accommodate.
- (ii) The RICS is effective in its publicity campaign and is not afraid to say things palatable. Copies of the Institution's publicity publication have been sent to major business concerns and public establishments. The target now is to educate fourteen- to sixteen-year old six-former about the Surveying profession and boys and girls are encouraged to consider joining vocational courses leading to RICS membership.
- (iii) A competent BS should not only possess sound technical skills and knowledge on management technique is equally important. "BS won't survive without management skills!"
- (iv) A broad knowledge on market trend, financial issues, current legislation, etc., is vital to the BS. More and more clients are looking for multi-disciplinary services from a single professional practice and BS must acquire the breadth of knowledge needed and be versatile.
- (v) The essence of the new TPC scheme is the "Practical Approach". Face-to-face interviews will be conducted in the six UK Centres and the only overseas centre is in Hong Kong. Candidates are expected to demonstrate their capacity on a professional approach, practical rather than theoretical. More details will be announced by the incoming BS President who is coming to HK later in the year.

Finally, Mr. Headlam concluded his speech by quoting President Reagan in saying:

"As far as Building Surveying is concerned, you ain't seen nothing yet".

Thanks Mr. Headlam. We hope that with the steady advancement of the profession it won't be long that we do see something.



Mr. Headlam presents his talk in the Ladies' Recreation Club.

New Trends of Building Control in the UK

(A summary of the talk presented by Mr. J.J. Cunningham, President of the IAAS during his visit to HK in June, 1986).

The United Kingdom has experienced significant changes in the administration of Building control over the past six months. These changes stem from a Minister's speech in December of 1979 backed up in February 1981 with a Command Paper. The then Secretary of State set out four criteria: —

- (i) Minimum Government interference
- (ii) Simplicity of operation
- (iii) Maximum self regulation
- (iv) to be totally self-financing

ADMINISTRATIVE

For the ordinary individual there are now 5 routes for compliance with the administrative procedures for obtaining Building Regulation approval:—

- (1) Installation of gas water heaters is simply dealt with by ensuring that the local gas authority or their contractor carries out the work, in which case the local authority is not involved.
- (2) Injection of cavity insulation — This work requires a simple notice to be submitted to the local authority and it is not necessary to pay any fee, nor is it essential for the local authority to inspect the work.
- (3) The deposit of two complete plans indicating the work which is then given a Building Regulation approval notice — This has been the normal route for all Building Regulation applications in the United Kingdom outside the inner London area. Fees are charged with the submission of the plans and also when work starts and the first inspection has been carried out. The ratio of fees is 1:3. It is necessary for the building owner to notify the local authority at various stages of construction. e.g. foundations, damp-proof course, drainage, completion.

A variation introduced by the Act enables the building owner to submit a certificate signed by an 'Approved Person' who certifies that his particular work complies with the Regulations, in which case the local authority must accept the certificate. The two areas where such an arrangement is possible are structural calculations where the Approved Person must be either a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers or the Institute of Structural Engineers, and the calculations in respect of thermal insulation where a Member or Associate of any one of 9 professional bodies is acceptable. For structural calculations the Approved Person must be independent of the development unless it is for a building of under four storeys, or if a public building with a span of less than 9 metres. There are also requirements as to insurance.

- (4) A Building Notice — This is a new provision within the United Kingdom whereby the builder can submit a Building Notice to the local authority. Such notice would not be accompanied by plans other than a block plan to indicate the position of any proposed building. The local authority is entitled to 48 hours notice and can as work progresses require further information which may include plans or structural calculations. This procedure cannot be used where there is a requirement in the Regulations relating to means of escape in case of fire for certain designated buildings such as shops and offices. The same total of fees as in (3) above would then be charged.
- (5) The privatized route whereby an 'Approved Inspector' undertakes to carry out the function of building control instead of the local authority — He jointly submits with the builder an Initial Notice which may be accompanied by a "plans certificate" which in effect states that he has checked all the plans and these plans comply with the Building Regulations. The local authority must check the documentation for its accuracy but otherwise must accept that this work is then to be dealt with by a private professional.

Assuming that work proceeds in the normal manner, the Approved Inspector will then issue a Final Certificate notifying the local authority that the work has been carried out under his supervision.

PUBLIC BODIES

Local authorities operating either within or without their area will be able to operate in very much the same manner as the Approved Inspector except that it will not be necessary to have the insurance cover.

The Crown is to remain exempt from the procedural arrangements for any building work but will be required to comply with the technical requirements.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The previous Building Regulations were a mixture of mandatory and functional requirements which were backed up by deemed to satisfy clauses and Codes of Practice. There were complaints that they were inhibiting and caused delays because of the need for relaxations. They were far too legalistic causing problems of interpretation which in many ways was understandable because the Regulations were a Statutory Instrument, in other words, part of the law. The Building Act has enabled sweeping changes which means that with the exception of three, all the Regulations are written in functional terms with a heavy splattering of words such as 'reasonable', 'satisfactory' and 'adequate'. These Regulations are then backed up by Approved Documents. The Documents at present can only be written by the Secretary of State but in the fullness of time he has indicated he will approve other persons/bodies' documents and has identified the British Standards Institute and the British Board of Agreement as likely candidates, and further, that at a later date he will allow those bodies to approve the documents of others. The status of these documents is similar to our Highways Code inasmuch as they are not the law but compliance or non-compliance with them will tend to prove that compliance has been achieved with the Building Regulations. It is very clearly stated that these documents will certainly not be the only way to achieve compliance. The three exceptions which have been written in a mandatory form relate to means of escape in case of fire, thermal insulation and access for the disabled and there are specific reasons for each of these exceptions.

There are major problems with the Government's requirements for insurance cover which at present amounts to 10 years no fault warranty and 15 years third party negligence cover. However, the insurance companies have so far been adamant that no such cover could be given and have in turn suggested a yearly professional indemnity cover. The Approved Inspector has to be independent of the development except when dealing with minor works such as alterations or extensions to two-storey houses and the provision of services and fittings to any building.

Approval comes from either

- (a) The Secretary of State for the Environment in the case of firms or companies such as the National House Building Council, and
- (b) Any one of 8 professional bodies which will approve individuals only. These bodies are The Incorporated Association of Architects and Surveyors, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, Royal Institute of British Architects, the Institution of Civil Engineers, the Institute of Structural Engineers, The Chartered Institute of Builders, the Faculty of Architects and Surveyors, and the Institution of Building Control Officers.

The criteria which each of the bodies has submitted to the Department of the Environment has varied somewhat but it is believed that the DoE will accept the submission put forward by the IAAS, RICS & CIOB as the standard which will allow for five-yearly renewals of licence and two grades of Approved Inspectors. Grade A will deal with all types of buildings whereas a Grade B Inspector will be restricted to low rise housing etc. To become a Grade A Inspector will require a minimum of 10 years post qualification relevant experience which need not necessarily be within Building Control itself, and for a Grade B Inspector then a 5 year post qualification relevant experience requirement would operate.

In addition there have been considerable changes in the scope of the Regulations. The local authority has now lost power to control under the Regulations such items as heights of habitable rooms, open space in front of windows of habitable rooms, garages and conservatories providing they are under 30 metres squared, but by an odd quirk the garden shed which is within 1 metre of the boundary now has to comply with Building Regulations.