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BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT LOCAL BUILDING SURVEYORS' ASSOCIATION

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21 October 2005

Private and Confidential

Hon. LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP
Chairman of the LegCo Panel
on Planning, Lands and Works

Conversion of two (AD) posts in BD from single-discipline to bi-discipline posts

Dear Hon. LAU Wong-fat,

On behalf of all our members, I hereby raise the strongest objection to the proposed conversion of two Assistant Director (AD) posts in the Existing Buildings Divisions of Buildings Department (BD) from single-discipline (to be filled by a Government Building Surveyor¹ (GBS)) to bi-discipline (to be filled by either a GBS or a Government Structural Engineer (GSE)); and request you and other Honourable LegCo Members of this panel to reject the proposal because of public interest.

The proposal to open up these two AD posts to GSE was unjustified and not in the public interest because of the following reasons:

- (1) There is no justification on how a Structural Engineer (SE) grade officer could have the knowledge and expertise of a professional Building Surveyor/Architect. SEs have not gone through professional training nor assigned to handle matters on development potential (e.g. plot ratio, site coverage and site classification), means of escape in case of fire, fire resisting compartmentation, public health and hygiene (e.g. lighting and ventilation, drainage system), and design for persons with a disability under the Buildings Ordinance. They are not required to consider matters relating to town planning and lease issues. Although individual may encounter such matters in the career path, his/her achievement outside his expertise has not been tested nor recognized by the professional institutes. Neither HKIA nor HKIS has been consulted in this respect.
- (2). There is no saving or improvement in efficiency to have these posts to be bi-discipline. Throughout the study and reviews within the BD and by the consultant commissioned

¹ The GBS is promoted from a Building Surveyor (BS) rank office who should be a professional building surveyor or architect and a member of the Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) or Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (HKIS).

by the Efficiency Unit (EU), no one has justified what is the public benefit to have the posts to be bi-discipline. There are sufficient candidates from our Chief Building Surveyors. If management skill were so important that could override the professional qualification, why the posts would not open to those experienced professionals in similar government departments such as Housing Department and Architectural Services Department? It appears that the consultant, PricewaterhouseCooper, tried to fit a CSE's experiences into the job competencies and then come up with some unjustified criteria, without knowing the work natures of the SEs in BD.

- (3). The propose opening up will dilute/downgrade the professionalism of BD in the control of existing buildings in HK. BS and SE are two different experts in BD and their expertise areas in BD remain separated. They would consult each other on matters under the other's expertise when handling building safety and health matters. GBS is the highest BS grade officers in BD as our Deputy Director is a bi-disciplinary post. If these two AD posts become bi-disciplinary posts, BD's top management has to rely on the Chief professional officers from the two different disciplines to offer expert advice when considering policies for existing buildings, which means a downgrade of the professional expertise to the Chief level.

Attached are our letters on the same issue addressed to the Director of Buildings and the Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning & Lands (Planning & Lands) for your reference. We have listed out our comments on the review and conflicts in the reports in detail in these letters. We standby to brief the Panel Members at your convenience.

As the issue will have effects on the recognition of the professional institutes, I also recommend the Panel Members to hear the views from HKIS and HKIA.

Your Sincerely,

(YUEN Hung-nok, Davy)

Chairman, Buildings Department Local Building Surveyor Association

c.c. Members of the LegCo Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

Hon. Patrick LAU, (Fax: 21479155)

HKIS

HKIA



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Private and Confidential

18 October 2005

Permanent Secretary for Housing,
Planning & Lands (Planning & Lands)
Murray Building, Garden Road, H.K.
Attn: Mrs. Rita LAU, JP (Fax: 2524 1298)

Dear

PricewaterhouseCoopers' report on Review of Opening-up of AD Posts in BD

We write to beg you to reject the report prepared by PricewaterhouseCooper (PwC) on the review of opening-up of AD posts in BD. We were given to understand that PwC's study was limited by the scope; and he offered no comment on the effects or disturbance resulted by the opening-up of the AD posts in BD.

Our detail comments on PwC's report, pointing out the mistakes and conflicts are given in Annex A. PwC did not address the issues raised in our previous letter to you on 4 January 2005, nor clarify which should be the appropriate professional for the job. During the meeting on 6 October, PwC and representatives from the Efficiency Unit told us that they were not appointed to consider any improvement in efficiency nor adverse effects that may result by the opening-up of the professional posts. Thus the proposed opening-up will only dilute the professional expertise of BD; and there is no public interest nor benefit to have the AD/EB posts bi-discipline.

We standby to brief you at your convenience.

Your Sincerely

(Davy H.N. Yuen)
Chairman, BDLBSA

c.c. The Hon. Patrick LAU, SBS, JP (Fax: 2147 9155)
DS(PL)2, HPLB (Attn: Miss Olivia NIP, Fax: 2899 2916)
DB – Mr. Marco WU
DD – Mr. HW Cheung
AD/Support – Mr. CK AU

Consultancy Report on the Review of Opening up of Assistant Director (AD) Posts in Buildings Department (BD)– by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC) issued on 9 Aug 2005

Comments on the Report by BD Local Building Surveyors Association (BSA)

1. Overall of the report

- a. There is no justification to conduct such a consultancy to further comment on a grade management problem. We noted that the Review Group was headed by our DD with 2 AD of this Department and 1 AD from EU. It is a duplication of effort to conduct another study by PwC.
- b. PwC pointed out in page 13 that the recommendations are comments of a so-called “Expert Panel” only. We cannot see any evidence that PwC has conducted any critical assessment and given independent views as required by EU. The report only provides individual views of 7 persons.
- c. It is illogical to seek views of a few people (which some are selected randomly) who are not familiar with BD to help the Administration to determine a staffing problem.
- d. PwC made a fundamental mistake of not to assess the competency of CBS and CSE grade officers in general.
- e. The PwC Report is too superficial and a lot of errors have been noted (comments below refer). The conclusion section is too brief without justifications.
- f. The consultant’s methodology to rely heavily on the personal opinions of the members of the so-called “Expert Panel” is not acceptable (comments on section B below refers). From 1st para. in page 12, we note that the operation of the “Expert Panel” is similar to a voting exercise and PwC has the final decisive vote.
- g. The presentation of the report is completely non-professional. There is no standard format on numbering of paragraphs and sub-paragraphs. In some sections, there is no numbering for individual paragraph whereas the numbering for other Sections are non-standard. Judging from this, we may have an impression that PwC has not handled this consultancy seriously and professionally. Even the Consultancy Steering Committee might have taken similar attitude.

2. Section A, Background

- a. The report cannot give independent views as PwC is appointed by Efficiency Unit, which has carried out the original O & M report in 1998 and was represented in the Review Group in 2004.
- b. Obviously PwC was paid by BD or the Government and its views and conclusions only echo DB’s personal views. Management consultants tend to focus on management skill and downgrade professional qualification and technical capability.
- c. PwC has been misled in that :

- i According to the last para. in page 1, the Consultant mentioned that the “Management” came up with some views on the AD/EB1, AD/EB2 and AD/Sup posts. In fact, these views were only DB’s opinion.
- ii At our meeting with Mrs. Rita Lau, PSHLP, we were informed that BDSEA also objected to DB’s views mentioned in item (c.i) above. The 1st para. in page 2 is therefore incorrect.

3. Section B, Methodology & Approach

- a. Item (b) of page 3 mentioned that it was a combined effort of HR professionals and an Expert Panel to identify competency requirements of the posts and determining if BS or SE grade officers can fulfill those requirements. However, there is no mention of who are these HR professionals and on what standard they based upon.
- b. The approach of relying on an expert panel is not acceptable and would set a bad precedent as along this thinking, will BA or the Administration set up such panel to deal with other grade management problems and any other controversial matters?
- c. It is too risky and perfunctory to rely on an Expert Panel to deal with this matter. In addition, the composition of this panel has inherent deficiencies (*the next two bullet points refer*) and this panel cannot provide valuable comments on this issue.
- d. The need for an overseas member in the Expert Panel is not founded and is a waste of money. It is too vague to simply mention this member has over 20 years of experience in various aspect of the building industry. Please note that building control system/matters is only part of the building industry not to mention the great social and cultural difference between UK and HK building control systems.
- e. The views of the three randomly selected AP/RSE are only individual views. They are not representing the professional institutes and cannot be taken seriously.
- f. Item (c) in page 3 and para. 2 in page 4 should be clarified. Apart from the Review Group study (submitted in May 2004), there is another report from DB in November 2004.
- g. Para. 6 is confusing in that the Expert Panel determined the suitability of the posts to be filled by BS/SE grades and the chairmanship of FSC was decided by “WE” (4th line of this para.) – “we” means PwC and the Expert Panel? Has every member of the Expert Panel and PwC attended any FSC meeting? Without any in-depth knowledge of the operation and proceedings of FSC meetings, on what basis can PwC and the Expert Panel offer any sound and valid comment?

4. Section C, Job Analysis

- a. It appears that PwC has deliberately omitted the following important information on the job duties and responsibilities:
 - i Both AD/EB1 and AD/EB2 have to deal with complicated and complex cases, which require the exercise of sound professional judgement.

- ii PwC should highlight in items (a) and (b) in page 6 that AD/Sup's involvement in matters concerning design and planning, health, environmental and fire safety standards to in line with the job details in page 18.
- b. AD/EB2 is solely responsible to formulate policies and strategies for fire safety. The phrase "formulating the technological basis for building and fire safety standards" in page 6 is misleading and totally unacceptable.
- c. PwC has over-emphasized the AD's managerial and administrative role. The term "management" judgement in major and complex operational issues page 8 is not sensible and redundant.
- d. PwC has overlooked the key role of these ADs as **expert advisors** to DD and DB as DD is a bi-discipline post whereas DB may be an Administrative Officer (i.e. a layman on building matters).

5. Section D, Job Competence Requirements

- a. PwC has not taken into account the importance of the profound professional knowledge in discharging the duties of AD/EB1, AD/EB2 and AD/Sup. Good job knowledge and analytical thinking and decision making rely heavily on the possession of relevant professional competence.
- b. Replacing the term "professional competency" with "Job knowledge competency" in the 1st para. of page 11 is misleading. These ADs need to exercise their in-depth professional knowledge on building design, health and fire safety to discharge their duties. Only general knowledge on structural matters will be required.
- c. We do not agree that the nine competencies have equally importance to the performance of the three AD posts.
- d. It is incorrect to say that both BS and SE grades have the same opportunities to develop their competencies in Competency (2) to analyzing issues from professional perspective. Professional knowledge and competency can only be developed through exposure and guidance from experienced supervisors of the same professional background.
- e. We cannot see any reason that the Expert Panel's view on the job knowledge competency can be regarded as the "bible". Were they informed that AD/EB2 is solely responsible to formulate policies and strategies for fire safety. It makes no sense to link up the construction professional qualification as a requirement for the AD posts.
- f. PwC should explain what is the meaning of "general professional knowledge"? Can professional knowledge be classified as "general", "specialized", "intermediate level", "higher level", etc.?
- g. It is illogical to mention "industry experience". Our ADs, even DD joined the civil services after their graduation and obtained their professional qualifications through Government's training scheme. Definitely, they only have BD experience and all lack of industry experience.
- h. PwC did not provide justification why the Chairman of the FSC should not be a GBS.

- i. In the absence of any knowledge on the operation and proceeding of FSC meeting, how can the Expert Panel come to a conclusion that specialist knowledge is not required. PwC's attention should be drawn to the fact that the statutory requirements on fire safety under the Buildings Ordinance are based on a performance approach. Without in-depth knowledge of the prescriptive requirements in the fire safety codes issued by the Buildings Department, the Chairman cannot easily handle cases relying on fire engineering approach to demonstrate achieving equivalent performance as the prescriptive standards.
- j. It is interesting to note that in the 1st para. of page 12 that 3 members considered experience in dealing with existing buildings was not essential whereas three other members believed that two years of such experience is desirable. Where is the 7th member? On what basis PwC came to a view that 2 years of such experience is preferred but not mandatory?
- k. We cannot see any justification that the Expert Panel and PwC can determine the years of services in BD and experience in dealing with existing buildings required for these AD posts. Do they aware that "professional" level is the basic rank of BS/SE grade. The job competency of a basic professional officer is definitely inferior to a senior professional officer who is also inferior to a chief professional officer.
- l. Again in page 18, PwC has omitted the core competency of AD/Sup on matters concerning design and planning, health, environmental and fire safety standards as given in the job details. Item (a) in page 12 should be revised accordingly.

6. Section E, Conclusion

- a. The views of the Expert Panel are totally unfound as they were based on misleading information; and they should be regarded as individual views only.
- b. PwC has mixed up the professional qualification of the BS and SE grade officers, in para.3 of page 13. The professional qualifications of BS and SE are different and are not mutually recognized.
- c. We do not understand how one can accept this report. The conclusion that "*With the recent deployment of SE grade officers to the Support Division to handle legislative and litigation work, SE grade officers can potentially gain the necessary experience.*" ... so that CSEs can be considered for the post of AD/Sup after three years, is ridiculous. e.g. **I don't know how to swim; and I can't have that skill by sending my son to a swimming class!** The consultant is simply trying to do what we have done in mathematics homework in those school days, i.e. get the model answer and "solve" the problem by reverse engineering. We did, however, manage to make sure that the arguments are valid.



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Private and Confidential

9 September 2005

Director of Buildings,
18/F., Pioneer Centre,
750 Nathan Road, Kowloon.
(Fax: 2840 0451)

Dear

PricewaterhouseCoopers' report on Review of Opening-up of AD Posts in BD

Members of our Association are so annoyed by PricewaterhouseCoopers' report on Review of Opening-up of Assistant Director Posts in the Buildings Department. The report is simply a recap of your views on the Review Group's Report on the issue without any justification.

First of all, PricewaterhouseCoopers never interview any of our members. They did not address the reasons of our objections on the Review Group's Report and on your views. They did not provide detail on who were in their Expert Panel, yet they tried to generalize their experiences and professional backgrounds that cannot be mixed. I must reiterate that professionals in the building industry are different experts in their own fields and their qualifications are not mutually inclusive.

PricewaterhouseCoopers could not justify their views by quoting a similar example in other professional departments in Hong Kong nor in any developed country. According to the "Job Knowledge competency" defined by their Panel, the "general professional knowledge" that consists of "general professional knowledge on building and structural design, building technology, building control, land use control, land and property laws, building health and safety" can only be fulfilled by qualified Building Surveyors and qualified Architects, but not Structural Engineers (not to mention other qualified engineers in the building industry).

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We do not understand why the Government Building Surveyor posts can be open-up ONLY to structural engineers in BD. If opening-up of a professional grade post based on management skill and working experience is really of such an advantage that could override the professional qualification, we see no reason why the Government Structural Engineer post cannot be opened to other candidates from the bureau or from other relevant departments.

Because the promotion exercise to fill the vacant GBS post has been dragged on for more than 3 years, we demand an equal treatment on the coming GSE vacancy. It can only be fair if all AD posts in BD are frozen until the opening-up of AD posts is settled.

We wish to stress that our objection on the issue is mainly based on the reason that such opening-up of professional posts would jeopardize public health and safety protected by the Buildings Ordinance. As a professional, we owe the public a duty of care. Should the Management insist on the wrong doings, we shall bring the issue to the media and the public.

Your Sincerely

(Davy H.N. Yuen)
Chairman, BDLBSA

c.c. Hon. Patrick LAU, (*Fax: 21479155*)
PSPL (Attn : Ms Rita LAU, *Fax 25241298*)
DS(PL)2, HPLB (Attn: Olivia NIP, *Fax 2899 2916*)



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Private and Confidential

4 January 2005

Permanent Secretary for Housing,
Planning & Lands (Planning & Lands)
Murray Building, Garden Road, H.K.
Attn: Mrs. Rita LAU (*Fax: 2524 1298*)

Dear Mrs. LAU

DB's View on Opening up of AD posts in BD

We are very annoyed by the views of the Director of Building (DB) on opening up of Assistant Director (AD) posts in his report submitted to you in November 2004. We have pointed out the mistakes in the review report [prepared by a Review Group chaired by the Deputy Director of Buildings (DD)] submitted to DB on 25 June 2004, a copy of which is attached for your reference. We now submit our **disagreement** on DB's views as follows:

(a) Review on the trial set up of Existing Buildings Divisions (EBD) should be conducted before considering the need to review AD posts.

The timing for the review on opening up of AD posts is wrong. A review on the trial set up of the re-organization of BD in 2001 should be conducted in the first place. The Management Services Agency's recommendation to open up the professional posts has been shelved and spent of effect, after our ex-DB decided not to follow such recommendation in the re-organization of BD in 2000. It is therefore inappropriate to revisit the issue without having a review of the current set up of the EBD first.

(b) DB has not substantiated his observation that the existing set up in EBD proves that SE grade officers are equally competent as BS grade officers in performing the core business of EBD.

In fact, there are ample incidents that even the senior SE grade officers could not handle their routine duties in EBD and required formal and informal assistances from BS grade officers; e.g. investigation of drainage system during SARS, handling unauthorized building works (UBW) in Wang Tau Hum Village, answering enquiry in a YTM District Council meeting, and seeking BS advice on enforcement actions.

Furthermore, the professional expertise of SE grade officers in discharging BS's duties could easily be challenged in court because they are not the right professionals. It is misleading to allege that SE grade officers have been engaged in the control of existing buildings therefore they are competent, because the quality of their service has never been assessed.

(c) The crux of the issue is to examine the core competence of Chief Structural Engineers (CSEs), which has not been included in DB's report.

DB has failed to provide any justification that CSEs in general acquired the required professional knowledge and expertise to enable them to perform the job contents of AD posts in EBD. DB's views in paragraph 8(a) and the fourth bullet point of Appendix VII of his report are regarded as blatant disrespect of the professionalism of qualified architects and qualified building surveyors as he opined that the two CSEs (there are 7 CSEs in DB) after working in EBD for 3 years have possessed "**good professional knowledge and experience(?)**" in building design and maintenance to enable them to be considered as suitable candidates to take up the AD posts in EBD. We are not convinced that good professional knowledge can be acquired in this manner; and we doubt their experience in building design could be gained in this way.

The development of the expertise of a professional relies on, among other things, the guidance from his supervisors from the same discipline. For our Chief Building Surveyors (CBSs), they have nearly 30 years of professional experience on building control from basic professional to chief professional levels. They have received invaluable guidance from other qualified and experienced architects and building surveyors. On the other hand, we cannot see any such kind of guidance being provided to these CSEs during their career paths in BD. These CSEs have very limited exposure and experience on building design and control and, even worse, are completely lack of suitable professional guidance on those aspects. Our CBSs have acquired good professional knowledge and expertise on building design and maintenance through their works in various Divisions of BD, and not limited to EBD.

We also do not agree with DB that **sound** knowledge of building design and maintenance are the **only** core competence for ADs in EBDs. Professional knowledge and expertise on fire safety, drainage system, building control system and building law are equally important for these ADs to discharge their duties independently and competently. We do believe that the limited exposure in EBD during the past 3 years cannot turn a CSE to be equally competent as a CBS.

Both the Review Group's Report and DB's view indicate that AD/EB1 and AD/EB2 should possess good professional knowledge and experience in building design in order to ensure the safety and hygiene of existing buildings. How can these CSEs that has been assigned to EBD since 2001 (only 2 of them up to now) have sufficient

knowledge and experience in building design such as development potential, means of escape, lighting and ventilation, drainage and building services, planning and lands issues, etc., in order for them to offer professional and expert advices to DB?

Without prejudice to our forgoing comments, it seems that DB has not been aware that, among our CSEs, some CSEs are completely lack of exposure to EBD. It is unreasonable to imply all CSEs in BD have exposure and experience in EBD's work and acquired limited knowledge on building design and maintenance. Would the opening up be unfair to those CSEs who have not been assigned to EBD for trial?

(d) DB has been misled by the Review Group's Report.

We has pointed out to DB that the Review Group's Report is biased because the methodology was "to cast the widest net for choice of candidates" yet it limited its consideration only to the two professional grades in BD. We have to reiterate that BS and SE are two different professionals and their qualifications are not inter-changeable. If management skill is of overwhelming importance to outweigh the professional qualification in the job competence, we wonder why only the BS grade posts are open to the SE in BD? We note that open directorate post has not been adopted in LandsD, ArchSD and other Works Departments. We also recalled that a temporary acting of a GSE post by a GBS some 10 years ago had led to a strong objection from the SE grade officers, before the early retirement of our first Director of Buildings.

We have doubt on the impartiality of the review conducted by the Review Group. Please refer to our letter dated 25 June 2004 to the DB. We consider DB's views even more biased than the Review Group's recommendations.

(e) The Chairman of the Fire Safety Committee (FSC) should be a BS grade officer.

DB considered that there is no cogent and compelling need to confine the chairmanship of the FSC to BS grade officer because the FSC is a multi-discipline committee. In his view, there was no technical analysis on the function FSC and the input of the chairman in the meeting. It simply concluded that the role of the chairman is to act as a facilitator. Obviously, DB did not know too much about fire engineering and have no knowledge in the operation and the work of the committee. It was simply based on a predetermined objective with tailor-made "findings" of the Review Group to suit his favoritism.

With the advance of building technology, some magnificent and complicated projects such as Chek Lap Kwok Airport, Hong Kong Disneyland, West Rail, and Mass Transit Railway of which strict compliance of our various prescriptive fire safety codes would hinder the flexibility of design. The FSC scrutinizes "performance-based fire safety engineering proposals" submitted by Authorized Persons responsible for these special projects.

Fire safety engineering is based on “total fire safety concept”. It consisted of three elements:-

- (i) Passive fire protection - fire resisting walls/doors, compartmentation, fire exits, means of access for firefighting and rescue, etc;
- (ii) Active fire protection - sprinklers, fire fighting equipment, etc; and
- (iii) Fire safety management - management control in case of fire.

The FSC comprises multi-discipline members because each member is an expert in one or more of the above fields. Under the “total fire safety concept”, it will allow a design to improve one of the above elements to compensate the deficiency of the other elements. For example, a large shopping atrium (more fire load) will need smoke extraction system to achieve the equivalent safety standard. The role of the chairman of the FSC is to judge and maintain this balance. This is a highly demanding job that not only required good experience in project management, expertise in fire engineering as well as on building design concept. That is why all FSC cases are prepared under the supervision of an AP. It is appalling that DB has made a simple conclusion by just observing the structure of the committee.

We have to emphasize that fire safety engineering courses are only available in universities in recent years and I doubt how many CSEs in BD have taken them? Accepting DB’s view will seriously impair BD's professional service to the public. We are worried that the fire safety standard of the West Kowloon development (because of its complexity will most likely employ fire safety engineering design) may be left at the mercy of a layman!

DB has provided a misleading figure that 19% of case involving structural plans in page 2 of Appendix VIII of his report. We must clarify that the stability of structural members in a fire safety proposal is only a very minor consideration. The determination of the fire resisting period of the structural members, the fire load of the compartment, the fire size and critical temperature of the structural members are non-structural matters. It is very disappointed that the DB provided misleading information to support his unreasonable recommendation.

We note that the Review Group has made a fair comment in para. 5.17 of their report that the Chairman of FSC should have professional knowledge on general building design especially in fire safety aspects. Only an experienced BS grade officer can perform the duty of the Chairman of FSC. We do not understand why there is a drastic change of view in Appendix VIII of DB’s report (DB has admitted that “Management views” in the Appendices of his report are basically DD’s and his views).

We strongly recommend the DB to further strengthen his continuous professional developments on fire safety engineering by attending courses organized by BD or universities.

(f) No SE grade officer should be redeployed to Legal Section.

We strongly object the redeployment of SE grade officers to Legal Section. A professional officer must first have the appropriate qualification for the post, and his/her on job training should be a continuous professional development. It is a wrong use of human resource (as contrast to DB's view) by paying someone a high salary and assigning him/her to duties that he/she has no knowledge on nor experience in. According to Management's Observation and Remarks (which DB admitted was DD and his views) in Appendix IX of DB's document, BS grade officers possess the "grade competence" for legal and legislative duties by their professional training.

Without prejudice to our stance of "no redeployment of SE grade officer to Legal Section", we would like to know how could CSEs have acquired the core competence and capability to perform duties of AD/Support. Legal Section should not and could not be transformed to an educational institute to train SE grade staff and grant them professional knowledge on building law. Fair application of building laws requires professional knowledge and qualification in general design and planning standards of buildings and their interface with the other allied ordinances.

It is unfortunate that DB has the wrong impression that Legal Section is a training school. We must stress that once a BS grade staff officer is posted to Legal Section, he or she is capable of discharging the duties competently and independently.

We object DB's view to consider opening up of AD/Support's post after 3 years, because we wonder how can those CSEs in BD acquire knowledge and experience in building law, litigation and legislation works and qualify as candidates for AD/Support when the department at present could only have a few numbers of junior SE posts in Legal Section.

(g) BS and SE are two different professionals.

Grade competence is a professional qualification widely accepted by the society. It cannot be justified or modified by an individual's own improvement in some unrelated areas. A SE cannot become a BS unless he/she has obtained the academic qualification and completed the professional training and finally satisfied the requirements of the professional institutes. It is unreasonable to say that because there is an elective course currently offered in a university, students graduated from that university would have the knowledge on that course. Likewise, SE grade officers cannot acquire capability and competence of another professional grade even after a few of them had taken on bi-disciplinary posts in the same department.

(h) Legal action, contravention of basic law

The existing AD posts in BD are GBS and GSE posts. They are professional promotional posts. Opening up the promotional posts to officers who do not have the right professional qualification would result in reduction of quality of services to the public and would be a contravention of the basic law. In order to maintain the quality of services to the public at a D2 professional rank, we insist that the GBS posts be retained as GBS and be filled only by a qualified BS grade officer. We also request a promotion exercise to fill the vacant GBS post be conducted immediately.

Your Sincerely

(Davy H.N. Yuen)
Chairman, BDLBSA

c.c. Deputy Secretary (UR&B) – Ms. Olivia Nip (*Fax: 2899 2916*)
The Honourable Patrick Lau (*Fax: 2147 9155*)
Director of Buildings – Mr. Macro Wu (*Fax: 2840 0451*)