

Disciplinary Panel Meeting

Case of

**Mr David Grantham FRICS [0064234]
Nairobi, Kenya**

On

Tuesday 11 September 2018

At RICS, 55 Colmore Row, Birmingham, B3 2AS

Panel

Helen Riley (Surveyor Chair)
Imran Benson (Lay Member)
Rosalyn Hayles (Lay Member)

Legal Assessor

Peter Steel

The formal charge is:

Between 1 January 2017 and 1 February 2018 you have failed to comply with RICS' requirements in respect of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in that you have not completed and recorded, or caused to be recorded, at least 20 hours of CPD on the RICS CPD portal.

Contrary to Rule 6 of the Rules of Conduct for Members 2007 version 6.

Response

1. Mr Grantham replied to the Notice of Hearing by an email dated 27 August 2018 containing the completed Listing Questionnaire in which he admitted the charge against him. The Panel therefore proceeded on the basis that the above charge was admitted.

Summary

2. From January 2013 RICS members were obliged to complete 20 hours CPD activity by 31 December of each calendar year.
3. Rule 6 provides: “Members shall comply with RICS requirements in respect of continuing professional development.”
4. CPD requirements for members are: –
 - Members must complete at least 20 hours CPD, of which at least 10 hours must be formal CPD.
 - All members must maintain a relevant and current understanding of RICS’ professional and ethical standards during a rolling three-year period.
 - All members must record the CPD activity online.
5. For the CPD year 2017 correspondence was sent by email to members reminding them about the necessity to comply with their CPD obligations. RICS also wrote to all those, who like Mr Grantham, received a Fine and Caution in 2015 reminding them of the RICS Regulatory Board’s policy on repeated breaches of the CPD requirements. Mr Grantham was sent a number of emailed reminders as a result of missing the 31 January 2018 deadline for recording his CPD. These made it explicit that he risked a sanction unless he took immediate action.

Service

6. A Notice of Hearing, together with the evidence bundle was sent via email to Mr Grantham’s preferred email address held by RICS on 13 August 2018. A copy of the Notice and electronic delivery receipt for it had been produced to the Panel. A statement from Maria Choudhury, Regulatory Tribunal Executive, dated 20 August 2018 confirmed that the evidence bundle had also been sent under cover of two further emails on the same date as the Notice of Hearing. Mr Grantham’s subsequent email containing the Listing Questionnaire dated 27 August 2018 indicated that he had received the Notice. The Panel was satisfied that Notice had been properly served in accordance with Rule 43a. Having considered the circumstances, the Panel was content that it was fair and in the public interest for it to proceed to consider the case.
7. Mr Grantham had been advised of his right to an oral hearing in the Notice of Hearing but had not requested such a hearing.

Findings of Fact

8. The Panel was provided with a statement from Abbie Atkins, CPD Administrator at RICS dated 6 July 2018 setting out Mr Grantham's online CPD record and exhibiting the relevant records. This showed that he had not recorded any CPD for 2017 and he had not been granted any concessions for that year.
9. Accordingly the Panel found the factual allegations proved, on the basis of the documentary evidence produced and Mr Grantham's admission.

Liability to Disciplinary Action

10. The Panel noted that Mr Grantham did not accept liability to disciplinary action. However the Panel was satisfied that the RICS requirement to complete and record CPD is reasonable and that Mr Grantham's failure to comply with those requirements is sufficiently serious to give rise to a liability for disciplinary action. In reaching this conclusion the Panel took into account the fact that the CPD policy has been approved by the Regulatory Board and is an expressly stated RICS rule. The Panel noted that all members agree to adhere to the RICS Rules, Regulations and Bye-Laws and accept that they may be subject to disciplinary action if they fail to do so. The Panel was also satisfied that breaches of the RICS rule on CPD recording must be regarded as serious as they prevent RICS from monitoring compliance and thus ensuring public protection.
11. Accordingly, the Panel was satisfied that Mr Grantham was liable to disciplinary action.

Sanction

Panel's Approach

12. The Panel took into account the submissions of RICS as set out in the Case Summary in the bundle. It had regard to the RICS Sanctions Policy.
13. The Panel bore in mind that the purpose of sanctions is not to be punitive, although it may have that effect. The purpose of sanctions is to declare and uphold the standards of the profession, to safeguard the reputation of the profession and of RICS as its regulator and to protect the public. Sanctions must be proportionate to the breach and all the circumstances and a decision should be reached having taken into account any mitigating and/or aggravating factors.
14. The Panel bundle contained a further statement from Abbie Atkins also dated 6 July 2018 which indicated that Mr Grantham had received a Caution for failure to comply with the CPD requirements in 2013 and a Caution and Fine in 2015 for a further breach. This was therefore Mr Grantham's third such breach.

Decision

15. In the completed Listing Questionnaire dated 27 August 2018, Mr Grantham had written:

“MITIGATION CIRCUMSTANCES:

- 1. I am 71 years old and whilst I still work this is on a consultancy basis and is not full time.*
- 2. [Mr Grantham describes his health issues and refers to attached medical records from 2014].*
- 3. I live in Kenya where CPD activity is limited. ”*

The Panel further noted that Mr Grantham had no other disciplinary history and gave him some credit for engaging with RICS.

16. The Panel considered that the following aggravating factors were present in this case:

- The charge found proved represented a repeated breach of the CPD requirements.
- Mr Grantham’s comment about the limited availability of CPD in Kenya did not suggest any willingness to comply in the future.
- The Panel noted that Mr Grantham had not recorded or attempted to complete any CPD whatsoever since the CPD requirements were introduced in 2013 (though he had received an ill health concession in 2014). He had obtained a partial exemption in 2016, so that he needed to complete only 10 hours CPD, but had still failed to record any CPD at all.
- Mr Grantham clearly understood the CPD requirements, as demonstrated by his application for a concession. He cited his surgery in 2014 and ongoing health issues as mitigation for his failure to complete CPD, but they did not apparently prevent him continuing to work, albeit part-time.
- He had been sent a number of prompts by email and letter that he risked disciplinary action if he did not comply which he had apparently ignored up until the point he was sent notice of this process.

17. The Panel noted that Mr Grantham had not provided any detail of the attempts he may have made to undertake CPD whether online or otherwise.

18. RICS is a professional membership organisation and sets standards for its members as a condition of membership. It is not difficult to record CPD online however busy a member’s professional or personal life may be. Compliance is not optional.

19. The Panel first considered whether it was appropriate to impose any sanction at all. The Panel concluded that the repeated failure to record CPD was serious and, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, imposing no sanction would be neither proportionate nor

appropriate. In reaching this conclusion the Panel noted that Mr Grantham had been sent numerous reminders by RICS. As noted above, Mr Grantham should have been aware of his responsibility to ensure that he complied with his CPD obligations. In addition, the Panel noted that he had been sent numerous reminders by RICS.

20. The Panel went on to consider whether to impose a caution. The Panel concluded that a caution would not adequately reflect the seriousness of the case, recognising the cumulative pattern of non-compliance and the fact that Mr Grantham had already received two Fixed Penalties for previous breaches. The Panel also considered the imposition of a reprimand, but concluded that similarly this did not reflect the seriousness of Mr Grantham's repeated failure to comply with the requirement to complete and record CPD on the RICS portal.
21. In considering whether to require Mr Grantham to give an undertaking the Panel took into account the mandatory nature of the CPD requirements. The Panel noted that the CPD requirements are designed to ensure that the skills and knowledge of RICS members are kept up to date and ultimately to ensure public protection. The Panel concluded that it would not be appropriate or proportionate, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, to impose an undertaking given that Mr Grantham should have been completing and recording his CPD online in any event. Even if an undertaking were to be combined with either a caution, reprimand or fine, the Panel concluded that imposing such a sanction would be insufficient to maintain public trust and confidence in the regulatory process.
22. The Panel then considered whether to impose a fine. It decided that a fine would not be an appropriate sanction. He had previously received a fine for a breach of the CPD requirements but this had clearly not served as an adequate warning. Mr Grantham's repeated failure to abide by his professional responsibilities was simply unacceptable for someone who wished to remain part of a respected profession.
23. For similar reasons, the Panel considered and dismissed the imposition of a condition on Mr Grantham's continuing membership as an adequate response to the misconduct demonstrated by this case. It also noted that Mr Grantham was required to complete and record CPD in any event and there was no suggestion by him of any insight or intent to comply the requirements in the future. Therefore it was not clear what purpose it might serve to impose a condition relating to his future completion of CPD in the circumstances.
24. The Panel took into account paragraph 21.1. of the Sanctions Policy, which states that expulsion is likely where there is a third breach of Rule 6 of the Rules of Conduct for members within 10 years of a receipt of a caution for breach of the same rule. In the absence of any response adequately explaining Mr Grantham's failure to complete and/or record CPD in 2017, the Panel considered there was no good reason in this case to depart from the Sanctions Policy. Having carefully considered all facets of the case,

the Panel concluded that the only appropriate sanction in this case was expulsion. It therefore ordered that Mr Grantham be expelled from membership of RICS.

Publication

25. The Panel has considered the policy on publication of decisions, The Sanctions Policy Supplement 3 - Publication of Regulatory Disciplinary Matters. The Panel was unable to identify any reason to depart from the presumption that decisions will be published on the RICS website and in the RICS magazine Modus.

Costs

26. RICS applied for costs of Ksh 51,203.50 (i.e. £400 at the exchange rate that applied on 10 August 2018).

27. The Panel considered carefully the issue of costs. The costs figure represents a contribution towards the costs incurred by RICS in preparation for the hearing and the hearing itself. The Panel had no reason to doubt that the costs application was fair and reasonable.

28. The Panel concluded that it was appropriate for Mr Grantham to make a contribution towards the costs of bringing this case, otherwise the full cost of these proceedings would fall on the profession as a whole.

29. The Panel orders that Mr Grantham pays to RICS costs in the sum of Ksh 51,203.50.

Appeal Period

30. Mr Grantham has 28 days, from the service of the notification of the decision, to appeal this decision in accordance with Rule 59 of the Rules.

31. In accordance with Rule 60 of the Disciplinary, Registration and Appeal Panel Rules, the Honorary Secretary of RICS has 28 days, from the service of the notification of the decision, to require a review of this Decision.