

Cautionary Note 7: Ethics and Honesty

On 26 June 2015, the NZRAB asked architect Edward O.G. Lee (Reg. no.3074) why he had claimed CPD points for numerous events that he had not attended and why his descriptions and recorded learnings for individual activities were plagiarised from publicly available websites.

Mr Lee provided no explanation or justification for his conduct and cancelled his registration. Mr Lee later agreed that there were grounds for discipline against him.

Since then disciplinary proceedings have taken place and Mr Lee has been censured, fined \$2,000 and charged costs.

This is hugely disappointing. The NZRAB expects architects to be trustworthy, as befitting professionals. The New Zealand architects' code of ethics is explicit, its first clause stating: "A Registered Architect must not represent or promote him or herself in a false, fraudulent, misleading, or deceptive manner."

The NZRAB has deliberately chosen a high trust model in relation to architects and the undertakings they give. This keeps down the compliance costs of being an architect. Conduct such as occurred here puts that at risk.

These events were also regrettable in that the NZRAB does not persecute architects in relation to the amount of CPD they do. Architects are required under the Registered Architects Rules 2006 to "take reasonable steps to maintain the currency of (their) architectural knowledge and skills." This is interpreted flexibly and holistically. Responding to this requirement in a fearful way is unnecessary.

The NZRAB's plea to architects is do the CPD or other professional development activities that are interesting and right for you, given the nature of the work you do as an architect. Approach this as a professional and as a member of a learned profession where the knowledge and skills required are always evolving.



Warwick Bell
Chair

29 April 2015