Book review

DISPUTE BOARDS: PROCEDURES AND PRACTICE

G. Owen and B. Totterdill, Thomas Telford Publishing, London, 2007.
ISBN 978 0 7277 3508 9, £55, 340pp.

With the increasing use and influence of dispute boards it is inevitable that books will be written on the subject. *Dispute Boards: Procedures and Practice* written by two well-known and respected Fellows of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) is among the first. It is a readable and welcome guide to dispute boards and their operation. As it says in the preface, the book is not a learned legal analysis of claims and dispute resolution procedures, but is a practical guide. In aspiring to just that, it hits exactly the right notes and avoids anecdotes and the history of dispute boards. It is neither excessively long nor too brief, and is about the right size to carry around as a helpful reference for potential and current dispute board members, as well as users of the dispute board system.

There are 12 chapters that are in a sequence which progresses from the basics of what a dispute board is, through to a summary of the various procedures, the composition and operation of the board, on to the board's decision, recommendation or opinion, culminating in the implementation and enforcement of the board's decisions. Finally, there is a short look at some of the variations on the theme of dispute boards.

There are then 19 appendices, which may sound a lot, and one might think that nearly 200 pages of appendices in a book of 340 pages is a disproportionate ratio. It may be a matter of personal preference, but in this case it is appropriate, due to the content of the appendices. Five of the appendices reproduce dispute board procedures from the International Federation of

Consulting Engineers (FIDIC), International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and ICE contracts. This means the rules and procedures are ready to refer to. It also does away with the need to keep referring to a separate document, which can be irritating.

Seven of the appendices contain examples of typical dispute board letterheads, directions, decisions, recommendations and other documents, which are an invaluable template for practical use as well as being informative.

The practical nature of this book is reflected in most of the chapters. It covers such matters as transportation to and from airports, hotels and project sites, among others. It does not stop at spelling out what should happen, what can go wrong, and how to avoid things going wrong. There are numerous examples of how a dispute member should conduct him/herself in certain situations and how to avoid situations developing into disputes. There is advice on how to deal with a dispute when it arises. It is written in a style which mixes informality with serious professional advice.

This is not an advertisement for the dispute board system. An informative guide for practitioners in the field of dispute boards, it is concise and informed. It is of the size and simplicity to enable one to carry it on project visits and keep to hand when acting as a dispute board member. Consequently, it is recommended as an essential addition to the library of anyone acting as a dispute board member or chairman, or of any user of the dispute board system.

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