

# Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke, GBS, JP

## Honorary Fellow

### Citation

From managing farms and estates in England to advising on international property investments in the Middle East and Hong Kong, Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke has earned his reputation as a global authority on property development and investment.

Mr Brooke was born in England, but he spent the first 14 years of his life in Brazil, whence his parents had migrated for employment. Life in Brazil was challenging but delightful, with so much to learn at a very young age in the bustling city of São Paulo. His family's return to Yorkshire in England presented a new challenge, but he met it with the same delight: "I think it was testing, but it was good for me", he reflects. Indeed, the contrast between urban life in São Paulo and "village life" in Yorkshire was the genesis of his interest in the built environment. The move to Yorkshire opened his eyes to "a world of challenges and opportunities".

As he has done throughout his life, Mr Brooke made the most of opportunity while in England: he not only managed to "catch up" with his English classmates but even topped his class in almost all subjects, despite his initial lack of fluency. He was not just academically gifted but also a natural leader, both the head boy and captain of the rugby team. After high school graduation, he pursued his early interest in the built environment by obtaining a BSc in Estate Management and a postgraduate diploma in Business Administration from the University of London. He also qualified as a Chartered Surveyor and became a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors.

From 1964-1972, he managed farms and estates for the Crown and Church Commissioners in the UK before moving to the Middle East as a consultant to the ruling families in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), whom he advised on their worldwide real estate investment programmes for eight years. When he arrived in the UAE in 1972, he was one of a handful of expatriates in the country. By the time he left, he had helped lay a foundation for the UAE's future development.

In 1980, Mr Brooke accepted the position of Deputy Managing Director of Swire Properties Limited — a leading property developer in Hong Kong. While at Swire, he coordinated the development of two of Hong Kong's renowned commercial projects: Taikoo Shing and Pacific Place. Over the next two decades, he also commenced a career of public service. He was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Town Planning Board, a member of the Hong Kong Housing Authority and a Justice of the Peace in 1996.

In the new millennium, he assisted the Hong Kong Government with the partial privatisation of the Mass Transit Railway Corporation and with the launch of the Link Real Estate Investment Trust, part of the privatisation of over 150 shopping centres previously owned by the Housing Authority. He also contributed significantly to the revitalisation of Ocean Park Hong Kong and the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District. From 2001 to 2014, Mr Brooke was a Board member of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation and became Chairman since 2007 and he led the development of all three phases of the Hong Kong Science Park. Under his chairmanship of

the Harbourfront Commission from 2010 to 2018, Mr Brooke advised the Hong Kong Government and private developers on how to improve the recreational and touristic appeal of Victoria Harbour. In terms of his international contribution during this time, he served as Global President of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in 2003-2004, and was elected Asia Pacific Chairman of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) from 2018 to 2021.

Currently, he is a principal advisor on Policy Partnership on Science, Technology, and Innovation (PPSTI) for the 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and Chairman of Professional Property Services Limited, which provides strategic advice and direction in planning and development, particularly in Hong Kong, Mainland China, Vietnam, and the Middle East.

Mr Brooke's life and career have been guided by "3-Ps": **P**atience, **P**erseverance and **P**assion. He believes that we "need all three to be successful" and that "whatever you do, the driver has to be passion...if you don't have that passion, you're not going to change things". While he considers himself "very lucky" in his career, he would not be where he is today without the 3-Ps, especially passion. To Mr Brooke's 3-Ps, we can add a fourth, **P**robity, for he has always upheld the highest professional ethics and standards.

Although Mr Brooke has lived and/or worked in Brazil, Britain, and Bahrain, he has been in "a love affair with Hong Kong". The "mixture of town and country" of the "fascinating city" means so much to him that he cannot see himself living anywhere else. This is why he is not resting on his laurels despite all his enviable achievements. He is eager to do more to improve people's lives in areas of housing and the development of the built environment that encourage a sense of community and enable people to "mix and meld together". He aims to continue sharing his experiences, mentor youth and help plan for a more sustainable and resilient Hong Kong that can withstand the adverse effects of climate change and respond to all "what if scenarios". He considers it his duty "to leave not just Hong Kong but also the world in a better state" for his "two children, four grandchildren and their descendants".

Mr Brooke has already won many accolades. He is an honorary member of The Hong Kong Institute of Architects and the Hong Kong Chapter of The American Institute of Architects, and an honorary fellow of The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the University College of Estate Management, UK. In recognition of his dedication and contribution to Hong Kong society in areas of housing and harbourfront enhancement, Mr Brooke was awarded the Bronze Bauhinia Star (1999), the Silver Bauhinia Star (2012) and the Gold Bauhinia Star (2018). Let us now add to his honors.

Mr Chairman, in recognition of his outstanding professional achievements and distinguished public and community service, it is my privilege to present Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke for conferment of an honorary fellowship.

*Citation written and delivered by Professor Padmore Adusei Amoah*