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Architect | Registered Valuer | Educator | Entrepreneur

A distinguished architect and registered valuer with over 26 years of expertise spanning architecture, construction, education, and research.

He is the Founder of GRIDLANDS and ValuerLAB, driving innovation in construction technologies and precision valuation.

As a former Principal at the Global Institute of Architecture, he shaped academic excellence, bridging theory with practice. His leadership extends to The Architects Forum and The Indian Institute of Architects, Palakkad Centre.

A recognized Conservation Expert, he has contributed to World Heritage assessments, advancing sustainable heritage preservation.

As the Editor-in-Chief of Valuers' Bulletin, he provides strategic direction, fostering discussions on enhancing the publication's depth and relevance in valuation knowledge.

Guided by Mr. Abhimod's recommendations, and insights from our Editorial Board Members, we are introducing Crossroads to further enrich our content.

Discover what it is and how you can get involved.

EDITORIAL FEATURE

CROSSROADS

Where Valuation meets Real-World complexity

In the world of valuation, not every question has a neat, clear-cut answer. While our textbooks and regulations offer clear principles, the field often throws up complex, real-world dilemmas that test both our judgment and integrity. Whether it's valuing a plotted layout without approvals, a distressed asset under insolvency, or simply a property riding the wave of speculative hype, let's be honest, we've all encountered situations that don't fit squarely into the rulebook.

Welcome to "**Crossroads**", a new section in the Valuers' Bulletin designed for exactly these moments.

Each issue will feature one challenging real-life valuation scenario, with perspectives from senior professionals and technical experts. The aim is not to prescribe a single solution, but to open up the thinking process behind professional decisions.

We invite you to contribute! If you've faced a valuation that made you pause or required a nuanced judgment call, share it with us

[. \[Link to the Google Form here\]](#)

Let's bring wisdom, caution, and clarity to the trickiest corners of our practice. Looking forward to your support in bringing this important initiative to life.

Warm regards,
Abhimod K

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CROSSROADS - VALUATION DILEMMA & EXPERT SOLUTION

For AaRVF Valuers Journal - Professional Ethics Section

THE DILEMMA: Family connection in Professional assignment

Submitted by: Anonymous Practicing Valuer, with presence in Kerala and Tamil Nadu

Case Background:

I am a registered valuer (IBBI & Wealth Tax Act) approached by a long-standing Chartered Accountant client for a retrospective valuation assignment. The CA requires fair market value assessment of about 300 cents of land in Palakkad district as on April 1, 2001, for LTCG computation under Section 55(2) of the Income Tax Act.

The assignment is technically sound. Determining whether market value in 2001 would exceed actual pre-2001 purchase cost, potentially reducing capital gains tax liability. The location (border area Kerala-Tamil Nadu with good connectivity) suggests market values would indeed be higher than government guideline rates.

The Conflict Discovery:

Upon case review, I discovered my close relative (direct) is a Director on the Board of the client company owning the subject land.

The Grey Areas:

The CA, being known to me for over 3 years and who fully endorses my professional credibility wanting me to do the valuation for him suggested several approaches:

1. Disclosure Approach: "Declare the conflict in your report and proceed"
2. Informal Assessment: "This is just for my understanding, not official submission"
3. Format Modification: "Use plain paper instead of letterhead to make it unofficial"
4. Methodology Sharing: "Provide the technical framework so I can attempt it myself"

Each suggestion seems to address the conflict concern while still providing professional assistance to a genuine client need.

My concerns:

Relationship Factor: Three-year professional relationship with mutual respect

Technical Expertise: My specific knowledge of Kerala-Tamil Nadu border area valuation

Legitimate Need: Client's requirement is valid and my expertise would be valuable
Varying Degrees of Involvement: Different levels of assistance seem to present different ethical implications.

The request seems fine to me upon first view. But I'm confused and seek professional clarity from experts.

CROSSROADS - VALUATION DILEMMA & EXPERT SOLUTION
For Valuers Journal - Professional Ethics Section

Opinion by: Abhimod K, Registered Valuer (L&B)
Dated: 06 August 2025

Clear recommendation: **Decline direct involvement**

This case presents a definitive conflict of interest that cannot be resolved through disclosures or format modifications. The appropriate response is to respectfully decline any form of valuation assessment while providing constructive alternatives.

Analysis of the gray areas

Argument 1. "Disclosure makes it acceptable"

Opinion IBBI Code requires independence in fact and appearance. Family director relationship creates both actual and perceived bias. Disclosures don't eliminate conflicts. They merely acknowledge them. Professional standards prioritise independence over convenience.

Argument 2. "Informal means different rules"

Opinion Professional expertise doesn't have an "informal mode".
Any opinion from a registered valuer carries professional weight.
Tax authorities don't distinguish between formal/informal professional advice. "Understanding only" assessments often become official references.

Argument 3. "Plain paper changes everything"

Opinion Letterheads don't determine professional liability

The source of expertise matters, not the format
Regulatory scrutiny focuses on professional conduct,
not documentation style
This approach actually signals attempt to circumvent
accountability

Argument 4. "Methodology Sharing"

Opinion This is the appropriate middle ground.

Sharing technical frameworks:

- a. Provides genuine assistance within ethical boundaries
- b. Maintains professional integrity
- c. Demonstrates good faith effort to help
- d. Creates educational value
- e. Guides client toward proper independent assessment

Recommended solution framework

Step 1: Professional Declination

"I cannot provide valuation services due to conflict of interest (family member on company board). However, I can help you find the right approach and qualified alternatives."

Step 2: Constructive Assistance

Provide comprehensive methodology framework including:

- a. Retrospective valuation approach for April 1, 2001
- b. Specific data sources for Palakkad area
- c. Comparable sales analysis methodology
- d. Market factors relevant to border locations
- e. Contact details of qualified independent valuers or refer IBBI website

Step 3: Implementation Document

Create detailed guidance covering:

- a. Technical methodology steps
- b. Data collection strategies
- c. Area-specific market advantages
- d. Quality validation approaches
- e. Professional recommendations

Why this solution works?

For Professional Ethics:

Maintains independence standards
Demonstrates consistent ethical behavior
Protects long-term professional reputation
Supports industry credibility

For Client Relationship:

Shows genuine commitment to helping
Provides substantial technical value
Maintains trust through transparency
Offers practical path forward

For the Profession:

Sets positive precedent for handling conflicts
Balances client service with ethical obligations
Demonstrates value of professional standards
Creates educational opportunity

Key learning points

- 1 Conflicts cannot Be "managed away": Independence violations require declination, not creative solutions
- 2 Professional relationships strengthen ethical obligations: Client trust is built on integrity compromising ethics betrays that foundation
- 3 Methodology sharing is valuable service: Technical guidance within ethical boundaries serves clients while maintaining standard
- 4 Documentation matters: How conflicts are handled becomes part of professional reputation and industry standards

Broader implications

This case highlights the maturity of India's valuation profession. As registered valuers, our collective ethical behavior determines:

Regulatory trust and autonomy
Market confidence in valuation services
Professional development opportunities
Industry reputation and growth

Every individual ethical decision contributes to our profession's credibility.

Conclusion

While the desire to help long-standing clients is natural and commendable, professional ethics provide the framework that ensures our services remain credible and valuable. The methodology sharing approach demonstrates that ethical practice doesn't mean abandoning client service it means finding better ways to serve within appropriate boundaries.

Final Message

Trust your ethical instincts. When situations feel uncomfortable from an independence perspective, they usually are. The profession's strength lies in practitioners who prioritise long term integrity over short-term convenience.

Call for Expert Panel Members – Crossroads Section

We are pleased to announce an opportunity to be part of our upcoming Crossroads section, a platform that presents real-world dilemmas faced by professionals in the field, encouraging diverse perspectives and thoughtful analysis. We are inviting experienced professionals and subject-matter experts to join our Expert Panel for Crossroads.

As a panelist, you will:

Review and provide insights on practical valuation and ethics-related dilemmas
Share your expert opinion on cases submitted by our readers
Contribute to elevating discourse and guiding our community through complex decisions.

Who can apply:

Professionals with demonstrable experience in valuation, finance, ethics or related disciplines. Academic and industry backgrounds are welcome.

To apply, please submit:

A brief introduction (max 200 words)
Your areas of expertise
Relevant qualifications or experience

Selected experts will be featured on our panel and acknowledged in all Crossroads publications.

Deadline for applications: September 30, 2025

Submit your application to: editor@aarvf.org

Help us shape a thoughtful and impactful dialogue. We look forward to your participation!

Team Crossroads