



ASSURANCE IN FOCUS

FROM SITE RISK TO CLIENT PROTECTION

A client-focused case study showing how independent, evidence-led Clerk of Works reporting turns site observations into clear decisions, tracked actions and practical protection.

Construction risk rarely arrives as one dramatic event. It usually develops through visible warnings, unresolved defects, missing evidence, weak coordination or items being closed up before they have been properly checked. ITSA helps clients see those warning signs early and understand what they mean.

<p>See risk clearly</p> <p>Plain-English commentary that explains the issue without hiding behind jargon.</p>	<p>Create evidence</p> <p>Photographs, locations, dates and clear observation records.</p>	<p>Drive action</p> <p>Recommended next steps, escalation points and defect tracking.</p>	<p>Protect value</p> <p>Better quality, fewer surprises, stronger audit trail and clearer decisions.</p>
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The client duty context

Commercial clients have influence over how construction projects are planned and managed. HSE guidance expects clients to make suitable arrangements, appoint suitable dutyholders, allow sufficient time and resources, and maintain and review those arrangements through the project.

That does not mean a Clerk of Works replaces the duties of the client, designer, principal designer, principal contractor or specialist subcontractors. It means good independent reporting can give the client a clearer view of whether risks are being observed, challenged, recorded and followed through.

"The Cost of a Clerk of Works per annum is cheaper than a day in court!"

Tony Bingham, Arbitrator, Adjudicator, Mediator and Barrister. Quote cited by JCT.

The practical risk chain

<p>How site risk develops</p> <p>Risk appears: An opening, interface, omission, poor product choice, incomplete fire stopping or temporary condition is visible on site.</p> <p>Risk is normalised: The issue is accepted as part of the programme pressure, with no clear record of ownership or close-out.</p> <p>Risk is covered over: Ceilings, risers, finishes or handover documentation progress before the evidence trail is complete.</p>	<p>How ITSA interrupts it</p> <p>Independent observation: The issue is seen, photographed and described in practical client-friendly language.</p> <p>Clear interpretation: The report explains why it matters for safety, compliance, durability, programme or handover.</p> <p>Recorded follow-through: Actions can be tracked within the report or through a shared live defect tracker until close-out.</p>
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Where site risk becomes client exposure

The pattern across construction disputes, enforcement examples and poor handover outcomes is often similar: a risk was visible, foreseeable or repeated, but the evidence trail did not clearly show that it had been understood, challenged and closed out.

Risk area	What the risk looks like	How ITSA converts it into protection
Temporary works and demolition	Propping, crash decks, scaffold adaptations, lifting openings, material loading, exclusion zones, retained structure and waste transfer.	Independent review of visible controls, clear challenge where risk is not evidenced, and a practical record of temporary states before they disappear.
Fire safety interfaces	Fire doors, frame gaps, riser penetrations, service routes, cavity barriers, intumescent products, certificates and inspection access before closure.	Moves fire safety from assumption to evidence, helping the client understand what is installed, what is incomplete and what proof remains outstanding.
Live environments and public interfaces	Occupied schools, residents, pedestrians, traffic routes, safeguarding, hoarding, signage, deliveries and changing access arrangements.	Reduces blind spots where construction work meets the public, pupils, residents or building users.
Product evidence and substitutions	Foams, sealants, doorsets, passive fire products, cladding components, system data, batch evidence and installed product records.	Links the specification to what was actually installed and recorded, supporting traceability and future confidence.
Handover readiness	Commissioning, external works, drainage, defects, cleaning, access, documentation, life safety systems and outstanding technical actions.	Prevents visual completion being mistaken for technical readiness, reducing post-handover disputes and operational disruption.

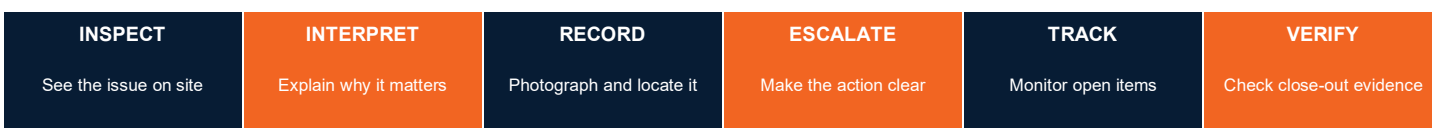
Real ITSA sample themes

Project examples	What this proves to a client
<p>Newman Street: Complex commercial refurbishment involving demolition, piling, propping, crash decks, roof works, waste transfer and structural interfaces within a constrained London site.</p> <p>Gosford Hill: Live education environment with temporary school accommodation, modular construction, safeguarding interfaces, firestopping, external works and DfE style reporting discipline.</p> <p>Hawks Road: Residential handover readiness with focus on risers, fire stopping, fire doors, compartmentation, apartment readiness, communal areas and defect close-out.</p>	<p>Not just attendance: ITSA is not simply recording that a site visit took place. The reporting interprets risk and explains the practical consequence.</p> <p>Not just defects: The value is in identifying the relationship between workmanship, evidence, sequencing, life safety, compliance and handover risk.</p> <p>Not just technical language: Reports are written so clients, consultants, funders and stakeholders can understand what needs attention and why.</p>

The purpose is simple: make the client better informed, make the project team clearer on required action, and reduce the chance that hidden issues become future cost, dispute or reputational damage.

The ITSA reporting method

From site risk to client protection depends on a repeatable reporting method. ITSA follows a simple principle: technical observations must be clear enough to support a client decision and detailed enough to support project team action.



What the client receives

<h3>Reporting outputs</h3> <p>Executive summary: A clear overview of current progress, priority issues and the areas requiring attention.</p> <p>Evidence-led observations: Photographs, locations, technical narrative and recommended action rather than vague commentary.</p> <p>Defect tracking: Defect trackers can be included at the bottom of reports or maintained as shared live documents showing status, ownership and close-out.</p> <p>Flexible templates: Bespoke ITSA reports or adoption of DfE, public sector, local authority or client standard templates where required.</p>	<h3>Client protection value</h3> <p>Better decisions: The client can see which issues are cosmetic, which are technical and which require escalation.</p> <p>Better evidence: The project retains a record of what was observed, what was requested and what remained outstanding.</p> <p>Better challenge: Independent reporting gives the client a practical layer of recorded challenge without disrupting the project team.</p> <p>Better handover: The report helps prevent visual completion being mistaken for technical readiness.</p>
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The ITSA difference

Technical enough for the project team. Clear enough for the client board. Practical enough to drive action. Independent enough to protect the client interest.

Not a legal shield. A practical layer of independent assurance, early warning and recorded challenge.

Source note and disclaimer

Sources consulted include HSE CDM commercial client guidance, HSE fatal injury statistics, the JCT article on the role of the Clerk of Works, and the GOV.UK Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 government response. This document is general information only, is not legal advice, and does not allege that any named case or project issue was caused by the absence or failure of a Clerk of Works.

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