

ASSURANCE IN FOCUS

Snagging and Technical Assurance

Why a building that looks ready can still carry hidden risk, unresolved evidence gaps and handover exposure.

Look beyond cosmetics	Check technical readiness	Make evidence visible	Protect handover value
Paint, chips and scratches matter, but they are not the whole story.	Fire safety, M&E, drainage, access and documentation must also be ready.	Photographs, clear narrative and trackers give the client a usable audit trail.	Early assurance reduces late pressure, disputes and post-occupation defects.

Snagging is not the same as technical assurance	The ITSA position
<p>Snagging is often treated as the final quality check. In reality, it usually captures what can be seen at the end of the job: decoration defects, damaged finishes, incomplete items and visible workmanship issues. These observations are important, but they do not always prove that the building is technically ready for use.</p>	<p>Technical assurance goes deeper. It asks whether work has been installed correctly, whether critical interfaces have been checked before closure, whether evidence exists, and whether the client is being asked to accept a building that is genuinely ready rather than simply looking complete.</p>

Why this matters to the client

- Late snagging pressure can lead to items being visually tidied without the underlying technical issue being properly resolved.
- Hidden defects can move from the contractor stage into the client ownership stage, creating cost, disruption and reputational impact after occupation.
- A clear independent report helps the client see what is ready, what is outstanding and what evidence should be requested before acceptance.

The aim is not to create paperwork. It is to help the client understand what is genuinely ready, what still carries risk, and what evidence is required before acceptance.

Where snagging alone can fall short

Snagging records visible defects. Technical assurance asks whether the item is genuinely ready, compliant, evidenced and suitable for occupation.

Risk area	What it can look like at snagging	What ITSA checks
Fire stopping and compartmentation	Walls and ceilings look finished, but service penetrations, riser interfaces or above-ceiling voids may remain unverified.	Inspection access, product evidence, photos before closure, continuity of seals and clear close-out records.
Fire doors and risers	A door may be hung and decorated, but the doorset may still fail on gaps, frame sealing, threshold detail, ironmongery or certification evidence.	Door margins, frame gaps, intumescent seals, certified foam, smoke seals, riser access and QA records.
M&E commissioning	Lights may be on and rooms may appear ready, but systems may not be fully tested, balanced, certified or integrated.	Fire alarm, emergency lighting, ventilation, water systems, heating, access panels, labelling and commissioning evidence.
External works and drainage	Paving, landscaping and entrances may look complete, but falls, ponding, drainage access or thresholds can still create post-handover issues.	Falls, drainage routes, rodding access, kerbs, paving levels, trip risks, ponding and interface with finished entrances.
Room or apartment readiness	A space can look clean enough for handover while still carrying unresolved defects, missing components or poor finish consistency.	Final finish quality, sanitaryware, doors, ironmongery, appliances, flooring, decoration, access and user-facing presentation.
Evidence and defect close-out	Items can be verbally closed without a strong record showing who checked what, when it was corrected and whether evidence exists.	Photographs, locations, status, ownership, live trackers, report appendices and verification before final acceptance.

The ITSA route from snagging to assurance

INSPECT	INTERPRET	RECORD	ESCALATE	TRACK	VERIFY
See the condition	Explain the risk	Photograph and locate	Set out action	Monitor status	Check close-out

What the client receives

<p>Clear technical narrative</p> <p>Plain-English commentary explaining what was observed, why it matters and what should happen next.</p>	<p>Photographic evidence</p> <p>Images linked to locations and observations so the client can see the issue rather than rely on vague descriptions.</p>
<p>Prioritised close-out</p> <p>Issues can be grouped by urgency, risk, location, trade, handover impact or client preference.</p>	<p>Defect trackers</p> <p>Trackers can be added to reports or maintained as shared live documents showing ownership, status and close-out progress.</p>
<p>Flexible templates</p> <p>Reports can be bespoke or adopt DfE, public sector, local authority or client standard templates where required.</p>	<p>Client-first assurance</p> <p>The aim is to protect quality, support informed decisions and keep the client interest at the centre of the project.</p>

<p>The client protection value</p> <p>A good snagging process identifies visible defects. A good technical assurance process helps the client understand whether the project is safe, coordinated, evidenced and ready to move towards occupation. The value is not just finding issues. The value is explaining their impact and helping the client drive close-out.</p>	<p>How ITSA communicates risk</p> <p>ITSA reports are written for project teams and decision makers. The language is practical, clear and direct, so that technical issues can be understood by clients, consultants, funders and stakeholders, including those without a construction background.</p>
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Real ITSA sample themes

<p>Hawks Road</p> <p>Residential handover: apartment readiness, communal areas, firestopping, risers, voids, fire doors, mastic works and finish quality.</p>	<p>Gosford Hill</p> <p>Live education: modular interfaces, safeguarding, firestopping, fire curtains, M&E integration, external works and progressive handover.</p>	<p>Newman Street</p> <p>Commercial refurbishment: temporary works, demolition, piling, loadings, roof works, structural interfaces and waste transfer.</p>
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Disclaimer: This case study is general information only. Sample themes and reporting examples are anonymised and adapted for public viewing. Final reporting is tailored to the client, project, sector and appointment requirements.