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# Peters Associates

Consulting Structural and Civil Engineers

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## STRUCTURAL APPRAISAL INVESTMENT PROPERTIES

The Practice acts for various investors and developers regarding the purchase and/or redevelopment of commercial property.

### The Initial Survey

Many clients consider that an initial visual structural assessment of an investment property is essential and PETERS ASSOCIATES (RIPON) LTD are well qualified to undertake this. Our survey would assess the current structural adequacy and the form of the construction. With this information judgments concerning the soundness of the investments can be made.

### The Building Assessment

With commercial buildings varying in size, type and age a sound knowledge of building construction and its potential effect upon the structure is vital.

Where a client in purchasing a property wishes to extend the potential of the investment and achieve greater market attraction, structure is certainly a controlling influence. Future options may well be:

- To increase the net to gross ratio by enlarging the floor area.
- Adding an additional storey on multi-storey and high rise property.
- Utilization of existing roof spaces.
- The potential for demolition and reconstruction with or without a retained façade.
- Introducing larger and more commercially acceptable lifts.
- The potential to alter the structure to suit a change of use.
- Modifying older buildings to be more compliant with current legislation.

PETERS ASSOCIATES (RIPON) LTD have experience in all of these fields, where our knowledge and expertise has been gained over many years.

## The Report

The report format is biased towards structure and fabric as these are areas of potentially high renewal cost.

Properties are viewed in detail externally to include all elevations, pitched and flat roofs, light wells if they exist, tank and lift motor rooms.

The internal fabric and structural form is also visually inspected and whilst the basic structure is usually obscured by finishes, non-public areas are viewed in particular as these can provide evidence as to the general quality of the structural form. Where possible false ceiling tiles are raised in general office areas.

Observations on the quality of the accommodation are presented. We have extensive experience on matters that could have an influence on the investment such as:-

- The durability and overall performance of the structure.
- The condition of the visible fabric and its level of maintenance.
- Whether building subsidence exists.
- Evidence of thermal damage to masonry.
- The quality of the existing roof and condition of flashings.
- Inspect for evidence of water penetration and general weathering.
- Likely deleterious materials such as H.A.C., chlorides, carbonation, etc.
- Enquiries as to the superimposed floor loadings.
- Nature of services available e.g. gas.
- Levels of maintenance being carried out by the tenant.
- The degree of building abuse and damage by tenants.

Overall conclusions are offered at the end of our report, with recommendations as necessary in support of the general condition of the structure and fabric.

The report is augmented with site photographs aiding the viewing and appreciation of the property as a whole, provided in electronic format on a CD which accompanies each report.

## Types of Property Inspected

### 1. Industrial

These have varied from basic single span shed type structures to multi-bay portal framed units. They may represent a single factory or an entire industrial estate.

In addition to their structural adequacy, these sites can be viewed on the basis of upgrading, refurbishment or increasing the asset value by extending the properties where possible.

## 2. Retail

Our work in this field ranges from single shop units in established locations and large out of town retail units through to city centre blocks comprising a retail complex.

The age of retail units ranges from recently built structures through to 17<sup>th</sup> Century timber framed properties.

## 3. Offices

In the main these have been old city centre structures comprising 185m<sup>2</sup> (2000sq ft) floor areas through to 4650m<sup>2</sup> (50000sq ft) multi storey properties built within the last 100 years.

### **Post Survey Enquiries**

These are extended as necessary, depending upon our site findings and the client's requirements to develop particular aspects of the investment, and may involve:-

- High Alumina Cement check and other specific tests for potentially deleterious materials.
- Enquiries with the relevant Building Control Department of the Local Authority concerning loading data, local ground conditions and potential geological problems associated with any particular area.
- Researching archive information on the buildings original design/calculations and available drawings as part of planned refurbishment or upgrading proposals.

### **The Client's View**

With an active and ever changing commercial property market the acquisition of a sound building is fundamental. Where buildings are run down and dilapidated yet possess assured rental growth their upgrading can be justified; this added value can only be achieved within the limitations imposed by the buildings existing structure.

PETERS ASSOCIATES (RIPON) LTD are able to contribute to satisfying this market enabling sound buildings to be acquired for long term retention or for complying with the stringent demands of banks and funding institutions.

## **Fees for the Survey, Assessment and Report**

These are usually charged on a time basis related to a maximum quoted figure.

Should the investment be developed our fees for structural engineering services would be based on a firm quotation or a lump sum fee for fixed areas of work; fees are therefore tailored to suit the client's needs.

PETERS ASSOCIATES (RIPON) LTD

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**Terms of Engagement**  
**For Commercial Structural Inspections**

- 1.0 We will carry out a visual structural inspection of those parts of the property which are accessible. This means visible and readily available for examination from ground and floor levels, without risk of causing damage to the property or injury to the person carrying out the inspection. Due care is therefore exercised throughout the inspection regarding safety, practicality and the constraints of being a visitor to the property, which may be occupied.
- 2.0 We will not therefore inspect areas that are covered, unexposed or inaccessible. Roof voids will only be entered if there is safe, boarded access. We will not lift sarking felt, move large items of furniture, lift carpets, floor boards or manhole covers, or dig below ground level unless specifically agreed in writing before carrying out the inspection.
- 3.0 We will comment specifically on principal elements of structure and any visible defects that may affect the building fabric.
- 4.0 External elevations and the roof will be viewed from ground level where visible, using binoculars where necessary. There may be some areas of roof that cannot be viewed externally.
- 5.0 We will not carry out a Fire Risk Assessment, which is the responsibility of occupiers under current legislation.
- 6.0 Photographs of the building may be taken at the time of inspection for record purposes, but may not be included in the report. Digital photographs may be included on a CD in the appendix.
- 7.0 We will not inspect plumbing, heating, electrical or gas installations, or the internal condition of any chimney, boiler or flue, and would recommend that these are inspected separately by suitably qualified people.
- 8.0 Our inspection will not research the presence, or possible consequences, of contamination of the ground or buildings by any harmful substance. Many building materials in the past have contained asbestos, and our inspection will not therefore comment upon asbestos as this cannot be readily identified by a purely visual inspection. Should the client have concerns on this aspect then we would recommend that an independent specialist survey for asbestos is commissioned. Under current regulations building owners and tenants are responsible for having an asbestos audit of their buildings. An independent report on site contamination is also recommended.
- 9.0 Furthermore we must stress that we have not carried out any investigation to determine whether High Alumina Cement was used during the construction of the building inspected and we are therefore unable to report that the building is free from risk in this respect. In view of the possible potential danger connected with High Alumina Cement we strongly recommend that the appropriate investigations, inspections and tests be carried out by a suitable qualified engineer.
- 10.0 Fees include all time in connection with the inspection, including arranging access, collecting and returning keys where required, travelling time, carrying out the inspection and office time in writing, printing, binding and issuing the report.
- 11.0 Our report is solely for the use of the Client and no liability to anyone else is accepted. Our report is neither an insurance nor a guarantee in respect of the property and its future performance.
- 12.0 We will consider the re-issue of the report in its original form to a third party within 6 months of the original report date for an administrative fee (currently £50.00 excluding VAT).  
  
Upon lapse of a 6 month period the report can only be re-issued following a full re-inspection, which will attract a further survey fee.
- 13.0 We reserve the right to refuse copies of the report to any third party (other than those named above). We also reserve the right to amend our opinions in the event of additional information being made available at some future date.
- 14.0 In accepting these terms of Engagement the Client agrees to pay the fee and any other charges agreed in writing.