HPK/2010/0683

COUNCIL
31 DEC 2010

THE BARCELO PALACE HOTEL PALACE RD, BUXTON IMPACT AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF THE PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO THE MAIN STAIRCASE HANDRAIL

This Impact Assessment Statement has been prepared as part of the Listed Building Applications for the addition of a remedial raised balustrade to the Grade II listed existing balustrade in accordance with current Health and Safety Requirements and Building Regulations.
Prepared by Finch Associates November 2010.

General details and background to Application.

This application has been prepared and submitted following a Health and Safety Risk Assessment carried out on the main staircase at the Palace Hotel which has confirmed that the existing height of the handrail to the staircase and landing areas is well below the level now required by current Building Regulations, and as such poses a potential risk to hotel guests and staff.

The alterations now proposed involve the retention of the existing historic handrail and balustrade and the installation of a secondary lighter weight balustrade and handrail structure to raise the handrail height from the existing level of about 862 mm to the required height of 900 mm on the stair flights and 1100mm on the landings, in accordance with current Building Regulations and Health and Safety legislation.

As stated, the existing cast iron balustrade and polished hardwood handrail are retained because of their historic and visual importance to main reception and central area of the building.

This statement is to be read in conjunction with and as part of the formal Listed Building Application submitted to High Peak Borough Council in December 2010.

Details of the location plan, existing plans and photographs of the main stair structure are shown on Finch Associates drawings; FA964/EX01- 08 and 964/500B - 501A.

The proposed balustrade scheme and relevant details are shown on FA964/GA200-202 and 320A-206A and 964/500B/501A as listed in the drawing Schedule attached to the application.

History and Use

The Palace Hotel was constructed in 1868 as a large purpose built hotel to cater for the increased tourist traffic to Buxton following the development of the railways. Constructed in the Second Empire style, characterised by its large central Mansard roof, the hotel is a significant feature in Buxton's history and it's skyline.

The Mansard roof and cast iron 'cresting' are mirrored in the cast iron balustrades to the balconies. Internally the Grade II listed stair, situated around the main atrium off the entry lobby, features a similar cast iron balustrade with decorative elements denoting the period in which it was built.

The stair itself serves as the main access from the Main Ground Floor Reception Area to the First, Second and Third Floors which contain the 122 Guest Bedrooms within the building. It is grandiose with generously wide, solid stone flights that encircle a multi-storey atrium space. Due to its prime location and important circulatory function within the hotel the proposed increased handrail height is an essential requirement to protect those using the stairs from the four storey stairwell, and to upgrade the guarding height in accordance with the latest Building Regulations Standards.

Scale and Appearance

As indicated on the our drawings it is proposed to add a remedial handrail to the inside of the existing Balustrade to raise the effective height to 1100mm at the landings and 900mm on the flights, in line with current BS 2000Part K-2.0 for a public building.

In accordance with feedback from the conservation officer the remedial balustrade will be bolted to the stair treads from the inside of the existing balustrade to lessen the visual impact on the stair from the atrium below. The fixing plates with countersunk bolts at the base are to be concealed by the existing carpet that is to run over flush.

The existing cast iron decorative balustrade panels are to be retained. The mahogany handrail is to be refurbished and retained, and will be connected by countersunk screws to the underside of the new balustrade for added rigidity. The new handrail is to be constructed out of slim15x15mm mild steel members painted to blend with the existing painted cast balustrade panels.

A new propriety brass handrail, in keeping with the brass door furniture and ironmongery, is to be added to the top of the remedial rail and has been selected to be stylistically simple and complimentary to the existing mahogany rail.

Access

As the stair constitutes a main focal and access point within the building the new balustrade is to be fabricated off site and installed in sections so as to limit any disruption to the hotel during installation.

Due to the generous width of the stairs only a portion of the stair will need to be closed during the works and it will be possible to accommodate some foot traffic during the installation. To alleviate any further congestion there are two secondary service stairs and a secondary guest stair that provide access from First to Third floors. In addition to this there is also a passenger lift serving Ground floor to Third floor levels in operation that can be used as access.

Summary

As noted we have sought the comments of High Peak Borough Council's Conservation Officer during the development of our scheme and the comments received have been incorporated in the proposals.

The selected materials and simple form harmonise with the existing balustrade and are sensitive to its wider context within the building, whilst significantly improving its safety performance.



Front elevation of the Palace Hotel, Buxto