

THE BARCELO PALACE HOTEL
PALACE RD, BUXTON

IMPACT AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
IN RESPECT OF THE
PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO THE MAIN STAIRCASE HANDRAIL

10th February 2012



Front elevation of the Palace Hotel, Buxton

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

This application has been prepared and submitted following a Health and Safety Risk Assessment carried out on the main staircase at the Palace Hotel. It is also based on advice from our Structural design consultants, Taylor Partington Design and supersedes our previous Listed building consent application (HPK/2010/0683) that was granted on the 11th March 2011.

We have sought the comments of High Peak Borough Council's Conservation Officer during the development of our scheme and have endeavoured to incorporate these comments into the current scheme.

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the revised drawings and letter from Taylor Partington Design that outlines the structural requirements of the design.

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

The proposed balustrade scheme and relevant details are shown on FA964 GA200-201C, FA964-GA202B, FA964-GA203-204C, FA964-GA205-206B and 964/500D/501C as listed in the drawing Schedule attached to the application.

DESIGN PROPOSAL

The Health and Safety Risk assessment advises that the existing height of the handrail to the stair is below the level required by current Building Regulations and, as such, poses a potential risk to hotel guests and staff.

The proposal intends to retain the existing historic balustrade and introduces the installation of a secondary balustrade and handrail structure to an acceptable height. This secondary handrail would raise the effective 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.

Upon further structural investigation the revised application proposes an increased baluster post size of 40x40mm and additional structural supports in accordance with the current Building Regulation requirements. Such supports aim to spread the loads from the remedial handrail and provide increased lateral restraint to avoid damage occurring to the existing 19th century stone slabs and steps.

Due to their historic and visual importance within the main reception lobby the existing cast iron balustrade and polished hardwood handrail would be retained.

HISTORY

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.

Internally the Grade II listed stair features a similar cast iron balustrade with decorative elements denoting the period in which it was built. The Stair itself is situated off the entry lobby with flights that encircle a multi-storey atrium space.

USE

The stair itself performs an integral circulatory function and serves as the main access from the Main Ground floor reception to the First, Second and Third Floors that service the 122 guest bedrooms within the building.

SCALE

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.

APPEARANCE

The remedial balustrade is to be fixed to the stair treads on the inside of the existing balustrade to lessen the visual impact on the stair from the atrium below. Fixing plates are to be bolted at the base with countersunk bolts and concealed by the existing carpet which 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. New baluster posts are to be 40x40mm mild steel members and 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 its existing width only a portion of the stair will need to be closed during the works. As such, it will still be possible to accommodate some foot traffic during the installation. Two secondary service stairs and a secondary guest stair, that provide access from First to Third floors, will still be in operation during works to help alleviate any congestion. In addition, there is also a passenger lift serving Ground floor to Third floor levels in operation for access.

Summary

As noted we have sought input from 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 harmonize with the existing balustrade and are sensitive to its wider context within the building, whilst significantly improving its safety performance.