

First Floor Balustrade

**Friends Meeting House
Euston Road
London
NW1 2BJ**

April 2010

Ref: 09/1310

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT FOR RAISING FIRST FLOOR BALUSTRADE

Friends House, the London Headquarters of the Religious Society of Friends, was completed in 1927 designed by Hubert Lidbetter. The building remains in the use for which it was designed, with some alterations and acquired Grade II listing in 1996.

At First Floor level on the East main staircase there are simple stone balustrades to the perimeter of the void to the pair of staircases up from Ground Floor level. The balustrades form guarding of a large and extremely busy landing. The balustrade is clad in Leckhampton stone and is 800mm high.

It was recently highlighted that the balustrade is not at the recommended height of 1100mm as specified in Building Regulations. Although Building Regulations are not applied retrospectively, our client feels a duty of care is owed to employees and general users of the building to have the balustrade comply. The landing area is busy and provides access to the first, second and third floors and the area itself is regularly used as an area where people congregate. Unfortunately, the height of the balustrade is that which encourages one to 'rest' against it, and this has been witnessed on a number of occasions. Since the matter has been highlighted within the Conservation Management Plan Item 5.10 on page 129 as an issue.

Following meeting the Conservation Officer, Alan Wito, we presented some options on the form of additional balustrading. We were advised the preferred option for raising the balustrade would be to carefully remove the coping stone and insert additional matching stone to raise the wall by 300mm to ensure a minimum height of 1100mm.

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Other options, such as installing an additional brass balustrade upon the existing stone balustrade were deemed an inappropriate addition, detrimental to the original design. Similarly, raising the balustrade will have minimal impact on the landing area and would not distract from the Architect's original design intentions.

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