

## Why a well-chosen balustrade and handrail will complete your building

Balustrading is an integral part of any building – an essential part of any design or renovation project.

And although it accounts for just one or two per cent of the cost of a new building project, it can often be the victim of cost-cutting measures because by the time it comes to installation, the budget is likely to be under strain and compromises are sought.

However, for Harry Watson, Managing Director of SG System Products Ltd, a leading UK designer, manufacturer and installer specialist of handrail and balustrades, a statement piece can add real drama to a project.

As a supplier to commercial, public, industrial and residential sectors, SG System Products Ltd understands the importance of the wow factor.

Its recent addition of the Illumine handrail, complete with discreet LED inserts, to its portfolio demonstrates that the appetite remains for innovative products with a design twist. It provides direct lighting to stairs and can be specified on the Stargard, Sentinel and Citadel handrails, and all its balustrade products.

“We are able to respond to the innovation of designers because we understand the engineering and art behind every handrail and balustrade,” said Harry. “Aesthetic appeal is crucial because a poorly designed and constructed balustrade can cheapen the appearance of even the most elegant building.”

Lifetime maintenance costs are another important aspect of any design. The cheapest balustrading – mild steel that is painted on site – although sufficiently strong to do its job, will need to be maintained regularly.

SG System Products Ltd prides itself on using only premium quality metals – stainless steel, brass, aluminium – that can have the option to be sleeved in PVC or powder coated.

Sentinel is a stylish stainless steel balustrade that is available in a range of infills, including glass, perforated metal sheet, stainless steel, while the Stargard is a Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)-compliant warm-to-the-touch handrail that comprises a tubular system made from galvanised steel and sleeved with 4mm thick PVC.

“External balustrading provides visitors with that essential first impression,” continues Harry.

“Stainless steel is often specified because it has to be weather-proof, but we insist that the steel used in the manufacture of the balusters, handrail and fittings, is grade 316. Any lesser grade will not resist the weather.

“If aluminium is used externally, it must be powder-coated or anodised. Either metal will look good but they will need to be maintained eventually.”

Internally, designers can go to town, choosing a feature staircase enhanced with glass or stainless steel balustrading, or a combination of aluminium and stainless steel.

Infill panels to the balustrade are also important in determining the overall effect. Toughened or laminated glass panels are popular and are cheaper than perforated sheet, although perforated panels are often used in schools.

“Using a combination of products means that clients can achieve a bespoke look for their building,” says Harry.

“With so many options to choose from, it pays to agree balustrading detail at the design stage to help minimise the issue of possible future compromises. That way, clients can enjoy the full wow factor.”

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