



A FAST GLASS ACT FOR JULIETTES

Aluminium and glass balconies make an elegant and aesthetic alternative to railings in enhancing the exterior appearance of residential buildings. Effi Wolff highlights an innovative and immediate balustrading solution.

Demand for reasonably-priced homes is continuing to fuel a boom in the building of flats and maisonettes. According to the NHBC's (National House Building Council) latest statistics, flats and maisonettes made up more than half (51%) of new homes started in England in the third quarter of 2007 – almost double the combined percentage of semi-detached and detached homes started (28%).

It's a similar story in Wales with 46% of homes started in quarter three 2007 being flats and maisonettes, 37% in Scotland and 29% in Northern Ireland.

Many of these properties feature French doors with Juliette balconies as attractive architectural features to enhance natural light and living space, particularly in higher-density schemes where space is at a premium. For developers, these features also help to increase the properties' desirability and perceived value to potential purchasers.

Railings and bars - traditionally used to provide the required safety and security for balconies – are often thought of as a 'cheaper' or 'easier to fit' option, but that is not always the case. As well as requiring regular maintenance, such as time-consuming painting, bars reduce the amount of light to the interior while the 'cage-like' appearance obstructs views to the outside.

Now there is an attractive, alternative and immediate Juliette balcony solution – aluminium

and glass balustrading, which combines convenience with cost-effectiveness to suit all property prices, styles and levels of the market. The added convenience of 'off-the-shelf' availability means glazed Juliette balconies can be delivered within a couple of days for housing projects of all sizes and stages of build.

For individuals or architects choosing a Juliette balcony for a one-off build or major house-builders working on large apartment developments, there is now a 'ready-to-fit' Juliette balcony system to meet their needs without compromising aesthetics, quality or cost.

The comprehensive system is available in seven stock sizes with handrail widths ranging from 1.28 metres to 2.84 metres. Immediate availability makes these particular balcony products an ideal choice for quick delivery in the event of last minute changes of mind or specification.

The two most popular widths of 1.5 metres and 2.18 metres also come in four different finishes, Royal Chrome, Silver, Bronze and White for immediate delivery.

With 10mm toughened glass as standard, the Juliette package is delivered ready to install with hand/bottom rails and wall brackets, gaskets and glazing beads.

Innovative glass balcony systems can be installed at comparative prices that you would pay for an iron balcony. The concept also allows for exciting design opportunities for both

straight and curved glass balconies.

Whether it's a simple Juliette style providing security across first-floor French windows or a larger external balcony; the neat lines of clear glass and aluminium handrails lend a contemporary appearance to any building's external appearance.

Glass is also an inherently strong material, with the added advantages of transparency allowing more natural light in and clear views out. There's no maintenance to worry about either; a simple wipe down is all that's needed to maintain the balcony's good looks for years to come.

Installation is straightforward, even by the keen 'Do It Yourself-er', and in the unlikely event of accidental damage, the toughened glass panels can be easily and safely replaced from the inside. This removes the need for costly 'cherry pickers' or scaffolding, particularly for taller buildings. Aesthetics are important too and no one can deny that the transparent beauty of glass is more appealing to the eye than the 'cage-like' appearance of bars or railings.

It is for this reason that glass balustrading is increasingly being seen in all types of projects, from self-builders adding an extension or a French window to large apartment complexes or sheltered housing schemes.

The external envelope of any building is an expression of its design, quality and 'personality'. Glass Juliette balconies provide the clear, convenient and cost-effective balustrading solution. With immediate availability, there's no waiting for 'Juliette' to arrive.

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