



THE “TOWEL RAIL” INITIATIVE

A handrail bracket which bolts directly into the web and/or flat edges of the structural steel whilst it was still at ground floor level. This left only the handrails which were fixed from a scissor lift.

Traditionally, when erecting guardrail protection, scaffolders have only open steelwork to erect and work from. The method of erecting a secure guardrail means the use of substantial amounts of tube and fittings thus prolonging the exposure to working at height. The risks are also significantly reduced when dismantling the guardrails. When the façade was completed, the guard rail and 'towel rail' could be dismantled safely from the inside of the structure.

There were many other safety, quality, time, cost and resource levelling benefits associated with this initiative. Just some of these are as follows:-

- the disruption typically caused to other trades such as glazing and perimeter blockwork was essentially eliminated as this system allowed the façade to be constructed without clashing with the edge protection.
- the temptation for operatives to make unauthorised modifications of the guardrails because they clashed with their work was essentially eliminated.
- the guardrails could be installed far quicker than the traditional method thus allowing other trades to start work on the floor areas.
- the reduction of the high risk element of working at height (externally in the winter months). However, by reducing the amount of time needed to work at height, there was also a reduction in the potential for a significant amount of down time associated with windy or wet weather conditions.
- Apart from the cost savings associated with time there have been major savings in the tube and fittings that were not required for the column details.
- At the end of their useful period the 'towel rails' were simply unbolted and were available for re-use on the next project. Hence the future costs of adopting this initiative will be further reduced as the fabrication cost of the 'towel rails' will be eliminated.

