

**BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE**  
**AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, POABC**

**File No: 98-0081**

**INTERPRETATION**

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Interpretation Date: December 17, 2003

Building Code Edition: BC Building Code 1998

Subject: Handrails for Platform/Stage Stairs

Keywords: Stages, Stairs, Handrails

Building Code Reference(s): 3.3.1.13., 3.4.6.4., 3.4.3.1.(2), 3.4.3.4.,  
3.4.6.7.(4)

**Question:**

A raised platform (approximately 600mm [2 ft.] above floor level) is used as a stage in a church building. The platform has an area of approximately 50 m<sup>2</sup> with an occupant load of up to 70 persons. Two stairs with four risers are provided, one at each side of the platform. The front edge of the platform (stage) is provided with steps--with no handrail. Are handrails required for the steps at the front edge of the platform/stage?

Note the steps at the front edge of the platform/stage are not part of the required means of egress for the platform/stage.

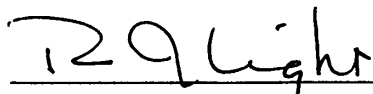
**Interpretation:**

No.

Sentence 3.3.1.17.(1) exempts the requirement for a guard at the front edge of a stage. A stepped front edge to a stage does not trigger the front edge to comply with the stair handrail requirements. The stairs at either end of the platform/stage are required to comply with the stair and handrail requirements. Sentence 3.3.1.13.(1) requires means of egress stairs to comply with the dimensional, guard and handrail requirements in Section 3.4. Based on the proposed size of the stage, the required width of each stair is 900 mm (Clause 3.4.3.1.(2)(b) and Article 3.4.3.4.). Sentence 3.4.6.4.(1) requires a handrail on at least one side of a stairway, and if the stair is 1100 mm or more in width, handrails are required on both sides. Sentence 3.4.6.4.(2) goes on to clarify that intermediate handrails must be installed, where the "required width" of a stair exceeds 2200mm. It is therefore interpreted that the required width of the means of egress stairs is 900 mm and each stair requires at least one (1) handrail conforming to Article 3.4.6.4.

Refer also to the Appeal Board Ruling #1288 that confirms that intermediate handrails are only required when the exit width is "required" to be greater than 2200 mm based on occupant loads.

Refer to the attached drawing for clarification.



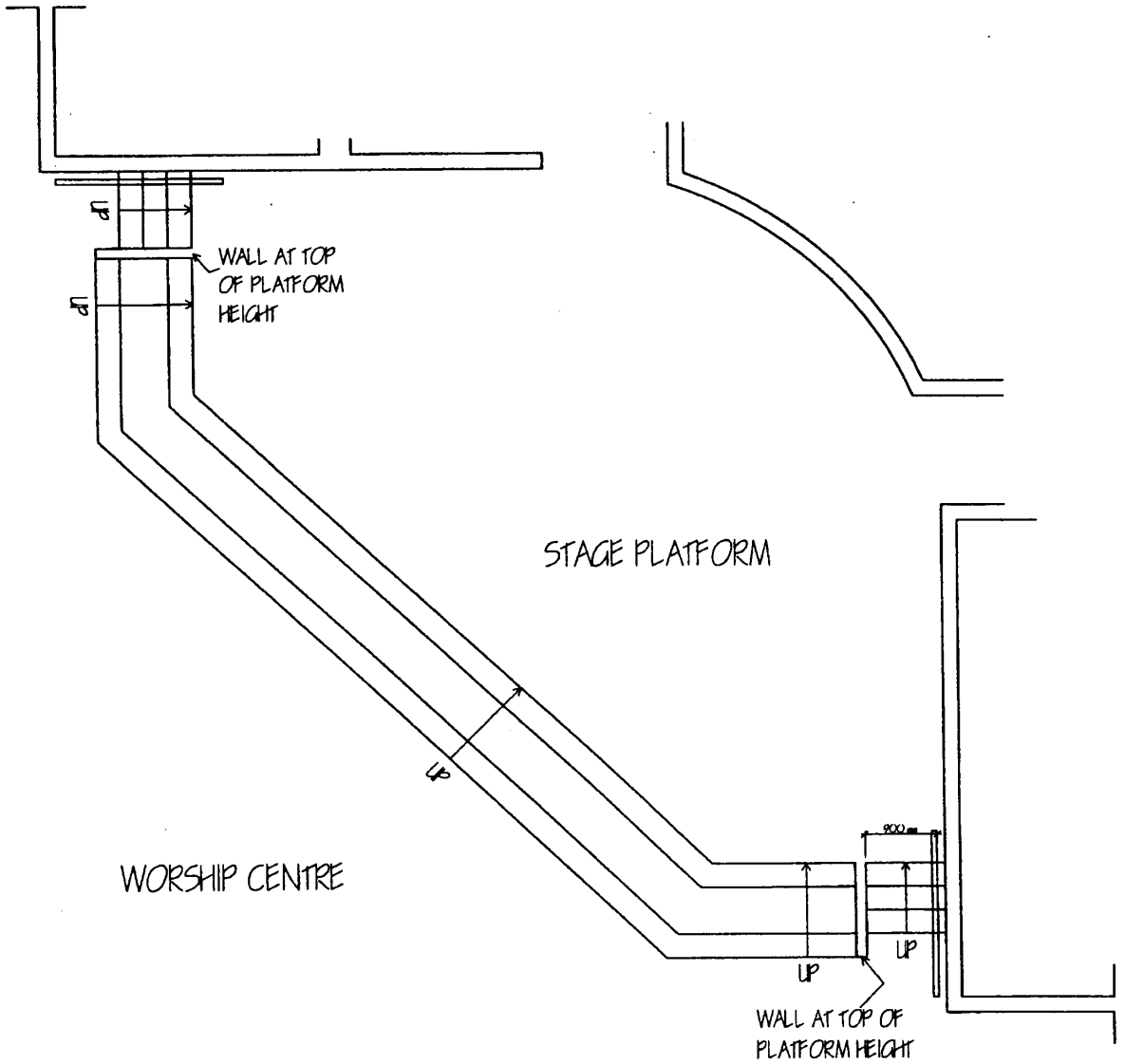
R. J. Light, Committee Chair

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SCALE: NTS

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