

Design and Access Statement

Application: Listed Building Consent for the Replacement of the Front Door and Door Frame

Property: 1 The Brookmill, Reading

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement accompanies an application for Listed Building Consent for the replacement of the existing front door and door frame at **1 The Brookmill, Reading, a Grade II Listed building**. The statement sets out the design rationale for the proposed works, demonstrates that the proposal is a suitable response to the site and its setting, and confirms that adequate access for prospective users has been considered.

2. Description of the Site and Setting

The property is a Grade II Listed building comprising a barn conversion of circa 1600 origin, constructed in traditional red brick with exposed brickwork elevations. The building is of significant historic and architectural interest, representing an example of vernacular agricultural building of the seventeenth century. The front entrance is set within a courtyard setting approached via a brick-paved external threshold with a low stepped approach.

The existing front door is a single-leaf, predominantly glazed timber door with four tall narrow vertical lights in obscured textured glass, painted dark red externally and white internally. On the basis of its design, glazing configuration, and materials, the existing door does not appear to be original to the building and is assessed as a mid-twentieth century replacement of no particular historic or architectural merit. The door and its frame are in a poor state of repair, with advanced timber rot evident at the base of the frame and threshold, paint failure throughout, and deteriorating glazing putty. The door no longer performs adequately as a weathertight, secure external door.

3. Proposed Works

It is proposed to replace the existing front door leaf and door frame in their entirety. No alteration is proposed to the masonry opening, brick reveals, external step, or any other element of the historic fabric of the building.

The proposed replacement door is the **Cottage Mahogany Pre-Glazed Door (44mm)**, supplied by **Doorstore** (www.doorstore.co.uk). The following description is taken from the manufacturer's product specification as stocked and supplied by Doorstore:

The door is a single-leaf solid engineered mahogany door of traditional cottage design, 44mm in thickness, featuring a robust solid engineered core with a traditional cottage-style design. The upper section incorporates an arched panel with a handcrafted triple-glazed leaded diamond-pattern glazed unit. The door is supplied in an unfinished state, ready to stain, paint, or varnish. The door will be supplied in the standard size of 78" x 30" (1981 x 762mm).

The door will be hung on traditional black-finished decorative strap hinges and fitted with a Suffolk-style black thumb latch, consistent with the vernacular ironmongery traditions of a seventeenth-

century agricultural building. These items will be sourced separately to complement the door supplied by *Doorstore*.

The door will be finished on site in a clear natural oil or hard wax oil finish, allowing the natural grain and warm tone of the mahogany to remain visible. No paint or opaque stain will be applied to the door leaf.

The existing door frame and threshold will be replaced on a like-for-like basis in European oak, replicating exactly the profile, dimensions, and rebate depth of the existing frame. The threshold will be replaced in matching European oak with a traditional weathered profile. All new timber will be finished with a compatible clear natural oil to match the door leaf. Where fixings disturb the masonry reveals, all making good will be carried out using lime-based mortar appropriate to the age and construction of the building.

4. Design Rationale and Heritage Justification

The principal driver for the proposed works is the advanced deterioration of the existing door and frame, which renders them beyond economic repair and no longer fit for purpose as a weathertight and secure external entrance.

The proposed replacement, the *Doorstore* Cottage Mahogany Pre-Glazed Door, has been selected for its appropriateness to the character, age, and vernacular tradition of the host building. The key design considerations are as follows:

Appropriateness to the building's agricultural vernacular origin. The host building is a barn conversion of circa 1600 origin. The proposed *Doorstore* door, with its solid timber construction, traditional cottage form, black strap ironmongery, and natural timber finish, is considered more sympathetic to the building's agricultural vernacular character than the existing predominantly-glazed mid-twentieth century door it replaces. The minimal glazed panel (a small handcrafted leaded diamond-pattern unit set within the arched upper panel, as described in the *Doorstore* product specification) avoids the open, lightweight appearance of the existing door, which is incongruous with the solid, robust character of a seventeenth-century agricultural structure.

Removal of an incongruous later alteration. The existing door is assessed as a non-original mid-twentieth century replacement that does not reflect the historic character or period of the building. Its removal and replacement with the more historically sympathetic *Doorstore* Cottage Mahogany door represents an enhancement of the listed building's special architectural and historic interest, in accordance with the principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Historic England guidance.

Material authenticity. The use of solid engineered mahogany, as specified in the *Doorstore* product description, for the door leaf, and European oak for the replacement frame, represents a considered choice of durable, high-quality natural timber species appropriate to an external door on a historic building. The clear natural oil finish preserves the visual integrity of the timber and avoids the use of opaque coatings that would obscure the material character of the joinery. The use of lime-based mortar for all making good ensures compatibility with the historic masonry fabric and avoids the risk of damage associated with cement-based products.

Minimal intervention. The proposed works are limited to the door leaf and frame only. No alteration is proposed to the masonry opening, reveals, step, or any other element of the historic fabric. The footprint, configuration, and dimensions of the entrance remain entirely unchanged.

5. Access

The proposed replacement door will be installed within the existing door opening, maintaining the same clear width and threshold height as the existing arrangement. No change is proposed to the external step approach or the courtyard surface leading to the entrance. The Suffolk thumb latch and strap hinge ironmongery will be positioned at a height consistent with standard accessibility guidelines.

It is acknowledged that the existing stepped threshold presents a limitation for users with mobility impairments; however, this is an existing condition of the historic fabric and falls outside the scope of the current application. The proposed works do not worsen the existing access arrangement in any respect.

6. Conclusion

The proposed replacement of the front door and frame at 1 The Brookmill represents a modest, carefully considered intervention that addresses the significant deterioration of a non-original mid-twentieth century door while enhancing the historic character of this Grade II Listed barn conversion. The selected replacement (the Doorstore Cottage Mahogany Pre-Glazed Door (44mm)) together with a like-for-like European oak frame replacement, has been chosen for its appropriateness to the vernacular agricultural tradition of a seventeenth-century building. The works involve no alteration to the historic masonry fabric and are considered fully compliant with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework, Historic England guidance on listed building consent, and the conservation policies of Reading Borough Council.