

Design, Access, and Heritage Statement

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

Property: 1 The Brookmill, Reading

List Entry Number: 1113610

1. Introduction

This Design, Access and Heritage Statement accompanies an application for Listed Building Consent for the replacement of the existing front door and door frame at 1 The Brookmill, Reading. The statement sets out the heritage significance of the listed building by reference to its official list entry on the National Heritage List for England, explains the design rationale for the proposed works, demonstrates that the proposal is a suitable and sympathetic response to the site and its setting, and confirms that adequate access for prospective users has been considered.

The property is recorded on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) as a Grade II Listed building under List Entry Number 1113610, first listed on 22 March 1957 and most recently amended on 14 December 1978. The official list entry is available at:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113610>

2. Heritage Significance

2.1 Designation and Statutory Protection

The property is designated as a Grade II Listed building, protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended. The building is listed under its historic designation as the Barn at Coley Park Farm, Wensley Road, within the Reading Unitary Authority area. Grade II designation identifies buildings of special architectural or historic interest considered important enough to warrant every effort to preserve them.

The legal protection afforded by the listing extends to the structure itself, any object or structure fixed to it whether inside or outside, and any object or structure within the curtilage of the building that formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

2.2 Description and Special Interest as Recorded in the Official List Entry

The official list entry (NHLE 1113610) describes the building as follows:

"Very large brick barn circa 1619. Brick English bond. 6 bays. Old tile roof patched with others and partly with Roman tiles. Main part has 2 rows of vents to north and central segmental headed entrance flanked by buttresses. Courtyard side to south has projecting gable with segmental arch over lintel and flanking lean-tos. Interior: queen-post roof with 2 rows of purlins on each side, the upper with small windbraces; 3 eastern bays repaired without windbraces. Ventilated panel to east with high lean-to shelter. 'L'-plan south wing slightly later as smaller central gable with weatherboarded tip, partly timber frame with brick. 5 bays, aisled to west. Large shelter to east. Interior, queen-post roof."

The special interest of the building therefore resides principally in its:

- Age and rarity — a largely intact agricultural barn of circa 1619, representing a significant example of early seventeenth-century vernacular construction in the Thames Valley
- Structural integrity — the survival of the queen-post roof structure with purlins and windbraces, and the original brick English bond masonry in six bays
- Architectural character — the segmental headed entrance with flanking buttresses on the main elevation, the projecting courtyard gable, and the lean-to ancillary structures
- Material authenticity — the use of traditional brick, old clay tile roofing (partly Roman tile), and the weatherboarded tip to the south wing gable

2.3 Assessment of the Existing Front Door

The existing front door is a single-leaf, predominantly glazed timber door comprising four tall narrow vertical lights in obscured textured decorative glass, painted dark red externally. Nothing in the official list entry makes reference to the existing door, and on the basis of its design, materials, and glazing configuration, it is assessed as a non-original replacement, likely dating from the mid-twentieth century. It bears no relationship to the architectural character or period of the circa 1619 barn, makes no positive contribution to the special interest identified in List Entry 1113610, and is not considered a historic feature worthy of retention in its own right.

The door and frame are furthermore in an advanced state of disrepair. Significant timber rot is evident at the base of the frame and threshold where timber meets the external masonry step. Paint failure is present throughout the door leaf and frame, and the glazing putty is deteriorating. The door no longer performs adequately as a weathertight or secure external entrance.

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, including the segmental arch and flanking elements noted in the list entry.

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, and will be finished on site. 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 an

early seventeenth-century agricultural building of this type. These items will be sourced separately to complement the door supplied by *Doorstore*.

The door will be finished 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, consistent with the brick English bond masonry identified in the list entry description.

4. Design Rationale and Heritage Justification

4.1 Policy Framework

This application has been prepared having regard to the following:

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular Chapter 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment
- Historic England Advice Note 16: Listed Building Consent
- Historic England guidance: Conserving and Repairing Historic Buildings
- Reading Borough Council's heritage and conservation policies

The NPPF requires local planning authorities to give great weight to the conservation of designated heritage assets. It is the applicant's submission that the proposed works cause no harm to the significance of the listed building as defined by List Entry 1113610 and in fact represent a positive enhancement of its character.

4.2 Appropriateness to the Building's Agricultural Vernacular Origin

The host building is, as recorded in List Entry 1113610, a very large brick barn of circa 1619, representing an outstanding example of early seventeenth-century vernacular agricultural construction. The proposed *Doorstore* Cottage Mahogany Pre-Glazed Door, with its solid timber construction, traditional form, black strap ironmongery, and natural timber finish, is considered significantly more sympathetic to the building's agricultural vernacular character than the existing predominantly-glazed mid-twentieth century door it replaces. The minimal glazed element (a small handcrafted leaded diamond-pattern unit set within the arched upper panel, as described in the *Doorstore* product specification) avoids the open, lightweight, and transparent appearance of the existing door, which is wholly incongruous with the solid, robust, and massive character of a circa 1619 agricultural barn structure of the type and significance described in the list entry.

4.3 Removal of an Incongruous Later Alteration

The existing door is a non-original mid-twentieth century replacement that makes no positive contribution to the special interest of the listed building as identified in List Entry 1113610. 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, consistent with the objectives of the NPPF and Historic England guidance on the management of listed buildings.

4.4 Material Authenticity and Craftsmanship

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 hardwood timber species appropriate to an external door on a historic building of circa 1619 origin. 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 English bond brick masonry fabric specifically described in List Entry 1113610, and avoids the risk of damage to historic material associated with modern cement-based products.

4.5 Minimal Intervention

The proposed works are strictly limited to the door leaf and frame. No alteration is proposed to the masonry opening, the segmental arch, the courtyard elevation, the brick reveals, the external step, or any other element of the historic fabric of the building described in the list entry. The footprint, configuration, and dimensions of the entrance remain entirely unchanged. The principle of minimal intervention, central to best conservation practice and to Historic England's guidance, has been applied throughout the design of the proposed works.

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 brick-paved courtyard approach or the stepped threshold 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 (the barn of circa 1619 at Coley Park Farm, Reading, designated Grade II under List Entry Number 1113610) represents a modest, carefully considered intervention that directly addresses the significant deterioration of a non-original mid-twentieth century door whilst positively enhancing the

historic and architectural character of this exceptional early seventeenth-century agricultural barn.

The selected replacement, the *Doorstore Cottage* Mahogany Pre-Glazed Door (44mm), together with a like-for-like European oak frame, has been chosen for its appropriateness to the vernacular agricultural tradition of a circa 1619 brick-built barn of the type and significance described in the official list entry. The works involve no alteration to any element of the historic masonry fabric described in List Entry 1113610 and are considered fully compliant with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended, the National Planning Policy Framework, Historic England guidance on listed building consent, and the conservation policies of Reading Borough Council.

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