

REPORT FOR INDEPENDENT INSPECTOR

24 Woolston Avenue



1. Matter for Consideration

- 1.1 The appellant subject of this appeal sought consent for a replacement front door.

2. Background

- 2.1 The subject property is a freehold. The surrounding area is designated as **Modern Character Area**.

- 2.2 The property has been the subject of the following applications:

Nature of Works	Outcome
Replacement windows and doors	Approved May 2012
Pt 2 storey, pt single storey rear extension	Refused October 2024
Single storey rear extension	Approved March 2025
Frontage Alterations	Approved April 2025

- 2.3 Planning Permission was not required from North Herts Council.

- 2.4 Photographs are available in **Appendix A**.

- 2.5 Images of the door options are available in **Appendix B**

3. Application

- 3.1 We received an application for replacement front door on 9th October 2024. The applicant gave us two door types to consider. We wrote to the owner to express our preferred choice, however on reply the owner expressed their choice to be the other door.

- 3.2 Whilst the application was pending a decision, the homeowner painted their existing front door in a shade of white rather than the rosewood brown used on the rest of this small estate. The team also picked up that the rosewood brown windows had also been altered to a lighter colour. These breaches are currently being investigated as an ongoing enforcement case.
- 3.3 The Heritage & Stewardship team felt that the Brompton door would be more appropriate, however, the owner wished to proceed with the Mortlake door. It was also felt that the door should match the original rosewood brown colour which has been respected by other residents of this small development.
- 3.4 Following a team meeting of 24th October 2024 the team decided to refuse consent for the Mortlake door for the following reasons:

The Design Principles state:

- New and replacement doors shall normally match the original door design and complement the style of the house and the street scene.
 - External doors shall be finished in a solid single colour to respect the character of the original house and its context.
- 3.5 Following this decision the applicants requested that their refusal be reviewed by AMC. The AMC met on 16th January 2025 and conducted a site visit. The AMC concluded that:
- The Committee noted the array of door styles within the street.
 - The Committee felt the door colour to be more valuable than the style; the Committee noted that there are no differing door colours within the street.
 - The Committee also noted that there are a number of alternative window styles within the street; but all Rosewood brown.
 - The Committee members were unanimous in recommending that the Householder Applications Committee re-consider the decision to refuse consent, made by the Heritage Advice Service. The Committee felt the 'Mortlake' style door to be an acceptable style but agreed that it should be finished in Rosewood brown.
- 3.6 The Householder Applications Committee (HAC) held their meeting on 7th February and re-considered the decision to refuse consent for the Mortlake door. The HAC agreed with the findings of the AMC. At the time of the meeting the owners had changed the colour of the windows also and requested a retrospective application for this external alteration within their letter.

4. Scheme of Management and the Design Principles

- 4.1 The Scheme of Management under the Leasehold Reform Act 1967 in the covenants section at point 6 states:

Restriction on further development

6. Any owner shall not carry out any development redevelopment or alteration materially affecting external appearance of the enfranchised property or of any building or structure thereon save with the written consent of the Corporation (which shall not be unreasonably withheld) and in accordance with plans drawings and specifications previously submitted to and approved by the Corporation. Any such development redevelopment or alteration shall be made in accordance with the approved plans drawings and specifications and shall be carried out in a good substantial and workmanlike manner with sound and proper materials.

4.2 The Design Principles state:

Pg 16 - External doors new & replacement

New and replacement doors shall normally match the original door design and complement the style of the house and the street scene

5. Issues

5.1 We feel that the main issue is the proposed colour of the front door. It is clear when walking the estate that all the windows and front doors are finished in rosewood brown. Within the context of Woolston Avenue, the proposed colour would impact the overall streetscene and diminish the cohesion of this 1980s development. The owners wish to have a door finished in a Pebble Grey colour.

5.2 The Scheme of Management states:

- *The object of the Scheme is to ensure for the benefit of tenants of houses buildings and land on the Estate (whether tenants holding under long tenancies at low rents within the meaning of the Act or not) and of freeholders of such houses buildings and land that the Estate and the standards of appearance and amenity (whether existing or in future) on the Estate shall be preserved and not deteriorate by reason of any tenant of a house in the Scheme area acquiring the freehold of the house either under the enfranchisement provisions of the Act or otherwise*

5.3 With this object in mind, we felt it important to ensure that the street facing scene of this estate is not disrupted by dramatic alterations from the original colour palette.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The Heritage Foundation appreciate the desire of the homeowner to replace their front door, however rosewood brown is the key colour of all windows and doors within this small development and the change in colour, not only impacts the appearance of the house but has a wider cumulative impact on the character and appearance of the street scene.

- 6.2 Overall, it is our view that the application represents a clear breach of the Design Principles, which have been carefully formulated to avoid this type of alteration. The application fails to preserve the character and appearance of the existing property and the Modern Character Area.
- 6.3 It is therefore respectfully requested that this appeal is dismissed.

Appendix A – Photographs



House at time of discovery



Original doors and windows



House prior to painting of front door



House showing contrast to surrounding properties

Appendix B – Plans

Proposed door choice

17:15
Mortlake External Door

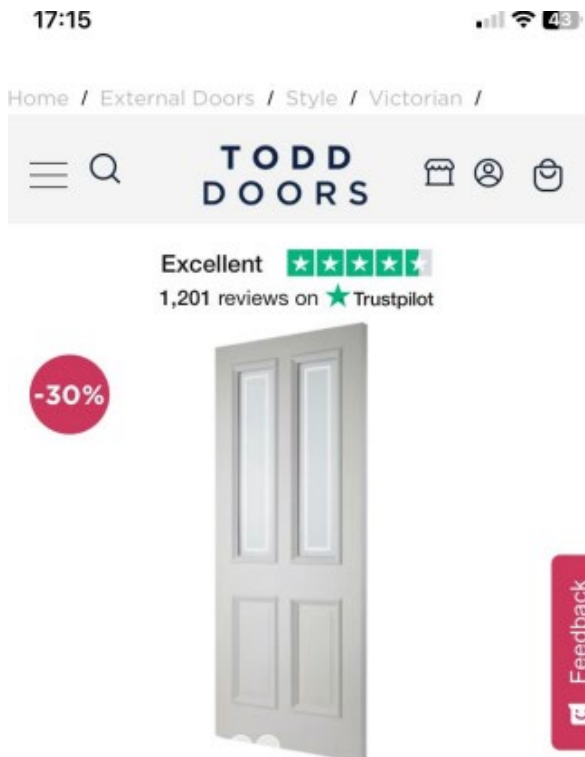


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