Replacing the Back Door at Porch House

Design and Access Statement

The proposal is to replace the back door of a grade 2 listed property in Bromham, Wiltshire, that functions as a family home. The need for replacement arises because the structure of the old door has decayed with age, and is deemed beyond practical repair.

Design Statement

The design minimizes the visual impact of the change, while restoring the functionality of the door, and of the approach to it. The modest visual impact that cannot be avoided has been mitigated by designing the change to be consistent with the building's heritage. Detailed description of the design, along with a heritage statement that justifies the design decisions, can be read in the "Statement of Work" document that accompanies the planning application.

The back door is not visible from any public road or footpath, and awareness of the design will be limited to visitors to the house and one neighbouring home that overlooks the back of the property. That said, the intent of the applicants is to protect the historic asset to the greatest extent possible while the property functions as a family home, and they anticipate that visitors to Porch House will not perceive any significant change.

Access Statement

Replacement of the back door will have no significant impact on how the property is used or how frequently it is visited. Therefore no consideration need be given to vehicular access. However, the back door to the property is the most frequently used entrance and the only route available to people with restricted movement.

The front entrance to the building is through the porch after which the house is named and which the National Heritage List cites as the most significant asset within the building. This access requires pedestrians to mount two substantial steps that are challenging for anyone who lacks strength or mobility in their legs. The design of the front porch is fundamental to the heritage of the building, and it is unlikely that significant modification of the steps would ever be approved. It is therefore important that access via the rear door is as easy as possible.

The current owners of Porch House have recently completed modest ground works to better level the approach to the back door, improve water run-off and stabilise the surface of that approach. This was done to accommodate elderly members of their family who visit.

Changing the back door will have no material impact on the ease of access, but two secondary features of the plan will provide modest improvement to the route of entry:

- The existing threshold timber is uneven, worn down by footfall and damaged by rodents. Its replacement will be more even, and hence more predictable under foot.
- Restoration of the window above the door will improve illumination in an otherwise gloomy corridor, which will reduce the risk of trip.

So whilst the primary purpose of the planned works will not impact access, the project provides an opportunity to improve access, and this has been built into the plan.