

## Suburb character – front doors

The Trust often receives calls from residents asking if they can change the colour of their front door. Other residents, however, feel it is acceptable to change the door itself without any reference to the Trust.

All changes to the exterior of a property require the consent of the Trust and making a change to the design of the front door is just as important as building an extension or adding rooflights or dormers for a loft conversion. This is particularly true if your house is one of a group where the front doors are a consistent part of the design.

Of course changing the design may often be a side effect of the need to find a replacement: after 100 years or so of use a front door can become battered and draughty and not very secure. But the original style may not be available to buy from a DIY superstore or online supplier. A good carpenter can make a copy of the original door and this will undoubtedly be more expensive than running out to the local DIY shop where front doors can cost as little as £40 or less. However a cheap front door will not increase security or enhance the value of your property. A carpenter might be able to repair and upgrade the original door.

Many roads still have a recognisable original style (or styles) of front door. Some stretches of road have extremely distinctive doors with interesting glass panels or even stained glass. Replacing such a door with an inappropriate design may seem to be a cheap option but it should be considered that this will not only alter the look of your own property but it will also have an impact on the neighbouring

properties, especially in a semi-detached house or a terrace.

Changing the door also requires planning permission from the Planning Department at Barnet. If the building is Listed, the correct choice of door is all the more important.

Having said that the design of the door is the important issue, in some roads colour and finish may also be important. If there is a generally consistent palette of colours in your street it is best to stick to this. Cottage doors were generally made of softwood and painted. For middle class housing, hardwood doors were affordable, polished and stained. A stained hardwood door in a cottage almost always looks wrong.

It is a good idea to check the doors in your road before making any changes. If the correct design for your property is not immediately obvious, the Trust's Architectural staff are happy to make suggestions. Residents who

### ***Original door in Hill Top***



### ***Original door and letterbox in Oakwood Road***

inherit mass-produced 1970s and 80s doors can replace these with a copy of the original style, which vastly improves both the look of the house and the whole road.

### ***Original door at Ossulton Way flats***

