

Where there is a problem of decay in a door, it will usually be found that only one member or a particular area is affected, usually along the base where most water is found. The splicing in of new sound timber is usually all that is required, rather than the replacement of the whole door. Small areas of decay may be filled. Repairs should be in matching materials and traditional construction methods should be employed.

Door furniture: original hinges, catches, bolts, knobs and door knockers are important features of the door and should be retained. Traditional door furniture was usually painted iron, although other materials were used and this should not be replaced with modern brass fittings.



Good example of 18th century door

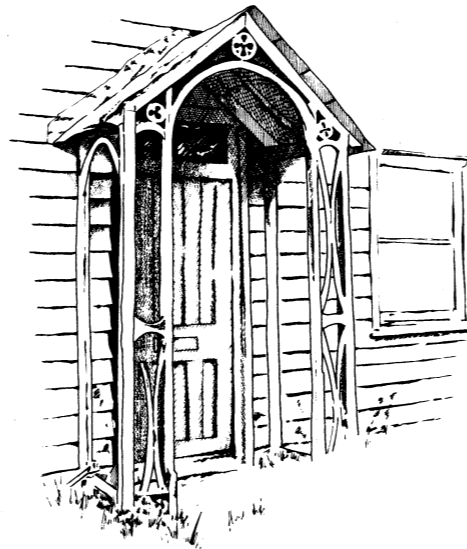
PORCHES

Some historic buildings have elaborate door surrounds, porches and porticos which, if original to the building or contributing to its character, should be retained and restored as important architectural features. If the building is listed, the removal or alteration of the porch, even if it is a recent addition, will require Listed Building Consent. Adding a new porch may require both Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent.



ADDING A NEW PORCH

Before Listed Building Consent for a new porch is granted, you will have to show that it is appropriate for the design of the house and its setting, especially if it is part of a terrace. You must decide whether the building is of sufficient scale to take a full porch or whether a small hood may be more appropriate. Sometimes an enlarged open hood or portico may provide a compromise between the two. Great care and finesse will be required. A modern glass porch or other inappropriate design will detract from the quality of the building.



FURTHER ADVICE

For further advice contact your Local Planning Authority who should be able to draw your attention to any special requirements necessary for instructing your contractor. They should also be able to provide information on the Historic Building Grants available and give details of the other leaflets in this series.

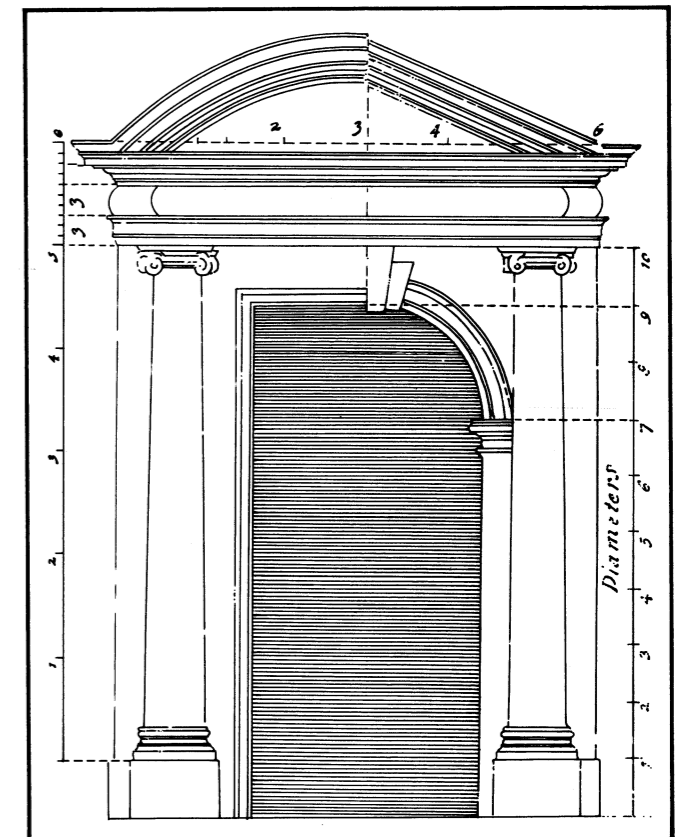
REPLACEMENT DOORS

If the existing door cannot be repaired or has been replaced with an inappropriate substitute, then a new replacement should be considered. A new extension may also require suitable doors and problems also occur with ancillary buildings such as garages. When trying to choose a suitable replacement door some basic research may be necessary to establish the appropriate design to use. On unusual buildings, architectural references can be gained from other parts of the building or from internal doors. Salvaged doors from building demolition and architectural salvage firms may also be considered. "Off the shelf" "period" doors produced by a large number of firms, particularly the so called "Georgian" style, are not appropriate. Doors with integral fanlights are without historic precedent and are totally inappropriate on historic buildings. Similarly, varnished hardwood finishes are not sympathetic. Frequently, the "off-the-peg" door will be of different dimensions to the existing opening. It may therefore be necessary to purchase purpose made doors, although there are some firms that can produce standard doors of the correct proportions and appropriate design.

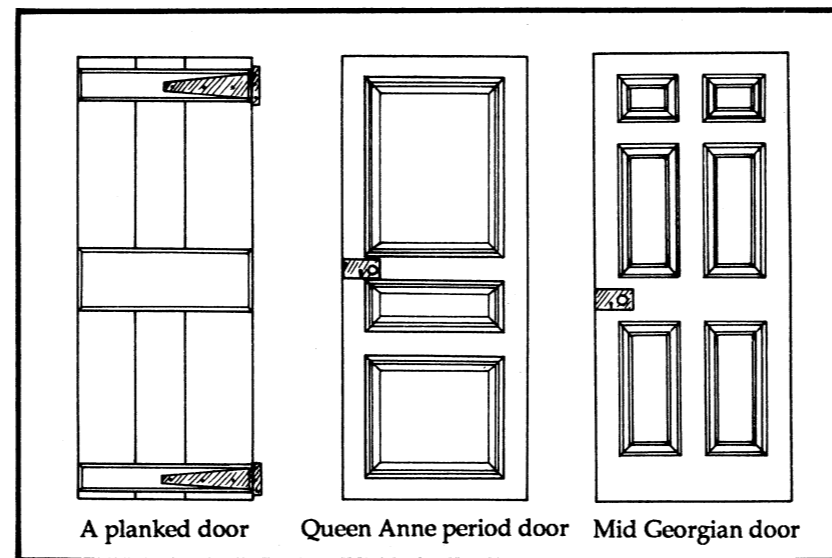


Advisory Leaflet 6

DOORS & PORCHES ON HISTORIC BUILDINGS



An original front door is a considerable asset to any period property, having been specifically designed or chosen for the building to which it belongs. It is of as much importance to the character of an historic building as other architectural features. An original door will usually be most satisfying aesthetically as well as being of intrinsic historic value. This leaflet aims to give guidance on how to treat doors and porches to ensure they continue to contribute to the quality of the historic buildings of the County. It is one of a series that has been prepared jointly by Surrey County Council and the eleven District Councils to provide advice, without prejudice, for the owners of and those working with, historic buildings.



SIMPLE RULES OF THUMB FOR REPAIR OF DOORS AND PORCHES

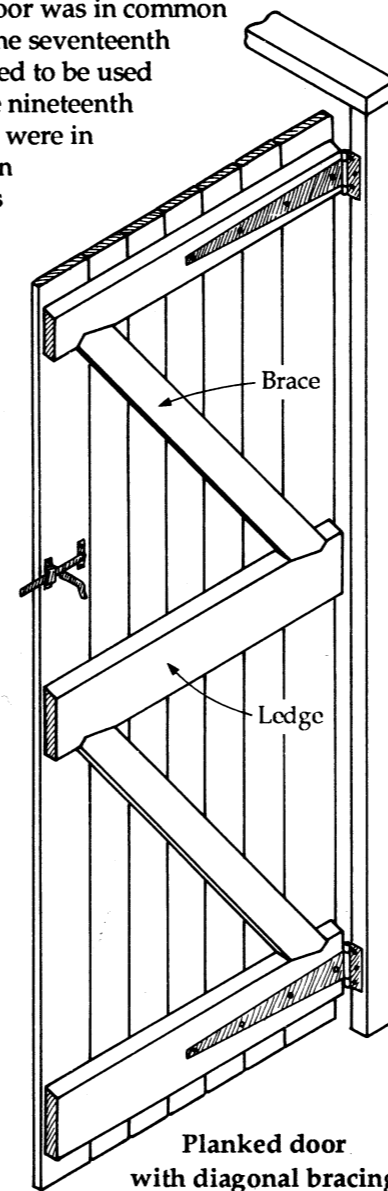
- 1 Contact your Local Planning Authority to see if Listed Building Consent will be required for the repair or alteration. A new porch or replacement door will always need consent.
- 2 Always use a suitably experienced contractor to work on your building.
- 3 Always repair rather than replace.
- 4 When replacing a door always choose a design that reflects the age and character of the property. Ensure it is in a similar style and uses sympathetic materials.
- 5 Do not festoon the replacement door or porch with inappropriate "period" door furniture or decoration such as mock Georgian pediments. If in doubt, use a simple design.
- 6 Do not use glazed doors. Glazing may be acceptable on later properties but should always be kept to a minimum and will require consent.
- 7 Varnished hardwood doors are generally unsuitable. Traditional painted finishes should be used.
- 8 Always use traditional materials and avoid modern substitutes.
- 9 Attention should be paid to careful architectural detailing.
- 10 Unless you can get the scale and the design exactly right, a porch should not be added to an historic building. This will be especially relevant to smaller historic buildings of modest character.

HISTORY OF DOOR DESIGN

Early wooden doors were of simple construction, normally comprising vertical planks, sometimes tongued and grooved and fixed together on two, or later three, horizontal ledges. The door was normally oak, held by rails or spikes without diagonal bracing. It was hung by metal straps and pins directly onto the stonework or timber frame of the building. This type of door was in common use from the medieval period until the seventeenth century on all entrances and continued to be used for less important entrances until the nineteenth century. Carved and panelled doors were in use before the seventeenth century on grander houses, castles and churches and where they survive, should be preserved.

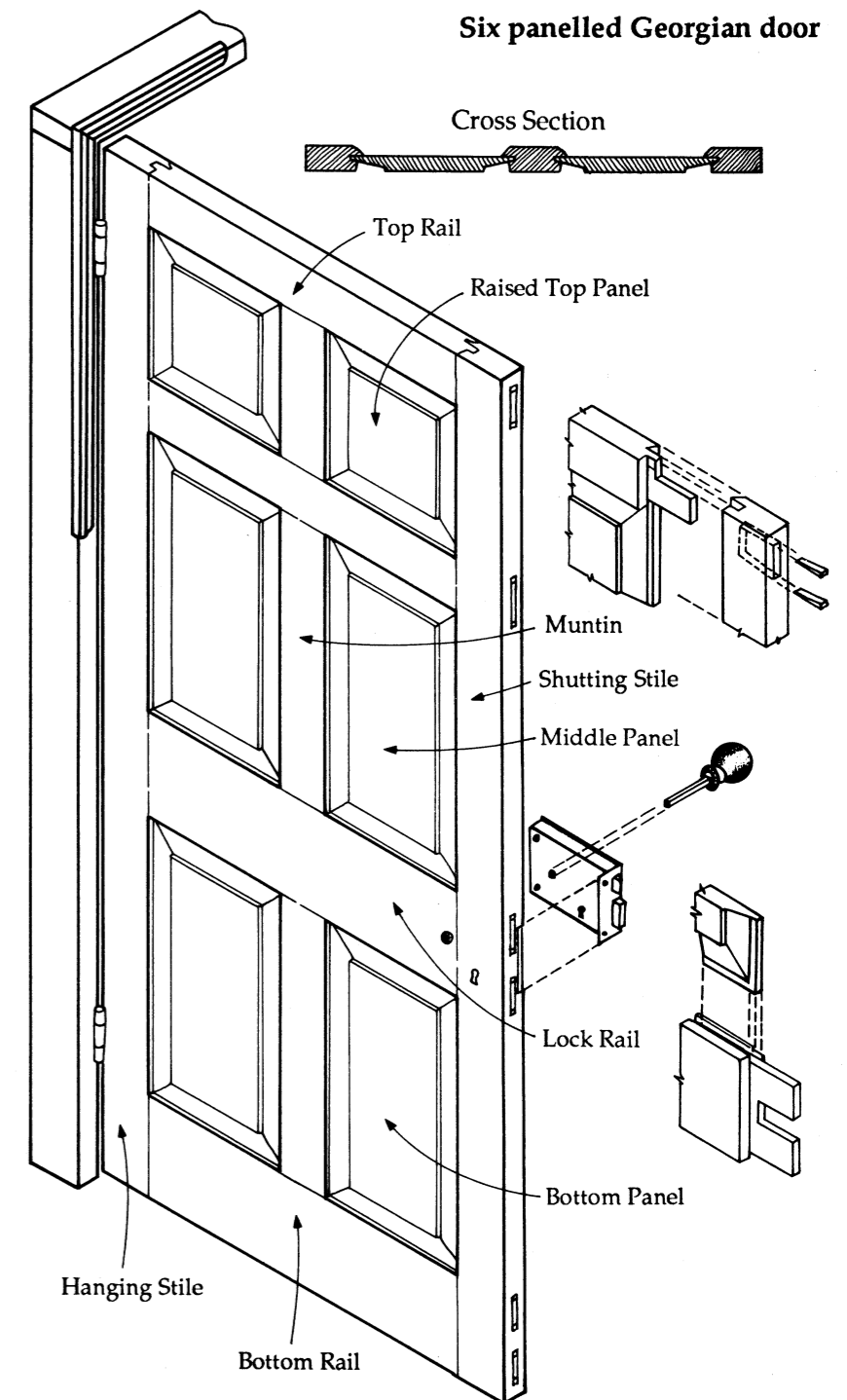
Georgian doors were usually constructed to have a painted finish and should not be stripped. Panelled designs were usual, sometimes of the raised panel and fielded type, the flat fielded panels being raised within the stiles of the door.

The panelled door was designed to fit in with the proportions of the main design and was not glazed. Light was obtained by way of a fanlight over the door, often decorated with tracery and incorporated into the door surround. Doors with glass panels usually do not appear until the late nineteenth century. Door furniture was usually restrained and comprised a central door knob and knocker, the latter sometimes being moulded in the form of a beast or other decorative motif and both made of metal.



MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF EXISTING DOORS.

Apart from earliest doors, usually dating before the seventeenth century, the majority of surviving doors on historic buildings are softwood with a painted finish. All softwood doors should be painted on a regular basis to keep them weatherproof, making sure that old paint layers are removed first so that a reasonable finish can be achieved.



Obviously, where there are mahogany or other decorative hardwood internal doors, these should not be painted and oak external doors should also be left. Some doors from the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contain decorative glass. Any repairs should ensure the glass is retained and should be carried out by suitably expert contractors. The regular maintenance of the glazed areas, particularly the putty, is important.