

Application 2024-098489 Frome St John the Baptist Glazed doors

Responses to comments from other organisations

1. CCB Consult Church Buildings Council

This body asked for

- (a) a photograph of the doors**
- (b) more information on the significance of the doors.**

We addressed these points in a separate document 'Glazed doors—additional information' uploaded on 24 September. Since then our architects, Chedburn Dudley, have added to this as follows:

'To state the significance of what it is that the parish wish to remove. The church of St John the Baptist, Frome is Grade II* listed. Pevsner describes the church as being sizeably re-built in C1160-70 with the tower being built in C13 and later the nave was lengthened and north transept re-built in C14. The chapel's clerestory, upper tower and spire were then later added in C15. Following this, the church was again mostly re-built in 1852-1866 by CE Giles for the Rev W J E Bennet. Although the church was virtually re-built in the C19, some vestiges from the C12, C13 and C14 work still survive.

The central west end entrance is believed to date from the 1852-1866 re-build and includes a pair of large framed doors with plain decorative panels, mirrored on both sides with cast iron ironmongery (also see attached existing images from Dec 2023). The west end central entrance porch also includes boarded doors forming recessed cupboards to both sides and a pair of large external boarded doors, which are all to be retained as existing.

Currently, there are two small steps/ change in level into porch and church, these areas are to be slightly raised to provide level access (to include re-grading the external tarmac and raising the existing coir matting and replacing with new), all as detailed on drawing 1305/SK3. The existing large and heavy entrance doors provide a narrow and dark entrance into the church; although generally left open during good weather, at other times the entrance is unwelcoming for the busy town centre location. Although there will be a loss of historic fabric, the new inner glazed entrance doors will greatly improve the use and entrance into the church and welcome and encourage the public to enter the church (all year round). Also with the benefit of retaining heat through draft proofing.

The existing timber frame to the existing inner timber doors will be retained and made good (with matching timber and stain) where the original hinges and ironmongery are to be removed. The timber frame will then form the surround for the new metal frame work/ channels for the new inward opening glazed doors (to match the existing use/arrangement) as detailed. The new glazed doors will also include perimeter draft proof seals to retain heat within the church and include tall metal handles for ease of use. Manifestation will be required to the glazing (to meet Building Regulation requirements).'

2. Historic Buildings and Places

This body has asked about

- (a) the precise history of the existing doors:** See our reply in 1. above.
- (b) the re-siting of the existing doors in the south porch in the future.**

Due to the conceptual stage of development of a scheme of works, also considering funding currently available and cashflow, we are not looking to include the South Porch re-ordering in this

faculty application, as it will need to include new electrical power circuits and upgrading lighting arrangements - both natural and artificial. We also need to consult with the local authority on the potential re-siting of a street lamp. The West end leaves will be stored on Church premises until a second faculty covering all aspects of the South porch re-ordering were obtained.

It should be noted that the South Porch was constructed at the same time as the West end door revisions (circa 1856) and that the outer arch of the porch follows the architectural form of the west end doorway in terms of material (Doulting stone) shape and header. The south porch does not have an outer door –currently the closure is made with modern site materials (plywood) to exclude rough sleepers and preclude anti-social behaviour inside the porch. Security for the building at that entrance is provided by means of a wooden (Victorian) door on the north side of the porch so the introduction of a further set of wooden doors in the same Victorian style would enhance security and be visually appealing.

However, aside from a final condition and suitability assessment once the leaves are available, their re-use would specifically entail:

- a. The construction of a oak wooden frame to set the leaves in.
- b. Replacing the existing stone step at threshold with levelled access.
- c. Reducing the overall height of the doors by around 750-900mm. (Some flexibility here given the need to form a new threshold and frame thickness may affect the final overall height of the opening leaves). The doors current design (see drawings) lend themselves to be de-constructed and remade accordingly.
- d. Introduction of security quality lock(s) and bolts and door furniture.

3. Victorian Society

We would like to reply on specific aspects of their report as follows:

(a) They say: ‘As part of the historic fabric of the building that was consciously designed for the building (rather than being a stock or catalogue item) it makes a contribution to the significance of the building and its removal would harm that significance.’

We would reiterate that we are aware of their installation as part of the re-ordering of the church in the mid 19th century – see our architect’s comments on page 1., also, that we are hoping to repurpose the existing doors in the south porch, which was also constructed during the re-ordering in the 19th century.

(b) ‘Increased welcome’ paragraph: They say: ‘[Glazed doors] design and materiality are often at odds with the historic materials present elsewhere in the building, and a glazed door's inherent industrial or commercial character does not harmonise with the existing building.

We would like to say that we have recently installed glazed doors in our church hall – also a Victorian building – and people have commented on how well they fit in. The form of those doors match those proposed in the faculty and are likely to be manufactured and installed by the same company.

c) ‘Increased welcome’ paragraph: They say: ‘While such doors are transparent, the level of visibility into a church they provide can vary greatly depending on reflections, the character of the church interior, manifestations on the glass ...

Reflections should not be a problem as the doors are in shadow for much of the day, facing west and sheltered by the other aspects of the West end. Also, reflections have not been an issue with the glazed doors in the Church Hall (see (b) – also West facing.

Manifestation to building regulations may permit the inclusion of an image (perhaps a simple stylised Victorian-form cross or replication of the St John lamb symbol as in the architect’s sketches) rather than mere ‘dots’, and this aspect is in discussion with the prospective manufacturer of the doors. We would welcome any guidance DAC wished to make in that respect.

d) 'Increased welcome' paragraph: the distance of the entrance from Bath Street means it is unlikely views would be noticeable to passers by during daylight hours.

In fact, many, many people pass within inches of our west doors every day.

Bath Street is the main vehicular route in and out of the south side town, but the **main pedestrian routes** pass right outside the west doors of the church (see the appendix on page 4 for a map and photos). So glazed doors really would make a huge difference to our mission in the town.

e) Heat retention is different matter, but it is worth noting that glazed doors are often draughty.

We would note here that the existing doors are slightly warped, letting in cold air, so new well-fitted glazed doors will be less draughty. As mentioned above, we already have similar glazed doors installed on part of the Church Hall and experience there is being used to inform this faculty application. Glass doors can be treated - either tempered or coated – with low-e material to create a high thermal gradient effect. The glass doors would be only inner leaves in the installation, so would be protected from temperature and weather extremes by the outer doors and the (approx) 1100mm airgap between the two sets of leaves.

We would also draw attention to our architect's comments on page 1: 'The new glazed doors will also include perimeter draft proof seals to retain heat within the church.'

(f) Often improved signage can make a church significantly more welcoming to visitors

We have worked hard with signage over the years with signboards at the entrance to the forecourt and to the south churchyard, two noticeboards on the exterior west wall of the church and an A-board out on the forecourt put out when the church is opened at 9.30am and taken in when the church is closed again at 3.30pm.

While we appreciate the Victorian Society's efforts to make suggestions, we have to say that in terms of welcome, using signage to encourage people to come in is nothing in comparison to enabling people to see inside.

In the warmer months we can of course enable people to see in simply by opening the doors, but we can't open the existing doors in the winter or we lose all the heat in the building, so people outside are faced with impenetrable looking doors behind which they have no idea what is happening—this is not a welcome in any sense.

(g) If the parish do wish to pursue this proposal, we would require further information about how the doors proposed for removal would be adapted in the south porch.

See our answer on pages 1-2 in response to a comment from Historic Buildings and Places.

Appendix showing pedestrian routes around St John's: see page 4

[text ends]

Appendix: Increased welcome—distance from thoroughfare

The Victorian Society comments: *While such doors are transparent the level of visibility into a church they provide can vary greatly depending on ... distance from a public thoroughfare. ... due to the distance of the entrance from Bath Street it is unlikely views would be noticeable to passers by during daylight hours.*

In fact, many, many people pass very close to our west doors every day. We agree that Bath Street is the main vehicular thoroughfare into and out of the town from the south side of town, but it is not the main pedestrian thoroughfare. The main pedestrian thoroughfare is down Gentle Street, across our forecourt – which means passing within inches of our west doors – and down Church Steps. The map and photos show this, and also another important pedestrian route – and a noted ‘school run’ – from Vicarage Street along the path alongside the south side of the church into our forecourt – again passing very close to our west doors – then on through across our forecourt and across Bath Street.



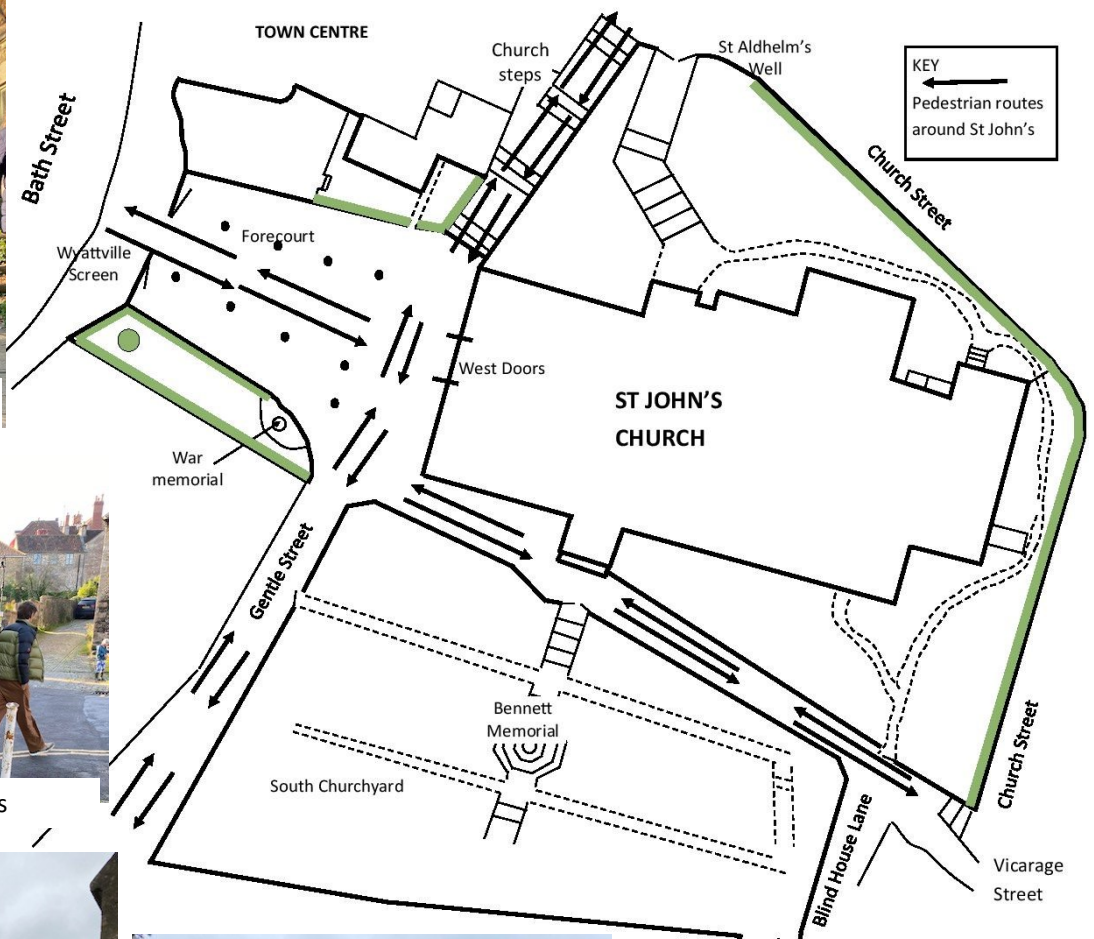
Church Steps



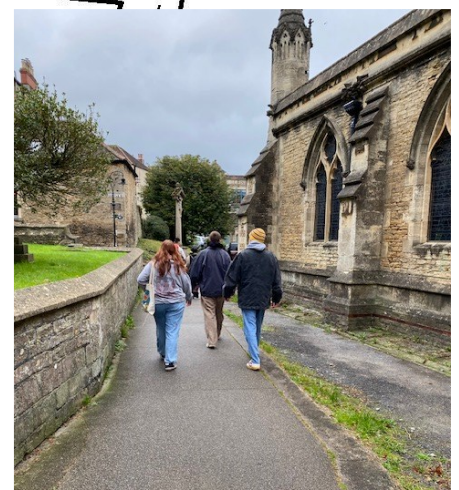
The forecourt from Church Steps



The forecourt from the south churchyard path



Gentle Street from the forecourt



The south churchyard path to/from Vicarage Street