



Historic England

Ms Jacqui Carreira-White
Bath & Wells, Church of England

Direct Dial: 0117 975 0691

Our ref: E00239675
Your ref: 2024-098489
27 November 2024

Notification under the Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (England) Orders 2010

LOCATION: ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, CHURCH STREET, FROME, SOMERSET, BA11 1PL

PROPOSED WORK: Replacement of inner doors with fully glazed

We were notified on 16 October 2024 of the proposed works at the above site.

Historic England advice

The significance of the Church of St John the Baptist

The origins of the Church of St John the Baptist origins lie in the 12th century with some subsequent alterations and rebuilding in the 13th and 14th centuries. The building was then essentially rebuilt throughout the 19th century, first in 1844 and then between 1852-66 by C E Giles in a decorated Anglo-Catholic style. The list entry recognises this phase of development as being of a consistently high Victorian standard.

Part of the Giles scheme included the provision of doors to the west porch, added at some time in the 1850s. The additional information regarding the significance of the doors states that the original design included some glazing, but that this was not enacted, and they were filled in with wood. The doors constitute part of the original scheme of restoration carried out by Giles and contribute to the significance of the building.

The Church of St John the Baptist is listed at grade II* recognising its high levels of architectural and historic significance. Only 5.8% of listed buildings achieve this grade, which denotes the building's more than special interest.

The impact of the proposals on the Church of St John

The application proposes to remove the inner timber doors from the west porch and replace them with a set of glazed doors, fixed to the existing door frame. The existing



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doors would be relocated to the south porch. The proposals aim to make the church more visually welcoming, and to address issues with the draughtiness of the existing door.

In our view, the removal of doors associated with such a substantial and important phase of restoration would cause harm.

Furthermore, we have concerns regarding the character of the proposed glazed doors which is starkly modern and would not respond to the character of the west porch, as existing.

The impact of the re-siting of the doors in the south porch is not currently clear. No photographs or drawings of this aspect of the proposals have been provided and it is not clear if these works are included as part of this Faculty application. We have concerns regarding the potential for the doors to be lost, stolen or damaged should there be a gap between their removal from the west entranceway and their installation in the south porch.

Historic England's Position

Historic England are understanding of the parish's desire to appear more welcoming within the town. However, we do have concerns regarding the impact of the removal and replacement of the existing timber doors which would cause harm. The impact of their installation in the south porch is not currently clear.

We query if the adaptation of the existing doors, including the provision of glazed sections, could fulfil the parish's brief. Whilst we understand that this option was ruled out at an early stage, in our view, such an intervention could provide the increased sense of welcome that the parish desire whilst retaining the existing doors in situ. Furthermore, adaptations to the door frame could address the issues with draughts.

Should this not prove successful, a design of doors that better responds to the character of the building should be sought. The use of an appropriately stained timber frame with glazed sections could provide a sensitive response to this part of the building and allow the proposals to harmonise with the existing fabric.

A suitable design of either adapted or new doors could be achieved with a balance between glazed and solid elements.

Recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.



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These concerns stem from the harm that would arise from the removal of the existing timber doors and their replacement with fully glazed doors, that would not respond to the character of the west entrancenway of this significant building.

We recommend that the parish work with their architect to adapt the existing door through the addition of some glazed sections. Should this not prove successful, we consider that a set of doors with a timber frame could provide a more suitable response to this part of the church.

Further information should be provided with regard to the impact of the installation of the doors in the south porch, and how they would blend with the existing fabric.

We would happy to offer further comments on these options once drawings of these proposals have been submitted.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss these comments. Any unamended application for faculty for this work can be determined without further reference to Historic England, but please consult us again before applying for faculty if there are any material changes to the proposals. This letter is being copied to the Secretary of the DAC.

Yours sincerely

Harish Sharma

Assistant Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

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Documents received:

All documents were accessed via the online Faculty System.



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