

Jacqui Carreira-White
DAC Secretary, Diocese of Bath & Wells

The Reverend Canon Adrian Daffern FSA
Senior Cathedral and Major Churches Officer

jacqui.carreira-white@bathwells.anglican.org

Our Ref: CARE 01/094

25 November 2024

Dear Jacqui

**Frome (Diocese of Bath & Wells)
Removal of existing timber doors and installation of glazed doors**

Thank you for seeking the Church Buildings Council's advice over the proposed installation of glazed doors at Frome St John the Baptist. This advice is informed by an informal and fortuitous visit made by me, with Tom Ashley (Head of Cathedrals and Major Churches), on October 9th 2024, when Tom was visiting Somerset on other business. The advice is given under the Council's delegated advice policy.

St John the Baptist is a Grade II* listed building, and is therefore a particularly important buildings of more than special interest. The present church is largely Victorian, after the restoration of C E Giles 1852-66, with fine glass by Kempe, and unusual roundels in the nave roofspace depicting biblical scenes. In addition there are significant remains of mediæval fabric, together with earlier work (including Saxon stonework and a Norman arch). The remarkable *Via Crucis* on the north side of the church, and the tomb of Bishop Thomas Ken to the east, add greatly to the significance of the building.

The PCC seeks to replace the inner doors with glazed doors out of a desire to increase a sense of welcome. The Council supports the desire of the PCC to ensure that the church is welcoming to visitors, but is not persuaded that the statement of needs makes a compelling argument for this solution. The proposed scheme does not make clear precisely how glazed doors will, of themselves, be more welcoming, and the Council is concerned that external reflection on the glass will preclude a clear view of the interior of the church. It is not clear from the proposals how the doors could be opened by visitors with particular access needs, nor how the existing framework - which is intended to be retained - will be adapted appropriately to accommodate the proposed new doors, saying that this is subject to 'final review'. The Council is not comfortable with this lack of detail.

The significance of the doors as historic fabric in their own right is not made clear in the documents provided. Nor is any detail given as to how the existing doors' new location in the south porch will be realised, nor any significant proposal for the desirability of moving them to this position.

With regard to the claims made for a reduction in carbon emissions, the Council believes that the net-zero benefit here is questionable. Glass transmits heat very easily, so from a net-zero perspective it is a poor replacement for wood in single glazed form. Heat loss and environmental control is better served by a double door system during operation i.e. a draught lobby, and this already exists in the existing solid timber door arrangement. Detailed technical data would help to strengthen the argument.

The Council understands that the PCC may find the advice offered disappointing, but would be glad to comment further if the parish can offer further substance to the omissions identified in this letter, alongside stronger arguments for the proposed alterations.

Yours sincerely



Senior Cathedral and Major Churches Officer