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£4.35





# Choosing the perfect front door



Your entrance door will provide security and could support the insulation values of your home, but making sure it fits in with your project's ethos is crucial to achieving real kerb appeal, says **Emily Smith**

**A**fter weeks, months or maybe even years of piecing together your new home, the hard work will be evident in every nook and cranny of the finished article. But before any visitors step inside to admire the complete masterpiece, they will come face to face with your front door. Ensuring the entrance reflects your project's principles is integral to those crucial first impressions, whether yours is a high-tech contemporary home, ultra-sustainable build or traditional-style scheme.

In the past, doors were usually bought straight from the local DIY store, joinery shop or builder's merchant, but today homeowners have a multitude of options to choose from – including specialist suppliers. “You need to be looking for security, insulation values and durability, within a design that adds to your home's aesthetic appeal,” says Matt Higgs from Kloeber. “Choosing the wrong style of door for the wrong period of house is something we see a lot”

“It's essential to look at the U-values and the future maintenance involved,” says Urban Front's Elizabeth Assaf. “Style-wise, trying to match the front door to every detail of a property is a really common design mistake.” Perfecting the balance of a suitable look that isn't excessively coordinated might seem like a specification minefield, but a thorough understanding of the options available will help.

## Modern ambitions

The average sized front door is around 2,100mm (H) x 850mm (W), but recent years have seen a variety of alternatives. “There is definitely a move towards oversized pivot options. We now make doors up to 3,000mm (H) x 1,500mm (W) to correspond with this demand,” says Elizabeth. Opting for a bespoke design will allow you to go as big as you dare and the choice of double doors presents the opportunity to create a really impressive threshold. “Larger solutions give the impression of grandeur and imbue an entrance with lots of character,” Elizabeth adds.

Enlarged openings correlate with a shift away from traditional styles in favour of strikingly modern looks. “We're seeing a constant rise in the popularity of contemporary designs, which provide the chance to add real personality to a door. Colour is also high on the agenda for many homeowners; more and more are requesting vibrant shades to add a unique twist to their scheme,” says William O'Neill

Above: Oak finishes are really popular at the moment and can be matched up to patio doorsets and windows. Knightsbridge white oak cottage door, prices from £204, Jeld-wen



from Yale Doors. Think about what tone best represents your property; the right hue is key to the panache of your entrance. "People are becoming braver with colour and we are seeing an increase in popularity for bold statements, which will help to add real wow factor," says Matt Higgs.

Don't forget that there is more to an entrance than just the frame and leaf. Letterboxes, handles, spyholes and knockers all present an opportunity for individualisation and stylistic expression. "Long bar handles have been incredibly popular over the last few years and having your house number etched into accompanying glazing is another well received design choice – this is also a practical solution that will make it easier to read your house number from the road," says Matt.

Many aspects of 21st century life are interlinked with the use of smart technology, and home security is no exception, as high-tech gadgets are now available for door locks and access systems. "Nearly every client we speak to at the moment asks whether or not our doors are compatible with their home automation setup," says Elizabeth. "A lot of people like that they can control their doorway with a smartphone. You can buzz someone into your house, check who is knocking and use fingerprint entry to make life simpler. If everything is fitted correctly, this is a convenient resource."

### Sustainable approach

If you want to benefit from effective insulation and airtightness, you need to ensure every break in your home's structure is performing to the utmost – including the front door. U-values for the whole unit should be a maximum of 1.8 W/m<sup>2</sup>K for a renovation and 2.0 W/m<sup>2</sup>K for a new build. It's also important to draughtproof every gap – including the letterbox. Check that the weather seals on the frame compress properly when the door closes against them. Thorough technical guidance on the thermal requirements

Smart entrance systems allow you to open your door using PIN codes, fobs, smartphones or even fingerprint technology. Yale's Keyfree Connected smart lock is one such design that offers modern levels of security and convenience



Above: Bold hues and stained glass details are a popular choice. Ludlow door with Quad red glazing, chrome handle and letterplate, £700, Quickslide. Left: Pivot doors work especially well on larger thresholds. Neo E80 doorset in Iroko, 2,400mm (H) x 1,800mm (W) plus boarded panel, £6,500, Urban Front

### PROS & CONS OF POPULAR MATERIALS

There are various options when it comes to the internal makeup of a front door, each with its own set of benefits and disadvantages:

**PVCu** The familiar white plastic of this type of door remains a popular choice for many, but some consider their lightweight profile to appear dated. This option might not offer a great deal in terms of grand statements, but they do now come in an array of colours and are a great solution for those on a tight budget. They're low-maintenance, but have a limited lifespan – typically around 35 years.

**Timber** The design options for wooden doors are endless and this material can easily assist in making an impressive visual result. However, they can be a bit on the pricey side (particularly more exotic woods) and will require regular maintenance in order to protect them from the elements. If kept in good condition, they can last for many decades.

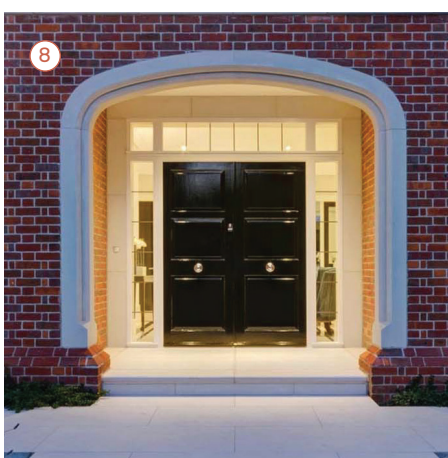
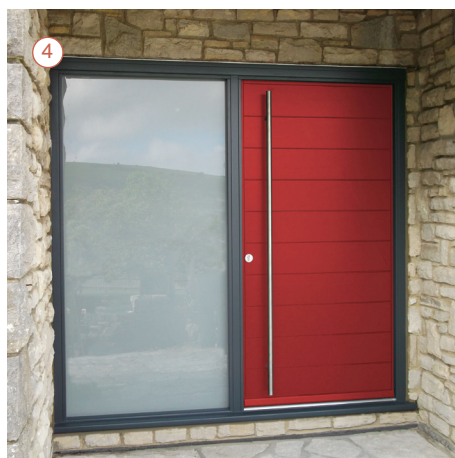
**Composite** These doors have a reinforced frame that is insulated with a thermally efficient foam layer. They are finished off with a range of materials, including hardy GRP (glass reinforced plastic) and timber. A thick core has made this style well favoured as it boasts admirable U-values and security advantages. The GRP versions don't require decoration, eliminating the need for future upkeep.

**Aluminium and steel** Providing strength and durability, metal doors are low maintenance and increasingly affordable. They can be coated in any colour and offer impressive U-values thanks to their insulating foam core.



# Door style inspiration

Make an impressive entrance by fitting one of these wow-factor front doors



**1** Boasting contemporary appeal, this pivot design features artistic detailing. **Root E80 Pivot front doorset in a RAL finish with Option 10 handle, 2,400mm (H) 1,200mm (W), £4,600, [www.urbanfront.com](http://www.urbanfront.com)** **2** Make a colourful statement with this country style door. **Quickslide Flint 5 in Rich Aubergine with black furniture, 2,100mm (H) x 900mm (W), £750, [www.quickslide.co.uk](http://www.quickslide.co.uk)** **3** This oak veneer design with a small glazed panel boasts a U-value of 1.5W/m<sup>2</sup>K. **Therm-L Mosel, 1,981mm (H) x 838mm (W), £539, [www.jbkind.com](http://www.jbkind.com)** **4** Bold and bright, this red door is accompanied by grey surrounds and a fashionable full-length handle. **FunkyFront timber entrance door, 2,100mm (H) x 2,000mm (W), £1,880, [www.kloeber.co.uk](http://www.kloeber.co.uk)** **5** Oak possesses timeless appeal, which is certainly the case in this front door design. **Knightsbridge white oak door with croft glazing, 1,981mm (H) x 838mm (W), from £207, [www.jeld-wen.co.uk](http://www.jeld-wen.co.uk)** **6** Create a grand entrance with this striking composition. **ThermoSafe Style 557, from £3,862 (excluding side elements), [www.hormann.co.uk](http://www.hormann.co.uk)** **7** Thanks to its impressive stained glass detail, this option will add kerb appeal to any home. **Yale Contemporary, made to measure, £1,164, [www.yaledoor.co.uk](http://www.yaledoor.co.uk)** **8** This traditional looking design adds elegance and grandeur to this property. **Kensington & Chelsea double entrance door, bespoke designs, prices start from £900, [www.lomaxwood.co.uk](http://www.lomaxwood.co.uk)** **9** This Victorian-style model has been given a contemporary colour twist. **Four panel primed clear pine veneer timber glazed external front door & frame, 2,125mm (H) x 907mm (W), £498, [www.diy.com](http://www.diy.com)**