

# **The Landings – Policy relating to Replacement Front Doors**

## **The Issue:**

Many of the front doors in The Landings are over 30 years old, being the originals and installed when the houses were built.

They are metal, inward opening and with two small glazed panels. The lower edge of the glazing stands 5feet 8 inches from the floor and with a total glazed area of 70 square inches, which is around half a square foot in area. There is generally a small spy-hole a little over 5 feet above floor level.

The question to be addressed by the Board is how these doors can be replaced, when replacement is required, and the style that can be permitted within the limitations set out in the governing documents.

Changing the front door style to anything different to the existing will require an ARC approval, and the ARC process will require that the change does not compromise the very attractive environment that gives The Landings (and other parts of Aberdeen East) its unique and enviable character.

The door will also need to meet current code requirements. Although it is possible to meet code with an inward opening door, with special reinforcement, the general requirement is for doors to open outwards.

## **The Problem:**

The solid style of the doors is outdated, and the provision of a very small amount of high-level glazing leads to the following, that are regarded as problems:

- Safety.
  - The door creates a very dark area inside the room and entering from a bright outside can lead to a tripping or bumping hazard, particularly for elderly people with fading eyesight.
  - The spy-hole fails as a safety feature. A trouble-maker ringing the door bell can easily duck down, so fooling the occupier into thinking there is nobody there, until the door is opened to asses the cause of the bell being rung. A forced entry is then possible.

**Note:** recent delivery of the Community Directory showed up some attempts to overcome this by the resident looking out of the front bedroom window. But there is an area to the side of the door where the intruder can hide. It was also noticed that some residents were not tall enough to use the spy-hole in the door.

- The older, inward opening door can be kicked in, and can also be forced open by strong hurricane-force winds.
- Preference.
  - These older doors are unattractive, and the dark area created inside the living rooms are simply undesirable.
  - There may be a popular requirement to simply update and modernize the style of the front door as a part of the refurbishment and updating of the interior.

**Proposition.**

It has recently been acknowledged by our Board that Aberdeen East, but more particularly The Landings, should avoid becoming a ‘museum piece’ and should seek ways of updating while maintaining its character and quality.



The character of The Landings is based on the open, tree and berm-dominated landscaping together with the attractive architectural styling of the buildings. This style of buildings is dominated by the roofs together with the prominent arches of the car ports. The buildings are also cleverly staggered horizontally, and this gives an attractive appearance to these blocks of 4 units.

The front doors play no significant part in the character of the buildings or the

street scene generally. The blocks within each berm are made up of two end units and two intermediate units. The front doors in the end units are at the side and face into the car ports. These doors are virtually invisible from the road and the berms. The front doors of the intermediate units are set back between the front bedroom and the kitchen within an area that is shaded. The character of the door can be difficult to ascertain.



For this reason, it is considered that the doors can deviate from the original door style, within carefully considered limitations that don't lead to the weakening of the character of The Landings.

## What is Possible?

It is essential that the style or the color of the door does not interfere with overall attractive appearance of The Landings. It is considered that a new door can blend with the surroundings and to some extent be invisible. For this to happen it will be necessary that doors panels and surrounds are painted the same as the colors of the house walls. These are the colors of the existing doors. It will make little or no difference as to whether the door is made of wood, composite or steel/aluminum.

The feature that will set the doors apart and reflect individual choice of the homeowner, is the extent and shape of the glazing set within the door. It is considered that the introduction of glazing into the door will overcome the safety issues described earlier and open up opportunities to create a more modern internal décor. To the visitor and prospective house buyer, modern attractive front doors will show that there exists some choices for the homeowner and dispel any thoughts that Aberdeen East cannot 'move with the times'.

The following are considered to represent a range that offers scope to the owners while protecting the character of The Landings. The five styles that can be considered acceptable and available for home-owners are shown below. The matter of inward/outward opening and the use of an insect screen are considered later.



## What does the Code say?

Following communication with the Boynton Beach Code Enforcement Department, it is a general requirement that all new doors shall open outwards. However, if a door manufacturer can show a Notice of Approval (NOA) relating to a door that opens inwards, because of specific structural design and additions, so complying with the State of Florida 2017 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, then a Permit will be issued. An inward opening door will solve many problems.

A new door without an NOA, shall open outwards, and therefore will not work satisfactorily with a bug screen. The following should be considered when looking to replace a door without an NOA.

### **The Bug Screen.** Light and Ventilation.

Important requirements of a bug screen are:

- That when open, the screen should not allow bugs to stick to the face of the screen that becomes exposed to the inside of the room when closed.
- That when closed, a screen on the inside of the door does not block access to the door handle and locks.
- That when closed, the screen on the outside does not stop the door from opening.

Having regard to the above requirements, all options have been examined (drawings available) and **there isn't a workable solution that allows a hinged screen to work in conjunction with an outward opening door.**

This is because if the screen is on the inside of the door: -

- It will introduce bugs into the room if opened inwards.
- It will prohibit access to the hardware if both the screen and the door are mounted so that both open outwards.

If the screen is on the outside of the door, its hinge must be on the opposite frame to the door creating the following: -

- It will make opening the door from the inside almost impossible.
- It will not be possible to seal the screen as the open edge will close and rest against the door, with a necessary gap.
- It will have an unsatisfactory framing mechanism.

If ventilation and light is needed, then a combination of open screened windows on the same side of the building (e.g. kitchen and front bedroom) together with glazing of the new door should help to re-create the effect of the existing arrangement. Residents like to use the cooler temperatures in winter to create light and ventilation within the living spaces by leaving the door open and closing the bug screen.

### **Conclusion.**

A policy can be based upon the following:

- A new door shall be selected from one of the 5 styles shown above.
- The framework and the door panels shall be painted the color of the house walls.
- The glazing shall be the choice of the homeowner.
- The door can open inwards with a manufacturer's Notice of Approval (NOA) and with or without a screen door.
- The door can open outwards but without a screen door, with ventilation relying upon open screened windows.

If the Board accepts this report as a way of moving forward in relation to a door replacement policy, an appropriate draft policy can be prepared for the Board to consider.

**Richard Hamer May 2019**