Entrance Doors – the signature of your home

Choosing the right front door for your property is key to creating a good first impression and enhancing kerb appeal. With so many different products on the market Stuart Shaw, of Hörmann UK provides an insight into the recent developments in door manufacture to help self-builders make an informed decision.

The entrance door you choose for your development has to satisfy many criteria, not only do you want it to look good and work in harmony with the style and design of the property, it also needs to provide the highest levels of functionality when considering security, thermal efficiency, durability and maintenance. Combined with a variety of material options and an ever-increasing choice of finishes and colours, choosing the right door can seem daunting.

Traditionally timbers doors have been the most fitted door in the UK, whilst offering good insulation properties, they do require constant maintenance to ensure that this natural product withstands the British weather and stays looking good. PVCu doors, popular with the replacement and commercial new build markets, score highly in thermal insulation but they can dis-colour and warp over time. However, recent developments in manufacturing techniques and material design have led to aluminum and steel doors seeing a steady increase in popularity in all sectors as they offer durability and resilience, together with high levels of performance.

With caring for our environment becoming increasingly important, insulating a property has never been more relevant and choosing a thermally efficient front door will help reduce heat loss and save money on heating bills. All new doors can now be tested for their Energy efficiency and given a simple A-G rating. A high-performance insulated door will have a minimum energy rating of ‘C’ and above.
Current legislation also requires that all new doors sold and fitted in England & Wales must have a “U” value not exceeding 1.8 W/m²K and the lower level of 1.6 W/m²K applying in Scotland. The U-value of a door is a measurement of its thermal transmission properties, in other words how much heat is lost through the door. The lower the value, the more energy efficient it will be. The latest technological advances now see front doors manufactured from steel and aluminum being able to achieve U values as low as 0.87 and 0.47 respectively.

To protect property against unwelcome intruders it is vital that the most advance locking and security systems are fitted, with minimum requirements complying with Building Regulations – Part Q. Entrance doors can be fitted with a high-security locking system and the profile cylinders which protect against manipulation. Increased levels of security can be provided by fitting break-in resistance equipment manufactured and tested to the latest British and/or European standards.

The way in which locks are operated should also be considered in terms of security and convenience. Although traditional keys are still most commonly used, there are a wide range of systems that are now available on the market that offer unrivalled standards in usability and security, with Smart technology becoming increasingly popular. Radio finger scanners, keypads or remote-control transmitters are all designed to provide homeowners with exceptional levels of security, supported by apps which offers the ability to open the entrance door remotely throughout the property, whilst checking on the status of the door.

The specification of entrance doors relating to accessibility for domestic dwellings is covered by Building Regulations - Part M. Compliance with the regulations means that where a front door is fitted to a new build property the door must have a level threshold (minimum threshold height 15mm), so that wheelchair users can move in and out of a property without a step. The entrance door should also be at least 838mm wide. Renovations of existing houses or extensions do not have to comply.

Incorporating glazing features within the door or as side panels is becoming widespread and popular both in terms of aesthetics and to add light into hallways. Homebuilders should ensure that glazing is manufactured from multi-pane insulated glazing units incorporating toughened or laminated safety glass to help protect against injury in case of accidental breakage.
Popular door styles range from the elegantly classic to more contemporary designs and door manufacturers have been working hard to improve the overall look of front doors by offering more concealed hinges, pivots and streamlined handles. An extensive choice of colours and finishes provides ample opportunity to experiment with a splash of colour such a vibrant Flame Red through to contemporary greys.

Some manufacturers are now providing on-line Configurators which show an overview of all their designs and finishes and allow the end consumer to customize their door in just a few clicks. The selected door can then be seen in-situ by simply uploading an image of the façade of the property, truly providing self-builders with the chance to meet the individual design requirements of their project.

For further information on Hörmann UK’s Entrance Doors, call 01530 516880 or visit: https://www.hormann.co.uk/home-owners-and-renovators/doors/front-doors/

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