

GRAND DESIGNS

The perfect home should really know how to make an entrance. Colin Campbell of East Lothian architecture practice Low Carbon Studio tells us why getting the threshold to your property just right can make all the difference.

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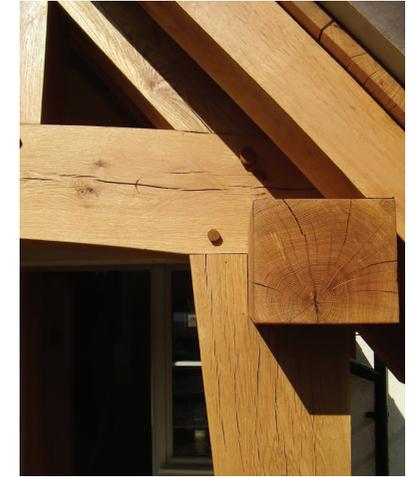
When I studied at the Mackintosh School of Architecture in Glasgow, I remember working on a project which was all about celebrating entrances. They're an incredibly important element of any structure. Often the first part of a building that you interact with, they're the threshold that connects a piece of architecture with the outside world.

The idea of the project was to explore how buildings mark your approach to them and the transition from the outside to inside. I was in my first year and I remember not quite understanding the purpose of the project. However over my years spent working as a designer and architect I have learned to appreciate just how important the way we approach and enter a building is.

Whether you're choosing a front door or designing a striking porch, first impressions really count for a lot. This is the first part of your home you see when you come home from a long day. It's the first place a new visitor sees. It's the threshold you cross when you leave the outside world behind you.

An entrance porch or garden room can both be interesting ways to create a new, striking threshold for your home. We work closely with Alba Green Oak Frames, and oak frames work really well for both types of design. We've designed and constructed many entrance porches and garden rooms together, each one bespoke and each one enhancing that transition from outdoors to in.





They can be grand or simple structures. Visually, they mark the point of entry to a building as you approach it and in some cases provide an enclosed or covered space to remove and store coats, boots and other paraphernalia. Taking into consideration views and orientation, in larger entrance spaces they can even double up as small sun rooms; a place to sit and relax.

They can be open or enclosed, with glazed walls or roofs. The timber frame can be fairly simple or very detailed in its design. Alba Green Oak Frames often take the opportunity with a home's entrance to add some fine timber carving that can be viewed close up due to the small scale of the structure.

Some projects feature the entrance on the front of the building as the main threshold. Others place it on the rear where they tend to double up as spaces for storing outdoor clothing. We have also completed projects with frames to both front and rear entrances.

Often we choose to link the design of an entrance to the landscaping. The choice of materials and planting will enhance how the building is linked to the exterior and the approach to it. In some projects we have replaced an existing entrance which simply doesn't correspond to the design of the home it's been added to. In others we have replaced entrances that weren't structurally sound.

As with all frames we work with, our clients can choose between green oak or Douglas fir, although most owners go for oak. The frames are cut and prepared off site and can be erected in just two or three days. Depending on the size and location they usually won't need a planning and building warrant approval, making things particularly straightforward for our clients.

For home owners these structures provide a cosy space to welcome guests, one which offers protection from the elements and acts as a buffer zone between inside and out, helping to prevent



heat loss in the process. Best of all, perhaps, is that they look beautiful. Any timber frame added to a house gives a wow factor and our clients invariably comment on how amazing the spaces we create for them feel.

When we think about enhancing our properties, we often think about big ticket areas, be it a new kitchen or a big extension. However it's important to get those smaller details right, and your home's entrance is key. You know what they say; you don't get a second chance to make a first impression...TC