

Project2

Decoding Invisible Signals of Winchester Doors

This project investigates doors in Winchester as everyday interfaces that encode invisible social, historical, and behavioural signals within the built environment. Doors are treated as everyday interfaces that communicate social, historical, and behavioural information.



Why Doors?

Doors are ubiquitous elements of the urban environment, yet they are rarely consciously noticed.

Through details such as colour, material, locks, doorbells, and signs of wear, doors communicate boundaries, access, identity, and social norms.

When decoded, these overlooked details reveal how private and public life is negotiated at street level.



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Key Questions + Signal Categories Identified Across the Study

These categories function as analytical tools rather than fixed attributes. Not every door displays all signal types, and in some cases, the absence of a signal is also meaningful.

Colour → Identity & Expression

Material → Economic & Historical Status

Doorbells / Intercoms → Social Structure & Occupancy

Locks & Security Devices → Perceived Risk & Control



Door Lamp

Fixed lighting signals safety, visibility, and regulated access after dark.

Signals |

Creamy white · Metallic details · Symmetry

Reads as |

Formal · Controlled · Reserved

Meaning |

Colour and metal detailing signal controlled access and social distance.



Glass Panel

Visual transparency signals openness, surveillance, and invitation.

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Signals |

Dark tones
· Glass
panels

Reads as |

Open · Tran-
sitional · Pub-
lic-facing

Meaning |

Glass transparency
signals openness and
invitation, typical of
commercial use.



Signals |

Black colour · Plants · Everyday objects

Reads as |

Informal · Lived-in

Meaning |

Surrounding objects signal on-going domestic use rather than display.

Everyday Objects
Nearby objects signal ongoing occupation
and everyday domestic use.

Signals |

Multiple doorbells · Layered hardware

Reads as |

Functional · Adapted

Meaning |

Multiple doorbells signal subdivided occupancy and shared access.

Doorbells

Multiple doorbells signal multi-household occupancy.





Metallic Hardware

Clean metal hardware signals maintenance and pride of ownership.

Signals |

Multiple doorbells · Layered hardware

Reads as |

Functional · Adapted

Meaning |

Multiple doorbells signal subdivided occupancy and shared access.

Signals |

Light colour · Seasonal decoration

Reads as |

Stable · Cared-for

Meaning |

Seasonal decoration signals long-term residency and cultural participation.

Metallic Hardware
Clean metal hardware signals maintenance and pride of ownership.





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SOUTHGATE STREET

Signals |

Multiple mailboxes · Numbering

Reads as |

Dense · Shared

Meaning |

Mailbox clustering signals subdivided living and shared access.

Mailbox
Mailbox signals regular delivery and ongoing occupation.



Signals |

Green colour · Surface wear

Reads as |

Practical · Everyday

Meaning |

Wear and fading paint signal frequent use over visual display.

Signal 01 — Door Frame Edge
EN: Aged edges signal time and accumulated use.

Signals |

Seasonal decoration

Reads as |

Expressive · Time-based

Meaning |

Temporary decoration signals presence and seasonal rhythm.

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St Thomas House

25A

House Name

Naming signals ownership and personalised domestic identity.

Signals |

House name · Typography

Reads as |

Distinct · Identity-focused

Meaning |

House naming signals ownership and personalised domestic identity.

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Decorative Door Knocker
Ornamental door knocker signals personal expression and attention to detail.

Signals |

Mint green colour · Decorative door knocker · Door number

Reads as |

Friendly · Domestic · Approachable

Meaning |

Soft colour and decorative details signal a welcoming domestic identity and personal expression.





Signals |

Glass panel · Safety signage · Exterior lighting

Reads as |

Functional · Regulated · Institutional

Meaning |

Signage, lighting, and controlled transparency signal institutional use and regulated access.

Safety Sign (Assembly Point)
EN: Safety signage signals institutional use and compliance with public regulations.

Summary Signal Statement |

Doors in Winchester function as everyday interfaces that quietly communicate identity, history, and social behaviour.

These signals are produced over time and interpreted differently depending on the reader.

