
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 July 2020

by H Butcher BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L3815/Y/19/3240926

Highleigh Farmhouse, Highleigh Road, Sidlesham PO20 7NR

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Hindson against the decision of Chichester District Council.
 - The application Ref SI/19/01103/LBC, dated 17 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 4 July 2019.
 - The works proposed are replacement windows to match existing.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the replacement windows on the special architectural and historic interest of Highleigh Farmhouse which is Grade II listed.

Reasons

3. Highleigh Farmhouse is a detached two storey property dating from the late 18th/early 19th Century. The original house has been extended over the years with a relatively historic two storey rear extension and more recent single storey rear extension. The front elevation of the original house is articulated by a central entrance door with doric pilasters and pediment, either side of which are large, traditionally constructed, timber sash windows. Above these are three further traditional timber sash windows. Similarly, on the side elevations of this part of the property, are a number of historic timber windows and the rear two storey extension is also heavily punctuated with such windows.
4. Windows and doors are one of the most prominent features of a building and are often an integral part of their design, as is the case here, as demonstrated particularly by the front elevation of the original property. Part of the significance of Highleigh Farmhouse is derived from its historic windows. Albeit perhaps not all are original, they nevertheless contribute to the significance of the building, not only in terms of their traditional materials and craftsmanship but also from their age and patina, which, to no small degree, provides interest. They also hold significance in terms of the evolution of the building over the years. Consequently, they make a substantial contribution to the architectural and historic interest of the property.
5. The works before me include the replacement of all windows in these historic two storey elements of the property with contemporary slimline glazing units.

Although these would replicate the windows they would replace in terms of materials, style and detailing they would be of modern, engineered construction which would give them a wholly different appearance to the more traditional hand craftsmanship employed in many of the existing windows. Consequently they would appear incongruous when set against the traditional appearance of the historic building.

6. Given the number of windows proposed to be replaced such works would significantly erode the special architectural and historic interest of Highleigh Farmhouse. The proposed works would also conflict with para 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which anticipates great weight being given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. Moreover, I also find conflict with Policy 47 of the Chichester Local Plan – Key Policies 2014-2029 which underpins the above statutory and national policy objectives. That the works would not be visible from the public domain does not alter my findings on this.
7. In accordance with the Framework, having identified harm to the designated heritage asset, the magnitude of this harm should be considered. I note the Council found 'substantial harm' but in the context of the significance of the asset as a whole I find the harm in this case to be 'less than substantial'. Nevertheless, less than substantial harm does not equate to a less than substantial planning objection. This harm, as per the Framework, should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal.
8. I accept that the existing windows are in need of a complete overhaul in terms of repairs but that does not, of itself, justify their replacement which, for the reasons set out above, would pose a threat to the long-term preservation of the building. Rotting wood can be cut out and replaced with sound treated timber. It is also possible to repair and/or replace ironmongery. Replacement windows may well increase the energy efficiency of the property, but it has not been demonstrated that such improvements could not be achieved through alternative means, for instance, through draft proofing, thereby avoiding the harm I have identified. Finally, any perceived harm from existing double glazing or secondary glazing in the property does not justify the harm I have found. Taking these points together I find that the public benefits would not outweigh the harm that I have identified, harm which must be given considerable importance and weight.
9. The appeal is dismissed.

Hayley Butcher

INSPECTOR