
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 August 2021

by Benjamin Webb BA(Hons) MA MA MSc PGDip(UD) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/Y/20/3263841

Post Cottage, Wood Lane, Bramdean, Alresford SO24 0JN

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Graham Rothery against South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref SDNP/20/03081/LIS is dated 26 July 2020.
 - The works proposed are described as renewal of three upper dormer wooden window openers and frames to the rear of the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed and listed building consent is refused.

Procedural Matters

2. The appeal has been made against the failure of the Authority to issue a decision within the required period. The Authority has however provided a statement and a draft reason for refusal as part of the appeal. I have taken these into account in assessing the scheme.
3. I have entered the description of works used by the Authority in the banner heading above. This omits unnecessary repetition and reference to the purpose of the works.
4. The scheme relates to the southwest elevation of the building, which is referred to as the 'rear'. In terms of the layout and architecture of the building it is however more logically understood as the front. It is indeed referred to as such within the statutory list, and I shall do the same below. Where reference is otherwise made to the rear elevation below, this should therefore be interpreted as being the northeast elevation.
5. Reference to Bramdean Conservation Area occurs within the submissions, however there is no such designation. I have therefore given this no further consideration.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is whether the works would preserve a Grade II listed building, or any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

7. Post Cottage is a Grade II listed building. In this regard, whilst the Act sets out the desirability of preserving the special interest of listed buildings, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes clear that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.
8. Insofar as it is relevant to the appeal, the special interest and significance of the listed building resides in its C16th origin as a timber framed cottage, which was encased in brickwork during the C18th, and its related historic fabric and detailing. The rear elevation has been subject of modern extension, however the front elevation remains fully exposed.
9. The building was listed in 1983. At that time C18th casements were described on the ground floor of the front elevation, but replacement has occurred since. The age of the dormer windows was not stated, but the current windows are all of recent origin. This is indicated both by the newness of the joinery and glazing, and the design change of the central dormer window. The latter now features 2 lights rather than the 3 lights noted in the list description. At what point replacement of the windows occurred, and whether or not such works were authorised, is unclear. However, as none of the dormer windows can be reasonably described as 'historic', the Authority's objection on grounds of loss of historic fabric is not applicable.
10. In view of the age and type of dwelling, its C18th refacing, and the list description, it can be assumed that the windows originally installed in the front elevation were timber, flush faced, multi-paned, side hung, single glazed casements. In these regards the current windows broadly reflect the characteristics of those likely to have been present historically. Notwithstanding the format change noted above, the current windows were therefore presumably modelled upon those they replaced.
11. Where the replacement of historic building components is required, their replication helps to sustain the contribution that design makes to the special interest and significance of a building. By extension, the same applies where replicated building components are themselves subsequently renewed. This is what is meant by 'like-for-like replacement', as noted within the submissions. As timber single glazed multi-paned casement windows form a component of the historic design of the listed building, the current windows, though not historic, contribute to its special interest and significance. It follows that this contribution can be sustained by further like-for-like replacement, albeit at the same time acknowledging scope for the central window to revert to its previous format.
12. I acknowledge that the Authority states that the scheme would not result in 'any significant harm' to the design of the property. However, whilst such phrasing is inconsistent with that used by the Framework, it is also contradictory. This is because the windows proposed would not match those replaced, whereas like-for-like replacement is otherwise identified as the proper course of action failing repair, as considered above.
13. The replacement windows would instead match the modern double-glazed windows installed within the rear extension. These feature substantial gaps between the panes, and correspondingly heavy glazing bars. The appearance is quite unlike that of a single glazed window, and is reasonably obvious viewed

- from a distance. Though described as 'slim', neither the double-glazed units currently installed, nor those proposed are or would be the slimmest available.
14. Double glazing is otherwise an appreciably modern product, and its presence within the replacement windows would be apparent both in day to day use of the building, and in direct contrast with the single glazed windows retained. For this and the above reasons, the proposed windows would not complement the age, or the historic architectural character of the building, and would thus detract from its special interest and significance.
 15. The fact that similar windows have already been installed within the modern extension does not alter my findings above. This is because the modern extension lacks the special interest and significance of the front elevation. Similarly, I attach no weight to the fact that plastic double-glazed windows have been fitted at the adjoining listed cottage. Whether or not they were present when the building was listed, I see no reason why the presence of inappropriate windows within another listed building should be held to justify the harm that would arise by installing the windows proposed.
 16. In view of my findings above, the scheme would fail to preserve the special interest of the building, contrary to the expectations of the Act. The harm caused to the significance of the listed building would be less than substantial, and such harm attracts great weight. In accordance with paragraph 202 of the Framework it is necessary to weigh this harm against the public benefits of the scheme.
 17. The appellant states that installation of double glazing would help to improve energy efficiency. Some relative reduction in heat loss through the windows would indeed be likely to occur. However, its extent and duration would be modest and of very limited broader public benefit, particularly when also taking into account the energy embodied within the existing windows. The latter show no obvious sign of requiring replacement. Furthermore, I have been provided with no evidence that other less harmful, or indeed, more sensitive ways of improving the energy efficiency of the building have been fully explored. I therefore attach negligible weight to the stated environmental benefits of the works. As such the harm that would be caused by the proposed works would cause would not be outweighed by public benefits. This indicates that the appeal should be dismissed.
 18. The appeal site additionally lies within the South Downs National Park (the National Park), within which there is a statutory duty to have regard to the purposes of the designation, one of which is to conserve and enhance cultural heritage. Here I have also had regard to paragraph 176 of the Framework, which states that great weight should be given to this consideration. As Post Cottage forms a component of the cultural heritage of the National Park which would be harmed by the works proposed, it follows that the scheme would also fail to conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the National Park.
 19. For the reasons outlined above I conclude that the scheme would not preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. It would thus fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, heritage policy set out within the Framework, and, insofar as it is relevant, conflict with Policy SD13 of the South Downs Local Plan 2019 (the LP), which supports the above objectives in relation to works subject of listed building consent, and Policy SD14 of the LP, which supports adaptations to mitigate climate change where they would

preserve or enhance a heritage asset. Whilst the Authority has also cited conflict with Policy SD12 of the LP, this is written with particular regard to 'development', and therefore it is not directly applicable.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Webb

INSPECTOR