



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 February 2024

by Geoff Underwood BA(Hons) PGDip(Urb Cons) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Z1775/Y/23/3326763

South Parade Pier, South Parade, Southsea PO4 0SW

- 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 T Ware against the decision of Portsmouth City Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01318/LBC, dated 8 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 May 2023.
 - The works proposed are described as the retention of the west elevation windows and window boxes.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The site is located within the Seafront Conservation Area (CA). Although the works' effect on that particular designated heritage asset is not a factor raised by either main party, I am nevertheless required by section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Main Issue

3. Therefore, the main issue raised by this appeal is the effect the works have had on the special architectural and historic interest of the grade II listed South Parade Pier and on the character and appearance of the CA.

Reasons

4. South Parade Pier is a large Edwardian structure incorporating the iron pier supporting a complex of buildings on top whose combination of towers, windows and architectural features creates a distinctive built form. Along with its history, seafront setting and materials, these aspects contribute towards its significance as a designated heritage asset. It is a prominent feature in the CA whose significance is in part derived from its distinctive seafront buildings and their architectural features, as well as their surrounding historic open spaces.
5. Noted in the list description as a later C20 infill structure, its right-hand elevation has simple mullion and transom timber windows. These windows' proportions sit harmoniously with the other fenestration within the pier buildings, including the similarly proportioned but larger windows adjacent and other windows on the pier with similarly sized timber glazing bars, albeit in different configurations. Indeed,

the similarity in fenestration assists in assimilating this extension with otherwise somewhat basic detailing into the overall Pier composition. Whilst later alterations do not have the same historic and evidential value as other parts, these characteristics make a positive contribution to the preservation of the listed building's significance.

6. The two flank windows nearest South Parade in this elevation have had plastic framed opening casements inserted into the lower frames. These inserts have markedly thicker and flatter profiles, reducing the glazed area and upsetting the uniform appearance of the windows in the west elevation of the building, an effect noticeable from both inside and out. Their plastic construction appears in harmful contrast with the timber of the windows in which they are set and the timber cladding and windows of the adjoining flank elevation. Although they appear to be a reversible addition, that does not significantly reduce their harmful effect.
7. The overall result is one of a clumsy appearance that harms the significance of the listed building. It follows that as the special interest of the prominently situated listed building within the CA has been materially diminished, that the character and appearance of the CA as a whole has also been similarly incrementally harmed.
8. As required by the Act I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building and paid special attention to preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the CA. In doing so, I have found that the works do not preserve either of these assets, nor consequently their significance.
9. I have given great weight to the designated heritage assets' conservation. Given the extent of works, that they affect a later addition to the building, and that no historic fabric appears to have been lost, the harm to the listed building's and the CA's significance is less than substantial in the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). However, less than substantial harm in this respect does not equate to the harm not carrying considerable importance and weight. The Framework requires that such harm is weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
10. The appellant advises that the opening casements were installed as a measure to improve ventilation following the Covid-19 pandemic. As such they will have had a degree of public benefit by way of ensuring the usability of part of the facility in the recovery period as lockdown restrictions were eased, which in turn may have helped maintain the building in economic use. However, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, this would only be a minor benefit. Any public benefits arising will have been outweighed by the heritage harm that has been caused. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the implemented works are the only way in which ventilation could be improved in this part of the building.
11. Insofar as it is relevant, the works are contrary to Portsmouth City Local Plan, 2006 Policy PCS23's cultural heritage protection and enhancement requirements.
12. For the above reasons, the works are contrary to the Act, the Framework and the development plan. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR