

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 03 November 2025 15:34:46 UTC+00:00
To: "Anna Tidey" <anna.tidey@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: South Lodge, Stonehurst DM/25/2007

Hi Anna

Comments on the above planning application.

Stonehurst is a substantial country house located in a rural position to the north of Ardingly. The building itself is unlisted but is regarded with its ancillary garden and estate buildings as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), and the gardens within which it is set are part of an extensive Grade II listed registered park and garden (RPG). The site is also within the setting of the Wakehurst RPG which is to the opposite side of Selsfield Road.

The house at Stonehurst was constructed c.1910 to a design by architect Norman Searle for client John Stewart, on the site of an earlier farmhouse, Stone Farm. The building is in a loosely Arts and Crafts style, with brick and hung tile elevations, with mock timbering to gables, and slate roofs. Originally, the house had a large conservatory wrapping around the south-east corner of the building, as well as a tall central tower with a balcony providing views over the surrounding landscape. These features have both been lost, although the base of the tower remains.

The gardens and pleasure grounds around the house were laid out in 1907 to a design by Thomas H. Mawson, with further input from Norman Searle. The formal gardens around the house and the pleasure grounds beyond these are very extensive, particularly to the north and west, extending to incorporate the valley of the Cob Brook and a tributary, mill ponds and woodlands, and also originally retaining some historic buildings including two mills and associated mill cottages. The formal gardens immediately around the house include a series of brick walled enclosures, with buildings incorporated into the walls including an observatory and viewing bastion, as well as a terrace with flanking tea pavilions which extends along the eastern side of the house. Below this terrace are lawns which descend towards the pleasure grounds in the wooded valley below, which are now in separate ownership.

The grounds also include two lodge buildings, North Lodge and South Lodge, to either side of the house adjacent to the road. These are contemporaneous with the house, and are attractive small buildings which are an integral part of the design and lay out of the gardens. The current proposal relates to the South Lodge, and is for works to adapt the building to provide improved ancillary residential accommodation, including:

- Infilling existing doorways to the eastern elevation;
- Replacement of an existing window to the western elevation with a porch extension;

- Creation of a lightwell adjacent to the southern elevation and addition of two new windows at lower ground floor level;
- A further new window to the southern side at raised ground floor level;
- Addition of sliding garage door to existing opening to the northern elevation;
- Addition of a spire to the roof above the garage;
- Addition of a gablet to the north roof slope above the garage;
- Solar panels to multiple roof slopes; and
- Internal alterations.

To consider these alterations in turn:

- The existing doorways to the eastern elevation are original, but not particularly visually prominent. I note that recesses are to be retained within the openings which would indicate the presence of the doors. This aspect of the proposal is not in my opinion contentious.
- The existing window to the west of the building is original, attractive, and is relatively prominent in public views from the adjacent road, seen above the boundary wall. In my opinion, the loss of this window would be regrettable and would detract from the appearance of the lodge, particularly when replaced with a blank elevation. The proposed porch also has an awkward relationship with the boundary being in uncomfortably close proximity to it. I would recommend that this aspect of the proposal is removed in favour of the retention of the window.
- The proposed lightwell and windows to the southern side would not have a marked impact on the appearance of the building, being largely below ground level, and are not considered contentious subject to detail.
- The further new window to this side would be to match the existing at this level and is again not considered contentious.
- Although I would not consider the principle of adding garage doors to the open fronted garage already in place to the northern side of the building contentious, ideally a form of door more sympathetic to the period and style of the building would be preferred. On site we discussed the possibility of partially converting the garage space to create an access to the residential part of the lodge at ground floor level as an alternative to the proposed porch extension, and I would suggest that if this is possible in combination with a revision of the style of the garage doors from sliding to side hung that this should be considered.
- The northern side of the lodge was altered at the time that the garage was created, and the previously existing gabled porch with adjacent canted bay windows removed. In light of this the reintroduction of an architectural feature of interest to this part of the building is not considered contentious in principle. However, in my opinion the combination of the spire and gablet is excessively 'busy', and I would recommend that one or the other is removed from the scheme.
- The proposed solar panels as shown are excessive in terms of number and scale and as a result will be unduly visually prominent, including in views from the adjacent road. This aspect of the proposal requires reconsideration, with the number of panels reduced and/or relocated only to inward facing roof slopes.

In summary, although aspects of the proposal are considered acceptable, others require amendment in order to ensure that the character of the building as an NDHA is preserved as well as the positive contribution which it makes to the RPG, and to the setting of the Wakehurst RPG, and in order to meet the requirements of District Plan Policies DP34 and DP36.

Thanks,

Emily

Please note that this advice is given at Officer level only and is without prejudice to the formal decision of the District Council.

Submit your planning application online.
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

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