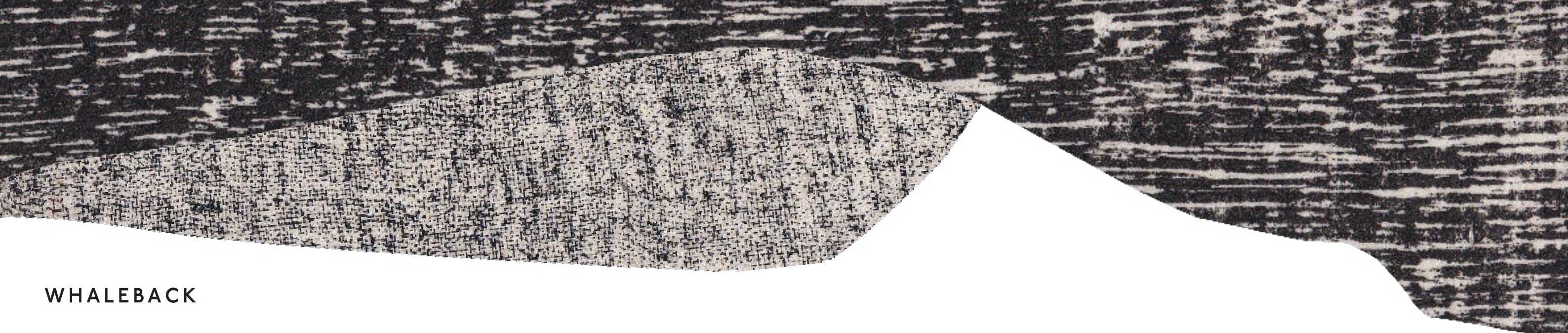




WHALEBACK

PLANNING & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Stonehurst, Ardingly

ADDRESS

Stonehurst, Haywards Heath,
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DATE

June 2025

REVISION

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Introduction

Whaleback is instructed to prepare and submit a householder application for the reinstatement of a partially demolished observatory tower and orangery at Stonehurst; a single dwellinghouse within a Grade II Listed Registered Park and the High Weald National Landscape.

Stonehurst House is a large county house dating to the late 19th century, built by Norman Searle on the site of an older building known as Stone Farm. The house sits within a large designed garden and park that was designed by Thomas H Mawson in 1907, with Norman Searle being responsible for the architectural details.

The gardens and park are included on Historic England’s register of Parks and Gardens (RPG) as Grade II Listed. While the house is not a designated heritage asset, it is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. The relationship of the garden to the house are closely intertwined. It is therefore important to understand the development of the site as a whole and establish where the significance lies in order to ensure that any future changes are sympathetic and appropriate to the site.

This report has been prepared to help inform the design development of the application scheme by presenting a thorough assessment of the historic development and significance of Stonehurst House, the Stonehurst RPG and other nearby heritage assets.

The proposals have also been the subject of pre-application discussions with Mid Sussex District Council as Local Planning Authority (LPA), who have signalled support for the designs subject to further information on heritage and landscape impacts.

This statement describes the application site and its surrounding context, before the historical development and significance of relevant heritage assets is presented. Research was conducted at both the West Sussex Record Office and The Keep (East Sussex) to consult primary sources. The design proposals are then presented, followed by a heritage impact assessment evaluating the impact of the application scheme in heritage terms. The planning policy context and relevant site planning history are both set out, before a planning appraisal is provided to consider the merits of the application - including matters relating to landscape and neighbouring amenity impacts.

This document supports the application and should be considered together with the following submitted documents:

- Architectural drawings (Ian Adam-Smith Architects - June 2025),
- Landscape Visual Impact Assessment Volumes 1 & 2 (Terraforma - June 2025)
- Wireframes of the proposed tower (Terraforma and Ian Adam-Smith Architects - December 2024)
- Structural Report (Austin Structures - May 2025)
- Bat Scoping Report and Bat Emergence Survey Report (Ecology Co-Op - September 2024 & August 2025)



Historic photograph of Stonehurst as originally constructed, likely dating from the 1900s

Site and Surroundings

Stonehurst House and the western part of the Registered Park and Garden (RPG) are located within the village and civil parish of Ardingly within Mid Sussex District administrative area. The eastern half of the Registered Park and Garden lies within the parish of West Hoathly.

The area is characterised by the topography which consists of steep narrow valleys created by streams, with narrow plateaux in between the valleys such as the one on which Stonehurst House sits. Further to the east, the land is more flat and so more open and suited to open fields. However large areas of woodland and small clusters of trees are equally dominant.

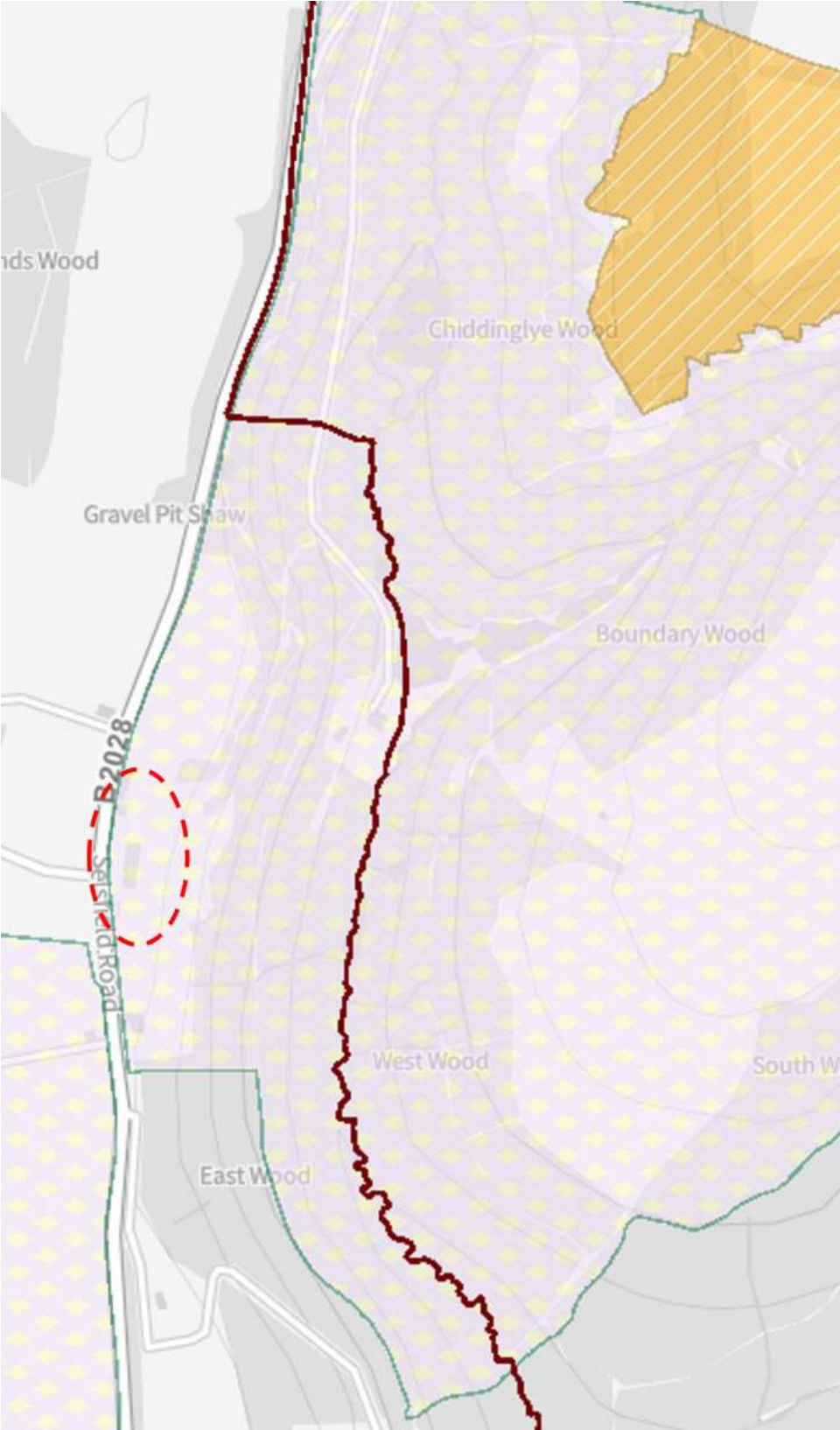
The geology of the area is complex and has played a large part in the resulting topography. The western part of the Registered Park and Garden is on Cuckfield Stone Bed, while the house and lawn is on a narrow ridge of Lower Grinstead Clay. As the valley descends to the east, the deposits include Ardingly Sandstone Member and Lower Tunbridge Wells Sand before reaching Wadhurst Clay Formation at the valley bottom.

Intersecting public rights of way are found within the local area, including the High Weald National Trail which crosses through the Stonehurst RPG. The site lies within the High Weald National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or AONB) and, in a valley to the east of the house, lies the Wakehurst and Chiddinglye Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Within the north east section of the Registered Park and Garden is a Scheduled Monument (Philpots Camp Fort) which extends beyond the Stonehurst RPG boundaries. To the west of the site is the Grade II* RPG of Wakehurst Place and various listed buildings associated with Wakehurst Place. The closest of these listed buildings is the Grade II listed South Lodge and Gateway to Wakehurst Place.

Stonehurst and its associated buildings are of a Vernacular Revival Architectural Style. They are not listed, but are set within a Grade II Registered Park and Garden and are considered to be Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHA).

Selsfield Road separates Wakehurst Place RPG from Stonehurst as it leads from Ardingly to the south towards Turners Hill to the north. The site has two access points from Selsfield Road, both marked by lodges which are equidistant from the house. North Lodge is situated directly 100m north of the house on Ardingly Road and South Lodge is 100m to the south. Drives from the lodges lead into a forecourt which runs the full length of Stonehurst’s western front.



Magic Map showing parish boundary, RPG extents (pink) and Scheduled Monument (orange)



Geology of Britain Viewer showing geology of the site and surrounding area

Site Description

STONEHURST - HOUSE

The house is a large county house exhibiting typical characteristics associated with the vernacular revival movement of the late 19th century. Construction materials are brick and weather tiles, with clay roofs. The dwelling is principally two-storeys of habitable accommodation with attics running the length of the building, and a basement below.

The west (front) elevation is formed of six bays with three prominent gables interspersed between recessed bays. There is one gabled dormer at attic level. All the gables have prominent bargeboards painted white. The entrance is through a carved timber porch with stone pillars. All the windows are white multi-paned casement windows, whilst three large chimney stacks are also visible.

The east elevation overlooks the lawn, garden and the eastern valley of the Stonehurst Registered Park and Garden. This elevation is more “busy” with two projecting bays with dormers. There is a lower and smaller dormer at the southern end. Two small gabled dormers are at attic level, whilst the stump of a former tower is prominent at the centre of the elevation.

The door to the garden is under a porch and there is a prominent loggia. Like the west elevation, this elevation is dominated by a large amount of fenestration and changing roof lines.

The south elevation is plain by comparison with no windows and only a ground floor door, due to the former presence of an orangery / conservatory to this elevation. What appears to be a dwarf brick wall with an opening is likely to have been the brick base of this historic orangery. Two prominent chimney stacks are visible, as are the primary building materials of brick and hanging tiles with large bargeboards. It looks onto a large paved terrace with ponds and terracing down towards the lawn east of the house.

The north elevation is partially obscured by a large bush but it has a large projecting, low-slung gable roof that is set perpendicularly to a matching gable on the west elevation. The north elevation has a large balcony with white painted balustrades.

Internally, Stonehurst comprises several bedrooms and reception rooms. The internal staircase to the former observatory tower is still evident and has been blocked up at ceiling level.

The original vehicular access into the site was opposite the main visitor access to Wakehurst Place until it was moved further north for safety reasons. The main entrance to the property from Selsfield Road is now to the north of the house with a drive approximately 200 metres long running parallel with Selsfield Road to the front door of the house. Initially the drive crosses a garden area until it reaches and leads under a brick arch. The drive then sweeps across the front of the house and provides a turning circle, by the building known as South Lodge.

The associated lodges and garages are in a similar style to the main house, being of brick masonry and weather tiles. The line of the garage roofs are visible from the walled gardens forming a pleasant vista.



West elevation of the house



South elevation of the house, patio terrace and dwarf wall



East elevation of the house.



South and west elevation of the house.

Site Description



North lodge looking north and brick archway



Staircase leading to now demolished tower and blocked opening.



Aerial photograph of Stonehurst House and park looking north.

Site Description

STONEHURST - PARK AND GARDEN

The garden and wider parkland of Stonehurst extends to the north, south and east, with the majority of the park being to the east. The gardens are a good surviving example of early 20th century design associated with vernacular revival and the arts and craft periods.

The immediate area to the east of the house is laid to lawn. A series of formal, enclosed, brick-walled gardens lie to the north of the house, a patio and further walled decorative gardens lie to the south. The garden nearest the house is now laid out as a bowling green/croquet lawn, separated and screened by a pergola with brick and tile pillars from a former rose garden to the north. The garden now contains a swimming pool. The pergola leads to a copper-domed observatory in the east, a loggia and dressing rooms. Further north, at the end of the formal gardens a door in the garden wall leads to a cross-walk along the side of a levelled lawn. This extends to a viewing bastion at its east end. The lawn is surrounded by low brick walls and in Mawson’s scheme was designed as a tennis court.

On the east front of the house, a brick-paved terrace over 50m long is set between tea chalets set symmetrically on either side of the house. To the east, the formal scheme continues with two sets of stone steps, one on the north side of the terrace and the other on the south leading down to a steep, sloping lawn, set out with groups of shrubs. From the lawn a series of gravel walks leads out into the extensive pleasure grounds, the garden boundary demarcated by a bridleway and National Trail route.

The wider parkland occupies a sweeping valley, the result of the complex underlying geology. Permeable sandstone meeting the impermeable mudstone has given rise to a large number of valley-side springs and a distinct steep sided, V-shaped valley. The main valley falls from 100m above Ordnance Datum (OD) in the north to 80m OD in the south. The result is that the house benefits from wide views eastwards and southwards over the Ouse Valley to the South Downs. The land on the slopes below the house is a typical Wealden valley garden with magnolias, rhododendrons and similar species beneath deciduous and coniferous trees. The ornamental planting becomes more dispersed further away from the house and dies out completely east of a stream. Beyond this planting there are eye-catcher groups of conifers up and down the valley and views of prominent conifers extending beyond the site to Chiddingly in the north and towards Ardingly in the south. A ridge south west of Philpots Farm is included within the designated park, but is occupied by open farmland.

The Parks and Gardens to the east of the Stonehurst formal lawns are under separate ownership and include the Many Waters dwelling and an associated outbuilding, sited to the south-western edge of a former mill pond.



Aerial photograph of Stonehurst House and lawn looking west



Eastern edge of lawn looking north with sudden cliff edge to the right.



Stonehurst RPG, looking east towards valley formation. The Many Waters property is visible to the left of the image, adjacent to the former mill ponds.



Valley path with geological formations on the left.

Designated Heritage Assets

STONEHURST RPG

Stonehurst is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden and was included on Historic England’s register of Parks and Gardens on 01 August 1988, National Heritage List Entry (NHLE) 1000326. Ownership of the grounds is now split between the Stonehurst and Many Water properties, with a bridleway and National Trail route crossing the RPG.

The listing description is as follows:

Gardens and pleasure grounds laid out in 1907 by Thomas H Mawson, assisted by the architect Norman Searle.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Stonehurst, a new country house and gardens was laid out on the site of an earlier farm, Stone Farm. Part of this earlier estate included two mills, Corn Mill and Stone Mill which were retained, together with the Mill Cottages set next to the mill ponds.

John Stewart commissioned Thomas H Mawson (1861-1933) to design the gardens in 1907, Norman Searle being responsible for the architectural details. Mawson’s scheme made use of the mill ponds and exploited the valley setting and existing woodlands in the ornamental pleasure grounds. The site remains (2003) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Stonehurst lies some 11km south of East Grinstead and 3km south-west of the village of West Hoathley, directly to the east of Wakehurst Place (q.v.), in the Sussex weald. The western site boundary is formed by Ardingly Road/Selsfield Road (B2028); on all other boundaries the site adjoins farmland or woodland.

Stonehurst commands extensive views from the north-east to south-east, standing on the edge of the steep-sided Ouse valley of the Cob Brook. The pleasure grounds and estate woodland extend to 80ha, and exploit the confluence of the Cob Brook and a tributary to the north-east.. The gardens are set on the east-facing valley slopes, and extend north to south parallel to Ardingly Road. The pleasure grounds, set out on the slopes below the house which run down to the Cob Brook, are orientated north/south along the valley and along the north-east valley associated with its tributary.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

There are two entrances to Stonehurst , both marked by lodges which are equidistant from the house. North Lodge is situated directly 100m north of the house on Ardingly Road and South Lodge is 100m to the south. Drives from the lodges lead into a forecourt which runs the full length of the west front of the house.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

Stonehurst, a substantial house, completed c1910, was built by Norman Searle for John Stewart, on the site of an earlier building, Stone Farm. The large building is built of brick and weather-tiles with slate [clay] roofs and is principally two storeys with attics. Photographs (c 1920s) show a conservatory at the south end of the building. The house was originally topped by a large multi-stage tower with a balcony which would have provided extensive views over the surrounding landscape; the tower has since been taken down.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

A series of formal, enclosed, brick-walled gardens lie to the north of the house, the picturesque roof-line of the garages and stables being visible over the western garden wall. The garden nearest to the house is laid out as a bowling green/croquet lawn. This is separated and screened by a pergola with brick and tile pillars, from an enclosed garden to the north. This was a rose garden which was remodelled to house a swimming pool. The pergola leads to two garden buildings; at its eastern end there is a copper-domed observatory and at the western end, a loggia and dressing rooms.

Further to the north, beyond the end wall of the formal gardens, a door in the garden wall leads through to a cross-walk running along the side of a levelled lawn to a viewing bastion situated at its eastern end. The lawn is surrounded by low brick walls and in Mawson’s scheme was designed as a tennis court.

On the east front of the house a brick-paved terrace over 50m long is set between a pair of tea chalets, set symmetrically on either side of the house. The formal scheme continues with two sets of stone steps, one on the north side of the terrace and the other on the south leading down to a steep, sloping lawn, set out with groups of shrubs. From the lawn a series of gravel walks leads out into the extensive pleasure grounds.

Directly beyond the east lawn the pleasure grounds lead through an extensive rock garden set out across the valley, with flights of steps giving access down both valley sides. A series of parallel walks link up with one another and exploit the valley slopes, passing under great rock outcrops and along rocky cliffs. The valley slopes are planted with a variety of ornamental shrubs set into the mature canopy of the pre-existing woodlands of Stone Farm. The stream flowing to join the Cob Brook from the north-east feeds a series of ornamental ponds, pools and waterfalls (many designed to be viewed from the house), and then issues out into a lake set at its confluence of the two watercourses. At the southern end of the lake stand the original Mill Cottages. To the north-east is a decorative house, ‘Many Waters’, built at the same time as Stonehurst and intended as a focal feature in the pleasure grounds.

Chiddingly Wood lies on the east and south side of the two valleys, to the north of the lakes. Within this woodland there are many natural, rocky outcrops, for a long-time a tourist attraction, the Great-upon-Little Stone being particularly famous in topographical accounts of the Weald (eg Cobbett 1853). On the summit of the west facing slopes which look directly onto Stonehurst a central area of land was left open and unplanted (OS 1910). Extensive plantations of Douglas Fir date from c 1910 and are planted amongst oak dating from c 1855 (ring counts, see Inspector’s Report, 1988). There are significant specimen conifers throughout the pleasure grounds.

KITCHEN GARDEN

The walled kitchen gardens are situated directly to the south of the house. They are reached by a path which leads southwards off the top terrace then through an arch in the castellated, brick north wall. The area is walled on three sides and has an open octagonal shelter at one of its corners. It is now let to a commercial nursery.

PHILPOTS CAMP

There are a number of other designated heritage assets around the site. Partially within the registered garden is the Scheduled Monument of Philpots Camp,

a promontory fort and Mesolithic rock shelter (NHLE 1014955). The listing description describes the Scheduled Monument as:

The monument includes a promontory fort situated on a triangular, north east-south west aligned, sandstone spur which forms part of the High Weald of Sussex. To the south west and south east, the fort utilises natural defences provided by the c.5m-10m high cliffs of Lower Tunbridge Wells Sand which form the edges of the spur. To the north east, constructed across the level ground of the neck of the spur, is a curving bank flanked by an outer ditch. These survive best towards their south eastern end, where the bank is c.8m wide and up to 1m high, and the ditch c.6m wide and c.0.7m deep. The ramparts were partly excavated in 1931. This showed the bank to be constructed of dumped soil and the ditch to be originally flat bottomed and up to 2m deep. Fragments of charcoal found during the excavation indicated that the bank may have been topped by a timber palisade subsequently destroyed by burning. Access to the interior was provided by two simple gaps in the ramparts towards their north western and south eastern ends. Further remains associated with the original use of the fort can be expected to survive within the interior in buried form. A low bank running towards the south west from the south eastern end of the ramparts is considered to represent a modern woodland boundary bank. The earlier prehistoric rock shelters are situated beneath the overhanging rocks of the natural cliffs which form the south western and south eastern edges of the monument. Investigations over the years have led to the discovery of quantities of worked flint flakes and implements dating to the Mesolithic period (10,000-3,500 BC). Further contemporary buried deposits are likely to survive beneath the natural sandy floors of the shelters. The modern fences which cross the monument are excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath them is included.

WAKEHURST PLACE RPG AND LISTED BUILDINGS

Immediately to the west of the site lies the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden of Wakehurst Place (NHLE 1000326). Within the Registered Park and Garden are three further listed buildings:

- Wakehurst Place (Grade I; NHLE 1025764)
- Stables to the northeast of Wakehurst Place (Grade II*; NHLE 1354792)
- South lodge and gateway (Grade II; NHLE 1025765)

Wakehurst Place is Grade I listed and is described as:

The property of the National Trust. Administered by Kew Gardens. This house was built by Sir Edward Culpeper in 1590. It originally formed a complete court-yard, but the south side of this was demolished before 1697. The east and west sides were shortened by two-thirds in 1848 and refaced on their south front with old stone. The house is therefore E-shaped today. It was restored by Sir Aston Webb for Sir William Boord in 1890. The whole of the south front was taken down, the stones numbered and replaced after careful restoration in 1938. The house is built of Sussex sandstone ashlar with a Horsham slab roof. 3-storeys. 7 windows. The wings have gables with kneelers, coping and ball finials at the apex and above the kneelers. In the centre is a smaller projection of 3-storeys surmounted by a similar scrolled gable. On its ground floor is the porch having a round headed doorway with Doric columns on pedestals with a cornice over, and the initials E. C. The first floor window above

Designated Heritage Assets

is flanked by similar Ionic pilasters with a triangular pediment over having a statue on each side of this. Between the porch and the wings are 2 gabled dormers on each side, the outer ones projecting slightly with a bay below them on ground and first floors. The inner face of the wings have similar dormers. Four-light casement windows with stone mullions and transoms. The north-east wing and the 1-storey wing on the east were added by the Marchioness of Downshire in 1869-70; and the north porch by Sir Aston Webb for lord Wakehurst in 1903. The interior has its contemporary staircase; also panelling, fireplaces and over-mantels, but the position of these has been moved in several cases. Manners Sutton, Speaker of the House of Commons, later Viscount Canterbury, and Sir Alexander Cockburn, Lord Chief Justice, were tenants of the house in the eighteen thirties.

The stables to the northeast are Grade II* listed and described as:

C18. Two storeys. Five windows. Ashlar. Stringcourse, cornice and parapet. Long and short quoins. The centre window-bay projects with similar quoins and a pediment over in the parapet. Horsham slab roof Octagonal bell-turret with cupola. Large round-headed doorway.

The south lodge and gateway are Grade II listed and described as:

Mid C19. One storey. Two windows. Ashlar. Hipped slate roof Gables to east and west with finials at apex and above the angles. Casement windows. Small gable porch. To the south of the Lodge are wrought iron double gates to the carriage-drive, set in octagonal stone piers with ball caps over, the piers flanked by iron railings on a stone base leading to further octagonal piers with ball caps.

The Grade II* Registered Park and Garden is described as:

An early to mid C20 plantsman’s and collector’s garden laid out by Gerald Loder, which has subsequently been enlarged and developed since 1965 as part of the Living Collections of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manor of Wakehurst probably dates from the mid C13, when its connection with the Wakehurst family was established. It passed by marriage to the Culpepers in 1454 with whom it remained for two hundred years, Sir Edward Culpeper building the present house in 1590. The estate was sold in 1694 to the Lydall family and then passed by inheritance to the Clarkes who sold it in 1776 to Admiral Peyton. The Peytons let Wakehurst to tenants from 1816 and sold off portions of the estate including, in the mid C19, land to the north of the mansion, before selling Wakehurst Place and the remaining land in 1869 to the Dowager Duchess of Downshire. She repurchased some of the former estate land and carried out considerable additions and alterations to the house and gardens. Although sale particulars were prepared in 1878, it was not until 1890 that she sold the estate to Sir William Boord. In 1903 he sold to Gerald Loder, younger brother of Sir Edmund Loder of Leonardslee (qv) and later created first Lord Wakehurst, who established many of the present plant collections, particularly those from Eastern Asia and the southern continents. On Loder’s death in 1936, the estate was bought by Sir Henry Price who continued to develop Loder’s work in the gardens, bequeathing them, with the estate, to the National Trust. In

1965, the Trust leased Wakehurst to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the estate being managed through the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. In 1984, management of the estate was passed to the Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, who have developed the gardens and plant collections further and who now (1998), in conjunction with the National Trust, manage the site.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Wakehurst Place lies on the west side of the B2028, 1.5km north of Ardingly village and 3.5km south of Turners Hill. The c 40ha registered site comprises some 12ha of parkland, 9ha of ornamental gardens and 20ha of mixed native and ornamental woodland. The eastern third lies on a level plateau, the ground falling away to the south and west and then descending into a deep, east/west ravine-like stream valley. The B2028, largely lined with post and rail fencing, forms the east boundary, while to the north the site is enclosed by agricultural (deer) fencing and adjacent deer pasture with, towards the eastern end, scientific and estate administration yards and buildings and the public car park. Beyond these and also to the west and south-west of the site are further wooded stream valleys (also National Trust property), the valley running south from the south-west corner of the site forming the northern arm of Ardingly reservoir. To the south, the site is largely enclosed by internal shelter belts (replanted after the 1987 storm) and is abutted by farmland.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The public entrance to Wakehurst Place is on the east side, gates leading from the B2028 into the car park (which lies outside the registered area). A path leads south-westwards through light, mixed native and ornamental woodland to the carriage courtyard south of the stable block on the east side of the house, its entrance flanked by a pair of giant redwoods. The principal, formal entrance to Wakehurst is at South Lodge, on the B2028 some 200m further south of the public entrance, the drive entering through wrought-iron gates flanked by stone piers and iron railings (lodge and gateway listed grade II). The lodge was probably built between 1825 and 1830 (CBA 1992), although an entrance from this point, with an avenue leading due west to the house, is shown on Thomas Attree’s map of 1727. From the lodge the drive, realigned slightly northwards to its present course between 1874 (OS 1st edition) and 1878 (sale particulars), follows a gentle S to arrive at the turning circle in the carriage courtyard.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Wakehurst Place (listed grade I) stands on level ground towards the northern boundary of the registered site and on the eastern edge of the gardens. The three-storey, E-shaped house, its principal, south front featuring a three-storey projection and porch, is built of sandstone ashlar with a Horsham slab roof. Built originally in the form of a complete courtyard by Sir Edward Culpeper in 1590, the south side had been demolished before 1697. The east and west sides were shortened by two-thirds in 1848 and between 1869 and 1870; the north-east wing and the chapel on the east side were added by the Duchess of Downshire. The whole house was restored for Sir William Boord by the architect Sir Aston Webb in 1890, who also added the north porch for Lord Wakehurst in 1903. The entire south front was taken down, restored and rebuilt in 1938. To the north-east of the house and facing south into the carriage court is the two-storey, ashlar stable block (listed grade II*), with an octagonal bell turret and cupola.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The south or garden front of the house opens onto a paved apron and a large, rectangular open lawn quartered by gravel paths, the present layout established by 1874 (OS 1st edition) on the site of formal gardens shown on Thomas Attree’s map of 1727. On its south-east side, the lawn slopes gently down to the



Grade II Listed South Lodge (Image: National Trust)



Grade II Listed Gateway at South Lodge

Designated Heritage Assets

roughly circular Mansion Pond (shown on Attree’s map), which is fringed with shrubbery clumps and small trees, its former surrounding tree cover largely destroyed in the storm of 1987. Enclosing the pond on its east side are the Tony Schilling Asian Heath Beds, developed after the storm on the site of the former Rhododendron Walk as large islands with dwarf and slow-growing mountainous vegetation. South-west of the lawn, and south of the former croquet lawn which adjoins it to the west, are the island Specimen beds, planted for summer colour around a central, iron-work pergola frame. West of the croquet lawn further sinuous island tree and shrub beds, separated by winding grass paths, are planted as the Southern Hemisphere Garden. These were originally laid out by Gerald Loder, on former open parkland, from 1903 to 1936. The north side of the croquet lawn is enclosed by the island bed of the Winter Garden, laid out since 1965 and planted with shrubs and perennials for winter colour. On its north side, and extending c 100m westwards from the west elevation of the mansion is the rectangular Walled Garden, built between 1869 and 1874 to replace former kitchen gardens and estate yards on the mansion’s east side. Entered through an arch at the east end of the south wall, the larger of the two compartments, laid out in 1973 and known as the Sir Henry Price Garden, is quartered by gravel paths with its four beds and perimeter borders planted as ‘a modern cottage garden’ (guidebook). An arch in the west wall leads into The Pleasaunce which is laid out with an inner square compartment of yew hedges (planted between 1890 and 1903) enclosing a small, quartered lawn with a central fountain basin and statue.

Beyond the main lawn, the path axial on the south front extends c 50m further southwards to the head of the valley, terminating at a bastion enclosed by a balustrade (built since 1965) and with a central sundial, the latter formerly sited (in 1909) on the main lawn. The bastion overlooks a steep, rocky waterfall and the south-west-flowing stream and pools of The Slips garden, the grassy banks of which are dotted with ornamental trees and shrubs. Developed on the line of a former north to south chain of ponds (Attree, 1727; Tithe map, 1841), both Black Pond, at the south-west end of The Slips, and the Bog Garden pond to its west, are surviving remnants of this chain. South-westwards beyond Black Pond are-- the Water Gardens, laid out around a series of informal pools and water courses with boardwalks and stone weirs and planted with colourful aquatic and moisture-loving plants including, as an addition in 1998, an iris dell.

South-west of the Water Garden, paths follow the stream course along both sides of the steep, ravine-like Westwood Valley beneath a canopy of mature oak trees (the woodland established between 1727 (Attree) and 1823-4 (Greenwood)) mixed with the exotic trees and shrubs, including rhododendrons, which form the Asian collection. On the north side of the valley, within and above a deep cleft in massive sandstone outcrops, is the Himalayan Glade which, planted largely with shrubby mountainous species, is reached from the valley by steep flights of steps. Northwards, on the gentler slopes above the valley and extending towards the northern site boundary is the Pinetum, the northern half of which is shown established on the OS map of 1909. It was extended south to cover its present area from 1965 and the whole was extensively replanted after the storm of 1987.

Two main, east to west paths, which follow routes established by 1874, run along the upper, southern slopes of Westwood Valley, passing through further collections of rhododendrons and, at the western end, affording extensive views southwards to Ardingly Reservoir and the distant South Downs. At the extreme western end of the valley, the stream flows into Westwood Lake, established between 1727 and 1823-4 and fringed with marsh plants and a backdrop of woodland. North of the lake is Horsebridge Wood, which appears to have been

planted during the same period and which contains the North American tree collection, many individuals from which were destroyed in the 1987 storm.

PARK The parkland lies east of the mansion and gardens, to the north and south of the South Drive. It is open in character with only an intermittent scatter of trees, of varying ages, surviving from the pattern of clumps shown on the OS editions of 1874 and 1909. Maps dating from the 1790s (OS preliminary drawing) up to 1909 (OS 3rd edition), show this eastern parkland extending further south-westwards as far as the present Pinetum, over the area now covered by the gardens. Also by 1909, the area south of the registered site, now known as the South Park, is shown as parkland but appears never to have been extensively planted.



Grade I Listed Wakehurst Place

Historical Development

STONEHURST RPG

The interesting geological formations within the site have attracted human activity for thousands of years. The Scheduled Monument in the north east of the site includes rock shelters and caves which have revealed flints of Mesolithic date. Around the geological feature of Big-upon-Little, flints were found during archaeological excavations in 2008 and around Great-upon-Little, flint tools were found in 2009, alongside Mesolithic/ Neolithic leaf-shaped arrowheads and early Neolithic pottery. The Scheduled promontory fort is believed to be of late-mid Iron Age date, but there is little artefactual evidence to corroborate this.

While the Roman road from Hassocks to London is conjectured to run to the west of Selsfield Road, there are no known finds in the area. The Weald was known for its iron production during Roman and medieval times, and the road was likely used for transporting iron.

The preponderance of place-names ending in *leah* and *hyrst* are indicative of early medieval occupation and interaction with the landscape. These suffixes denote woodland clearings and wooded hill respectively indicating that while the early medieval landscape was heavily wooded, clearings, settlements and outlying pastures were vital in navigating the landscape and contributed to the sense of place.

Land within the Parish of Ardingly were held by the Archbishop of Canterbury and fell under the manor of South Malling. The name “Stone” is recorded as being part of the manor of Walstead in Lindfield and this name continues to appear in records from the 13th century onwards. A property within the site is registered as Stone Place in the 16th century, belonging to the Paines family. The place-name implies a substantial building of some status, but it could equally draw reference from the nearby geological formations of Great-upon-Little and Big-upon-Little.

Within the park (east and north east of the High Weald National Trail) are several ponds which historically were used for water mills. The number of ponds fed by underground streams is as a direct result of the local geology and resulting topography. These ponds would have been vital for the local iron working industry and then changed over to corn milling when the iron industry faded. A large mill is illustrated on Richard Bugden’s *An Actual Survey of the County of Sussex Divided, into Rapes, Hundreds and Deanryes, In which the Exact Longitude and Latitude of all the Remarkable Places are Determin’d from Observation. Also An Accurate Delineation By Admeasurement of The Sea-coast, Roads, and the Rivers so far as Navigable etc.* of 1724, as well as Big-upon-Little and a large house near Stonehurst labelled as “Stone”.

Like in the medieval period, the geological formations within the site would have attracted curiosity and there exists many 18th century depictions of these such as that by Francis Grose and Grimm, both from the second half of the 18th century. William Cobbett’s *Rural Rides* from 1831 describes Big-upon-Little:

“At the place, of which I am now speaking, that is to say, by the side of this pleasant road to Brighton, and between Turner’s Hill and Lindfield, there is a rock, which they call ‘Big-upon-Little’; that is to say a rock upon another, having nothing else to rest upon, and the top one being longer and wider than the top of the one it lies on. This big rock is no trifling concern, being as big, perhaps, as a not very small house. How, then, came this big upon

little? What lifted up the big? It balances itself naturally enough; but what tossed it up? I do not like to pay a parson for teaching me, while I have ‘God’s Own Word’ to teach me; but if any parson will tell me how big came upon little, I do not know that I shall grudge him a trifle. And if he cannot tell me this; if he say. All that we have to do is to admire and adore; then I tell him, that I can admire and adore without his aid, and that I will keep my money in my pocket.”

Yeakell and Gardner’s *A Topographical Map of the County of Sussex, Divided into Rapes, Deaneries and Hundreds, Planned from an Actual Survey of 1796* clearly shows the mill. Stone Place is itself not labelled, but buildings are depicted.



Francis Grose, 1760–1790, “A National Rock call’d Great upon Little near Wakehurst Sussex”.



Bugden’s map of 1724



Yeakell and Gardner’s map of 1796.

Historical Development

The Tithe Map of 1841 shows the ponds within the site clearly along with stone Mill. Stone Farm is indicated by a square building coloured red, indicating it is either stone or brick built. To the north is an L-shaped black building which is likely an agricultural building. There is a further small building to the north at the junction of two routes. Stone Mill is indicated as is Chiddingly Wood which remains to this day as a large wood within the Registered Park. The primarily wooded nature of the area to the north east is evident on this map with some more open areas dotted around and visible to the south east.

Records indicate that in the 1820s, Stone Farm belonged to Sir Charles Wetherill. The holding comprised about 30 acres and is likely to represent the area shown as open land on the tithe map. Appraisals and rentals of the late 1820s describe a small farm mainly of pasture and meadow. Some time between 1841 and 1875, 80 acres of land to the east were purchased and added to Stone Farm at which point it is described as a “pleasure farm”. These were small estates, often on poor land which were adapted to be entirely ornamental and for leisure, facilitated by the railway and the rapid links to London.

The first edition Ordnance Survey six inch map of 1879 shows Stone Farm formed of one large building and three other buildings to the north. What this map also shows is the high number of springs and waterfalls east of the house at the bottom of the valley. A Corn Mill is now also noted north of Stone Mill. The larger scale map gives more detail of the planting showing the area near the house as occupied by an orchard as well as a wooded cliff. Tracks within Chiddingly Wood are possibly walks or drives highlighting the pleasure aspect of the estate.

The second edition Ordnance Survey six inch map of 1899 shows that the previous building of Stone Farm has been demolished and replaced with a large rectangular building and both the north and south lodges have been built. The house has also been renamed Stonehurst. Stone Farm was bought by John Stuart in 1889 who made his fortune from Camp Coffee. The house was designed by Norman Searle. The gardens as we see today were designed by Thomas Mawson, with Norman Searle working on the architectural elements.

Work on the gardens began in 1907. Mawson had designed several other gardens before beginning work at Stonehurst and the use of water within valleys feature prominently in his works. The availability of the mill ponds at Stonehurst were therefore an ideal existing feature to be utilised. These formed the middle ground of the long view from the terrace and lawn below the house.

The third edition Ordnance Survey map of 1910 shows the house in a little more detail along with the garden walls and garages north of the lodge. The lawn and path are visible, as are the Mill Cottages (including a folly by the edge of the mill pond) and various waterfalls.

The property was sold in 1926 and re-sold 10 years later to the Strauss family, who occupied it until 2002. Over the years the outer garden has become much more wooded.



Tithe map of 1841



First edition Ordnance Survey six inch map of 1879.



Second edition Ordnance Survey six inch map of 1899



Third edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch map of 1910.

Historical Development

NORMAN SEARLE

Very little information has been found on Norman Searle despite extensive enquiries at the East Sussex Records Office (ESRO) and West Sussex Records Office. The RIBA archives holds an entry for Norman Odell Searle (1881-1966) and this record is associated with details of the architectural firm of Searle & Searle.

It is understood that many of the firm’s premises were burned in the war in 1940. The partners then took temporary accommodation at 6 Old Bailey, until this too was destroyed in 1941. It is understand that Charles Gray Searle, the grandfather of Norman Searle, was by profession an architect and surveyor, who had trained under Thomas Cubitt and had set up his own business in c.1846. Charles Gray Searle died in 1881. Norman Searle became a partner in the firm at age twenty-five. Also associated with the same firm was Septimus Cecil Searle (1853-1922) and Cecil Johnstone Searle.

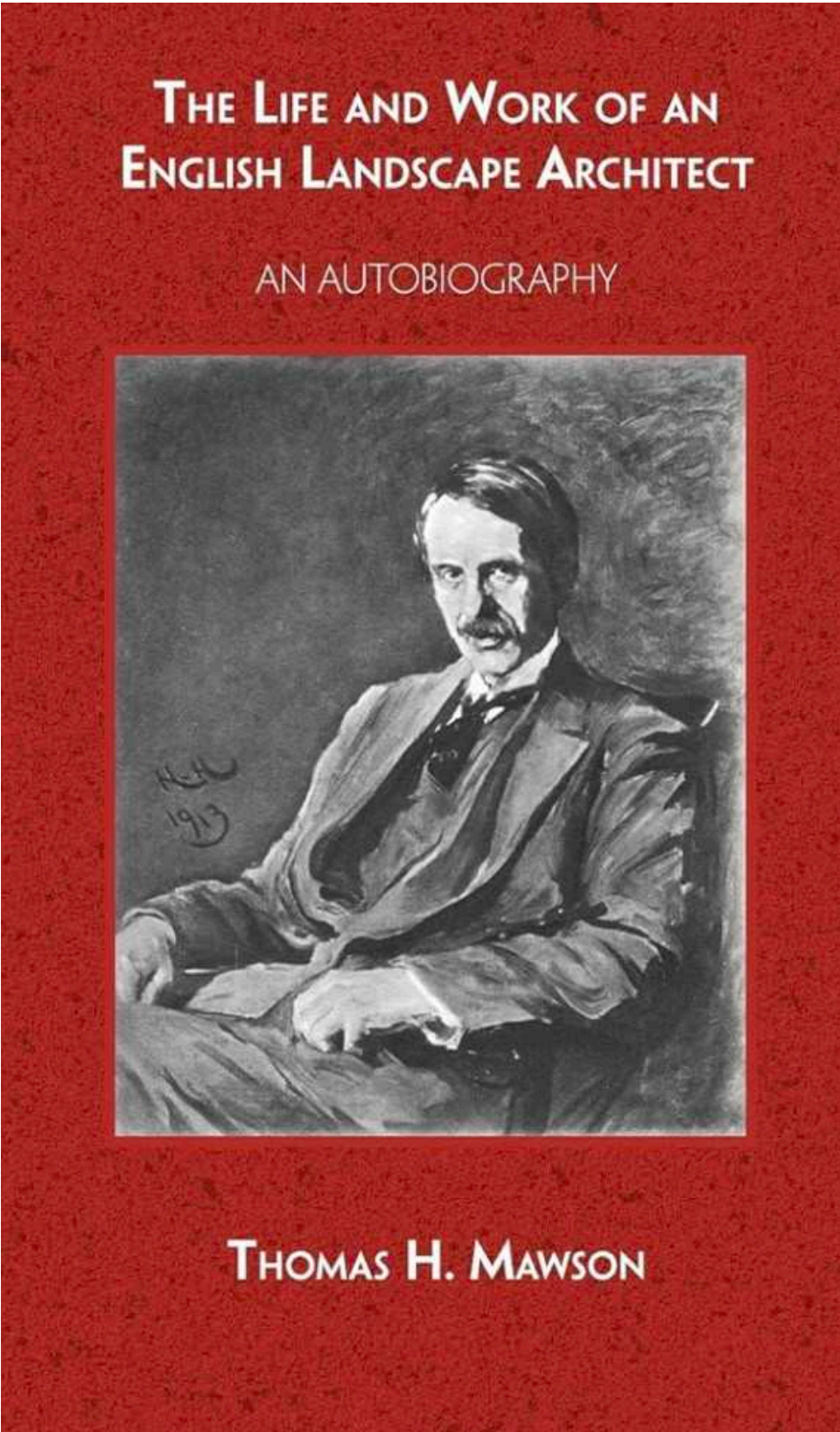
Closely associated with Stonehurst is the architect Leonard Keir Hett (1887-1978) who worked at Searle & Searle from 1911 and who worked extensively in Ardingly, including working on the conversion of the kennels at Stonehurst into a bungalow in the 1940s.

While specific information on the original design of the house and the involvement of Norman Searle have not been found, it is evident that the relationship with the firm Searle & Searle was important and long lasting.

THOMAS H MAWSON

Thomas Hayton Mawson (1861-1933) designed some of the most celebrated gardens in the Lake District and Cumbria. He also designed the ‘Palace of Peace’ gardens at the Hague in 1908 and had a hand in the Smokey Mountains National Park in the United States of America. As well as garden design, he was a published author. In 1901, he wrote two comprehensive works called ‘The Art and Craft of Garden Making’ which are now regarded as the foundation of modern landscape gardening. He published his autobiography in 1927, citing his luck in finding “appreciative clients” and skilled assistants, as well as moving in the right academic, business and government circles across the world.

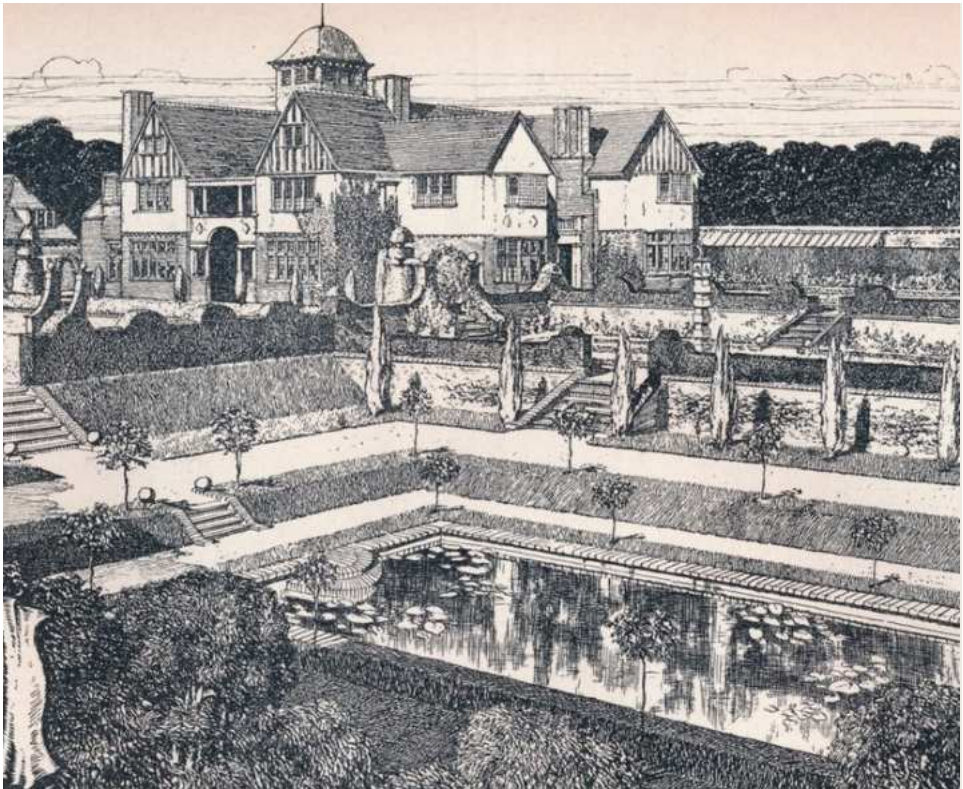
His work at Stonehurst followed on from other commissions in the area such as at Wych Cross Place, 1901; Moonhill Place, 1902; Cripland Court, 1902; Pressridge, 1902; Chelwood Manor, 1903-4; Birch Grove House, 1906. The design at Stonehurst combines elements of Wych Cross Place, such as the formal garden overlooking a valley, but there are also strong associations with his schemes in the Lake District such as working with existing water features such as the waterfalls in the dell and the aspect of working in harmony with the natural geological and topographical features.



Autobiography of Thomas Mawson



Aerial photo of Wych Cross Place



Artist impression of Moonhill Place



Thomas Mawson's scheme and vision for Stonehurst.

Historical Development

STONEHURST HOUSE

The most recent sales brochure indicates that the interior of the house has been substantially remodelled. The main vernacular revival elements are restricted to the exterior of the building and the garden features. The main exterior change to the house has been the removal of the tower and the large orangery that wrapped around the south elevation and the south east corner. The exact date of the tower's removal is not known but anecdotal evidence suggests its removal was ordered by the Home Office at the beginning of World War Two as the Luftwaffe was using it to navigate to Biggin Hill.

An undated photograph, but likely from the early 20th century due to the visible clothing, shows that the original tower was higher than that shown on the later photographs from 1926. Prior to being entirely removed, the tower experienced some remodelling, but its function of allowing the owners to enjoy sweeping viewss over their domain was kept. These historic photographs demonstrate its details, which include a large amount of fenestration, a wrap around balcony, a further observation turret on the south east corner of the tower, gabled dormers above the balcony and topped by a short needle. While high, the tower does not appear out of place within the roof line. The nature of vernacular revival design with projecting bays, gables and tall chimney stacks means the tower fits well.

The remaining stump sits at odds with the architectural aesthetic of the house. Historically, the tower would itself have been visible from further afield, including from outside the site. Currently the stump of the tower is partially visible from the overflow car park of Wakehurst Place. This stump creates an odd roof line for a house where the roof line is dominant and forms a distinctive feature.



Undated historic photograph.- likely 1900s



Stonehurst from the south, particulars of sale, 1926.



Stonehurst from the grounds, particulars of sale, 1926.



Current view of Stonehurst tower stump from Wakehurst Place overflow car park

Historical Development

MANY WATERS

A decorative folly at Many Waters was constructed adjacent to the two Mill Cottages by the southernmost mill pond, with a tower and steeply pitched roof as seen in the 1926 sales particulars opposite. The two Mill Cottages are also visible behind the folly.

A woodman’s cottage was built later on the site in place of these buildings, subsequently named Many Waters by Winifred Fortescue (a writer, actress and wife of Sir John Fortescue) during her stay at the cottage during the Second World War.

The woodman’s cottage was demolished in the early 20th century, following the grant of permission (02/02407/FUL) for a replacement dwelling and associated outbuilding - intended to provide more suitable accommodation for a family responsible for managing the wider RPG. The replacement dwelling was positioned in a similar location to maintain the designed relationship with Stonehurst House.

A comparison of the approved plans with Google Earth imagery confirms the permission was implemented in full and as such, given the modern construction of the building, Many Waters cannot be regarded as a heritage asset in its own right.



1926 sales particulars showing Many Waters forward of the two retained Mill Cottages



Many Waters prior to its demolition in the early 20th century



Approved sketches accompanying replacement dwelling application (02/02407/FUL) at Many Waters



Google imagery (March 2025) showing that permission 02/02407/FUL for replacement dwelling and outbuilding was implemented in full

Historical Development

WAKEHURST PLACE REGISTERED PARK AND GARDENS

Wakehurst Park and Gardens were significantly altered and subject to degradation during the early to mid 19th Century, with the estate apportioned between different owners until its sale to Caroline Frances, the Dowager Marchioness of Downshire, in 1869. She progressed with a schedule of improvement works to the gardens, which was continued by Sir William Boord, who bought the estate in 1890.

During the early to mid 20th century, Gerald Loder laid out his plantsman's and collector's garden at the core of the RPG around the principal buildings in this location. The gardens were enlarged over time through the work of the Kew Royal Botanic Gardens.

Parkland lies to east of the formal gardens, with some groups of trees surviving from those shown in the 1899 OS Map opposite. The parkland is seen to cover a more extensive area west of the Wakehurst Place mansion, which has since been incorporated into the formal designed gardens.

The eastern parkland has been subject to modern interventions in recent years. A large area of hardstanding used for storage has been introduced, north of the private driveway from the South Lodge to the Wakehurst mansion.

SOUTH LODGE AND GATEWAY

The listing description for the Grade II Listed South Lodge states that the South Lodge was built in the mid-19th century, but National Trust records confirm that the building is thought to date from the early 19th century when John Fairlie (tenant at Wakehurst Place from 1825-1830) commissioned its construction. This is corroborated by documentary evidence, with a rectangular building first seen in the location of South Lodge on tithe maps from 1841.

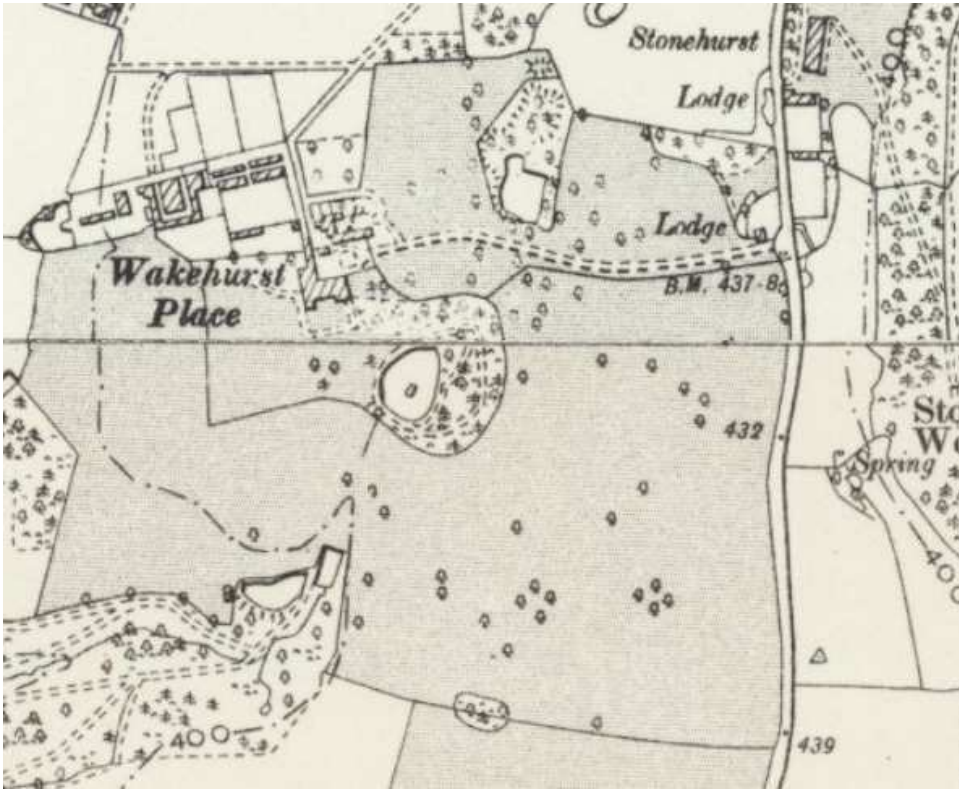
South Lodge was built at the start of the original approach to Wakehurst Place, which had fallen into disuse until its reinstatement by John Fairlie when building the South Lodge. It was built in the style of the Wakehurst Place mansion and was extended on a number of occasions during the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

In 1869, the estate was sold to the Marchioness of Downshire. The 1874 OS Map shows the first appearance of a northern wing, with the southern porch and further rear extensions then added by at least 1910.

The Grade II Listed gateway is thought to have been built at the same time as South Lodge to better mark the arrival into Wakehurst Place.



South Lodge on tithe map of 1841



1899 OS map showing parkland covering a larger area to the west of Wakehurst Place mansion and its formal gardens. Stonehurst is also shown.



1874 OS map - South Lodge is shown to have been extended to the north



1910 OS Map - showing further extensions to the rear and the southern porch added

Statement of Significance

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

The Registered Park and Garden have a high archaeological interest evidenced by the incorporation of a Scheduled Monument and the number of archaeological finds recorded on the HER from both antiquarian excavations and recent ones. Place-name evidence also points to a long history of human activity in the area.

The house at Stonehurst was built on the site of an earlier house known at Stone Farm. Stonehurst is a significantly bigger house and has a basement covering its entire footprint. There are also several outbuildings to the north and south of the house. The construction of the house with its basement will have removed any archaeological remains associated with the earlier house and the same is likely also the case for the outbuildings depending on the depth of their foundations. The topography of the area means that some of the garden landscaping by Thomas Mawson will have required ground levelling and / or building up in certain places. The insertion of the swimming pool within one of the walled gardens will have removed any earlier archaeological remains or those associated with the previous garden layout. The house has been altered substantially internally and so retains little architectural interest in its fabric.

The archaeological interest of the site is therefore vested in the wider Registered Park and Garden around, those areas known to have previously revealed evidence of past human activity and the Scheduled Monument.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC INTEREST

There is very little information surviving on the historic design and development of the house at Stonehurst or its original layout. The available information is restricted to exterior photographs from the sale particulars of 1926 and a few other single undated photographs. These cannot give an indication of the interior of the house but they do show that the exterior has remained largely unaltered and as such the building is a good example of the vernacular revival style.

The available photographs help understand that the two major changes to the house were the removal of the tower and the large orangery on the south elevation. These photographs help understand the detail and amount of fenestration incorporated into the tower. The tower was not just an architectural feature, it was functional, was an intrinsic part of the house and as an observatory tower contributed to the enjoyment derived from the surrounding parkland. By the late 19th century Stone Farm had become a pleasure farm, the tower is the progression of this by enabling spectacular vistas across the estate and RPG.

While the gardens and parkland were designed by a known landscape architect, hardly any archival information survives with the exception of one coloured drawing. It is possible to establish though that the gardens have survived well, especially the architectural elements. The overall legibility of the gardens and the house are still clearly visible and form an impressive whole with a high degree of aesthetic interest.

The incorporation of natural features and existing woodland into the parkland by Mawson is a typical trait of his work and is very evident at Stonehurst.

HISTORIC INTEREST

The relatively intact survival of the house as seen from historic photographs is beneficial to our understanding of the house. It also allows for a good understanding of the elements that were lost, such as the tower and orangery. Both of these elements are shown on historic photographs.

Given the topography of the site and its expansive garden, the tower is well placed to provide the residents with views of the garden. The former orangery was also a typical feature of late 19th/early 20th century country houses, and while the exact date of its construction and demolition are not known, the different owners of Stonehurst were interested in their extensive garden and parkland and so its existence is not out of place. Its absence also explains the plain appearance of the south elevation.

Historic maps and aerial photographs help our understanding of the evolving nature of the wider parkland. Tree growth and change are expected due to their nature, however the available information allows for a good interpretation of the original concept and how it has evolved.

SETTING

The house is set within the western end of the Registered Park and Garden. The house was positioned on an elevated part of the land in order to maximise the wide and long views to the east, north east and south east. The current house also evolved from a previous house that had become a pleasure farm, meaning there was a shift in focus from productive agriculture to pleasure and enjoyment derived from the natural environment.

The setting of the Registered Park and Garden and the house are therefore inextricably linked. While not a designated heritage asset, the house forms an essential intrinsic part of the Registered Park and Garden and is the best place to view the wider landscape. The house can be viewed from certain areas of the Registered Park and Garden and serve as an essential place marker from within the Registered Park and Garden.

The western boundary is distinct by virtue of it being a road. However the other boundaries are more blurred as a result of their natural setting. This is a key feature of the Registered Park and Garden. While it is in part a designed landscape to the west, the areas to the east, north and south are far more naturalistic with Mawson's scheme adapting and elevating the existing features, especially around the valley bottom and mill ponds. His scheme involved the planting of several trees which over time have grown and filled out.

Within the woodland areas and valley bottom, the area is dark and enclosed and this experience is likely very similar to previous generations. The Scheduled Monument's setting is probably relatively unchanged as is the manner it is experienced. Some clearings will have appeared and the species of tree cover may also be different, but it is situated on high ground over woodland in order to benefit from sweeping views. The house at Stonehurst is a newer addition to the wider setting, but like the Scheduled Monument it is situated on an elevated ridge

The setting of the non-designated heritage asset of the house, the Registered Park and Garden and the Scheduled Monument are essential to the significance of each of these and contribute positively to their significance.

The eastern section of the neighbouring Registered Park and Garden of Wakehurst Place forms part of the setting of the site, and *vice versa*. As a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden, Wakehurst Place is a significant heritage asset and derives its significance from the combination of designed and natural landscapes, laid out and managed by Gerald Loder and subsequently by Kew Gardens.

Like Stonehurst, Wakehurst Place's various owners in the early 20th century were keen horticulturalists and devoted much time and energy to planting and laying out of the grounds. The proximity of the two designed landscapes is important and contributes to their significance and the harmony of their settings.

The eastern parkland retains much of its 18th and 19th century landscape character, although this has been diminished to a degree by the storage area, which harmfully introduces a cluttered, built function to the parkland.

The Grade II Listed South Lodge draws its significance from its surviving original fabric and appearance, despite having been extended on occasions during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It also derives interest as a marker for the primary (private) approach into Wakehurst Place RPG and towards the Wakehurst mansion.

The listed gateway derives its value from its association with South Lodge, its surviving original fabric and for its contribution in formalising the principal entrance into the park and gardens.

Their settings are distinctly rural due to the surrounding Wakehurst parkland and the wider countryside to the east of Selsfield Road - which is particularly apparent when travelling north along the main road. The curtilage of South Lodge is defined by dense vegetation, reinforcing the heritage asset's verdant, rural setting.

Design Proposals

RECONSTRUCTION OF TOWER

It is proposed that the former observatory tower is re-instated as a faithful replica of its predecessor. The design of the tower by Ian Adam-Smith Architects has been led by research into the former appearance and size of the former tower, with the historic photographs from the early 20th century having been closely studied in order to understand its height, proportions and architectural details.

The new tower will stand at approximately 23.3m above the terrace level, c.11m above the existing tower base and will necessitate the partial demolition of the existing tower base at the point it was previously capped. The tower will have a clay hanging tiles, matching tiled roofs and timber framed fenestration, balustrades and exposed timber framing

PROPOSED ORANGERY\

A new orangery is also proposed to the southern end and south-eastern corner of the main house.

It would occupy the former orangery footprint, building from the retained dwarf wall to a total height of c.6.85m when measured to the proposed lanterns. The orangery would have timber-framed glazing, metal profile roof and incorporate ornate detailing at ridge level.

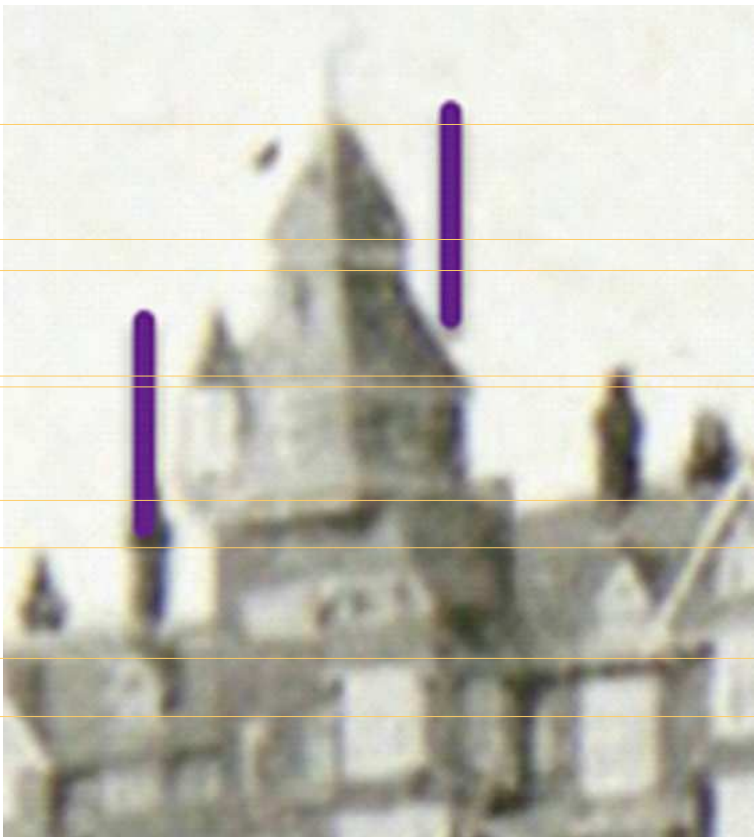
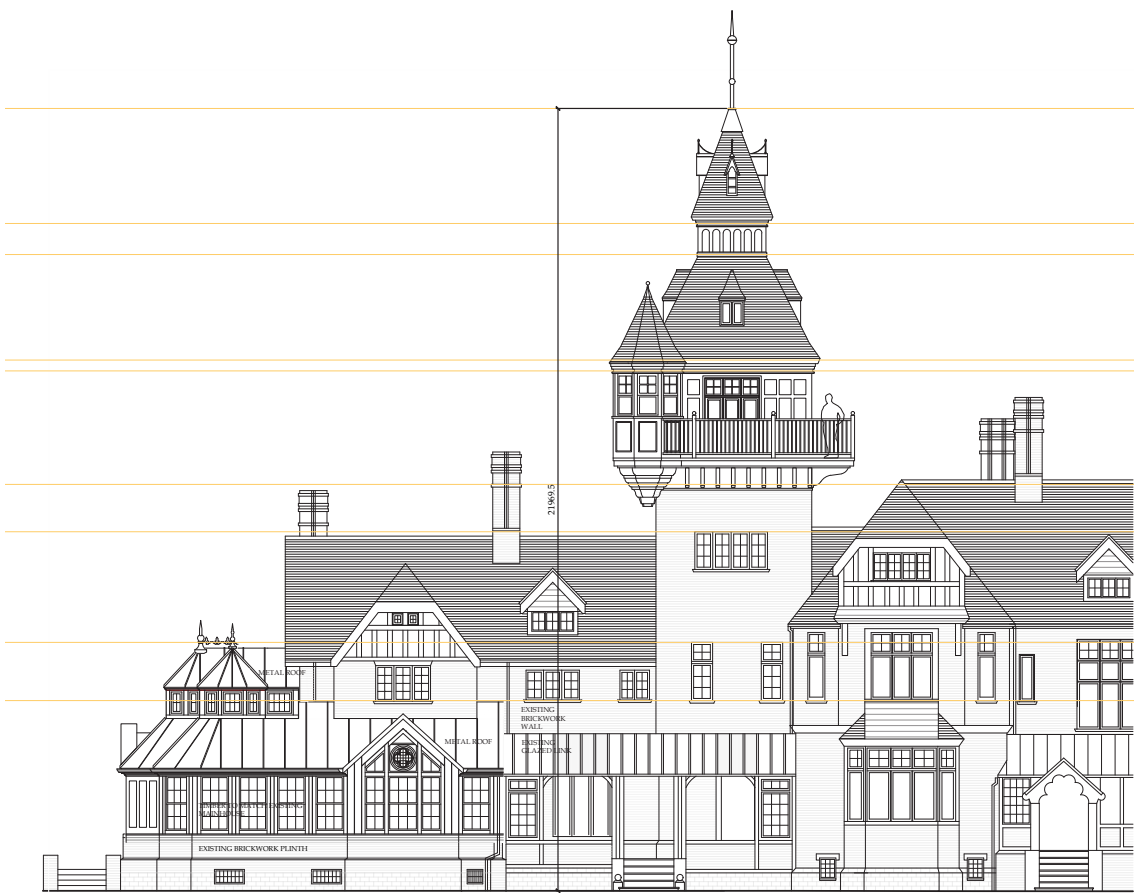
WIDER HOUSE WORKS

It is also proposed to remove the hanging tiles from the gable ends on all elevations to reveal the half-timbering beneath.



Proposed southern elevation

Design Proposals



Research undertaken by Ian Adam-Smith Architects, comparing the height of the tower in both its original and re-modelled form

Heritage Impact Assessment

STONEHURST HOUSE

The reinstating of the tower and the orangery will return the visual and external appearance of the house as it was originally intended. The house was built on an elevated plateau offering extensive views to the north, east and south. The design of the house intended to maximise this exceptional location through the extensive fenestration on the east elevation, the wide terrace but also importantly the tower offering different levels of views. The orangery also provided views to the south from an enclosed situation which was likely welcome in winter.

The heritage value of the building and registered parkland is currently harmed by the absence of the original tower and the incongruous, exposed base of the tower currently in its place. Former historic views of the grounds and beyond, as intended by the original designers, cannot be appreciated. The tower is described within the Stonehurst RPG listing as “a large, multi-staged tower with a balcony, that would have provided extensive views over the surrounding landscape”. The 1926 sales particulars go on to describe the “extensive views obtained over the grounds to the South Downs, stretching from Clayton, to beyond Beachy Head”. It also refers to the study/smoking room below, enjoying similar views. These features as described are presently lost.

The integrity of the design of the house as a non-designated heritage asset is also degraded because the intended views from the house across the grounds has been lost, the original deliberate relationship between the two is currently broken. Replacement of the tower would serve to restore the integrity and heritage significance of the original architecture of the house and its place within the designed parkland, enhancing the heritage significance of the Historic Park and Garden as a result.

A replacement orangery was previously consented of a similar design. The proposed orangery will fit in the footprint of the historic one and build from the remaining brick dwarf wall. Its design is reminiscent of late 19th/early 20th century orangeries and as such it will sit harmoniously with the house. It will also enhance the south elevation which is plain due to the loss of the historic orangery.

The proposed removal of the hanging tiles will reveal the half-timbering behind, marking a reinstatement of the original elevational treatment as evident from the historic photographs on page 14 of this statement.

REGISTERED PARK AND GARDEN

Historic views of the house from within the gardens and wider parkland show the tower clearly, but it does not show it as out of place or dominating. The relationship between the house and wider parkland are intrinsically linked. Currently, the visible stump sits uncomfortably within the roof line of the house. There is no doubt that the reconstruction of the tower will change the visual impact of the house over the Registered Park and Garden, but this change is deemed to be positive as it will reinforce the close relationship between the house and the wider parkland - namely that the wider parkland is meant to be appreciated from many angles and viewpoints, including from on high.

The house with its prominent position helped serve as a focal reference point from anywhere within the parkland. While without the tower the house is still recognisable, the tower will help enhance the role of the house as the main architectural feature of the parkland - the parkland was enhanced and created because of the importance of the house and its owners.

The orangery will have a minimal impact on the Registered Park and Garden due to its size, scale and appropriate design. It will offer an infill on a very large terrace and the addition to the south elevation is an enhancement to the setting of this part of the garden. As an orangery, it provides a direct link to the horticultural importance of the Registered Park and Garden.

WAKEHURST PLACE AND SOUTH LODGE

To the immediate west of Stonehurst lies the Registered Park and Garden of Wakehurst Place and several other listed buildings. The closest to Stonehurst is the South Lodge and Gateway and therefore Stonehurst House lies within the setting of both.

Currently, the part closest to Stonehurst is the entrance and overflow car park to the wider site of Wakehurst Place, now managed by Kew, but outside the defined boundaries of the RPG. This area is a functional part of the wider site and has had modern intrusions such as gates and turnstiles installed. As a result, these modern elements have impacted the setting of the RPG, slightly commensurately with the use of Wakehurst Place Registered Park and Garden.

The tower stump is visible from within the overflow carpark and is framed by two mature trees, suggesting that when the tower was built, its visibility from neighbouring Wakehurst Place and the road was considered and trees were added to form a visual *ensemble*. This further emphasises the concept that the house and landscape of Stonehurst are intrinsically linked forming an aesthetic whole. This aesthetic ideology extended to include visibility from neighbouring areas as well, especially for a prominent architectural feature such as the tower.

The submitted LVIA demonstrates that only glimpsed views of the proposed tower would be possible from the eastern perimeter of the publicly accessible RPG, as detailed in the *Planning Appraisal* section further below.

There would likely be some views from within the eastern parkland, which is an privately accessible area where the tower would have a lesser perceived impact on the designated RPG by the visiting public. Nevertheless, the tower at Stonehurst would have been in situ at the same time as the parkland (from at least 1899 onwards), meaning that the tower and parkland once shared an established visual relationship - one that predated Gerald Loder’s development of the designed gardens at Wakehurst. As such, the proposed tower would reinstate and enhance the historic intervisibility with the eastern parkland.

Appreciation of South Lodge is primarily afforded from the south towards its facade, where the majority of views of the tower would be screened by the established vegetation to the rear of the listed building. The tower would be more visible from the gateway, particularly the entrance bellmouth, where visitors’ focus would be directed towards entering Wakehurst Place rather than toward the tower.

Even so, any perception of the tower would be positive. It would not detract from the architectural or historic significance of South Lodge as an entry building into Wakehurst Place. Rather, the reintroduction of a tower would re-establish a historically appropriate built form within the setting of South Lodge and its listed gateway. The tower was an established element of the wider landscape during the late 19th century and its return would not harm the rural setting of the Grade II listed South Lodge.

The reconstructed tower will result in a change to the setting of the eastern part of Wakehurst Place and the South Lodge, however the current tower stump of the tower is not a positive attribute. The new tower will help return the roof line of Stonehurst to its historic grandeur as it used to be seen from Wakehurst. This change is therefore an enhancement to the setting of these other designated heritage assets.

The orangery will not be visible from Wakehurst Place due to the screening impact of the boundary walls at Stonehurst and would therefore have no measurable impact on the setting of nearby designated heritage assets.

The submitted LVIA confirms that views of the tower would not be possible from the Grade I Listed Wakehurst Place nor the Grade II* Listed Stables, resulting in no impact on their special interest as heritage assets.

Relevant Site Planning History

There are several planning applications associated with Stonehurst House and the RPG, but the below decisions are of most relevance when assessing the application scheme:

- **08/01044/FUL:** A glass and hardwood timber conservatory with lantern, to be built on the base of a previous Victorian glazed conservatory. Approved 1st May 2008.
- **07/03885/FUL:** A glass and hardwood timber conservatory with lantern. A tiled and glazed building to the top of an existing tower. Refused 6th March 2008.

A previous attempt to re-instate the Stonehurst tower was refused in March 2008 under refusal 07/03855/FUL. The proposal was for a shorter version of its original structure and did not follow the historic design intent, with an octagonal built form and differing architectural features - such as a lead dome and weather vane.

The Officer Report for the refusal noted:

The tower is also described as a reinstatement but the supporting photographs show the design and appearance greatly differ from the original in terms of; size, shape, fenestration, roof-pitch and architectural details... this has left very little resemblance to the original structure and results in a wholly different and disjointed appearance.

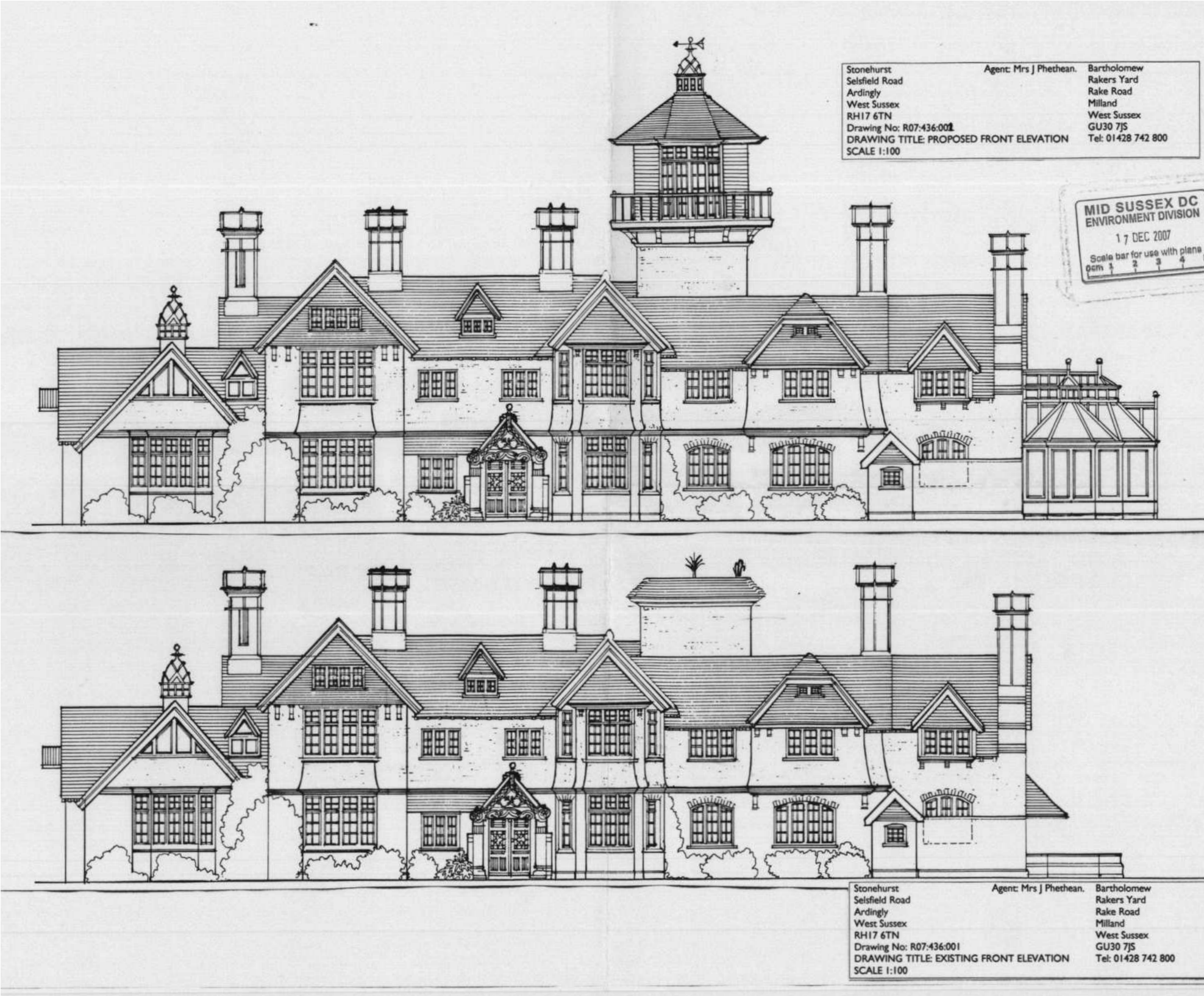
*Stonehurst is positioned on an exposed ridge and the full scale of the proposed tower would be highly visible from across the Cob Brook valley **to settlements in the distance, as well as the nearby rural bridleway (2Ar) 115m east of Stonehurst** and the listed garden in which is sits.*

*Because of this highly visible and dominating position in the landscape, any additional development, particularly above the existing height of this property **would need to be of exceptional design and quality to a degree that would enhance both the architectural character of the building and the natural beauty and visual quality of the AONB.***

The reason for refusal was stated as:

The proposed tower would form a tall and obtrusive development, significantly detracting from the visual amenity of the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in conflict with Policy CH1 of the adopted West Sussex Structure Plan and Policies C4 and H13 of the Mid Sussex Local Plan.

A conservatory was also proposed as part of the application, sited in the same location and adopting a similar design approach to the orangery proposed under this planning application. It was supported by the Local Planning Authority during refusal 07/03885/FUL and subsequently approved under permission 08/01044/FUL, but never implemented.



Plans refused under 07/03885/FUL

Relevant Site Planning History

Pre-application enquiry DM/24/3102 was submitted to the LPA to seek feedback on the proposed tower and orangery, in light of the previous refusal relating to the previously proposed observatory tower.

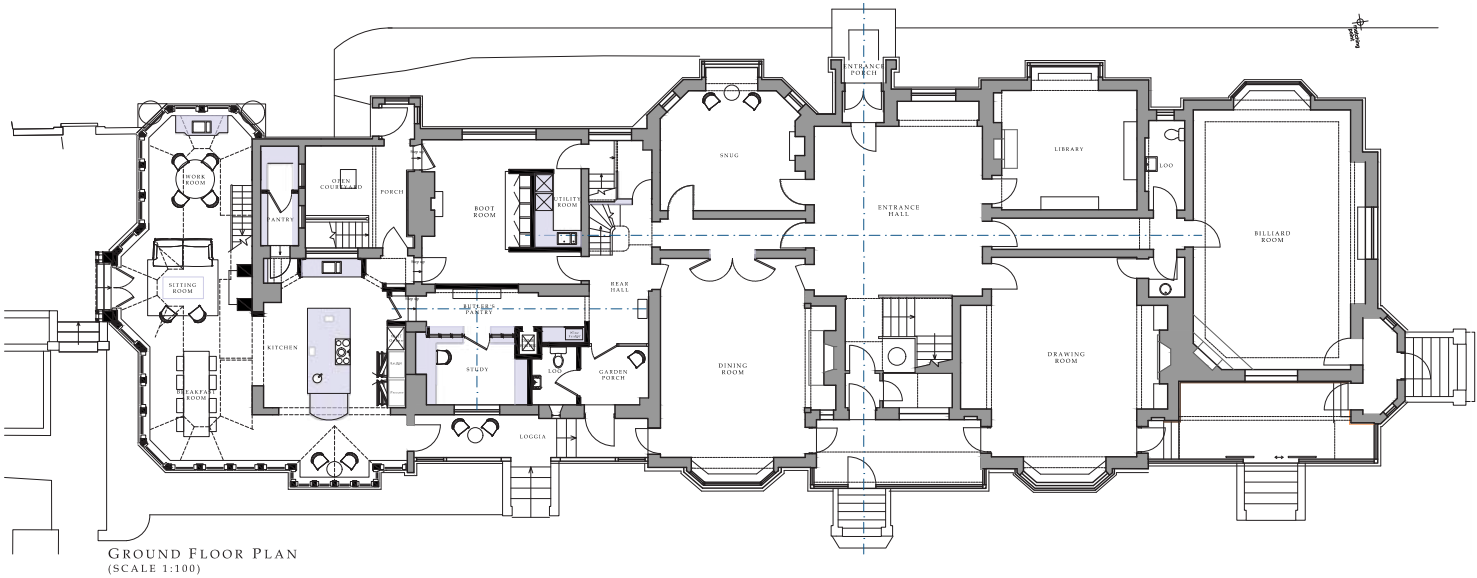
The LPA feedback was supportive, noting there was sound evidence that the tower was an important element of the original designs for Stonehurst and its designed landscape. The tower was designed to provide views to the valley beneath and was a focal point for views within the park, together with the (former) decorative folly of Many Waters. The existing tower base was also considered to detract from the character of Stonehurst, particularly its roofline interest.

The LPA did raise how the tower could be prominent in views from points within the Wakehurst Place RPG, particularly in designed views which may have formed since the original tower was demolished. The applicant’s response to this can be found within the submitted LVIA Volume 1 and 2 and in the *Design and Heritage* section of the *Planning Appraisal* below.

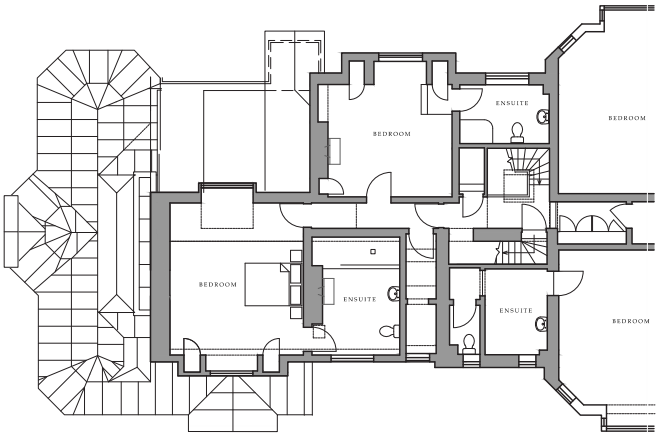
The proposed conservatory was assessed as being an enhancement to Stonehurst, given the robust documentary and fabric evidence for a similar structure to the southern end of the NDHA.

The LPA assessed neighbouring amenity as being preserved by the development, whilst a Flood Risk Assessment was also requested - which is addressed in the *Flooding* section of the *Planning Appraisal* below.

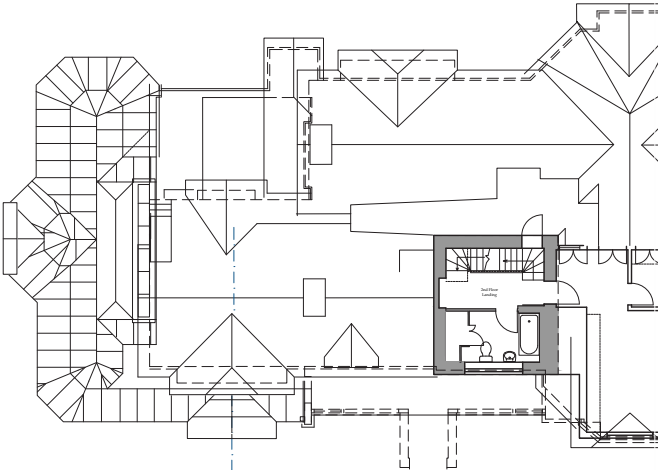
The High Weald Unit and Historic England were also approached to participate in pre-application discussions, but were unable to commit resources at that stage.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN
(SCALE 1:100)



FIRST FLOOR PLAN EXTRACT
(SCALE 1:100)



TOWER ACCESS EXTRACT
(SCALE 1:100)

Planning Policy Framework

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Section 38(6) requires local planning authorities to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

A presumption in favour of sustainable development is found at the heart of the NPPF, for both plan-making and decision-taking, defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives): economic, social and environment.

NPPF paragraph 203 states that, when assessing and determining applications, Local Planning Authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and how new development can make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

NPPF paragraph 189 directs that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing National Landscapes, including the enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage within these areas.

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT PLAN (2018)

The following MSDP planning policies are relevant to the assessment of the application scheme:

- **Policy DP12:** Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
- **Policy DP16:** High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- **Policy DP26:** Character and Design
- **Policy DP29:** Noise, Air and Light Pollution
- **Policy DP34:** Listed Buildings and other Heritage Assets
- **Policy DP36:** Historic Parks and Gardens

ARDINGLY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (2015)

The following ANP planning policies are relevant to the assessment of the application scheme:

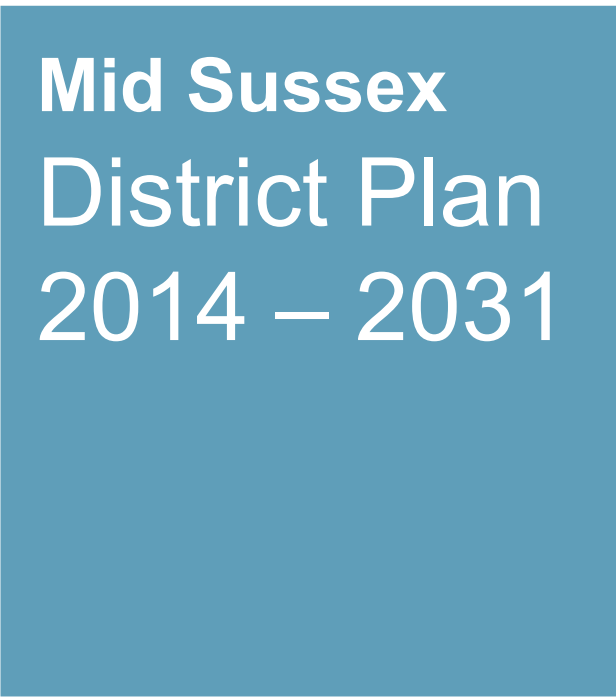
- **Policy ARD1:** Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- **Policy ARD2:** A Spatial Plan for the Parish
- **Policy ARD5:** Housing Design

- **Policy ARD9:** Heritage Assets

OTHER RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY DOCUMENTS

The following supplementary planning documents and guidance documents are relevant to the assessment of the application scheme:

- Design Guide SPD (2020)
- High Weald AONB Management Plan (2019-2024)
- High Weald: Guidance on the Selection and Use of Colour in Development (2017)
- Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (2021)
- Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex (2005)



Mid Sussex Local Plan (2018)

Planning Appraisal

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The application site lies outside any defined settlement boundaries and is therefore in the countryside for planning policy purposes.

The proposed development comprises works associated with Stonehurst as a single dwellinghouse, all of which are within the established residential curtilage. As such, the principle of development is accepted, subject to an assessment of the proposals against the relevant policies of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan, as well as any material planning considerations as outlined below.

DESIGN AND HERITAGE IMPACT

NPPF paragraph 203 states that, when assessing and determining applications, Local Planning Authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and how new development can make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. NPPF paragraph 216 directs that a balanced judgement must be conducted when weighing the impact of proposals on Non-Designated Heritage Assets, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

MSDP Policy 26 (Character and Design) states that all development proposals should be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages, while being sensitive to the countryside. Development should demonstrate that they are of a high quality and create a sense of place, while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape.

MSDP Policy DP34 (Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets) seeks to balance the need for development with the importance of preserving Mid Sussex’s rich heritage, ensuring that historical assets continue to contribute to the district’s character and quality of life. There is an emphasis on the use of traditional building materials and construction techniques to preserve heritage asset’s historic character.

MSDP Policy DP3 (Historic Park and Gardens) states that registered parks will be protected by ensuring that development within or adjacent to RPGs conserve and enhance its special features, setting and views into and out of the park or garden.

A previous attempt to construct a tower at Stonehurst was refused permission in March 2008 under application 07/03855/FUL. Importantly, the Officer Report for the refusal stated that:

‘The tower is also described as a reinstatement but the supporting photographs show the design and appearance greatly differ from the original in terms of; size, shape, fenestration, roof-pitch and architectural details... this has left very little resemblance to the original structure and results in a wholly different and disjointed appearance.’

The design of the tower proposed then was of an inappropriate design considering the age of the building, its architectural vernacular and the evidence of the original multi-stage tower design from the photographs. The proposals made little effort to replicate that of the former multi-stage tower and balcony, and appeared to be an octagonal, timber structure with little historical precedent. Within the

application documents themselves, there is little justification for the tower, and the architectural drawings are basic.

The application scheme for the tower has been designed from an in-depth analysis of the height, appearance and architectural features of the original tower captured on historic photographs of the property. The proposal can therefore be described as a re-instatement of its predecessor, overcoming one area of LPA concern when refusing application 07/03855/FUL.

Pre-application feedback DM/24/3102 offered support for the proposals on heritage grounds, subject to further information on the remaining historic fabric at Many Waters and a more detailed assessment of the tower’s impact on the setting of Wakehurst Place RPG and the individual heritage assets within it. It was also suggested that verified views from Wakehurst Place RPG may be required, depending on the visibility and impact of the tower from within the park and gardens.

Many Waters is a modern replacement dwelling as approved by permission 02/02407/FUL. There is therefore no remaining historic fabric nor is the building of sufficient age to be considered a Non-Designated Heritage Asset, which would otherwise necessitate an assessment of the proposal’s impact on Many Waters as a heritage asset.

The submitted Landscape Visual Impact Assessment Volume 1 (LVIA) (Terrafirma - June 2025) identified locations along the eastern perimeter of Wakehurst Place RPG with potential views of the proposed tower, based on findings from the LiDAR Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) which accounts for screening from existing topography, buildings and vegetation.

Fieldwork undertaken in Spring 2025 confirmed that public views of the tower from within the RPG would be limited to only three locations along the public eastern boundary, and even these views would be glimpsed - filtered by mature vegetation and the topography of the land. It was therefore concluded that visibility from within Wakehurst Place did not warrant consideration in LVIA Volume 2 nor the need for verified views.

This finding demonstrates that there are no designed or open views facing Stonehurst that would be harmed by the tower, addressing concerns raised in the LPA pre-application feedback. Any glimpsed views of the tower from within Wakehurst Place would be perceived as an enhancement to the setting of the Grade II* Listed RPG, replacing the existing stump and restoring the original roofline at Stonehurst as it was experienced in the early 20th century.

The same can be said of views from the Grade II Listed South Lodge and gateway, where the tower would represent the reinstatement of a feature lost during the 20th century, enhancing the setting of the heritage assets. Their architectural value and understanding as the formal, private entry into the Wakehurst Place RPG would not be harmed by the introduction of the tower.

The LVIA also assists in assessing impacts on the setting of the Grade I Wakehurst Place and the Grade II* Stables. The ZTV confirms there would be no visibility of the tower from these buildings (due to the screening effect of intervening features) and as a result their settings and significance as heritage assets would also be

preserved.

The proposals at Stonehurst align with the various historic environment policy objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, heritage policies within the Mid Sussex District Plan (2018) and the Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan (2005) through several key aspects:

1. Protection and Enhancement of Historic Character

The proposals are designed to respect and enhance the historic character of Stonehurst House and its registered parkland. By carefully considering the form, scale, and materials used, the proposals ensure that any changes are sympathetic to the building’s historic significance and that of the parkland, aligning with the policy emphasis on preserving the historical and architectural integrity of heritage assets.

While the reconstructed tower will be visible, it will return the historic and diverse roofline typically associated with Vernacular Revival to its historic splendour. The southern elevation is remarkably plain compared to the rest of the house due to the absence of the historic orangery. The construction of a new orangery within the same footprint of the historic orangery is an enhancement to the historic character of the house and the wider parkland.

The removal of the hanging tiles to reveal the underlying half-timbering will expose an original archetectural feature of Stonehurst House and further enhance its special architectural interest as a NDHA.

2. Retention of Historic Fabric

The plans emphasise the retention and careful restoration of significant historic elements, such as the tower and the orangery. While some fabric will be lost to integrate the new orangery into the circulation of the house, this is countered by the incorporation of significant heritage enhancements. This approach complies with the policy requirements to protect the historic fabric and significance of heritage assets.

3. Use of Traditional Materials and Techniques

The proposals incorporate traditional building materials and construction techniques, which is a core policy objective. The tower will be finished in materials that assimilate with the main house and replicate the former tower’s construction, such as matching half-timber elements and clay hanging tiles.

Importantly, the new orangery will use the existing brick dwarf wall that historically was part of the former orangery. This ensures that any new additions or alterations are compatible with the existing historic structure, maintaining the building’s authenticity and heritage value.

4. Sensitive Design and Modest Interventions

By its very definition, the tower is a large structure. However when looked at in the wider context of the house, it is an appropriate and proportionate addition. The visible stump is incongruous with the existing roofline, while the reinstating of the tower at its length and height will help draw the eye over the roofline and make it appear more as a cohesive whole.

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The new orangery is a proportionate addition to the south elevation and is nestled in the footprint of the historic orangery. This aligns with the policy requirements of ensuring that new developments respect the scale and character of the historic environment, avoiding overpowering or incongruous changes.

5. Enhancement of Setting

By improving the historic character and appearance of the house, the proposals enhance the overall setting of Stonehurst RPG. The tower will be visible in relatively few locations within the the neighbouring Registered Park and Garden of Wakehurst Place and from the Grade II Listed Gatehouse. This will constitute a change in setting, but it is considered to be a positive change in setting. This approach meets the policy requirements of protecting and enhancing the settings of listed buildings, ensuring that the building’s historical context is preserved and enhanced.

With respect to the policy requirements regarding the Registered Park and Garden, the proposals will both protect and enhance views into and out of Stonehurst and Wakehurst Place. The enhancement is provided by the removal of the current awkward stump which does not enhance views towards the house and restoration of a tower that formed a coherent part of the originally designed dwelling at Stonehurst.

Overall, the application proposals have been led by a desire to replicate and re-instate what has been lost from the originally constructed property of Stonehurst. The proposals achieve this and overcome previous design/heritage concerns leading to the refusal of application 07/03855/FUL. The proposals would result in an enhancement to the Grade II Listed Stonehurst RPG, Stonehurst as a NDHA, the setting of the Wakehurst Place RPG and its listed buildings, according with MSDP Policies DP26, DP34 and DP3 and ANP Policies ARD5 and ARD9.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND IMPACT

NPPF paragraph 189 ascribes great weight the conservation and enhancement of National Landscapes, including the enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage within these areas.

MSDP Policy DP16 (High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) states that development will only be permitted where it conserves and enhances natural beauty and has regard for the High Weald AONB Management Plan. In particular, it seeks proposals that respect local character and distinctiveness, settlement pattern, a sense of place and conserve cultural heritage.

The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 is a high-level document, without specific reference to the application site. It does however refer to Registered Parks and Gardens as a characteristic of the High Weald. Other stated characteristics include dispersed historic settlements with high concentrations of historic buildings, woodland lying along sandy ridges and intricate and extensive network of footpaths, roads, lanes and disused railway lines. The application site is of significance as it demonstrates these important characteristics.

The site is located within area HW1 (High Weald) of the Landscape Character

Assessment of West Sussex County Council (2021). A “Key Characteristic” is described as “*designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses*”. Stonehurst therefore forms part of this important character and makes a positive contribution to the landscape character of this part of the protected National Landscape. The area assessment advises that long views along valleys and ridges have a high sensitivity to the impact of new urban development, modern farm buildings, masts and pylons and new roads, and that proposals should seek to ensure that any new development is integrated in long and other views.

The site also lies within Landscape Character Area 6 – High Weald of Mid Sussex District (A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex - November 2005) . The key characteristics of greatest relevance to the application site are designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses, complex sandstone and clay hilly landscape of ridges, and secluded valleys centred on the western end of Forest Ridge of the High Weald plateau deeply cut by numerous gill streams.

The Landscape Character Assessment also refers to Stonehurst directly, as follows:

“Stonehurst, a ‘new’ country house and gardens near West Hoathly and directly east of Wakehurst Place, was laid out on the site of an earlier farmhouse, Stone Farm. Part of this earlier estate included two mills, Corn Mill and Stone Mill which were retained, together with the Mill Cottages set next to the mill ponds. Built around 1910, the brick and weather-tiled house is substantial. Stonehurst sits on the edge of the deep Cob Brook valley, the pleasure grounds (including ornamental ponds, pools and waterfalls) and estate extending over 80 hectares of farmland and deep gill woodland centred on Chiddinglye Woods. The valleys contain extensive sandrock crags including the famous ‘Great-on-Little’ Stone remarked on by Cobbett (1835). Much of the valley is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest”.

Paragraph 9.28 of the Landscape Character Area 6 Document is also of relevance:

Settlement in the area was ... unobtrusive and scanty until the 19th Century, when the High Weald became a favourite area for the extension in the Victorian and Edwardian eras of ‘London into Sussex’, characterised by widespread, often lavish, house development, the hilly woodland settings highly prized. The new parksapes developed as a setting for these houses have bequeathed a legacy of exotic trees and shrubs which are today locally dominant in the landscape.

The tower is an integral element of the original design and beneficial to the RPG designation. Replacing the missing section is architecturally in keeping with the original design ethos and would positively contribute to the distinctive, local vernacular found in this part of the High Weald National Landscape, enhancing its sense of place as a result.

LVIA Volumes 1 and 2 accompany this planning application and should be referred to for further detail.

The LVIA notes that homes within Arts and Crafts inspired gardens (such as that at Stonehurst) would sometimes be built with prospect towers - in a similar manner to that proposed under this pre-application enquiry. Stonehurst is described as one of several historic properties in the locality that has a notable influence on the scenic quality of the National Landscape. It would have been designed to

achieve key vistas across the parkland and the wider landscape, which the original observation tower would have formed an important part of. The High Weald National Trail crosses through the gardens and walkers along the trail appreciate the sense of place created by the Arts and Crafts parkland.

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments 3 also states that:

‘it should be remembered that well-designed new development can make a positive contribution to the landscape and need not always be hidden or screened’

The LVIA concludes that of the 55 viewpoints from within the High Weald National Landscape, only 16 vantage points offer possible visibility of the proposed tower and that these views should be taken forward for further landscape impact assessments. The identified viewpoints are either from Selsfield Road, the temporary carpark serving Wakehurst RPG, Hook Lane or a public bridleway to the east of the site.

Two wireframes of the proposed tower (presented overleaf) have been prepared to provide an indication of its landscape impact; from viewpoint 17 and viewpoint 52, which respectively have high and medium-high sensitivity to change.

Viewpoint 17 is from the bridleway to the east. The far views are characteristic of the rural High Weald landscape, taking in gill woodland/ shaws, and views of Stonehurst.

The long distant views across the rolling landscape and characteristic shaw/ gill woodland include a clear view of the Stonehurst Registered Park and Garden and its designed garden on the ridgeline, framed by mature trees. This verdant, rolling rural landscape with views towards a characteristic historic house is typical of the High Weald, and contributes to the expectation of rural beauty that users of this bridleway will look forward to.

However, the nature of the views varies along the landscape trail. Some are enclosed by the dense, tall hedge and others are far reaching where the bridleway crosses open ground. The photograph taken at viewpoint 17 represents the most open view of the country house as seen from across the valley.

Whilst the house can be appreciated from this higher position, the proportion of the view likely to be affected by the proposed development is a very small and limited section of the panoramic. Other features in the scene dominate and draw the viewers’ attention such as the extensive woodland, rolling fields and topography. An interesting profile and juxtaposition of trees and roof lines adds to the horizon’s character.

Seen as an integral part of the panoramic wooded setting, the country house and restoration of the tower in the context of other buildings on the site would not be seen as an unusual or the most dominant feature.

The LVIA Volume 2 assessment concludes that, despite the high sensitivity of this view, the tower would result in a minor beneficial visual affect (together with viewpoints 18-20).

Viewpoint 52 is from the temporary car park adjacent to, but outside the Wakehurst RPG. Conclusions drawn from this viewpoint are that the tower would result in moderate beneficial visual impact despite its visibility, in part as the tower

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reintroduces a lost feature - but also as drivers’ attention on arrival is likely to be focused on finding a parking space and that visitors walking towards the entrance building will be facing away from Stonehurst.

Should visitors take notice of Stonehurst, the evergreen planting and trees placed along the property’s boundary facing towards Selsfield Road is thought to be the original planting from the Arts & Crafts Period. Two trees frame the tower ‘stump’ and the gap created by the missing section is noticeable.

More generally, the proposed colour palette would not only match that of the original tower and building, but also aligns with the recommendations set out within High Weald AONB: Guidance on the Selection and Use of Colour in Development (2017). The timber boarding would be white (0300-N) and black (8005-Y80R) and the clay tiles would be reddish clay (5020-Y60R), using the recommendation colour codes as set out within the High Weald guidance.

The proposed massing and colour derived from the materials support the National Landscapes’ core characteristics. The interest and variation of the roofscape adds interest, and the massing and architectural detailing of the tower is expected to provide a missing focal point, reinstating a lost feature and understanding of the Stonehurst RPG.

The LVIA findings counter landscape reason for refusal ascribed to application 07/03855/FUL by using a robust and evidenced-based approach. When justifying the refusal, the Officer Report stated (without any landscape consultee advice) that:

*Stonehurst is positioned on an exposed ridge and the full scale of the proposed tower would be highly visible from across the Cob Brook valley **to settlements in the distance, as well as the nearby rural bridleway (2Ar) 115m east of Stonehurst** and the listed garden in which it sits.*

The LVIA demonstrates that the tower would in fact be screened from nearby settlements and that it would be visible from a different bridleway from that relied on within the Officer Report- this being the bridleway that crosses the Stonehurst RPG, from which the LVIA has found no views would be afforded. The LVIA instead show that the tower would be visible from relatively few vantage points, would lead to an overall enhancement to the High Weald National Landscape and counteract the previous landscape reason for refusal.

The proposed orangery would be a reinstatement of a former conservatory in the same location and would be a proportionate addition that would not be visible in long-range views from within the High Weald National Landscape. Localised views from Selsfield Road would also be limited, due to the screening effect of the western boundary walls at Stonehurst. The orangery would be read as an appropriate addition in any partial views from Selsfield Road, seen in the context of the existing dwelling.

Overall, the tower would be far less visible than originally assessed by the LPA under refusal 07/03855/FUL and, on occasions when the tower is perceived, it would enhance the character of the High Weald National Landscape. The development as a whole would lead to a positive contribution to the National Landscape’s distinct rural vernacular and cultural heritage and as such, would accord with the relevant NPPF sections and MSDP Policy DP16.



Proposed wireframe for Viewpoint I7



Proposed wireframe for Viewpoint 52

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NEIGHBOURING AMENITY

The Holt is the closest property to Stonehurst, with the proposed tower being c.80m due north from the neighbouring garden and c.125m from the dwelling itself. There were no neighbouring amenity concerns associated with the tower refused under application 07/03855/FUL due to the significant distance between the two sites and this remains the same for the proposed scheme, with no significant impacts in terms of neighbouring levels of light, privacy nor outlook.

This same rationale can be applied to the orangery which, although closer to the Holt than the proposed tower, would be lower in height and as such would have no impact on neighbouring amenity.

The LPA also reached the same conclusion in its pre-application feedback and it is expected that this position will be maintained, with the proposed tower and orangery remaining unchanged in scale and location since that assessment.

ECOLOGY

A Bat Scoping Report and Bat Emergence Survey Report (Ecology Co-op - September 2024 & August 2025) accompanies this application and should be referred to for further detail.

The Bat Scoping Report concluded that the building had a high potential for bat roosts, including existing tile-hung areas which would be impacted by the proposed development. This necessitated the need for a minimum of three bat emergence/re-entry surveys, which were undertaken in June and July 2025.

The bat emergence surveys identified a total of nine roosts that could be impacted by the proposed development and as such, a bat license will need to be granted before the development can proceed. Possible measures to safeguard bats include a toolbox talk for contractors before commencing works, provision of alternative bat roosts and the use of Bitumen 1F roofing felt.

Overall, the proposed mitigation measures will ensure that bats will not be harmed during construction and that alternative roosting opportunities will be provided post-completion.

STRUCTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

The planning application is accompanied by a Structural Inspection Report (Austin Structures - May 2025), which should be referred to for further detail.

The report was commissioned in response to LPA pre-application comments and assesses whether the building remains structurally capable of bearing a new observatory tower.

The report determines that the building is structurally capable of re-supporting the reinstated tower, due to the good condition of the internal load-bearing brickwork

and timber joists that originally supported the tower.

OTHER MATTERS

The LPA pre-application feedback recommended that a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should accompany a planning application for the proposed development, citing areas of surface water flooding risk near to Stonehurst House.

However, the Environmental Agency flood risk mapping does not show the application site to be at risk of any form of flooding (either now or in the future) and as such, a FRA is not required to support the application.

SUMMARY

The proposals for Stonehurst have been carefully curated and comply with the heritage policy objectives of both the NPPF, Mid Sussex District Plan and the Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan.

They ensure that the historic significance of the Stonehurst RPG and neighbouring designated heritage assets are preserved or enhanced, that any alterations are sympathetic to the original structure, and that the overall character of the property are enhanced. Through sensitive design, the use of traditional materials, and a commitment to reinstating historic significance, the proposals support the long-term preservation and appreciation of Stonehurst as a heritage asset.

LVIA findings demonstrate that the proposed tower would be seen from relatively few viewpoints and, on occasions when it is visible, would positively contribute to the character and cultural heritage of the High Weald National Landscape.

Neighbouring amenity impacts, ecological considerations and structural matters have also been shown to be acceptable.

It is therefore respectfully requested that the application be approved without undue delay so that the significant benefits of the scheme can be delivered.

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Appendix I: Statement of Significance and Assessment Methodology

All heritage assets are significant. Significance can be understood as a combination of various values and value-based assessments that should remain adaptable in their application. It is important to avoid oversimplification and recognise when an asset holds multiple layers of value, which can often enhance its overall significance.

The goal of this assessment process is to gain a well-rounded understanding of the likely effects of proposals on an asset’s significance, based on the predicted impacts. It is essential to ensure that the level of detail in these assessments is “proportionate to the asset’s importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance,” in line with Paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET

There is no reference to local undesignated heritage assets within the legislation that relates to the historic built environment. The concept of non-statutory local heritage designations was first introduced in Planning Policy Statement 5, published in 2010 and later set out in the policies included in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Local authorities are encouraged to create and maintain a list or register of those buildings considered significant in a local context. This means that non-designated heritage assets are a material consideration in the determination of a planning application. The NPPF includes a definition of a heritage asset within Annexe 2 of the Framework which states that a heritage asset is:

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

This definition means a local heritage asset must demonstrate a level of “significance” as defined within the NPPF in order to be considered a heritage asset. Annexe 2 also includes a definition of significance. It is defined as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.

Therefore, in order to be considered a local heritage assets, the building should demonstrate some degree of heritage interest, whether that be, archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. The NPPF includes a provision for non-designated heritage assets. Paragraph 209 states:

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

This sets out the national policy towards undesignated heritage assets. It means that when an application for alteration, or other works that may affect the heritage assets, a balance must be reached to assess the importance of the locally designated asset in the context of the proposed development and the planning policies that apply.

In drawing up local lists or registers, Historic England Advice Note 7 (Second Edition) Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage (Historic England 2021) provides a list of criterion to help assess the suitability of an asset for inclusion in a local list. The criterion includes the asset type, age, rarity, architectural and artistic interest, group value, archaeological interest, historic interest and landmark status

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

‘Significance’ lies in the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. The determination of the significance of these assets is based on statutory designation and/or professional judgement against four values (English Heritage 2008):

- Evidential value: the potential of the physical remains to yield evidence of past human activity. This might take into account date; rarity; state of preservation; diversity/complexity; contribution to published priorities; supporting documentation; collective value and comparative potential;
- Aesthetic value: this derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from the heritage asset, taking into account what other people have said or written;
- Historical value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through heritage asset to the present, such a connection often being illustrative or associative;
- Communal value: this derives from the meanings of a heritage asset for the people who know about it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory; communal values are closely bound up with historical, particularly associative, and aesthetic values, along with educational, social or economic values.

Historic England Advice Note 12: *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets* (Historic England 2019b) states that ‘interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.

The British Standards BS7913 (2013) advises ‘*to think of a historic building’s significance as comprising individual heritage values*’. These could include townscape characteristics, artistic value, educational value and identity or belonging amongst others.

ASSESSMENT OF SETTINGS

While not a designation itself, the setting of a heritage asset can be crucial to its significance. The value of setting lies in how it contributes to the asset’s importance, though in some cases, it may not contribute at all. Historic England’s Good Practice Advice 3: *Setting of Heritage Assets* (2017a) defines setting as “an established concept that relates to the surroundings in which a place is experienced, its local context, embracing present and past relationships to the adjacent landscape.” This concept extends beyond visual aspects to include cultural, intellectual, spatial, and functional relationships. Understanding an asset’s origins

and evolution is key to assessing its contextual relationships and potential greater value as part of a larger entity. The significance of setting may stem from:

- Visual considerations
- Historic use
- Ownership
- Changes over time
- Cultural influences

It is important to note that impacts on an asset’s setting do not necessarily equate to direct impacts on its significance. The importance of setting depends entirely on its contribution to the asset’s significance or our ability to appreciate it. To effectively assess setting in decision-making, one must understand the asset’s history and development to the extent that it creates present-day significance. This approach ensures a comprehensive evaluation of the asset’s value within its broader context.

Appendix I: Statement of Significance and Assessment Methodology

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

The significance of a heritage asset must be clearly assessed to provide context for and determine the impact of any development proposals. The impact on this significance is evaluated by first considering the sensitivity of the identified heritage assets, which is best expressed through a hierarchy of value levels. There are various systems in use for presenting significance hierarchies, the most commonly used is based on the established ‘James Semple Kerr method,’ as adopted by Historic England. This is combined with the impact assessment methodology for heritage assets outlined in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB: HA208/13), published by the Highways Agency. This “value hierarchy” has undergone scrutiny within the UK planning system, including public inquiries, and is the only one formally published by a government department. The table below describes the significance hierarchies for heritage assets.

HERITAGE ASSET DESCRIPTION	HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE
World Heritage Sites; Scheduled monuments; Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings; Grade I and Grade II* registered parks and gardens; Protected Wrecks; and Heritage assets of national importance	Very high (International/ National)
Historic England Grade II registered parks and gardens; Conservation areas; Designated historic battlefields; Grade II listed buildings; Burial grounds; Protected heritage landscapes (e.g. ancient woodland or historic hedgerows); and Heritage assets of regional or county importance	High (National / Regional / County)
Heritage assets with a district value or interest for education or cultural appreciation; and Locally listed buildings	Medium (District)
Heritage assets with a local (i.e. parish) value or interest for education or cultural appreciation.	Low (Local)
Historic environment resource with no significant value or interest	Negligible
Heritage assets that have a clear potential, but for which current knowledge is insufficient to allow significance to be determined.	Uncertain

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

Once the significance or value has been established, the next step is to determine the asset’s sensitivity to change. The table below outlines the levels of sensitivity to change, which are based on the asset’s vulnerability—either in part or as a whole—to a loss of value due to change. Sensitivity to change may apply to individual components of a building or its setting and may vary across different elements of the asset.“an established concept that relates to the surroundings in which a place is experienced, its local context, embracing present and past relationships to the adjacent landscape.” This concept extends beyond visual aspects to include cultural, intellectual, spatial, and functional relationships. Understanding an asset’s origins and evolution is key to assessing its contextual relationships and potential greater value as part of a larger entity. The significance of setting may stem from:

SENSITIVITY	EXPLANATION OF SENSITIVITY
High	High Sensitivity to change occurs where a change may pose a major threat to a specific heritage value of the asset which would lead to substantial or total loss of heritage value
Moderate	Moderate sensitivity to change occurs where a change may diminish the heritage value of an asset, or the ability to appreciate the heritage value of an asset
Low	Low sensitivity to change occurs where a change may pose no appreciable threat to the heritage value of an asset

An asset’s sensitivity also reflects its capacity to absorb change, whether the change affects the asset itself or its setting. According to Historic England (2017a), change does not necessarily imply harm; it can have neutral, positive, or negative effects.

Certain heritage assets are more resilient than others and therefore have a higher capacity for change. As a result, even with substantial proposed alterations, their sensitivity or ability to absorb change may still be considered low. After assessing an asset’s sensitivity, the next step is to evaluate the magnitude of the impact any proposed works may have. Impacts can be adverse, beneficial, or neutral, and can involve direct physical changes or effects on the asset’s setting. The impact on the setting is measured by its effect on the asset’s significance, rather than viewing the setting as the asset itself.

After gaining an understanding of an asset’s sensitivity, the next step is to evaluate the magnitude of the impact that any proposed works might have. These impacts can be classified as adverse, beneficial, or neutral and may affect the asset physically, its setting, or both. The impact on setting is assessed based on how it influences the asset’s significance, rather than treating the setting as the asset itself.

MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT	CRITERIA DESCRIPTIONS
	Adverse: Impacts will destroy cultural heritage assets resulting in their total loss or almost complete destruction.
Very high	Beneficial: The proposals would remove or successfully mitigate existing and significant damaging and discordant impacts on assets; allow for the substantial restoration or enhancement of characteristic features.

MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT	CRITERIA DESCRIPTIONS
High	Adverse: Impacts will damage cultural heritage assets; result in the loss of the asset’s quality and integrity; cause severe damage to key characteristic features or elements; almost complete loss of setting and/or context of the asset. The assets integrity or setting is almost wholly destroyed or is severely compromised, such that the resource can no longer be appreciated or understood. Beneficial: The proposals would remove or successfully mitigate existing damaging and discordant impacts on assets; allow for the restoration or enhancement of characteristic features; allow the substantial re-establishment of the integrity, understanding and setting for an area or group of features; halt rapid degradation and/or erosion of the heritage resource, safeguarding substantial elements of the heritage resource.
Medium	Adverse: Moderate impact on the asset, but only partially affecting the integrity; partial loss of, or damage to, key characteristics, features or elements; substantially intrusive into the setting and/or would adversely impact upon the context of the asset; loss of the asset for community appreciation. The assets integrity or setting is damaged but not destroyed so understanding and appreciation is compromised. Beneficial: Benefit to, or partial restoration of, key characteristics, features or elements; improvement of asset quality; degradation of the asset would be halted; the setting and/or context of the asset would be enhanced and understanding and appreciation is substantially improved; the asset would be brought into community use.
Minor/Low	Adverse: Some measurable change in assets quality or vulnerability; minor loss of or alteration to, one (or maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements; change to the setting would not be overly intrusive or overly diminish the context; community use or understanding would be reduced. The assets integrity or setting is damaged but understanding and appreciation would only be diminished not compromised. Beneficial: Minor benefit to, or partial restoration of, one (maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements; some beneficial impact on asset or a stabilisation of negative impacts; slight improvements to the context or setting of the site; community use or understanding and appreciation would be enhanced.
Negligible	Barely discernible effect on baseline conditions but a slight adverse or beneficial impact.
Neutral	A change or effect which is neither adverse nor beneficial in impact.
Nil	No change in baseline conditions.

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