

Mid Sussex District Council Planning
FAO Stefan Galyas
Oaklands
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath RH16 1SS

13th October 2025

Dear Mr. Galyas,

Reinstatement of observatory tower, proposed construction of orangery and associated works, including removal of hanging tiles. Stonehurst, Selsfield Road, Ardingly, Haywards Heath, West Sussex. RH17 6TN Planning ref: DM/25/2231

I refer to the above planning application, which is made on behalf of Mr. Laurence Tonna (the applicant), by Whaleback Ltd (the agent).

My name is ██████████ and I own and occupy the nearby property Rock Cottage, Ardingly Road West Hoathly RH19 4RD which is around 800 yards from Stonehurst. I wish to **OBJECT** in the strongest possible terms to the above proposal.

In summary, I object for the following reasons:

- **Lack of Notification to Local Residents:** It appears that no adequate notification has been provided to local residents regarding this planning application. As a directly affected neighbour, I was not formally notified, and from discussions with other residents in the area, it seems this oversight extends more widely. This lack of transparency undermines the community's ability to engage meaningfully in the planning process and raises concerns about procedural fairness. I urge the Council to ensure proper consultation is carried out before any determination is made.
- **Proposal Not in Keeping with the Area:** The proposed tower, at approximately 23.3m above the terrace level and 11m above the existing tower base, would form a tall and obtrusive development that is entirely out of keeping with the character of the surrounding area. Stonehurst is located within a Grade II Listed Registered Park and the High Weald National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The tower would significantly detract from the visual amenity and essential characteristics of this protected landscape, appearing out of context with the rural setting. There is no comparable built form in the immediate vicinity, and the development would neither preserve nor enhance the architectural integrity or natural beauty of the area. This echoes concerns from a previous refused application (ref: 07/03885/FUL), where similar issues were highlighted,

and no material changes in planning circumstances justify a different outcome now.

- **Unacceptable Views Over Private Property:** The scale, form, height, and position of the proposed tower would result in unacceptable overlooking and loss of privacy for neighbouring properties, including my own. The tower's elevated position and balcony would allow direct views into private gardens and habitable rooms, such as bedrooms, creating a detrimental impact on residential amenities. This would foster an intrusive relationship between properties, harming the quality of life for residents in this peaceful rural location.
- **Distraction on a Dangerous Country Road:** The tower's prominent and eye-catching design would pose a significant distraction to drivers on Selsfield Road, a notoriously dangerous stretch with high speeds and multiple entry points to Wakehurst Place directly opposite the site. This section of road already demands heightened concentration due to traffic from the main gate, car park signage, and event advertising. Adding such a visually dominant structure could exacerbate accident risks, compromising road safety for local residents and visitors alike.

In my opinion, the proposal conflicts with relevant policies in the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, as well as supplementary guidance such as the Design Guide SPD (November 2020), which emphasize protecting visual amenity, landscape character, and residential privacy. It is therefore respectfully requested that the application be refused.

I trust the above comments will be taken into consideration in the determination of the application. If the Council's Planning Department requires any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

