

LUDWELL HOUSE
HOOK LANE
WEST HOATHLY
WEST SUSSEX
RH19 4PX

6th October 2025

BY EMAIL TO planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk

Planning Department
Mid-Sussex District Council
Oaklands
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

For attention of: Stefan Galyas Esq.

Dear Mr Galyas

Objection to planning application DM/25/2231 – Stonehurst, Ardingly

I object to the above planning application for the construction inter alia of a 76 ft. tall observation tower, for the following reasons.

1 Detriment to visual amenity and to landscape character

The proposed tower, at 23.3m above terrace level, would be a tall and obtrusive structure, directly impacting the westward view from my property, and significantly detracting from the visual amenity of the surrounding area and the wider High Weald National Landscape/AONB.

The scale, height and position of the tower would dominate a largely unspoiled rural landscape, creating an incongruous feature visible from afar, including from Cob Brook valley, nearby bridleways, the West Hoathly ridge (where we live) and the ridges further east, i.e. the Highbrook and Chilling Street ridges.

I understand that the Council previously refused a similar application (ref: 07/03885/FUL) for a smaller tower, citing its obtrusiveness and detrimental impact on the AONB: “*modern planning policy and the protection of the visual amenity and character of the AONB will receive greater priority and weight... than a historic and long-absent precedent*”. The current proposal, being bigger and taller, would plainly exacerbate those issues.

2 Detriment to residential amenity and to dark skies

The proposed tower would overlook, and therefore intrude on the privacy of, neighbouring properties, such as The Holt and Many Waters. The Council noted that the height of the previously proposed tower would “*visually dominate*” the area and cause harm to residential amenity. The current proposal is for an even taller tower, which would only intensify those impacts.

In addition, it would be an obtrusive artificial light source at night (performing no obvious public function), highly visible from my and neighbouring properties, and which would appear to fly in the face of attempts to preserve and enhance 'dark skies' in the south east, e.g. nearby South Downs National Park has since 2016 been designated an International Dark Skies Reserve.

3 Conflict with planning policies

The proposal would appear to conflict with the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 and the Design Guide SPD (2020), which require developments to conserve and enhance the character of the AONB and avoid obtrusive impacts. The Council's earlier refusal highlighted similar policy conflicts.

4 Detriment to historical context and architectural integrity

I understand that the original tower, removed decades ago, was not part of a Listed Building. Its reinstatement would not therefore restore architectural integrity, but would instead increase the dominance of Stonehurst within the local rural landscape. The Council previously stated that "*any additional development... would need to be of exceptional design and quality*" which this proposal would not appear to achieve.

In a nutshell, the proposed development would cause significant harm to the visual and residential amenity of the area, as well as the character of the High Weald National Landscape/AONB.

I respectfully request that the Council refuse this application.

Yours sincerely

