

Stefan Galyas

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 September 2025 12:02
To: Stefan Galyas
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: DM/26/2231

Dear Mr Galyas

We wish to object to the above planning application for Stonehurst, RH17 6TN. I have tried to submit this via the online comment form but the link appears to be currently unavailable.

[REDACTED]
The Holt, RH176TN

Planning Application No DM/25/2231

We live at The Holt, Ardingly, RH17 6TN and are the nearest residential neighbours to the south of Stonehurst House.

We have no complaint with the proposed reinstatement of the orangery but object to the proposed tower.

The application draws on the historical significance of the house and its setting, with the tower designed to provide “extensive views over the surrounding landscape”. In the 1920s that nearby landscape to the North, East and West was part and parcel of the property, a significant estate with the tower providing its owner with views of it all. The 2020s are a very different context. The Stonehurst estate was broken up in 2000 with the land immediately to the South forming the Holt and Many Waters, and to the East, Many Waters. The tower had been removed many decades before. The significance of linking the reinstatement of the tower with the lost views from the house to its original architectural intent a century ago is thus inappropriate and anachronistic.

The proposed tower may lie beyond the statutory limits to warrant objection on grounds of loss of privacy and significant overbearing, but our border lies extremely close to this limit and the sheer scale, proportion and visual imposition of the proposed tower are such that we contend that the limit should be seen as arbitrary in this case.

The height and visual imposition of the tower will significantly impact the appearance of Stonehurst house from the south. It will provide a dominating presence, nearly twice the height of the current roofline as seen from the Holt. It will tower over our gardens and north facing rooms and provide views into our everyday lives; views which are not

currently available from Stonehurst where there are no southern facing windows of significance.

The previous proposal from 2007 was for a lower tower and was deemed architecturally out of keeping with the house as is now. In seeking to restore the original architectural relationship of house and tower in the current design, this proposal significantly increases the height and volume of the tower and along with it, the imposition on visual amenity and character in an AONB.

We note the Council's rejection of the 2007 application stated:

“Regardless of the architectural accuracy of the replacement tower, modern planning policy and the protection of the visual amenity and character of the AONB will receive greater priority and weight in this determination than a historic and long-absent precedent. Local Plan policies C4 and H13 seek to ensure developments conserve and enhance the AONB and do not detract from its visual quality and essential characteristics. Policy H13 explicitly states that ‘proposals should be appropriate in their setting and not obtrusive in the landscape’ and the Council considers that every effort should be made to protect the AONBs from potentially obtrusive development, particularly on exposed sites which are visible from long distances (C4, para 3.38).

“The height of the proposed tower at 20m above ground would be unparalleled in the local area and would visually dominate a large area of the AONB landscape. 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 proposed use of the tower would be as an observation platform including an external wrap-around balcony. The occurrence of electric lights and activity in this prominent position, particularly at night, would create a very conspicuous and additional obtrusion in the landscape, significantly detracting from the visual quality of the AONB as viewed from much of the surrounding countryside.

“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.

“By virtue of its excessive height and design on such an exposed position in the landscape, the proposed tower would form a tall and obtrusive development, significantly detracting from the visual amenity and rural character of the surrounding AONB. Whilst a tower may previously have existed at the site, modern planning policy outweighs this consideration and the Council will firmly resist development which fails to conserve or enhance the AONB”.

We do not believe the proposed materially larger and taller tower will conserve or enhance the AONB in which it would sit.