

Andrew Bishop [via email]

Planning, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

9 December 2021

**Objection to Planning Application: R/56/30H
Gaudy House Farm, Gayle, Hawes, DL8 3NA**

**Full planning permission for hard and soft landscaping works; creation of access/tracks;
construction of 4 No. bridges across Widdale Beck; 1 No. waterfall and pond; construction of
external viewing areas with low level walling and for planting of shrubs and trees (part
retrospective)**

Dear Mr Bishop

Friends of the Dales strongly objects to this application for the following reasons:

One of the two statutory purposes behind national park designation is the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, wildlife and cultural landscape of the special area. This scheme does nothing to achieve this; rather it adversely affects both the landscape character and ecological value of the area by introducing extensive areas of planting of non-native species, at the expense of the natural habitats. It does not conserve or enhance the landscape character through appropriate landscaping as demanded by the Local Plan.

Good design should respond to the site and its landscape setting and reinforce local distinctiveness. The species used, far from being “native” as the applicant claims, are all introductions from abroad. To use planting like this is inappropriate, out of character, and suburban - indeed, more appropriate for an ornamental garden in the centre of a town. It adversely affects the quality and local distinctiveness of Widdale and surrounds, an area of sweeping and extensive upland moorland, grass moor and rough pasture. This is clearly a change of use from agriculture into garden, close to one of the remotest dales which lies within “open upland” where any land use change should not detract from its special qualities of openness and remoteness. The plans are in conflict with the open uplands policies of the Local Plan.

The aim of any development allowed for by the Local Plan is to maintain and strengthen ecological networks, and to enhance ecological value. This scheme does the opposite by breaking up existing ecological networks of natural habitats, as well as introducing non-native species (some of which, such as *Cotoneaster horizontalis*, are potentially invasive), at the expense of native species. Not only is there an impact on the existing vegetation, there is likely to be an impact on species such as curlew and golden plover.

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From the photos it is clear that the existing trees have not been adequately protected from the construction of the tracks and bridges and therefore conflict with the requirements of policies for protecting trees and walls. The walls appear to be shoddily built and are likely to be unsafe, with inappropriate oversized capping stones that are out of proportion. These structures and the small folly have no aesthetic value. It is possible that the 4 bridges, with their culverts, will have an impact on the flow of the beck, especially at times of flood. The design quality is low and does not reinforce local distinctiveness as required by Local Plan policies.

The second statutory purpose of national park designation is to provide opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area. The Pennine Way, one of the most popular long-distance national trails, runs alongside the site. The proposal fails to contribute to the understanding of the local landscape, as well as reducing the visual quality and experience for those using the trail.

The disturbing decline in biodiversity is well documented; if we are to be serious about protecting and enhancing our wildlife, then schemes such as this must be prevented.

For these many reasons, Friends of the Dales objects to the scheme, and trust that steps will be taken to remove the inappropriate planting.

Yours sincerely



Wilf Fenten, Chair, Policy and Planning Committee

Friends of the Dales is a working name of the Yorkshire Dales Society which was founded in 1981 and is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Friends of the Dales is free of political and financial affiliations. We work to ensure that the Government, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, and other relevant agencies deliver their obligations to care for the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales, an internationally important area. We do this by considering major planning applications and policy development affecting the Yorkshire Dales and adjacent areas. We offer a year round programme of walks and talks so that everyone can enjoy and learn more about this beautiful area and why it needs protection. We have a membership of around 1,300 individuals, families, businesses and organisations.