

Wendy Thompson [via email]

Planning Team

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

31 October 2022

Comment on Planning Application C/04/704A: Dam House Barn, Wharfe, Austwick

Full planning permission for conversion of barn to provide short stay accommodation; installation of sewage treatment plant; installation of ground source heat loop and associated works

Dear Ms Thompson

This application seeks to convert **an isolated field barn** to the west of Wharfe, near Austwick, with access by an existing long track. According to the application, it will be offered for use by short stay visitors such as walkers, riders and cyclists. The documents that accompany the application show a clear awareness of the possible “visual impact upon the building and/or landscape setting” of the conversion. The architect claims that “great care and attention to detail is owned to ensure such conversions do not have a detrimental impact on the character of the building, biodiversity, and the surrounding landscape.” The application also states, “There are no plans to change, alter, or extend the external footprint of the existing building.”

If relevant conditions were to be used to realise these aims, then Friends of the Dales would support approval of the application. However, as several recent barn conversions have shown, very soon after accepting the original conversion, new buildings are often added or the curtilages extended, with or without the benefit of further planning approvals.

If you are minded to recommend approval of the application it would be important that **any planning permission is conditional, and one of the conditions is to remove permitted development rights in order to retain control over subsequent development.** In our view, this is the only way to ensure that the barn conversion re-purposes this traditional building in such a way that retains its historic interest and its contribution to the historic landscape.

Removing development rights may also be important in view of a “proposed stable building” shown on the earlier plans that have been withdrawn. It would be important that plans for any such building are subject to another planning application.

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A further point of concern to Friends of the Dales is the proposed planting “with local wildflower meadow mix”. In our experience, these tend to introduce plant species that do not naturally occur in a particular place. It would be much better if the applicant were to manage the relevant space as if it were a hay meadow which would attract all really local wildflowers in due course.

Yours sincerely

Signed by Wilf Fenten, Chair, Policy and Planning Committee

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