Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority **Item 5.2**

Committee: 13th October 2026

Applicant: Mr & Mrs J & R Henson

Parish: Austwick CP

Application No: C/04/711C

Site Address: Far End House, Austwick, Lancaster, LA2 8DG

Proposal: Full planning permission for change of use, conversion and extension of outbuilding to residential ancillary accommodation and change of use of part field to residential curtilage and installation of ground mounted solar panels (retrospective)

Purpose of Report

1. That Members approve planning permission for the above development in accordance with the recommendations below.



Reason For Committee Consideration

2. This application is reported to Committee for the following reason: the Parish Council recommendation is contrary to the decision which the Head of Development Management proposes to take.

Application Site

3. The application relates to Far End House, which is a large two storey farmhouse set within a former farmstead located approximately 2.1km to the northeast of Austwick. The site is accessed from the highway by a long narrow lane. The land to the rear steeply rises and forms part of the Ingleborough Complex SAC and open access land.

4. The farmhouse has a long narrow plan form. The property has a large garden area to the front (south) and east, that is mostly screened by the existing trees positioned within and adjacent to the site. To the north of Far End House is a former agricultural building that is now derelict.

5. Planning permission was originally granted in March 2024 under application ref: C/04/711A for the re-ordering of the existing dwelling, the extension into the attached former barn, the construction of a two storey side extension and the replacement of a rear single storey extension. This application did not include any change of use of or works to the paddock, or for the conversion of the agricultural building to domestic use.

Proposal

6. This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use, conversion and extension of outbuilding to residential ancillary accommodation and change of use of part field to residential curtilage and installation of ground mounted solar panels (retrospective).

7. As set out within Item 7 of the Agenda for the Planning Committee on 10th March 2026, a number of breaches of planning permission had been identified at Far End House. These included –

    - The change of use of the paddock to domestic use and associated development, this being the creation of patio and seating areas, hardstandings, walls and fencing, paths and steps into the area.
    - The installation of ground mounted solar panels in the paddock area; and
    - The change of use, alteration and extension of the of the derelict agricultural building to domestic use.

8. This current application seeks to regularise some of the breaches of planning control set out above. Retrospective permission is sought for the conversion of a former agricultural building, located immediately north of Far End House, into ancillary accommodation. The works include new glazing in the east elevation and a small single-storey plant room extension on the north elevation. A patio has also been created to the east of the building, but this will be removed, with only a small access path retained.

9. Retrospective permission is also sought for the installation of solar panels to the northeast of Farn End House within the paddock, which lies outside of the residential curtilage of Far End House. The panels are arranged in 3 rows, and the plans propose planting around the solar array to provide screening. The plans also show the removal of the surface around the solar panels and covering over the bases with soil in order to receive grass seed.

10. Permission is also sought for the change of use of a small area of agricultural land to the south of Far End House to residential curtilage.

11. The report to the Planning Committee on 10 March also considered the unauthorised use of the paddock as garden, together with related works. To address this, the applicant proposes removing the paths, steps and seating areas. The land will be regraded, covered with soil and reseeded with grass. A 1.2m high dry stone wall will be built along the boundary with Far End House to clearly mark the residential curtilage. The paddock is no longer being used for residential purposes, and work to restore the land has already begun.

Relevant Planning History

12. The following applications are relevant:

C/04/711A - Full planning permission for re-ordering of existing dwelling, extension into attached former barn, erection of a two storey side extension and the replacement of a rear single storey extension. Approved – Conditional 06/03/2024

C/04/711B - Section 73 application to vary Condition 2 (approved drawings) & 4iii (roof covering) of C/04/711A (Full planning permission for re-ordering of existing dwelling, extension into attached former barn, erection of a two storey side extension and the replacement of a rear single storey extension) in respect of solar panels to be integrated with the roof coverings to the existing dwelling roof and the side extension roof. Approved – Conditional 11/02/2025

Consultations

13. The comments of statutory and non-statutory consultees are summarized below:

North Yorkshire Council Environmental Health – No objection. From a contaminated land/air quality perspective the Scientific Team have no observations.

North Yorkshire Council Building Control - All work is to be carried out, to ensure compliance with the Building Regulations 2023. As the Planning Authority for the project, you should ensure the required consultations are carried out, with particular reference to: Drainage Schemes, Structural Engineers Reports and Fire Officer Requirements.

Fire Officer - No objection/observation to the proposed development. The YNYCA will make further comment in relation to the suitability of proposed fire safety measures at the time when the building control body submit a statutory Building Regulations consultation to the YNYCA.

North Yorkshire Council Highways - There are no local highway authority objections to the proposed development.

Austwick & Feizor Parish Council – Objects to the application on the following grounds -

Outbuilding
The Parish Council submits that this building should not be permitted as it is contrary to the existing Local Plan policy L3 and the emerging Local Plan policy AB3, both concerned with building treatment on the conversion of Traditional Buildings. Appendix 1 to this letter shows the condition of the outbuilding before the 'conversion' work was carried out. Policy L3 of the existing Local Plan requires that it can be demonstrated that "the building has the physical capacity to accommodate the new use without significant extension or alteration" and that "one of the main objectives of conversion is minimum intervention and retention of original fabric". It is clear from the photograph in Appendix 1 that the outbuilding was a ruin before building work started.

As a separate point, the dimensions of the 'new' outbuilding are significantly greater than its predecessor. Appendix 2 provides Google Earth images of the building in April 2020 and in May 2025 at which later date it can be seen that the 'new' outbuilding was under construction, apparently from foundation level. Appendix 3 provides lateral measurements of the original building as shown on the site plan for the approved C/04/711A and those for the present application. In addition to the increased footprint area noted in appendix 3, it is evident that the eaves height of the 'converted' building is also significantly increased compared with the original.

Solar Panels
We consider that this installation does not comply with Policy CP7 – Energy requirements – of the Authority's emerging new Local Plan due to its harmful impact on landscape character. We ask you to note that, whilst the panels are shielded from view from the highway and from land to the East of the site, they are clearly visible from open access land to the North and, at a distance, from the elevated section of the Pennine Bridleway and Dales High Way to the South.

Metal Fence
We submit that the Metal Fence should be removed and the drystone wall should be reinstated. We believe the wall to be an important part of the intrinsic agricultural landscape environment in which Far End House is situated. A metal fence is not an appropriate feature and is an insensitive intrusion in this rural landscape.

Encroachment of residential curtilage to the South of the property
Appendix 6 compares the residential curtilage of Far End House at the South of the property in consented application C/04/711A and the expanded area applied for in the present application. A substantial expansion of the garden area is proposed, and may already have been created. The applicant makes no reference to this, and my Council sees no justification for it and strongly believes it should not be permitted, as it represents a further intrusion into the inherently rural agricultural landscape of this location. We note Photos and words in the Applicant's Design and Access Statement show "hardcore walkways" through this area and a "stone flagged patio". The amended plan AMD1 specifies "soil over path bases to receive grass seed". The amended plan AMD1 also indicates that, for the proposed partial 'removal' of the existing patio "soil over patio to receive grass seed".

We question whether this treatment is adequate to restore the pasture to its condition before unapproved development took place. The "grubbing out" and removal from site of alien material is surely necessary to achieve satisfactory reinstatement?

Biodiversity and removal of mature trees in the south of the application site

Whilst we cannot be sure that this estimate is precisely correct without access to the site, it seems clear that around 11 out of 17 'protected' trees have been felled and removed.

We conclude that the Applicant's claim in its "Design and Access statement and Biodiversity Net Gain Statement" that the proposed planting of a hedge along the proposed metal fence, some trees alongside solar panels in the agricultural field and a wild flower meadow "will provide biodiversity gains through this development" does not in any way represent biodiversity net gain. We submit that the Authority should take action to ensure the loss of many mature trees on the application site is compensated by the Applicant through a substantial new tree-planting proposal.

14. A site notice was displayed on 16 March 2026 and expired on 06 April 2026. Public responses received at the time of writing: 0

Assessment

Key Issues:

- Planning Policy
- Impact on the character of the site

- Impact on residential amenity
- Biodiversity Enhancements
- Parish Council comments

Planning Policy

15. The Yorkshire Dales Local Plan (2025-2040) Policy CP6 aims to ensure that new development is of a high quality, and requires design proposals to accord with the principles of sustainability (Policy CP1) and not conflict with the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park (Policy CP2)

16. The application seeks permission for the change of use and alteration of an outbuilding. Policy AB2 supports the conversion of traditional buildings to dwellings where they are within settlements, building groups, or suitable roadside locations. While there was previously an agricultural building on the site, photographs submitted by the Parish Council indicate that the former barn has been substantially rebuilt. As a result, the proposal cannot reasonably be considered a conversion under Policy AB2. Nor does it fall within Policy AB3, which supports the conversion of traditional buildings only where they have the physical capacity to accommodate a new use while retaining their architectural and historic character and landscape setting. Therefore, the outbuilding should be assessed as a new domestic building rather than the conversion of an existing structure.

Impact on the Character of the Site

17. Policy CP8 of the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan requires new development to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and the special character of the landscape of the National Park. In assessing proposals regard must be had to the design, layout and scale of proposals and their fit with the distinctive physical and natural character of the landscape in which they would be located.

18. There have been a number of unauthorised works carried out at the property, which will be discussed in turn below:

    Change of use, rebuild and extension of outbuilding

19. The application seeks retrospective permission for the use of a detached outbuilding to allow use as an ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling in the form of an office space. As set out above, it is considered that the works carried out would constitute the construction of a new building rather than conversion of an existing traditional building. Due to the nature of the use of the building as an office space, the building would be functionally linked and incidental to the main dwelling, and is located within 5 metres of the dwelling within its residential curtilage. As such, the outbuilding functions as ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling, utilising the

same access and sharing private amenity space, and therefore would not impact upon the character of this residential plot.

20. The outbuilding is constructed of stone with a slate roof that matches the materials of Far End House. It is proportionate to both the existing dwelling and the size of the plot. The building occupies a similar, although slightly larger, footprint to the former agricultural building and is viewed in the context of the existing buildings around Far End House. As a result, it has not caused significant harm to the character or appearance of the site or the surrounding area.

21. Subject to the outbuilding being limited to a use ancillary to the main dwelling, the outbuilding is considered to be acceptable in respect of impact on the site and surrounding area, in accordance with Policies CP6 and CP8 of the Local Plan.

Solar panels

22. Policy CP7 of the Local Plan support renewable and low carbon energy proposals where they provide permanently for the needs of communities, businesses and households inside the National Park. The ground mounted solar panels are located to the northeast of Far End House within the paddock. Whilst they are located outwith the residential curtilage of Far End House, they are still in relatively close proximity to the property, being less than 15 metres away, and its curtilage. The solar panels are located within the southeastern corner of the paddock immediately adjacent to the boundary walls, and as such are screened from views to the south and east of the site by this boundary wall. The solar panels are screened within views from the west by Far End House itself and the outbuilding, as well as the other built form surrounding the application site.

23. Furthermore, the applicant proposes to grass over the bases of the panels and add further planting to the north and west of the solar array. This will help the solar panels assimilate into the landscape and will provide further screening to soften the appearance of the solar array in long distance views of the site. As such, the solar panels, subject to the proposed landscaping being implemented, are not considered to be harmful to the character and appearance of the area due to the careful siting in this less prominent corner of the paddock. When taken alongside the benefits of the provision of renewable energy, the solar panels are considered to acceptable in this location, in accordance with the provisions of Policy CP7 of the Local Plan.

Change of use of agricultural land to residential curtilage

24. The garden area serving Far End House is located to the front/south of the property and is surrounded by agricultural land. A small area of the agricultural land has been incorporated into the residential curtilage to provide an extension to the garden associated with the property. This change of use has involved the re-siting of the boundary wall to the south of the property. The extension of the residential curtilage has not extended beyond the southernmost boundary of the site – rather, it would

bring the southern boundary of the site into a straight line. This extension into the surrounding countryside would not be clearly discernible due to its location to the south of the property, and would not have an adverse impact upon the character or appearance of the site or surroundings, nor would it result in a significant loss of agricultural land.

Paddock

25. A numbers of unauthorised works have been carried out within the paddock, including the change of use to domestic curtilage, level changes, the creation of a number of pathways, steps, a seating area and a patio area.

26. The applicant has agreed to cease the use of the paddock for domestic purposes and return it to an agricultural paddock. This will involve the removal of the pathways, steps and seating area, which will then be soiled and grassed over, as shown on the submitted plans. The patio area, which can currently be accessed directly from the outbuilding, will also be removed with only a small walkway retained immediately to the east of the outbuilding to provide access into it from Far End House. The applicant also proposes the regrading of the paddock to slope down to the boundary with Far End House to reflect the original landform prior to the unauthorised works being carried out, and a 1.2 metre stone wall being installed along the boundary of the paddock to define the residential curtilage of Far End House.

27. The insensitive alterations to the landform have resulted in the site appearing manicured and domestic in nature, as would be expected with a formal garden. The introduction of hard landscaping and the associated unauthorised change of use of this land from agricultural land to domestic use has significantly changed the relationship the former farmhouse and associated agricultural buildings had with the farmed landscape and has caused significant harm to the agricultural character of the site and the surrounding area. Therefore, the applicant's willingness to reverse these works through the removal of the hard landscaping, regrading of the land and reinstatement of a stone boundary wall is positive, and it would improve and restore the character and appearance of the site, and would go some way to return the site to its former agricultural nature.

28. It is therefore considered that the conversion of and works to the outbuilding, the siting of ground mounted solar panels, change of use of agricultural land to the front of the house to form an extension of the existing garden area and remediation to the unauthorised hard landscaping works carried out within the paddock would not cause significant harm to the character or appearance of the former Far End farmstead and the wider landscape character, and would comply with Policies CP1, CP6, CP7, CP8 and AB3 of the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan, and the provisions of the NPPF.

Impact on Residential Amenity

29. The nearest residential property is located approximately 10 metres to the west of the application site. The proposed solar panels are located a significant distance from this property and would not be visible from this neighbouring property, and therefore would not raise any amenity issues. The conversion of the outbuilding to form ancillary accommodation, which is located approximately 15 metres from the neighbouring property, would also not impact upon the residential amenity currently enjoyed by the occupiers of the neighbouring property by way of loss of light outlook or privacy, with only a blank elevation facing towards this neighbouring dwelling. As such, the proposals accord with Policy CP6 of the Local Plan in this respect.

Biodiversity Net Gain

30. As of the 2nd April 2024, under the Environment Act 2021, all planning permissions granted in England (with a few exemptions) will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain to make sure that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were before the development. As the proposal is part retrospective, the proposal is exempt from the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

31. However, in accordance with Policy CP9 of the Local Plan, biodiversity enhancement measures would be required. The application includes the planting of a number of trees within the northeastern corner of the paddock and around the solar panels, a hedge along the eastern boundary of the site to screen the metal fencing, as well as planting a perennial wildflower meadow. In addition to this, a condition would be attached to any grant of permission to secure enhancement measures for bats and birds to ensure a proportionate level of biodiversity enhancements within the site is achieved, in accordance with Policy CP9.

Parish Council Comments

32. Austwick Parish Council objected to the application on the grounds that the outbuilding has been substantially enlarged beyond what could reasonably be considered a conversion, that the solar panels and metal fencing have an adverse impact on the character of the landscape, that the change of use of agricultural land to residential curtilage represents an encroachment into the wider countryside, and that the proposed biodiversity enhancements are insufficient.

33. These concerns have been considered fully in the above report. Whilst the outbuilding has been rebuilt and is slightly larger than the former agricultural building on the site, it is considered to be appropriate in terms of its design, scale, materials and relationship to Far End House. It is therefore not considered to cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the site or the surrounding area.

34. The visual impact of the solar panels and fencing would be mitigated through the proposed landscaping, including tree and hedge planting, which would assist in

integrating these features into the surrounding landscape. The change of use of a small area of agricultural land to residential curtilage would not result in any significant extension of the established domestic area into the surrounding countryside and is therefore not considered to have an unacceptable impact on landscape character. The application also includes landscaping and habitat enhancement measures, and further biodiversity enhancements can be secured by condition to ensure an appropriate level of ecological benefit is delivered.

35. Overall, whilst the Parish Council's concerns are acknowledged, it is considered that the revised proposals and recommended conditions satisfactorily address these matters, and they do not provide sufficient grounds to warrant refusal of the application

Equality Act

36. The Authority has a duty under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share it. The relevant characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

37. It is considered that there are no overt reasons why this proposal would affect anyone with the protected characteristics such that the application should be permitted or refused on equality grounds.

Conclusion

38. It is considered that the rebuilding of and works to the outbuilding, the siting of ground mounted solar panels, and change of use of agricultural land to form an extension of the existing garden area and remediation to the unauthorised hard landscaping works carried out within the paddock would not cause significant harm to the character or appearance of the former Far End farmstead and the wider landscape character.

39. Furthermore, the works carried out have not result in an adverse impact upon the residential amenity currently enjoyed by the occupiers of the neighbouring property. The application also includes biodiversity enhancements in the form of tree and hedge planting, and creation of a wildflower meadow.

40. The proposals would therefore comply with Policies CP1, CP6, CP7, CP8, CP9 and AB3 of the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan (2025-2040), and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2026) and guidance contained within the adopted Yorkshire Dales Design Guide (2026).

Recommendation

41. It is recommended that permission is granted subject to conditions including the following:

- Works to be carried out within 6 months of the date of the decision
- Works to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans
- Use of the outbuilding to be ancillary to Far End House
- Implementation of landscaping scheme
- Biodiversity Enhancements (bat and bird boxes)
- Control of external lighting
- Withdraw permitted development rights

Report Author: Joanne Wood