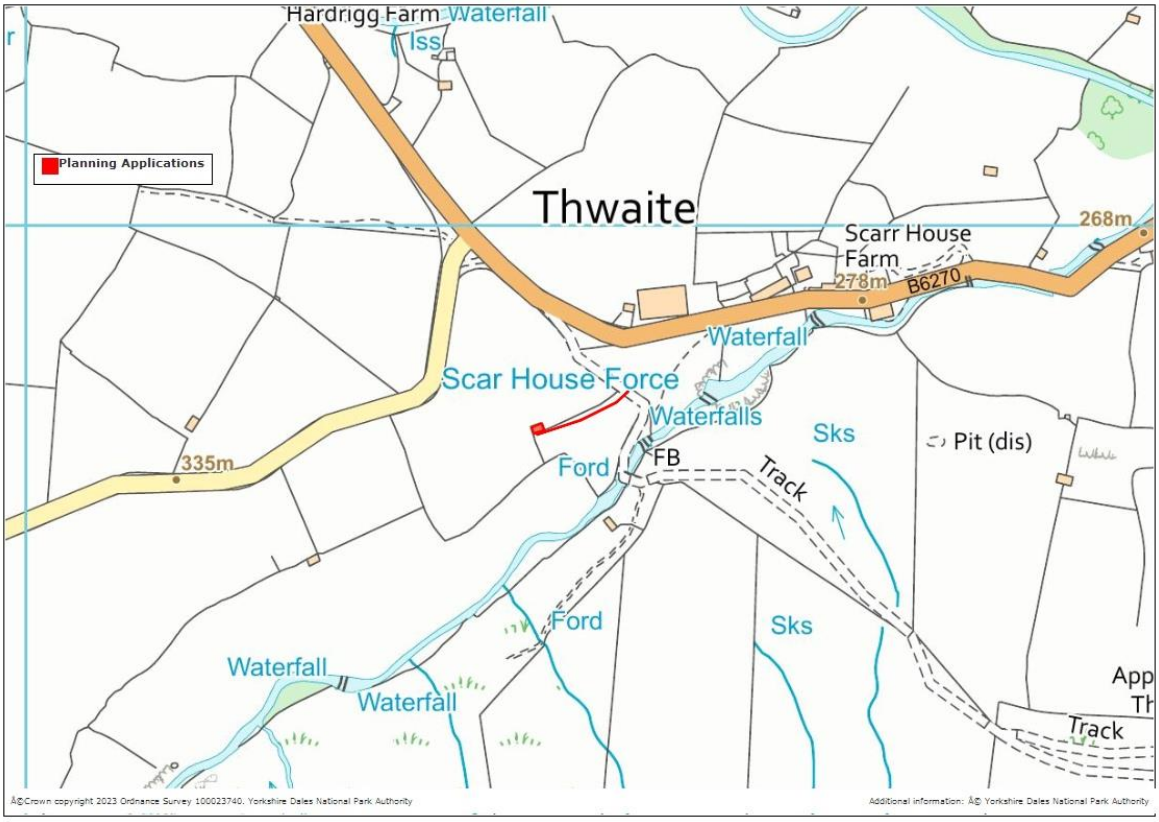
YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Committee:	Planning	**Parish:**	Muker
Date:	24 January 2023	**Officer:**	Emma Heron
Applicant:	Mr & Mrs Paul & Gillian Haworth	**Application No:**	R/06/151B
Site Address:	Barn west of Scarr House Force, Muker, DL11 6DW		
Proposal:	Full planning permission for conversion of traditional stone barn to a camping barn.		



REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

1. 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

2. Barn west of Scarr House Force, Muker, DL11 6DW. It lies to the south of Thwaite, close to the junction with the Buttertubs Road. Access is from the steeply ascending bridleway on the southern side of the road to a field gate to one side of the track. From the field gate the barn is 65 metres up a steeply ascending field. There is no track or path to this point.

PROPOSAL

3. Full planning permission for conversion of traditional stone barn to a camping barn, including a replacement roof with steeper roof pitch (replacing the existing shallow-pitched tin roof).

4. Internally, the proposal comprises an open plan ground floor with a small cooking area, table and chairs, a compost toilet, woodburner, with a loft ladder leading to a sleeping platform on a mezzanine floor.

5. The proposal has been amended since original submission. Vehicular access had been proposed along the bridleway to a vehicular access and parking area in the vicinity of the field gate. This has now been omitted. The proposal is now supported by a visitor management plan to ensure the barn is used as a camping barn for short-stay holiday accommodation.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

6. The following applications are relevant:

R/06/151A - full planning permission for conversion of existing barn into two-bedroom holiday let, installation of package treatment plant, works to access track and creation of associated curtilage with parking
Refused - 30/08/2019

CONSULTATIONS

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

Fire Officer – Richmondshire

No comments received

Richmondshire DC

No comments received

Hawes, High Abbotside & Upper Swaledale

No comments received

Highways - Richmondshire

There are no Local Highway Authority objections to the proposed development.

Muker Parish Council

This barn is in a highly prominent isolated location on the landscape of Upper Swaledale, visible from many locations, particularly from The Buttertubs pass and Kisdon. It is unconnected to any settlement. The creation of a lay-by and presence of a vehicle on the track is not considered suitable or aesthetic, because of the impact on walkers, livestock, farm vehicles and the residents of Appletreethwaite. The lane is very narrow with poor visibility by a bend, making manoeuvering a vehicle in and out difficult. Also the turn onto the B6270 would not allow a vehicle to turn right safely to Muker or to turn in from Muker. A vehicle would have to travel to the

Buttertubs Junction in order to turn round. The route from the parking area to the barn is very steep and would be difficult to access on foot particularly in inclement weather, without a hard standing path or track, which if installed, would detract from the natural beauty and landscape of the area. The installation of utilities would be problematic and may further harm the landscape, therefore this application is not supported by Muker Parish Council.

Muker Parish Council – comments following amendments

Muker Parish Council is still not able to support this revised application and maintains its original comments. We also believe that this does not comply with YDNPA Local Plan, does not meet criteria SP2 as the application neither conserves or enhances natural beauty or heritage. Upper Swaledale is part of the barns and walls conservation areas which represent a designated Heritage Asset on a landscape scale.

Further that L.2 is applicable. The barn is not part of an existing settlement or building group and is not road side.

It is unclear whether this will be group visitor accommodation. The management and supervision is vague and imprecise and does not identify how it will work or be effective.
The market of people arriving on foot or bike to the area is extremely limited. Expecting a visitor to provide heat, food, lighting and water for 3 days is not viable.

The nature of the Dales and the restricted public transport means motorised transport would be essential, there is no guarantee people would not utilise the area around the barn for parking facilities, sunbathing and barbecues etc.

Wildlife Conservation Officer

The barn was evaluated as having moderate potential for roosting bats, however no bats were recorded emerging from the barn during two emergence surveys. On this basis there are no objections to the proposal. A condition is recommended for two compensatory crevice bat boxes (Greenwood Eco Habitats or equivalent), placed on site prior to work commencing and to remain on site afterwards as per the bat survey recommendations.

Informative notes concerning bats and nesting birds should be appended to any planning certificate and/or decision notice issued if consent is granted.

Environmental Health - Richmondshire DC

No objections to the proposal in principle, subject to a condition relating to remediation of unexpected contaminated land, and an information relating to private water supply.

Area Ranger (Swaledale & Arkengarthdale)

Informative note in relation to the unobstructed use of the public bridleway.

Senior Listed Building Officer

No objections subject to details required by condition.

PUBLIC RESPONSES

8. The application was advertised by site notice dated 10th August 2022. One objection has been received from Friends of the Dales raising the following points:
    - Isolated prominent location within the landscape with no access so outside the scope of policy.

- Camping barn an inappropriate use in this location.
- No adequate supervision as applicant does not live locally, a risk that cars may be taken up the barn.

ASSESSMENT

Key Issues:

- Planning policy
- Design and landscape impact (including conservation area)
- Neighbour amenity
- Biodiversity
- Drainage and water supply
- Parish Council comments
- Equality Act

PLANNING POLICY

9. The Yorkshire Dales Local Plan (2015-30) aims to deliver sustainable development in the National Park context and in reflecting policies in the National Planning Policy Framework. It aims to achieve the conservation and enhancement of traditional buildings (heritage assets) by allowing them to be adapted or converted to new uses, providing the building and its landscape have the capacity to absorb them.

10. Policy L1 considers development affecting heritage assets. Traditional buildings may be designated as Listed Buildings or are considered to be 'heritage assets' despite not being designated. Proposals affecting undesignated heritage assets that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to designated heritage assets will be treated as though they were designated for the purposes of the policy. Development proposals affecting other non-designated assets are accepted provided that their significance will be conserved. The building is a field barn, built using traditional methods and displaying many typical features (through stones, breather holes, stone lintels and door surrounds etc.). It is clearly of some age and is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset however there is nothing to suggest that the barn is of equivalent significance to a designated heritage asset.

11. Policy L2 is a strategic spatial planning policy. It allows traditional buildings to be changed to high-intensity residential, visitor and employment uses in certain locations (in existing settlements, building groups, or suitable roadside locations). Proposals for change of use of isolated traditional buildings (such as this one), to low-intensity uses will be permitted provided they do not result in material alteration to the exterior of the building or its surrounds. Footnote 32 to this policy includes camping barns as a low-intensity use.

12. Policy L3 considers the details of the conversion works. Proposals will not be allowed where they undermine the architectural and historic character of the traditional building and its landscape setting. The building must have the physical capacity to accommodate the new use without significant extension or alteration or requiring new ancillary buildings.

13. A proposal to convert a traditional building to a new use should satisfy the requirements of all three policies.

14. In this case, the barn is an undesignated heritage asset owing to its age (early to mid-19th century) and traditional character. It has a simple humble and robust form and field setting, such to be typical of the Dales landscape. Its main significance lies in its contribution to the Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Barns and Walls Conservation Area as it is visually prominent in the landscape. It is suitable for a low intensity use only, due to its situation and lack of track/road access. The proposal is for a camping barn use. A supporting floor plan and the visitor management plan details the accommodation to be provided, and the access to the site. The conversion works include the raising of the roof from the existing shallow-pitch tin roof to a steeper pitched

stone slated roof. This is a material alteration and therefore a deviation from the requirements of policy L2, however the alteration would restore a more traditional appearance and can be regarded as a reinstatement with minor landscape benefits, which would accord with policies L1 and L3.

15. A condition is recommended to control the building's use in accordance with L2 above.

DESIGN AND LANDSCAPE IMPACT (conservation area)

16. The barn is highly visible within the landscape, is viewed in isolation, has no curtilage and benefits from a simple and robust appearance. It contributes to the intricate pattern of drystone walls and dense network of traditional stone-built field barns, of locally quarried stone, that forms the conservation area. The barn is also within an iconic viewpoint of Swaledale, approaching the dale when dropping down from the Buttertubs road. The main element of the conversion works that would be discernible in the landscape is the proposal to re-instate a stone slate roof. This would be at a steeper pitch than the existing metal roof, and would have a minor landscape benefit, insofar as its form would be that of the barn's original traditional appearance. Other elements of the conversions work relate to making use of existing openings, and as such these would have an acceptable landscape impact. No vehicular access or new curtilage is proposed as part of the development. Overall, the low-key camping barn use of the building aligns with policy L2 and L3, and it would not harm the significance of the conservation area, in accordance with policy L1.

NEIGHBOUR AMENITY

17. The separation of the site from residential dwellings, combined with the nature of the proposed use is such that it is not considered that the residential amenity of occupants of the nearest houses to the north east would be harmed. A condition would also be imposed to require compliance with the Visitor Management Plan as a further means of seeking to ensure that the use of the barn is done so in a suitable low-impact manner for the sensitivity of its rural setting.

BIODIVERSITY

18. The bat survey concludes that the proposal will not have an impact on roosting bats, and as such the Wildlife Conservation Officer has no objections. A scheme of biodiversity enhancements in the form of bat and bird boxes would be required by condition in accordance with policy W2.

SERVICES, DRAINAGE AND WATER SUPPLY

19. The proposal is off-grid, such that there would be no electricity or water supply. The proposal incorporates a compost toilet, and compost bin within a modest enclosure sited within a wall corner.

PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

20. Muker Parish Council's objection refers to parking concerns, Policy L2, the management and supervision of group visitor accommodation, the limited market for camping barns and the use of the field for sunbathing/barbecues etc.

21. The proposal aligns with policy L2, it is a low-intensity use (camping barn) due to its relatively isolated location. There are no parking proposals associated with the development. The visitor management plan states that the use would be for groups and individual walkers or cyclists, and the small-scale, off-grid nature of the development would self-limit the numbers and type of visitor that would use the facility. The limited market for off-grid camping barns is a commercial concern, that carries limited weight in the planning balance. A restriction on the use of the site for parking and barbecues can be controlled by condition.

EQUALITY ACT

22. 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.

23. 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

24. The proposal aligns with policy L2 and will have minimal landscape impact, as it is for a low-intensity camping barn use. The use would be controlled by condition, referring to the visitor management plan and a restriction to short-stay holiday let. These conditions, and the separation distance to the nearest residential properties mean that the proposal would have an acceptable impact on residential amenity. Biodiversity and the off-grid nature of the proposal would be controlled by condition.

RECOMMENDATION

25. It is recommended that permission is GRANTED subject to a S106 legal agreement restricting overhead power cables to the site, and subject to conditions including the following:
    - Three year time limit
    - Plans list
    - Unexpected contamination
    - Short-stay holiday (camping barn) accommodation only
    - Managed in accordance with the visitor management plan
    - Re-roofing in ‘Natural Weathered’ Greys Artstone or alternative to be agreed
    - Specified details relating to the flue, window frames, structural method statement, rainwater goods
    - Removal of permitted development rights – extensions/alterations
    - Removal of permitted development rights – enclosures, hard-surfaces, external painting
    - Removal of permitted development rights – solar
    - No external lighting unless details first agreed
    - Biodiversity enhancements
    - No connection to overhead lines