



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 November 2025

by **C Skelly BA (Hons) MSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A2335/W/25/3373040

Ty Nant, Wyresdale Road, Quernmore LA2 9EF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Dr T Dawson against the decision of Lancaster City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01301/FUL.
 - The development proposed is a solar array.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In 2023, designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England and Wales became “National Landscapes”. The appeal site falls within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB) which has become the Forest of Bowland National Landscape (FBNL).
3. Section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) amended the duty on relevant authorities in respect of their interactions with the statutory purposes of National Landscapes, as set out in Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (as amended). In so far as it relates to this appeal, the amendment now requires relevant authorities “in exercising or performing any function in relation to or so as to affect land in an AONB... to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB”. As such, it is incumbent on me to evidence consideration of ways to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the FBNL.
4. A screening direction was issued under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations). In exercise of the powers conferred by Regulation 14 (1) and 7 (5) of the EIA Regulations, the Secretary of State directed that the development is not EIA development.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, which lies within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

Reasons

6. The appeal site is an agricultural field located approximately 120m to the north of Ty Nant, which is a grade II listed building and a small group of buildings. The site

is located within the FBNL. The field rises upwards to the east following the topography of the valley. It is enclosed by dry-stone walling and newly planted hedging along the northern boundary. The surrounding area is characterised by undulating, unspoilt countryside comprising agricultural fields bounded by dry stone walls and small groups of trees. The existing trees to the south and east of the appeal site provide some screening proximate to Ty Nant. However, the appeal site is prominent in wider views from the west side of the valley.

7. Paragraph 189 of the Framework states, amongst other matters, that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. Policy DM46 of the Lancaster District Local Plan 2020-2031, Strategic Policies and Land Allocations Development Plan Document (climate emergency review) (2025) (LP) reaffirms these objectives and requires that proposals within the AONB should be sustainable, consistent with the primary purpose of the AONB designation and support the special qualities of the AONB as set out in the AONB Management Plans.
8. The special qualities of the FBNL include its outstanding landscape. The site is within the Undulating Lowland Farmland landscape characterised by an intricate tapestry of grazed fields and a patchwork of wood and pasture when viewed from the fells. Given its open, natural appearance, the site contributes positively to this landscape character and the special qualities of the FBNL.
9. The proposal is for the erection of 26 solar panels stacked 2 high in a portrait formation. The panels would be angled towards the south at a height of approximately 2.3m. A Landscape and Visual Impact note¹ was submitted as part of the application which concludes that landscape impacts would be confined to limited areas to the west and therefore the appellant contends that the impact of the proposed development would be minor adverse.
10. I note that the proposed solar array would be sited along the northern boundary wall to ensure maximum output and to facilitate the continued agricultural use of the field. However, this means that the panels would be in an isolated position separated from the existing built form. Although the solar array would align with the existing dry-stone wall it would extend well beyond its height. Whilst additional hedging has been planted along the wall, this will take time to establish and therefore this part of the field remains visually open in character. Therefore, the proposed development would be prominent in views towards the appeal site from higher ground on the western side of the valley.
11. I observed the presence of high voltage electricity lines which run along the west of the valley and are a prominent feature within the landscape. Nevertheless, views to the east of the valley remain uninterrupted from such industrial style features including those often associated with agricultural practices. The existing landscaping would largely screen the proposed development from close distance views from Wyresdale Road and public rights of way near the site and therefore only glimpses of the solar array would be visible from these perspectives. However, despite only covering a small part of the field, given its rising, open character, the eye would be drawn towards the proposed solar arrays when viewed from the west including along Little Fell Lane and higher ground along

¹ Prepared by Yew Tree dated 25/02/2025

Wyresdale Road. Against the natural, uninterrupted landscape the proposed development would appear as an incongruous feature set against the valley side and erode the natural beauty of this landscape, albeit on a limited scale. Whilst I recognise that the proposed development would provide low/zero carbon energy for the appellant, this minor benefit in my view, does not outweigh the harm that I have identified to the FBNL which has the highest status of protection.

12. The appellant has referred me to nearby solar farms at Burrow Beck and Land East of Hazelrigg Lane. A third party has also brought to my attention permissions granted for solar panels within the setting of the FBNL. I do not have all the details of these cases or the circumstances in which permission was granted. However, as these cases are not located within the FBNL they are not directly relevant to this appeal. In any event I have dealt with the appeal on its own merits, based on the evidence before me.
13. I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area and fail to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the FBNL. It thereby conflicts with paragraph 189 of the Framework and Policies EN2, DM29, DM46 and DM53 of the LP, which amongst other things seek to conserve and enhance the landscape character and visual amenity of the FBNL.

Other Matters

14. I am aware that the site is proximate to the Grade II listed building of Ty Nant. Its significance lies with its historic and architectural interest. Mindful of the statutory duty set out in S66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving its setting. Notwithstanding the appeal site and that there is limited intervisibility between the two, in my judgement, the appeal proposal would preserve the setting of Ty Nant, the significance of which would not be harmed.
15. I note that there has been support for the proposal from the Narr Lodge Management Company and Parish Council. However, neither this nor the other matters raised outweigh or alter my conclusions on the main issue.

Conclusion

16. The proposal conflicts with the development plan, when read as a whole and there are no other material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, that outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

C Skelly

INSPECTOR