

# 1 Leeds Road, Birstall Heritage Statement

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# 1 Leeds Road, Birstall

## Heritage Statement

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Site Name:** 1 Leeds Road, Birstall

**Address:** 1 Leeds Road, Birstall, Kirklees WF17 9PY

**Local Planning Authority:** Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council

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**Humble Heritage Ltd is a professional built heritage and archaeological consultancy operating in the specialised area of the historic environment in the planning system. The practice has extensive experience of historical and archaeological research, assessing significance and heritage impact and preparing Heritage Statements, archaeological desk-based assessments, statements of significance, conservation management plans and so forth. Humble Heritage Ltd provides heritage and archaeological advice on behalf of a wide variety of clients across much of England. The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (the IHBC) accredits Humble Heritage as a professional Historic Environment Service Provider.**

Humble Heritage Ltd undertook this Heritage Statement in March 2022, having been first appointed to advise on the project in March 2020. It is intended to accompany application for planning permission for demolition of the existing buildings on the site and the erection of a 1-2 storey convenience store.

This report provides a summary of the historical development of the application site. It examines the inherent heritage significance of the existing building and assesses the contribution that the application site makes to setting of the Birstall Conservation Area within which the application site is partly located. It then assesses the impact of the proposed development on the relevant heritage assets.

One of the existing buildings on the site, 2-8 Huddersfield Road is a non-designated heritage asset because of its early date and the fact that its façade is identified as an '*important frontage*' in the conservation area appraisal. The other buildings on the site are of modern origin and have no heritage significance.

The terrace consisting of nos.2-8 is an example of mill workers cottages, with a former shop/business premises at one end, later converted to a dwelling. It specifically identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as occupying a prominent position at the eastern gateway to the conservation area, and as being dilapidated and at risk of further deterioration. Its façade is highlighted as an '*Important*



*building/frontage*, and the view looking east from within the conservation area towards the building is a key view.

The building has unfortunately deteriorated to a considerable extent since the Conservation Area Appraisal was written some years ago (approximately fifteen years), when the condition of the building was described as *'dilapidated'* and *'at risk'*, and is now in a poor structural state. A recent structural survey concluded that its *'structural integrity is now in question'* and that the building is *'not economically viable for repairs and demolition of the properties should be considered'*. The report noted structural movement, dangerous upper floors and roof structure and damp issues and concluded that it *'will become a danger risk and demolition of the buildings will be required in the near future'*. Extensive works would be required to make the building viable and some of the required works would require extensive re-building, removing heritage significance due to the loss of original fabric that would inevitably be required.

The advanced structural problems at the property and the derelict appearance that characterises it result in a lower level of heritage significance. Its demolition would result in the total loss of a non-designated heritage asset of the lowest level of heritage significance. It would also harm the Birstall Conservation Area, but this harm would be of a low level. However, the conclusions of the structural survey indicate that the most likely outcome for this building is that it will need to be demolished in the near future due to the increasing danger of the structure. Therefore the proposed demolition as part of this planning application would not result in any greater harm than would be caused if the building is allowed to remain. This planning application allows the replacement of the building with a suitable and sympathetic designed new building. The proposed new building has been carefully designed to be a suitable replacement in this prominent location at this *'gateway'* to the conservation area.

A low level of harm will be caused to the historic environment but this harm will inevitably occur if the present building is retained and allowed to further deteriorate. Public benefits will be derived from the construction of a replacement building and the new building will enhance the conservation area. This application is therefore in accord with the heritage provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and the relevant sections of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act.

## INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

- 1.01 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Dave Pinnock (BA, MA) of Humble Heritage Ltd and was produced during March 2022 with Humble Heritage having been first appointed to advise on the project in March 2020. This assessment is intended to accompany an application for planning permission for demolition of the existing buildings on the site and the erection of a 1-2 storey convenience store.
- 1.02 The aim of this report is to satisfy the requirement of paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which indicates that applicants should provide a description of the significance of any heritage assets affected by their proposals (including any contribution made by their setting).
- 1.03 This assessment has been informed by a site visit made in May 2020 that included an external examination of the existing building and its environs. The Heritage Statement is further informed by analysis of historic maps of the area, and a review of known information about the site from various sources.

## HERITAGE PLANNING CONTEXT

### General

- 2.01 The application site is situated at the junction of Huddersfield Road and Leeds Road, Birstall. The site comprises a terrace of four dwellings (2-8 Huddersfield Road), and a garage and offices together with an area of tarmac forecourt (formerly Value Car Centre). The western part of the application site is within the boundary of the Birstall Conservation Area.
- 2.02 The front facade of 2-8 Huddersfield Road is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) as an important frontage/building. Given this identification it is likely to be judged to have sufficient heritage significance to be identified as a non-designated heritage asset.



The application site in its historic environment context: Birstall Conservation Area (green); Important buildings/frontages identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal (purple)

### Legislation, planning policy and guidance

- 2.03 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraphs 11-14). The purpose of this Heritage Statement is to satisfy paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that '*In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contributions made by their setting*' and to assess

whether the proposed development meets the test of sustainable development as regards its impact on the historic environment.

- 2.04 The statutory protection for conservation areas is laid out in the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. The Act defines a conservation area as an area identified by the Local Planning Authority as having *'special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'* (s69(1)(a)). Section 72 of the Act requires planning authorities to pay *'special attention'* to *'the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'*.
- 2.05 It is recognised in national planning guidance that this does not mean that every aspect of a conservation area's character or appearance is to be preserved or enhanced: *'Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance'* (NPPF paragraph 207). Development should conserve or enhance those elements of a conservation area's character or appearance that positively contribute to its special architectural or historic interest.
- 2.06 The importance of identifying the significance of a heritage asset is highlighted in the NPPF as this is essential in informing future change that affects heritage assets. The aim of heritage conservation is to sensitively manage change to ensure that significance is protected. In Annex 2 of the NPPF *'significance'* is defined as *'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'*.
- 2.07 The NPPF requires in the case of all heritage assets, designated or otherwise, that local planning authorities should take into account *'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of such heritage assets and of putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation'* (NPPF paragraph 197a).
- 2.08 In the case of designated heritage assets such as the conservation area the NPPF requires that *'great weight'* is given to the conservation of the asset, and *'the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be'* (NPPF paragraph 199).
- 2.09 If the development will lead to *'substantial harm'* to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 201 of the NPPF indicates that the development should be refused consent by the local planning authority, unless it can be proved that the loss or damage to the asset can be outweighed by substantial benefits to the public or if the proposal can meet a number of specific conditions. If the development leads to *'less than substantial harm'* to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 200 indicates that this harm still needs to be assessed against the public benefit of the scheme and whether or not the viability of the site is being optimised.
- 2.10 In the NPPF a heritage asset is a broad category that includes *'designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).'* (NPPF, Annex 2: Glossary). The latter are known as non-designated heritage assets and are sometimes identified by planning authorities by virtue of *'local listing'*. The government's Planning Practice Guidance states the basic principle to guide the identification of non-designated heritage assets:
- 'A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets.'* (PPG Paragraph: 039)
- 2.11 In contrast to designated heritage assets, the NPPF does not require planning authorities to give *'great weight'* to the conservation of non-designated heritage assets, nor does it require *'clear and convincing justification'* for any harm that will be caused to their heritage significance. Instead, the NPPF states that:

*'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'* (NPPF paragraph 203)

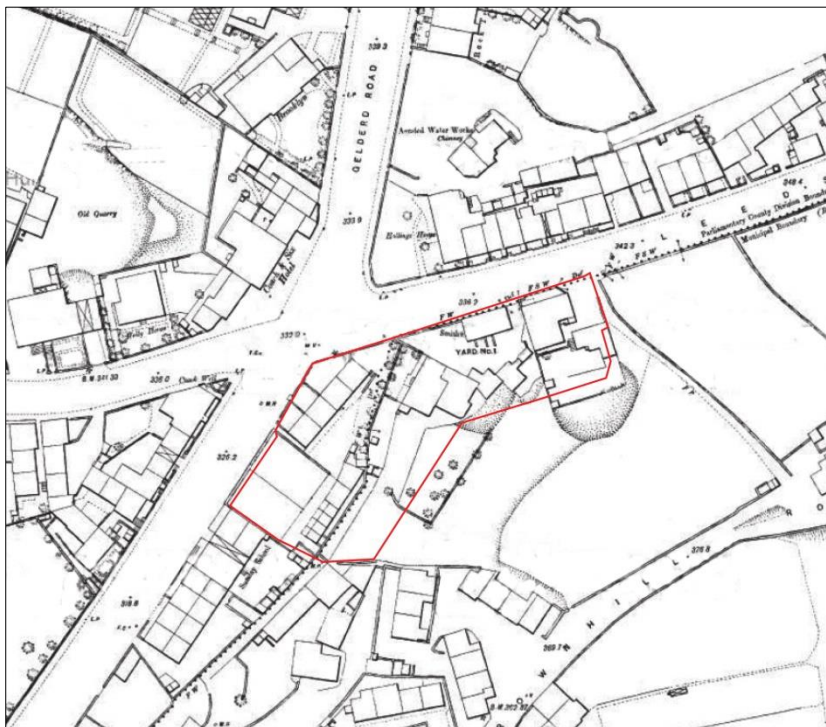
## SITE HISTORY

- 3.01 The terrace pre-dates 1854 and was probably built as mill workers housing as it has the characteristic small front yards, likely related to the industrial works in the area such as the Birstall Steam Mill that was once located to the north. The Conservation Area Appraisal describes such mill workers cottages: *'The mill workers cottages are set slightly back from the highway, creating a small front garden, enclosed by dwarf stone walls and constructed from locally sourced stone.'*
- 3.02 No.2 was originally a shop, while no.4 was a dwelling linked with the shop and originally sharing a single large forecourt (the dividing wall between no.2 and no.4's forecourts is a later addition, signified by different coping from the other forecourt walls). There were originally two full height windows on either side of the entrance door to no.2, which would typically have been timber windows consisting of stall risers below bowed windows containing multiple small panes. The windows were later partially filled with stone as part of the adaptation of no.2 to domestic use. A former window on the northeast gable that is partially obscured by an advertising hoarding was also filled in, possibly at the same time.
- 3.03 It is unclear when no.2 was converted to a dwelling. The additional wall in the forecourt was not shown on the 1890 1:500 Ordnance Survey map and was first shown on the 1922 1:2500 map. This probably dates the conversion of no.2 to between c.1890 and 1922, although it may have been carried out later.
- 3.04 There have been a number of other alterations to the external fabric. No original or historic windows and doors are known to survive. The house that has been most recently occupied (no.8) has uPVC windows and doors. In the case of the rest of the properties the windows and doors are mostly boarded. The doors on the frontage are filled with twentieth century plywood doors. To the rear there are two twentieth century casement windows in the upper storey (probably inserted windows for toilets/bathrooms). There is a single older door in the lower ground floor of the rear of the terrace, which may be mid-twentieth century or earlier although in dilapidated condition and partially hidden by vegetation.
- 3.05 Other changes include the addition of a lower ground floor extension to the rear of no.8, which Ordnance Survey maps suggest was constructed between c.1972-1989.
- 3.06 There are large cellars below nos.2-8 that extend out to the edge of the pavement, with the forecourts being formed by stone slabs that form the ceilings of the cellars. There are two coal holes at the street front that allowed coal to be delivered directly into the cellars of nos.6-8.
- 3.07 The garage and offices that were most recently occupied by the Value Car Centre were built between the Ordnance Survey maps of 1956 and 1971, with some later modification. They replaced a public house (Blacksmiths Arms) that previously stood on the site, and a smithy which stood to the west of the public house until sometime between 1908 and 1922. An additional range of buildings to the south of the smithy was demolished between the maps of 1938 and 1956.





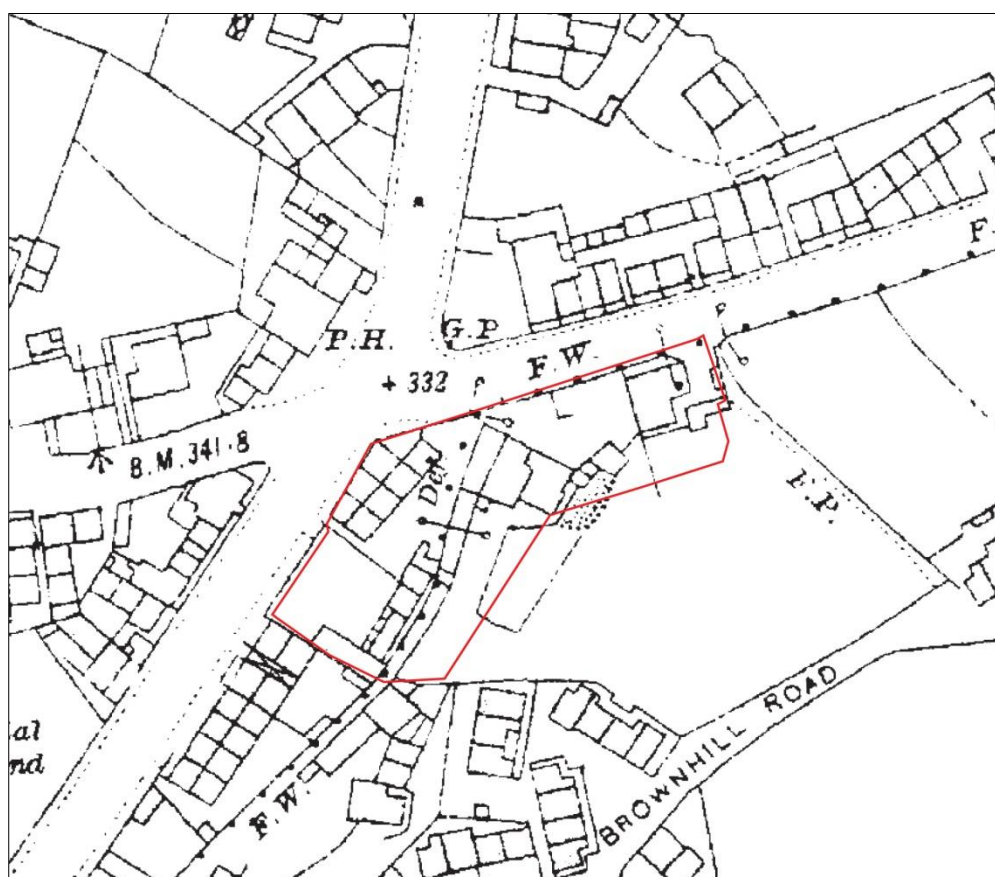
1854 1:10560 Ordnance Survey map. Application site (red).



1890 1:500 Ordnance Survey map. Application site (red).

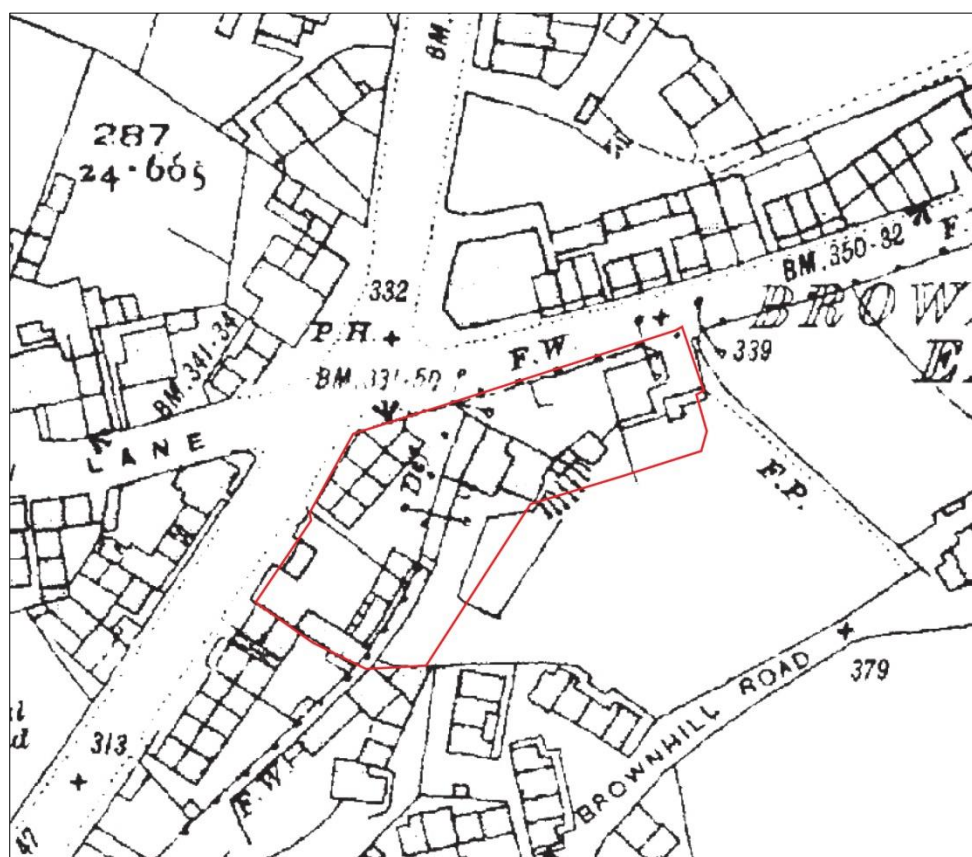


1908 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map. Application site (red).

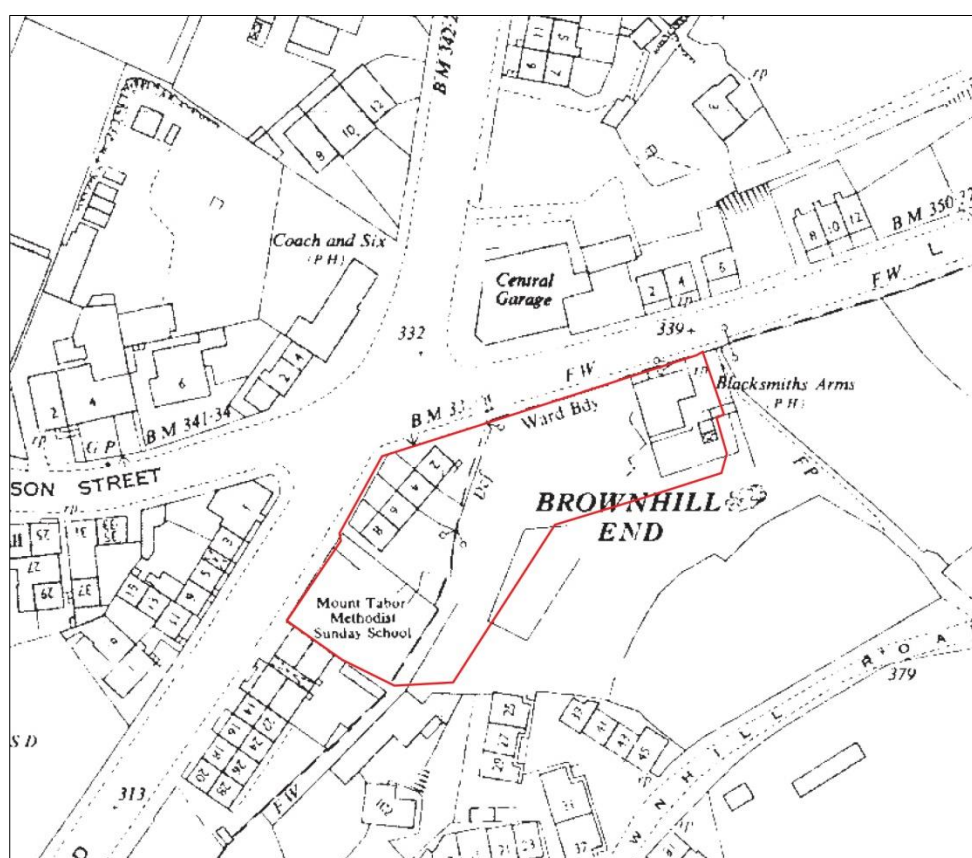


1922 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map. Application site (red)

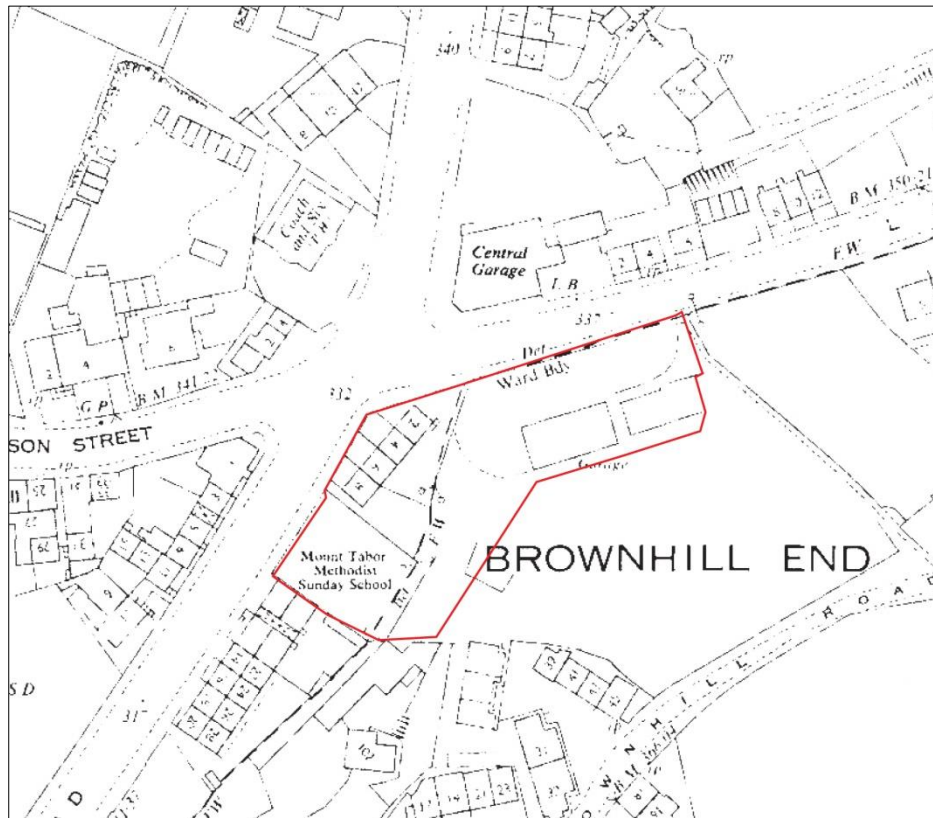




1938 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map. Application site (red)



1956 1:1250 Ordnance Survey map. Application site (red)



1971 1:1250 Ordnance Survey map. Application site (red)



1989 1:1250 Ordnance Survey map. Application site (red).

## ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 4.01 Significance is the concept that underpins current conservation philosophy. The significance of heritage assets is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as, *'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'*.
- 4.02 The following section assesses the level of heritage significance of 2-8 Huddersfield Road and the contribution that the application site makes to the Birstall Conservation Area. The purpose is to establish a baseline against which the impact of the proposed development can be assessed.
- 4.03 The terrace is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as an *'important frontage/building'*, although only the front elevation is identified. Despite a number of interesting historic features, the inherent level of heritage significance of nos.2-8 is relatively low. This is an area in which there are many surviving examples of workers housing and the level of heritage significance of one isolated example is limited.
- 4.04 Additionally, it is legitimate to take into account the condition of a building when assessing its level of heritage significance. The Conservation Area Appraisal identified nos.2-8 as a building at risk and noted:

*'2-8 Huddersfield Road occupies a prominent position at the Nelson Street gateway. The buildings are currently dilapidated and are at risk from further deterioration.'*

- 4.05 The building has unfortunately deteriorated to a considerable extent since the Conservation Area Appraisal was written some years ago (approximately fifteen years) and is now in a very poor structural condition. A recent structural survey was undertaken (JNP Group Consulting Engineers *Structural Report* 9 February 2021). It notes [emphasis added]:

*'2.1.1...the properties have reached a stage where **their structural integrity is now in question. Failure of all the roofs has already occurred.** Upper floors are suffering from **timber decay**, particularly due to damp ingress. There are indications of **downward movement**, particularly to the front of property No. 8 and to the rear elevations of properties 2, 4 and 6, with additional failure of the front elevation at upper levels at properties 2 and 8. There are also **indications of progressive movement** when compared to our survey of 2012.*

*2.1.2 Due to the **advanced structural problems** associated with the 4 properties I am of the opinion that they are **not economically viable for repairs and demolition of the properties should be considered.** In the meantime, the properties should be kept sealed to prevent public access due to their **dangerous condition**. Should the stone slabs over the cellars to the front yard fail, then additional protection will be required as there would be a significant drop from the pavement level to cellar level.'*

- 4.06 The report notes a number of structural issues, of which the following is a non-exhaustive selection:
- All roofs have failed and all the structural timbers are deteriorated and would require renewing (7.1.1 i);
  - New doors and windows and rainwater goods required throughout (7.1.1 iii, v);
  - Significant damp, both penetrating and rising, difficult to insert a suitable damp proof course and cellars require tanking (7.1.1 vi);
  - Drainage around building requires renewing and may have damaged foundations (7.1.1 vii);



- Damp has damaged plaster throughout and may have damaged mortar in the walls (7.1.1 viii);
  - Movement of front and rear elevations, will require tying in (7.1.1 ix);
  - All interior lintels require replacement (7.1.1 x);
  - No.2 elevation would require dismantling and rebuilding to replace wooden beam (7.1.3);
  - All ground floor floors require replacement and probably first floor floors, failure of floors may have affected stability of external walls (7.1.4-5);
  - Upper courses of front elevation wall require renewing (7.1.6);
  - Settlement of rear elevation requires investigation of foundations and possible underpinning (7.1.7);
  - Numerous cracked cills and lintels (7.1.8);
  - Front elevation of no.8 requires dismantling and rebuilding from first floor up (7.1.9).
- 4.07 The structural report concludes that the properties '*are not economic for repair*'. It reiterates that the properties are dangerous and that this condition is progressive and '*demolition of the buildings will be required in the near future*'.
- 4.08 Overall 2-8 Huddersfield Road is beyond economic repair and in a dangerous condition and is likely to rapidly deteriorate. Extensive works would be required to make the building viable and some of the required works would require extensive re-building, removing heritage significance due to the loss of original fabric that would inevitably be required.
- 4.09 In particular, the structural report states that there would need to be extensive demolition and rebuilding of the front elevation, which is the only part of the building identified as an important frontage/building in the Conservation Area Appraisal. The required rebuilding would lead to a significant loss of original fabric and character, harming the level of heritage significance of the building.
- 4.10 The unsightly appearance of 2-8 Huddersfield Road resulting from its poor condition detracts from its contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and reduces its inherent level of heritage significance. It is unlikely that an owner could be found who would be willing to repair and refurbish the building as it would be not economically viable. Even if repair was undertaken, the resulting loss of original fabric and features would also lead to a loss of contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and would harm the contribution that the building makes to the special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area.
- 4.11 The other buildings on the application site date to the mid-twentieth century and have no heritage significance.

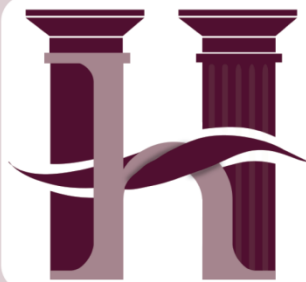
## HERITAGE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 5.01 The application is for planning permission for demolition of the existing buildings on the site and the erection of a 1-2 storey convenience store.
- 5.02 Demolition of 2-8 Huddersfield Road is the only practical solution for the building. Repair would not be economically viable. Even if the building were to be repaired, the necessity of replacing many original features and of demolition and rebuilding of substantial parts of the front elevation would lead to considerable loss of historic fabric and harm to the overall significance of the building and its role in the special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area.

- 5.03 Demolition of the building will lead to the total loss of a non-designated heritage asset of a relatively low level of heritage significance. It would also lead to a low level of harm to the special architectural or historic interest of the Birstall Conservation Area. However, there is a strong case for concluding that this harm is inevitable, with the poor structural integrity of the building having developed over many years.
- 5.04 If planning permission for demolition is not obtained, the most likely outcome will be the rapid deterioration of the building to the point where demolition is necessary for safety reasons. It is highly unlikely that repairs will be carried out since the work involved would be substantial with little chance that an investor would be found for a loss making project. In event of demolition for safety reasons there would be the same level of harm to the historic environment but may be less opportunity to record the building before demolition depending on safety concerns and the speed of demolition that might be needed if prompted by an immediate hazard. There is also the possibility that the opportunity to construct a suitable replacement building may have passed, with the risk that the application site would be left vacant.
- 5.05 It is therefore concluded that the harm to the historic environment is inevitable. This planning application will allow the building to be recorded prior to demolition as a condition of any planning permission. It is also an opportunity to ensure that a suitable replacement building can be erected on the site.
- 5.06 The proposed replacement building is intended to be a modern replacement building suitably designed to allow it to fulfil a similar function in the streetscape and complement its location at the gateway to the conservation area. It is not intended to be a pastiche of an historical building, but the proposed materials (stone clad with slate roof) and architectural details will reference other historic buildings in the area. Where possible historic details will be retained, such as the roadside wall and the stone slabs that form the forecourt for the present building.
- 5.07 The proposed building will be a purpose-built convenience store, but the exterior form, especially the roadside elevation, will retain a domestic character with the appearance of a terrace of two-storey dwellings. The proposed styling is drawn from other buildings in the area, such as the raised gables found at the neighbouring Victorian building immediately to the south of the application site and at no.17 on the opposite side of Huddersfield Road. Windows in the front elevation will be domestic in character with strong vertical emphasis typical of historic buildings. Stone quoins are also found on other historic buildings in the area such as the former public house at no.42 Huddersfield Road to the south or the terrace of historic mill workers cottages to the north at 7-17 Gelderd Road. Stone cills and lintels (the latter proposed for the upper storey windows) are also typical details.
- 5.08 The proposed store will occupy a similar footprint to the existing terrace and will retain the forecourt setting, allowing the retention of the characterful historic features of the front boundary wall and the stone slabs that form the present forecourt area. The latter will be relaid following filling of the former cellar space below. Boundary walls are identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as a very important part of the conservation area and the proposal will allow the front boundary wall to be preserved and enhanced in line with the recommendation of the appraisal, preserving this element of the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 5.09 This report therefore considers that the proposed development will cause no harm to the historic environment that would not result in any event from the structural condition of 2-8 Huddersfield Road. The replacement building is of a suitable design and will enhance the Birstall Conservation Area. The proposed development is sustainable development in terms of its impact on the historic environment as defined by the NPPF and is consistent with the relevant sections of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act.

## CONCLUSION

- 6.01 The front façade of 2-8 Huddersfield Road is identified as an important frontage/building in the Conservation Area Appraisal and it is a non-designated heritage asset. Its inherent level of heritage significance and contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area is undermined by its deteriorated structural condition. It is described in the structural survey submitted with this application as being in a state of advanced deterioration, unsafe and not economically viable to repair. Even if repair were possible, the amount of rebuilding and replacement of historic features would lead to a loss of heritage significance. It is however very unlikely that the building would ever be repaired as the deteriorated condition of 2-8 Huddersfield Road will require substantial building work to rectify and to make the building safe, which is not economically viable
- 6.02 It is likely that its condition will deteriorate further and require the demolition of the building on grounds of safety, with the structural report stating that this will likely be required in the near future. The proposed demolition as part of this application will not therefore cause any more harm to the historic environment than that which would occur if the building is allowed to remain. This application provide the opportunity to ensure that a suitable replacement building can be erected.
- 6.03 The replacement building is of a suitable design and will enhance the Birstall Conservation Area. The proposed development is sustainable development in terms of its impact on the historic environment as defined by the NPPF and is consistent with the relevant sections of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act.



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