Heritage Statement

Property Address: 43 Black Rock Drive
Proposal: Rear dormer loft extension and installation of two conservation-style roof lights to the front roof slope
Location: Linthwaite Conservation Area, Kirklees

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement is submitted in support of a householder planning application for a rear dormer loft extension and installing two conservation-style rooflights to the front pitch of 43 Black Rock Drive. The property lies within the boundary of the Linthwaite Conservation Area. While the dwelling is not of architectural or historic interest, and the wider development is modern in form and materials, the proposal has been designed sensitively to ensure it complements and respects the special interest of the conservation area.

2. Site Context and Character

Black Rock Drive forms part of a late 20th-century residential infill estate on the edge of the Linthwaite Conservation Area. As noted in the **Linthwaite Conservation Area Appraisal**, this area is characterised by:

- "Modern housing development… the style and use of materials are not sympathetic to the traditional historical development and character of Linthwaite".
- "Buildings of neutral quality and neither enhance or detract from the quality of the conservation area".

While the surrounding streets benefit from rich heritage, including weavers' cottages and historic mill structures, Black Rock Drive is considered a neutral contribution to the conservation area. As such, the area provides an opportunity for sensitive improvements that do not compromise the heritage value of the wider setting.

3. Design and Impact Assessment

The proposed works have been designed with reference to **Policy BE5** of the Kirklees UDP and national conservation guidelines. The rear dormer is positioned on a non-prominent elevation and, importantly, will not be visible from public viewpoints due to the steep elevation to the rear of the property. The house backs onto a natural rock face or cliff-like gradient, meaning that views from below or behind are entirely screened by the landscape. This ensures the dormer has no visual impact on the wider conservation area or any historic sightlines.

The two conservation-style roof lights proposed on the front pitch will be:

- Flush with the roofline
- Of appropriate scale and spacing
- Subtle in appearance, ensuring they do not disrupt the rhythm of the existing roofscape

These alterations respect the form of the existing dwelling and are visually recessive.

4. Conservation Area Policy and Appraisal Alignment
The proposal respects the key principles outlined in the Linthwaite Conservation Area Appraisal and Kirklees UDP:

- **No Harm to Historic Fabric**: The dwelling is not listed, and the proposed works will not affect any listed or historic buildings nor undermine views of nearby heritage assets such as Black Rock House or Black Rock Mills.
- **Preserving Character**: As noted in the appraisal, some modern housing is already considered to have a "neutral" effect. This proposal enhances such buildings through sensitive and well-integrated design choices.
- **Enhancing Sustainability and Liveability**: The modest addition facilitates much-needed internal space and energy-efficient living without expanding the property's footprint—supporting Objective 4 of the **Kirklees Heritage Strategy (2024)**, which encourages "innovative reuse and sensitive adaptation of the historic environment."
- **Policy Compliance**: The proposal aligns with UDP Policy **BE13** and **BE14**, which permit rear extensions and alterations that do not cause harm to visual or residential amenities. Furthermore, using conservation-style roof lights ensures compliance with **BE5**, promoting sympathetic design in conservation areas.

5. Conclusion
The proposed dormer and roof lights represent a minimal, carefully designed enhancement to a modern dwelling that lies within the Linthwaite Conservation Area but lacks individual historic or architectural value. Crucially, the presence of a steep natural rockface to the rear entirely obscures the rear elevation from public view, ensuring that the dormer extension has zero impact on the conservation area's character or views.

The development supports the principles of sustainable adaptation and thoughtful design within heritage contexts and will not adversely affect the character or appearance of the Linthwaite Conservation Area. Instead, it subtly improves the property in a manner that aligns with the ambitions of both the Linthwaite Conservation Area Appraisal and the Kirklees Heritage Strategy, ensuring that heritage is understood as an opportunity for responsible, context-sensitive development.