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Heritage Statement

1 Blacker Road, Birkby, Huddersfield, HD1 5HU
Proposal: Retention of Existing Flat-Roofed Single-Storey Front Extension
Designation: Within Birkby Conservation Area
Applicant: Khadim Supersave

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to support a retrospective planning application for the retention of a rebuilt single-storey front extension to Khadim Supersave at 1 Blacker Road, located within the Birkby Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The purpose of the statement is to:

- assess the significance of the heritage context.
- describe the impact of the rebuilt extension on that significance.
- demonstrate compliance with statutory duties, the NPPF (Dec 2024), and relevant local policy.
- justify why the works preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

2. Policy and Legislative Context

2.1 Statutory Duty

Under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, local planning authorities must pay *special attention* to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

2.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024)

Relevant sections include:

- §155–§161 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
  Development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- §158 – Great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.
- §161 – Alterations within conservation areas should be assessed in terms of whether they preserve or enhance the area’s character.
- §186–§189 – Enforcement should be proportionate and should not be pursued where planning permission is likely to be granted.

2.3 National Design Guide (2019)

Relevant characteristics include:

- C1 / C2 – Understanding context and valuing local history
- I1–I3 – Identity, local character and well-designed buildings
- B2 – Appropriate building types and forms
- R2 – Use of robust and appropriate materials

2.4 Kirklees Local Plan (2019)

- LP24 – Design: Requires development to respect local built character, materials, detailing and street form.
- LP35 – Historic Environment: Development should preserve or enhance designated heritage assets, including conservation areas.
- LP28 – Local Centres: Supports the retention and enhancement of small shops that contribute to local character and community function.

3. Heritage Context

3.1 Overview of Birkby Conservation Area

Birkby Conservation Area is characterised by:

- 19th-century stone and brick residential terraces and commercial units.
- simple, linear streets with active frontages.
- modest building scales, predominantly 2 storeys.
- traditional materials, including natural stone, brickwork and slate.
- historic shopfronts forming local centres of activity.

The area's significance derives from its historic urban grain, vernacular architecture, and the relationship between residential and commercial uses.

3.2 The Application Property

1 Blacker Road is a traditional commercial ground-floor unit within a small parade of shops, contributing positively to the area through:

- its long-established retail use.
- its active street frontage.
- its location at a visible position on Blacker Road.

The building is not listed, but its contribution to the conservation area is through its role in maintaining the traditional pattern of local shops.

4. Description of the Development

The applicant replaced an existing, previously approved mono-pitched lean-to extension (Recent Application Ref:2017/62/91852/W) with a rebuilt flat-roofed, parapet-fronted extension that:

- retains the *identical footprint*.
- does not exceed the original approved ridge height.
- uses improved, sympathetic materials.
- creates a tidier, more cohesive shopfront.

The rebuilt structure provides essential operational space needed to sustain the shop's long-term viability.

5. Assessment of Significance

The contribution of the site to the Birkby Conservation Area's significance lies in:

- maintaining the rhythm and continuity of the commercial parade.
- presenting an active frontage to the street.
- reflecting the historical pattern of small local shops within predominantly residential areas.
- supporting community function and vibrancy.

The front extension forms part of the shop's street-facing elevation. Its visibility is moderate, and its massing is consistent with commercial adaptations within the immediate area.

6. Assessment of Impact on the Conservation Area

6.1 Scale, Massing and Form

- The extension remains on the original consented footprint.
- The height does not exceed the previously approved lean-to ridge line.
- The simplified flat parapet form is consistent with many historic and contemporary shopfront modifications.

Impact: Neutral to minor positive.

6.2 Materials and Detailing

- Materials have been improved relative to the former lean-to.
- Colours and textures reflect local vernacular tones.
- The new parapet provides a cleaner, more coherent frontage than the previous visually dated form.

Impact: Positive, as material quality is enhanced.

6.3 Character and Appearance

The rebuilt extension:

- retains the building line and street rhythm.
- enhances visual cohesion of the frontage.
- avoids any harm to key views or the established townscape pattern.

There is no erosion of heritage significance, nor any loss of traditional fabric.

Impact: Preserves the character and appearance of the conservation area.

6.4 Cumulative Impact

Small front projections exist elsewhere in Birkby's commercial streets, and the proposal does not introduce any new typology or discordant form.

No cumulative harm is identified.

7. Justification and Heritage Balance

7.1 Compliance with Statutory Duty

The works preserve the character and appearance of the Birkby Conservation Area, fulfilling the statutory requirement under s.72(1).

7.2 NPPF Paragraph 161 – Conservation Areas

The proposal does not result in harm; instead, it improves materiality and visual coherence, strengthening the area's appearance.

7.3 Public Benefits

- Supports the long-term viability of a valued local shop.
- Sustains economic activity within a historic local centre.
- Enhances the visual quality of the immediate streetscape.

7.4 Enforcement Context (NPPF §186–§189)

Given that:

- the form and footprint were already approved.
- the rebuilt structure preserves the conservation area's character.
- visual quality is improved.

Enforcement action would be disproportionate. Retrospective consent is the appropriate remedy.

8. Conclusion

This Heritage Statement demonstrates that the rebuilt extension at 1 Blacker Road:

- preserves the character and appearance of the Birkby Conservation Area.
- is consistent with the NPPF (Dec 2024), Kirklees Local Plan policies LP24 and LP35, and the National Design Guide.
- provides an enhancement in material quality and visual coherence.
- supports the continued operation of an important local facility.
- does not result in harm to the heritage significance of the conservation area.

Accordingly, there is a clear and justified heritage basis for granting retrospective planning permission.