

DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

FOR

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84 Blacker Road, Birkby, Huddersfield, HD1 5HN

ISSUED FOR PLANNING APPROVAL:

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TREND ARCHITECTURE

Ref: TR-A22-0303

DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

84 Blacker Road, Birkby, Huddersfield, HD1 5HN

1. Introduction

This Design, Access and Heritage Statement has been prepared by Trend Architecture on behalf of the applicant in support of a planning application relating to 84 Blacker Road, Birkby, Huddersfield, HD1 5HN. The application proposes the refurbishment and mixed use of the existing building, comprising: Office accommodation at basement and ground-floor level and a five-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) at first-floor and loft level.

The property is situated within the Birkby Conservation Area and is surrounded by a mixture of residential and commercial premises. Particular consideration has therefore been given to the character and appearance of the conservation area, the amenity of neighbouring properties and the overall appearance of the development.

The proposal makes productive use of an existing building and involves mainly internal alterations, with relatively limited external changes.

2. Existing Property and Surroundings

The property has historically been used for residential purposes and comprises accommodation over four levels. The existing accommodation is broadly arranged as follows, Basement: Storage areas, WC and ancillary accommodation, Ground Floor: Living Areas, First/Loft Floor: Bedrooms and bathrooms

The property occupies a prominent position on Blacker Road, within Birkby village centre. Blacker Road contains a mixture of residential properties, shops, offices and other commercial premises, particularly at ground-floor level. As a result, the street has an established mixed residential and commercial character. The property is also located within the Birkby Conservation Area, and the proposal has therefore been designed so that the existing building remains the dominant feature and unnecessary alteration to its external appearance is avoided.

3. Proposed Development

The applicant proposes to bring the building back into full and beneficial use by dividing it vertically between commercial and residential accommodation. The basement and ground floor would be used as office accommodation falling within Use Class E, incorporating office/work areas together with associated kitchen, WC and storage facilities. The first floor and loft would provide a five-bedroom HMO, intended for no more than five occupants and falling within Use Class C4. Each of the five bedrooms would have its own en-suite bathroom, with a suitable communal kitchen/living area provided for the occupants.

The residential and office accommodation would operate independently, with separate access arrangements as shown on the submitted plans. A rear dormer is proposed to improve the usability and headroom of the existing loft accommodation and enable a more practical internal layout.

External alterations are otherwise limited principally to the proposed rear dormer and alterations to the ground-floor frontage. The intention is for the ground-floor frontage to reflect the established commercial character of other premises along Blacker Road.

4. Principle of the Development

The proposal represents the reuse and refurbishment of an existing building rather than substantial redevelopment of the site. The property is located on a main road in an established local centre containing a mixture of commercial and residential uses. The proposed combination of office accommodation at the lower levels and residential accommodation above is therefore considered compatible with the general pattern and character of development within the locality.

The proposal also allows the existing building to remain occupied and maintained rather than remaining vacant for extended periods. The five-bedroom HMO would provide accommodation for a relatively small number of residents and would remain residential in character. The commercial use is limited to the basement and ground floor and is considered appropriate to the location given the surrounding shops, offices and other commercial premises.

5. Heritage and Conservation Area

The property lies within the Birkby Conservation Area and consideration has therefore been given to preserving the established character and appearance of the building and its surroundings. The majority of the proposed works are internal and would therefore have no material effect upon the external appearance of the conservation area.

The proposed alterations to the front elevation are intended to provide a practical frontage for the proposed office while remaining sympathetic to the proportions, materials and appearance of the existing building and neighbouring commercial premises.

The proposed rear dormer is located on the rear roof slope, thereby limiting its prominence within views from Blacker Road and reducing its effect upon the principal elevation and wider street scene.

Materials, finishes, window proportions and detailing will be selected to complement the existing property as far as reasonably practicable.

For these reasons, the proposal is considered capable of being accommodated without causing harm to the character or appearance of the Birkby Conservation Area.

6. Residential Amenity

The majority of the development consists of internal alterations within the existing building. The proposed HMO would accommodate a maximum of five residents, with each bedroom having an en-suite and occupants also having access to appropriate communal facilities.

The office use would principally operate from the basement and ground floor and would be appropriate to the mixed character of Blacker Road.

7. Access and Transport

Pedestrian access to the building would continue to be taken directly from Blacker Road, with access serving the residential and commercial elements as shown on the submitted drawings. The property does not currently benefit from off-street car parking, and it is not physically practical to introduce off-street parking without substantial alteration to the established frontage of the property.

The absence of new off-street parking should therefore be considered in the context of the property's existing circumstances and its sustainable location. The site lies within Birkby village centre, on an established main road and close to local shops, services and employment opportunities.

Public transport is readily accessible from the surrounding road network, providing connections towards Huddersfield town centre and surrounding areas. The location therefore provides residents and office users with alternatives to dependence upon the private motor car.

No existing off-street parking is being removed as part of the proposal. The proposed HMO is also relatively modest in scale, comprising only five bedrooms and a maximum of five occupants.

The property does not currently benefit from any on-site parking; however, it is located within Birkby village centre, close to shops, local services and public transport links. Given the relatively small scale of the proposed HMO and the mixed residential and commercial character of Blacker Road, it is considered that the development can operate without dedicated parking and would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety. Secure cycle storage can also be provided where practical to encourage more sustainable forms of travel.

8. Refuse and Recycling

Careful consideration has been given to refuse and recycling, as the property will contain both residential and office uses. Waste from the HMO and the office will be kept separate so that the two uses can be managed independently.

The HMO will have its own dedicated bin storage area, with space for two 240-litre general waste bins and one 240-litre recycling bin. These bins will be stored close to the residential entrance and moved to the appropriate collection point only when required. The final bin requirements can be agreed with Kirklees Council Waste Services if necessary.

The office will also have its own separate waste and recycling provision, with space for two 240-litre bins or other suitable commercial waste containers depending on the requirements of the appointed waste contractor. Commercial waste will be collected separately from the residential waste.

All bins will be stored within clearly defined areas so that they do not obstruct the public footway or interfere with access to the property. The storage areas will be kept tidy and maintained, and the bins will remain within their designated areas except on collection days. This will help minimise any impact on the street scene and the character of the conservation area.

9. Amount and Layout of Development

The proposal largely comprises the internal refurbishment and subdivision of the existing building. There is no significant increase in the footprint of the property. The proposed layout has been arranged so that the two uses function independently while making efficient use of the existing building. The commercial accommodation occupies the basement and ground floor, where it benefits from direct access from Blacker Road. The residential accommodation is positioned on the upper floors, providing separation between the commercial and residential functions.

The HMO layout provides five bedrooms, individual en-suite facilities and communal accommodation appropriate to the number of residents. This represents an efficient reuse of the existing building without overdevelopment of the site.

10. Scale and Appearance

The overall scale of the existing building would remain substantially unchanged. The principal front elevation and general architectural form of the building would be retained.

The proposed alterations to the ground-floor frontage are intended to provide an appropriate entrance and window arrangement for the proposed office use whilst respecting the proportions and character of the existing building and neighbouring commercial premises.

External materials and finishes will be chosen to complement the existing building and ensure that the development integrates appropriately with its surroundings. Accordingly, the proposal would retain the established scale and overall character of the building.

11. Management of the HMO

The applicant acknowledges that an HMO occupied by five persons forming more than one household is subject to the relevant HMO licensing requirements and the property will be operated in accordance with those requirements.

12. Conclusion

The proposal provides an appropriate and sustainable reuse of an existing building within Birkby village centre. The development would bring the property into productive use through a combination of ground-floor/basement office accommodation and a modest five-bedroom HMO on the upper floors. The proposal involves primarily internal alterations, with only limited changes to the external appearance of the property.

Particular consideration has been given to the site's location within the Birkby Conservation Area. The principal form, scale and character of the existing building would be retained, with external alterations designed to remain sympathetic to the property and surrounding street scene.

Although the property does not provide off-street parking, this is an existing site constraint. The property occupies a sustainable location on a main road within Birkby village centre, close to public transport, shops and local services. No existing parking provision would be lost and the relatively modest scale of the proposed uses is not considered likely to result in an unacceptable effect upon highway safety.

Separate and clearly managed waste arrangements will be provided for the residential and commercial elements, with dedicated storage and suitable collection arrangements to prevent bins obstructing the highway or detracting from the appearance of the conservation area.

Overall, the proposal makes good use of the existing building by providing additional residential accommodation together with an appropriate commercial use at the lower levels. The development makes efficient use of a sustainable location while retaining the scale and character of the existing property and protecting the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Suitable arrangements will be provided for waste and recycling, and the proposal is not expected to result in an unacceptable impact on the surrounding highway network or the character of the area.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development represents an appropriate use of the property and would preserve the character and appearance of the surrounding area and Birkby Conservation Area.