



Statement of Significance

West Heslerton Hall, West Heslerton, North Yorkshire

Prepared by **contura** on behalf of Albanwise Ltd.

12/10/2018



Contents

	<i>List of Illustrations</i>	3
1	Introduction	4
2	Context	5
3	History and Development	5
4	Description	6
5	Statement of Significance	8
	5.1 Historical value	8
	5.2 Aesthetic value	8
	5.3 Communal value	8
	5.4 Evidential value	9
6	Conclusion and Recommendation	10
7	Historic Maps and Illustrations	11
8	Records	22
9	References	27

1 Introduction

1.1 This Statement of Significance¹ has been commissioned by Albanwise Ltd. in order to better understand the significance of the different elements of West Heslerton Hall and inform future proposals for the building.

1.2 West Heslerton Hall is a non-designated heritage asset that still lies in a landscaped park with the surrounding estate intact and in the same ownership.

1.3 This scope for this report was solely to examine significance of the hall, not its setting, landscaped park or any of the historic outbuildings. These merit consideration in a separate assessment.

1.4 This statement is in line with guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 and the Planning Policy Guidance Conserving and enhancing the historic environment 2014 describe the significance of any heritage assets² affected by development proposals. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

1.5 The NPPF also states that "Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage

¹ Significance (of a place or building) is defined in Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (English Heritage) as "the sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place, often set out in a statement of significance".

² Heritage Assets are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as: a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in

asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal (NPPF 16.190).

1.6 The site was visited on 8th August 2018; the building was inspected internally as well as externally with views of the building from the West, South and Southeast, but there are currently no full views from the East or North due to the site being very overgrown in this area.

1.7 A full archival research was not possible at this stage due to the fact that archives in Yorkshire cannot be accessed in one place, but are spread out in the regions including some private collections and the *Hull History Research Centre*. Several of them have been contacted and all online records have been consulted, but no useful evidence has been found.

planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. They include designated heritage assets (as defined in the NPPF) and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process.

2 Context

2.1 West Heslerton is a small village in North Yorkshire, England, 6 miles (10 km) southeast of Pickering. The village lies within the historic county boundaries of the East Riding of Yorkshire.

2.2 The village is the site of one of Britain's largest archaeological excavations, that of a large settlement which seems to have been occupied for several centuries until about 800 AD. The settlement flourished during late Roman/early Anglo-Saxon times, but may have been occupied for a considerable length of time before the arrival of Romans in Britain. The site covers over 45 hectares and contains the traces of more than 200 buildings.

2.3 The village name is thought to be derived from the word "hazel" or "hazel enclosure".

2.4 The Yorkshire Wolds Way National Trail and the Centenary Way long distance footpaths runs just south of the village.

2.5 West Heslerton was served by Heslerton railway station on the York to Scarborough Line between 1845 and 1930.[5]

2.6 In 1870-72, John Marius Wilson's *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales* described Heslerton like this:

HESLERTON, a parish in the district of Malton and E. R. Yorkshire; on the York and Scarborough railway, 8¼ miles NE by E of New Malton. It has a station on the railway, and a post office, of the name of West Heslerton, under York; and it consists of the two townships of East H. and West H. Acres of E. H., 3, 990; of W. H., 2, 180. Real property, £3, 455 and £2, 697. Pop., 262 and 341. Houses, 46 and 67. The manor of E. H. belongs to Sir Tatton Sykes,

Bart.; and that of W. H. o Viscount Downe. W. H. House is a chief residence. The living consists of W. H. rectory and E. H. chapelry, n the diocese of York. Value, £465. Patron, the crown. The church of W. H. is ancient, with a turret; and contains monuments of the Fowlis family, a monument to Sir Sykes, and a canopied font of Caen stone, presented in 1855 by Lord Downe. The church of E. H. also is ancient, with a turret. There are two Wesleyan chapels, and a national school.*

2.7 *Bulmer's History and Directory of East Yorkshire (1892):*

Heslerton Hall is a modern [?] mansion, surrounded by pleasant grounds. It is the property of the Hon. Eustace Henry Dawnay, J.P., D.L., of Witham Grove, Essex, whose father, William Henry, Viscount Downe, purchased it from the late Mark Foulis, Esq., in 1854.

2.8 Hull History Centre holds documents relating to Mark Foulis who owned West Heslerton Hall until 1854:

"William Foulis and Hannah Robinson's son, John Robinson Foulis, married Decima Hester Beatrix Sykes, eldest daughter of Christopher Sykes, 2nd baronet Sykes of Sledmere. The documents relating to this lucrative marriage settlement are to be found at U DP/166/77-80. From these it can be ascertained that Christopher Sykes settled on his daughter a mansion and valuable land at West Heslerton, originally bought by him in 1787 (U DP166/50-52) and a marriage portion of £10,000. When John Robinson Foulis died in 1826, he was able to leave to his daughters £15,000, while the halls and lands at West Heslerton and Buckton were inherited by his son, Mark Foulis (U DDX/16/209; U DP166/82).

2.9 The hall and the entire village was then owned by the Dawnay family for over 150 years, until 2016, when the land and property remaining in Estate ownership was put up for sale for £20 million following the death of its last owner, Eve Dawnay, in 2010.[6] Miss Dawnay was a great-granddaughter of William Henry Dawnay, 7th Viscount Downe and of Lt.-Col. Arthur de Vere Capell, Viscount Malden, son of the 6th Earl of Essex.

2.10 Miss Eve Dawnay's younger sister, Verena Elliott, lived at West Heslerton Hall until she left for London at the age of 18:

“We used to have folk dancing in the village hall during the war and there was a very strong WI, one of the first in Yorkshire, which my aunt started. My mother ran the land army so was kept very busy. I remember that there was a side door to the hall and that it was always open; nobody rang the bell. Anybody from the estate was welcome to walk straight in and go down to my father's study. Virtually every day there was somebody popping in to ask his opinion or tell him about some problem or other like a broken fence or a smoking fire.”³

The colonel passed on this approach to his three daughters and when the eldest, Eve, inherited the family estate on the death of her father in 1964, she kept the rents low and the community intact.

Verena Elliott: “We all loved it and it would be very hard to find a village with more loyal and lovely people living in it. There is a real sense of community which is hard to find these days.”

³ Read more at: <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/lifestyle/for-sale-yorkshire-village-where-time-has-stood-still-1-7824747>

3 Description

Please see also marked up floorplans in the appendices for significance of different elements and the location of most notable features.

3.1 Nikolaus Pevsner describes the building as below, but it must be noted that external as well as internal period detail and map evidence point to a rather different account:

West Heslerton Hall. A large stuccoed house with C18 origins, but greatly extended in the late 1890s and again in 1934 by Ward & Leckenby for the Dawnay family. The earliest part, of the mid to late C18, is the six-by-three bay block to the south, now three-storey, but originally two-storey [this is questionable as outlined below]. It has a hipped slate roof. Late C19 – early C20 bay window and central entrance porch.

3.2 External

3.2.1 Early map evidence shows that the footprint/ground floor plan of the house is already substantial in 1850 and has only marginally been altered in the late 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

3.2.2 A small, single storey section appears to have been added at the beginning of the 20th century (before 1911) to the northeast of the front range. Its last use was as a boiler room.

3.2.3 Further alterations to the floorplan seem to have taken place in 1934 when the bay windows were added to the south as well as the bay in reception room 3. The rear range appears to at least

have been remodeled and the secondary staircase dates to the 1930s.

3.2.4 The 18th century porch to the south was reused and put back onto the added bay. The more detailed maps show evidence of the porch in 1891, but the architectural detail of the element clearly point to a much earlier date.

3.2.5 The proportions of the main southern block as well as internal evidence (see below 3.3) appear to indicate that the third storey was part of the original early 18th century house design.

3.2.6 It is possible that the second floor (third storey) of the north wing was added or remodeled in the late 19th or early 20th century. However, some of the built evidence indicates that the section nearest to the main range is indeed from the 18th century (identical cornice running along the ceiling of the landing and into the first section of the corridor of the north range).

3.2.7 It is also possible that the northernmost part of the service range was rebuilt at some point. However, the map evidence and 18th century features also on the first floor – such as the fireplace, cornice and floorboards in Nannie's bedroom - appear to confirm that the building already had a large service wing when it was first built.

3.2.8 The dormers on the northern range facing west and south appear to be of a late 19th century/early 20th century date and have probably been added during the above mentioned alterations. It is likely that this northern service wing had a full second floor added at this point, but there is again an area immediately adjacent to the main range that might have already

had a second floor as mentioned above. For full analysis please see below 3.3.5 Second Floor.

3.2.9 The remodeling from the 1930s also appears to have included the complete covering of the external walls in stucco with some very fine detailing around the windows. This stucco at West Heslerton Hall is cement based, so it will date to the second half of the 19th century or later.

3.2.10 Further archival research could possibly establish the exact changes – a full archival research was not possible at this stage due to the fact that archives in Yorkshire cannot be accessed in one place, but are spread out in the regions including some private collections and the *Hull History Research Centre*. Several of them have been contacted and all online records have been consulted, but the search has not resulted in much useful evidence.



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3.3 Internal – 3.3.1 Entrance, Lobby and Stairs

These areas have features which all point to an early Georgian date at the beginning of the 18th century – the elaborate closed string oak staircase with the Venetian window, but also the very refined entrance lobby with a fine doorcase and beautiful detailed and proportioned ceiling and corner piers.

The Venetian window consists typically of an arched central light flanked by two shorter sidelights. Each sidelight is flanked by two pilasters and topped by a small entablature. The entablatures serve as imposts supporting the semi-circular arch that tops the central light. This design was varied by substituting columns for the two inner pilasters which can be observed in the example at West Heslerton Hall.

It appears that these features are all from the earliest building phase of the house and are highly significant.

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3.3.2 Reception Rooms 1 – 4 and Formal Entrance

The floorplan here has remained much the same since the beginning of the 18th century – except the added bays to the south and northeast. Please see also above description regarding the development of the floorplan for these rooms.

The compartmented ceilings are of particular note in reception rooms 1, 2 and 4 as well as in the formal entrance, some of which still show the decorative plaster detail from the early 18th century. The most interesting example is in the formal entrance; it still shows the original beautiful detail with shells.

This type of ceiling also appears to have existed in the Library (Reception 4), but is it has a plain profile here.

The central reception room (formal entrance) also has a notable decorative floor – with sheaves of wheat as an unusual pattern – which appears to date to the Victorian period with a later insert in the 1934 bay window floor area. All other floors are timber and mostly from the late 19th and early 20th century.

Reception room 3 was added between 1891 and 1911 and has some good raised and fielded paneling up to dado level.

Doors in this area are all early Georgian six paneled with raised fields. Unfortunately, most fireplaces have been removed and have left great scars in the walls.



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3.3.3 Service (North) Range - Library, Kitchen, Scullery and other service rooms

Library

This is an interesting room as it has some early fittings (fitted cupboards on either side of the fireplace) as well as the deep structural beams (boxed in here) of compartmented ceilings that are so characteristic for the front range. Proportions as well as fittings in this room indicate an early building date with the bay window having been added during later alterations/ refurbishments.

Kitchen, Scullery, pantries and other service rooms

Fixtures and fittings in these rooms mainly appear to date to the 1930s and were probably part of the alterations and refurbishment overseen by local architects Ward & Leckenby that is mentioned by Pevsner. Fixtures and fittings in these areas are of low significance, but there are some interesting early 20th century fittings such as the servants bell board along the main corridor and something that appears to be holders for portable lamps (?).



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3.3.4 First Floor

Stairs and Landing

The notable shouldered and eared architraves with keystones into the rear (north) ranges not only indicate an early 18th century date, but also that access into a rear range was already necessary and planned at the early and original building phase. Doors, cornices and other detailing in the north range also confirm this.

Bedrooms 1 – 4

Bedrooms 1 and 3 have decorative ceiling beams and good 18th century cornices. All the doors here are 18th century six paneled raised fields and some of the fireplaces are original (see also picture 27).

The northeast bathroom in the front range has some interesting wall paintings executed by Ann Forsyth in 1935.

Rear range

The simple, early and bright Georgian interiors are particularly convincing in the Nursery and in Nannie's room with good cornices and an interesting fireplace in Nannie's room.

Other bedrooms at this floor level have simple fixtures, fittings and detailing which are mostly from later periods.

There is a notable paper transfer of a cartoon map of the City of London on one of the walls in the northernmost bathroom: it has some humorous detail, but also three-dimensional depictions of prominent buildings.



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3.3.5 Second Floor

The staircase leading up to this level is an early 18th century feature as described above, so this and further evidence below indicate that this floor level is from the first building phase of the house.

On this floor the decorative detail is clearly more plain and limited to some fireplaces, which is due to the characteristic hierarchy of spaces in the Georgian house.

The front range has been separated off as a flat and was lived in by Miss Evie as an adult. It still has a few interesting early features from the 18th century such as the eared fireplace, a paneled doorframe and some early six paneled doors, but most of the fixtures and fittings are from the early 20th century and later.

The flat also contains an interesting map of the West Heselton Estate drawn by Colonel Dawnay in 1943. This map is very significant as it contains some invaluable historical information and insights about the estate and the community.

Rear Range

The decorative cornice of the landing continues into the immediate landing space of the adjacent northern range possibly indicating that this hall and the adjacent room are of the same early building phase as the front range.

There are three identical ornate little firesurrounds in bedrooms 15 and 16 as well as in a dressing room; these are likely to have been added during refurbishments replacing the plain type of timber fireplaces that can still be seen in bedroom 20.

Doors and windows here mainly date to the early 20th century.

There is another light sconce such as the ones on the ground floor at the top of the rear stairs.



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4 Statement of Significance

4.1 Historical value - deriving from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.

- The association with the Foulis and Downe (Dawnay) family estates⁴ adds significance.
 - The history of the estate is unusual as the estate survived in its entirety even after its most recent sale in 2017.
 - The hall has group value with other historic estate buildings such as the listed ice house within the immediate surroundings and the landscaped park, but also with the village and the church due to the historical association.
- The asset is of high historical value.

4.2 Aesthetic value – deriving from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

- Some elements of West Heslerton Hall, such as the high quality 18th century architectural detail and the great later stucco detail on the façades, are of high aesthetic value. However, the overall moderate aesthetics are reflected in the fact that the hall is not included on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE).
- There is some good and interesting internal detail as identified in the above analysis.

⁴ Miss Dawnay was a great-granddaughter of William Henry Dawnay, 7th Viscount Downe and of Lt.-Col. Arthur de Vere Capell, Viscount Malden, son of the 6th Earl of Essex.

- The heritage asset cannot be seen from any public vantage point, so its aesthetic value is presently largely hidden from public appreciation.

► The aesthetic value of hall is moderate – high (some internal detail).

4.3 Communal Value – deriving from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

“We all loved it and it would be very hard to find a village with more loyal and lovely people living in it. There is a real sense of community which is hard to find these days.”

- The building carries a lot of memories from both locals as well as visitors; it is a place that has significant emotional value and provides identity. It especially carries positive memories for past tenants on the estate.
 - There appears to be strong local support for the conservation of the building together with its estate; the high community value of the building was recognised when the estate was sold off as a whole in 2017 with 400 residents of this village hoping that the Dawnay spirit would survive the change of ownership.
- The communal value of the asset is high.

4.4 Evidential value – deriving from the potential of a place to yield primary evidence about past human activity.

- The fabric of the asset ranges in date across the life of the building, demonstrating the historic development of the structure. However, map evidence and built evidence do not seem to concur with the account by Nicolaus Pevsner, so further archive research might throw clarify this.
 - Due to its present vacant status, the building is now vulnerable to rapid decay and further loss of fabric due to theft and deterioration.
 - It has only been possible to explore archival evidence at the Northallerton North Yorkshire County Record Office and online: this has proven to be limited, but it is likely that there is further evidence in other Yorkshire depositories (Hull History Centre, York Borthwick Institute for Archives, the East Riding Archives etc.).
- The known evidential value is moderate.

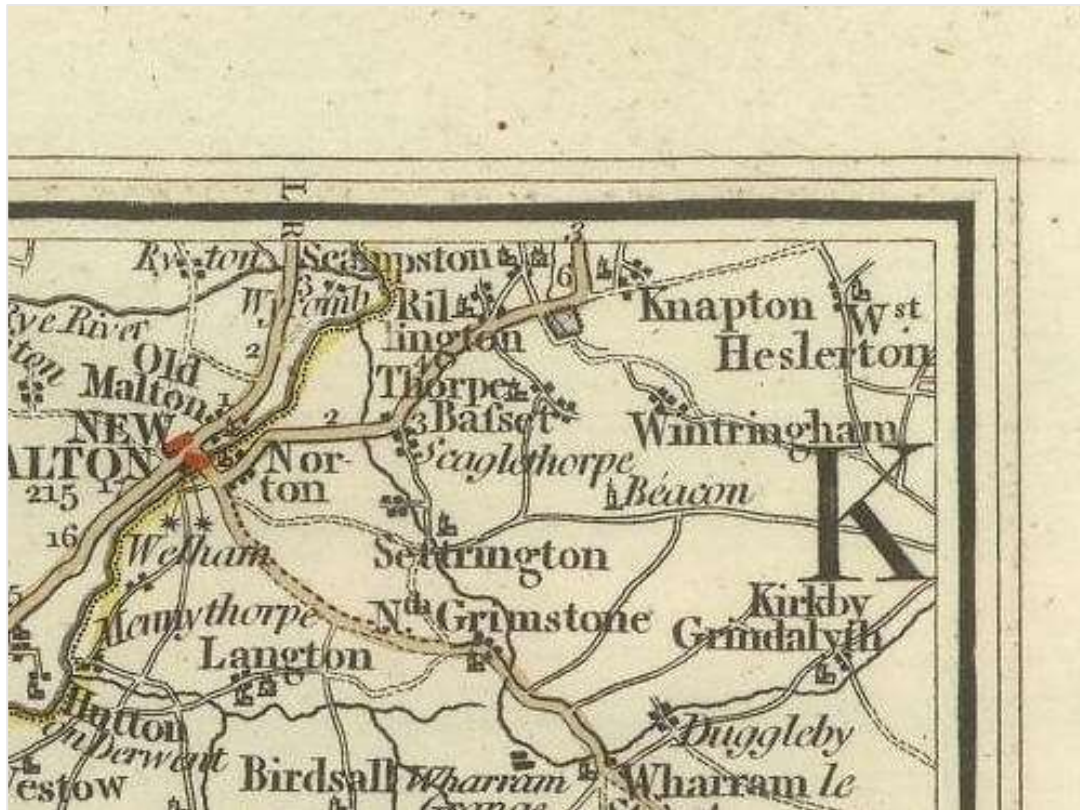
5 Summary - Conclusion and Recommendation

The asset's significance is moderate to high. It is a non-designated building of much local interest.

The front range with the immediate attached part of the northern service wing is of considerably more importance than the rest of the service wing to the north.

The northernmost part of the service wing is much altered with most fixtures and fittings from the late Victorian era and the early 20th century. However, it is likely that some of the walling and proportions are from an earlier core of a building. To fully understand this development, further archival research would be necessary.

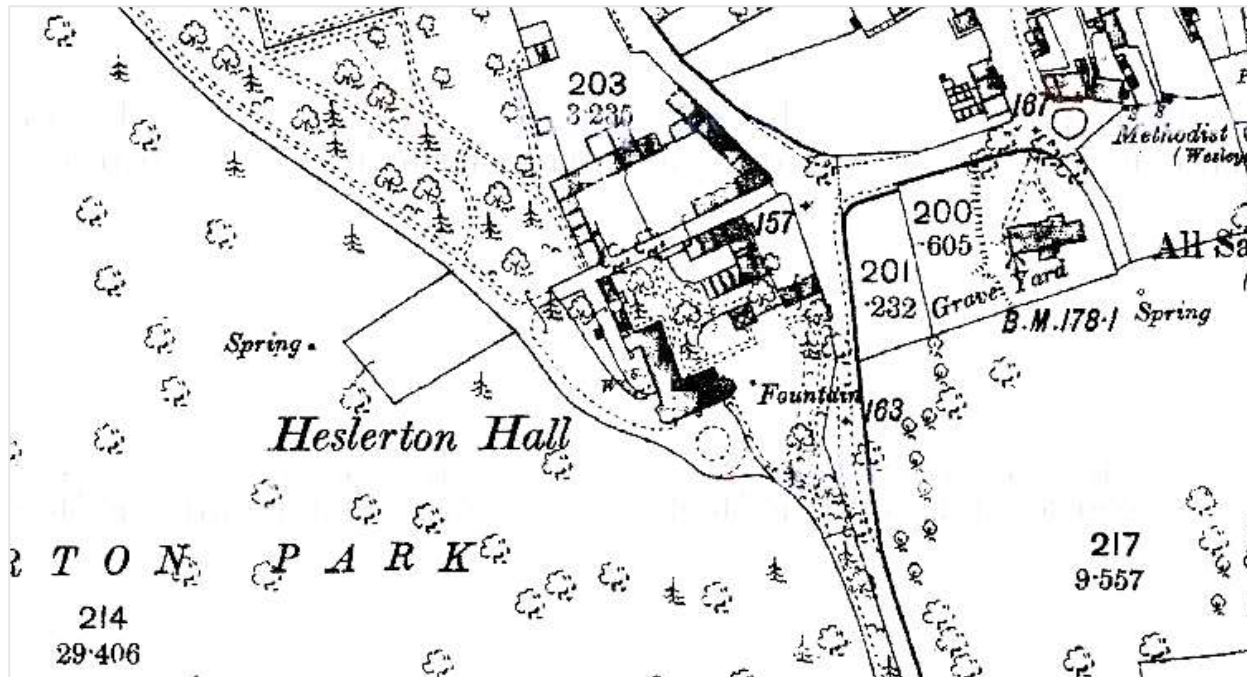
6 Historic Maps and Illustrations



Map 1 John Cary Map 1794.



Map 2 OS 1850 © National Library of Scotland.



Map 3 OS 1891 © old-maps.co.uk

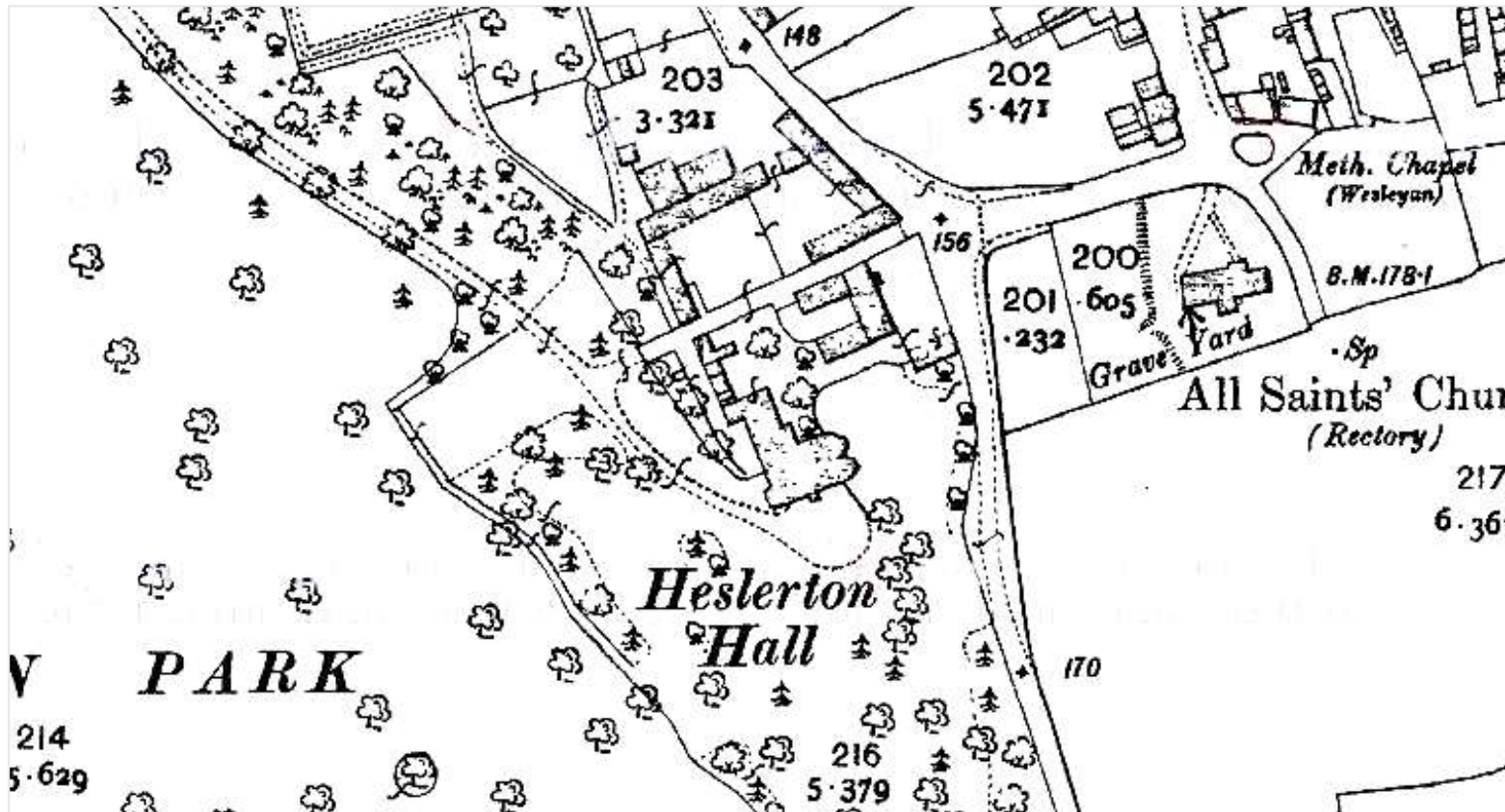


Map 4 1898 OS Scarborough Hills.



Map 5 OS 1909 © National Library of Scotland: large and detail.



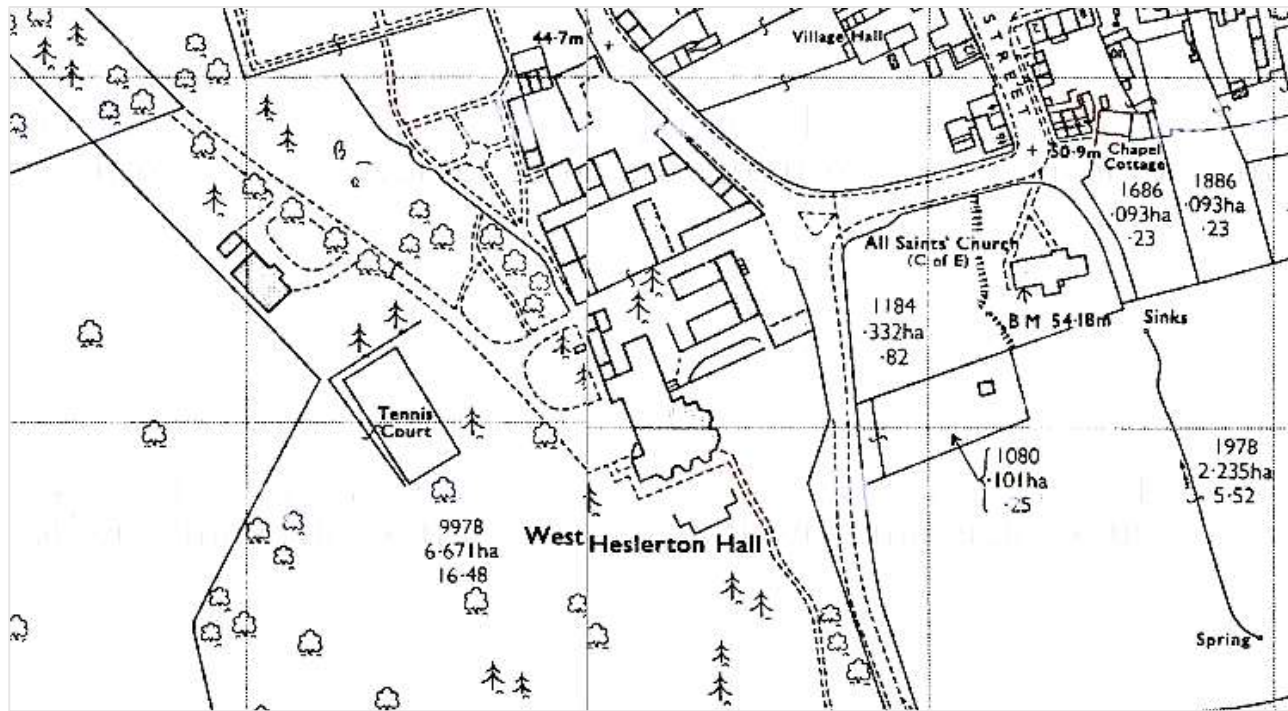


Map 6 1911 © old-maps.co.uk



Map 7 OS 1950 © NLS: large and detail.





Map 8 OS map 1972 © NLS.

7 Records

relievo of our Divine Redeemer and the Blessed Virgin. This tomb is supposed to belong to Thos. de **Heslerton**, the founder of the church. The edifice was restored in 1809, when the north wall was built six feet further south, thereby making the church six feet narrower. Before that period the entrances were on the north and south sides, but since then the entrance is at the **west** end. A handsome new font was given by Lord Downe in 1853. A fine *Rectory House* was built in 1820; the grounds and gardens surrounding it are beautiful.

The *Village of West Heslerton* is seated near the foot of the Wolds, 8 miles E.N.E. of Malton. A *Wesleyan Chapel* was erected here in 1839. The *School* was built in 1829, at the joint expense of the Hon. Marmaduke Langley (then Lord of the Manor), M. Cannon, Esq., and the Rector. It is chiefly supported by Viscount Downe, Lady Sykes, and the Rector. A house for the master was built in 1850. *Heslerton Station*, on the above railway, is about 1¼ mile N. from the village.

Heslerton Hall, a modern mansion, was purchased with the estate of Mark Foulis, Esq., in 1854, by Lord Downe. It is pleasantly situated in well-wooded grounds. The *Manor House*, in the village, is in the occupation of Mr. Henry Abbey, farmer. *Wold Farm* is in the occupation of Mrs. Jane Abbey; *Ling Hall*, in that of Messrs. William and Benjamin Kirton; *Heslerton Carr*, of Mr. Thomas Miles; *Carr House*, of Mr. John Wilson; and *Flats Farm*, of Mr. William Dale.

Figure 3 history and topography of Yorkshire Volume II, 1867 Mike Thornton

	<p>6. Draft Conveyance: for £500: Mark Foulis, late of West Heslerton, now of Perth, esq. to William Henry, Viscount Downe:</p> <p>Date: 28 Sep 1854</p> <p>Extent: 1 item</p> <p>Reference No: U DP166/43</p>
	<p>7. Draft Conveyance: for £500: Mark Foulis, late of West Heslerton, now of Perth, esq. to William Henry, Viscount Downe:</p> <p>Date: 28 Sep 1854</p> <p>Extent: 1 item</p> <p>Reference No: U DP166/44</p>
	<p>8. Copy. Conveyance: Mark-Foulis, now of Perth, his trustees and mortgagees to William Henry, Viscount Downe: for £18,500 in all</p> <p>Date: 29 Sep 1854</p> <p>Extent: 1 item</p> <p>Reference No: U DP166/54</p>

8 References

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- Nikolaus Pevsner and David Neave, *Yorkshire: York and the East Riding*, 1995.
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