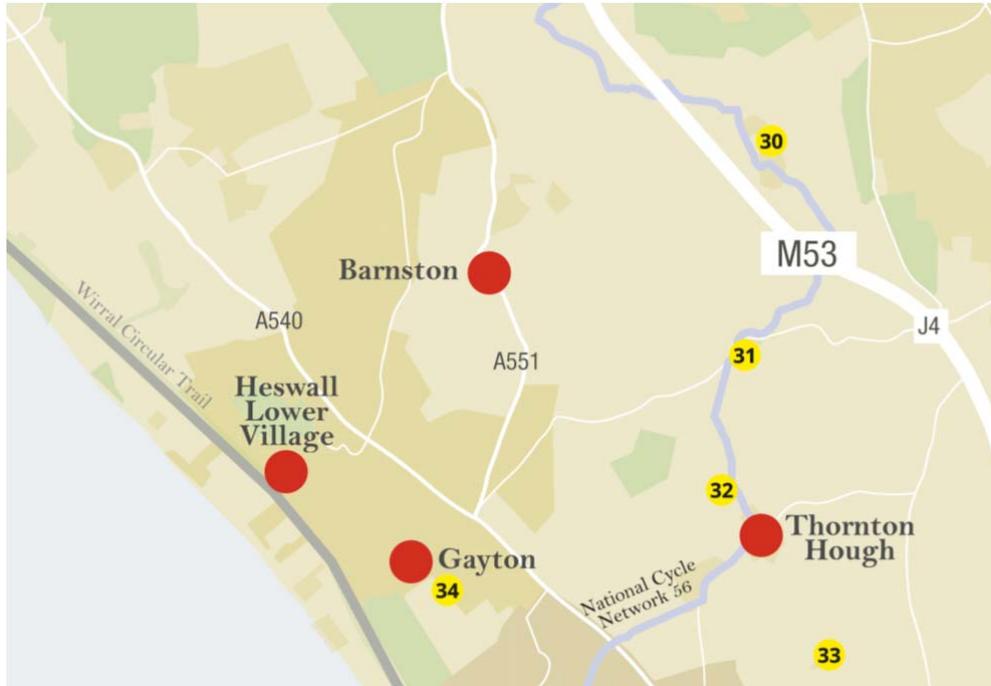


Conservation Areas and Heritage Trail South West section



Introduction

The south west quarter of the Borough of Wirral contains the conservation areas of Heswall Lower Village, Gayton, Barnston and Thornton Hough. Heswall and the much smaller Gayton retain many of their original vernacular buildings, and in the case of Heswall the old parish church. Inland, Thornton Hough, largely rebuilt by the industrialists, Joseph Hurst and William Lever, is an outstandingly attractive model village, deliberately planned to include much open space.

Barnston, the smallest of the settlements and the least altered, contains a number of working farms.

Beyond the built-up area footpaths cross open fields and on the Dee side, walkers can access the Wirral Way. Although all four villages have been engulfed by suburban housing, there is sufficient remaining of the surrounding farmland and common land to give this area a pleasing rural character.

The trail starts in Heswall Town Centre:

Parking: Pay and display car parks

Buses: The regular 471 and 472 bus service starts and finishes in Heswall, plus other local services linking West Kirby and Chester.

Trains: Heswall Railway Station: route to join the route and return from the finish: Total distance is about 13 miles for walking and cycling and about 12 for driving.

Heswall – Barnston:

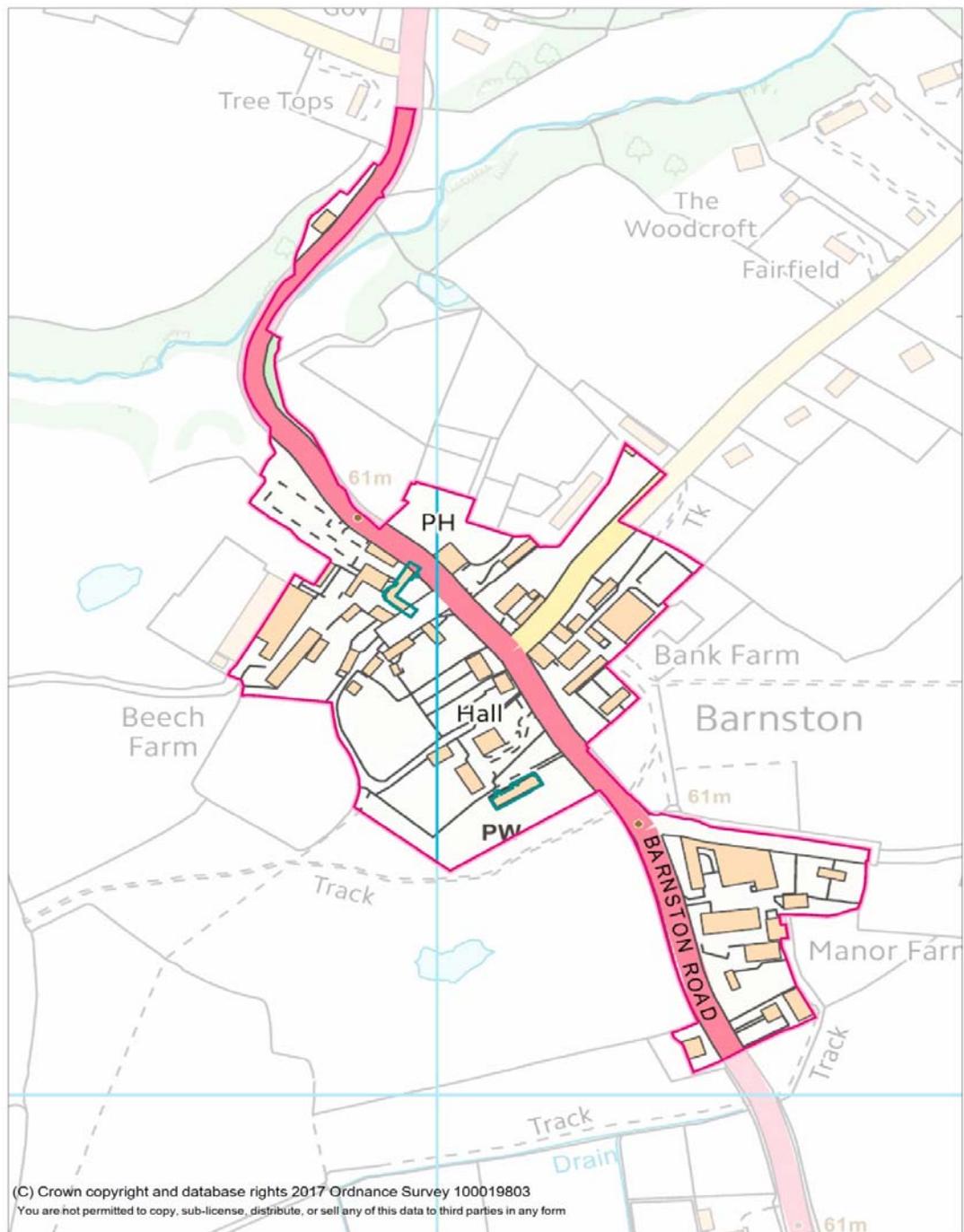
Walking: turn left out of the bus station, left at Thornton's into Downham Road South and immediate right into Milner Road. Take the public footpath on the left after Mill Lane on your right. Follow this path, keeping straight on when other footpaths cross this path following the discs for the Arrowe Park – Parkgate Circular Walk. Go across Whitfield Common to Whitfield Lane and take the footpath opposite, down alongside the School. Follow this footpath to Barnston Village.

Cycling: turn left out of the bus station, left at Thornton's into Downham Road South and immediate right into Milner Road. Turn right at the Y junction into the continuation of Milner Road. Turn left into Barnston Road and follow this road to Barnston Village.

For Walkers and Cyclists starting from Heswall Railway Station: turn left out onto the main road, Brimstage Road, turn right into Acre Lane and right into Barnston Lane as per the route above.

Driving: turn left out of the bus station, left at Thornton's into Downham Road South and immediate right into Milner Road. Turn right at the Y junction into the continuation of Milner Road. Turn left into Barnston Road and follow this road to Barnston Village:

Barnston Conservation Area (1983)



The original village of Barnston is mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086, though its earliest buildings date only from the C18th. Still dominated by working farms, the village retains an essentially rural character and represents a good example of a post medieval nucleated settlement.

The village is typical of one that has grown over time, with an irregular grain and a variety of building types. Few of its buildings date from after 1900 and consequently its original layout remains largely unaltered. Except for the Fox and Hounds public house, substantially rebuilt in 1910, and a key landmark when entering Barnston from the north, the village would be eminently recognisable from its 1900 form.

Within the village there are two distinct groups of buildings: the old domestic core, centred round Old Lane and its junction with Barnston Road and the Church precinct, framed by imposing sandstone structures, which form a loose square whose open side is to Barnston Road

Boundary walls, mostly constructed of local red sandstone, and surrounding both domestic and agricultural buildings, are a key part of Barnston's visual character. They vary in construction and design, but are all coursed rubble, with very little dressing or squaring-off of stones. A number are of a dry-stone construction, apparently without mortar.



Barnston Village collage.

Key buildings in the village include:

- Christ Church (Grade II), built 1870-1 to a design of G. E. Street (1824-1881)
- The Vicarage, designed by J. F. Doyle (1840 – 1913), who worked with R. Norman Shaw on Liverpool's White Star building and also designed St Peter's, Lower Heswall
- The Church Hall (formerly the school) the earliest part by Street
- The Fox and Hounds public house
- Beech Farm (Grade II)
- 109 / 111 Barnston Road

www.barnstonvillage.info

Barnston – Storeton:

Walking: leave Barnston past The Fox and Hounds and down the pavement via Barnston Dip, up the other side past Gills Lane on your left to the old black and white finger post on the right taking you right into Holmwood Drive and follow this road round to the entrance of Murrayfield Hospital where you continue straight on onto the bridleway. After the houses, turn right onto the footpath which continues across the fields, over Prenton Brook, then the railway and the M53 towards Storeton Village. At the kissing gate at the road, Landican Lane, turn left and follow the road round to the right towards Lever Causeway, turn right and continue to the roundabout and turn left into the Village.

Cycling: leave Barnston past The Fox and Hounds and push your cycle down the pavement via Barnston Dip, up the other side past Gills Lane where it is safer to remount and carry on cycling to the roundabout and dismount just prior, because you need to take Landican Road on the right just after the roundabout. In Landican Village turn right onto Landican Lane the public bridleway track on the right well signposted as National Cycle Network route 56 to Storeton Village, where you re join the surfaced road to the roundabout take 2nd left into Red Hill Road.

Driving from Barnston to Storeton:

take Storeton Lane, the road almost opposite the Church out of Barnston Village and continue over the M53 into Storeton Village.

Storeton Village: Heritage site 30:

The small village of Storeton is characterised by the use of local sandstone in many of its walls and buildings. For centuries it formed part of the estate of the Stanleys. until 1849 when it was purchased by Sir Thomas Brocklebank (1814 – 1906), the shipping magnate.

It remained in the Brocklebank family until the death of Sir Thomas Brocklebank, the 2nd baronet (1848 – 1911) when it was sold to William Lever. A number of the properties, including the former school (1865), were built at the expense of Sir Thomas Brocklebank, 1st baronet, and bear his crest.



Buildings within Storeton Village.

Storeton Hall: Farm buildings incorporate the remains of a medieval hall, built for the Stanleys. The two storey north wing and the east wall of the hall still stand. A rare building contract for work at the hall, dated 1372, made between William Stanley and the mason, Roger Barton, survives in the British Library. One of Wirral's oldest buildings and a Scheduled Monument. G.II*

Storeton – Brimstage:

Walking: having passed Rest Hill Road on your left, fork right onto the public footpath along Keepers Lane that goes down past the Cattery and Kennels and leads you alongside the M53 to Brimstage Lane, turn right under the motorway bridge but take care along this narrow lane to Brimstage where you turn right and The Craft Centre is on the left.

Cycling or driving: Leave the village along Red Hill Road and fork right into Brimstage Lane following the National Cycle Route 56 to Brimstage Village where you turn right and The Craft Centre is on the left:

Brimstage Hall and Tower: Heritage Site 31:



The late 14th century tower house

With 16th and 19th century additions and one of a very few medieval domestic buildings still standing in Wirral. The base of the tower has a vaulted ceiling. The upper floors were once reached via a newel stair. The former farmyard, now 'The Courtyard', houses a range of shops and places to eat.

Brimstage - Thornton Hough – Raby - back to Thornton Hough:

Walking: From the Craft Centre take the footpath out of the car park across the field to Brimstage Lane, turn left and then left into Talbot Avenue and immediate left onto the Bridleway. After about half a mile when the bridleway turns left continue straight on along the public footpath across the fields to Thornton Hough. At the 'main drive' turn right and left and the turn right by the School into the village.

Exit Thornton Hough on the south side of The Cricket Green and take the right arc of the permissive horse route to Raby to the footpath and turn left. At the end of the footpath go past the phone box and take 2nd right and The Wheatsheaf is on the left. Return to Thornton Hough Cricket Green by the same route.

Brimstage - Thornton Hough – Raby - back to Thornton Hough:

Driving and Cycling via Thornton Manor:

Turn left out of Brimstage Craft Centre onto Brimstage Road, turn left into Talbot Avenue and left into Manor Road. **Thornton Manor is on the right.** Continue on into Thornton Hough and straight on to Raby, where you turn left and immediate right and The Wheatsheaf is on the left. Return to Thornton Hough by the same route.

Thornton Manor and Thornton Manor Gatehouse: Heritage Site 32:

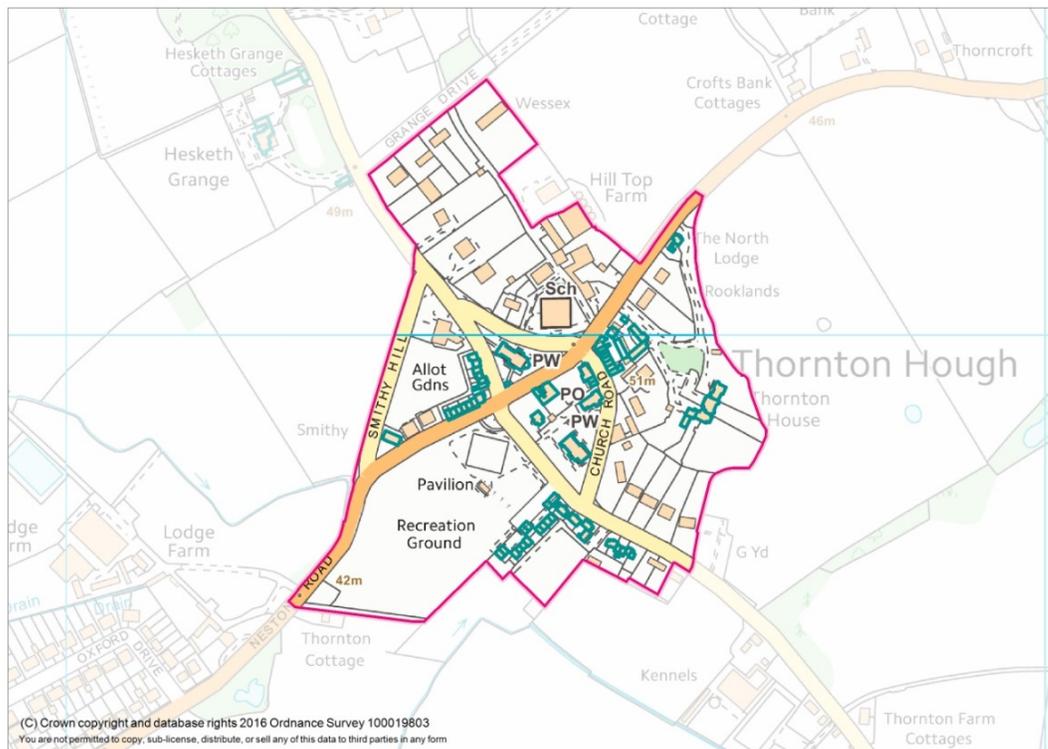


Originally a modest country house, Thornton Manor, was bought by Lord Leverhulme as his family home in 1891. Over the next 22 years, this modest house was transformed into a superb neo-Elizabethan mansion. Architects included many of those who worked elsewhere in the village including Douglas and Fordham, Lomax Simpson and Grayson and Ould. The gardens were laid out by the noted landscape designer Thomas H Mawson and Lord Leverhulme himself.



The gatehouse was added to the Manor in 1910. Designed by James Lomax Simpson, it has a timber-framed, Tudor style, upper floor and a stone slate roof.

Thornton Hough Conservation Area (1979)



Although pre-conquest in origins the character of the settlement has been largely determined by its transformation into a model estate village in the second half of the 19th century. The Conservation Area contains an interesting mix of estate cottages and public buildings, mostly in the Vernacular Revival style, together with older buildings which have survived from the earlier settlement.

In 1847, the village was described as having only one street "and although it possesses a few tolerably good houses, the greater proportion are of a very inferior description".

The first phase of improvements was made by Joseph Hirst a wealthy woolen mill owner of Wilshaw near Huddersfield. He bought farmland in 1866 and began to develop a small model village with a church, vicarage, school, shop and a terrace of houses called Wilshaw Terrace. However, the most dramatic transformation was made by William Hesketh Lever, first Viscount Leverhulme, who bought Thornton Manor, then a modest early Victorian House in 1891. He almost entirely re-built the village, employing many notable local artists who were already working on his far more ambitious model village at Port Sunlight.

Even though most of Thornton Hough's buildings date from c1890 to c1910, the overall appearance is of a settlement which has grown organically over many centuries. This was a deliberate intention of the designers, who followed the historic street and field patterns and used a rich variety of traditional building materials and styles. Red sandstone, polychromatic brick, carved timberwork and stonework, leaded windows and decorated plasterwork, all contribute to the 'picturesque' character of the village – a character which is now epitomised by Port Sunlight.

There are 22 Listed Buildings in Thornton Hough. All Saint's Church, built in 1867 for Joseph Hirst and the adjacent Vicarage and School, form an interesting grouping and are listed Grade II. Typically, Gothic in style, the red sandstone church spire is a focal point for the village. In contrast, St George's URC Church, built 1906 –7 for Lord Leverhulme, is Norman in design, with outstanding Romanesque-style carvings and impressive stained-glass windows. It is listed Grade II*.



All Saint's Church, built in 1867.

Other key buildings include:

- Wilshaw Terrace, a row of cottages and shop with conical roofed tower, built 1870 as part of Hirst's original development.
- Weald House, built as the Congregational Manse in 1904 and designed by important architects Grayson and Ould, who worked for Leverhulme at Port Sunlight and the Dukes of Westminster in Chester and on the Eaton Estate.
- Sunnysdale and Holmdale and Thicketford were all built in 1892 by William and Segar Owen, who worked extensively in Port Sunlight and were architects of the Lady Lever Art Gallery.

- 1 – 7 Neston Road, built 1839 by the best-known architect who worked at Thornton Hall. John Douglas of Chester (1830 – 1911), was a prolific architect of many buildings throughout the north-west, working for Leverhulme in Port Sunlight and for the Duke of Westminster's Eaton estate. He was responsible for many of Chester's best known 'black and white' buildings and the world famous Eastgate Clock.



Collage of Thornton Hough.

The Wheatsheaf Inn, Raby: Heritage Site 33:



Thatched and timber framed public house, built on a stone footing, dated 1611. A rare example of the style of building that was commonplace in Wirral until the 1800s. G.II

Thornton Hough – Chester High Road:

Walking via Thornton Manor:

From the Cricket Green in Thornton Hough, return to the main crossroads by the Church and turn left into Manor Road. **Thornton Manor is along on the left.**

Continue to the public footpath on the left opposite Talbot Avenue. Continue along this lovely long footpath through the grounds of the Manor, all through adjoining woods, and then alongside the railway to the Chester High Road and turn right.

Cycling and Driving: As you come back into Thornton Hough from Raby, turn left at the cross roads into Neston Road passed the Cricket Green, turn right into Parkgate Lane opposite Thornton Hall Hotel and then right onto Chester High Road.

Walking, Cycling and Driving: Chester High Road- and return to Heswall via Gayton Mill, Gayton and Heswall Lower Village:

On the Chester High Road opposite the car dealerships, turn left into Boathouse Lane and immediate right into Gayton Parkway, then left into Dee park Road, left into Well Lane which takes you down into Gayton.

Turn right along Gayton Road into Lower Heswall Village into Village Road, Thurstaston Road, right into Dee View Road (walkers can take a short cut up School Hill). At the top of Dee View Road with the Dee View Pub on the hairpin bend, turn right into Dawstone Road and immediate left into Rocky Lane. At the traffic lighted

crossroads turn left and **you are back in the centre of Heswall** with the Bus Station on the right and the Fire Station on the left.

For Walkers and Cyclists using Heswall Railway Station: turn right at the Rocky Lane traffic lights to the roundabout and turn left and immediate right onto Brimstage Lane and Heswall Railway Station is about half a mile down on the right.

Gayton Conservation Area (1979)



The Gayton Conservation Area was designated with the aim of preserving the character of the settlement, once no more than a small farming township and still retaining its Hall, vernacular buildings, cobbled roads, unmade paths and lanes and wooded setting.

The manor of Gayton was first recorded in Domesday Book, its name probably meaning 'goat farm' from the Old Norse '*geit*' and the Old English '*tūn*', meaning a farmstead or village. Little has changed in Gayton over the centuries. The village remained small, its inhabitants farmed and fished and a ferry across the Dee operated from the bottom of Cottage Lane. As late as 1881 there were still fewer than 200 (199) people in the entire township.



Collage of Gayton Village.

There are three listed buildings in the conservation area and one just outside. Of these the grandest is Gayton Hall, listed Grade II*, and in private hands. Built in the late 17th century but refaced in the early 18th century, it is a three-story mansion of brick with sandstone dressings and parapet constructed on a stone base. Inside are two Jacobean staircases and these and other interior features are listed. For long the home of the Gleggs, it was the only residence within easy reach of Hoylake of sufficient status to be able to accommodate William of Orange, before he left for Ireland in 1690. Before leaving the king knighted Sir William Glegg, the owner of the Hall, to thank him for his hospitality.

Also Grade II* listed and part of the former Glegg estate is the mid-17th century octagonal dovecote standing to the north of the Hall. Built of brick, with stone dressings and base, the inscription over its lintel reads '16 EGK 63' (Edward Glegg). It has nesting boxes for 1000 birds

Beyond the Hall, in Gayton Farm Road, The Old Farm is listed Grade II. Built of local brick and stone, it has a date stone inscribed RCM 1761. Outside the Conservation Area, set back from Telegraph Road is a stone tower mill. Probably built in the mid-18th century, but perhaps earlier, it is also listed Grade II.

Unlisted buildings are mainly of brick and built in a modest, vernacular style. Dating from the 18th and 19th century, these include the former outbuildings and coach house to the Hall. Little Gayton Farm and Gayton Farm Barn, Rose and Croft Cottages, Lister Lodge and the older parts of Little Gayton House. The Lodge, in Gayton Lane, formerly the gatehouse to the Hall, is in late 19th century Domestic Revival style. Buildings like these have enabled Gayton to retain the appearance of an essentially rural village despite the spread of suburbia in its immediate surroundings.

The Wirral Way runs below the village and the Dee shore can be reached via Cottage Lane.

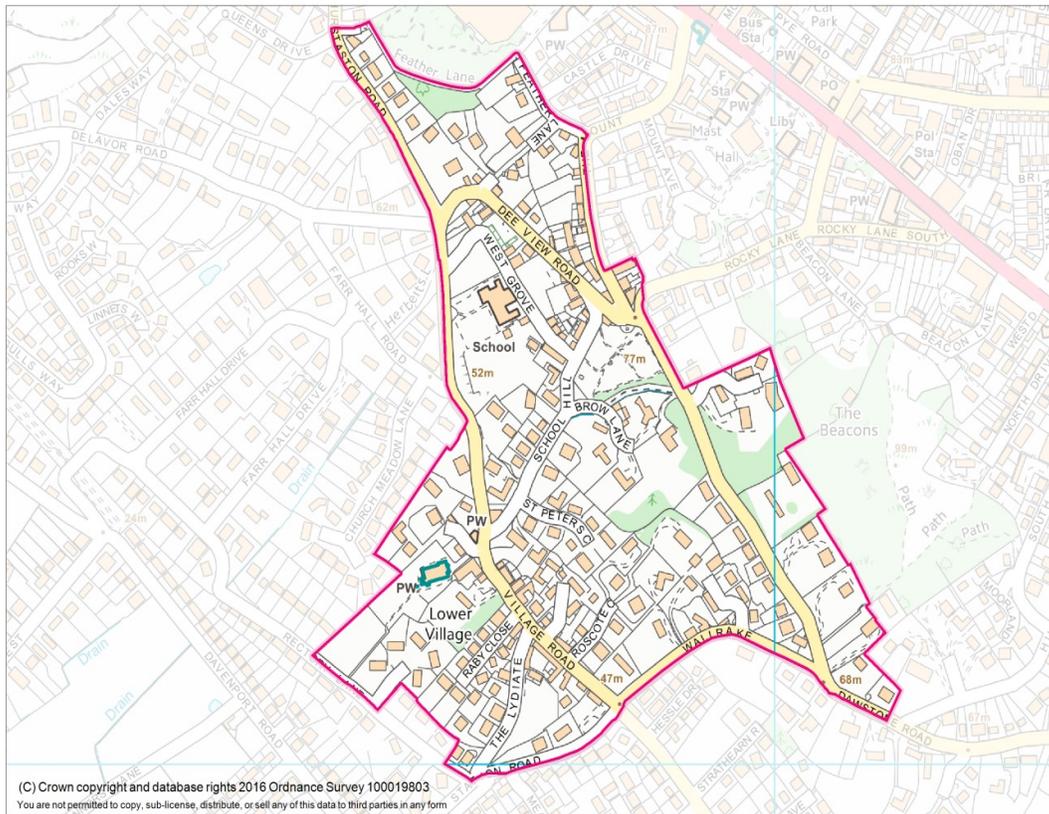
www.theheswallssociety.org.uk

Gayton Mill: Heritage Site 34



A stone tower mill, probably built in the mid-18th century, but perhaps earlier. Now a private residence. G. II.

Heswall Lower Village Conservation Area (1979)



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The Heswall Lower Village Conservation Area was designated with the aim of preserving the distinctive character of the original village with its church, former farm buildings, smithy and cottage-scale dwellings. Protection was also provided for those parts of the surrounding area characterised by substantial properties set in large, well landscaped grounds.

The manor of Heswall was first recorded in Domesday Book, its name meaning 'spring where hazels grow' from the Old English *hæsel wella*. Little has changed in the village over the centuries.

Stone remained the chief building material in the area for years. A warm red in colour, it was quarried locally and can be seen in numerous houses, boundary walls and cuttings through the bedrock.

Farming and some market gardening remained the main occupation of the inhabitants until the later 19th century. The Lydiate, Church Farm and the Old Smithy are reminders of this period.

In 1877 Thomas Helsby's edition of Ormerod reported a new trend, describing the village as becoming a 'favourite place of resort in the summer by the residents of Liverpool and Birkenhead.' This resulted in the appearance of large Victorian villas, set in substantial gardens, and often with stretches of heather or woodland within their grounds.

Growth was further stimulated when, in 1886, the railway linking Hooton with Parkgate was extended through Heswall to West Kirby. Running below the village, closer to the shore, the line provided easy access to Liverpool. This and the area's healthy surroundings and spectacular views brought more villas and several late Victorian and Edwardian terraces.

The principal feature of the village is the Grade II* listed St Peter's Church, with its churchyard sloping away to the west. It was rebuilt in 1879, having been struck by lightning, but its tower was begun in the 14th century and many of its internal fittings date from earlier years.

As with several Wirral churches, there are stained glass windows by C.E. Kempe, who also designed the reredos. A sundial, listed Grade II and dated 1726, stands in the churchyard as do several Commonwealth war graves, dating from both World Wars. The former Rectory was replaced in the 1960s, but part of its large sandstone barn still abuts on Village Road.



St Peter's Church, with its churchyard

Other features worth noting are the two inns, The Dee View, a later Victorian public house and the Black Horse, whose stone built centre section dates from 1843. At the top of School Hill is the original village school, opened in 1872 and at the bend in Dee view Road is the red sandstone war memorial, unveiled in 1924,

Several areas of open space lie within or adjacent to the Conservation Area. The triangular Dawstone Park was laid out by the former Heswall cum Oldfield Parish Council in 1931 at the head of School Lane. A sandstone plaque in the boundary wall, bearing the inscription 'Floreat Sanctus Sanctorum', commemorates its opening on 1st July. The Beacons, a stretch of sandstone outcrops and pine is a Site of Biological Importance. Most extensive are the Dales, over 70 acres of lowland heath, designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Local Nature Reserve.

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Collage of Lower Heswall.

RT draft5 7th November 2017.