

Yorkersgate, Malton



Yorkersgate in Malton constitutes a rich and varied architectural landscape. It offers elevations and buildings from many historic periods of the town's development, some from as early as the medieval period, at least in part.

The Talbot Hotel, dating in its core from the early C17, at least, and perhaps containing remnants of the medieval town wall within its fabric, as well as early stone-vaulted spaces; the Talbot Yard, remarkably well-preserved – if currently derelict – late Georgian stables and coach house; York House, a probably late C15 H-plan house largely intact on plan with significant C17 and C18 evolutions; surviving C18 warehouse buildings associated with the Derwent Navigation, one of the earliest in Britain; former and current inns and their yards; the 1845 Corn Exchange building, which later evolved into a fine Art Deco cinema complex (architect James Brodie, 1933); several fine bank buildings, one neo-palladian, 1820, of Hildenley or Portland limestone, the other Italianate, of sandstone, (architect Rowling Gould), as well as more humble, largely early Victorian facades to much older buildings; the Subscription Rooms; and beneath most of these, a wealth of medieval and later stone and brick vaulted cellars, most of them formerly undercrofts only partially beneath ground level. Water Lane meets Yorkersgate via a

passageway through the George Hotel. This was the main route into town from the Navigation after its extension upstream after 1810. Two earlier passageways from the original port of the Navigation, now known as Owston's wharf, have been blocked – one beneath 39 Yorkersgate (Tui's) to the Yorkersgate opening only, remaining open beneath the building itself; another completely absorbed into the building now used by Bar13teen. Many of the original burgage plots in Yorkersgate survive with intact sequences of architectural accretion. Most ginnels associated with these burgage plots also remain, although frequently disguised as later doorways.

All of the materials of which Malton was built, truly vernacular, as well as those imported later upon either the Navigation (after 1725) or the railway (after 1848), are represented in Yorkersgate: Malton oolitic limestone; calcareous sandstone; Hildenley limestone, all of them immediately sourced. Bricks of a wide range of dimension and style, most of them manufactured immediately across the river Derwent, the brow of the escarpment above which Yorkersgate occupies; earth as bedding and plastering mortar within all stone buildings and interiors built prior to the mid-C18; lime mortars from all periods prior to the mid-C20, most of which survive intact and in situ; some unaltered roof pitches that reflect, at least, the extensive and all but universal thatching of the buildings illustrated upon Settrington's 1728 painting of the town. Pantiles, also of local manufacture, are common, and originally replaced the thatch. Elsewhere, there are Deltaic North York Moors sandstones imported from Whitby along the Derwent Navigation after 1725 and West Yorkshire, Pennine gritstones that appeared via the Calder/Aire, Ouse and Derwent Navigations, perhaps to some extent, but mainly – along with Welsh roof-slates – by rail. York House and the Talbot in part retain sandstone slate roofs, although these are likely replacements of earlier Brandsby slate roofs with West Yorkshire gritstone slabs. All stone elevations in Yorkersgate show evidence of having been previously and routinely limewashed, white and copperas having been the dominant colours. Most of the apparently Victorian buildings in Yorkersgate are brick facades from this period upon much older structures, built mostly of Malton oolite. Most buildings have been given real or sometimes illusory symmetry by the later alteration or introduction of sash windows. Oriel/ first floor bay windows have come and gone. Many of the stone and brick elevations have been repointed in the more recent past with ordinary Portland cement mortars or have been painted with modern acrylic paints. Both recent interventions compromise the necessary breathability of the buildings they are applied to and lead to dampness and decay. As the pitch of the roofs was made more shallow – by the raising of the walls by around 24" typically – in order to receive pantiles, as well as to make the attic spaces more accommodating, many original roof structures seem to have been lost. Some do survive – in York House, for example, where some of the major rafters were fashioned from oaks felled in 1468 and where the roof as a whole is

framed in several historical patterns. An audit of roof structures in Yorkersgate and throughout Malton would be a valuable exercise in itself.

As is well-known (if under-explored), of course, Yorkersgate was a Roman road and then, as always since, the main road to York (via what is now Castle Howard Road). The size and extent of Roman Malton and Norton are little known; conjecture relies upon mainly C19 finds during major engineering works, particularly the Gas works in Sheepsfoot Hill, and scanty excavation of the Orchard Fields fort site during the early and mid 20th century. That said, the majority of Roman finds in Yorkshire have been made in Malton and Norton and the widespread dispersal of sometimes unnotified finds in Norton alone suggests the presence of a significant Roman settlement either side of the Derwent. Robinson posits that Norton was a largely industrial settlement attached to the fort and vicus across the river in Malton.



The precise boundary and extent of Roman Malton is unknown, but is likely, and logically, to have included the later port area of the Derwent Navigation. Yorkersgate was a major conduit of goods from the River in all periods; traffic and trade came largely by river long before the C18 improvement of the Navigation, for all that its improvers claimed otherwise in their original

petition to Parliament in 1702 (see Copsey Owston's Warehouse report www.nigelcopsey.com). To all travellers from the direction of York in the medieval period, Yorkersgate represented the main access to the various market sites: the Swine market immediately adjacent to Yorkersgate in what is now called Market Street, as well as to the Corn and Beast markets to either end of St Michaels church. The regular horse markets had always been held outside of the town wall, to the west of the church, corn and beast markets. The cattle market was moved to this site after 1826, where – subsequently extended – it remains. Horsemarket Road became the main access hereafter. Yorkersgate was part of the York to Scarborough turnpike road, the longest turnpike road in England. During the C19, the Talbot Hotel was a major staging post half way and a day's travel between York and Scarborough. It was also a Royal Mail Posting Inn. Before this, the Talbot Hotel had been an important social gathering place for the horse–racing gentry of north and east Yorkshire, as, indeed, it had been designed to be by the Watson–Wentworth family. Before this reinvention as high class hotel, it had been the Strickland Hunting Lodge, also a centre for the horse racing and breeding fraternity. Sir William Strickland himself resided next door, in York House, when he was in town, in his capacity as MP for Malton and Master of Ceremonies at Langton Wold Racecourse. Hunting, or rather coursing may well have taken place upon the flood plain of the Derwent, below the escarpment upon which all buildings on the southern side of Yorkersgate are built, commanding sweeping views of the river and the Wolds. The footings of Strickland's hunting lodge, as well as the original U–shaped plan, probably date from an earlier – and important – building or buildings on the site which were likely owned by the Gilbertine Priory. The use of mainly Hildenley limestone above and below ground indicates that it was built by either the Gilbertine Priory or by the Strickland family, or else with spolia from the Priory itself. It has been considered possible that the site came into Strickland ownership after the Dissolution, along with the Hildenley quarries and estate. Two–thirds of the building lie without the town wall. It may, therefore, have been built in the C16 as a hunting lodge to an earlier Strickland to the one it is normally attributed to. However, deeds of transfer held in the North Yorkshire Records office show that James and Barbara Hebblethwaite, son and widow respectively of Sir Thomas Hebblethwaite sold a 'house at the west end of a street there (Malton) called York House Gate' to Sir William Strickland for £152.0.10d in 1672. This may have been the house that became the Strickland Hunting Lodge, though £152 was a bargain even in modern values; it may have been another building on what is now the site. The Hebblethwaites were Lords of the Manor of Norton. The deed makes clear, however, that Sir Thomas had over–extended himself and that the family were then in serious debt, hence the sale (and perhaps the price). Hebblethwaite ownership prior to 1672 would rule out Strickland construction before this date; and suggest that the vaulted spaces of Hildenley limestone date from a period of Gilbertine ownership. Strickland ownership after 1672 would suggest that

much of the superstructure of the building illustrated by Settrington and Dickinson was built at this time under Sir William Strickland's direction. Unusual double stone windows with semi-circular arches, which incorporate dropped key-stones, date probably from the last years of the 17th century, as does a major refacing of the north, road-side elevation. These interventions, at least, might lend weight to Hudleston's assertion that Sir John Vanbrugh worked upon the building, though this will have been after 1699 when he first visited the site of Castle Howard. The main building pre-dates any such possible intervention, however, and in the area that seems to incorporate sections of the medieval town wall, is very much older with a moulded C16 doorway of calcareous sandstone partially abutted by a later stone vault.

It cannot be ruled out, however, that the house and vaults are of substantially late C17 construction, incorporating some vaults, perhaps, from an earlier and significant structure on the site.

Uniquely, perhaps, for a town of its size and importance, Malton has always been largely owned by one, two and occasionally three families or groups. When ownership has fragmented, this has been through marriages involving existing owners, and has typically been reunified quite quickly. There has always been a peppering of much smaller freeholders but merchants and others have typically been tenants within Malton, even when they have been freeholders elsewhere. It is pertinent that when Norton dramatically expanded during the later years of the C19, most of those buying land for development were from Malton.

Ivo de Visci acquired the Manor after the Norman conquest, but married into a Saxon dynasty locally, marrying the daughter of Gilbert Tyson. Gilbert himself had fallen at the Battle of Hastings. Their daughter Beatrice married a favourite of Henry I, Eustace Fitzjohn, who alienated much of the Manor to the foundation of a Gilbertine Priory in 1150. Malton was walled in stone soon after 1138 and a transcript of a late C15 edition of the Borough Charter made in 1726 survives. This very clearly sets out the Rights and Privileges of the Burgesses of New Malton, as well as detailing Fairs, markets and legal procedures.

The De Vesci seat was at Alnwick Castle, that of the Tysons before them. Alnwick was later acquired by the Percys, Dukes of Northumberland, the de Vesci heirs, the Eures, taking residence thereafter at Witton and Warkworth Castles. Malton having been burned at the behest of Thurstan, Archbishop of York, in 1138, it seems likely that it was rebuilt, and perhaps planned, by the Gilbertines and that they remained the main property-owning stakeholders within the town until the Dissolution of Old Malton Priory in 1539, although there remained Lords of the Manor and probably significant property owners within the borough. After the De

Vescis came the Atons by inheritance and then, after 1390, the Eure's, Bromeletes and Conyers by marriage to three co-heiresses.

Until 1600, New Malton continued to be held in thirds – by the Conyers, De Clifford and Eure families. The Eures held the Lordship of Old Malton also; the De Cliffords that of Welham, now part of Norton. Ralph Eure acquired the De Clifford shares of Malton, Welham and Sutton (the Cliffords acquired these by marriage to a Bromelete) in 1599–1600, and promptly set about the construction of an impressive 'Prodigy House' upon the former Roman Fort and Norman castle site. In 1611, the Eures consolidated their ownership of Old and New Malton with the acquisition of the Conyers third. Eure also owned estates in Stokesley and a large house and estate at Ingleby (the house survives), as well as the Estate of Great Ayton, which included Hutton Buscel. Ingleby, Ayton and Malton all lie upon the banks of the Derwent. The family's preference for residence in Malton had waxed and waned and had only become solid after the Dissolution. That said, Maud in 1490 and others, chose to be buried in the transept of Old Malton Priory, though this part of the church is now outside of the current building. Ralph's grandson William died young of smallpox without a direct heir in 1652, his father Ralph having been killed in a duel and his uncle William, a Royalist, having died in the civil war in 1644, at Marston Moor. The Estate was inherited in 1662 by two surviving daughters of Ralph's brother William, Margaret and Mary Eure, who argued so much about possession of the Prodigy House that it was ordered to be dismantled by the High Sherriff of Yorkshire, who issued a writ of partition, its stones sold and the proceeds divided equally between the warring sisters. The upshot of the settlement would seem to have been that Malton and Old Malton fell exclusively to Mary Eure and to her husband William Palmes of Lindley. Margaret had fought hard to prevent William Palmes becoming MP for the town, and as hard later on to disinherit her own children in preference for a lover she took after the assassination in London of her husband, the first Lord Mayor of Leeds, Thomas Danby, in 1667, an assassination some believed she had commissioned (see appendix). The order to demolish Eure's Prodigy House was made in 1674 and Margaret Danby seems to have lived in Hutton Buscel, close to Ayton, by this time. William Palmes had effectively become Lord of the Manor. He was one of the main petitioners to Parliament to improve the Derwent Navigation in 1702. Another was Sir William Strickland of Boynton. Strickland married Palmes's daughter Elizabeth in 1684 and acquired a significant tranche of New Malton, including York House. His grandfather, also William, had been a determined suitor of Margaret Eure, but had been rejected, she said, for having fought for Parliament during the civil war, whilst her father, William Eure, had died fighting for the Royalist cause. Strickland was a puritan, her family Catholic. His grandson achieved what he had not, and married into the Eure Estate.

In 1713, Palmes sold the major part of the Manor to Thomas Watson Wentworth of Wentworth Woodhouse in south Yorkshire. This included the Hunting Lodge, opening the way for its transformation into a hotel. Strickland, having been acquiring more property around town after 1684, began selling it piecemeal to the Watson Wentworths after 1713, the remainder, including York House, was alienated after the death of his son, also William, in 1735. In this year, Strickland's widow, John Sambrooke, Sir Hugh Cholmley and Daniel Draper were appointed executors of the Strickland Estate. Property in Malton was sold to the Wentworth Watsons in 1739. The Wentworths also took on the lease of Easthorpe Park. Strickland's other property was vested in Sir Hugh Cholmley in 1739, the families continuing to own Hildenley Hall which the Stricklands had acquired in the 1540s, the Hildenley Estate, which included the quarries, having previously been monastic land. Howsham had been acquired at the same time, also from Priory holdings. Hawksmoor's mausoleum for Lord Carlisle, his last work, stands on former Strickland land, sold to the Castle Howard Estate at Hawksmoor's suggestion, the better to elevate and present the building. Hildenley Hall, a C17 house, was demolished in 1909, though its garden front portico, at least, survives, attached to the south side of the most recent extension of the Old Lodge in Malton. It is possible that the 'Vanbrugh Arch' which gives pedestrian access to the Talbot Yard Stables in Yorkersgate, was also recycled from Hildenley Hall. That it was once attached to a building is as clear as its stylistic association with Vanbrugh.

In 1782, the Wentworth estates were united with those of the Fitzwilliams of Milton Hall near Peterborough, passing through the sister of the last Marquess of Rockingham, to the Earl Fitzwilliam. The Fitzwilliams also owned property in Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire, as well as in Ireland.

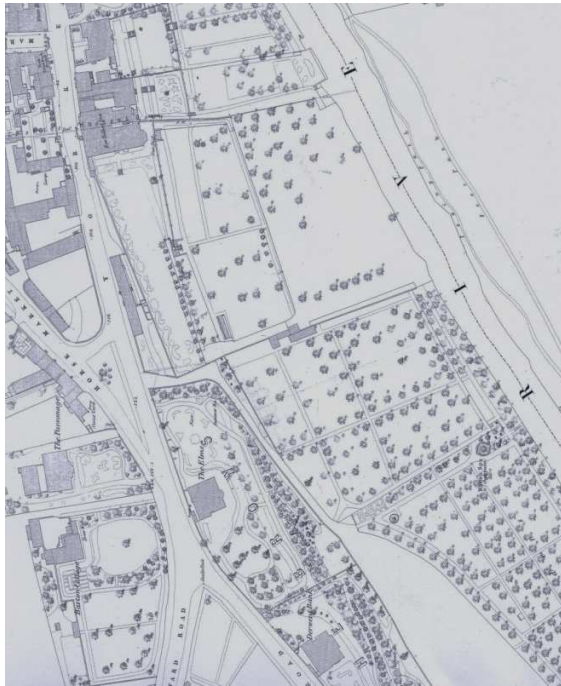
In 1997, the Wentworth-Fitzwilliam Estates were inherited by Sir Philip Naylor-Leyland, bringing Nantclwyd Estate in Wales into the family holdings.

See appendix for fuller accounts of the 'Malton Families'.

Returning from this condensed narrative of long-term continuity in the historic ownership of Malton to Yorkersgate, it has always been a major artery of the town. It remains so, but its regular and daily congestion with traffic, and particularly with HGV vehicles, has had, and continues to have, a significant negative impact upon the street in terms of accelerated and ongoing decay of its historic fabric – by PM10 sooty diesel deposits and other vehicle exhaust gases, by vibration of the fabric (which can be quite dramatic) – as well in aesthetic terms, leading to a cumulative soiling. The constant presence of vehicles large and small and the relative narrowness of the pavements mean that the undoubted architectural and aesthetic interest and appeal of the street are rarely appreciated or even much noticed, let alone enjoyed.

This is a great shame and a wasted opportunity for the town. Above this, there are serious health implications of high concentrations of PM10s, nitrous oxide and dioxide and benzene, which may cause a range of lung diseases, as well as increase the incidence of heart disease. These levels may be assumed to be high, particularly at roadside level, throughout Malton, and especially on Yorkersgate, Wheelgate and Castlegate. The Office for National Statistics publishes figures for background levels of these pollutants in Malton, which are considered to be at 'safe' levels; figures for roadside levels are not published, though these are being monitored on Castlegate at least. Results of this monitoring were to be sent to DEFRA and published upon the Ryedale District Council web-site by April 2008 but have yet to appear.

The boundary wall of the Talbot Hotel gardens and Yorkersgate is listed GII* as being of C18 construction. This might be true, but, if so, the wall has enjoyed other guises. This boundary is shown on the 1730 Terrier. By 1843, however, there is a building adjoining Yorkersgate, listed at this time a 'house' occupied by John Slater. This building remained through the C19. The wall that remains, as well as the rusticated doorway with flat lintol, may very well be part of this building, left standing and adapted when the building was demolished. The building may have incorporated an earlier wall (which would not be uncommon in Malton), which has now returned to being a wall. Most likely, however, is that current wall was built at the time that the building, which was perhaps a stable block prior to the construction of the stables across Yorkersgate subsequently made into a dwelling, was demolished, using material recycled out of the building. The doorway matches another that passed from the western boundary of the upper terrace to a lane which ran down towards the C17 chalybeate spa. Both, with their bold rustication and raised keystones, could be by Vanbrugh. If so, they will be earlier than the building that appeared briefly in this area. The upper and lower terraces of the Talbot gardens, as far as the river bank are tenanted separately to the hotel itself at this time also. The lands beyond the Hildenley limestone wall that forms a western boundary to the riverside gardens was tenanted by William Longster. He leased a 'round house, orchard, gardens and mineral spring'. This was the site of Longster's Nurseries.



1850

The 'round house' was the apparently limestone rotunda built over the spring by the Earl Fitzwilliam, part of an endeavour to revitalise an attraction that had been at its height of fame and popularity in the later C17, when William Strickland had made it a part of the gardens of York House and the Hunting Lodge, with a riverside avenue of trees leading to it from the gardens of York House and another walk from the upper terrace of the hunting lodge garden, creating a circular walk. The construction of the larger calcareous sandstone mansions on York Road, as well as of the elegant, originally gated suburb of the Mount was also part of this plan to elevate Malton to the status of a fashionable Spa Town.

A treatise had been written on Malton Spa in 1669. Writing in 1841, the site was described by a Dr Travers in a contribution to *The Spas of England* by AB Granville:

“ The saline–chalybeate spring at this place was celebrated nearly two centuries ago...The present handsome pagoda over the well was erected by the late Earl Fitzwilliam, about (1816)...and stands prettily *in the gardens adjoining the hotel.*

The water flows in a very copious stream, is quite clear as it issues from its source, but on standing for a little time, leaves a ferruginous deposit ... It has a strong saline–chalybeate, but not unpleasant taste, and possesses considerable purging and diuretic qualities...The water has been found highly efficacious in many chronic diseases; particularly affections of the liver, indigestion under its various forms, and general languor of the system. It is taken in doses of from one to four half pints, at short intervals; the early morning being considered the most favourable time for that purpose.

“This Spa, however, *has ceased to be* a resort to persons from a distance; which is rather a matter of surprise when (apart from the valuable properties of the well) we take into account *the very superior and extensive accommodation at the hotel, and the attractive character of the surrounding country. The district abounds in picturesque rides and drives, and is one of no ordinary interest to the botanist, the practical farmer, and the geologist.*” (p148–149)



1728



1730



1843



circa 1850



1891

In the 'New and Complete History of the County of York,' Thomas Allen (1831) says that "about a quarter of a mile to the SW of New Malton is a mineral spring, similar in its properties to those of Scarborough, and is said to be a very efficacious chalybeate" (vol3 p466). Robinson notes that the spa was a saline-chalybeate, popular in the mid- to late seventeenth century, "but a long period of neglect followed. A brief revival occurred at the beginning of the C19" (note 15, p17).

