**Scale House, Rylstone**

Notes by A Armstrong after a visit in 2011

Her interpretation is below.

INTERPRETING THE HOUSE

A look at the house shows that parts of it date from 17thC and before it was sold by the Watkinsons in 1704 and enlarged by the Morley family in the early 18thc.

About 1609 the well-to-do Watkinsons bought the property from the Earl Of Northumberland. It is likely the property was rebuilt soon after. This is likely to be a cross passage house with good stone fireplace. In 1657 (George Fox Journal) Quaker meetings were held at George Watkinson’s house and at Scale House (the house of George’s brother William). In 1677 meetings moved to Raikes. A deed of 1664 (R.H.) tells of the division of the “new dwelling house”. It may have been as much as 50 years old by that time and still in living memory. William Watkinson junior had the east part but with free egress to it through the other half of the building occupied by W Watkinson senior. Father and son then shared the house in 1664. The garden lying on the south of the parlour window, in the son’s part, was also included. The parlour (probably the room with the large fireplace) must then have overlooked the garden. The east part of the house included “the parlour or the several rooms or chambers above it and within it” .

A picture thus emerges of the extent of the older house which matches architectural detail and parts of the present plan. (See plan) The 17thC parts including the porch entrance and the north facade and the east wing . After 1704, when the house was sold, the symmetrical S front range was added and the house much enlarged. Old photos show the south garden front doorway in “pattern book” style with a large pediment hood.

By 1731 the Morleys were gentlemen of Scale House and considerable land owners in Craven. JM remains on a 1758 rainwater head. At the Enclosure of the commons in 1772 the Morleys had cattle-gates on North Moor and Bark, showing they were gentry farmers. The Rev Bury recalls painted hunting scenes on the walls of one of the ground floor rooms. This may have been in the stair hallway and perhaps c 1730s to go with the re-modelled house.

About 1860 the house was enlarged and modernised again. This included the addition of three corner turrets, with a new west front entrance block, perhaps reflecting the new turnpike road of 1835 on that side. The NE corner of the house was extended with a Victorian service wing to form the E side of a court yard. A further portico was added to the porch about 1910. Carriage houses made up the north side of the courtyard. Since a new entrance was made in the 1860s on the west side, the presence of stables and carriage houses visible from the old north entrance did not matter.

A large barn complex is shown to the SE on the OS 1850 map. This has now gone and is the site of a shrubbery and terraced gardens probably dating from the 18thC. In 1664 this was probably “the barn or laithe called the new barn“

and also Watkinson junior’s “one halfe of the barn adjoining to the said new barn , that is to say the west end thereof.” This matches the barn’s plan on the maps, with what was a long, perhaps cruck-built, barn with a new barn and porch added on the west. The stable in the N courtyard of the house appears to be a late building and was not a barn. The older pre- 1704 house can be traced from its very thick walls and architectural detail.

The parts of this house are (see sketch);

OUTSIDE

The north frontage with three storey porch,

The five bay mullioned and transomed windows of the S front.

The low end east wing

INSIDE

- the stone arched fireplace,

- the east wing ,

- (the roof trusses are c 1700 so probably later)

SETTING

It must be remembered that Scale is a pre-Norman estate and remained a separate estate, as did Bucker or Bucross at the North end of Rylstone. Both Scale and Bucross are Norse names. The 1909 OS 25 inch map, seen inside Scale House , showed the estate with its Scale House farm. The extent of the “Scale” field names to the south and just to the north may indicate the limits of the earlier land boundary. The field boundary on the south remains as an earthwork but the field boundaries have been removed.

The older house probably always had its entrance on the north and the 17thC porch remains on the north. This may seem unusual since most old houses face south. The reason for this north entrance is probably because the house was in Rylstone township and its entry faced the village and village fields, not the wooded park lands to the south which were the medieval demesne lands and deer parks of the de Rylstone/Nortons and the Cliffords.

Earthworks show there was an old road on the south side from the house towards the present Sandy Gate Bar. The old hollow-ways went through the fields to Scale House. Later the road was re-routed further east from the house to the present Sandy Lane and was diverted away from the house.

Even with the present road of 1835 and a new west entrance range in 1860, the south garden front remained private, overlooking the old manorial woodlands. The old north entrance became a Victorian courtyard with stables and an east extension attached to the House. It is possible that the house did have an earlier courtyard, perhaps with a gatehouse, lodgings and, attached to the service wing, a brew-house and all the usual outbuildings. Documents might reveal this.

**DESCRIPTION -** EXTERIOR

The north frontage

This had the main 17thC entrance porch. The architectural detail suggests a rather high status house incorporating features from pattern books like the eared doorway and the bull’s eye oval window. Some mullioned and transomed windows have rather flat mouldings typical of c 1700 but a style continuing to 1740. (An eared doorway is reused for the privy at Park House Bordley and flat mouldings are seen at Malham 1735.) The basement/cellar doorway with wide chamfer stops and a window at the NW have plain wide chamfers and splayed mullions. Whilst these might be of older date it could also be that this door and window are just lower status. The east wing similarly has plain splayed transomed windows and only the stair window has flat mouldings.

The central doorway on the north gives symmetry. However the symmetry is broken by the very vernacular large hall/ stair window with flat moulded surrounds on one side of the porch. This is a very vernacular feature.

The quoins of the east wing are seen where 19thC work is added on. The wing was originally not as high as the present eaves, and has been heightened for the East wing extension and to extend the east wing roof up, to meet the 19thC towers.

It is unclear if there was a matching west or solar wing beyond the hall. However the Plinth seems to curve around the west end which suggests there was never a west wing of stone.

The south frontage

The five bays of mullioned and transomed windows in the central part are “Queen Ann” and early 18thC in gritstone ashlar with a wide cornice at the eaves. The narrow central window has been heightened to make a French window and its 18thC pediment door hood is missing but appears in old 19thC photos. The mullioned and transomed window mouldings possibly match some on the north front, perhaps deliberately, to blend in. The 1860s Italianate towers cleverly copy the older ashlar and window details, so the old and new work blends in remarkably well and the whole south side looks uniform from a distance.

The east range /service wing.

This once had its own separate roof and was a two storey building of 17thC date. Its roof has been heightened in 1860 to give stair access to the 18thC attics which were probably the servants quarters. The staircase window has flat mouldings like the N and S frontages and may be inserted, but the other ,windows are plain vernacular, and splayed, perhaps reflecting the lower status.

INTERIOR

The old north porch was the impressive 17thC entrance which was retained until the 19thC. However it may have been changed from entry into a heated hall or housebody, to entry into an entrance hall with stairs off (as in The Folly of 1669) The front door enters against a cross wall suggesting a possible cross passage or screens passage. If it was a floored hall, then the floor may have been removed in E18thC or 1860s to make a baronial entry with a dog-leg stair by the window. There is no evidence of the fireplace site in the hall, so how was it heated? It may have had a fireplace on the thick south wall near the doorways in to the south range. The present carved timber staircase is said to have come from Belgium (Pevsner), and is part of a 19thC remodelling. (The old stair is perhaps rebuilt as the wing stair which incorporates 17thC and 19thC work.) Entrance halls with stair began to replace the housebody in grander gentry houses of the 17thC.

On the first floor, the chambers are now reached from a balcony or mezzanine as in some medieval halls. The old floor level is now the half turn of the stair where there are steps down onto the porch floor. The walls may have had the hunting scenes recorded by Rev Bury of Rylstone.

Under the stair is now the modern access to the cellars. The external 17thC doorway remains in the yard. The cellar houses the boilers but a flagstone of 1679 was once recorded.

Some walls in the house are older and very thick but we did not measure them. There is a thick wall between the N and S ranges. This was once the outside wall of the north range. Both ranges have their own roof trusses of c 1700 (see sketch below) and possibly reused from the older house. A thick wall on the east leads into the parlour.

The east parlour

This has a large late 17thC stone fireplace with voussoirs and an integral arched stone doorway into the east wing. This arch arrangement is very similar to the hall and north parlour fireplaces in The Folly at Settle (1669) where an integral arch leads into the wing. The top moulding above the voussoirs is also similar. This fireplace could be as late as c1700, based on the wide panel-like jambe to the fireplace. (A similar housebody fireplace but 1670s and with square headed door in Cromwell House in Long Preston leads into the parlour)

A chamfered window is reset in the back wall of the fireplace where the masonry is much disturbed. This may be a former fire window from the north wall, re-set. The Listing description calls this room a kitchen but this is an ornate hall or parlour fireplace, not a kitchen fireplace. The stack is seen in the chamber above so is an old feature. The arched doorway leads into a service wing.

The Service wing

The cross walls are very thin partitions which suggest timber framed partitions originally. The stair is 17thC with fine balusters, but rebuilt as a narrow stair with pine treads. It may be parts of the stair originally in the hall and reconstructed in the 18th/19thC with the remodelling.

The North room has an odd fireplace with an 18thC bolection mould but 4-centred arch top and may be made of bits like the stair. The transomed window is of 6 lights with the top row shorter. The stair leads to the upper chambers and attics.

**UPSTAIRS**

From the hall, the floor levels in the porch are much lower, indicating the main floors have been raised during later alterations.

The bedrooms have few features.

The east wing has floors at original, lower level. There are steps down from the front range into the E wing.

We were taken up the wing stairs to the attics.

The two attic ranges retain separate roofs of upper kingposts. There is a dropped attic floor typical of Craven where top floors seem to have been large storage spaces. (See Hutton and Harrison Vernacular Buildings of N Yorks)

DATING

Architectural and documentary evidence help analysis. Generally it is a 17thC gentry house that was much altered and enlarged with a south range in early 18thC. (Sale of Scale House 1704 by Ann Watkinson included “barn behind”(ie on the SE side) and “fox barn”(- ie barn on SE and Fosse/ Fox House Barn in Rylstone ) .

House plans change through time and give clues to date. The 17thC house seems to consist of the asymmetrical area, now the entry hall (but perhaps the housebody originally or a hall with screens passage), the east parlour and the east (service?) wing. It is uncertain if there was a west wing but if the stair window was once an open hall window, then a solar or west wing would be likely.

From about 1670-1750 the symmetrical double pile plan house became popular amongst local gentry. It is likely the Morley family added the south range to create a double plan and symmetry. Architectural detail remained similar to the old but incorporated more design. The double pile plan was more convenient and printed books of symmetrical villa designs by Palladio and Serlio were available in 16thc for nobility and higher gentry to copy. Inigo Jones (1573-1652) built one of the first such houses in Britain. After 1680 the entry area with a stair linking all rooms becomes general in the Pennine area. The double pile villa plan that had evolved at Scale by the 18thC is typical but it still retains aspects of the older asymmetrical house which makes it a vernacular house or minor gentry house.

In spite of the very symmetrical, 5 bay, south front of early 18thC, the older north front retains a vernacular 17thC porch with asymmetrical hall or stair window, an off-centre cellar door and, it seems, a wing on the east but not the west.

The flat mouldings of the windows all around the double pile structure indicate considerable modification. The floor levels of the porch however sit awkwardly with the heightened levels of floors in the house.

Similarly the older east service wing has lower floor levels. The east wing however has alterations that might be c 1860s. A very good 17thC staircase is now part of a narrow back stair with pine treads. The upper stair has 19thC balusters. The roof has been altered and heightened to a “lean-to” in order to reach the attics and probably servants rooms. On the N front the top of the quoins of the east wing suggest it had a normal pitched roof originally. The stair may be the old c 1700 stair which was replaced by the present one (supposedly from a Belgiancastle ) in the 19thC or 20thc. It is also possible that the roof trusses from the wing are reused in the present roofs.

The roof trusses;- The south range was added to an earlier hall range with east wing.

The roof trusses over both these ranges look the same being upper kingposts (very 17thC) .Some have been modified into morticed apex types of 18thC. All timber is very waney and of local timber but now much propped and patched. Listing suggests the timbers are crucks but they are not. (There are no redundant pegholes or half-lap joints and they are only curved principles which are common in Craven. Attic spaces have large storage areas eg Paget Hall Gargrave (see picture in Hutton and Harrison and Bradley Old Hall. Dropped attic floors like these are also typical. No reused timber was seen.

An earlier house of c1600 or Quaker meeting house of 1650s?

Documentary evidence shows the Watkinsons acquire Scale about 1609. We do not know if there was a house still standing. The Hearth tax of 1672 has “Mr Watkinsons” house with 3 hearths, when 32 villagers had only one hearth and only 3 has two hearths. Clearly Watkinson was of some importance. Francis Stering (Stireng?) had 6 hearths (Old Hall which was still standing). One hearth houses were probably single storey cruck houses. In 1664 Scale is referred to as the “new house” although this could be 50 years old and suggests a new re-build in stone. It may still have had an open hall rather than floored hall c 1609. It is divided between William Watkinson senior and junior. (RH notes from a lease)

The 1850 map shows the old house before the Victorian additions. It is square with a porch projection on the north and set in symmetrical gardens with rows of terraces on the south (these remain) However there are old barns to SE, at the corner of the old lane to Scale house and the (diverted) Sandy Lane to Rylstone.

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APPENDIX

Info fron R Harland Sept 2011;

16-6-1664 deed of moiety called Scale House with all its land, livestock......That is to say the moiety or one half of the new dwelling house of the said William Watkinson the older

..called...Scalehouse... that is to say the parlour or the several rooms or chambers above it/and within it/ being at the east end of the said house or building/ with free egresses and regress to the same through the other part of the said house /the garden lyinge next before the parlour window on the south side thereof/ the one half of the garden called the kitchinge garden/ the one half of the garth called the beane garth with half of the parrocke, the barn or laithe called the new barne/ and the one half of the barn adjoining to the said new barn that is to say the west end theereof, one close of arable meadow or pasture ground commonly called the well close/..........................

Ilustrations follow (two pages)



