

Prescot Hall

Little is known of the early history of Prescot Hall, except that it was the mediaeval residence of the Rector and Lord of the Manor. It was described as the “*Mantion Howse of the parsonage of Prescote, commonlie called the Hall of Prescote*”.



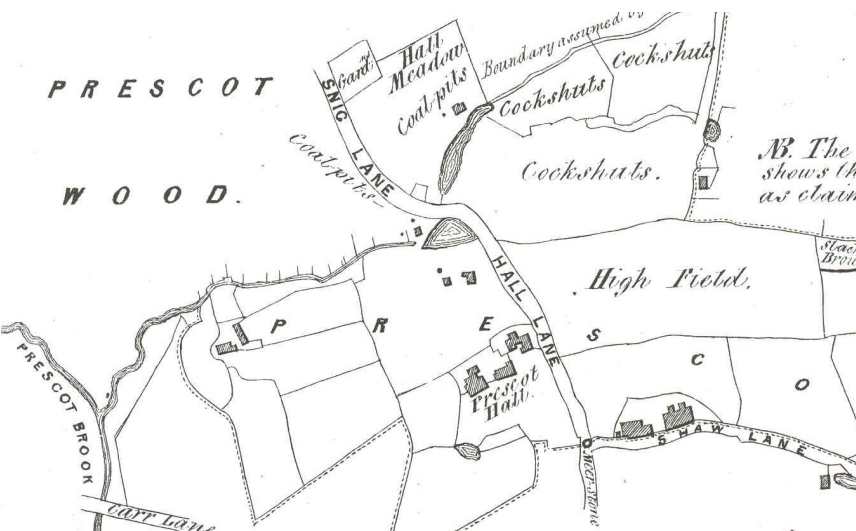
Prescot Hall - 1930s

It is difficult to know what the original house would have looked like. It was situated at the bottom of Hall Lane and probably had a small moat around it. The Manor was surrounded by a large area of farm land known as a ‘demesne’, land managed by the Lord of the Manor for his benefit.

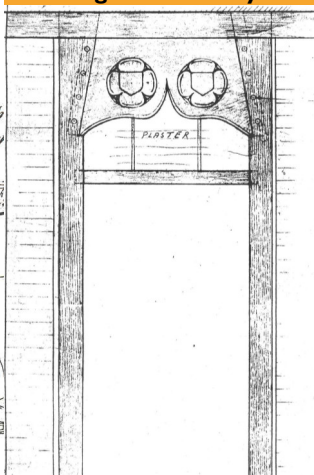
After King’s College, Cambridge became Lord of the Manor in 1445, the manor house and lands were rented out. This would have been an attractive tenancy as it included income from its coal mine and corn mill. Records from the Elizabethan period give us the first clues to the house’s shape and size, however the house was modified and re-built several times.

In 1558 John Layton took over the tenancy, and in 1562 an agreement was made between Layton and King’s College, Cambridge to rebuild the old Hall to ‘*alter, take downe and change the mantion howse...wyth a kytchyn, parlor, chambers and other howses belongynge to the same.*’ The Hall is also described as including orchards, gardens, meadows, mills, dams and coal mines. It may have been around this time that Prescot Hall was moved to a larger site on a neighbouring field. The lease of the Hall at that time included the liberty for the tenant to fell and take timber from the woods, hedgerows or demesne lands for the upkeep of the building.

<http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/things-to-see-and-do/galleries-and-museum.aspx>



Drawing of a doorway



The first illustration of the house in the Edge Map of 1743 shows a twin gabled brick house set back from Hall Lane.



Edge Map detail

Prescot Hall

The type of house that John Layton rebuilt is described in the 1592 survey of Prescot Hall as a '*manison howse, containing a dining hall, kitchen and several bedrooms, together with two barns, stables and other*

convenient and necessary buildings, with a garden and several enclosed plots'. It was probably built in the latest architectural style to reflect the status of the family. Unfortunately the untimely deaths of both Layton brothers meant that the family did not hold the tenancy for long.

During the 1600s the lease of the manor passed through several hands until it came to Robert Roper at the turn of the 18th century. In 1702 Roper sought permission from the landlords at King's College, Cambridge to rebuild the hall again. He enclosed a carpenter's report on the size and condition of John Layton's house. From this report it is clear that the house by that time was a large rambling, partly timber framed house in very poor condition. Layton described the house as a '*large irregular building*'. It measured approximately 23 metres by 13 metres.

There were three separate structures joined together including a timber framed wing that was in ruins. The first illustration of the house in the Edge Map of 1743 however shows a twin gabled brick house set back from Hall Lane.

Photographs taken of the house in the 1930's show how little it had changed. It was still set back from the road with another gable added to the original twin gables. The fate of the building mirrored the decline of the mine and the house had been divided up and let to multiple tenants. Shortly after the photographs were taken, the hall was demolished to make way for the expansion of The British Insulated Wire Company.



Prescot Hall -1930s

Photographs showing the house in the 1930s shortly before demolition

