

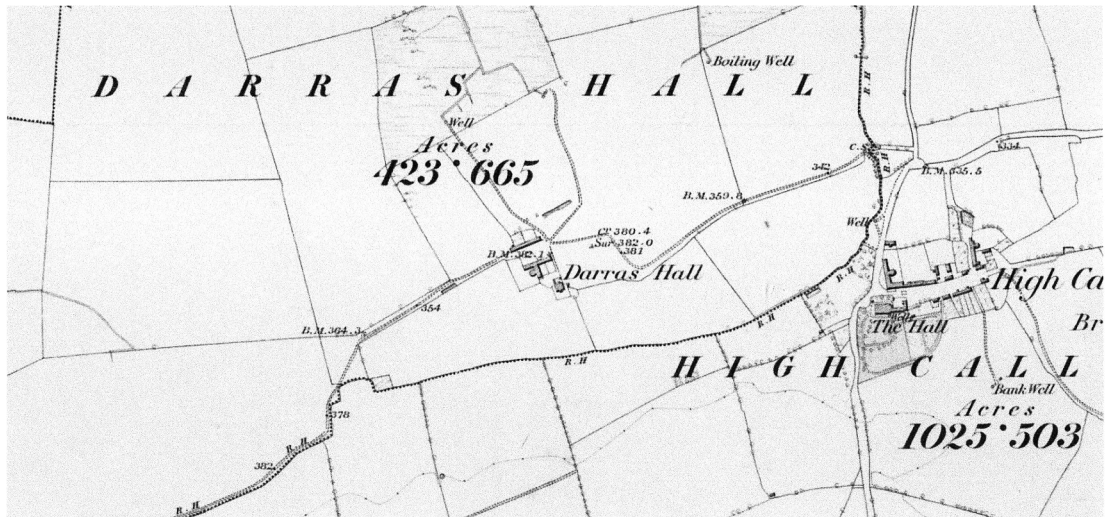
16. Darras Hall Farmhouse



The “Garden City” development now known as the *Darras Hall Estate* arose out of the Northern Allotment Society (NAS) which was formed on the 21st of May 1890. The objects of the Society were to obtain and cultivate land as allotment gardens, in order to allow produce to be grown and sold in the ever-expanding city of Newcastle and, by 1905, 14 separate estates of a similar kind had been created around Tyneside covering a total of 1,645 acres.

These early estates included 1,100 houses with an estimated population of 7,000. The need to control the housing element gave rise to their regulation by Trust Deeds, so that by the time some more land near to Ponteland had come on to the market in 1907, such legal arrangements had become more or less established. The area of land now offered by auction was the largest amount so far considered by the NAS and comprised that belonging to two farms: Darras Hall Farm with 414.422 acres, and Little Callerton with Callerton Moor Farm of 590.704 acres, giving a total of some 1,005 acres.

It was not very long, however, before the emphasis of the Society changed so that “it had in effect become a medium for the acquisition of land for residential and investment purposes by people who were not really interested in only the horticultural market aspects.” [1] The same applies even more so today.



An extract from the Six-inch OS Map of 1865 (above) illustrates the isolation of the Darras Hall Farm, planted in its surrounding fields and connected to Ponteland only through rough tracks and bridleways. In 1988 it was reported that all three of the original farmhouses had survived [2] but by the first few years of the 21st Century only the Darras Hall farmhouse remained (as illustrated) together with one cottage dwelling of the original Little Callerton complex.



The present Darras Hall Farmhouse dates to 1830, having replaced an older structure which had been completely gutted by fire some years previously. The connotation “Hall” does not necessarily imply an important dwelling and was sometimes applied to a large farmhouse such as this.

In the early photograph above, dated to circa. 1910, the typical south-facing elevation and end-chimneys can be seen, to which has been added a quite substantial porch and a conservatory or greenhouse on the western side.

When the highways were laid out for the future estate, the road which was to provide access (Edge Hill) was located some distance to the north of the Farmhouse, and therefore the approach is now to what was originally the rear. Several separate farm buildings which were formerly to the rear of the Farmhouse have since disappeared, although the farmhouse still has substantial extensions to the rear (north) side, rather in the manner of the Clickemin farmhouse.

The Darras Hall Farmhouse has, however, since had the large porch removed, bay windows added to the south elevation, a pitched roof added to the conservatory and dormer windows inserted into the roof to provide third-floor accommodation of a habitable standard. As an original remaining building within the Darras Hall Estate and one which, moreover, has given its name to the Estate, this Farmhouse has a particular affinity with its location.

[1] "Darras Hall, The Garden City of the North"

Leslie Almond/Ponteland L.H.S. & Darras Hall Estate Committee. 1997. p. 4.

[2] *ibid.* p. 10.