



Beswick Group, New Chester Road

The architect Harry Beswick (1856-1929) was employed as an architect by Cheshire County Council. His listed buildings (all Grade II or II\*) which remain now are:

- Oakfield Headquarters of Chester Zoo, 1892
- Numbers 21 and 23 Northgate Street Chester, 1897
- 158-168 New Chester road Port Sunlight, 1899
- Statue of Queen Victoria Opposite portico of Assize court, 1903
- Love Street School (St Werburgh Middle School), 1909
- Ruskin Road School, 1909
- The Delaney Building at Crewe and Alsager College, 1911

Architectural features from the Port Sunlight Buildings and Love Street School are mirrored in Heswall Police Station in terms of the articulation of the building, chimney stacks, roofscape and window details, confirming this building as being an important representation of Beswick's oeuvre as an architect, which has been recognised by listing in the other buildings.

Beswick trained Maxwell Ayrton as his apprentice. Ayrton went on to become a renowned London architect, whose designs included the old Wembley Stadium with its famous twin towers.

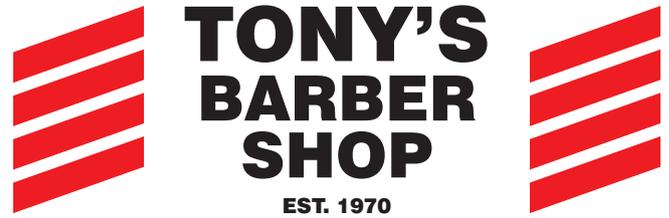
The Heswall Society has been anxious about the fate of the Police Station since its closure to the public, but it was not possible to take action on a potential listing until it could be proven it was under threat. Once the sales details were published, work started immediately on an application for listing, using material which had been gathered in anticipation of a likely sale. The Committee decided to ensure the best possible chance of a successful application by commissioning Donald Insall Associates, who are chartered architects and historic building experts to supplement and advise on the submission. This company previously prepared the excellent reports for the Heswall Lower Village and Gayton Conservation areas for Wirral Council.

The conclusion of the consultants is that the former Police Station is a good example of an Edwardian police station building, emphasising that it incorporates the same quality and skill of the architect Harry Beswick which resulted in the many listings of his other remaining buildings detailed above. They highlight that it is a key landmark building within Heswall Top Village which together with the Methodist Church opposite frames the entrance to the Village centre. It is one of the few local police stations to be built with an integral station house. The front and east facades and boundary walls/gates remain largely intact and its interior, although altered, retains most of the original plan form, corridors, quarry tiles/parquet flooring, timber staircases, skirtings, panelled doors and exercise yard. The external dog kennels and eastern courtyard are also of note. The building is a rare survivor and a good example of its type architecturally and historically. The consultants concluded that the building is of "special architectural and historic interest" as outlined in Historic England's 'Law and Government Building Listing Selection Guide' as amended December 2017 and, therefore, that the building meets the criteria for inclusion on the statutory list.

The outcome of the listing application is awaited as we go to press. We would encourage readers who share the Society's view on the need to save this iconic building to consider joining the Society via the website [www.theheswallsociety.org.uk](http://www.theheswallsociety.org.uk), where updates on the listing application will be posted. In spite of the very supportive consultant's report, there is no guarantee of a successful listing and, whatever the outcome, the Heswall Society will continue to take every possible action to protect the building and the heritage of Heswall.

*The authors would like to thank members of the Heswall Society Committee and Donald Insall Associates for their contributions to the information in this article.*

*Submitted by Roger Lane and Jenny McRonald ([roger.m.lane@btinternet.com](mailto:roger.m.lane@btinternet.com) or 0151 342 9269) on behalf of the Heswall Society, which was established in 1953 "for the public benefit to conserve the heritage of the Ward of Heswall". For more details of membership and activities please call Roger Lane or visit [theheswallsociety.org.uk](http://theheswallsociety.org.uk)*



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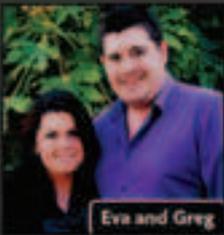


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