

# DERBYSHIRE EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

## WIRKSWORTH

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 The assessment report

This assessment report forms part of the Extensive Urban Survey Programme, an English Heritage funded initiative to assist local planning authorities with the conservation of their urban archaeological resource. Wirksworth is one of a series of small towns and large villages in Derbyshire selected for such assessment.

The report is a desk-based survey, the scope of which includes both above and below ground archaeological remains of all periods, using information from the County Sites and Monuments Record, local histories, early maps and plan form analysis, with the results presented as a series of maps generated by GIS. It forms the foundation for an archaeological management strategy which can be adopted by the local planning authority as supplementary planning guidance.

#### 1.2 Overview of the town

The town of Wirksworth lies in the centre of the county approximately 14 miles north-west of Derby and 6 miles south-east of Matlock. It was the site of an important early church, a settlement having been established there by at least the 9th century, while its lead fields were already being worked in Roman times. It was from these that the town derived its prosperity, acting both as a market for lead and as the seat of the principal lead-mining court. Mining continued as a major source of employment in Wirksworth until the third quarter of the 19th century, when it became uneconomic. Other important sources of employment were the textile industry and limestone quarrying. The latter developed on a large scale following the arrival of a railway branch line, and still continues today. The town failed to develop during the 20th century, however, and suffered some decline until being chosen by the Civic Trust in 1978 as the subject for an experiment in urban regeneration. Following this it has experienced a degree of revitalisation.

### 2. GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Wirksworth lies in a basin at the head of the Ecclesbourne Valley, surrounded by the southern foothills of the Pennines which shelter the town on its northern, eastern and western sides. The river Ecclesbourne rises in the town and flows south to meet the River Derwent at Duffield. The town also lies at the junction of three geological areas, having carboniferous limestone to the west, limestone shales to the east, and millstone grits to the east and south-east. In addition there are patches of till, a cold heavy clay with occasional small pebbles (Ottrey 1966).

The market place is at *c.* 158m AOD, with the ground rising to the north and, more steeply, to the west and sloping down to the south and east.

### 3. ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

In 1086 Wirksworth lay in *Hamenstan* wapentake, a large area later divided into two, the wapentakes of High Peak and of Wirksworth. However, it appears that for a time at least, Wirksworth and Ashbourne had a dual role in the Low Peak, since there are several references from the 13th century which describe the wapentake as divided, for example in 1274 '*Wapentakes of Wirksworth and Esseburn*' (Cameron 1959).

By the mid-19th century the town had come under Belper Poor Law Union. It was governed by a Local Board from 1877 until the Local Government Act of 1894, following which an Urban District Council was established. It is now within the administrative district of Derbyshire Dales.

## **4. SOURCES**

### **4.1 Primary sources**

The Derbyshire Record Office holds a large amount of primary documentation relating to Wirksworth. This includes deeds from the early 18th century, a large number of business records and sale catalogues from the late 19th century, solicitors' papers from the 17th century, records of the various non-conformist chapels in the town and the parish records, which include registers from 1608 and glebe terriers from 1612. Also important are the archives of the Gell family, who were lords of the manor of Wirksworth from the 16th to the 19th century. No primary documentation was consulted for this report.

According to Addy (1923), more early wills have survived for Wirksworth than for any other 'village' in Derbyshire, probably because lead-merchants in that neighbourhood had debts owing to them in various jurisdictions. These wills and probate inventories are mostly held at Lichfield Record Office.

### **4.2 Secondary sources**

A considerable amount of information on the lead mining industry in Wirksworth, along with other information relating to the town, such as deeds, terriers etc., was collected by Adam Wolley, of Riber, Matlock. He compiled information over the course of some 50 years for a projected county history which he never accomplished. This collection, which consists of 52 large folio volumes, was bequeathed by him to the British Museum in 1828. However, a copy of the material is held on microfilm in the Local Studies Library at Matlock, although it was not consulted for this report.

As far as published information is concerned, the earliest town history is that by Hackett, produced in 1863. Little new work appears to have been done on the pre-19th century although the lead industry has been more fully researched. Two unpublished MA theses, one by Ottrey (1966) and the other by Bounds (1995) are a useful source of information on the town in the 19th century.

### **4.3 Cartographic evidence**

While there are some early plans of the Wirksworth area showing lead mines, the earliest plan to show the town is an estate map of 1710 which, although useful, only depicts those buildings owned by the Gells, together with a few additional details. The original plan appears to be lost, although it was reproduced in the 1899 edition of the Wirksworth Parish Magazine, a copy of which can be found in Derbyshire Local Studies Library, Matlock. The surveyor's drafts for the plan, probably made in *c.* 1709, are held at the Derbyshire Record Office. The Parliamentary Enclosure map of 1806 is also only partial in its depiction of the town and consequently the first map to show all the buildings and property boundaries is Sanderson's map of 1835. This is at a small scale, however, and the Tithe Map of 1849, at a larger scale, provides the most useful depiction of the town before the introduction of the detailed Ordnance Survey maps of the 1880s.

### **4.4 Archaeological evidence**

There are 24 sites listed on the Derbyshire Sites and Monuments Record for the area under consideration in this report. Almost all of these sites are standing buildings. Only one archaeological excavation is known to have taken place in the town but no published details of this excavation are available.

## **5. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUMMARY**

## 5.1 Prehistoric

No evidence of prehistoric activity has been recovered from the built-up area of Wirksworth. However, there are a number of sites in the vicinity, as shown on Figure 1.

Just to the north of the town, at Rise End, a large grey horseshoe scraper and 3 brown flint flakes were found when the land was ploughed in 1971 (SMR 15566), while at Bolehill, a bronze palstave and a socketed axe, now in Derby Museum, were found together in 1902 during building operations (SMR 15526). Another couple of bronze palstaves have been found further to the north, one while extending Dene Quarry (SMR 9701), the other during the construction of a housing estate at Cromford (SMR 9702).

Flint artefacts of various periods have been recovered from the area to the west of Wirksworth. In 1848 two polished stone axes were found at Middleton Moor, one in May, the other in June (SMR 15521). The exact findspot is not known with any certainty. A flint was found in Bateman's Coppice near Middleton Moor prior to 1975 (SMR 15529) while slightly further south two end scrapers of Neolithic date came from within yards of each other (SMR 15539). In neighbouring Hopton parish, a Palaeolithic hand axe was found in 1953 on a ploughed meadow (SMR 8309). Field-walking in a field to the south-east of Hopton Incline Bridge in 1960 produced an amount of flint material, including several barbed and tanged arrowheads (SMR 8310). Further south, in Callow parish, a rectangular flint scraper was found in c. 1960 near Stainsbro' Hall (SMR 3008).

At the western edge of Middleton Moor is a Bronze Age round barrow (SMR 15522). Illicit excavations carried out there in the past are believed to have recovered a complete food vessel as well as human skeletal remains. There are also references to the disturbance of a barrow at Middleton Moor in 1787 (SMR 15524), when an extended inhumation with what was described as an iron spearhead was found. On this basis it was originally classified as an Anglian burial, but the object has since been reclassified as a Wessex-type round-heeled bronze dagger, and the barrow would consequently have been of Bronze Age date. Whether the site is therefore the same as SMR 15522, or has since been lost, is not known.

Another mound is present in Hopton parish. This was reputedly a gallows mound but may well originally have been a Bronze Age barrow (SMR 8301/2).

## 5.2 Roman

The Romans are known to have extracted lead from Derbyshire, as indicated by numerous finds of lead pigs of Derbyshire origin. A concentration of these have come from the Wirksworth and Matlock area, although no workings of Roman date have been identified, probably owing to the extensive activity of later miners. They may also have extracted silver from the galena. There has been speculation in the past that Wirksworth may be the Roman lead-mining centre of *Lutudarum*, a name which occurs in the Ravenna Cosmography and in abbreviated form on a number of inscribed lead pigs (Cockerton 1962), although Carsington has also been suggested as a candidate. Alternatively, *Lutudarum* may in fact refer to the principal region of lead fields rather than to a specific settlement (Ling & Courtney 1981).

It has been suggested that a Roman road connected Wirksworth with Rykniel Street (Watkin 1886) although according to Smithard

‘... no scrap of positive evidence has ever been brought forward to justify us in putting Wirksworth on the main line of route to Buxton. It is nevertheless possible, and even probable, there was a Roman road from Wirksworth to Derby in connection with the lead mines’ (Smithard 1910, 137).

Certainly others were of this opinion, for example J C Cox who in 1903 suggested that a Roman road ran from Derby, climbed the Chevin from Duffield and kept on the high ground, dropping down on Wirksworth and from there across the hills and down to Cromford. From there it may have gone on via Old Matlock to Chesterfield (Lane 1986).

At present, the only evidence of Roman activity from the built-up area of Wirksworth is a single rim-sherd of Derbyshire ware found while digging a garden in Pittywood Road, Warmbrook. A lead spindle whorl of probable Roman date, was found at the same time (SMR 15551) which, if indeed Roman, indicates sheep rearing in the area and the processing of wool for textile production (Hart 1981).

A number of Roman artefacts have been recovered from the vicinity of Wirksworth (see Figure 1). In 1735 the Society of Antiquaries were read two letters from a 'Gentleman in Derbyshire' which gave an account of 83 Roman silver denarii found near Wirksworth, the coins ranging from Augustus to Lucius Verus (SMR 15528). Unfortunately the actual findspot does not appear to be known.

To the north of Wirksworth, the lower stone of a gritstone rotary quern was found (SMR 9729), although it could possibly be of Iron Age rather than of Roman date. Further north, at Cromford, two Roman lead pigs were found during the digging of a grave in the churchyard in the early 20th century (SMR 9705). Also at Cromford, a labourer employed in getting limestone from Scarthin Nick in March 1795 discovered a skeleton in a fissure, together with upwards of 60 small Roman coins (SMR 9736). Another reference to 200 coins of the 'Lower Empire', found in a 'perforated rock' at Scarthin Nick in about 1800 may represent a separate incident, but could also be a different account of the 1795 find (SMR 9706, not marked on Figure 1). A single Roman coin of Constantius II was found in the 1950s near gardens at the roadside of Cromford Hill (Lane 1986). This find has not yet been incorporated into the SMR, and is shown on Figure 1 as site 'A'. In addition, a Roman spindle whorl was found on the cricket pitch in Cromford Meadows around the mid-20th century (D Buxton pers. comm.). The approximate site is shown as 'B' on Figure 1.

Evidence of Roman activity also comes from the area to the north-west of Wirksworth. This includes a possible settlement site (SMR 15531), as indicated by a T-shaped enclosure of about 3 acres with possible rectangular divisions. Field walking produced a sherd of Samian and one of 3rd century Derbyshire ware. Roman pottery was found in Bateman's Coppice prior to 1975 (SMR 15530) while two Roman sherds were found in a trench in the side of the round barrow on Middleton Moor in 1970. Several sherds of Derbyshire ware were also picked up on its surface in 1977 (SMR 15523).

In the same area to the north-west of Wirksworth lies Hoptonwood quarry. Hoptonwood marble was used for the facing slabs at the Roman baths at Godmanchester at the end of the 1st century AD although the exact area quarried at that time has not been identified (SMR 15571).

To the south-east of the town, on Alport Hill, Ashleyhay, excavation of a mound (SMR 16501) recovered charcoal and about 1cwt of pottery sherds, over 95% of which were Derbyshire ware. Pieces of sandstone which had been subjected to great heat were also found, as were several pieces of lead ore. It was suggested that a pottery kiln or a smelting furnace, or possibly both, may have existed somewhere close by (Lomas 1961).

### **5.3 Early Medieval**

#### **5.3.1 Place-name evidence**

The earliest reference to Wirksworth comes from a 14th century copy of a document of 835, when it is written as *Wyrcesuyrthe*, meaning 'enclosure of Weorc or Wyrce'. This Old English personal name is one which is found elsewhere also, for example in Worksop and Worsborough (Cameron 1959).

The name of the river which rises near Wirksworth, the Ecclesbourne, also contains an early element, namely *ecles*, indicative of a church.

#### **5.3.2 Communications**

An early route between Wirksworth and Bakewell, still known in the 18th century as the Portway, survives in part as a track running through the fields near Winster (Hey 1980). It has been suggested that this route continued from Wirksworth to Nottingham, but according to Dodd & Dodd (1980), this is by no means proven.

### 5.3.3 *The settlement*

It seems likely from place-name evidence not only that there was an early settlement at Wirksworth, but also that it had an early church, the *ecles* of the river name. Certainly a church was present by the time of Edward the Confessor, as indicated in a later charter of Henry I (Cox 1877). Given the size of the medieval parish, the church may well have functioned as a minster for the area (Riden 1977).

There are believed to have been links between Wirksworth and Repton from at least the beginning of the 8th century when, in 714, the abbess Ecgburg sent a coffin of lead and a shroud to Croyland for the burial of St Guthlac. In the following century, a charter of 835 records the grant of land at Wirksworth by the abbess Cynewara to Duke Humbert, with an annual rent of lead worth 300 shillings to be paid to Archbishop Ceolnotho and Christ Church, Canterbury. Although there is no definite contemporary evidence to confirm that both Ecgburg and Cynewara were abbesses of Repton, it is thought to be very likely (Biddle & Kjølbye-Biddle 1986). In this case, it is equally likely that there would have been a monastic house established at Wirksworth.

It has also been suggested that Wirksworth was one of a number of old established royal estate centres which together made up the vast royal 'Demesne of the Peak' (Stafford 1985). Certainly it was part of the royal demesne in the 11th century (see below).

The only archaeological evidence from this period at Wirksworth is provided by a coin and two pieces of carved stone. The coin, a Northumbrian sceatta of Eadberht, was found using a metal detector on the spoil heap of a small excavation in the car park to the rear of an office building in Church Street. The stones consist of a fragment of vinescroll carving rebuilt into the wall of the church, and a larger piece of carving known as the Wirksworth slab, also in the church (SMR 15532). This was found in *c.* 1820, almost 2 feet beneath paving in front of the altar, its carved face downwards, covering a stone-built vault or grave. It is unique in Anglo-Saxon art in that it features a number of biblical or symbolic scenes in two long panels, one above the other. It is generally considered to have been the lid of a sarcophagus, although an alternative suggestion is that it could have formed part of a low stone screen separating the altar area from the faithful in a predecessor to the present church (Harbison 1987). A date of *c.* 800 seems to be the most generally accepted, although recent work has linked both carvings to a unique regional group of monuments found in the territory of the *Pecsaetna* and which have a strong Northumbrian bias in styling. This reassessment proposed a date of between *c.* 920 and 950 (Sidebottom 1999).

### 5.3.4 *Trade and industry*

It is evident from the charter of 835 that lead was being extracted from the Wirksworth area in the early medieval period. However, as with the Roman workings, no early medieval industrial sites have been identified, having almost certainly been destroyed by centuries of later activity.

## 5.4 **Medieval**

### 5.4.1 *Domesday Book*

At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 Wirksworth formed part of the king's estates. The entry was as follows:

*M. In WIRKSWORTH 3 c. of land taxable. Land for 4 ploughs. A priest and a church; 16 villagers and 9 smallholders who have 4 ploughs. 3 lead mines; meadow, 26 acres; woodland pasture 2 leagues long and 2 leagues wide. [Outliers of this manor. In Cromford 2 c; Middleton 2 c; Hopton 4 c; Welledene 2 c; Carsington 2 c; Callow 2 c; (Kirk) Ireton 4 c]*

*These five manors, Darley, Matlock (Bridge), WIRKSWORTH, Ashbourne and Parwich, with their outliers, paid £32 and 6½ sesters of honey before 1066; now £40 of pure silver*

#### **5.4.2 *The manor***

The manor in 1086 was royal demesne. In 1199 it was granted in fee farm to William de Ferrers, Earl of Derby, who obtained a grant of inheritance of the manor four years later. Edward I granted it to his brother Edmund, Earl of Lancaster. It then came into the hands of Sir Robert Holland, either from Edmund's son, Thomas (Hackett 1863) or from Edward II (Tilley 1902). Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter, forfeited it by attainder in 1461 and soon afterwards it was in the hands of the Duchess of Exeter, sister of Edward IV. In the time of Henry VII it belonged to the Countess of Richmond, reverting to the crown in 1509 (Tilley 1902).

#### **5.4.3 *The settlement and its environs***

There were at least two open arable fields belonging to Wirksworth. North Field lay to the north-east and Dale Field to the north-west. The location of Upper Field, mentioned along with the others in 1709, is not known; it may have been a furlong rather than a field. In addition to the arable fields, meadow land lay in the valley bottom, while Wirksworth Moor was to the east. In the context of fields and commons, it is worth noting that lead miners had the privilege of digging or turning up any ground whatsoever in the search for lead ore.

Wirksworth in the medieval period was a small market town, which appears to have acquired the status of a borough by the 13th century, as there is a single reference to a burgage there in c. 1200 (Beresford & Finburg 1973). In the Lay Subsidy of 1334 the town was assessed at £2-12-0, a value towards the upper end of the range for the wapentake, with 6 being assessed at a higher sum and 23 at a lower amount (Glasscock 1975).

Analysis has been carried out of surviving real estate rentals at Wirksworth. Although these fluctuate considerably, particularly in the 15th century, the general picture is one of slump between 1300 and 1450, followed by a slight recovery to 1540, a picture which is in line with other market towns in Derbyshire (Blanchard 1967).

#### **5.4.4 *Markets and fairs***

Wirksworth received the grant of a market and fair in 1306. The former was to be held every Tuesday, the latter annually for three days, on the eve, day and morrow of the Nativity of the Virgin, September 7-9 (Coates 1965).

Market and fair toll figures have survived for Wirksworth from the 14th century, unlike other market towns. These show 'the puzzling phenomenon' of rising revenues until 1361, followed by a fall of as much as a half between then and 1408. Tolls for several market towns exist for the 15th century, and Wirksworth follows the others in showing slumps between 1415-41 and 1450-85, with recoveries in 1440-50 and after 1485 (Blanchard 1967).

#### **5.4.5 *St Mary's church***

It is clear from the Domesday survey that a church was standing at Wirksworth in 1086, served by a priest. At the beginning of the 12th century Henry I granted the church to the newly founded Cathedral Church of Lincoln, the endowment being subsequently assigned to the Deanery. It seems that in the 12th century the churches of Bonsall, Carsington, Kirk Ireton and possibly Matlock were in the position of parochial chapelries dependent on Wirksworth, but they had obtained their independence and become distinct rectories some time prior to 1291 (Cox 1877).

The earliest known ordination of a vicar at Wirksworth took place in 1272, at which time the tithes of lead, in addition to other small tithes and offerings were set apart for his income, although as the value of the tithes increased, so did the disputes and litigation in relation to these (Cox 1877).

Three chantries were founded at Wirksworth, all of which appear to have been within the church, rather than having separate free-standing chapels (Cox 1877).

#### **5.4.6 Trade and industry**

##### *Lead mining*

The extraction of lead, already underway in the Roman and early medieval periods, continued to be important in the area, to the extent that three lead mines were recorded at Wirksworth in the Domesday survey of 1086, with a further two elsewhere in the wapentake. Lead was the most renowned of Derbyshire's products in the medieval period, being used particularly for royal building throughout the whole of southern, midland and eastern England. It was also exported, passing out of the country via either Derby or Chesterfield. Much of the extraction at this period was likely to be carried out on a seasonal basis, as part of an economy based on dual occupation.

Using information from tithes returns and from seigniorial dues of lot and cope, Blanchard (1971) suggested that the overall trend of production was downward from the end of the 12th century to the end of the 14th century. At Wirksworth, some 210 fothers of lead were produced in *c.* 1290/1300 compared with only 44 fothers in *c.* 1390/1400. Lead mining is highly labour intensive, and was probably badly affected following the depredations of the Black Death. Production during the 15th century appears to have fluctuated, with upswings followed by declines, although the situation had improved by the end of this period (Blanchard 1971).

##### *Silver extraction*

The Domesday Book entry, which refers to the payment by the Ashbourne group of manors of £40 of pure silver, clearly indicates that silver was being extracted from the argentiferous galena. However, the development by Edward I of the rich Devonshire mines possibly led to the abandonment of silver refining from such comparatively low-grade silver-lead ores as those of Derbyshire. Certainly the detailed lead accounts of 1322-3 which exist for Wirksworth make no mention at all of silver (Vellacott 1907).

##### *Textiles*

There are references to a fulling mill at Wirksworth from the early 14th century, as well as to *Walkmylnelane* in 1498 (Cameron 1959). It may well have been on the same site as a later fulling mill, in the area where Haarlem Mill is today, and would have catered to a local demand for rough woollen cloth.

The fortunes of the fulling mill were unlike those of the other three mills whose fortunes could be followed from the 14th to the 16th centuries, namely Bakewell, Haddon and Hartington, in that while these latter all showed continuing falls in rent until the middle of the 16th century, when each had fallen out of use, the lowest rental of the Wirksworth mill was *c.* 1410, with recovery in the 1430s, followed by decline and then growth from the 1460s. These rent movements appear to correlate closely with lead production in the wapentake and suggest the powerful influence of the immediate local market on the value of the mill (Blanchard 1967).

### **5.5 Post-medieval (16th - 18th century)**

#### **5.5.1 The manor**

In 1553 Wirksworth manor was granted to Ralph Gell of Hopton and remained with the Gell family until the 19th century, when it was held under the crown by the Arkwrights of Willersley (Tilley 1902). However, late 18th century documents indicate that the Arkwrights were leasing the manor from the Gells from 1777 onwards. There are also references to there being more than one manor at Wirksworth. According to Lysons (1817) there was a rectorial manor and two other manors besides that of the rectory. One of these is said to have been the 'manor of Holland, otherwise Richmonds' given by the Earl of Lancaster to Sir Robert Holland, with a manor house to the south of the church. However, Woolley

considered that the king was lord of the manor 'though there is a small manor within or adjoining called Richmond, which belongs to Sir Phillip Gell'.

### **5.5.2 *Communications***

The importance of Wirksworth on the pack-horse routes of the post-medieval period, and its continued status as a market town, is indicated by a number of 18th century guide stoops pointing to the town. Five have survived which show Wirksworth as one destination, while another known stoop is now lost (Smith 1996). These were generally erected in 1709, the usual date of Derbyshire stoops, although one is dated 1705 and is the earliest stoop in the Peak.

Several of the most important pack-horse routes would have been those used to transport lead. From Wirksworth, trade tended to be with the east. Accounts of 1653 survive, showing that lead was sent from the Wirksworth area to Bawtry, as well as going to Nottingham, while a map of 1717 depicted the smelting mills and 'ye passages of the Lead from thence by Land and Water', the final destination being Hull (reproduced in Radley 1963). This showed a route to Derby and from there to the Trent at Wilne Ferry, a route to the Trent at Nottingham, and a route running up to Rowsley, then across to Chesterfield, Worksop, Blyth and Bawtry.

In 1757 the road between Wirksworth and Duffield was turnpiked, and this for some time was the main road to the south, joining the Derby-Sheffield turnpike road at Duffield. In 1792 the Wirksworth-Hulland Ward turnpike road was completed, which linked up with another turnpike from Derby (Ottrey 1966).

### **5.5.3 *The settlement and its environs***

A partial map of the area surrounding Wirksworth drawn in 1709 indicates that, although piecemeal enclosure of the common arable fields had clearly taken place, some areas of strip cultivation had survived into the 18th century.

Two 'warm brooks' were recorded at Wirksworth in the early 18th century, one of which was used for bathing. One was on the east side, the other on the west side of the town, both being 'a beautiful transparent water'. They were described as follows:

'That on the East Side of the Town is a Sough or Level a Mile long, made for carrying the Water from their former Lead Works; where it appears first to the Day, they have made a very convenient Bath. There was formerly here a very good warm Spring, but by sinking so many Shafts in Quest of Lead, they lost it and most of their cold Springs ... The Sough on the West-Side of the Town made in Search of Limestone about one and forty Years ago ...' (Short 1734)

The latter sough was begun at the southern end of the town and carried up the west side. No limestone was found, but they found lead and a strong current of warm water from the north-east and a cold current from the south-west which met in the bottom of the shaft to make a tepid stream. Short (1734) noted that despite their beautiful clarity, the waters could not be taken 'inwardly' due to the amount of lead they contained. In 1789 Pilkington described a spring not far from Wirksworth, on the road leading to Ashbourne, which contained sulphur and iron and which was also said to be impregnated with salts. However, he did not note the presence of a bath or any other exploitation.

The town itself generally appears to have prospered during the post-medieval period. In *c.* 1715, for example, the town was described by Woolley as being 'rich by reason of its mines as trade, and well inhabited and has many good houses in it' (Glover & Riden 1981, 177). In 1771 it was described as being:

'... situated in a very fine valley, bounded every way by high hills. Turning to the right, the road leads on the edge of a precipice which commands the valley in a most romantic manner. You look immediately down on a fine variety of inclosures, trees, houses, rocks, lead-mines, all in picturesque confusion ...' (Young 1771, 201-204)

However, there were undoubtedly fluctuations in its fortunes and particularly in those of the lead miners. In 1631, for example, the constables of Wirksworth wapentake reported that they had ‘put down a full third part of all the alehouses’, but they had reluctantly decided that

‘... there are so great a multitude of poor miners within this wapentake that we are enforced to leave more alehousekeepers than otherwise we would’ (quoted in Hey 1980, 208).

In 1662 the Hearth Tax returns were accompanied by a list of 40 persons whose wealth was declared to be ‘not sofishtant’ for them to pay the tax. At around the same time, in the reign of Charles II, there was apparently a ‘House of Correction’ in the town, although this was subsequently suppressed. However, in the early 18th century there was a petition to re-establish it, Wirksworth being ‘... a very populous place and greatly oppressed with Poor by reason of the Mines now in decay ...’ and it was restored in 1727 (Cox 1890, 37).

Defoe, in the early 18th century, described Wirksworth as

‘... a large well-frequented market town, and market towns being very thin placed in this part of the county, they have the better trade, the people generally coming twelve or fifteen miles to a market, and sometimes much more ...’ (Defoe 1724-6, 460).

Although there was some accommodation for travellers and visitors, considerably more accommodation was provided for horses. War Office returns of 1686, which recorded the country’s available guest beds and spare stabling facilities, showed Wirksworth as having almost as many stables as Ashbourne (which came second on the county’s list of facilities at that time), but it had significantly fewer guest beds. This reflects Wirksworth’s reliance on trade and on goods carried by packhorse traffic, rather than wheeled traffic and long-distance travellers (Hey 1980).

In addition to the inns and stables, one of the most important buildings would have been the Moot Hall, which stood in the market place and where all the cases dealing with mining matters were heard by the Barmoot Court.

In September 1756 the *Derby Mercury* reported that at Wirksworth ‘a great Mob arose ... and pulled down several Corn Mills in that neighbourhood’, the principal grievance apparently being the use by certain millers of ‘French stones’ which allowed the flour to be ground more finely and therefore more easily adulterated. Further riots occurred at Wirksworth in 1800, a time of soaring food prices and mass unemployment. The crowd actually appears to have been in control of Wirksworth market for several weeks, setting the prices at which grain could be sold (Thomas 1975).

Towards the end of the 18th century there were 486 houses in Wirksworth (Pilkington 1789). A larger figure is given in 1797, when there were said to be 607 houses, with 36 alehouses, 152 of the houses paying tax and 455 being exempt (Eden 1797). The difference in figures may relate to the difference between town and parish, or to the type of structure counted.

#### **5.5.4 Markets and fairs**

Market day continued to be on a Tuesday, and was described by Woolley in c. 1715 as being so considerable that it was

‘as great as most fairs - it being the only lead market in this county, as also for oatmeal and bread, which last is brought from Derby, whose bakers have found it a beneficial trade thither’ (Glover & Riden 1981, 177).

Defoe similarly commented on the market:

‘This town of Wirksworth is a kind of a market for lead; the like not known any where else that I know of, except it be at the custom-house quays in London ...’ (Defoe 1724-6, 460).

By c. 1753, Wirksworth was holding two fairs, on May 1 and on September 3, for horned cattle (Anon n.d.). The number of fairs appears to have increased by the end of the century, as the list for 1792 compiled by the Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls recorded fairs on Shrove Tuesday, May 12, September 8, and October 4-5.

### **5.5.5 Population**

The diocesan census of 1563 provided a figure of 470 households in the parish of Wirksworth, suggesting a possible population of between 1880 and 2350, although this appears to have included the chapelries of Alderwasley and Cromford. Making the assumption that the proportion of the population living in Wirksworth itself was the same as it was in 1801, Riden (1978) estimated that the population of the town would have been between 1000 and 1100 individuals.

Bradley (1968) attempted to use Hearth Tax returns to estimate the population in 1670 and suggested a figure of 3100 for the parish as a whole, with the population of the township being between 60% and 64% of the parish total, that is some 1860-1984 individuals.

### **5.5.6 Education**

Wirksworth Grammar School was endowed by Anthony Gell in his will of 1579, although he did not die until 1583. The foundation of the school took place the following year, with Letters Patent being granted by Queen Elizabeth. A lintel over the door into the school yard is inscribed with the date 1576, but this is thought to be the date of 'the messuage called the School House', a building probably intended as the master's house, and built during Anthony Gell's lifetime. His intention to endow a school was presumably known by a woman called Agnes Fearn who, in her will of 1574, left instructions that if 'at what tyme soever there shall happen to be anye free schole within the towne of Workesworth', then an annual sum of 5 marks should be paid to that school from her lands.

In the late 17th century an assistant schoolmaster at the Grammar School kept a notebook describing the teaching methods employed by the headmaster. This notebook provides considerable information about educational content in a small country school at that time (Smith 1975).

### **5.5.7 Religious buildings**

The first dissenting chapel was built, or converted from an existing structure, in 1699 and opened in 1700 on what became Chapel Lane. Its founder was buried there and his lead coffin was apparently discovered during the construction of a later building on the site. The old chapel had a high wall around it to protect it from 'lawless attacks', and later had a large vestry built onto the side. It fell into disuse, but then was used for a while by the Wesleyans and, from 1803, by the Independents (Simpson 1981).

### **5.5.8 Almshouse**

Anthony Gell, who had provided in his will of 1579 for the foundation of a school, as noted above, also included provision for an almshouse. As with the school, his intentions were clearly known beforehand, since Agnes Fearn, in her will of 1574, included 40 shillings a year 'to the use and relief of certaine poor folks in a beade house at Workesworth for ever' (Cox 1911). The almshouse received royal assent in 1584, the year after Anthony Gell's death. It was constructed facing the churchyard, and consisted of six dwellings, three on the ground floor and three above, with a garden behind (Bowles 1916).

### **5.5.9 Trade and industry**

#### *General trade*

As a successful market town, a wide variety of trades would have been followed in Wirksworth. A presentment made in 1693 by the constable of Wirksworth for the 'Clerk of the market' provided a list of

the tradesmen at that time. It included 3 innkeepers, 37 alehouses, 6 grocers, 4 ironmongers, 2 apothecaries, 6 blacksmiths, 2 bakers, 2 chandlers, 9 tailors, 3 weavers, 5 swalers (one dealing in salt, one in cloth, one in tobacco, the other two without a special product), 6 butchers, 2 millers, 2 'shearmen', 2 dyers, a peddler, 3 'softmunglers', 3 'applemunglers' and 2 feltmakers (Cox 1890).

The importance of the Wirksworth trade is illustrated by the number of licences granted to dealers (badgers, swalers or hucksters), permitting them to trade. Most Derbyshire villages and towns for which there is information relied on the services of only one or two badgers, but Wirksworth was exceptional. In 1747-8, for example, 13 were licensed, with 21 in the following year (Hey 1980).

Records of the firm of Charles Wright & Son, of Wirksworth, for the years 1793 to 1808, held at the Derbyshire Record Office, illustrate the importance of the town as a distribution centre for provisions. Products brought in included tea, sugar, coffee, cocoa, rice, spices, dried fruits, oranges and lemons, as well as non-food materials such as gunpowder, soap, starch and candles. Wrights supplied a large number of hotels not only in the Wirksworth area but also as far afield as Loughborough, Nottingham and Manchester (Ottrey 1966).

### *Lead mining*

Lead mining continued to form the basis of Wirksworth's importance and prosperity. By the beginning of this period the industry, although recovering from earlier decline, had probably still not attained the same levels of production as those of the 12th century (Blanchard 1971). Where lead deposits were small and accessible, without the need for drainage, the old arrangements of extraction persisted and local men continued to combine farming and mining. However, from the 17th century at least, the structure of the lead mining industry could be quite complex, particularly where there were rich veins that had become inaccessible due to water (Slack 1992).

The first half of the 18th century was possibly the most productive era for lead-mining in the Wirksworth area both in the exploiting of the mineral field and in the driving of soughs to 'unwater' many of the rich, but flooded, veins in and around Wirksworth. In addition, there was increasingly heavy involvement in the industry not only of the local gentry but also smaller businessmen and yeoman farmers. An example comes from 1735 when George Wigley of Wirksworth, a carrier, entered into an agreement with John Wall of Wensley, gent, Henry Thornhill and Nicholas Twigge, lead merchants, John Willcockson of Wirksworth, gent, Wigley Hayward of Cromford, gent, Philip Hutchinson of Carsington, gent, Anthony Gell of Middleton, tallow chandler, Edward Wheatcroft, currier, John Bocking, and Samuel Wheatcroft of Wirksworth, miner, to mine ore discovered by George Wigley within the freehold of his house in Wirksworth Market Place 'and which ranges south-east to the churchyard' (Gould 1977).

Flooding of the mines had always been a problem, and had rendered many particularly rich veins inaccessible. However, from at least the 17th century, mines were being drained by soughs and in 1773 one of the best known of these in the Wirksworth area, Meerbrook Sough, was driven, draining water into the River Derwent at Whatstandwell and so increasing the amount of ore that could be extracted (Bounds 1995).

In this period also, water power was introduced in c. 1537 to provide the blast for lead smelting, and the idea soon spread, despite litigation. In 1579 there were eleven infringers of the patent, one of whom was a Wirksworth man, John Doe, described as a yeoman. In 1769 smelting mills were described as being built on the hills east of the town (Hackett 1863), but at least one of the mills depicted on a sketch map of 1709 to the south of the town is thought to have been used for smelting.

In the course of mining for lead, other materials were also extracted. Camden (1607) records the finding of antimony and of 'spar', while Pilkington (1789) refers to the extraction of calamine. The calamine from Wirksworth's mines was taken to Cromford to be processed.

### *Textiles*

The textile industry, present in Wirksworth in the medieval period, had developed into an important industry by the end of this period. The marriage register records the presence in the third quarter of the 18th century of a number of textile workers, including woolcombers, flax dressers, framework knitters and stocking weavers. Silk from Derby and local wool were first used; however, from c. 1780 a local supply of cotton thread became available, although silk goods continued to be produced (Bounds 1995).

In 1777 Richard Arkwright leased the site of an old mill at Millers Green, half a mile south of the town on the turnpike road to Duffield. A new mill was constructed, although water power may have been insufficient since by 1782 a Boulton and Watt reciprocating engine was in use. Pilkington (1789) noted that, although the working of the lead mines was still the chief employment of the inhabitants of Wirksworth,

‘... several hands are employed in the spinning of jersey and cotton. For carrying on the latter branch of manufacture a mill has been erected by Sir Richard Arkwright from which nearly 200 persons derive their support’.

By 1790 a second cotton spinning mill was in operation by John Dalley, a local merchant connected with the Nottingham hosiery trade (Bounds 1995). The former mill became known as Haarlem Mill, the latter as Speedwell Mill.

#### *China manufacture*

In 1775 Wedgwood referred to ‘A china work - lately begun at Wirksworth. Other records suggest the manufacture of china had commenced a couple of years earlier, as seven invoices dated between September and November 1772 had been made out to the ‘Wirksworth China Works’, each containing references to varying quantities and types of bricks, including ‘arch bricks’ and ‘shaped fire bricks’. These suggest that construction was underway at the end of 1772. The invoices also refer to the supply of quantities of clay, as well as to slip clay. A later document of November 1773 refers to substantial building work done at the factory, including ‘6 tunnels’ and ‘paving the kilnhouse floor’. A large number of invoices survive which provide information as to the wares available and to the workmen employed, the former ranging from simple bowls and jugs to more complex objects such as ‘Flower Jars with heads and horns’. References to cups as ‘China in blue’ are assumed to imply that the decoration was similar to the blue and white Chinese style popular at the time. There is also evidence of transfer printing, which appears to have been carried out both under the glaze and over it, the latter being more difficult (Lockett 1972-3).

The china manufacture does not appear to have been successful, however. In 1777 the works were included in Gell’s lease of Wirksworth manor to Richard Arkwright of Cromford as follows

‘... all other buildings, warehouses, workshops, and appurtenances, situate, standing, and being in Wirksworth ... heretofore used for the making and manufacturing of China Ware ...’.

A later lease of 1793 added that they were then being used for picking cotton.

The premises where the manufacture took place was originally known as the Holland Manor House, part of Sir Robert Holland’s estate in the town, but later became known as China House Yard, and lay to the south of the church. According to Jewitt (1878), during excavation in the area some years previously, portions of saggars and china were found, some of which he had in his possession. These appear since to have been lost, however. In 1914, when a drain was being laid, saggars, lumps of china clay kneaded into balls, stilts for packing the ware in the ovens and numerous fragments of unglazed wasters were found. At that time, there was a building standing in China House Yard which was 58 ft long and 30 ft wide, in use as a cart shed, while two cottages nearby appeared to have been adapted from part of the same building. The finds were made in the cart shed, which apparently also retained the old flue (Tudor 1916).

#### *Quarrying*

Both the limestone and the gritstone in the vicinity of Wirksworth provided a source of stone for local use, including building material, roofing material and lime for agriculture. In addition Camden (1607), when describing Wirksworth, noted 'there are also dug mill-stones and grind-stones'.

## **5.6 19th century**

### **5.6.1 Communications**

In the mid-19th century, Wirksworth was suffering from relatively poor communications. In 1820 the Belper to Cromford section of a new road through Derbyshire had been completed which emphasised the geographical advantages of the Derwent Valley over the Ecclesbourne, and tended to isolate Wirksworth in the Ecclesbourne valley. In addition, existing turnpike roads which served the town were, by 1840, the worst in the county (Ottrey 1966).

The town also missed out on the first phase of railway building, so that in 1863, Hackett noted that the only communication with Derby was by carrier, the nearest railway station being about two and a half miles away. This station, at Cromford, had opened in 1849 and all down trains were met by a 'conveyance' for Wirksworth. There may have been a similar connection with the station at Whatstandwell (Sprenger 1987). Even the Cromford and High Peak Railway only passed through the north of the township, with a station at Steeple Grange, over a mile from Wirksworth.

In the mid-19th century there were several proposals for railway lines to run through Wirksworth but all came to nothing. When the line was actually built, it was as much the result of inter-company rivalry as of local pressure, with attempts by the LNWR to prevent the Midland Railway from progressing northwards. In any event, in 1863 the Midland received assent for a new branch railway from Duffield to Wirksworth, with an additional short stretch to connect with the Cromford and High Peak Railway (at that time leased by the LNWR). The line opened to passengers in 1867. The main purpose of this line was to provide the Midland with an alternative route to Rowsley, to connect with the route to Manchester. However, before the stretch between Wirksworth and Rowsley could be built, the LNWR capitulated, the Manchester, Buxton, Matlock and Midlands Junction Railway passed into the Midland's hands, and the Wirksworth line was neither extended nor provided with a second line of rails (Sprenger 1987).

### **5.6.2 The settlement and its environs**

At the very beginning of the 19th century, the remainder of Wirksworth's open fields and commons were enclosed, the Enclosure Act going through in 1802 and the Award in 1806. There were 2225 acres of old enclosures, with 764 acres being allotted under the Award. There had been 5 springs on the common lands and the Act ordered the protection of one of these to secure a water supply for the inhabitants of Wirksworth town (Tate 1945). Some 40 years later, the tithe schedule indicates that in 1848 the lands of the township included 450 acres of arable land, 800 acres of meadow and 1603 acres of pasture (Ottrey 1966).

While Wirksworth's setting had been seen towards the end of the 18th century as picturesque and romantic, in accordance with the fashion and tastes of the time, a different view was given in 1806:

'the town of Wirksworth lies in a bottom eternally overhung with smoke from the lead and calamine works, the principal covering being here and there broken into pillars of white smoke from the smelting mills' (Gough 1806).

Some aspects of the town improved, however. A piped water supply was provided in 1827, while gas was supplied from works built to the south of the town, at Warmbrook, from 1838. A new lock-up was built on North End in 1842 and a new Town Hall of Italianate design was built in 1871. An adjacent area was built as a butter market, although it was never used as such (Eardley 1998).

### **5.6.3 Markets and fairs**

In 1817 Wirksworth's market was described as being for 'butchers' meat, butter, eggs and peddlers' ware', with only a small corn market (Lysons & Lysons 1817).

Fairs were recorded by the Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls in 1888 as taking place on Shrove Tuesday, Easter Tuesday, the 2nd Tuesday in May, the 2nd Tuesday in September and the 3rd Tuesday in November, all coinciding with the weekly market, which continued to be held on a Tuesday.

#### **5.6.4 Population**

The 10-yearly census, which commenced in 1801, provides the following figures for Wirksworth:

Year	Population
1801	2978
1811	3474
1821	3787
1831	4082
1841	4122
1851	3923
1861	3717
1871	3603
1881	3678
1891	3725
1901	3807

The census shows an increase by about a third over the first four decades, followed by a decline for the next three, with figures beginning to rise again towards the end of the century.

#### **5.6.5 Education**

The Grammar School, which was rebuilt in the early 19th century, was supplemented by further schools over the course of the century. The National Schools, on North End, were commenced in 1850 and completed the following year (Hackett 1863), while a further school was built on the same road in 1896 (Few 1986).

#### **5.6.6 Religious buildings**

In addition to existing religious provision, several dissenting chapels were constructed during this period.

##### *Methodists*

The Wesleyan Methodists built a chapel on Chapel Lane in 1810, known as the Ebenezer Chapel, while the Primitive Methodists had a chapel at the top of the Dale in 1815, which was occupied as a dwelling house for a time prior to its demolition. A chapel at the bottom of the Dale, acquired by the Primitive Methodists in 1828, was probably reconverted and incorporated as the schoolrooms when a new chapel was constructed in 1859 (Simpson 1981).

At Warmbrook the Methodists acquired property at the corner of Water Lane, opening a chapel in 1835. The congregation later moved to a building further up St John's Street which had been constructed in 1881 (Simpson 1981).

##### *Baptists*

The Baptists are known to have been established in Wirksworth by 1813 and by 1818 the congregation were worshipping in an unsuitable building which had a stable below it and an uncovered flight of steps

leading to the meeting room. In the mid 19th century a plot of land was purchased on North End for use as a burial ground. In the 1880s it was decided that a new chapel was necessary as

‘The Chapel and School are in a dilapidated state, and the approach to them is very objectionable, an uncovered flight of steps leads to the place of religious assembly and a subterraneous passage to the School’.

This building was therefore demolished and a new chapel was opened on Coldwell Street in 1886 (Few 1986).

### *Congregationalists*

A Congregational church was built in 1866 on the site of the much older Presbyterian chapel referred to in section 5.5.7.

### ***Trade and industry***

#### *Lead mining*

In the early 19th century, the lead mining industry was experiencing problems. These were caused in part by cheap imports from elsewhere. In 1832, the vicar of Wirksworth wrote to the Ecclesiastical Revenues Commissioners that

‘... unless there is a protecting Duty on the Lead Ore exported from Spain and other countries the produce of the Mines in this District will scarcely render a remunerating price to the miners ... the Mining Business continues much depressed ...’.

He noted that his income from tithe ore had dropped from £207 to £140 over the course of the previous three years. The second problem was underground water, resulting in a considerable decrease in the amount of lead being brought to the surface, as the soughs constructed in the previous two centuries were no longer adequate. As a result, the Meerbrook Sough Act of 1841 was passed. This was designed to solve the problem of excess water in the mines by facilitating the development of the existing Meerbrook Sough, which had been driven in 1773 (Bounds 1995).

There was some success for a while. Yields of lead, as evidenced by the lead ore tithe accounts, were much higher in the 1850s than they had been for any decade in the 19th century before that. However, by the 1870s many mines were exhausted, while the deeper veins made accessible by the Meerbrook Sough proved to be less rich than had been hoped. In addition, foreign competition further eroded the industry. Many mines closed over the course of the 1870s and by the 1880s virtually none were producing lead (Bounds 1995).

#### *Other mineral extraction*

As noted previously, other minerals were also recovered during the course of lead extraction in the vicinity of Wirksworth, many of which had probably been exploited in earlier periods. These minerals included calamine, manganese, black jack, barytes, pyrites, fluorspar, ochre and white gypsum, among others. Black jack was used in the manufacture of brass, while calamine was roasted in a reverberatory furnace to make zinc and mixed with quicklime to make cement, supposedly being used by Arkwright in the construction of his mills (Farey 1811, 403). Ochre or red earth, known locally as ‘raddle’, was presumably bought by the paint manufacturers of Wirksworth and the Via Gellia (Ottrey 1966). Barytes was also used in the manufacture of paint, and in the 1880s some of the mines which were no longer producing lead remained open for a while producing barytes (Bounds 1995).

#### *Textiles*

The variety of occupations associated with the textile industry present in the 18th century continued into the first half of the 19th century. The Parish Apprentice Register recorded weavers, calico weavers and framework knitters as taking apprentices between 1801 and 1833. The 1841 census showed that weavers were producing silk, velvet and worsted cloth, as well as silk tape. Cotton was used to produce calico, gingham, lace and stockings. Over the course of the second half of the 19th century, however, domestic cotton and silk production declined considerably as the widespread use of power looms made domestic production uneconomic. By the time of the 1871 census only a small number of people gave their occupations as weaver or framework knitter (Bounds 1995). Hackett had noted this trend in 1863, remarking that while silk weaving had once been important, was by that time 'but slightly followed'.

A new specialisation developed in Wirksworth, however, which continued to give employment in the textile industry. This was the production of tape. In 1806 Arkwright's mill was sold to a Derby firm, who named it Haarlem Mill and began manufacturing silk tape there, probably bringing the silk thread in from Derby. From 1844 Speedwell Mill was also producing tape. Two additional water-powered mills produced tape in the area, Willowbath Mill between Warmbrook and Gorsebank, first recorded in 1816, and Providence Mill at Gorsebank, recorded in 1823. A variety of tapes was produced at these mills, as well as other items such as bootlaces, although red tape was a particular speciality (Bounds 1995).

### *Quarrying*

Limestone had almost certainly been quarried in Wirksworth from an early period, to produce both building stone and lime. Farey noted in 1811 that Wirksworth limestone was in great demand for agriculture. He also recorded a steam-powered saw mill producing paving stones in the town. In 1829 one Wirksworth quarry owner began transporting lime from his works on the Middleton road to Stanton Iron Works. The census of 1841 records 53 people working as masons, lime-burners or quarry labourers at Wirksworth (Bounds 1995). Hackett (1863) noted the importance of the quarries in providing employment, but commented that 'their pursuits are frequently retarded by the severe frosts of winter'.

The arrival of the Midland Railway in 1867 acted as a particular stimulus to the quarrying industry. Prior to this, stone had to be transported by turnpike road to Duffield, or to Cromford where it could be transferred onto boats using the Cromford Canal (Bounds 1995). The railway permitted the dramatic expansion of the limestone quarries, so that by the end of the 19th century there were three large quarries on the northern side of the town, Dale Quarry, begun in 1874, Baileycroft Quarry, first mentioned in 1871, and Stoneycroft Quarry which was started shortly after 1830 (Sprenger 1987).

In addition to the limestone quarries, gritstone was also quarried to the south-east of the town. It was used as building stone and was also manufactured into roofing 'slates'.

### *Other*

Fire stones for furnaces were quarried on Wirksworth Moor to the east of the town (Farey 1811), while black marble was found one mile west. 'Improved bricks, draining tiles and pipe bricks' were manufactured from local clay at the Wirksworth brick kiln, three-quarters of a mile east of the town (Ottrey 1966).

## **5.7 20th century**

During the course of much of the 20th century the historic part of the town was in decline. Although the limestone working provided some employment, the scale of operations so close to the town centre caused many to leave Wirksworth. As part of these operations, a new road was driven through the northern side of the town to improve the flow of traffic generally and to facilitate the movement of quarry traffic in particular.

As a result of this decline, accompanied by the development of new housing on agricultural land to the south-west, and the fact that a large proportion of those living in the town did not work there, Wirksworth was chosen by the Civic Trust in 1978 as the subject for an experiment in revitalisation. Signs of

regeneration were well underway by 1982, so much so that the town was the only UK recipient of a Europa Nostra medal, and the Civic Trust's initiative there, known as The Wirksworth Project, was extended further. This involved providing more local jobs, greater investment in the town's shops and the development of the town's tourist potential through the creation of a Heritage Centre in the small former silk and velvet mill behind the market place (Joyce 1984).

## 6. THE DEVELOPMENT OF WIRKSWORTH

The town has been divided into plan elements, or components, based on map evidence and documentary sources. These plan elements have been subdivided below according to the earliest date of their assumed occurrence, although these divisions are tentative only, and need to be confirmed by further work. Subsequent major changes are briefly summarised, together with the degree of survival of early features to the present day.

### 6.1 Early medieval components

As none of the individual features making up the early medieval settlement can be defined with any accuracy, a single component has been identified for this period, as shown on Figure 2.

#### **Component 1** *Area of possible early medieval settlement*

This area may include features such as a series of early churches, monastic buildings etc. It also includes a number of important later features.

***The church (SMR 15533) and churchyard*** - The earliest standing remains are 13th century. The survival of the churchwardens' accounts from 1658 onwards provides a picture of the range of work which was constantly being carried out on the church. In 1820-1 the church 'suffered most barbarous innovations and alterations' to accommodate a larger population, with further alterations being carried out in 1855. In 1870 restoration work commenced under the direction of Sir Gilbert Scott. During this work remains of an earlier building were discovered, sufficient to show that it was

'... of some size, of a cruciform shape, and lavishly ornamented with the various effective mouldings that characterised that style about the middle of the twelfth century' (Cox 1877, 547).

Numerous fragments were incorporated into the interior of the church.

The present churchyard is bounded by Church Walk, although whether this marks the limits of the medieval, or earlier, cemetery is not known at present. In 1662, churchwardens' accounts indicate that a saw pit was set up in the churchyard, probably to enable carpenters to carry out repairs (Cox 1877). The medieval cross (SMR 15534) currently standing to the north-east of the church may originally have stood in the market place.

***Wirksworth Grammar School***, founded in 1584, and originally consisting of two rooms, was in such poor condition in 1827 that it required immediate rebuilding, this being completed the following year. It was probably at that time that the piece of land in front of the school was paved and walled in, having originally lain open to the churchyard, with the lintel dated 1576 being erected over the entrance (Bowles 1916).

***The Almshouses*** (SMR 15556) were constructed following royal assent in 1584, the date of construction having recently been confirmed by dendrochronology.

***The vicarage*** - The present vicarage dates from 1831 and is a listed building. Some information about the site in 1693 comes from a terrier, which records:

‘The Vicaridge House together with three gardens & one piece of ground taken out of the Kitchen Garden and lyeing westward thereof, containeing an acre of land or thereabouts. One barn & one stable and little outhouse adjoining thereto containing three bayes or thereabouts’ (Cox 1912, 126).

### ***Buildings along Church Street, Blind Lane and the southern frontage of Coldwell Street***

Includes the Baptist Church, constructed using stone from Black Rocks Quarry and from a quarry in Matlock, opened in 1886 (Few 1986), and a number of 18th century buildings, several of which are listed.

## **6.2 Medieval components**

Fifteen medieval components have been identified based on plan form analysis of historic maps and on documentary evidence. They are shown on Figure 2 with the exception of component 16, which is marked on Figure 3.

### **Component 2 *Settlement to the east of Blind Lane***

Medieval boundaries in this area are not known and are difficult to define in the absence of any detailed early plans, consequently that shown on Fig. 2 is the boundary of Wirksworth Hall gardens in the 19th century, consisting on the northern and western sides by a high curving brick wall on a stone base. The ‘Halleorchard’ is mentioned in 1415 (Cameron 1959) but it is not certain whether the later Wirksworth Hall, a building of the 18th century, stood on the same site as the medieval hall. The plan of 1710 shows a row of three houses along the south-eastern side of Blind Lane, all of which had gone by 1848.

### **Component 3 *The Old Market Place***

A triangular area entered by Dale End and Coldwell Street at its north-western and north-eastern corners respectively, and narrowing to the south towards the present market place. The old market place appears to have been encroached upon by buildings along its northern side. The plans of 1709 and 1710 show a cross somewhere in the region where the two market places merge - the plans are not accurate enough to allow the site to be accurately defined. The old market place once contained the moot hall, presumably medieval in origin although the earliest reference to it appears to be in 1608, when it was described as being in ‘great decay’. A document survives relating to its repair at that time, listing the costs and the materials used (reproduced in Wirksworth Parish Magazine 1898). In 1650 it was described as containing

‘Three Bayes of Building under which Court Roome are Built Six Butchers Stalls & Twoe Butchers Shoppes on the West side thereof ... (Arkwright 1912).

It was rebuilt in 1773 but was demolished in 1814, having become a hindrance to the movement of traffic.

### **Component 4 *The Market Place***

An irregularly shaped area on quite a pronounced slope. West End opens into it from the west, this part having been the Swine Market, although cattle were probably also sold nearby since some of the premises opposite the Swine Market had stalls for cattle on their ground floor (Ottrey 1966). Nineteenth century maps show three ‘islands’ of buildings standing within the area of the market place, presumably having developed from temporary stalls. One of these was demolished in the 20th century.

### **Component 5 *Row of buildings along the eastern side of the market place***

A row of buildings set in short narrow plots between the churchyard and the market place and likely always to have had a commercial function, possibly even originating as market stalls before being built as more permanent structures.

**Component 6** *Settlement along the south-eastern side of Dale End and the northern side of the Old Market Place*

An area of irregular plots, the original frontage of which appears to have been slightly further north than the modern buildings. At the eastern end of this area, on Chapel Lane, is the site of the first dissenting chapel, opened in 1700. The component was bisected by Harrison Drive in the late 1930s.

**Component 7** *Settlement along the north-western side of Coldwell Street and the south-western side of North End*

A number of properties set in irregular plots, constrained by the hill to the rear of the properties. The northern end of this component is marked by a steep narrow footpath connecting North End with Chapel Lane.

**Component 8** *Settlement along the northern side of Coldwell Street and the south-eastern side of North End*

An area of irregular plots. It is probable that the medieval crofts behind the North End properties originally ran down to the river. Greenway Croft was cut through this component in the 20th century to provide access to housing constructed to the rear of the frontage.

**Component 9** *Settlement along the western side of the Old Market Place*

A row of narrow plots which had become densely occupied by the 19th century.

**Components 10 & 11** *Settlement fronting the market place and West End*

Blocks of narrow, irregular plots, that on the northern side being bounded to the rear by Crown Yard and the southern end of Bowling Green Lane; that on the southern side by a strong curving boundary shown on early maps, although no longer clearly visible.

**Components 12 & 13** *Settlement along St John's Street*

Plots on the western side of St John's Street (component 12) appear to have a common rear boundary with a possible remnant back lane running southwards from The Causeway. The plan of 1710 shows the northern part of component 13 and suggests that plots there also once shared a rear boundary. The terrier accompanying that plan indicates that, in addition to houses and barns, there was also a slaughterhouse, a smithy and a workhouse. The latter component also includes a Methodist Chapel, constructed in 1881.

**Component 14** *Block of settlement to the north of St Mary's Gate*

A densely occupied block of properties fronting St John's Street and St Mary's Gate, the latter leading to the churchyard.

**Component 15** *Settlement to the east of St Mary's Gate*

Settlement in this area is assumed to be medieval in origin, given its proximity to the church and its frontage along one of the ways leading up to the church, namely St Mary's Gate. The plan of 1710 shows a row of four or five houses along the eastern side of the road. By that time the eastern half of this component included a bowling green. In the second half of the 18th century, china was manufactured here for a brief period (see section 5.5.9).

**Component 16** *Fulling mill* (see Fig. 3)

There are references to a fulling mill at Wirksworth in the early 14th century and, although its site is not known for certain, it may have been in the same place as the 'Walk Mill' shown in this area on the sketch

plan of 1709. The site was chosen by Richard Arkwright in 1777 for the construction of a spinning mill which later became known as Haarlem Mill. It was converted to tape weaving in 1815. It is thought to represent the earliest successful application of steam power to textile production, and has been the subject of a measured survey by RCHME's Threatened Buildings Section (Menuge 1993). The buildings are listed, Grade II.

### **6.3 Post-medieval components (16th to 18th century)**

Twelve components have been identified for the post-medieval period, based mainly on documentary evidence, plan form analysis of historic maps and standing buildings. The components are shown on Figure 3.

#### **Component 17 *Meerbrooksough Mine* (SMR 15588)**

A late 18th to mid 19th century lead mine which includes a listed 19th century engine house associated with the pumping and use of Meerbrook Sough.

#### **Components 18 & 19 *Settlement along North End***

Settlement along the western side of North End in this area was set into the hillside, with small yards to the rear, while the crofts of properties on the eastern side ran down to the river. Slightly further north, a couple of buildings were erected at the junction of North End and Cromford Road, one of these still surviving as the Lime Kiln Inn, a listed building of the 18th century.

#### **Component 20 *Settlement along the eastern side of Chapel Lane***

Chapel Lane is shown on the plan of 1709 as 'foot way to Cromford' and provided a steeper but slightly more direct route from the northern end of the town into the centre than did North End, which skirted the side of the hill. The lane was known as 'Bayly Croft Steele' in 1649, when a smithy was recorded there (Arkwright 1912). The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel stood at the northern end, built in 1810 but closed as a chapel in 1968 and destroyed by fire in 1982.

#### **Component 21 *Settlement along the eastern end of Coldwell Street***

The bridge across the river at the eastern end of Coldwell Street was known as Newbridge, the name already being in use by 1649 when eight cottages were recorded as encroachments there, although it is not known which side of the river they were. The plans of 1709/10 show several houses at the south-eastern end of Coldwell Street, one of which included a bakery at that time. However most, if not all of these, had gone by the end of the 19th century. There was a tannery on the north-eastern side of the street by the mid-19th century, presumably utilising water from the nearby river; however this too had gone by the end of the century, when Newbridge Works is shown on the map.

#### **Component 22 *Settlement along Green Hill***

This component and the next saw considerable development during the post-medieval period. At the southern end of the road, buildings with small yards developed along the frontage, some of which could in fact have had medieval origins. Further up Green Hill, however, settlement took place in a more haphazard way across the slope of the hill. Cottages stood in small irregular plots with curving boundaries, interlined by short lanes, creating a very distinctive pattern, almost certainly the result of a long period of encroachment in this area. For example, in 1649 eight cottages were described as encroachments 'upon Greenhill'. To some extent the pattern is still visible today. The largest and most impressive of the surviving post-medieval buildings, Babington House (SMR 15560), a 17th century listed building, was used as a cottage hospital in the 19th century.

#### **Component 23 *Settlement along The Dale***

Buildings along the eastern side of The Dale stood at the foot of a steep cliff, probably the result of early quarrying, and had very little land attached. They may have originated as roadside squatter settlement - in 1649 six cottages are described as encroachments in The Dale. Many of those shown on the tithe map no longer exist. Buildings on the western side of the road stood in more regular plots; again many no longer survive as a result of extensive quarrying. A Primitive Methodist chapel was constructed at the southern end of The Dale in 1859. It went out of use as a chapel and in 1981 was serving as a warehouse to an ironmonger (Simpson 1981). It is now converted for use as the regional base for the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

#### **Component 24 *Settlement along West End***

Settlement in this area may have had its origins in encroachments on waste at the road junction.

#### **Component 25 *Settlement at the western end of The Causeway***

The main building in this area, the Gate House, is referred to in the 1670 Hearth Tax Return, although it has experienced alterations and enlargements since that time.

#### **Component 26 *Settlement at Warmbrook***

Settlement in this area almost certainly began as encroachment upon an area of waste ground just beyond the southern limits of the medieval town at the junction of three roads. In 1649 there were four cottages paying rent and two encroachments at Warmbrook. A Methodist chapel was constructed at the corner of Water Lane in 1835, rebuilt in 1856 and closed in 1887, possibly being incorporated into the pair of semi-detached houses which succeeded it (Simpson 1981). A smithy was present by the late 19th century, as was part of the gas works.

#### **Component 27 *Middle and Willowbath Mills***

A mill is shown in this area on the sketch plan of 1709, and named 'Middle Miln'. It was probably a smelting mill, as the tithe map shows a field called 'Smelting Mill Piece' adjacent to its site, although the mill itself was no longer present by that time. The earliest recorded use of Middle smelting mill was 1693, the last was 1751 (Kiernan 1989). Its site may have been destroyed by the construction of the railway. A new mill, Willowbath Mill, was built on a slightly different site just to the north of the earlier mill in 1815, and used for tape weaving. It was powered by steam.

#### **Component 28 *Speedwell Mill***

Several buildings are shown by the Ecclesbourne in the southern half of this area on the sketch plan of 1709, although they are not described. By 1790 a cotton spinning mill, known as Millersgreen Mill in the 1880s and later as Speedwell Mill, was in operation in the northern half of the area. The mill was converted to tape weaving in 1840.

### **6.4 19th century components**

Twelve 19th century components have been identified, based on documentary evidence, comparison of early and late 19th century maps and on standing buildings. The components are shown on Figure 4.

#### **Component 29 *Railway***

The railway opened in 1865 and closed as a passenger link in 1947 (Few 1986). The component includes a large yard constructed to deal with the traffic from the stone quarries and which included an engine shed and a goods shed by the late 19th century. Two tunnels opened into the yard from the quarries further west.

### **Component 30 *Stoneycroft Quarry***

Stoneycroft Quarry was started shortly after 1830. By the end of the century it had become part of a vast area of quarrying, Middlepeak Quarries, which stretched along the road towards Middleton. Tramways connected the quarry with the mineral railway line which ran between Wirksworth and the Cromford and High Peak Railway. The area now forms the National Stone Centre.

### **Component 31 *Baileycroft Quarry***

Baileycroft Quarry is first mentioned in 1871, when land was leased with permission to extract 8400 tons of limestone. In 1877 an agreement was made to make a tramway in a tunnel from the quarry to the railway near the Baptist Cemetery. In fact, two short tunnels connected by a cutting were constructed, the tunnel quite near the surface since residents of Cemetery Lane have occasionally struck the top of the tunnel lining whilst digging. The quarry was closed around 1906, and the site was being used as a refuse tip in 1922. In the 1930s, in an effort to improve the flow of traffic through the town, a new road (Harrison Drive) was built at the site of the quarry. Part of the quarry face was removed and the quarry filled in with dust from Dale Quarry. A garage, fire station and telephone exchange were built in the quarry (Sprenger 1987).

### **Component 32 *Dale Quarry***

Dale Quarry was begun in 1874 by Arthur Harward. He initially transported stone to the station via horse and cart, but his trade developed so rapidly that he needed to improve this. He applied to construct a tramway through the town, a project which appears to have gained the approval of the ratepayers but which he abandoned in favour of a tunnel under the town. The tunnel took 18 months to complete and was opened in 1877. At the same time he built lime kilns which produced some 30 tons of lime per day. However, within two years he was forced into liquidation as a result of the cost of the tunnel. The quarry continued in use under a new owner. A schedule accompanying a lease of 1883/4, held at the Derbyshire Record Office, provides a list of the machinery in use at that time. The quarry was closed down in the early 1920s, but was later reopened and worked until 1968. The tunnel was still in use at that time, but the stone was carried to the station yard on lorries, rather than trains (Sprenger 1987).

### **Component 33 *Development along Cromford Road***

By the end of the 19th century several short rows of houses had been constructed in this area; these still appear to survive.

### **Component 34 *Development along North End***

Land at the north-eastern end of North End was developed for various purposes over the course of the 19th century. These included the National School, opened in 1851. A Baptist burial ground was established from the mid-19th century, and a general cemetery was created in 1854, containing chapels for Anglicans and for non-conformists, together with a house for the sexton. North End Mill was producing tape in the early 20th century, and is still in use as a hosiery factory, while further south an Infants' School was constructed to the rear of earlier buildings in 1896.

### **Component 35 *Settlement along the western side of Chapel Lane***

A number of buildings were constructed in this area during the 19th century, including a new Moot Hall, built to replace the hall which had stood in the old market place, and an infants' school towards the northern end of the component.

### **Component 36 *Settlement to the rear of properties on eastern North End***

A school was built in this area in 1896 and enlarged in the 20th century, while further buildings to the south are shown on the OS map of 1899. These have since been replaced by more recent housing.

### **Component 37 *Settlement at the top of West End***

By the mid-19th century several buildings were present in this area, including The Lees, Yokecliffe House and Buena Vista (previously called Woolleygreen House). The former was demolished in the early 20th century when the area was quarried away.

### **Components 38-39 *Development to the south of Wirksworth***

A few isolated buildings, not thought to be barns, are depicted on the late 19th century OS maps along the roads leading away from Warmbrook.

### **Component 40 *Gas Works***

Gas Works were established at Warmbrook in 1838.

## **6.5 20th century development**

Twentieth century development is represented by a single un-numbered component, shown on Figure 5.

## **6.6 Discussion**

As noted in Section 5.2 suggestions have been made in the past that Wirksworth was identifiable with the Roman lead-mining centre of *Lutudarum* and that at least one Roman road ran through the area. At present, however, there is no firm evidence for any Roman settlement on the site of the later town and current knowledge suggests an origin for Wirksworth in the early medieval period, with its place-name derived from an Old English personal name. This early settlement appears to have been on a low mound of till, possibly because its slight elevation above the Ecclesbourne meant that it was flood-free yet relatively level and productive. The area of settlement has been tentatively identified as Component 1, based on the assumption that the early medieval church known to have been at Wirksworth would have stood on the same site as the later church. It is not known at present whether there was an early monastic settlement here, linked with Repton; however it seems possible that, at the very least, Wirksworth was the site of a minster church, as implied by its large parish, retained until the 19th century, and by its early origins, as indicated by sculptural fragments and by the name of the nearby Ecclesbourne river. Early ecclesiastical sites are often enclosed by round or oval precinct walls, and the curve which survives along the western side of the churchyard may reflect the line of the boundary of such a precinct.

As a minster and/or royal estate centre, the settlement would have attracted a degree of commercial activity in addition to its importance due to the lead mining industry. A market is likely to have developed well before the acquisition of a charter in 1306. It is suggested that originally this market would have taken place in the triangular area formed at the junction between St John's Street, coming in from the south, The Dale, approaching from the north-east, and Coldwell Street, approaching from the east (Component 3). The southern end of this area was marked by the entry of West End. West End may have widened naturally as it approached St John's Street; at any event, at some point a second, larger, market area developed (Component 4), possibly necessitating the removal of earlier buildings. It may be that this occurred at the same time as the granting of the market charter, although there is no evidence in the plan of any deliberate replanning of the layout. Over time, some encroachment onto the market space took place, particularly with the formalising of temporary market stalls into permanent buildings. The row of buildings between the churchyard and the market may have developed in this way (Component 5), while 19th century maps depict three blocks of buildings in the market area at the western end of West End, one of which has since been demolished. The survival of a 16th century structure in one of the remaining blocks indicates that encroachment had already occurred by that time, but the process had probably begun before then. It is worth noting that the broadness of St John's Street towards its northern end suggests that it, too, could have been used as a market.

There is no evidence in the town plan for any replanning, for example at the time of the granting of a market charter. Indeed, there are few areas identifiable from early maps as being typical of a regular medieval town plan in having long narrow plots with boundaries running back to a back lane. The most regular plots appear to have been those along St John's Street. Elsewhere, plots had to be adapted to local topography.

Expansion of the town in the post-medieval period would have been at least in part the result of miners coming to work the lead, and who would have had their dwellings on the outskirts of the town. Defoe described them in the early 18th century as

‘the subterranean wretches, who they call Peakkrills, who work in the mines, and who live all round this town every way ...’ (Defoe 1724-6, 460).

Squatter settlement on the wastes and commons around the margins of the town was well underway before the 18th century. A Parliamentary Survey of Wirksworth carried out in 1649 recorded a number of such encroachments, particularly in the Dale and Greenhill area to the north-west and the Newbridge area to the east, Newbridge being the bridge across the Ecclesbourne. The cottages erected ‘and encroached in the Wastes’ by tenants who had ‘noe right Lease or Estate therein’ were valued in the survey, with valuations ranging from fourpence for the cheapest to as much as 7 shillings for the most expensive (Arkwright 1912). This suggests a wide variety in the quality and size of the structures erected.

Wirksworth's situation at the junction of three geological areas probably had a considerable impact on its success in this period. The limestone was a source of lead ore and stone, the millstone grit provided building stone as well as good pure and soft water for the textile industry, while shales and clays offered rich agricultural soils as well as materials for the brick and tile industry. The market provided an outlet for the products of the different areas and the town acted as a staging post providing accommodation for horses and travellers prior to crossing the peak (Ottrey 1966).

This post-medieval success does not appear to have continued, however. Many towns expanded dramatically during the 19th century, but Wirksworth was not one of them. This may have been at least in part because, with the construction of the Cromford to Belper road in 1820, Wirksworth became somewhat cut off from the main trade routes. In addition, the use of the Cromford Canal for bringing in raw materials and transporting away local products allowed the industries of the Middle Derwent Valley to grow more rapidly than those of Wirksworth. Water power was relatively small, while coal was not particularly easily and cheaply available (Ottrey 1966). Even the arrival of the railway, which so often stimulated growth, had little impact at Wirksworth except for the quarrying industry. As a result, the town suffered a degree of stagnation and decline. In 1801 it was the fourth largest town in Derbyshire, but by 1901 it was only the 35th largest. Population numbers remained stable, thanks to the growth of the limestone quarrying and tape weaving industries to take the place of lead mining, but there was little expansion (Sprenger 1987). Such development as did take place tended to be to the north and the south, rather than on the slopes of the hills to the east and west of the town. Growth recommenced in the 20th century, however, with new housing estates being developed, particularly on the southern side of the town.

## **7. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ISSUES**

### **7.1 Research questions**

1. There needs to be a far greater knowledge and understanding of Roman activity, both industrial and domestic, in and around Wirksworth. There can be little doubt of the importance of the area at that time, with its lead, marble and possibly silver. However, little is known of the nature and extent of mineral exploitation, of the road pattern providing access to, and transport away from the works, or of the settlements which might have provided food and labour. Are Wirksworth's origins to be found in this period?

2. Beyond a couple of pieces of sculpture and a sceatta, nothing is known of either the nature or the extent of early medieval settlement at Wirksworth, although again it was probably of considerable importance in the region. Was there indeed an early monastery? If so, what was its location, was it established in or near a pre-existing settlement and did the religious community survive the loss of the abbey at Repton? Did the church continue to function as a minster for the surrounding area, as the Repton church appears to have done? To what extent did the form of early medieval Wirksworth influence the medieval town?

3. A number of questions relating to the medieval town also exist, including that of its true extent which, in the absence of any archaeological information, is difficult to determine from plan form analysis alone, there being little in the way of 'typical' medieval town plots. Wirksworth was granted to William de Ferrers in 1203 by the same charter as Ashbourne. Why was the wapentake split between them and were there any implications of this split for Wirksworth? Was there a medieval manor house, and if so, where was it? Is there any other evidence for a sharp decline in the second half of the 14th century, as indicated by market tolls? Two, possibly three, potential market areas have been identified. What is the relationship of these areas to each other - do they reflect chronological development or contemporary areas with specialised functions?

4. What was the relationship of Wirksworth with the surrounding area? Lead was always important for trade, but what else? It was relatively unusual in that it was one of the few Derbyshire medieval markets in the centre of the county, with more than seven miles separating it from its nearest neighbouring market in any direction. Did this mean it traded a wider variety of higher status goods than other rural market towns of similar size?

5. Although there has been much work carried out on the history of the lead mining industry, the quarrying industry around Wirksworth appears to have been largely overlooked. Quarrying for stone within the town also needs to be researched in terms of its location, chronology and relationship to settlement expansion.

6. Similarly the identification and history of the various mill sites at Wirksworth, both water and wind, prior to the late 18th century requires further research, both in terms of documentation and of surviving remains. While some sites are easily identified, others are less certain; for example, Bailey Croft Sough was dammed up for some years shortly after completion due to a dispute with an adjacent corn mill (Rieuwerts 1997), the site of which does not appear to be known.

## **7.2 Archaeological potential**

### **7.2.1 Existing protection**

#### *Conservation areas*

The *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* required all Local Planning Authorities to determine which parts of their areas were of special architectural or historic interest and to designate them as conservation areas, in order to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area. It is also their duty to review them from time to time, and to determine whether any further parts of their areas should also be designated as conservation areas.

Wirksworth Town Centre conservation area was designated in August 1970 and extended in January 1976 so that it now covers not only the historic town but also Wash Green and an area of open land to the east. Much of the conservation area is shown on Figure 6. In addition, there is an Article IV Direction in operation in the Conservation Area. This removes the permitted development rights normally enjoyed by private householders to carry out minor alterations which can seriously damage the character of unlisted buildings in conservation areas.

### Listed buildings

A listed building is one recognised by the government as being of special architectural or historic interest, as specified by the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*. Listing is made at three levels of importance, Grade II, Grade II\* and the most important, Grade I, and listed building consent is required, in addition to normal planning consent, before any alterations, extensions or demolitions can be made to a listed structure which might affect its character.

There are 95 listed buildings in the built-up area of Wirksworth under consideration in this report. Of these, seven are Grade II\*, namely The Gate House, the Grammar School, 1 Coldwell Street, the Old Manor House, Babington House, 15 Market Place and the Red Lion Hotel. The remainder are Grade II, and all can be broken down according to their earliest structural phase as follows:

Earliest structural phase	C16 or earlier	C17	C18	C19	C20
Number of structures	3	15	34	41	2

The majority of listed buildings are shown on Figure 6, with the exception of buildings well to the south of the town, at Haarlem Mill, and of structures such as gates, railings and bollards.

Planning Policy Guidance 15 allows the creation and maintenance of a list of buildings of local historic/architectural interest, although this does not confer a statutory obligation. In Wirksworth there are six buildings considered to be of local interest.

#### 7.2.2 Above ground remains

Wirksworth's historic street plan is still clearly visible today, the only major disruption to it being the insertion of Harrison Drive in the upper end of the town in the late 1930s. This has considerably lessened the impact of the old market place with its characteristic triangular space. The building of the railway in the 19th century also destroyed the relationship of the historic core of the town with the river.

The town retains a large stock of buildings dating from the 17th century onwards, both domestic and industrial in origin. Prior to the 1630s, buildings tended to be built of limestone with gritstone dressings. After this date, they were more likely to be built either of gritstone, which was more easily worked than limestone or, from the second quarter of the 18th century, of brick. The first documented reference to a brick building at Wirksworth is from 1731 (B Joyce pers. comm.). Many of these buildings were either vacant or underused by the mid-20th century, and were deteriorating. Following the success of the Wirksworth Project, however, many have been renovated, and the town still keeps much of its character from the 18th century.

Given the large number of historic buildings in the town, it is important to note that the existing list is now very out of date, with no comprehensive review having been carried out since the early 1970s. It is estimated that the list could be increased by at least 25%, as it excludes a considerable number of important buildings, including one of the earliest still to survive, namely a 16th century building on West End (B Joyce pers. comm.).

Beyond the core of the town there is little evidence for earlier field boundaries within the area under consideration, although there has been reasonable survival to the east of the railway line. Nineteenth century and early twentieth century housing development often retains the lines of these boundaries within its blocks; however, the housing estates to the south and south-west of Wirksworth, being later, have generally imposed a new pattern on the landscape, with the older boundaries only visible in one or two places, for example preserved by the line of the rear gardens of houses along the eastern side of Arkwright Street, Ian Avenue and Yokecliffe Crescent, the latter forming one side of a small area of open land to the west of St John's Street.

### 7.2.2 *Below ground remains*

Churchyards are areas of considerable archaeological potential which may contain long sequences of religious buildings and burials, possibly relatively undisturbed, protected by the build-up of grave earth. The churchyard at Wirksworth may have served the pre-conquest settlement, while the church may overlie a pre-conquest church, or even a sequence of churches, about which nothing is known. Based on other early ecclesiastical sites, one might have expected the early medieval cemetery to have been of greater extent, although there appear to be no records of skeletons having been recovered from areas beyond the present graveyard. Nevertheless, the rear yards and gardens of properties surrounding the churchyard are potentially important in that they may contain evidence of features such as precinct boundaries and early buildings. One area of particular potential is the vicarage garden which, from map evidence at least, appears to have remained relatively undisturbed.

Market places too may contain rich archaeological deposits, as they are usually the most intensively occupied areas of a town. At Wirksworth, it is possible that the remains of earlier structures may survive, not only surrounding the market place, but also upon it, where they were demolished to allow improved access for traffic. Such structures include the moot hall on the old market place and the cross depicted on the early 18th century plans. With a good deal of the town lying on a slope, survival in some areas will depend on the extent to which the ground has been cut away to provide a level surface for succeeding buildings.

One area which is known to have produced archaeological material in the past is China House Yard to the south of the church, where finds of pottery were made in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This clearly indicates the potential for future work, including the location of the six tunnels referred to in an 18th century document.

Areas in the vicinity of water offer the potential of exceptional survival through the waterlogging of deposits. Unfortunately the railway follows the line of the river immediately to the west of Wirksworth; nevertheless it is possible that remains of two of the industries known to have taken place, namely the tannery by Newbridge and the smelting mill at Willowbank may survive, as might the remains, further south, of a sequence of water-powered textile mill, since the late 18th century Haarlem mill does not appear, from map evidence, to have been constructed on exactly the same site as the earlier fulling mill.

Many of the areas likely to have been subject to early lead mining activity on the northern side of the town have been quarried away. However, there would have been instances where lead was mined within the town, such as that referred to in section 5.5.9, when ore was discovered within the freehold of a house in Wirksworth Market Place. There is the possibility, therefore, of the chance survival of mining remains, and also of soughs such as that which drained the Bailey Croft mine into the river at the end of Coldwell Street.

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