

Update November 2016

Work continues putting in Test Pits in the Manor House Garden. On the 12th of November Test Pit 4 was inserted into the west side of the garden which is in the form of an embankment which runs up to the rear gardens of houses on North End. So, Test Pit 4 is in the vegetable garden 4 metres from the north boundary wall and 1 metre west of the vegetable garden greenhouse, also against the north boundary wall.

The Test Pit consists of 20cm of modern fine soil and loam, a further 20 cm of modern soil and compost, then some heavier more ashy soil which carries on down to fawn streaky clay at 90cm depth to the maximum achieved depth of 1m 10cm. The fawn streaky clay appears to be the natural substrate at this point.

The heavier ashy soil includes amounts of post-mediaeval pottery of various kinds, china, brown glazed wares, a shard of brown-dot yellow glazed Staffordshire Slipware (a clear glaze over a cream-fawn fabric giving it a yellow tint) (production range 1670-1795). Also clay pipe shards, oyster shell, ironworking slag, small stone, chert and bone and a single shard of very gritty unglazed cream-pink coarseware which we take to be a variant of some gritty ware we previously found in the Hannages a while ago and tentatively regard as being 1100-1400. It's quite an interesting assemblage from one pit.

Some map work done following this indicated that all the test pits so far have been outside the curtilage of the Manor House as it was prior to 1806. The Manor House is not shown on the incomplete 1806 map of Wirksworth, not even all its boundaries, but it is in the part of the plot on the left hand above the "G" of Greenhough Croft. Part of this plot is also occupied by houses fronting Coldwell Street and North End. A house, also not shown in 1806, immediately adjacent to the Manor House on the west side is called Green Gates. Both the Manor House and Green Gates appear on the 1836 map and Green Gates at that time appears to own what is now the Manor House vegetable garden. The Greenhough of Greenhough Croft means green spur of a hill and both in 1806 and 1836 it ran down to the Ecclesbourne, which is now culverted under the railway station.



Wirksworth (incomplete) 1806 (left) and Wirksworth 1836 (right) showing similar central area.

end.