

**The Old Maltings
Barton Mills,
Suffolk
BTM 049**

Heritage Asset Assessment

OASIS ID: Suffolkc1-92095



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The Old Maltings, The Street, Barton Mills, Suffolk

(TM 725 738)

Heritage Asset Assessment

This report provides a written and photographic analysis and record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a redundant maltings. It has been prepared to a specification written by Edward Martin of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (ref. SpecHAA(EM)_OldMaltings_BartonMills_0730_10, dated 10th December 2010) and is intended to inform and accompany an application to Forest Heath District Council for domestic conversion (F/2010/0730 and F/2009/0378).

Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 73 digital images of 21 megapixels (Appendix 1), but also includes 12 printed photographs of key features to illustrate the text (Appendix 2). Each image is described in a separate schedule and wherever possible includes a scale rod with half-metre divisions in red and white. The site was inspected on 12th January 2011.

Summary

The former maltings at Barton Mills adjoins the southern bank of the River Lark to the east of the bridge which carried the 1768 turnpike road until the construction of a new bridge immediately to the south-east in 1963 (enlarged to carry the present A11 in 1989). This section of the river was made navigable at the beginning the 18th century and the adjacent crossroads became an important industrial and commercial centre with a wharf, maltings, corn mills and a coaching inn, leading to a change in the name of the parish from Little Barton to Barton Mills. The historic riverside character of the area remains largely intact, despite the proximity of the A11, and the maltings adjoins two impressive grade II-listed buildings: the Mill House and the old Bull Inn. This character is celebrated by historical plaques sponsored by the parish council, and the rear of the maltings is overlooked by the picturesque 'Barton Mills Millennium Walk' on the old towpath to the north.

The maltings is shown in much the same form as today on an enclosure map of 1796, and retains part of a brick structure of the late-18th century which extended to over 40 m in length between the crossroads and the riverbank. Maltings of this early period are rare survivals, but unfortunately this example was extensively altered and partly rebuilt in the mid-20th century when it was converted into a storage facility for the mill. These alterations included heightening the walls, replacing the roof structure and inserting Crittall windows throughout. Further changes occurred at the end of the 20th century when it was converted into the head office of the Willhire vehicle rental company. The western range of the building was rebuilt in the late-19th century and has also been extensively altered. A number of original ceiling joists survive in the 18th century range, however, and more historic fabric may be revealed behind modern dry-lining during any future conversion work. The northern end of the same range has been truncated and ground archaeology may uncover additional evidence of the building's extent and the origins of commercial activity on the site. While the maltings has been too heavily altered to merit listing, it remains of historic interest insofar as its industrial external appearance contributes to the commercial character of the local area.

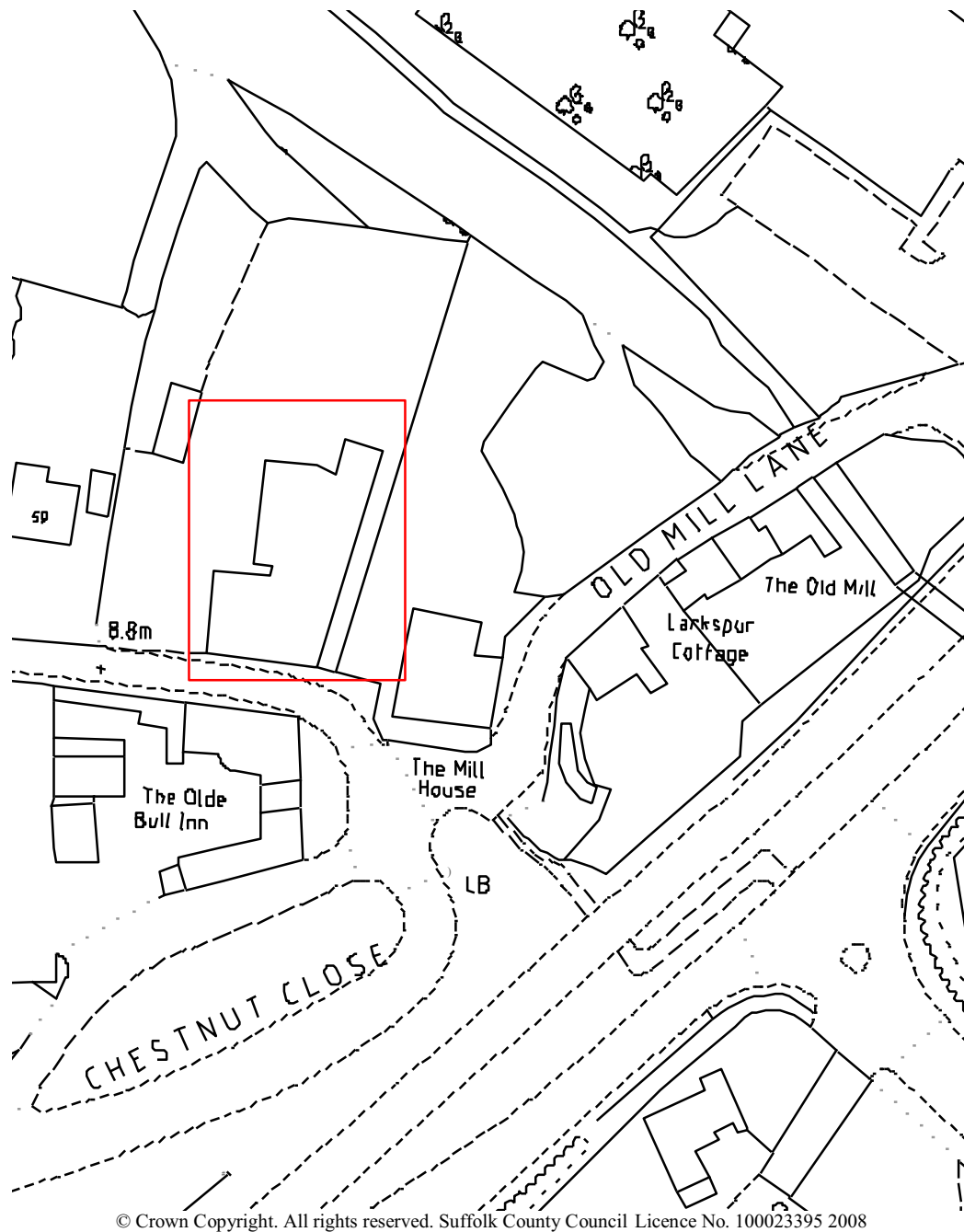


Figure 1
Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan
 Outlining the maltings in red and showing the course of the 18th century turnpike road crossing the River Lark (Old Mill Lane). This once important road junction has now been by-passed by the modern A11 shown to the south. The mill leet (i.e. the southern branch of the river) has been partly filled to form a garden behind the maltings.

Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

The former maltings at Barton Mills adjoins the southern bank of the River Lark to the east of the bridge which carried the turnpike road of 1768 until the construction of a new bridge immediately to the south-east in 1963. This bridge now carries the dual carriageway of the modern A11 which opened in 1989. The building lies at the end of The Street on what would have been an important crossroads approximately 800 m east of the parish church and in close proximity to two imposing 17th century grade II-listed properties: the ‘Olde Bull Inn’ to the

south (a major coaching inn with Dutch gables) and ‘The Mill House’ with impressive chimneys dated 1668 to the east. The former watermill on the old bridge has been demolished but was later replaced by a modern domestic replica. Mills have existed here since the Middle Ages but the commercial viability of the site would have been significantly increased at the beginning of the 18th century when this stretch of the river was made navigable as far as the outskirts of Bury St Edmunds (the navigation having formerly extended only as far as Mildenhall). By the late-18th century the parish had become known as Barton Mills rather than Little Barton as hitherto (to distinguish it from Great Barton near Bury). The industrial and commercial character of the crossroads is therefore of considerable antiquity and historic interest, and is marked by heritage display boards sponsored by the parish council; the board on the northern bank of the river adjoins ‘Barton Mills Millennium Walk’ on the old towpath which commands fine view of the rear of the maltings.

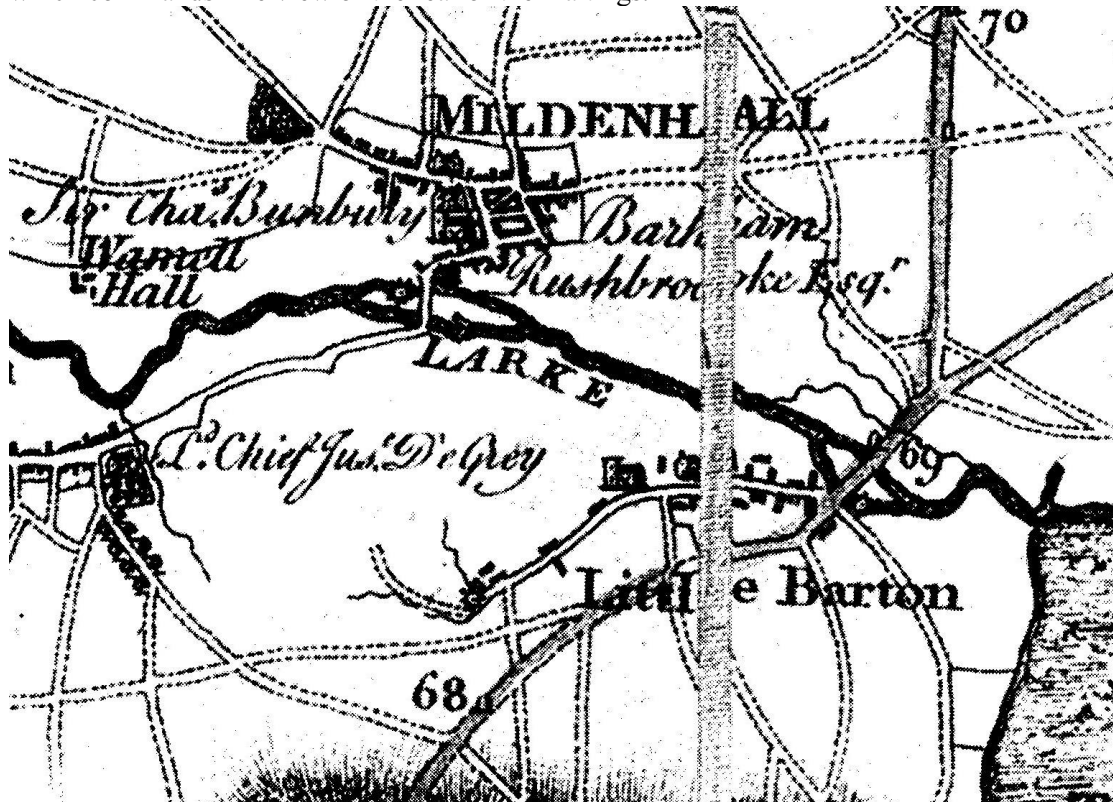


Figure 2.

Barton Mills on Hodskinson’s county map of 1783, which still uses the medieval name of the parish: Little Barton (although the second edition of Kirby’s ‘Suffolk Traveller’ in 1764 refers to it as Barton Mills). The maltings appears to be shown to the north of the turnpike crossroads, although the scale is too small to be certain.

The detailed enclosure map of 1796 (figure 3) shows a large expanse of metalled road surface at the crossroads with the distinctive L-shaped outline of the maltings clearly recognisable to the north and the enclosed courtyard of the inn (with its central entrance passage) to the east. The rear (northern) range extended almost to the bank of the mill leet, which has since been partly filled in to leave only its western spur intact at the foot of the modern garden. The tithe map of 1838 unfortunately lacks the usual apportionment by which its numbered plots could be identified, but shows the maltings with much the same outline - albeit no longer encompassed by the public highway (figure 4). White’s Directory of Suffolk for 1844 records a large corn mill and a wharf at ‘Barton Mills, or Little Barton’, naming the miller as Phillip Fuller, ‘corn miller, merchant and maltster’. The 1855 edition expands his job description to ‘miller, maltster and corn, seed and coal merchant,’ and by 1874 he had been replaced in the same occupations by James Godfrey.

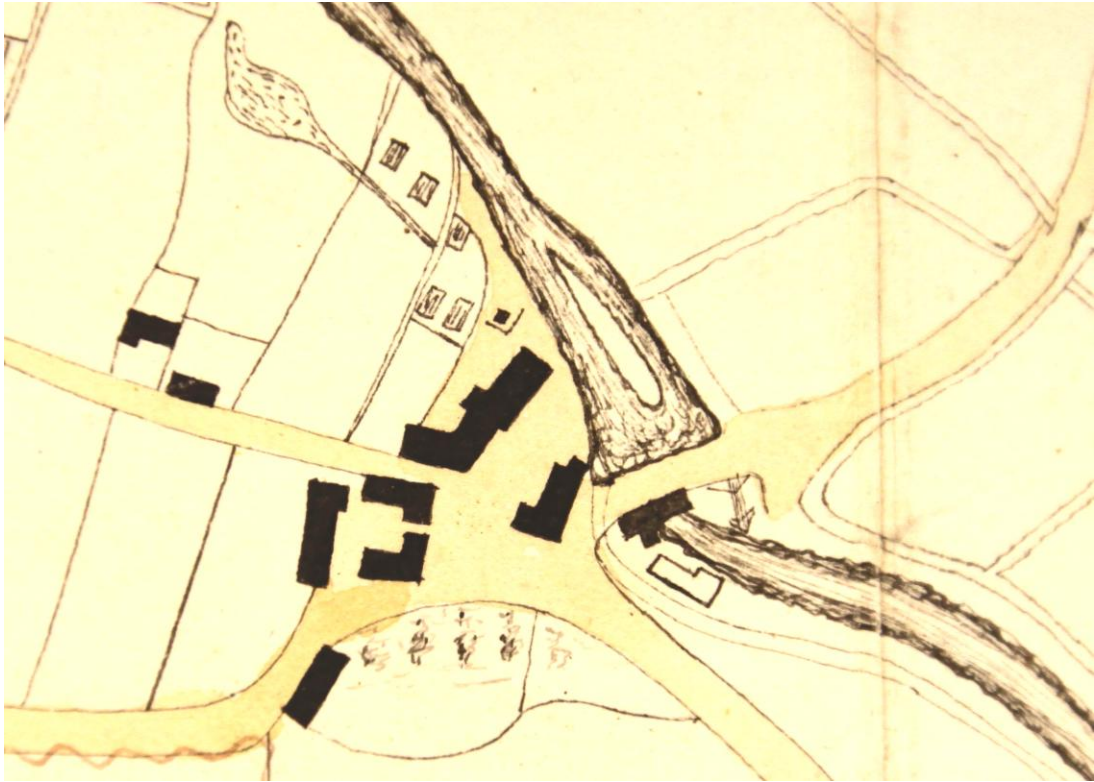


Figure 3. The site on the Barton Mills enclosure map of 1796 (SRO Q/RI 39), showing the distinctive L-shaped outline of the maltings to the north of the crossroads.



Figure 4. The Barton Mills title Map of 1838, which shows the outline of the buildings in more detail and defines the road more clearly to the south. No apportionment survives to identify the numbered plots.

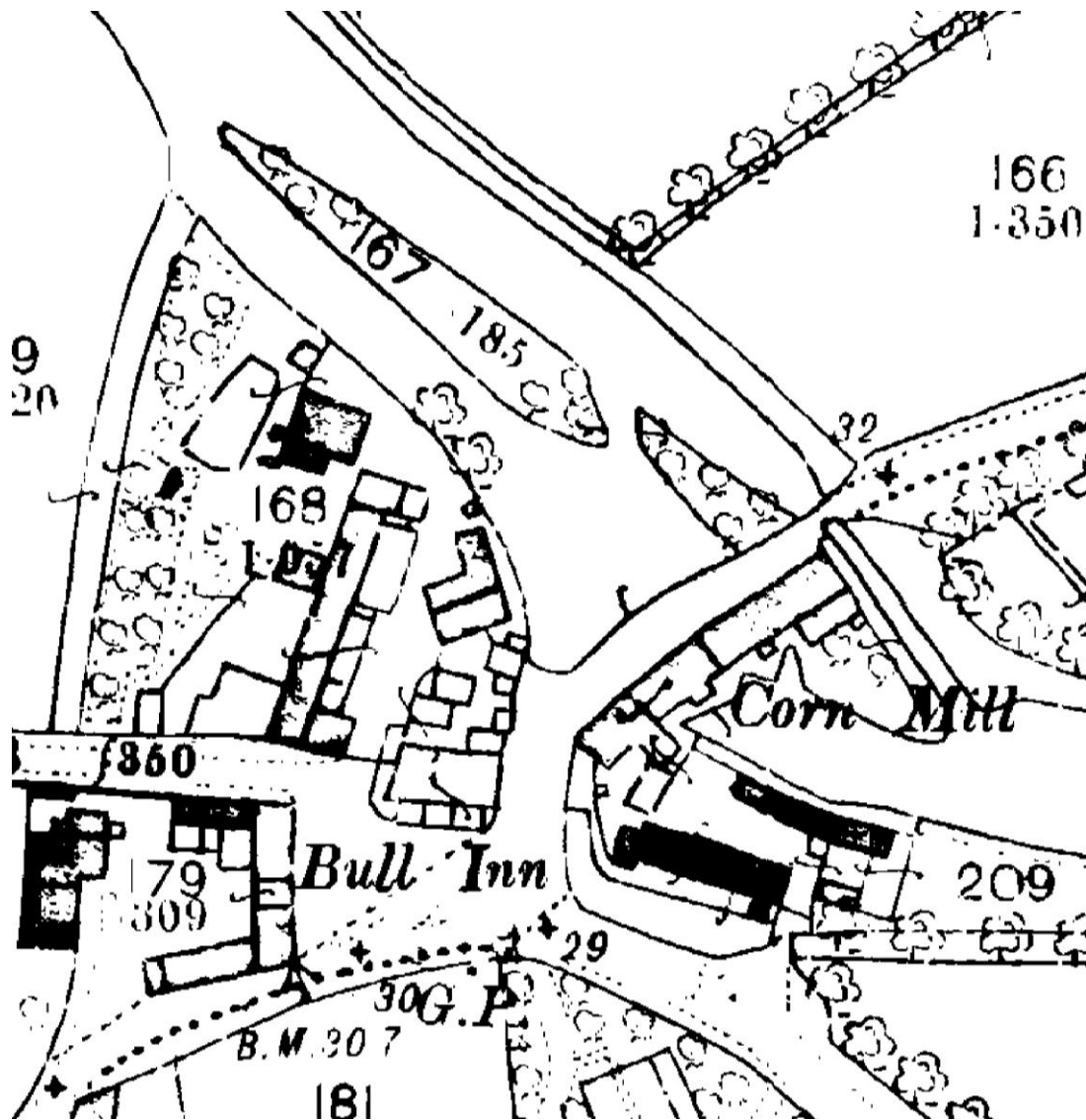


Figure 5

The First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1882, showing a series of probable lean-to sheds against the maltings' eastern elevation.

The outline of the maltings remained much the same in 1882 and 1904, as shown (figures 5 and 6) but its eastern elevation had acquired a series of additional projections of which no trace now remains. They probably took the form of lean-to sheds and had been demolished by 1979 to leave only the eastward projection shown in 1838 adjoining the northern end of the building (figure 7). This feature no longer survives but is indicated by fragments of brickwork at the eastern corner of the truncated gable. The southern branch of the river (cut as a leet to power the mill) had been partly filled by the same date, and the watermill on the bridge had disappeared. The present 'converted' mill building is understood to be a recent structure built in imitation of its predecessor in order to complement the industrial character of its location. The Mill House, mill and maltings were acquired by the Parker family in *circa* 1893 (according to the aforementioned historical display boards) and with the decline of rural malting during the 20th century the maltings was latterly used only as storage for the mill. This change of use relates to the insertion of a large mid-20th century vehicle access at the southern end of the eastern elevation. Mr Roger Williams founded Willhire Car Rentals at the Mill House in 1964 and later converted the maltings into its Head Office. The business was taken over by Arriva plc in 1998 and subsequently relocated, but the name Willhire was still visible above the street entrance to the redundant building at the time of inspection.

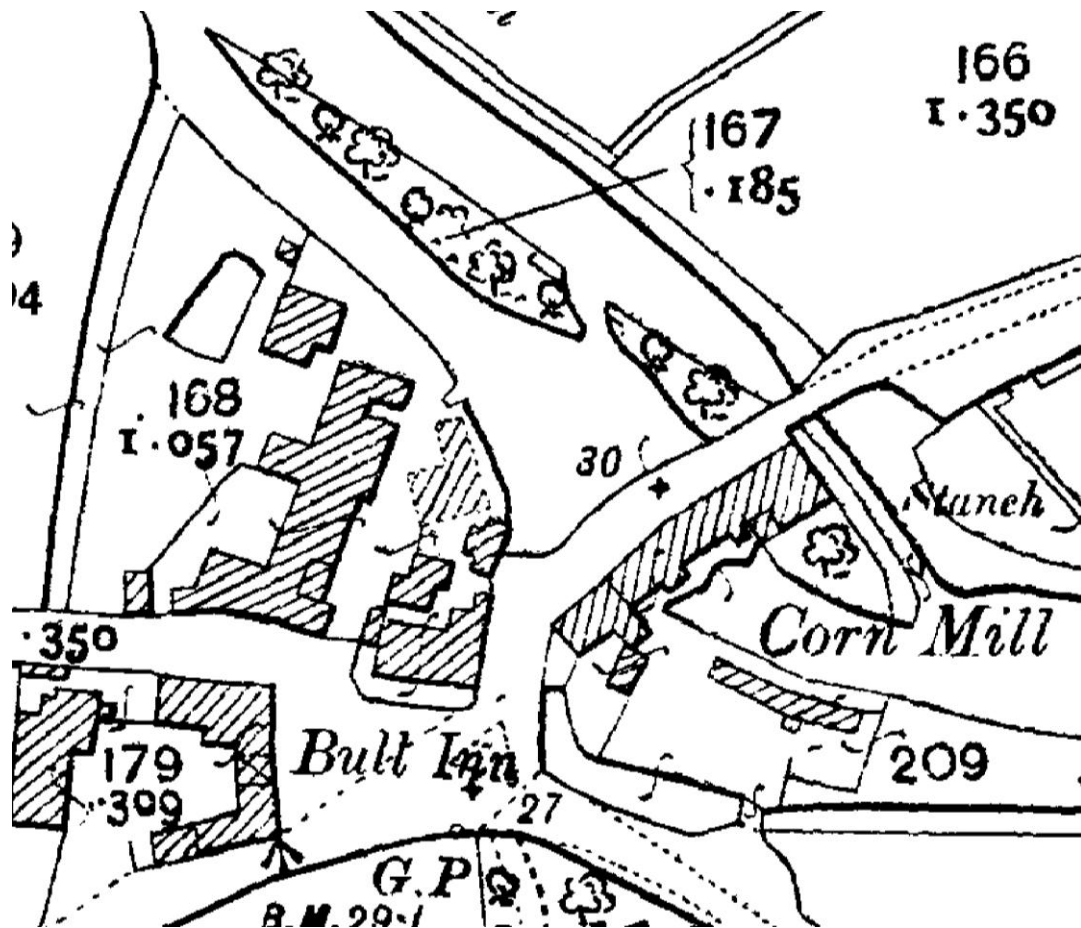


Figure 6. The Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904

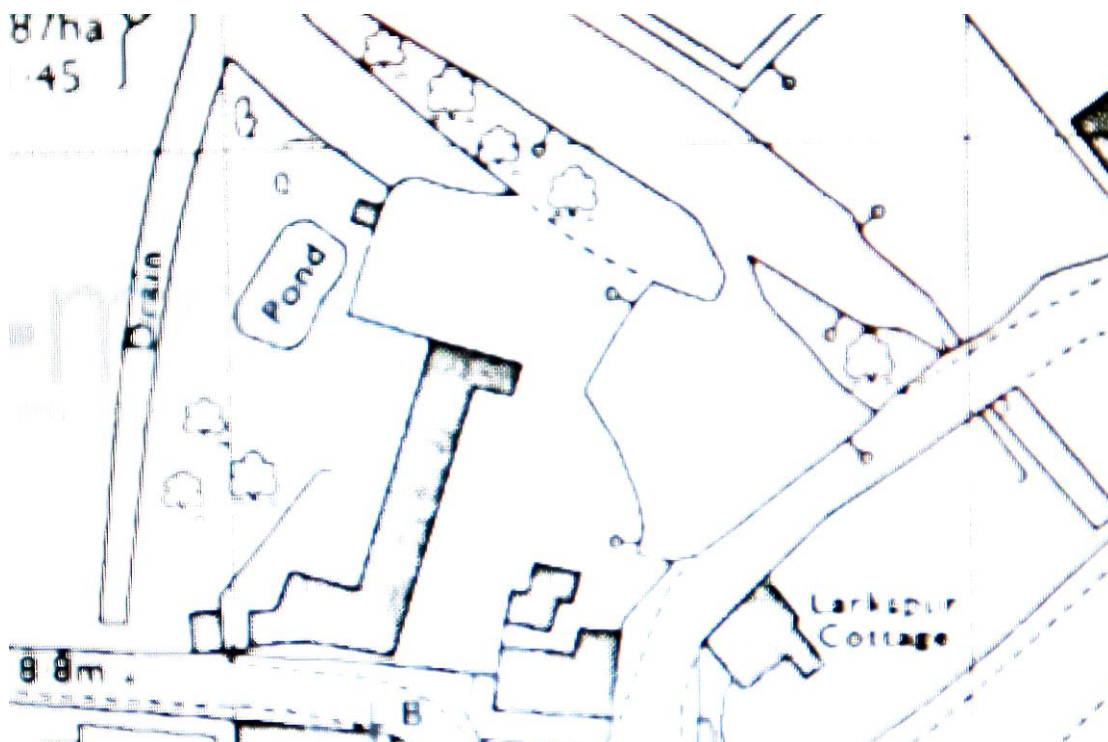


Figure 7. Ordnance Survey of 1979 showing the partly filled mill leet to the north and the removal of all but one projection from the maltings' eastern elevation. Note the absence of the watermill from the bridge before its reconstruction as a replica dwelling.

Building Analysis

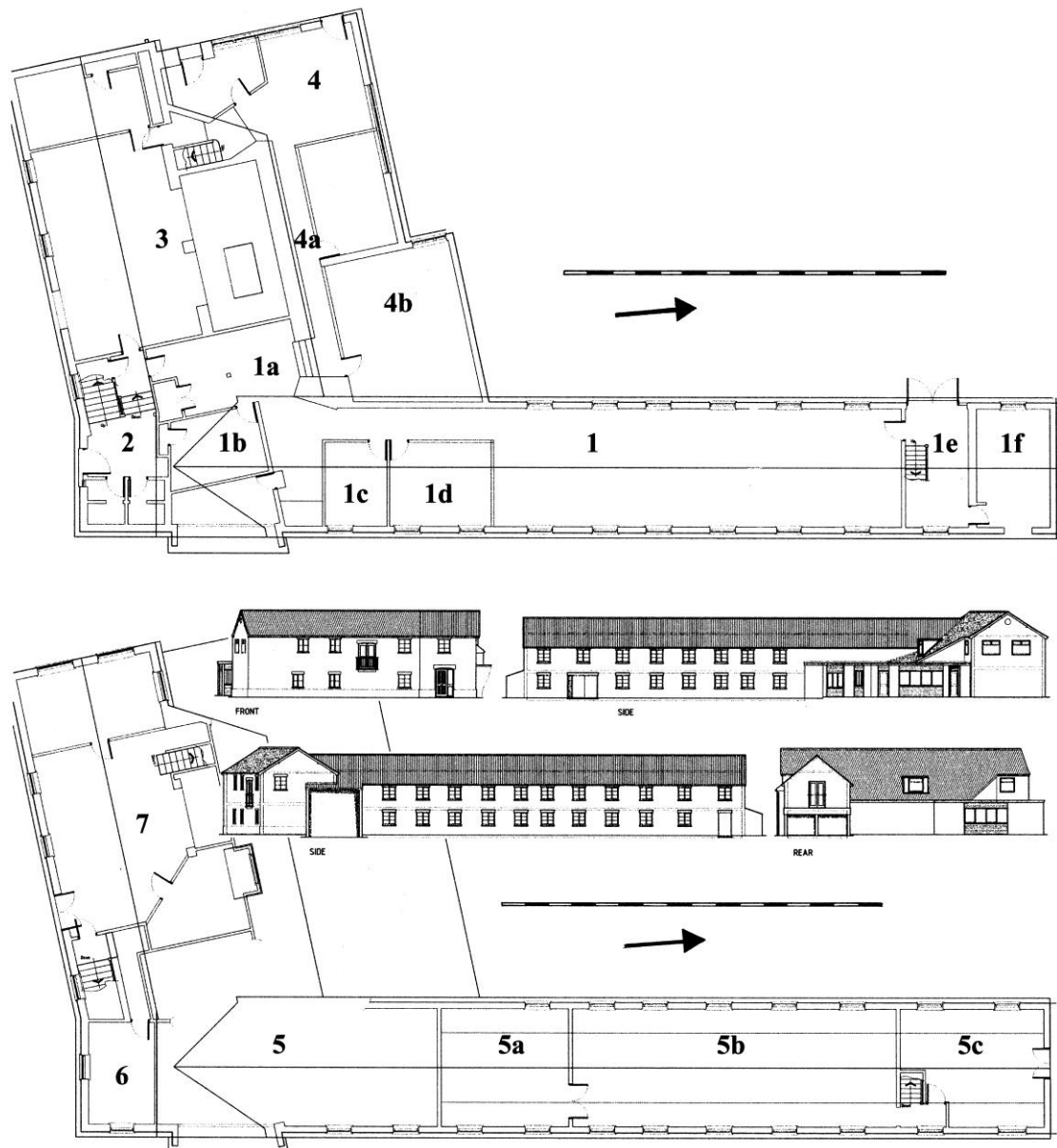


Figure 8

Block plan of the site identifying each area with a number for ease of reference in the text and photographic record. The ground plan is shown above and the first-floor plan below. Scales in metres. Adapted from drawings by M.R.Designs of Newmarket.

Key

1 & 5. Brick malting range. Probably late-18th century but largely rebuilt in mid-20th century.

The eastern wing of the maltings is a substantial two-storied brick structure with a slate roof that extends to 5.8 m (19 ft) in external width by 40 m (130 ft) in length from its northern gable to its junction with the road (i.e. areas 1 and 2 in figure 8). The walls rise to 4.3 m (14 ft) at their eaves with an internal ceiling height of 1.9 m (6.3 ft). The building was extensively altered in the mid-20th century and converted into offices during the late-20th century, leaving relatively little original fabric either intact or exposed. Any precise analysis of its original

appearance, layout and purpose is accordingly impossible, but the limited evidence is consistent with the building's use as a maltings.

The distinctive L-shaped outline is shown on the Barton Mills enclosure map of 1796 (figure 3) and the irregular colour (mixing red and white) and texture of the English-bond brickwork is consistent with a date in the latter part of the 18th century. The same date is also suggested by the impressive chamfered binding joists of the ceiling which represent the only early fabric exposed inside the building and preserve what may be original grey pigment beneath later whitewash. At least one joist bears an unusually large incised carpenter's Roman numeral (XXII) but these impressive timbers may have been re-used and may have been raised in height during the 20th century alterations (given the relatively low height of the original door and window lintels described below). The internal walls and common ceiling joists of the lower storey were entirely hidden by the dry-lining of late-20th century office fittings at the time of inspection, but more evidence of their origin and development may be revealed during any future conversion work. The present internal walls on both storeys (as indicated in figure 8) appear to consist only of 20th century brickwork, block-work or boarding, and there is no evidence of original partitions. This lack of internal subdivision is consistent with the layout of 18th and 19th century maltings elsewhere, in which the upper storey typically served as a malting floor and the lower storey as a general storage area. The various stairs are also modern.

The original brickwork is exposed externally along the entire length of the eastern elevation and northern gable but rises to only 3.5 m at its maximum height and the upper courses consist of mid-20th century Flettons. The same early brickwork survives to a height of only 3 m in the western elevation (i.e. slightly lower) and the northernmost 14 m has been entirely rebuilt. The present metal-framed Crittall windows and external doors date only from this refurbishment, which included a new softwood roof structure. Early malting floors were often provided with relatively little headroom and it seems likely that the entire building was raised in height when it was converted into a warehouse for the adjacent mill. There is evidence of two original but blocked doors and/or windows at the northern end of the eastern elevation, where lintels of bricks set on edge can be discerned in conjunction with straight joints respected by closers (quarter-bricks) at a height of just 1.5 m (5 ft) – 0.5 m below the present window lintels. It is also clear that the building continued further to the north and has been truncated, since broken brickwork projects from both corners of the present gable. The missing structure also projected to the east and can be equated with a similar projection shown on the tithe map of 1838 and subsequent Ordnance Surveys: it may have formed the malting kiln which the structure must have possessed (and which is otherwise conspicuous by its absence) and was lost only after 1979 as it appears in figure 7.

2-3, 6-7. Brick roadside range. Probably late-19th century but incorporating earlier fabric to the east.

The southern wing of the building adjoins the eastern wing at an angle slightly in excess of ninety degrees, reflecting the curve of the road which it adjoins. It consists of painted brick and slate of late-19th century appearance but incorporates the earlier brick fabric of the eastern wing to a height of 2 m in its gable (suggesting it represents a reconstruction of an older building on the site, as confirmed by the historic maps). A series of crudely finished pitch-pine binding joists are exposed on the lower storey to the west, and a rear elevation of flint-rubble with gault-brick dressing to a pair of blocked windows has recently been uncovered in the corridor of the 20th century northern extension (4a). The internal fabric is otherwise entirely hidden by the dry-lining of late-20th century offices, WCs, and bedrooms, and any analysis of its original layout and purpose is hampered accordingly. A first-floor loading door in the roadside elevation is consistent with the building's use as a storage facility associated with the mill but appears to be a 20th century conversion of an original arched window (the closers of its eastern jamb do not extend beneath the level of a window sill). The present

windows also appear to be insertions of the mid-20th century which interrupt the brickwork. The flint-rubble northern elevation probably belonged to a rear lean-to rather than the main structure, but may have been retained from the earlier structure on the site. Large vehicle doors to the east were approached from the adjacent Mill House but are now blocked by the aforementioned internal partitions. As in the eastern wing, more evidence of the historic fabric may well be revealed when the present dry-lining is removed during any future conversion work.

4. A late-20th century flat-roofed office extension of Fletton brick with an internal corridor (4a) in which the flint-rubble northern elevation of the street range (3) has been recently exposed behind dry-lining.

Historic Significance

While the building would have been of considerable historic significance as a rare 18th century malting range, its interest was dramatically reduced by a major mid-20th century reconstruction which probably related to its conversion into a storage facility for the adjoining mill. These changes, which involved the replacing of its roof and windows along with the partial rebuilding and the raising in height of its walls, were compounded by further alterations of the late-20th century when the building became the head office of the Willhire vehicle rental company. Additional historic fabric may be revealed behind the extensive internal dry-lining during any future conversion work, and the grounds to the north may preserve archaeological evidence of malting kilns and the commercial origins of the site, but the building is not sufficiently well preserved to merit listing. Its chief historic interest probably lies in the extent to which its industrial appearance continues to contribute to the commercial character of the local landscape in conjunction with the reconstructed watermill and the grade II-listed Mill House and inn: a character which remains surprisingly intact despite the close proximity of the A11.

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from The Street to west showing proximity of maltings (left) to Old Bull Inn (right) & Mill House.
2. General view of site from south-east showing Mill House right, maltings in centre and Old Bull Inn to left.
3. General view of site from east showing Old Bull Inn to left, maltings in centre and Mill House to right.
4. General view from River Lark to north showing maltings to right, Mill House in centre and converted mill & bridge to left.
5. General view of site from grounds to north showing site of the demolished 20th century buildings to the left and the remains of the river spur to right.
6. General view of site from bridge to east showing Mill House with dated chimney to left (1668) and maltings in rear to right.
7. Northern end of eastern exterior seen from bridge to north-east showing 19th century slate roof.
8. Eastern exterior seen from bridge to east showing Crittall windows to the raised upper storey and recently renewed slate roof.
9. Truncated northern external gable showing remains of demolished walls to both corners & modern doors to first-floor chamber (5c).
10. Exterior from north showing truncated gable with attached modern corrugated-iron lean-to shed.
11. Exterior from north-west showing truncated northern gable to left and remains of 20th century offices (4) to right.
12. Exterior from west showing remains of 20th century offices (4) and 19th century street range (3) to right & maltings (1) to left.
13. Exterior of 20th century offices (4) and 19th century street range (3) from north-west.
14. Western exterior of maltings (1) showing remaining original brickwork to right with 20th century Fletton brickwork above & left.
15. Detail of irregular original brickwork in English bond to western exterior (1) showing ostensibly inserted door and window.
16. Northern external gable of maltings (1) showing remains of outward step in eastern exterior to left-hand corner.

17. Eastern exterior of malting range (1) from south showing 20th century windows and upper courses of Fletton brick.
18. Detail of eastern exterior showing 20th century Crittall windows and heightening of original walls in Fletton brick.
19. Northern end of eastern exterior showing blocked original low door to left of modern door opening onto store room (1f).
20. Northern end of eastern exterior of maltings (1) showing blocked original low door or window between 20th century windows.
21. Detail of blocked original low door or window with lintel of bricks set on edge to left of northernmost 20th century window (1e).
22. Eastern exterior of maltings (1) from north-east showing lintel of blocked low door or window to left of scale rod.
23. 20th century vehicle loading doors at southern end of eastern exterior of maltings (1b), seen from south.
24. Southern end of eastern exterior showing early brick fabric to ground-floor of street range (2).
25. Southern end of eastern exterior showing 19th century brickwork of roadside range (2) above earlier fabric.
26. Southern roadside exterior (2 & 3) from south-east showing change of angle and 20th century gable doors to right.
27. Southern roadside facade showing scar of Willhire sign above entrance to right.
28. Exterior from The Street to west showing change of alignment to roadside range (2 & 3) and single-phase western gable.
29. Interior of entrance lobby (2) from west showing roadside door to right and modern WCs to left.
30. Interior of entrance lobby (2) from west showing stair to right and door to northern range (1a) to left.
31. Interior of entrance lobby from east showing modern stair to upper storey & door to street office (3) in rear to right.
32. Interior of street office (3) from west showing rendered flint wall in rear to left and door to entrance lobby (2) to right.
33. Interior of street office (3) from east showing crudely finished ostensibly original pine binding joists of ceiling.
34. Interior of 20th century rear office (4) from north-west showing flint fabric of rear wall of street office (3) to left.
35. Corridor of rear office (4a) from west showing flint fabric of northern exterior of street office (3) to right.

36. Detail of blocked original window with brick dressing in flint northern exterior of street office exposed in rear corridor (4).
37. Corridor of rear office (4a) showing flint northern exterior of street office (3) to left and rear office (4b) right.
38. Interior of 20th century rear office (4) from south.
39. Southern end of malting range (1b) from north showing door to entrance lobby (2) to right and modern kitchen to left.
40. Southern end of malting range (1b) from south showing steps to rear corridor (4a) to left.
41. Malting range from south showing modern office cubicles (1c & 1d) to right and steps to corridor (4a) to left.
42. Interior from west of modern office cubicle (1c) at southern end of rear malting range.
43. Interior from west of modern office cubicle (1d) at southern end of rear malting range.
44. Interior of malting range (1) from south showing office cubicle (1d) to right and thickness of dry-lined western wall to left.
45. Interior of malting range (1) from north showing ostensibly original binding joists.
46. Interior of southern half of malting range (1) from north showing whitewash over grey pigment of ostensibly original joists.
47. Southern end of malting range (1) from north showing modern office cubicles (1c & 1d) to left.
48. Detail of binding joist of malting range (1) showing large carpenter's Roman numeral (XXII).
49. Detail of binding joist of malting range (1) showing chamfered edge and early grey pigment beneath later whitewash.
50. Northern end of malting range (1) from south showing internal dry-lined walls with door to modern stair lobby in rear to left.
51. Northern end of western interior of malting range (1) showing modern dry-lining to walls.
52. Interior of stair lobby (1e) from west showing store room (1f) to left and door to main malting range (1) to right.
53. Interior of stair lobby (1e) from east showing store room (1f) to right and door to main malting range (1) to left.
54. Interior of store room (1f) from east showing 20th century brick fabric.

55. Interior of store room (1f) from west showing external door at northern end of malting range.
56. Internal south-eastern corner of street range (6) from west showing uniform brickwork and modern bedroom.
57. Interior from east of first-floor bedroom in south-eastern corner of street range (6) showing entrance from central stair.
58. Interior from west of first-floor street office (7) showing door to stair lobby in rear to right.
59. Interior from east of first-floor street office (7) showing back stair to rear office (4) to right.
60. First-floor bedroom at northern end of malting range (5c) seen from east.
61. First-floor bedroom at northern end of malting range (5c) from west showing modern rendered interior.
62. First-floor eastern interior at top of stair (5c) showing door to largest chamber (5b) right and later brick above window sill.
63. First-floor of malting range (5b) from north showing 20th century softwood roof trusses and evidence of raised external walls.
64. 20th century internal western brickwork of first-floor malting range (5b) showing surviving earlier fabric to left.
65. Western interior of first-floor malting range (5b) showing earlier brickwork to left of scale rod and beneath window sills.
66. Eastern interior of first-floor malting range (5b) showing 20th century brickwork above original fabric.
67. Eastern interior of first-floor malting range (5a) showing junction between original and 20th century fabric at window mid-height.
68. Western interior of first-floor malting range (5a) showing junction between brick fabrics at sill height.
69. Western interior of first-floor malting (5) showing junction between brick fabrics at window mid-height.
70. Eastern interior of first-floor malting (5) showing 20th century vehicle doors to right.
71. Junction of malting and street ranges on upper storey (5) seen from north-east and showing partition of modern bedroom (6) left.
72. Southern end of first-floor malting range showing junction with street range showing 20th century vehicle doors to left.

73. Eastern interior of first-floor malting range (5) showing 20th century vehicle doors blocked by modern partitions.

Photographic Appendix follows on pp. 15-20

Appendix 2 (pp. 15-20): Selected Printed Photographs



Illus. 1. General view of the site from the 18th century turnpike road to the south-east showing the conspicuous relationship of the maltings (centre rear) to two major grade II-listed buildings: The Mill House to the right (with imposing brick chimneys bearing the date 1668) and the old Bull Inn with 17th century Dutch gables to the left.



Illus. 2. The maltings from The Street to the west showing the late-19th century roadside range of painted brick (2 & 3) with the 20th century offices (4) to the rear (left).



Illus. 3. General view of the 18th century ‘industrial site’ from the Millennium heritage walk on the opposite bank of the River Lark to the north, showing the maltings to the right and the bridge and converted corn mill to the left. The chimney of the Mill House is visible to the left of the maltings. The southern branch of the river formerly passed through the hedge to the right but has been filled.



Illus. 4. The maltings from the west showing the 19th century street range (2 & 3) with the 20th century flat-roofed offices (4) to the right, and the much altered 18th century brick malting range (1) to the left.



Illus. 5. The western exterior of the malting range (1) showing the remaining original brickwork to the right with 20th century Fletton brickwork above & left. The metal-framed Crittall windows date only from the building's extensive mid-20th century refurbishment which appears to have included the raising of its walls.



Illus. 6. The truncated northern external gable of the malting range (1) showing the remains of an outward step in the eastern elevation to the left-hand corner. The earlier brick fabric in the gable (beneath the modern cement render) probably illustrates the original height of the eaves. The laurel hedge marks the boundary with The Mill House.



Illus. 7. Detail of the eastern external elevation of the malting range (1) showing its northernmost window (lighting the modern stair lobby, 1e) with evidence of a blocked original low door or window between it and the scale bar to the left. Note the straight joint respected by closers (quarter bricks) and the horizontal lintel of bricks set on edge (at the same height as the lower glazing bars).



Illus. 8. The interior of the 19th century street range (3) from the west, showing the original pine binding joists. The historic fabric is otherwise entirely concealed by the dry-lining of a modern office (including the flint-rubble northern wall to the extreme left).



Illus. 9. The corridor of the 20th century rear office (4a) from the west showing the recently exposed flint fabric of the northern external wall of the street range (3) to the right. This wall contains evidence of two blocked windows (each with brick dressings) but has been rebuilt above in 20th century cement block-work and Fletton brick.



Illus. 10. The interior of the malting range (1) from the north showing the recently exposed and ostensibly original chamfered binding joists (with early grey pigment beneath later whitewash). The internal walls and common joists are concealed by late-20th century dry-lining.



Illus. 11. The upper storey of the malting range (5b) from the north showing the 20th century softwood roof trusses and exposed brickwork of the external walls. Both the front and rear elevations have been raised by varying degrees, and the western elevation to the right largely rebuilt.



Illus. 12. The southern end of the first-floor malting range (5) showing its junction with the street range with the large 20th century vehicle doors to left blocked by late-20th century internal partitions.