

Heritage Appraisal.

Land at Mill Lane, Willaston, Neston.

On behalf of Redrow Homes North West.

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Document Management.

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1	May 2025	Joseph Empsall Senior Heritage Consultant	GS	-



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Pegasus Group have been commissioned by Redrow Homes North West to provide a Heritage Appraisal for land at Mill Lane, Willaston, Neston, as shown on the Site Location Plan below (Plate 1). The land is proposed for residential development.
- 1.2. The purpose of this document is to seek to understand the heritage assets located within the Site and its surrounding area, and what constraints, if any, these may pose to a residential development at this location. The Appraisal will set out the significance of the identified heritage assets, including whether the Site forms part of the setting of the assets and if so, what contribution the Site makes to the significance of the assets.
- 1.3. Following this, recommendations will be made, where applicable, for areas of the Site which may be particularly sensitive to development and conclusions drawn about potential heritage constraints, the magnitude of those constraints, and the implications for the principle of development at this location.
- 1.4. The Heritage Note has been informed by a Site visit undertaken on 21st May 2025, reference to the online Historic Environment Record, and reference to historic maps and aerial photographs.



Plate 1: Site Location Plan.



2. Archaeology

- 2.1. The site of a possible cottage depicted on the Tithe Map may be located within the Site, though this would not represent a constraint to development.

3. Built Heritage

- 3.1. The Site contains no Listed Buildings and is not located within a Conservation Area. Within a 1km study area of the Site, there is one Grade II* Listed Building, 15 Grade II Listed Buildings, and the Willaston Conservation Area.
- 3.2. The Grade II Listed Willaston Mill (NHLE 1387688) is located c.100m to the east of the Site, and has been identified as having the potential to be sensitive to the development proposals.
- 3.1. With regards to other heritage assets within the vicinity of the Site, the Grade II Listed The Lydiate (NHLE 1387639 (NHLE 1138723) and its Grade II Listed Lodge (NHLE 1387640), are located c.215–300m to the north–west of the Site, and the Willaston Conservation Area is located c.200m to the south of the Site. The assessment has concluded that the Site does not form any part of setting that positively contributes to their heritage significance due to the nature of the assets and a lack of visual connections, spatial relationships and legible historic connections. Accordingly, the proposed development is not anticipated to result in a change that would impact upon the overall heritage significance of these assets. Therefore, these have not been identified as sensitive to the development proposals, and have not been discussed further below.

Willaston Mill – Grade II Listed

- 3.2. The Site is located c.100m to the west of the Grade II Listed Willaston Mill. The Windmill dates to 1805, comprising a 5-stage tower built of circular plan, which is built from red brick in an English Garden Wall bond (Plate 2). The building was converted as a residential dwelling in 1962, with its various lifting doors over each floor instated with French windows.



Plate 2: The Grade II Listed Willaston Mill.

- 3.3. The first available cartographic source to depict Willaston Mill is the 1843 Tithe Map (Plate 3). This showed the Mill as a circular structure located on the southern side of Mill Lane, with a rectangular structure shown as attached to its western side. The Mill is recorded under Plot 26, which was owned and occupied by Samuel Price, who also owned and occupied a house on the opposing side of Mill Lane, recorded under Plot 25. The Site is depicted to the west of Willaston Mill, which was shown as a series of agricultural fields. None of these fields were owned or occupied by Samuel Price.
- 3.4. The 1878 Ordnance Survey Map shows that a long and linear building had been added to the west of the Mill, comprising cottages, with a rectangular building also shown to the east, comprising a terrace of workers cottages (Plate 4). This mapping is the first to show the footpath that crosses the eastern side of the Site, which at this time ran through the centre of a field, that extended further eastwards beyond the Site.
- 3.5. There had been minimal changes to the immediate surrounds of the Mill by aerial imagery from 1945 (Plate 5). This imagery shows that the public footpath to the south-west of the Mill did not originally have hedgerows along it, and views along this path would likely have included the Mill.

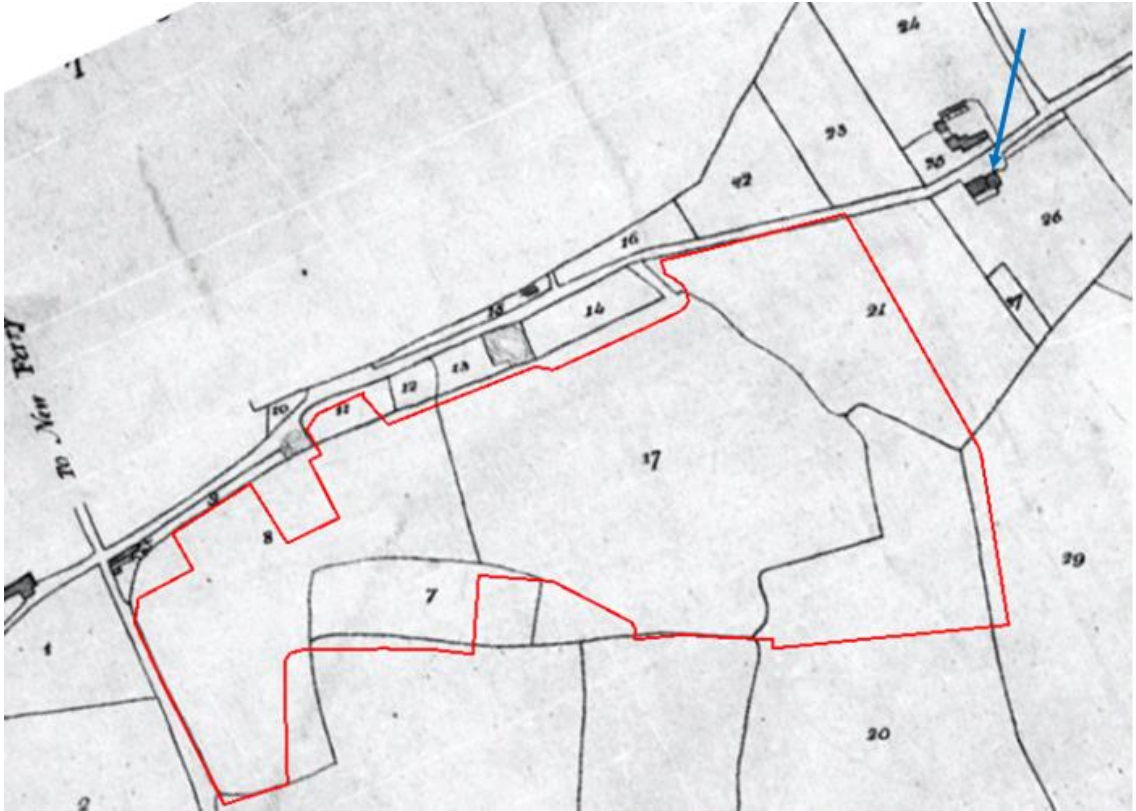


Plate 3: The 1843 Tithe Map, with Willaston Mill (blue) and the approximate outline of the Site (red) highlighted (The Genealogist).

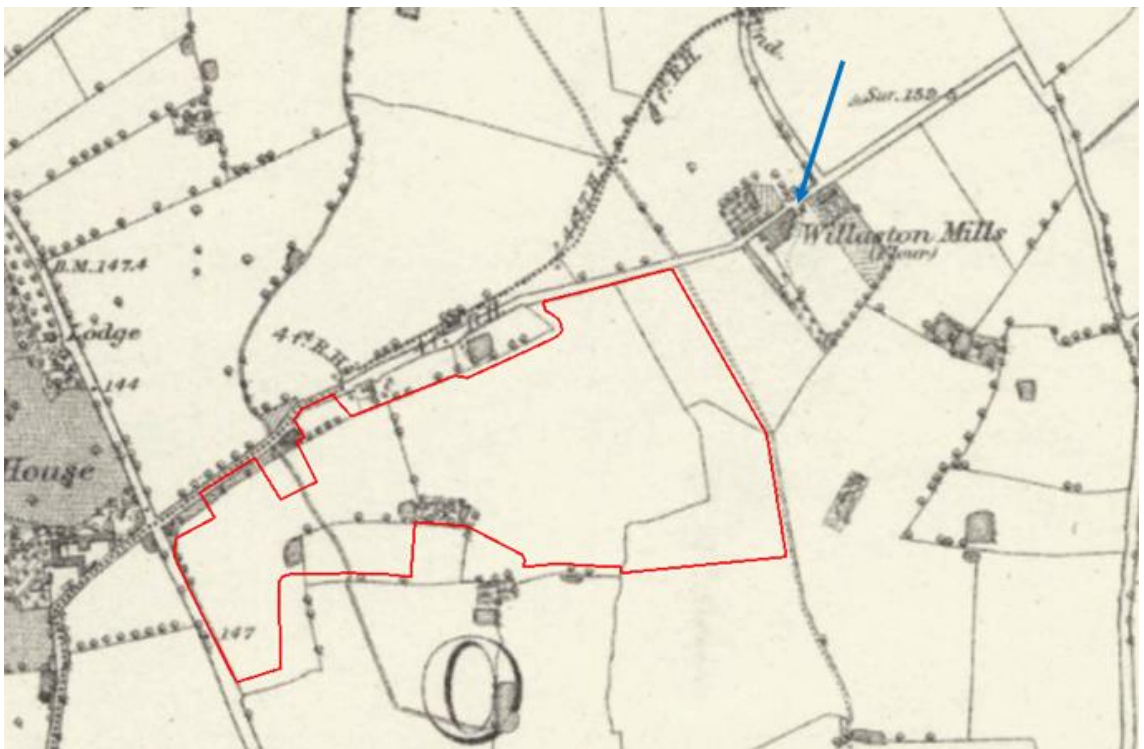


Plate 4: The 1878 Ordnance Survey Map, with Willaston Mill (blue) and the Site (red) highlighted (NLSM).



Plate 5: Aerial imagery from 1945, with Willaston Mill (blue) and the Site (red) highlighted (NLSM).

- 3.6. Willaston Mill is located to the south of Mill Lane, positioned at a slight high point in the landscape, with the topography gradually rising to this area on all sides within the vicinity. The Mill is located within the vicinity of a small cluster of buildings, which were historically associated with the mill function. The Mill House is located to the north of the Mill, which was shown on the 1843 Tithe Map and comprises the original mill owner's house. A row of sandstone cottages are present to the west of the Mill, with a row of terraced worker's cottages present to the east. Both of these were constructed by the 1878 Ordnance Survey Map. Mill Lane represents one of the areas where Willaston Mill is best appreciated, with its tall built form dominant along the roadside (Plate 6). Within the vicinity of the Mill, it can be experienced in conjunction with the other buildings historically associated with the Listed Building along Mill Lane (Plate 7).
- 3.7. Longer distanced visibility of the Mill is limited in most publicly accessible areas, due to intervening built form and vegetation. The Mill is visible in longer ranged views from Mill Lane to the east. From these views, the Mill's relationship with the topography of the landscape can be understood (Plate 8). These views also allow for an appreciation of its tall height in combination with open countryside. From the public bridleway to the north-east of the Mill, there is no visibility due to vegetation (Plate 9). The Mill cannot be clearly seen on the wider approach to the building along Mill Lane (Plate 10). Views from Mill Lane to the west are screened by trees, with some minor visibility of the lower portion of the Mill possible closer to the structure, with its full aspect visible immediately adjacent to the structure (Plate 11). There is also no visibility of the Mill from the footpath to the south-west, which straddles the Site (Plate 12). Views along this path are blocked by the tall hedgerows along its eastern side. These hedgerows were not present on the 1945 aerial image, with this footpath likely previously allowing for longer range views of the Mill historically.



Plate 6: View of Willaston Mill along Mill Lane.



Plate 7: View of Willaston Mill in combination with the Mill House, along Mill Lane.



Plate 8: View of Willaston Mill (yellow) from Mill Lane to the east (Google Street View).



Plate 9: View showing the lack of visibility of Willaston Mill (yellow), from the public bridleway to its north-east.



Plate 10: View towards Willaston Mill (yellow) on the approach along Mill Lane, showing limited glimpse, primarily screened by the trees.



Plate 11: View showing clearer visibility of the Mill (yellow) closer to the structure on Mill Lane.



Plate 12: View showing lack of visibility of Willaston Mill (yellow) from the public footpath to its south-west.

- 3.8. The Site is located c.100m to the west of Willaston Mill. There does not appear to have been any historic association between the Site and the Listed Building. Willaston Mill is visible from various parts of the Site. It is most visible from its eastern extent, but can also be seen in longer distanced views from further west (Plate 13). There is a long and unbroken view of the Mill orientated south-west to north-east from the western extent of the Site to the eastern end of the Site (Plate 14). The Mill can also be seen looking in long ranged views looking across the Site from this orientation along Birkenhead Road to the west (Plate 15). Within the Site, the Mill is partly blocked in some areas by intervening built form and trees to its west (Plate 16), with some areas where the full extent of the 5-stage tower is visible, and some areas where the Mill is entirely shielded from view. When viewed across the Site, the relationship of the Mill with the topography of the landscape can be understood. These views also allow for an appreciation of its tall height in combination with open countryside, including the Site fields.
- 3.9. There is anticipated to be views across the Site fields from the upper storey windows of the mill (Plate 17). However, the building would not have been designed to take in views of the wider landscape. These window apertures had originated as loading doors for the milling process, which were functional rather than allowing for views, with the building converted for domestic use in 1962.
- 3.10. There is a limited degree of co-visibility between the Site and Willaston Mill. From Mill Lane, the north-eastern extent of the Site is partially visible in combination with the Mill (Plate 18). However, the Mill is predominantly screened from view by trees within these views. There are no co-views of the Site and Listed Building from the public footpath that crosses the eastern side of the Site, with no other areas where co-visibility is possible.

3.11. Overall, the Site is considered to contribute to the significance of the Grade II Listed Willaston Mill through setting. Whilst there is no known historic association between the Site and Mill, the views of the Mill from the Site fields allow for an understanding of its relationship with the topography of the landscape which relates to its historic function, and which contributes historic illustrative value. However, it should be noted that these mostly do not represent publicly accessible views. Whilst it appears that historically there would have been views of the Mill in combination with the Site from the public footpath to the east, these are no longer possible. Furthermore, the understanding of the Mill's relationship with the topography can also be appreciated from Mill Lane to the east of the Mill, which does not include the Site fields.



Plate 13: View of Willaston Mill (yellow from within the eastern extent of the Site).



Plate 14: View showing long distanced visibility of Willaston Mill (yellow) within the western extent of the Site.



Plate 15: Long ranged view of the Mill (yellow) from Birkenhead Road, looking across the Site (Google Street View).



Plate 16: View showing the screened visibility of Willaston Mill (yellow) along the northern extent of the Site.



Plate 17: View showing the lack of visibility of the Site (red) from adjacent to Willaston Mill along Mill Lane.



Plate 18: The limited co-view of the eastern fields of the Site (red) and Willaston Mill (yellow) from Mill Lane.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. The Concept Masterplan for the residential development within the Site indicates the intention to include a wide landscape buffer within its eastern extent. The initial assessment has determined that the Site does contribute to the significance of Willaston Mill through setting, and the addition of this buffer would help to minimise harm to the Listed Building, through change to its setting. Public access within this landscape buffer would also allow for publicly accessible views of the Mill in this location, which were not possible in this location previously, with the Site representing private farmland. These would allow the local topographic situation of the Mill which relates to its historic function to be understood.
- 4.2. Longer distanced views of the Mill were also identified within the Site and the road to its west, extending from the Site's western extent with unbroken views of the 5-stage tower to the north-east. Additional mitigation measures could be implemented within the design to further minimise any harm to the Listed Building. A view corridor through an aligned road could be implemented within the scheme, which retains the longer distanced visibility of the structure, in combination with the landscape buffer, which ensures that the building's relationship with the topography of the landscape continues to be understood (Plate 19).

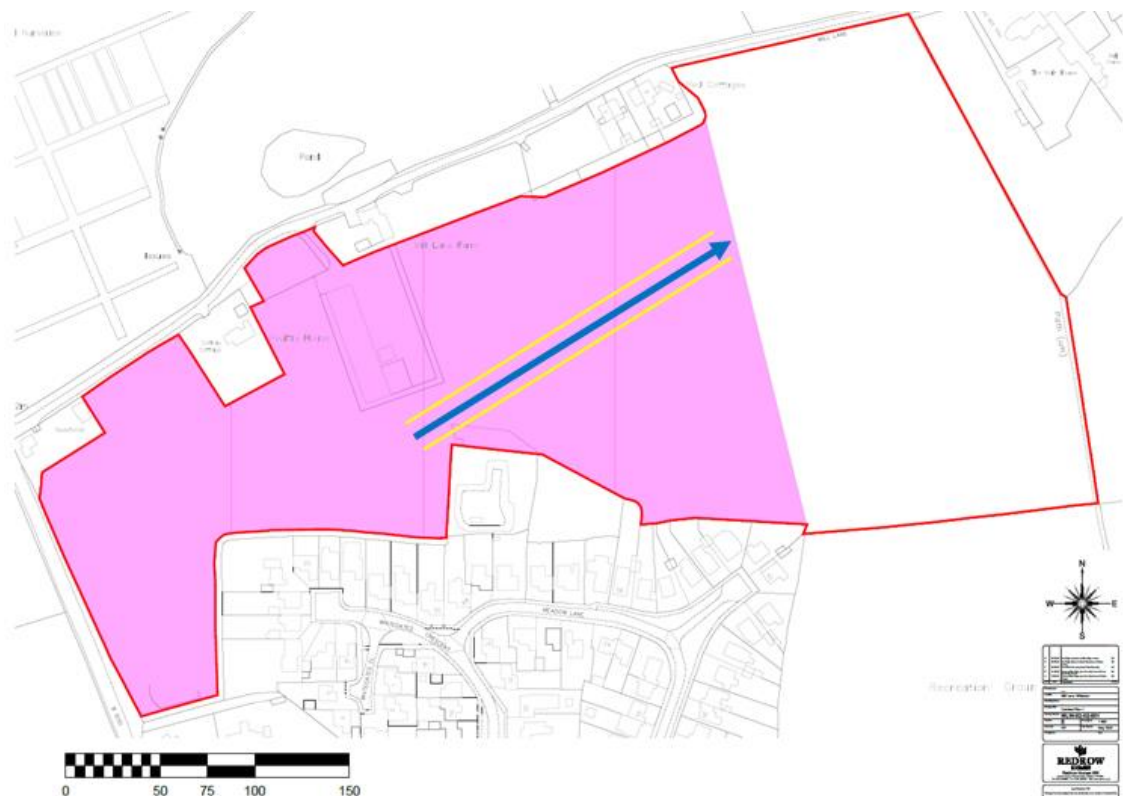


Plate 19: Plan of the Site showing the potential area with viewshed corridor, orientated from south-west to north-east providing continued views of Willaston Mill through the Site.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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