



The windmill at Wheatley

Work on mill goes on

Despite a lack of money, a group of windmill enthusiasts have decided to double their efforts to restore a mill.

The Wheatley Windmill Restoration Society has had an emergency meeting to decide whether to continue with the restoration or let it go considering money difficulties and the need for voluntary helpers.

The society chairman, Mrs Wendy Benson, said: I was pessimistic about the outcome of the meeting, but the members decided to continue working and new ideas have been put forward."

The society intends to approach the local secondary

school, Wheatley Park School, and invite the pupils to take the windmill on as a project.

Members also hope to extend their agreements with the mill owner allowing the society to always have ten years ahead of them to finish the work.

"At the moment," said Mrs Benson, "our agreement runs out in 1986, but if we can extend it every year for ten years people might be more forthcoming with their donations and not worry that the scheme will come to an end before the job is complete."

The 18th century windmill was badly damaged by fire in the 1930s but most of the mechanism is intact and because it was used

to make ocre paint pigment as well as grind grain it is an unusual mill and worth preserving.

The society is approaching ICI, asking for help in painting the mill because of the mill's connection with paints.

Restoration began in 1976 and the ground floor is now complete with a new floor, stonework, windows and the installation of water and electricity. So far the job has cost about £5,000, and there are three more floors to do.

Mrs Benson said if the society did not have to pay labour costs the mill could be restored for another £2,000.

"But if we have to pay wages the cost could be as much as £40,000," she said.