

**THE ELMS FITZROY PARK LONDON N6 6HS**  
**PRELIMINARY DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**  
**FOR THE REINSTATEMENT WORKS**



**FINAL VERSION**

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## **CONTENTS**

Section 1	:	Introduction
Section 2	:	The Form Of The Original Building
Section 3	:	Relevant Recent Planning History
Section 4	:	Review Of Work Already Undertaken
Section 5	:	Proposals For The Reinstatement Works
Section 6	:	Reinstatement Of The Retained Joinery
Section 7	:	The Design Development Of The Winter Garden
Appendix I	:	Site photographs from 2001 and 2002
Appendix II	:	English Heritage photographs dating from 1988
Appendix III	:	Site photographs from December 2012
Appendix IV	:	Stucco Specification

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.01 This Design & Access Statement sets out the context for the proposed reinstatement works to the listed areas of the building. It also addresses the issues raised by the London Borough of Camden in their enforcement notice dated 14 May 2012, reference EN10/0028.
- 1.02 The Elms has undergone significant alterations since it was thought to have been first built by George Basevi for his own use in the early 1840's. Perhaps the most dramatic change was its conversion into seven family units in 1949-50. As a result of all the changes, little of the original historic interiors remained at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the current owner acquired the building. In addition, some of the historic fabric clearly did not derive from Basevi's time. Also, prior to the present works being commenced in 2003, the building suffered from very poor upkeep, and was very dilapidated. It has been on English Heritage's 'At Risk' list since 1974.
- 1.03 For a description of the listing, and the subsequent report by English Heritage historian Susie Barson please refer to the Heritage Statement prepared by Paul Velluet.
- 1.04 Our approach to the reinstatement works was firstly to try and understand the true provenance of the building. At the time the original proposals were being drawn up, for which planning permission was granted in 2003 (planning references PEX/0100810/R2, LEX0100811/R1, and CEX0100812/R1) the research on file at English Heritage, accumulated at the time the building was listed in 1974, indicated the building was substantially by Basevi, with some additions (thought to derive from the 1860's) in the north-east part of the house.
- 1.05 We have recently learnt that the interiors of the building were not inspected by English Heritage at the time of the listing, and yet, as we have also subsequently learnt, much can be determined about the provenance of the building by careful examination of the interior fabric.
- 1.06 For our current work, we consulted some architectural historians, and doubts were raised about many aspects of the building, and whether they could have derived from Basevi, whose classicism, often based in academic study, was derived from his time as a pupil with Sir John Soane. We therefore felt that any strategy for the reinstatement works should be derived from as thorough an understanding of the history of the building as possible, and this meant re-visiting, and attempting to complete, the original research commissioned.
- 1.07 In 2004, at a time when it was anticipated that the client intended to move forward with proposals for the reinstatement of the interiors of the listed elements, Alan Power Architects Ltd commissioned Caroline Pegum to undertake research into The Elms. This was left incomplete when proposals for the interiors were then commissioned from a firm of interior designers from St Petersburg around that time (this work has since been abandoned). When we were asked this year to review the matters raised by Camden Council in their enforcement notice, which was to include proposals for the reinstatement works, we felt it was important to re-visit the historic research, to see if there was any additional material on record that could assist in our understanding of this somewhat puzzling building (although Ms Pegum was no longer available to undertake this further research).

- 1.08 Caroline Pegum's research is included here as part of this pre-application submission.
- 1.09 As is fairly typical of the early period of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, information on this building is sparse; there are no records of the original design, (in fact, we have been unable to find any drawings from the 19<sup>th</sup> century). There are no original documents from Basevi, and nothing to explain the development of the house. The Pegum research has found documents relating to the original disposal of the land by Lord Southampton, but even this is not entirely clear in understanding what happened with the site before Basevi's death in an accident at Ely Cathedral in 1845.
- 1.10 The short period between the date of the disposal of the land by Lord Southampton to Basevi (thought to be around 1838-40) and Basevi's untimely death in 1845 may hold the clue as to what happened with the building. The question is raised as to whether Basevi left the building incomplete, and when it was sold after his death, whether the new owner undertook significant alterations and additions, including, it is thought, moving the original main entrance from the east elevation to the south elevation (see Section 2).
- 1.11 What we felt was really needed, therefore, in order to inform the reinstatement works, was not only an understanding of the provenance, and the historic development of, the building, but also, as a consequence of this, an assessment of its significance. The assumption has always been that the building largely derived from Basevi's design, but there were increasing doubts about this. I
- 1.12 It was therefore decided to appoint the highly respected architectural historian Dan Cruickshank to undertake a review of the research already available, to see if there was any further information available, and to review the research, and to examine the building itself, and to produce, in effect, a statement of significance. We also asked Mr Cruickshank to give his view as to the strategy that should be taken in the approach to the reinstatement works, in the light of his conclusions about the historic significance of the building. Mr Cruickshank's report forms part of this submission to Camden Council.
- 1.13 At the same time, chartered architect and architectural historian Paul Velluet was commissioned to produce a Heritage Statement. Mr Velluet was also briefed to address the issues raised in the enforcement notice, and in particular those works already undertaken that Camden wish to see remediated. As part of his work, Mr Velluet has also undertaken his own research, and has also discussed the matter of the building's provenance and significance with Mr Cruickshank.
- 1.14 Structural engineers Price & Myers have been commissioned to report on the remediation issues raised by the enforcement notice, including the design of the Winter Garden, and the structural concrete used in the south-east corner of the listed elements. Their report forms part of this submission.
- 1.15 Luard Conservation Ltd have been asked to comment on the internal report from Camden Council on the assessment of the retained joinery, and their report is included with this submission.

- 1.16 The report has been prepared on the assumption that none of the works described in the Enforcement Notice are authorised in order that the Council can be presented with evidence as to why consent should be granted. As is explained in the covering letter sent to the Council with this report, nothing stated in in this report shall be taken as acceptance that the works in question have not already been authorised by the Council, however.



- 2.04 A triangular area is indicated on this plan on the south-east side of the proposed house, just off Fitzroy Park, which appears to be a provision for an entrance area from Fitzroy Park into the site. In the far north-east corner of the site, up against the boundary with Fitzroy Park, another rectangular building is indicated, where the present-day Elm Cottage is located.
- 2.05 A broken line runs from the south-east corner of the proposed house, in a south-west direction, and appears to create an area between the broken line and the boundary with Fitzroy Park that is isolated/proscribed as an area where numerous Sycamore and Elm trees are to be protected and retained.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.06 The same plan arrangement for the house can be seen in the (printed) plan attached to auction catalogue, for the second day of the sale, 11 August 1840.

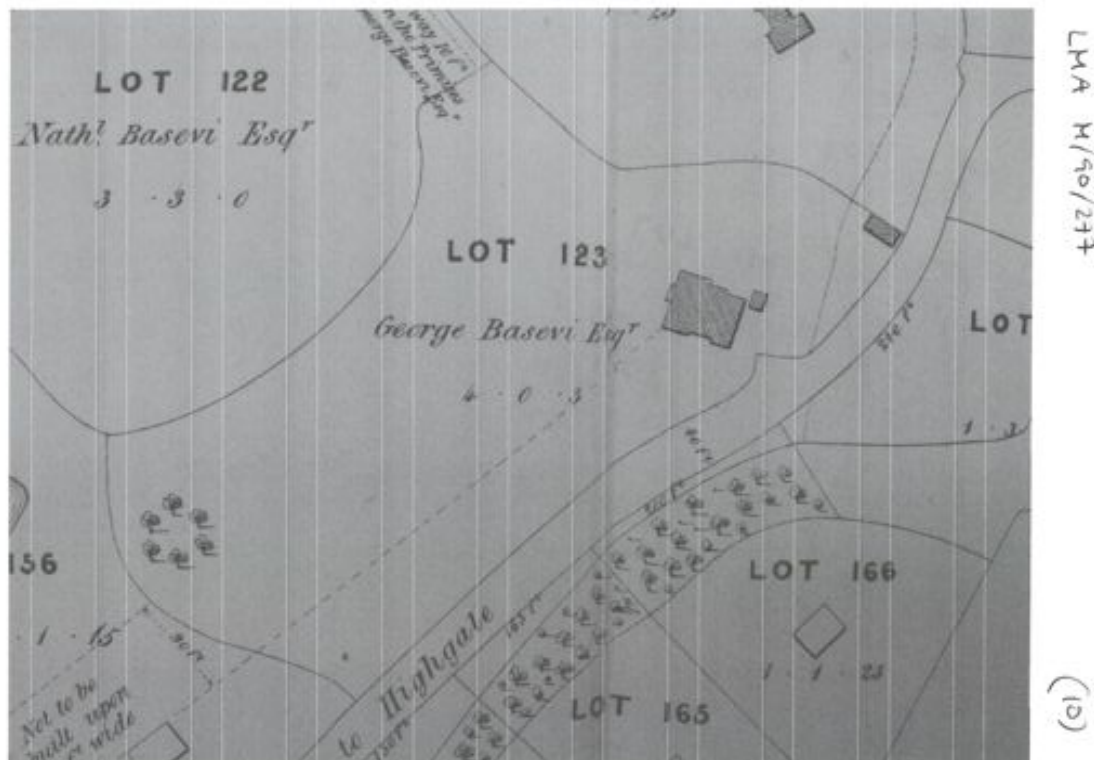


Illustration 2.02: Extract of the printed plan second day of the auction sale on 11 August 1840, showing the proposed location of The Elms

- 2.07 From this plan, it would appear that the matrix envisaged by Basevi was for an inset carriage entrance immediately off Fitzroy Park, that opened onto an arrival courtyard, leading to a main pedestrian entrance on the east elevation. This would set the laying out of the interior up for an arrival hallway, leading to an inner hallway containing the main staircase, which in turn leads onto a pair of rooms of reception rooms, orientated on the long access overlooking the main grounds to the west.

<sup>1</sup> The agreement between Basevi and the Earl of Southampton refers to the requirement to retain certain trees on the site, and they appear to be principally located in this demarked area



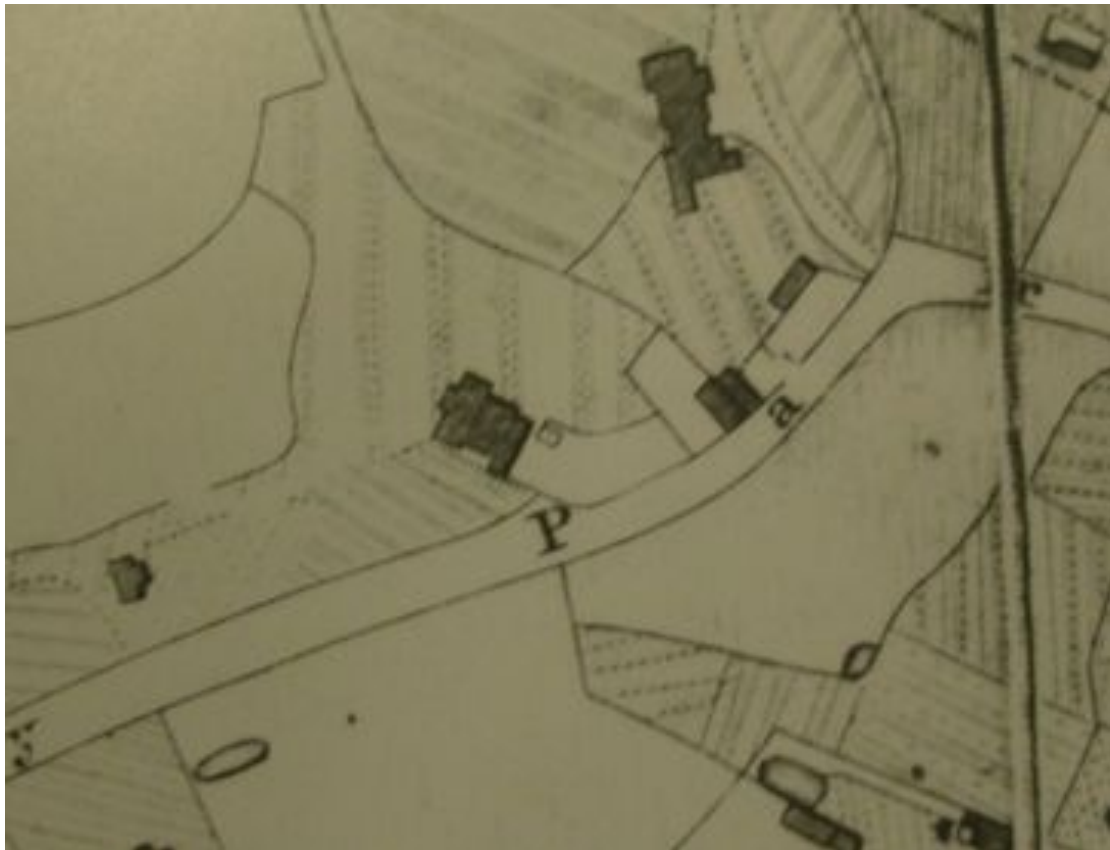
- 2.08 The plan does not appear to allow for the two canted bays to be found on the present building in the south-east corner, nor does it show the canted bay on the east side (an orthogonal projection is shown) and nor does it include the decorative screen on the south elevation, although the characteristic indent to be found in this area on the present building is already indicated.
- 2.09 Nothing is known of the way in which work developed on the site between the agreement of September 1838 and Basevi's death in 1845. Given that Basevi died unexpectedly in an accident at Ely Cathedral in 1845, it is likely, as one senses from the present building, that Basevi left the building unfinished, at least as to his long-term intentions for the site.
- 2.10 The next available evidence chronologically for the layout of the building is the *Map of the Parish of St. Pancras in the County of Middlesex, 1849*. This shows the building in the same plan form as shown on the site plan attached to the 1840 auction sale. However, this map provides clearer information as to overall plan of the house, and its primary orientation: it shows the entrance into The Elms from Fitzroy Park, and indicates an entrance courtyard, fenced off from the rest of the site. This suggests, as noted above, that the original entrance to the building, as laid out by Basevi, was on the east side of the building, and not where it was when listed, on the south side. The area of the site on the south side of the building is shown as planted gardens, or perhaps a kitchen garden, which would have been common at the time. The Lodge is shown, but no linking path or road between the Lodge and the main house is indicated.



*Illustration 2.03 Extract from 'Map of the Parish of St. Pancras in the County of Middlesex, 1849'*



- 2.11 The 1849 map shows the plan of the house in a more or less identical layout to the plan attached to the 1840 auction sale. As in the 1840 plan, the 1849 plan does not show the canted bays in the south-east corner or the on the west elevation; the decorative screen is not shown
- 2.12 Given in plan forms between the 1840 and 1849 maps, the 1849 arrangement appears to describe the plan form of the house at the time of Basevi's death in 1845.



*Illustration 2.04 Enlarged extract from 'Map of the Parish of St. Pancras in the County of Middlesex, 1849' showing The Elms with the entrance court on the east side, directly off Fitzroy Park*

- 2.13 The next known map is the 'OS Map/III/1863-1869. This shows The Elms extended in the north-east corner from the original footprint, but the original plan form is still visible. The indent off Fitzroy Park for the entrance is shown in a similar position and form to the position shown on the 1849 map, but the south side of the building has been opened to as a carriageway, and the characteristic circle form for horse and carriage is shown laid out in front of the south elevation.
- 2.14 This suggests that at some time between 1849 and 1863-69, the house was re-orientated to have the main entrance on the south side. Even with this arrangement, there is still no indication of the canted bays and the screen on the south side (by contrast, projecting bays are shown on Beechwood). This suggests that the external alterations from the Basevi period are later than at least 1863.
- 2.15 It seems probable, from a reading of the 1849 and 1863-69 maps, that the original entrance was on the east side of the building, and the building was

without the additions of the bays and decorative screen. It is also probable that the two storey element on the south-east corner did not exist.

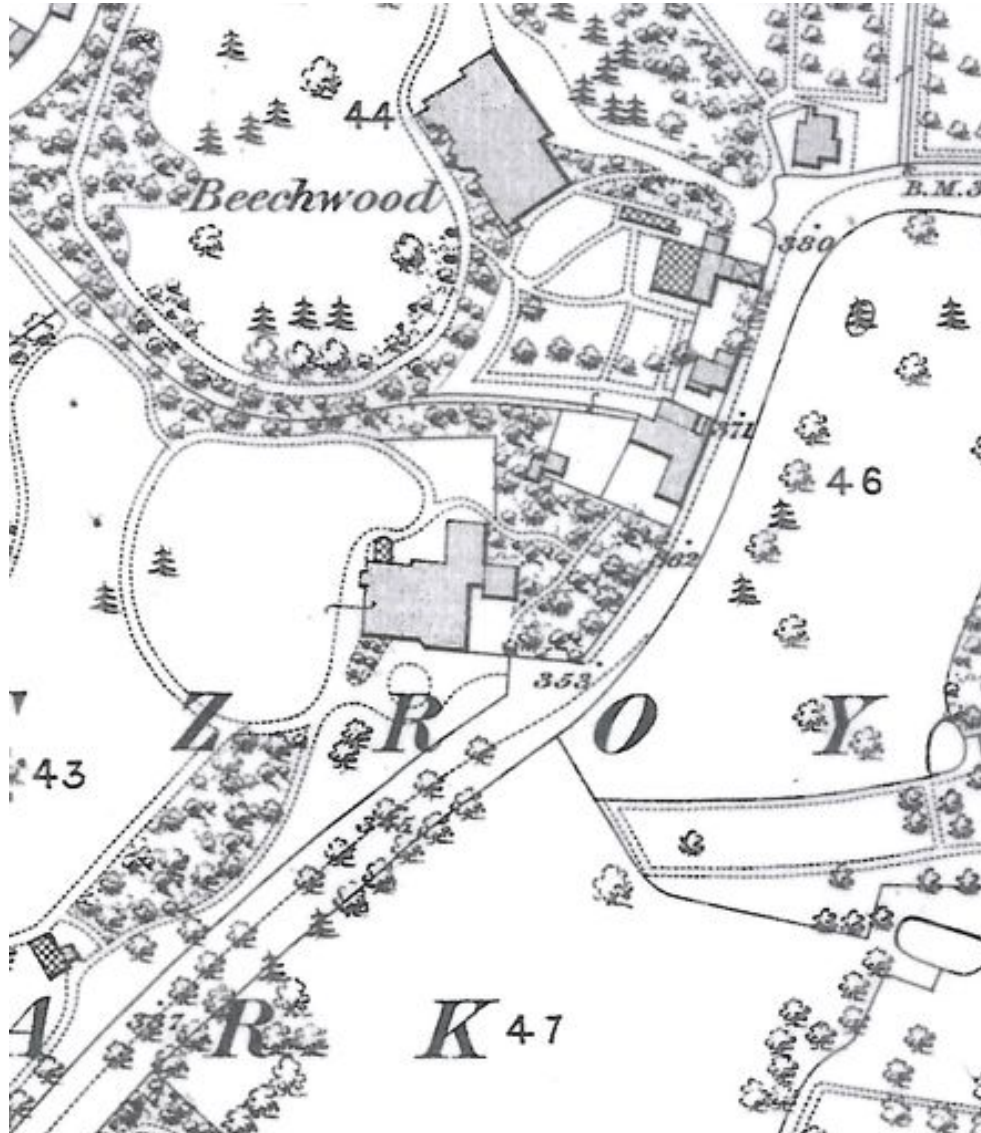
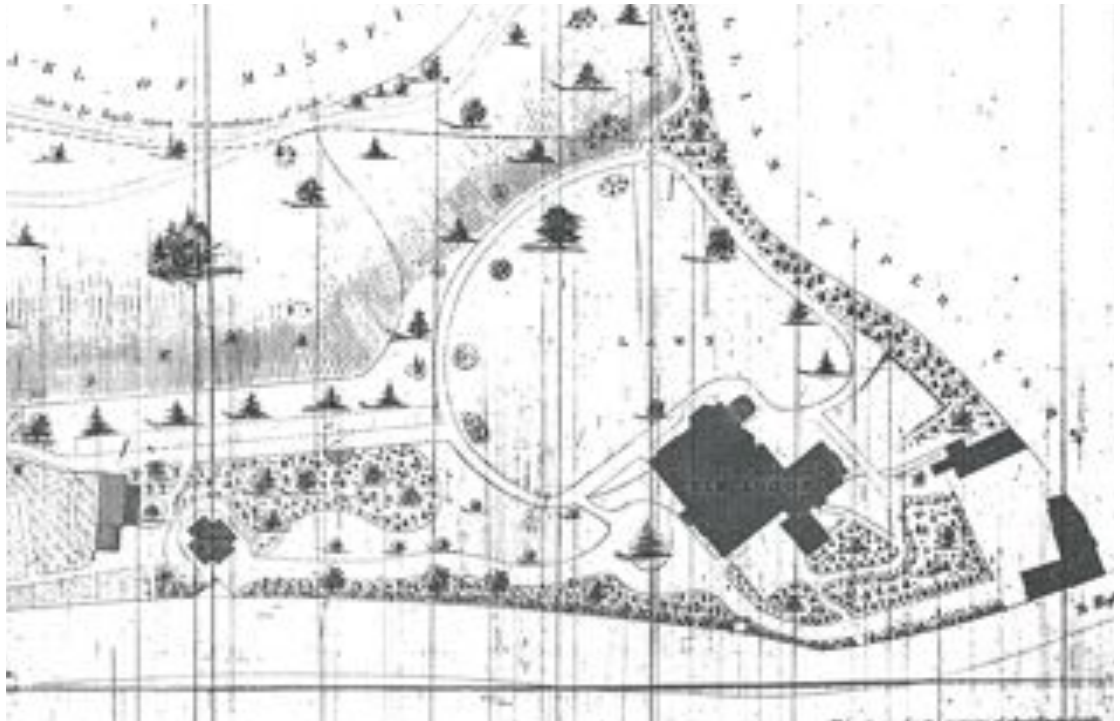


Illustration 2.05: Extract from OS Map/III/1863-1869: This is the earliest known map that shows the new south entrance, with a carriage drive and turning circle accessed off Fitzroy Park. The east of the house is now shown as landscaping.

- 2.16 Sometime later – probably after the building was sold 1849 - major alterations and additions were undertaken, the most radical of which was to re-orientate the whole building, with main entrance now on the south façade, dressed in a new, free-standing decorative classical screen of columns on a continuous plinth. A new 'wing' was added on the east side of this entrance. The 1863-69 map also shows that the building was extended on the north-east side, most probably at ground floor and basement only.

- 2.17 In June 1889, the building and land was offered for sale by auctioneers Debenham, Tewson, Farmer and Bridgewater. The site plan attached to the sales particulars, which annotates the house as 'Elm Lodge' (see illustration 2.06) shows the carriage access off Fitzroy Park removed, and relocated to a position in front of the Lodge.



*Illustration 2.06: Extract from the sale particulars for the sale of The Elms in June 1889*



- 2.18 In the 1889 plan, a new pedestrian gate is shown adjacent to the south-east corner of the main house (this is still in place today). A new carriage gate is shown adjacent to Elm Cottage and what appears to be a new arrival sequence has been laid out: a carriage – still horse drawn at that time – enters The Elms in front of the Lodge, in a new inset gate, continues up a new internal road to the south entrance, where the main entrance is now located; if the carriage is for an occupant of the house, they disembark here, and the carriage continues up the east side of the side in a new internal road just inside the boundary with Fitzroy Park, and parallel with that boundary, to arrive at a stables courtyard that includes what is presently known as Elm Cottage.
- 2.19 This courtyard appears to comprise the 'L' shape of Elms Cottage (still seen in this form today) on the east side, and presumably used for stable hands and grooms, and the stables on the west side of the courtyard.
- 2.20 This appears to be the first time that there was an internal roadway linking the main house with the stable block: the plan from the 1863-39 OS map suggests that the carriages had to exit back into Fitzroy Park, before turning into the stable yard around Elm Cottage.
- 2.21 If the carriage arriving at the south entrance is serving a guest, it turns through the carriage circle and heads off back down the road to the Lodge, and exits at the new carriage gate in front of the Lodge.
- 2.22 For the first time, the canted bays on the south-east corner are shown, and what was previously shown as an orthogonal bay on the west elevation is now shown as a canted bay.
- 2.23 A likely reason for the introduction of these bays is that the relocation of the main carriage entrance to the south, in front of the Lodge, meant that there was no longer a need for the entrance road close to the south elevation of the house, and the south-east corner of the building was no longer the primary entrance point for carriages entering the site; this, together with the introduction of planting in front of the south elevation, and the consequent realignment of the carriage drive slightly away from the house, presented the opportunity of adding in the two bays in the south-east corner.
- 2.24 It is assumed that, for reasons of expediency and cost, these bays were built off cast iron columns, rather than being off foundations.
- 2.25 This was substantially the building, with some further minor additions at ground floor in the north-east corner, that was converted into seven family units under a planning permission dated 1949.
- 2.26 Given that Basevi died five years after the auction of the land for The Elms, and assuming some lead-in time for preparing for construction, including the production drawings, the supposition is that the building may have been left unfinished at the time of his death, or Basevi may have left a more modest building than the one assumed to be linked to his name.
- 2.27 The question is to what extent the building was subsequently altered, both externally and internally, and therefore to what extent the building at the time

of listing retained any of the character of the original building intended by Basevi.

- 2.28 Please refer to Section 3 'Proposals for the Reinstatement Works' here, which sets out the principles of the approach to the reinstatement works, in the light of the recent research and assessments carried out by messrs Cruickshank and Velluet.

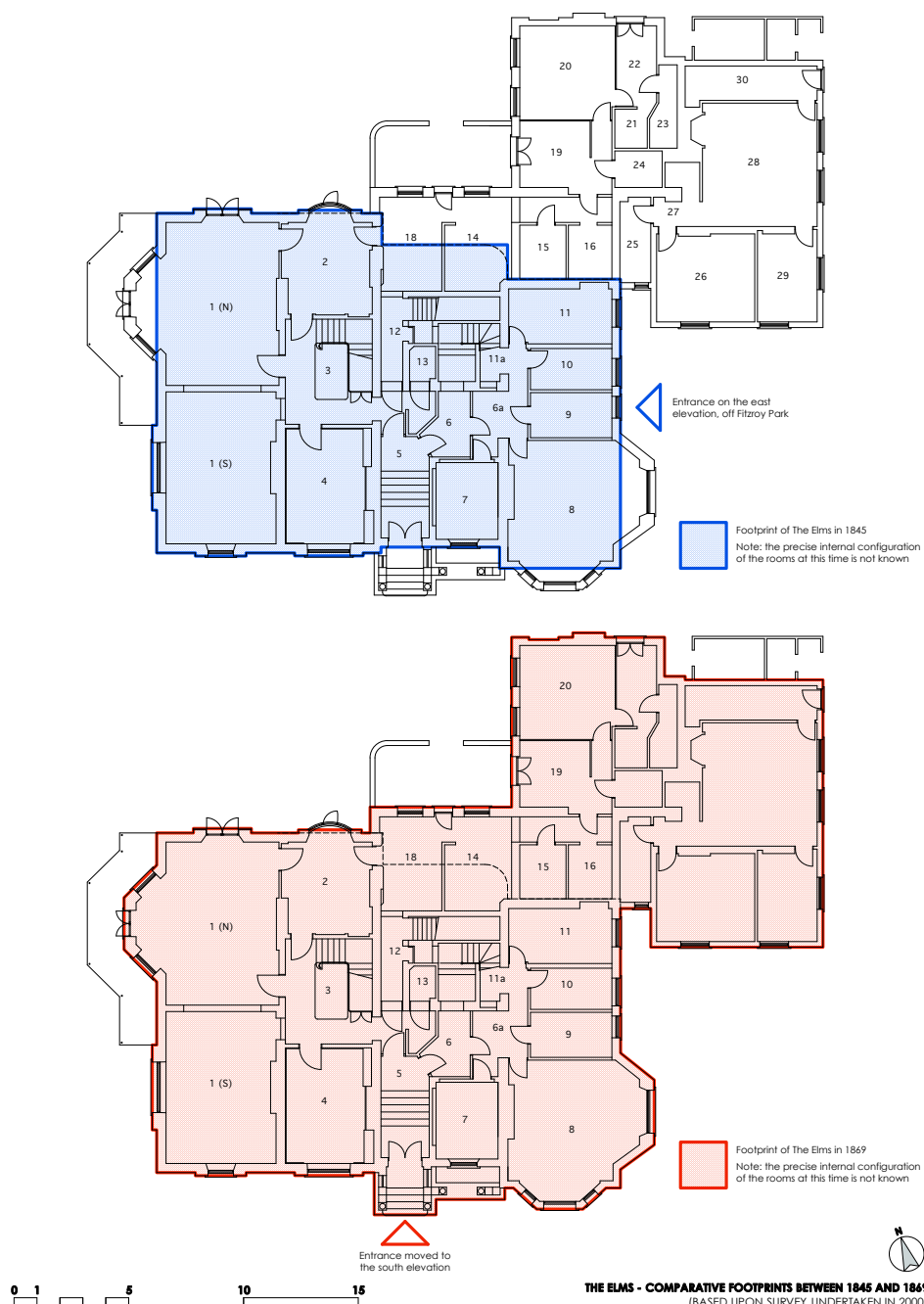


Illustration 2.08: Indicative floor plates for the main house in 1849 and 1863-69, based upon a topographical survey undertaken in 2000