

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



**FINAL VERSION**

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August 2013

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### 3 RELEVANT RECENT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.01 The broader area around The Elms, an escarpment that tumbles down from Highgate towards the south-west, and the lower ponds on Hampstead Heath, at the beginning of the twentieth century, was characterised by large individual plots of land, containing typically one main house and subsidiary accommodation, and extensive landscaped grounds.
- 3.02 Subsequently, as pressure for development intensified within the area, these individual plots were developed for multiple houses – mini estates in effect, and this began to change the character of the area significantly. This trend accelerated after World War II, right up into the 1970's, when one of the densest mini estates was laid out at Highfields Grove, directly opposite The Elms on the east side of Fitzroy Park. The Elms remained a single entity, no doubt helped by the designation of the site as Metropolitan Open Land.
- 3.03 In 1948, planning permission was granted to convert the main house into "seven family units".
- 3.04 This work seems to have been a significant change to the interior of the building. The main spaces at ground floor – the two living rooms, the library and the inner hallway – appear to have been left as found, although the extent to which the internal fabric was altered during these substantial building works is not known. Elsewhere within the building, however, including the main rooms on the west side at first floor, the spaces were substantially carved up.
- 3.05 The listing of the main building in 1974 reinforced the fact that The Elms was not suitable for the kind of post-war intensification seen elsewhere in the locality. Nevertheless, during the 1980's and 1990's the site became the subject of numerous planning applications that attempted to aggrandise what originally began as a modest villa – presumably, prospective site owners determined that a site of circa three and a half acres needed a much larger building.
- 3.06 A key scheme in this trend was the application nos. TP8701463R1 and HB8770240R1, granted consent on 25 April 1990 (although the drawings are stamped approved with the date 16 March 1989). This scheme more than doubles the footprint of the original building, with the additions being towards the north and east sides.
- 3.07 If one takes as the definition of the original Basevi buildings as proposed in illustration 2.08 in Section 2, this plan was completely subsumed in the 1990 scheme. Externally on the west side, the primary elevation is increased to the north, and the canted bay and tented structure which wraps the bay, and which was originally set asymmetrically in the west elevation, now becomes the central motif in a completely symmetrical composition. The west elevation is further extended over two storeys and roof, slightly set back from the main front. The overall effect is more than double the original elevation, completely changing its nature, and losing the original Basevi elements into the new whole. [See illustration 3.01]
- 3.08 The east elevation has a similarly overwhelming make over, with the new façade being completely dominated by a new double front, set significantly forward of the original 19<sup>th</sup> century line, with a new circular colonnaded main

entrance. The effect on the original building is even more marked, and it becomes a remnant on the south end of this elevation. [See illustration 3.02]

- 3.09 This scheme created a single monolithic roof over the whole of the new footprint; despite some local setting back of the elevations, the overall effect created was of one building, one large, grandiose house, and the roof forms from the Basevi period and later were lost completely.



*Illus. 3.01: The north and west elevations of the 1990 consented scheme. The west elevation extends the Basevi elevation northwards on the same line, with further additions set back. The original clarity of the Basevi façade is consequently completely lost*

- 3.10 Despite the end result of completely losing the original building into a much larger classical reproduction, it should be borne in mind that this scheme was consented, and it seems to have acted as reference point for subsequent proposals.
- 3.11 This scheme was not implemented. On 2 June 1995, a planning application (9501002) and an application for listed building consent (9570171) was submitted to renew the 1990 approvals. Appeals were subsequently made for non-determination.
- 3.12 At the same time, a new proposal was drawn up, based upon the 1990 consents, but with a slightly smaller footprint.<sup>1</sup> These are applications nos. P9602946R1 and L9602947R1.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that both schemes involved a new leisure centre set in the grounds, but the design of these is not relevant to the present discussion



*Illus. 3.02: The east and south elevations of the 1990 consented scheme. The original south elevation completely lost in the additions on the east and south-east*

- 3.13 The new scheme retained the principal of the substantial extension of the existing building to the north, although the footprint of this was reduced from that approved in 1990. Again, the intent was for the final form of the development to read as one continuous building, with the Basevi elements subsumed into a single whole.
- 3.14 The Report to Committee for these proposals, concluded that the new scheme was acceptable, particularly in the light of the scheme consented in 1990, with English Heritage commenting that the proposals were "... a significant improvement over those which were considered to acceptable in 1989... ... the general treatment in both plan and elevation is considered acceptable".
- 3.15 It is clear that the subsumation of the Basevi building into a much larger, more dominant ersatz building was not an issue of concern for EH and the LPA.

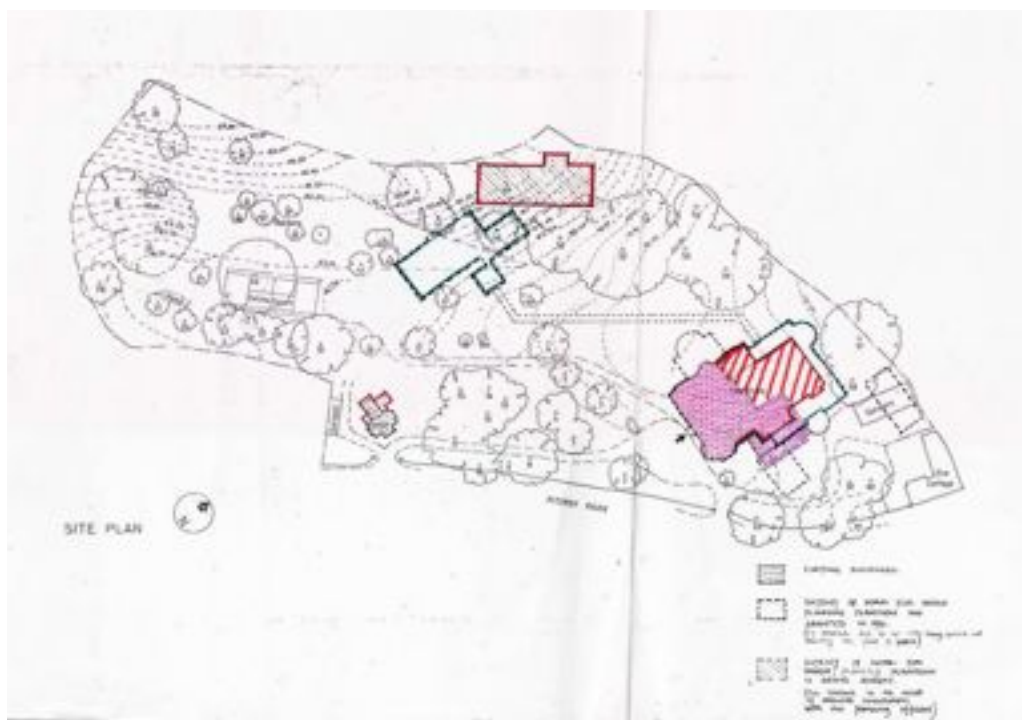


Illustration 3.03: Site plan from the 1997 consent, annotated to show the changes in footprint proposed between the consented 1990 scheme and the consented 1997 scheme



Illustration 3.04 Proposed west elevation of scheme granted consent in 1997

- 3.16 With regard to the interiors, the same report observes about the existing house: "Internally there have been insensitive alterations, but four attractive rooms survive in the original part of the house together with a simple, but elegant staircase with cast iron balustrading, window joinery, and marble fire surrounds, the library has attractive fitted shelving and other interesting features and a small study has oak panelled walls and fire surround. On the first floor the principle bedroom has fitted furniture which dates from the 1890's, a fire surround and a simple run cornice. Within the 1863 extension are

two rooms which are capable of being restored to provide attractive spaces".

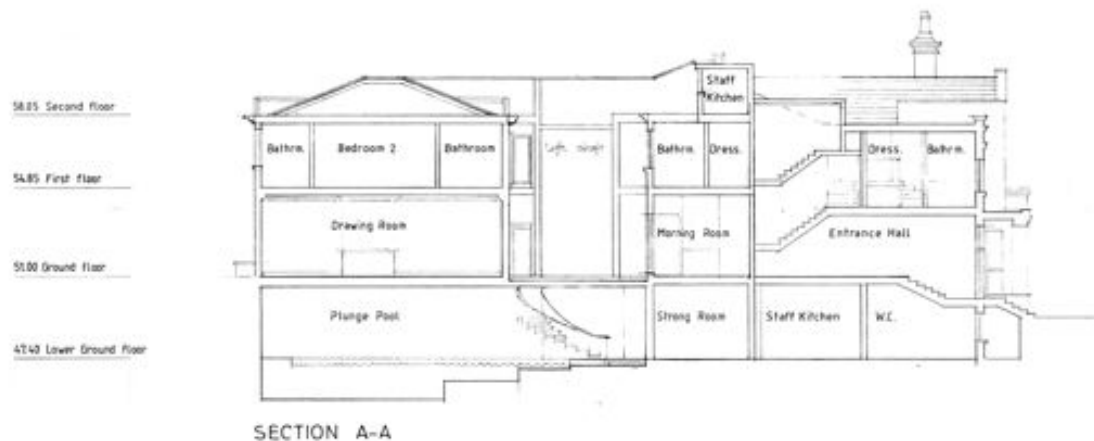
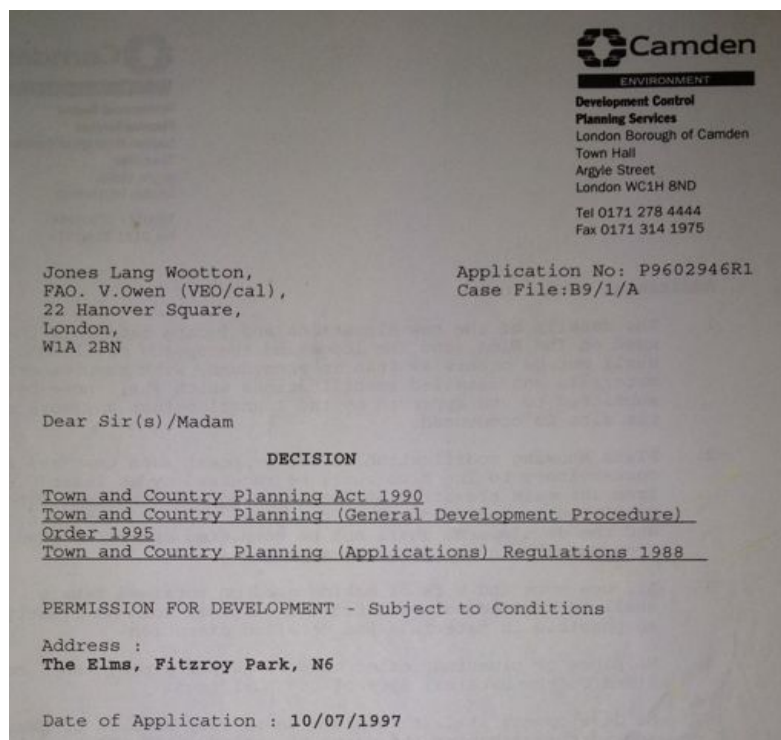


Illustration 3.05 North-south long section through scheme granted consent in 1997, showing continuous roof form from existing building into the new extension

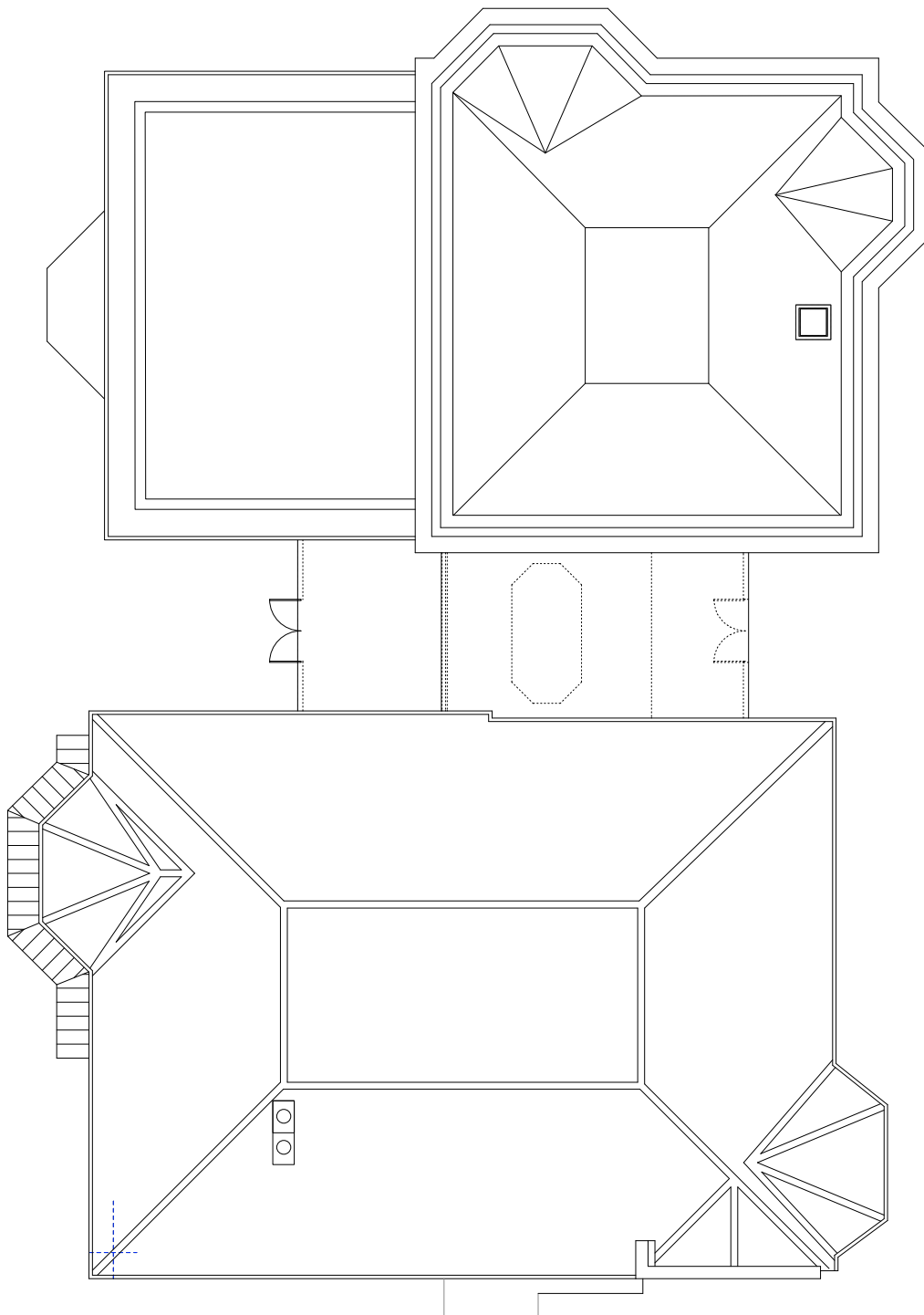
- 3.17 Whilst the origin of the first floor fitted furniture from the 1890's is questionable, this assessment of the interior appears to describe the historic fabric that officers considered should be taken into account when considering proposals for the building as a whole, and this seems to have informed the plans that were developed for applications P9602946R1 and L9602947R1.
- 3.18 Applications P9602946R1 and L9602947R1 were granted consent on 10 July 1997. The delegated report in respect of the enforcement notice EN10/0028 incorrectly states, in paragraph 2.1, that P9602946R1 was withdrawn on 27 February 2003: the following is an extract of the Permission For Development issued by the Council to confirm that this scheme was approved.



- 3.19 Applications P9602946R1 and L9602947R1 were also not implemented, and the current owner purchased the site in 2000, when the 1997 consent was still live.
- 3.20 Discussions with the LPA were commenced about a new scheme for the site, and various proposals were made. One of the concerns identified with regard to previously consented schemes was the extent to which both the 1990 and the 1997 consents subsumed so much of the original building. Consequently, one of the primary drivers for a new scheme was to make the original building more legible, whilst at the same time acknowledging that consent had previously been given for a considerable increase in floor space.
- 3.21 The matrix eventually arrived at, and for which consent was granted in January 2003 via a Section 106 Agreement, separated out the historic building from the new extension, with a glazed Winter Garden mediating between the two elements. The extensions on the north-east side of the building were to be demolished, leaving the historic building as an 'L' shaped plan, with a short return leg in the south-east corner. The 'L' shaped plan became an orthogonal rectangle with the addition of a new 'wing' on the east side. The new extension had a similar plan form on the north side, and the new Winter Garden mediated between the two elements.
- 3.22 The main entrance to the development was moved to the east side (ironically, on the side we think Basevi originally set the entrance), with the Winter Garden forming the new arrival point, providing clear views from east to west between the two building elements, and framing the garden beyond. The south entrance was maintained as a second entrance into the listed elements of the building.
- 3.23 The form of the Winter Garden at the point of entry was a two-storey space, with the first floor as an open gallery above. A new main staircase was planned perpendicular to this central space, on the south side, sitting between the listed building and its new east 'wing'. This staircase ran from the basement up to the first floor, and linked all parts of the building, both existing and new, as well as linking into the original staircase.
- 3.24 The new plan arrangement of two building elements with a linking Winter Garden was seen as a considerable improvement over the 1990 and 1997 consented schemes because it gave complete legibility to the original listed elements. However, one hangover left in the new arrangement from these schemes was the monolithic roof that was proposed over the listed elements and the new east 'wing'. This new roof maintained the pitch and appearance of the original roof, but was a single form across the whole building, with a significant amount of flat roofing in the middle of the building (refer to illustration 3.06). One of the effects of this proposal was to create a large area deep within the new design, over the new main staircase, without any daylight. Also, whilst the original building elements could now be read externally within the building as facades, the roof was not clearly defined. In addition, more crucially, there was no such legibility for the listed elements from within the building.
- 3.25 It should be borne in mind that the 2003 consented plan provided for a completely new central area within the listed elements, between the original



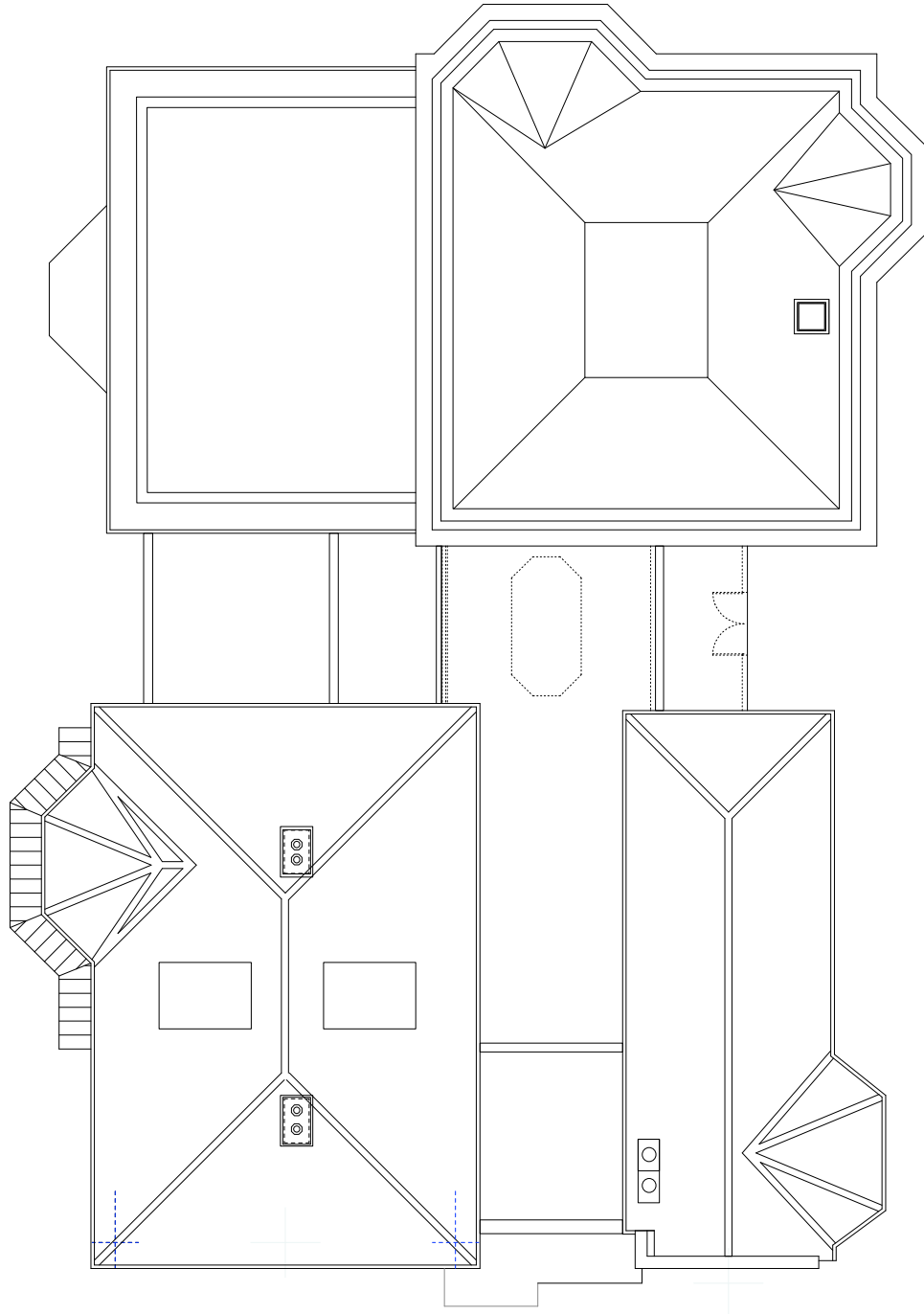
listed west side and the new east 'wing', including a new staircase linking all levels.



*Illustration 3.06 Roof plan of the 2003 consented scheme, showing the two building elements (original and new extension) separated by a new Winter Garden, with a single monolithic roof over the listed elements and the associated new east 'wing'*

- 3.26 After the grant of the 2003 consent, when more detailed proposals were developed, in consultation with English Heritage and the LPA, the roof arrangement was rethought and a proposal was developed for what we have referred to as a tri-partite roof. This arrangement created a double

pitched roof over the listed west side, defined by the east wall of the original staircase; a similar form was proposed over the new east 'wing', with a flat roof element on the south side, between the two pitched roofs. The area left in the centre of the building was linked with the glazed roof of the Winter Garden. Not only did this bring daylight into the centre of the building on the south side, but it also gave complete legibility to the listed elements, from both inside and outside, for both the façades and the roof.



*Illustration 3.07 Roof plan of the 2003 consented scheme, showing the design development in early 2004, as discussed with English Heritage and the LPA, with the original single monolithic roof over the listed elements now broken down into a 'tri-partite' roof, thereby making legible the roof form of the original Basevi villa for the first time since the 1840's (the Winter Garden is brought into this tri-partite arrangement, to complete the weather cover, as a wholly subservient element to the main roof on the west side)*

- 3.27 The initial proposal for the Winter Garden roof was a shallow double pitch. Upon review, it was felt that the form of the Winter Garden should sit below, and within, the projecting eaves of the listed element, and consequently an elegant, and very shallow diagrid steel structure was developed, with inset structural glass elements. One of the options considered was an all glass structure, but the spans involved meant that the depth of the beams required would not allow sufficient headroom at first floor in the Winter Garden, or would have required a significant dual pitch to the glass roof, which would not have met the requirement to keep the Winter Garden as a subsidiary form to the listed element on the west side.
- 3.28 This proposal was included in the 'Existing House Tender Set' (EHTS) sent to the LPA and English Heritage in March 2004, and subsequently discussed on site.
- 3.29 The design development for the roof over the listed elements, including the changing form of the Winter Garden roof, is set out in illustration 3.07.
- 3.30 This design evolution from the originally consented 2003 roof form was seen as the definitive solution to reconciling the desire for the original Basevi building to be legible in the final form of the development with the extent of the new accommodation agreed.
- 3.31 Numerous other consents were obtained for the works at the property, including some allowed on appeal, but these are not material to the scope of the works addressed here.