

Heritage & PPS5 Statement:

Rev 0

62 Elsworthy Road, NW3 3BU

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Elsworthy road lies on the northern edge of Primrose Hill and forms part of the old 'Chalcots' Estate'. The area was developed between 1890 and 1910 by the builders William Willet (younger and elder). The original house at No. 62 Elsworthy road dates from circa 1900.
- 1.2 Please see enclosed Design Statement for further details describing the context and form of the existing house.

2 History

- 2.1 The Elsworthy Conservation Area is situated in an area immediately to the north and west of Primrose Hill. Prior to the nineteenth century the land occupying the current Conservation Area was farmland owned by the Eton College Estate and the Eyre Estate. The Conservation Area designation covers entirely Eton College Estate dating back to the fifteenth century, with the exception of Avenue Road which was within the Eyre Estate.
- 2.2 The name Elsworthy is believed to have been sourced by a contractor employed by Eton College, who was endowed with the Manor of Chalcots (London Encyclopaedia).
- 2.3 *'The Willett's extended Elsworthy Road, forming a loop with the new Wadham Gardens, which they linked to Avenue Road on the west and the existing roads on the north. The site, bordering Primrose Hill but within easy reach of public transport, was highly sought after. By 1903, when the elder Willett retired, the firm had built more than 100 houses, designed by Faulkner, behind privet hedges rather than garden walls and forming a neglected precursor of Hampstead Garden Suburb.'* (British History Online)
- 2.4 Elsworthy Road, together with Wadham Gardens, contains well-detailed buildings using a rich mix of materials. A combination of brick and decorative tiling creates a strong architectural vocabulary on many properties, while others with large expanses of stucco add contrast to the streetscape. The quality and level of detailing in wood, stucco and stone is high.



- 2.5 Each building has unique features, but shares a common form and style with its neighbours to produce strong group value influenced by the Free Style of the 1890s (whereby architects could pick and mix features from classical, Gothic, English and Scottish 16th century, or Italian and French Renaissance in any combination of building materials they chose).
- 2.6 Despite there being a huge wealth of variety of styles, drawing from different inspiration, research by David Prout (1989) revealed that all but two properties were designed by one main architect. Amos Faulkner (1867-1940), referred to above, was the 'in house' architects for the Willett's and the original house is likely to be of his design.
- 2.7 Faulkner proved to be successful at evolving the fashionable suburban style influenced by Norman Shaw and Ernest Newton. At its time from the 1890's the suburban style was both innovative and different, today its influence still resonates in provincial London suburbia.
- 2.8 The style can be defined by the lack of terraces, no basements, and no rigidly defined brick boundary walls and railings. The ground floor layouts were generous and the houses were detached with small front buffering gardens.
- 2.9 Despite not being a listed building, the property lies firmly in and contributes as a positive member to the Elsworthy Road Conservation Area. As a fine example with well-preserved details it is seen as an important member of the fabric of dwellings that constitutes the conservation area.

3 PPSS assessment of significance

- 3.1 *Policy Planning Statement5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPSS)*, which this year replaced PPG15 as a statement of the government's guidance on planning policies with regard to heritage matters, places considerable stress on the identification of the significance of any heritage asset.
- 3.2 With specific reference to conservation areas it states that (in policy HE9.5): *'Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. The policies in HE9.1 to HE9.4 and HE10 apply to those elements that do contribute to the significance. When considering proposals, local planning authorities should take into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the World Heritage Site or Conservation Area as a whole. Where an element does not positively contribute to its significance, local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of enhancing or better revealing the significance of the World Heritage Site or Conservation Area, including, where appropriate, through development of that element. This should be seen as part of the process of place-shaping.'*
- 3.3 There is no doubt that existing property present at No. 62 Elsworthy Road makes a significant contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.



- 3.4 The elements which are affected by the current proposals have minor significance in conservation area terms and do not impact significantly on the overall appearance of the property.
- 3.5 Behind its façade No. 62 Elsworthy Road has been much altered, including its rear elevation where changes have been made including to the fenestration at every level.
- 3.6 It is particularly the combination of hedges and wooden gates that defines the special character of the streetscape in the Willett area. However, only No 62 retains original wooden gateposts, with other properties having replaced original frontages with harder wearing and out-of-keeping materials such brick gateposts and metal railings, or having allowed the hedges to form a less structured natural boundary.

4 Impact of the proposals on the conservation area

- 4.1 This statement is concerned with those aspects of the proposals which have an impact on the conservation area, or what otherwise might be described as the outwardly visible aspects of the proposals.
- 4.2 Following on from the free style employed by Faulkner for the Elsworthy development the proposals fit in suitably with the design ethos. The proposals are sympathetic with the original external aesthetic and the internal layout is updated to accommodate modern family living.
- 4.3 The only proposed alterations to the front of 62 Elsworthy Road, apart from beneficial restoration, is the re-adjustment of existing windows to provide a greater sense of symmetry to the elevation. This would not be overwhelmingly visible from any vantage point in Elsworthy Road and would only have a positive effect on the way the building is read. It could not be said to have any adverse effect on the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 4.4 The replacement of the non-original garage extension would provide an overall enhancement to the front elevation as the existing extension is not considered to be sympathetic to the original house.
- 4.5 Both the proposed rear elevation of 62 Elsworthy Road, side extension and the minor alterations to the elevations are scholarly reinterpretations of typical late Victorian/ early Edwardian approaches to the design of such features and copy features adopted locally in other properties.
- 4.6 The architectural treatment of the rear elevation would duplicate the double bay windows often seen in the neighbouring original properties. Reinstating the symmetry will restore the regularity that has been lost in subsequent alterations.
- 4.7 Not only would the proposed building work at 62 Elsworthy Road be a considerable improvement on the building standing on the site at present, but it would also provide a more satisfactory elevation to the streetscape. Its style would be complementary to that of the main house, and it would enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.



5 Summary and conclusions

- 5.1 The present building on the site 62 Elsworthy Road was erected in circa 1900's to the designs of the architect Amos Faulkner for the speculative builders the Willer's (Elder and Younger).
- 5.2 In terms of a PPS5 assessment of significance, 62 Elsworthy Road proves to be an integral part upholding the proud character and appearance of the conservation area, even though the building cannot be said to be of any particular architectural merit, it is considered important when viewed as a part of the whole.
- 5.3 The proposed extensions would enhance the conservation area and the construction of a basement level and other alterations would have a neutral effect.
- 5.4 In conservation area terms, the scheme as a whole would both preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Elsworthy Road Conservation Area.

