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Heritage Appraisal  
Flat 3 39 Eton Avenue, London, NW3 3EP

September 2019

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## 1 Introduction

1.1 The following Heritage Appraisal has been prepared to support an application for listed building consent at Flat 3, no. 39 Eton Avenue, London NW3 3EP.

1.2 No.39 Eton Avenue is Grade II listed and located in the Belsize Conservation Area. The proposals relate to internal works to flat no. 3 which is a duplex ground and lower ground floor level apartment. The works include reconfiguration of existing partitions, the replacement of modern bathroom and kitchen fittings and the modern staircase as well as general refurbishment and redecoration works.

1.3 No external works are proposed.

1.4 The purpose of this appraisal is to outline the significance of the listed building. It will describe the proposed works and assess their impact upon that significance. This appraisal has been compiled using desk-based research and Camden Council's planning records as well as a visual assessment of the site and its context.

1.5 This appraisal will demonstrate that the proposed works will preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building. As such, the proposed works will be shown to be acceptable and to comply with the relevant national and local policy framework.

### Author

1.6 This appraisal has been prepared by Charles Rose (BA (Hons) who has extensive experience in dealing with proposals that affect the historic environment. He has over 15 years of local authority experience, including 12 years as a Principal Conservation & Design Officer at the London Borough of Camden. He also has experience in the private sector, preparing heritage statements and appraising the significance of historic buildings.

### Designations

1.7 No.39 Eton Avenue is a Grade II listed building. The building was listed on 11th January 1999 and the listing description reads as follows:

*"Detached house. c1900. By Amos Faulkner; built by William Willett & Son. Red brick with stone dressings. Tiled gabled roofs with dormer and tall brick chimney-stacks, that to right hand return with stone cornice. 2 storeys and attics. 4 bays, all gabled except right hand. All windows with small leaded panes. Left hand projecting bay with 8-light canted bowed window through ground and 1st floors, ground floor transom and mullion; 3-light Venetian type attic window and gable with small pediment finial. Entrance in next bay to right with carved doorcase. This and other bays with 3 and 4-light windows. INTERIOR: not inspected."*

1.8 The application site is situated in the Belsize Conservation Area which was first designated in 1973 and then extended in 1984, 85, 88, 91, 94, and finally in 2002. Eton Avenue was included in the conservation area in 1985 along with Fellows Road and Lancaster Gardens to protect "distinctive groups of large detached houses and some terraces."<sup>1</sup> The adopted 2002 Belsize Conservation Area Statement divides the conservation area into six sub areas. Eton Avenue is in sub area 3 - Eton Avenue (including Strathray Gardens, the southern end of Lancaster Grove, Lambolle Road, Lambolle Place, Eton and Lancaster Garages and Fellows Road). Sub Area 3 is described as:

*"This is a consistent area of predominantly late Victorian housing with some Edwardian pockets, built on land primarily in the ownership of Eton College. The houses within this area are smaller than the villa development to the north, being predominantly two storeys with an attic level. The properties in this area are notable for their varied styles and elevational treatment. There is however consistency of materials generally, red brick with red clay tiled roofs being a recurrent theme."*

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<sup>1</sup> Belsize conservation Area Appraisal and management strategy 2002 page 9



1.11 The area is rich in terms of its heritage and there are a number of statutorily listed buildings within the immediate vicinity and wider context. Those listed below are all located on Eton Avenue except for the Belsize Fire Station:

South Side

- No. 31 Eton Avenue, grade II
- No. 37 Eton Avenue, grade II
- No. 43 Eton Avenue, grade II
- No. 45 Eton Avenue, grade II
- No. 61 Eton Avenue, grade II
- No. 59 Eton Avenue, grade II
- No. 57 Eton Avenue, grade II
- 73 Eton Avenue, grade II
- North house, Eton Avenue, grade II

North Side

- No. 36 Eton Avenue, grade II
- No. 34 Eton Avenue, grade II
- No. 28 Eton Avenue, grade II
- No. 26 Eton Avenue, grade II
- Belsize Fire Station, Lancaster Grove, grade II\*



Figure 1: No. 39 Eton Avenue

## 2 Site location and description

2.1 The following section provides a brief overview of the location and context of Flat 3, no. 39 Eton Avenue and also an outline description of the exterior of the building and the affected parts of the interior.

2.2 The building is located on the south side of Eton Avenue in the southern part of Belsize conservation area. The application site consists of a flat (Flat 3) which occupies part of the ground and lower ground of the former house. The flat also includes a front well and half of the rear garden. The building is divided into eight flats. Three share the ground and lower ground. All of the flats are accessed from street level through the stone curved main entrance door.

2.3 No. 39 Eton Avenue was constructed in circa 1900 by William Willett & Son who started developing Eton Avenue from around 1885.

2.4 The building consists of five floors of residential accommodation at lower ground to third floor level including attic accommodation in the roof.

2.5 The building is constructed in a red brick with stone dressing in asymmetrical composition in the domestic revival style. All original windows are stone mullion with leaded lights. Replacement window are generally timber casement units. The building has an interesting roofscape with tall chimneys and three pediment gables. The main left-hand gable projects forward and contains a bowed window over three floors. The rear façades includes two bowed wings one larger than the other, also over three floors. The facade is topped by a slate roof which includes high level dormer windows serving the third floor attic accommodation.

2.6 The exterior shares many characteristics of the many other buildings by William Willett & Son in the area. These are constructed in a variety of eclectic late Victorian architectural styles, with the extensive use of rich red brickwork and stone dressing and terracotta. Their facades



are well articulated, with projecting bays of varying profiles and levels of decoration, including contrasting banding, half timbering, relief panel and various architectural motifs. The roof levels are of interest and decorative, with a range of gables, Dutch gables, dormers and prominent chimneystacks.

2.6 Internally the building was subdivided into flats in the 1980s which has resulted in the subdivision of the internal spaces and loss of historic features of interest.

2.7 Each flat is accessed from the main entrance and original staircase. Flats nos. 1-3 are served from the ground floor. Flats nos. 4-5 from mezzanine level; Flats nos. 6-7 from first floor level and Flats nos. 7-8 from the second floor.



Figure 2. Main staircase at 39 Eton Avenue

2.8 The rear garden is divided into two sections. Flat no. 3 has access to the western side of the garden and Flat no. 2 has access to the eastern side of the garden.

2.9 Adjoining the site to the west is Springfield Court a late 20<sup>th</sup> century apartment block with parking and lockup garages at the rear of the site. This adjoins the garden of flat no. 3. To the east is a large detached building by Willett and Son which is also grade II listed.

## Relevant planning history

2.10 There is a small number of relevant applications relating to no.39 Eton Avenue:

- Planning permission (8804738) was granted on 5th December 1988 for '*A change of use to 5 self-contained flats and 3 self-contained maisonettes; 2 basement swimming-pools; the formation of roof terraces at first second and third floor levels and the installation of rooflights.*'
- Planning permission (00/04891/FULL) was refused on 20 September 2000 for '*Alterations to the roof to create additional residential accommodation within the roof space, repositioned air conditioning units at roof level and new rooflights (Site includes 6-9 Mount Street).*'
- Planning permission (PE9606110) was granted in February 1997 for '*Construction of a glazed enclosed conservatory style porch/ vestibule to entrance to Flat 1 at basement level. As shown on drawing No P/OP/001, plus one unnumbered curtilage plan and one unnumbered elevation plan*'
- Planning permission and listed building consent (2013/0443/P & 2013/-479/L) granted in January 2013 for '*Replacement of rear window with timber French doors at lower ground floor level, and internal alterations to kitchen, guest bathroom, stairwell and master bathroom in connection with existing dwelling*' to flat no.2





### 3 Historic development of the site and wider area

3.1 The following section sets out the historic development of the site and provides a brief description of the origins and evolution of the site and wider area.

3.2 Eton Avenue is situated within the area of Belsize in the London borough of Camden. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, the land between the northern edge of London and the settlement of Hampstead was predominantly open land in agricultural use with a few scattered farms and houses. The Dean & Chapter of Westminster acquired the northern part of the Belsize area at the beginning of the 14th century. The southern tip of the Conservation Area, broadly the area to the south of Lancaster Grove and England's Lane was given to Eton College by Henry VI in 1449.

3.3 Development of the Belsize area as a residential suburb began in the middle of the 19th century and it is the Italianate villas dating from this period that are most commonly associated with it.

3.4 William Willett & Son commenced development in the area from 1870 after purchasing a sublease of part of the Belsize Park Estate to build what is now known as Belsize Crescent. Belsize Crescent consists of mostly gault brick and stucco terraced houses typical of the area, except for no.24 Belsize Crescent which is the only listed building on the street and appears to have the first red brick Queen Anne revival house Willett & Son built in the area.

3.5 This was proceeded shortly after by development by Willett & Sons on Lyndhurst Gardens (nos.4 to 16 & 22 to 26 (even) are now listed grade II) and 'high-class detached and semi-detached houses'<sup>2</sup> on the northern side of Belsize Avenue from 1871 and in Ornan Road

from 1878. They then developed Eton Avenue and Strathray Gardens in the 15-20 years from 1885.



*Fig 3. No.24 Belsize Crescent. 1886. Thought to be the first Queen Anne Revival House by W Willett & Son.*

3.6 It appears that William Willett & Son used in-house architects including Amos Faulkner (1867-1940), the architect for no. 39 Eton Avenue, and Harry B. Measures (1862-1940). Interestingly it appears that only the Queen Anne domestic revival style, large red brick dwellings constructed by Willett & Son are statutorily listed on the national register. None of the other houses or terraces built by the developer in the area are statutorily listed. These speculative houses set a new artistic standard and construction for their time in contrast with the classicism of early stucco houses of the area.

3.8 Architect Harry B. Measures designed in more strict Queen Anne Revival style housing in common with listed buildings in Lyndhurst Gardens and nos 34, 36, 43, 45, 57 59, 61, 65, 73 Eton Avenue. Whilst it appears that Amos Faulkner have had a more free style Arts and Crafts and domestic revival style as per no. 39 Eton Avenue, and nos. 13, 26, 30, 31, 37 & 39 Eton Avenue (refer to Appendix C)

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2 <https://www.britishhistory.ac.uk/vch/middx/vol9/pp51-60>



### Development of the 39 Eton Avenue

3.9 No. 39 Eton Avenue was built as a large dwelling in domestic revival style (figure 4). The ground floor entrance foyer displays the same style interior details which rich deep turned balusters and handrail to the staircase, moulded wall panel and broken pediment door architraves (figures 5,6) consistent with Old English style.

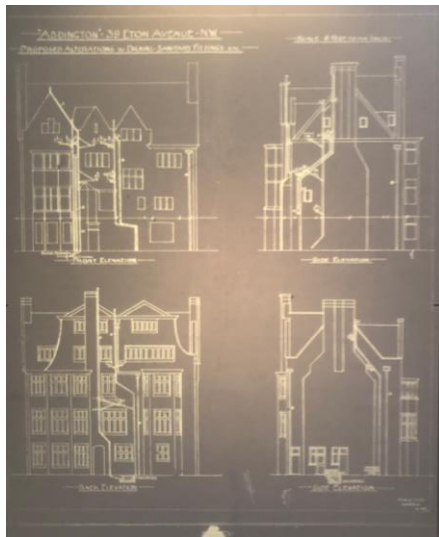


Figure 4 – 1920 External elevations of no. 39 Eton Avenue.



Figure 5 –Entrance to flat 3 beneath main staircase of 39 Eton Avenue



Figure 6 Entrance to flat 5 first floor 39 Eton Avenue

3.9 The original plan form would have provided a two room deep layout three rooms wide. With two rooms either side of the central entrance and a further room behind the entrance/staircase in the middle of the plan. This is also demonstrated by the chimney stacks- the building contains two large stacks located in the centre of each flank elevation, which serve two outer rooms on each side of the plan. A further smaller stack is located in the centre of the rear elevation which would have served the central room behind the vestibule area.

3.10 However by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century the building was converted into flats. The drainage plans of 1945 (figure 7) show that there was a flat on the lower ground floor and one on the ground floor. The annotation on the plans also indicate there was a further four flats above.

3.11 A 1980s conversion saw the property divided further to provide eight flats with three occupying the lower ground and ground floors. The boxing out beneath the staircase shown in figure 5 shows how the reconfiguration of the internal layout and main staircase has been compromised through the subdivision of the ground floor to create three units.

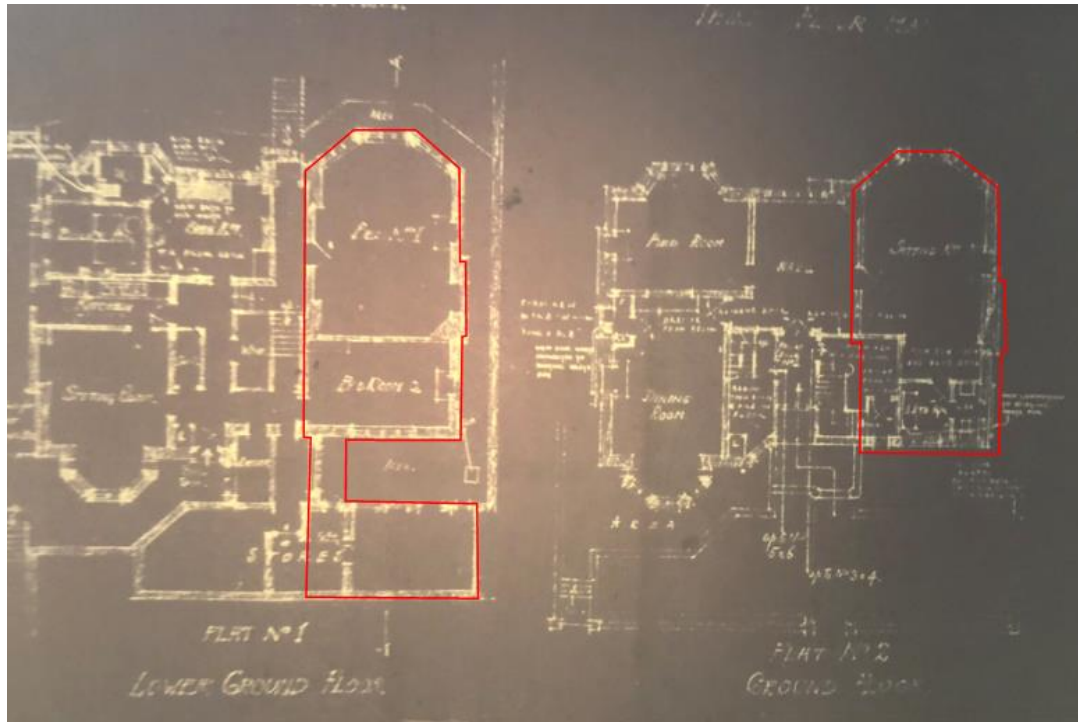


Figure 7 1945 Drainage Plans showing historic layout of the ground and lower ground floors. Outline of the existing flat shown in red.

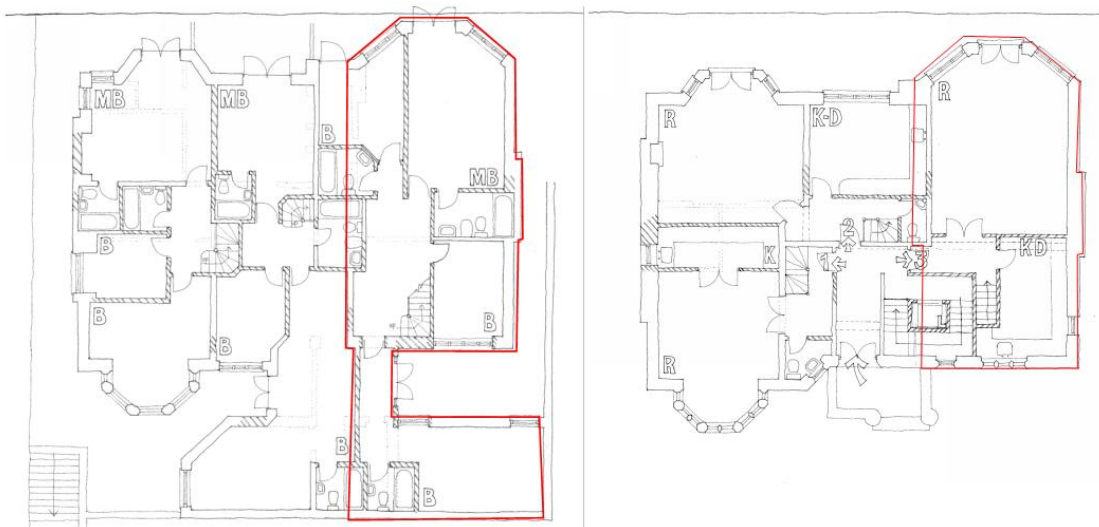


Figure 8 – Approved 1988 ground and lower ground floor plans showing conversion to three duplex apartments. Outline of the existing flat shown in red,

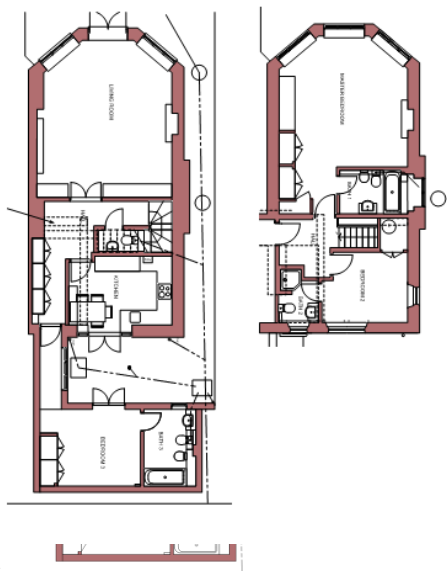


3.12 The conversion required inserting a modern staircase into each duplex flat. In flat no.3 the staircase was installed to the right-hand side of the main stair to the front right-hand side room.

3.13 At lower ground floor level the two rooms to the right-hand side were divided into five to create a hallway, two bedrooms and two bathrooms. This significantly altered the historic layout and would have resulted in substantial loss of any feature of interest to this part of the building.

3.14 Prior to listing in 1999 the 1988 conversion layout was altered again to the current layout. The living accommodation has been switched to the lower ground floor and a bathroom, with window in the chimney stack, is at ground floor level

and concrete block work behind the modern plaster and it would appear as if the substantial reconfiguration of the layout has possibly resulted in the loss of substantial historic fabric as can be seen from images A-0 in Appendix B.



3.15 The changes in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century have removed all features of interest inside the flat. The plaster surfaces appear to be modern gypsum plaster. The staircase, kitchen and bathrooms are modern and all joinery is also modern profiled softwood.

3.16 Localised openings up works have revealed modern materials such as steel beams





## 4 Significance of the site

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework Annex 2 defines significance as *"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."* A heritage asset is defined as *"A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)."* In this case the listed building and the Belsize Conservation Area are the heritage assets.

4.2 The application site dates from 1900 and consists of a residential building subdivided into a series of apartments during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

4.3 The building is of five storeys, including the lower ground floor and is set at the back of behind deep front garden. The building has a central entrance door with irregular asymmetrical façade either side. There is no regular repetitious pattern to the floor plan due to the asymmetrical composition of the building.

4.4 There is no cohesiveness with regard to size, design or layout of other listed building by the same architect and developer along the Eton Avenue. Instead the architectural and visual interest comes from the well constructed, rich and decorative domestic revival style of the large speculative dwellings.

4.5 The individually designed external appearance of no. 39 Eton Avenue includes all the essential elements expected from the movement which flourished in Europe during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The asymmetrical design, use of traditional craftsmanship and details & forms - such as the stone mullion windows, leaded lights, gable bays and tall

chimney stacks – results in a fine example of the popular architectural style of the period. It is clear that the significance of the building lies in its external appearance, townscape value and architectural and visual relationship with other surrounding buildings of the same age and character. This is affirmed by the fact that the interior had already been heavily compromised at the time of listing, strengthening the fact that the exterior was the determining factor its listing designation.

4.6 The entrance foyer and communal areas exhibit similar high quality workmanship of the period. This also has some significance but is limited due to the more modern interventions into the original decorative interior and grand entrance resulting from the subdivision the building into multiple units.

4.7 The interior of Flat. 3 has been drastically modified during the 20<sup>th</sup> century prior to the building being listing in 1999. It retains no features, layouts or known fabric reminiscent of its construction period. The internal layout which has evolved since construction is not of historic interest. The flat has undergone significant changes to its plan form, spatial quality and general appearance at various points during the later 20<sup>th</sup> century and is devoid of any character or appreciation of its style, type of construction.

4.8 Thus, it must follow that the modern character and appearance of the interior of the flat no. 3 is of far less significance, if of any at all, in terms of its special architectural or historic interest.

## Conclusion

4.9 The application building is Grade II listed however it is clear that this is due to its historic and architectural role in the development of Belsize in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century which contributed to the rise of the suburban north London. Most notably the Domestic or Queen Anne revival style developments of the Willett & Sons by their inhouse architects Amos Faulkner and Harry B.



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Measures which saw the construction of a new artistic type of high quality speculative dwelling in the area.

4.10 This artistic style and craftsmanship is present in the high aesthetic and architectural value of the exterior of the listed building on Eton Avenue which reflects the stylistic themes of the period. These are also present in the entrance vestibule and communal staircase of no. 39 Eton Avenue.

4.11 However, this high quality is not reflected in the internal layout, fabric, or character of Flat no. 3 which is considered to be make no contribution to the special interest of the grade II listed building following drastic changes which have occurred during the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century.