

Tavis House 1-6 Tavistock Square WC1H 9NA - 2021/6105/P

Tavis House is located at the junction of Tavistock Square and Tavistock Place on the south-eastern corner of Tavistock Square.

Tavistock Square, first laid out in the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, saw transformation throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the clearance of the original housing stock on the north, east and south and the building of

The development site is considered a building of architectural and historic interest. It is an interesting example of the type of large-scale commercial development that came forward in the 1930s, Art Deco-inspired. However, this building was in fact been built in the 1950s following significant bomb damage to the east of Tavistock Square during the Second World War.

In addition to having architectural interest in its own right the building contributes significantly to the character and appearance of Tavistock Square and thus to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. In this regard the detailing of the west elevation is significant.

The building has group value with the neighbouring Lynton House (7-12 Tavistock Square) and 19-29 Woburn Place as large early 20<sup>th</sup> century office buildings of red brick and Portland stone construction. The facades presented onto Tavistock Place, along with the Grade II listed Lutyens BMA House, offer a degree of uniformity and architectural interest onto the eastern elevation of Upper Woburn Place, Tavistock Square, and Woburn Place.

Tavis House and its neighbour to the north, Lynton House, have a commonality of materials and architectural style and therefore it is useful to compare the two buildings.

Tavis House currently has a single storey 3-bay entrance located under a cantilevered portico. This is in-keeping with the Art Deco detailing of the building and appears slightly 'old fashioned' which personally I consider no bad thing. The expressed 7 bays central section has a solidity which again is in-line with the underlying architectural tenor of the building.

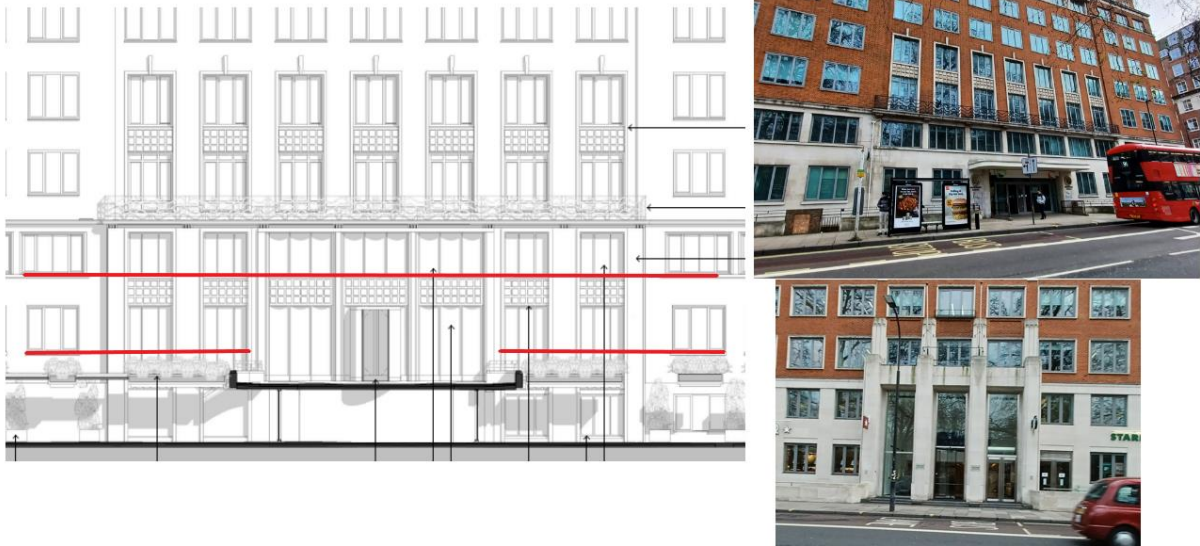
The proposed change to the entrance includes an expressed 7 bay entrance, the canopy gone, replaced by decorative spandrels between ground and first floor window openings.

I would not wish to see the current solidity of the entrance completely lost and suggest that the window cills of the first floor window openings as well as the ground floor window openings line through (see annotated drawing below).

Lynton House has three double height fully glazed central openings. The architectural style of Lynton House is more clinical and the detailing we find on Tavis House absent. As a result Lynton House comes across as a less welcoming building. The three double height entrances appear almost military and may serve as a warning not to over-glazed the restyled entrance lobby to Tavis House for fear of losing the compositional integrity that the front of the building currently possesses.

The proposed refronting of the east elevation is considered to rationalise and visually improve this very much 'back-on-house' elevation. The works are not considered to impact unduly on the setting of the Grade I Mary Ward House adjacent.

Given the robustness of the existing building it is considered that the addition of a relatively modest roof extension can be accommodated without aesthetic or intrusive harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



Proposed west elevation of Tavis House annotated to suggest consistency of window cill heights; Tavis House as existing (top right); Lynton House as existing (bottom right).