

# CONSERVATION PLANNING



**The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine**  
**15-17 Tavistock Place**

**Addendum Report**  
**Heritage Impact Statement: Revised Main Entrance**

**January 2025**

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## The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine 15-17 Tavistock Place

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Numbers 15-17 Tavistock Place were constructed in 1904 to the designs of architect Charles Fitzroy Doll as the headquarters for the Express Dairy Company. (Charles Doll also designed the close by Russell Hotel on the east side of Russell Square). Designed as a continuous terrace, the building stands on ground plus three upper floors above basements on the north side of the street. The ground floor is faced in terracotta tiles, the upper floors in red brickwork with dressed stone quoins above timber, sliding sash windows and an ashlar stone band running across the entire terrace above the second floor windows.
- 1.2 Doll's original drawings for the front elevation show a prominent pitched roof with dormer windows and pediments above the end bays. However, the current construction is a flat roof, hidden behind a low parapet wall and supporting a large number of building services and PV units. Neither the form of the roof as originally built or the date when it was replaced by the present structure is known.
- 1.3 The building is not included on The Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, (The Statutory List), but stands within The Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 1.4 The building was acquired by The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in 2008 and as part of its conversion to University use, planning permission was granted to extensively remodel the interior and add a new extension constructed across the rear. (Planning Ref: 2009/0067/P). Within the building, only principal structural elements and fragmentary remains of original plan form and surface finishes are now evident.
- 1.5 In June 2024, Conservation Planning prepared a Heritage Statement which summarised the architectural interest and significance of the building together with its contribution that it makes to The Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The Report explained that the building's architectural interest and significance is concentrated in its handsome front elevation which makes a positive contribution to the street scene and the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area.
- 1.6 The Report commented on proposals to comprehensively refurbish the building as a teaching and learning facility for London University post graduate students. It concluded that no harm would be caused to the architectural interest or significance of the building or the contribution it makes to the Conservation Area. Specifically, the proposals would help secure a viable, long term public use for a characterful historic building.

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- 1.7 On 28<sup>th</sup> August 2024, planning permission was granted for the proposals, (planning reference 2023/4334/P).
- 1.8 Conservation Planning has now been asked to provide independent conservation related advice on whether proposals to carry out minor alterations to the materiality of the main entrance to the School would cause any harm to the architectural interest or significance of the building or its contribution to the Conservation Area.
- 1.9 This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared by Paddy Pugh, Director of Conservation Planning. In summary, Paddy Pugh has over 40 years' experience of managing change and development within the historic environment including working with English Heritage, (now Historic England), for 27years, the last seven as its Director of Planning and Conservation for London.
- 1.10 The Statement is intended to support an application for planning permission to carry out the proposed works as an integral part of the building's refurbishment as a teaching and learning facility for London University. It should be read as an addendum to the 2024 Heritage Report.

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## 2.0 Proposals

2.1 A significant part of the building's refurbishment is conservation of its front elevation without alteration. However, the building's partly glazed entrance doors and blocked window to the reception area are not particularly welcoming or recognisable as the entrance to a major teaching and learning school within the University of London. It is therefore proposed to create a more open and welcoming entrance to the School by making the following minor alterations:

- Replacing the existing partly glazed doors with a pair of fully glazed doors and fanlight.
- Reopening the blocked window with glazing bars to match adjoining ground floor windows.



Proposed New Entrance Doors



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## 3.0 Considerations

- 3.1 At ground floor level, the building is entirely faced with terracotta tiles. Each window and door opening is framed in terracotta with an arched head and keystone. The proposed new doors and reopened window would sit entirely within the existing terracotta framed openings so that the rhythm and materiality of the ground floor elevation would be unchanged. The blocked window to the right of the entrance is a later, unfortunate, alteration.
- 3.2 The existing partly glazed doors are a later alteration of no architectural or material interest. Replacing the sub-divided fanlight with a fully glazed variant would be a very minor loss of early fabric. Replacing the existing doors and fanlight would affect less than 1% of the building's elevation. No harm would be caused to the architectural interest or significance of the building. The impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area would be de-minimus.
- 3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), December 2024, makes clear that when assessing proposals for change or development within the historic environment, the principal judgement to be made is, would any harm be caused to any historic asset affected by the proposals. Paragraphs 207 and 208 emphasise that the aim should be to avoid any conflict with the asset's conservation. Paragraph 2010 emphasises the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, together with the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 3.4 The architectural interest of 15-17 Tavistock Place rests in its handsome front elevation and positive contribution to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The significance of the building is most evident in the aesthetic value of its front elevation but it is also of some communal value for the collective memories it holds as part of London University.
- 3.5 Alterations to the materiality and detailing of the front entrance would not cause any harm to the architectural interest or significance of the building. Importantly, the proposals would be entirely consistent with the requirements of the NPPF. There would be no conflict with the asset's conservation and a contribution made towards securing a viable, long term future for the building.
- 3.6 Historic England's Planning Policy Note 2, Managing significance in decision taking in the Historic Environment, emphasises that *change to a historic asset is inevitable but is only harmful when significance is damaged*. That is not the case here and there are no sound conservation related reasons why planning permission should not be granted for the application made by The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and illustrated in the drawings and Design and Access Statement prepared by architects Rivington Street Studio.