

NatWest Tavistock

Basement and Ground Floor Natwest Bank, Tavistock House North, 13 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9JH.

Grade 2 listing

Date First listed: 09.03.82

Current use: Bank

Location

The branch is located towards the north-west of Tavistock Square. Tavistock Square is a public square in Bloomsbury, in the London Borough of Camden.



The administrative home of the British Medical Association was built by Sir Edwin Lutyens as the headquarters and temple of the theosophical society, however his work was not finished. Built in phases as follows: 1913-14 and 1923-25 by Sir Edwin Lutyens (E courtyard and elevation to Burton Street); 1928-9 by Cyril Wontner Smith (central entrance block to Tavistock Square and blocks extending eastwards to form the W courtyard); 1938-49 by Douglas Wood (flanking blocks to entrance); S extension of 1947-50 (the Nuffield Wing), also by Wood and extension on NE of 1959-60. Contains re-used fittings from the previous BMA headquarters at 429, The Strand, built by Percy Adams and Charles Holden in 1908.

Exterior – Details taken from the English Heritage listing

The south west elevation is the relevant elevation for Natwest Bank. The central entrance block was designed by Wontner-Smith, which is composed of a centre bay and two projecting bays. The building is comprised of four storeys, attics and a basement. The ground floor is made up of Portland

stone which three round-arched openings. The central opening with vaulted porte-cochere, with lower pedestrian access either side to the courtyard.

“Plain stone 1st floor band. Centre bay with distyle-in-antis attached Corinthian columns (brick shafts, stone capitals) rising from 1st to 4th floor and supporting a modillion entablature with open segmental pediment, flanked by architraved sashes with keystones in attic storey. Above the vehicle entrance, a tall architraved sash with bracketed pediment surmounted by a cartouche, a small architraved sash with keystone and keyed oculus in the pediment. Cornice at eaves level and hipped roof, behind which 2 tall moulded brick slab chimney-stacks. Flanking bays with similar columns and entablature. Architraved 1st floor windows with balustraded balconies and bracketed segmental pediments; 2nd and 3rd floor, architraved sashes with an oculus in the attic storeys. Cornices at eaves level and hipped roofs. Courtyard facade similar to centre bay but flanked by extra bays with 2 brick pilasters and narrow architraved sashes. Attached blocks forming the western courtyard of 4 storeys; stone ground floors with 2-light round-arched openings. Plain 1st floor sill band. Architraved sashes; 1st floor with alternating segmental and triangular pediments with balustraded window guards. Stone entablature at 4th floor level; architraved attic windows with keystones, above which a stone cornice. Eastern elevations with brick chimney-stacks rising from 1st floor.

Douglas Wood's extension blocks of 1928-9, flanking the entrance, are 3 bays and 2 storeys each, plus 2-bay, 4-storey pavilions. Stone ground floors with square-headed, square pillar arcading and 2 square-headed, metal framed windows to each bay. Stone-capped parapet at 1st floor level. Square-headed architraved sashes in each bay on 1st floor, above which the cornice. Stone-capped parapet. Each pavilion with slightly projecting stone entrance surround with impost bands, fanlight and 2-leaf wooden doors. Above, tall architraved sash with bracketed pediment and balustraded balcony flanked by similar columns and entablature to the central entrance. Cornice at eaves level and hipped roof.”

History

Lutyens originally designed the headquarters and temple of the Theosophical Society, adding in offices for commercial purposes. During the period, Lutyens' wife had been following the Theosophists. They began to build in 1913 but this was put to a stop in 1914 when the uncompleted works was taken over by the Army Pay Office. After the war the Theosophists had no money and it is unclear whether they ever even used the building. BMA bought the lease in 1923 and asked Lutyens to complete the inside shell. Wontner-Smith was introduced to the works in 1927 to finish the western part of the building.

Although an incomplete piece of work of Lutyens', the work of Wontner-Smith and Wood combined, represent a coherent complex of multi-phase buildings. With BMA leasing the building since 1923 also adds a historical interest.

New Proposal

Exterior

Externally we will be proposing a fascia signage, which will be non-illuminated and two internally suspended illuminated chevrons. The brand presence will be further highlighted through replacement of the existing hanging sign with a new heritage version. One of the illuminated Natwest chevrons will be located above the main entrance, guiding customers inside the building.

A new nameplate will be installed in the location of the existing sign, to the left of the main entrance, however it will be positioned inside the doorway.

Our proposal will preserve the historic character specifically mentioned in the listing description of the building's exterior and it does not propose to alter any elements of the exterior.

Quality of finish

Working with in the heritage guidelines and the branding guidelines of NatWest we will persevere to produce the highest possible finish. An example of a previous completed heritage project at NatWest would be Moorgate.

Images of Moorgate completed below:





Natwest are committed to delivering an appropriate, improved and accessible personal service and banking experience for the customers and staff. This has identified a need to improve each branch with better brand graphics externally to allow for easier banking and provide more obvious advertising of the services available within. The external appearance of the building will be improved with a deep clean and redecoration of existing surfaces and the replacement of existing branding with new modern signage which is in keeping with the scale of the façade.