

## DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT



**Project:** NatWest TAVISTOCK SQUARE  
**Address:** BMA HOUSE, WC1H 9JA, LONDON,  
**Date:** 15 November 2021

**Applicant**

NatWest Group  
36 St Andrew Square,  
Edinburgh,  
EH2 2YB  
Edinburgh

**Agent**

Lewis & Hickey Ltd  
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**Description of works**

**External:**

Removal of existing signage, external ATM and night safe and making good where removals affect the building.

**Internal:**

Removal of non-original internal signage, fixtures, fittings, furniture, and equipment relating to the operation of this retail bank.

**Use:**

Existing: Retail Bank

Proposed: Handover back to Landlord

**Tenure:** Leasehold

**Amount:**

The scope of removal work to the building will be minimal and will not affect the condition of the building. Removals will cause no harm or loss to the original building. Where stone is affected from removal of signage, new stone will be used to match the original wall geology, stone colour patternation, texture, bond and grout detail.

**Scale:**

Works affecting the fabric of the building are restricted to removals of fascia and projecting signage solely.

**Landscaping / Philosophy:** N/A

**Appearance:**

No original items will be affected. Reinstatement only.

**Access:**

Vehicular and Transport Links: No works proposed.

Inclusive Access: No works proposed.

**Heritage asset statement:**

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1378968

Date first listed: 09-Mar-1982

Date of most recent amendment: 16-Jun-2006

Statutory Address 1: TAVISTOCK SQUARE, CAMDEN

This list entry was subject to a Minor Amendment on 04/02/2013

SK 7081 SW 1/29 5345

THE SQUARE (West Side) No 21

Location:

Statutory Address:TAVISTOCK SQUARE, CAMDEN

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:Greater London Authority

District:Camden (London Borough)

Parish:Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference: TQ2989682438

Details

This list entry was subject to a Minor Amendment on 26/10/2015

TQ2982SE 798-1/94/1596

CAMDEN, TAVISTOCK SQUARE (East side), British Medical Association House including Screen and Gates

09/03/82

GV II

Administrative headquarters of the British Medical Association and rented offices, begun by Sir Edwin Lutyens as the headquarters and temple of the Theosophical Society, his work unfinished. 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 (qv). MATERIALS: Steel-frame construction. Red brick laid in English bond, Portland stone dressings and green Westmorland slate roofs. Timber sash windows with glazing bars.

EXTERIOR: SW elevation to Tavistock Square. Central entrance block by Wontner Smith, comprising centre bay and 2 slightly projecting bays. 4 storeys, attics and basement. Ground floor Portland stone with 3 round-arched openings with keystones and impost bands to each bay. Central opening with vaulted porte-cochère, flanked by lower pedestrian passageways to 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. Wood's red brick Nuffield Wing joins on to the southern extension. 3 storeys with single-storey bay to N. Elegant red brick façade in restrained Baroque style, with

concave section of 5 bays to the N framed by pilasters. Horizontal rustication to ground floor, parapet with recessed panels.

E courtyard. The wings to the N, S and E of this courtyard are the original block designed by Lutyens. W façade 'Wrenaissance' style; 3 storeys and 5 bays. Portland stone faced ground floor with round-arched openings linked by impost bands, except those flanking the central entrance which are square-headed. All with keystones. Hexastyle-in-antis stone Corinthian columns from 1st to 2nd floor supporting a modillion pediment with a clock in the tympanum. Entablature continued one bay each side, supported at angles by Corinthian pilasters. Each bay with architraved sash with bracketed pediment. Small, architraved sashes with keystones in attic storey with stone cornice. North and south blocks, forming the sides of the courtyard, similar to those of western courtyard. E façade to Burton Place: Handsome elevation in manner of Renaissance palazzo. 2 storeys, 7 windows, framed by pilasters. Round-arched ground floor openings of 2 lights with stone architraves, soffits and keystones, linked by impost bands. Centre opening with 2-leaf doors and fanlight. Plain stone band and stone string at 1st floor level with carved stone shell motifs above each keystone. Tall piano nobile with large square-headed, architraved windows with alternating triangular and segmental pediments. Central window with bracketed cornice surmounted by a multi-layer feature of rectangular blocks. Projecting stone cornice. The pilaster capitals and a stone tablets above central first-floor window left uncarved as boasted work. The adjacent block to the north of this is by Douglas Wood, in an austere neo-Georgian style. This is of lesser interest. INTERIOR: Much of the interior now modern offices. Interiors of note include the Great Hall (intended as the Theosophist's temple), occupying the entire length of the first floor Lutyens E courtyard block. This was subdivided by the insertion of a floor in 1985 to provide a library with offices. 5 bays with aisles; frieze at dado height has series of roundels. Marble columns with Corinthian capitals supporting entablature; beamed compartmented ceiling inserted above cornice level. Above this is the barrel vaulted ceiling, of which only the coffered end bays were finished. The Hastings Room, originally planned by Lutyens as a library. Contains mahogany panelling and colonnaded screen. Chimneypieces with mahogany timber overmantels, marble slips and decorative tiled insets. Some of these features are understood to have been moved here in 1928-9 from the former BMA headquarters at 429 The Strand, designed by Percy Adams and Charles Holden. The Council Chamber, on the S side of the main courtyard, also has panelling from the Strand building. Coved ceiling. Round-headed windows with imposts linked to cornice. Entrance hall to the right of Wontner-Smith's main gateway has mahogany Tuscan columns, cornice and doors with segmental pediments. The Prince's Room is a square chamber above the main gateway. Recess to corner with Corinthian columns and entablature. Decorative window architraves. Neo-Georgian chimneypiece with marble bolection moulding and lugged timber surround and mirrored overmantel to match windows. Most of these rooms have been altered.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: The E and W courtyards are separated by Lutyens' intricate wrought-iron war memorial screen and gates, opened on 13 July 1925 by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The plaque over the main gates is inscribed on the W side MEMORY AND PRAISE, and on the E side: FAITHFUL HAVE BEEN YOUR WARFARE. Statues of Sacrifice, Cure, Prevention and Aspiration of 1952 by J Woodford and S Rowland Pierce form a Second World War memorial.

A small southern courtyard, The Council Garden, between the southern wing of Lutyens' building and the Nuffield Wing, contains a garden with oval pool, set beneath curved retaining wall built in red brick with stone steps and coping. The garden design is attributed to Lutyens, but this has not been established and evidence suggests that it post-dates his involvement. Plaque to Charles Dickens surrounded by bricks from his home on the site. Parapet stones from BMA House forming wall to planting bed and inscribed to commemorate the air raid of 16 April 1940 which damaged the buildings.

HISTORY: Originally designed by Lutyens as the headquarters and temple of the Theosophical Society, incorporating offices for commercial rental. Lutyens' wife Emily had become a follower of the Theosophists. Construction began in 1913 and ceased in 1914 when the uncompleted shell was commandeered by the Army Pay Office, which fitted out parts of the interior as offices. It is unclear whether the Theosophists ever used the building. After the war ended, the Theosophists had run out of funds. The BMA, founded 1832, bought the lease in 1923, and engaged Lutyens to complete the interior, principally the Great Hall. Wontner-Smith was engaged in 1927 to complete the western part of the building, facing Tavistock Square. The building subsequently expanded as membership increased and to provide income from letting.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANCE: A fine, albeit incomplete, example of Lutyens' earlier work in the neo-classical idiom. The later additions by Wontner-Smith and Wood, which form the majority of the building, are dignified and well-detailed; the whole ensemble representing a distinguished and coherent complex of multi-phase buildings. Of historic interest as the headquarters of the BMA since 1925.

SOURCES: ASG Butler, *The Architecture of Sir Edwin Lutyens*, 1950; *BMA House: a guide*, Jane Smith, 1988; Pevsner, *The Buildings of England*, London 4: North, 265-266

Listing NGR: TQ2990382430

This List entry has been amended to add sources for War Memorials Online and the War Memorials Register. These sources were not used in the compilation of this List entry but are added here as a guide for further reading, 9 February 2017.