18 - 51-4 Gracechurch Street, EC4.

Date: 1928-30.

Architect: L Sylvester Sullivan.

Sculptor: unknown.

Sculptures: This building has two horizontal rows of mask-like faces [A-C], carved in Portland stone. The lower row is placed in between the upright columns defining the window openings at 5th floor level. The upper row is placed on the upper edge of the stone elevation at the point where it recesses to form the two topmost storeys.

The building itself is in my view an elegant and successful example of modernist architecture, its principle feature being the vertical pillars which define the window openings, which rise above the seperately articulated ground floor. The doors and large window of this floor are themselves defined and articulated with complex abstract chevron carvings in stone [D-E].

The mask-like sculptures, although they assist in the overall articulation of the building, are placed rather high up to make much impact as sculptures. They are similar but not exactly the same, each probably carved out of a larger block forming part of the structure of the frontage. Their direct symbolic reference is obscure, and they should therefore be regarded as providing a 'humanising' influence for the otherwise rather severely designed facade.

Source: None available.