**Dorset House**, Gloucester Place/Marylebone Road, NW1.

Date: 1935

Architects: T. P. Bennett & Son.

Sculptor: Eric Gill

**Sculptures**: The flanking walls on either side of the entrance to the building each have a substantial carved low relief by Eric Gill (signed with initials, bottom right-hand corner of right side [E]), in the curved faces of Portland stone. These were almost certainly carved in situ when the blocks were in place.

1. **R.h.s** - a man running or dancing with arms outstretched, in front of a tree with schematic leaves. Two women kneel on either side, one offering him a bowl of fruit, the other holding flowers or possibly scaly fruit [C-D].

2. **L.h.s** - a woman standing holding the branches of a tree with schematic leaves to one side, with a figure of a man with a jug and bowl kneeling on the left, and a boy with a towel on the right [F-G].

The building itself is described by Pevaner as a "lively modernistic block with vertical brick channelling and plenty of balconies with rounded corners" [A-B]. He mentions Gill's work around the entrance in passing, but no other sources refer to these sculptures (eg. Collins 1992, and the list of Gill's sculptures in London in Byron 1981: 404). The style and subject matter, in particular of the tree and leaves, are similar to those of his engravings of the mid 1930s. The iconography and symbolism appear therefore to be Gill's own, and the exact significance of the scenes could be the subject of a neat little art-historical quest. There seems to be no obvious relationship between the symbolism of the carvings (if any) and the function of the building. In spite of the fact that their upper parts are truncated by a relatively modern and very ugly canopy, they do however decidedly enliven the entrance.

**Source**: Architecture Illustrated, Nov 1939.