

85 Fleet Street - The Reuters Building

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The Grade 2 Listed Reuters building has elevations to Fleet Street, St Bride's Avenue and Salisbury Court and occupies a site which once included the building housing Punch magazine. Its important stone elevation to Fleet Street has three principal elements – a rusticated base (incorporating a bold main entrance treatment running through three floors), plain ashlar stonework to the upper levels and a recessed top two floors with a concave façade topped by a drum and book-ended on the corners with pedimented pavilions. Might Lutyens have considered having one of his flat domes as a finishing flourish? Overall the building has a vaguely post-modern flavour.



When the Press Association vacated the building in 1995, followed by Reuters in 2005 they were the last major news outlets to leave Fleet Street – for centuries the home of the newspaper industry. It is interesting to note the initials of the Press Association carved into the stonework above an upper window at the of St Bride's Lane.



The building illustrates the type of design games that Lutyens frequently employed – the manipulation of planes, the subtle tricks of perspective and painstaking attention to detail. All of these combine in this case to place this particular building beyond its more ordinary neighbours.

Sadly, one of the original minor details – the Reuters' carefully detailed bronze name plaques (shown above) which adorned the two front corners have been removed – one to a company archive, the other to adorn the wall of the current Reuters' Canary Wharf headquarters.

There are, literally, a mere handful of significant buildings designed by the great late 19th and early 20th century architect Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens (1868 – 1947). These include the (then) Midland Bank Headquarters at 27 Poultry (now the Ned Hotel), Britannic House in Finsbury Square (1924-39), the Mercantile Marine Memorial on Tower Green (1926) and the headquarters of Associated Press / Reuters at 85 Fleet Street (1935).

As the premier press agency in London, it was Reuters who broke the news of a considerable number of significant events to the British press. Scoops included the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the erection of the Berlin Wall. This is a building that could tell tales of great journalistic endeavours.



85 Fleet Street - The Reuters Building Additional notes

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