

In any case where there is doubt or uncertainty whether the Incumbent may authorise the memorial within the above procedures or whether a faculty is required, the case should be referred to the Diocesan Registrar, 90 Deansgate, Manchester M3 2QH.

In any case where a faculty is required, the applicant should, in the first instance, consult the Secretary of the Diocesan Advisory Committee (address below).

Churchyard Monuments

If you have any questions please contact the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC):

DAC Secretary
Diocesan Office
5th floor, Church House
90 Deansgate
Manchester
M3 2GH
Tel: 0161 828 1419
Fax 0161 833 2751
Email: dac@manchester.anglican.org

For more information about the care of churches visit the DAC pages on the Diocese of Manchester's website: www.manchester.anglican.org



Remembrance

Christian Burial is the act by which the mortal remains of a person is laid to rest until the Day of Resurrection. Meanwhile it is good to mourn the departed, to remember them with thanksgiving and to reflect on our own mortality.

A memorial stone is by no means essential. Burials in churchyards are always recorded in church registers. The best form of remembrance is in prayers, sacrament and witness, or by gift to the church which can be a useful and worthy memorial.

Elements Prohibited Except by Faculty

- Kerbs, railings, fencing, chippings, statues, or any stone in the shape of a heart.
- Anything affixed to or hung upon any monument such as insignia.
- Subject to Rule 4 above, any granite polished above eggshell and any material of black, dark grey, or such a vivid colour as to be intrusive or offensive to the environment.
- Plastic and other synthetic materials, and all artificial flowers, except Remembrance poppies.
- Any carving, other than flowers, birds and small crosses.
- All Arms and Crests, and badges and other insignia of the Armed Forces of the Crown.

Materials, Shapes and Inscriptions

Materials

Stone should be natural with no reflecting finish and in keeping with the particular type and colour of the stone of which the church is built. No part of a monument may be polished so as to be reflecting or be above what is commonly called an eggshell finish.

This regulation is subject to the proviso that at the discretion of the Incumbent, where monuments not complying with this regulation have been permitted previously, materials similar to those already in situ may be authorised.

Shapes

Memorials of "eccentric" shapes will not be permitted (e.g. Teddy Bears). They should be simple and conform to those already in place in the area of the churchyard where the monument is to be erected.

Inscriptions

The churchyard is a public memorial of succeeding generations. Nicknames and personal comments may mean little or nothing to people in years to come and should not be used.

Inscriptions should be simple, dignified and reverent, brief epitaphs should reflect the life and work of the deceased: appropriate biblical or other quotations may be helpful in emphasising that life, but these should reflect Christian truth.

No inscription should be placed on the arms of a cross but only on the foot of the upright or on the base of the cross.

Trademarks and company names may not be inscribed on a headstone but the individual craftsman's name may be incised on the reverse side in letters no larger than 1/2" (13mm) high.

Churchyards

Churchyards like the churches within them are an important part of local and national heritage. They are often rich in historical, natural and artistic interest. Preservation of their particular character and beauty in the local environment is vital.

The church and churchyard go together even though they may be detached from each other. No monument should ever be placed in a churchyard which by reason of design, colour or material is obtrusive and blemishes the harmony and environment of the place.

The Law

Like the church the churchyard is 'owned' by the Incumbent. He or she holds it as a trustee for the benefit of all the parishioners past, present and future. The Parochial Church Council has the responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of the churchyard in co-operation with him or her.

The churchyard is subject to faculty jurisdiction, that is to say, the overriding authority of the Chancellor to the Diocese who is Judge of the Consistory Court. The Churchwardens are the officers of the Ordinary (the Bishop of the Diocese) in the parish and are responsible for ensuring that the law, proper practices and procedures are complied with.

Every parishioner or person on the electoral roll of the parish at the time of death has a legal right to burial in the churchyard, if the same is open for burials. Cremated remains may nevertheless be buried in a closed or disused churchyard, provided that a faculty is obtained from the Consistory Court. But no one has any right whatsoever to introduce any monument into the churchyard: this remains a granted privilege.

Those who are privileged to erect monuments and their heirs-in-law are responsible for their upkeep.

Bases

Where any memorial, being a headstones, cross or fixed memorial vase, requires for the purpose of its stability to be erected on a stone base or plinth, the same must be sunk at least two inches below the level of the immediate surrounding soil so that after settlement it is entirely invisible and a mower can pass safely over it. If a receptacle for flowers is incorporated, the body of the same must be likewise sunk.

Monuments Permitted by an Incumbent

The Incumbent may approve, without faculty, the following

HEADSTONES

not exceeding 5'0" (150cm) high nor 3'0" (90cm) in width.

CROSSES

not exceeding 6'0" (180cm) high nor 3'0" (90cm) in width.

FLAT STONES

not exceeding 3'0" (90cm) in width nor 5'0" (150cm) in length.

PLAIN OPEN BOOKS

(i.e. without wings, elaborate supports or other ornamentations)
not exceeding 2'6" (75cm) in width nor 1'6" (45cm) in height.

FIXED MEMORIAL VASES

to be placed at the head of the gravespace.
not exceeding 12" x 8" x 8" (30cm x 20cm x 20cm)

FLAT STONES

over the ashes of persons cremated
not exceeding 21" x 21" (53.3cm x 53.3cm).

Applications for any other type of memorial require a faculty.

The Reasons for these Procedures

Historically monuments were usually simple headstones with no above-surface bases, stone or wood crosses, and some edifices specially authorised by faculty. Much of the stone used was local, similar to that of the church. But from about the turn of the century unsuitable materials were introduced such as monuments with harsh unnatural colours, sometimes highly polished, often kerbs and chippings, which spoilt the aesthetic environment and increased maintenance problems.

Complaint was such that the Church Assembly set up a commission to investigate the matter in depth. By its 1953 Report every diocese was recommended to introduce control to prevent further deterioration of the environment. These new procedures set the bounds within which a monument is considered acceptable subject to the consent of the Incumbent. Anything else requires faculty authority. It may or not be permitted by the Court according to the special circumstances.

The Incumbent's Discretion and Authority

An Incumbent may authorise the introduction of a monument without need for faculty providing the same is in accordance in all respects with the regulations. He may advisedly consult the churchwardens and/or the Parochial Church Council. If in doubt he should seek first the advice of the Diocesan Registrar.

Whenever the proposed monument is outside his authority, or for one reason or another the Incumbent in the exercise of his discretion declines to authorise the monument, the applicant may always petition the Court for a faculty where the issue will be judged on its merits.

The expression "Incumbent" includes a duly licensed priest-in-charge. In cases where there is no incumbent after a period exceeding six months, enquiry should be made to Diocesan Registrar.

Procedures: Applications

Unless there are very exceptional circumstances no application for a monument should be made until after the burial.

Thereafter, the applicant is advised to read these procedures and discuss the project informally with the Incumbent.

Subsequently a formal application should be addressed to the Incumbent on the Diocesan Form available from him.

The applicant is advised not to enter into any agreement with a Stonemason before obtaining either the Incumbent's written consent or a faculty.

These procedures are issued by the Chancellor of the Diocese of Manchester. They apply to all churchyards in the Diocese of Manchester.