

Neutral Citation Number: [2016] ECC Lon 4

IN THE CONSISTORY COURT OF THE DIOCESE OF LONDON

IN THE MATTER OF ST MICHAEL CORNHILL

AND IN THE MATTER OF JOHN GAZE DECEASED

1. By a petition dated 14 April 2016, the Rector, a churchwarden and the parish clerk of St Michael Cornhill sought a faculty for “The adding of an inscription to one of the floor tiles in the sanctuary to mark the interment of the late John Gaze Esq.” The PCC had unanimously passed a resolution in support of this proposal. The DAC had recommended the proposal, subject to a proviso but it noted: “that it is unusual for a layman to be buried in the sanctuary”.
2. This matter had been informally raised with me some time prior to the death of Mr Gaze and I had replied in a letter, the details of which are not relevant to this decision. I was then again approached informally after the death of Mr Gaze and I had indicated that the matter would be considered on its merits, but that I considered that, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, I would consider it unlikely in principle that the cremated remains of a lay person should be interred and, marked with a memorial tile, in the sanctuary of a Grade I listed church. This was contained in preliminary advice communicated to the DAC which was then passed on to the parish, before the arrival of the present Rector.
3. The petitioners did not seek to establish any exceptional circumstances other than that in Mr Gaze’s liturgical role as parish clerk (I also understood him to have been a server) he had given a great amount of time and energy to the parish. I therefore indicated that I would make a decision after a site visit with the Archdeacon of London. That site visit has now taken place.

4. I observed that there were in fact two memorial tiles in the sanctuary floor commemorating past rectors of the parish. I also observed on the north wall of the nave there were numerous memorials of distinguished people connected to the parish including at least one long serving rector whose remains were interred in the crypt beneath. I also observed, in a prominent position above a single pew at the west end of the church on the west wall of the nave on the north side of the baptistery/narthex, a memorial to Thomas Goldney “Choirboy, Parish Clerk and Deputy of the Ward of Cornhill”. There was space in a similar position on the south side of the nave behind another single pew and it appeared to me that Thomas Goldney was a similar precedent for the late Mr Gaze and there was a corresponding position for a memorial plaque. The Archdeacon and the Rector agreed and the Rector had indicated that it was still possible to access the crypt and the deceased’s cremated remains could be interred there.

5. A faculty may therefore issue accordingly as agreed between myself, the Archdeacon and the Rector.

Seed, Ch

29 June 2016