

Neutral Citation Number: [2022] ECC Swk 5

In re St Paul’s Church, Wimbledon Park, Wandsworth

In the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Southwark

JUDGMENT GRANTING FACULTY

1. The faculty sought in this case by a Petition dated 7 February 2022, following a PCC resolution on 12 January 2022, is granted with and subject to the Provisos decided on by the DAC at its meeting on 13 April 2022.
2. I note that the DAC gave full consideration to the concerns expressed by the CBC and concluded that “on balance”, it was happy to support the parish’s proposals, which it considered to be “thoughtful and coherent”.
3. The conditions to which this faculty is subject are as follows:-
 - (1) A sketch/drawing of the proposed scheme for the work on the Rood-Cross must be provided to and agreed by the DAC before any works are started, if this has not already been done.
 - (2) In the programme of works, a sample section of the rood-screen should be treated initially, with the painted work being done first and then the gilding. This is because the extent and type of gilding would depend somewhat on the effect achieved by re-painting the areas of red and blue.
 - (3) Before proceeding further with the intended programme of works, the restoration work should be begun by carrying out areas of experimental treatment – on the screen, cross and reredos – in order to gauge onsite the effect of the repainted and regilded work in each case.
 - (4) The works must be completed to the reasonable satisfaction of the architect.
4. In granting this faculty, I note in particular:
 - (1) That the screen is said to be “incomplete” without the colouring which ancient builders always put upon structures of this kind and that partial colouring was done in 1957;
 - (2) That it is said to be “quite wrong to have a dark structure silhouetted against the light further east”, an opinion which seems to me to be both correct and uncontroversial;
 - (3) That the rood has not so far been coloured or gilded and that people “neither notice let alone read the inscription at its base”;

- (4) The DAC's observations that "the changes resulting from the 1930s work, which were seeming designed to introduce a greater dimension of colour ... were compromised by unsatisfactory choices of pigment (and its application) and unsympathetic treatment of the gilding";
 - (5) That the DAC considers that the parish's proposals "will enhance both the appearance of the various elements and their liturgical impact as a unified scheme of decoration within the Chancel";
 - (6) That the parish's desire is to "regain the lustre of the reredos ... and screen and let them speak out again to the glory of God".
5. I also note that neither Historic England nor the Victorian Society has any objections.
 6. There does not appear to have been a response from the Twentieth Century Society, but I do not regard this as essential to my determination, having regard to the dates of the chancel screen and rood (1896) and nature of the design, seeking to replicate a 14th century design. I note that the reredos was dedicated in early 1908, but infer from the circumstances that it has a historical and, accordingly, Victorian focus.
 7. I also note that the local planning authority has been consulted, but has not replied.
 8. I also record that I have no concerns regarding the credentials of Paul Velluet and Stephen Bellion. I respectfully endorse the DAC's view that these are "impressive". I also note the considerable experience of Elizabeth Simon, who is the parish's lead on this project.
 9. Lastly, I note that advice has been given regarding possible improvements to the internal lighting system. This appears to me to be consistent with the enhancement which the approved works seem likely to achieve.

Araba Taylor
Deputy Chancellor of the Diocese of Southwark
21 September 2022