

Neutral Citation Number: [2021] ECC Yor 4

IN THE CONSISTORY COURT OF YORK

PARISH OF YORK, ST OLAVE with ST GILES

CHURCH OF ST OLAVE, YORK

IN THE MATTER OF A PETITION TO INTRODUCE A MEMORIAL TO DICK REID

Unopposed Petition

ELIZABETH REID

MARK REID

TOM REID

Petitioners

JUDGMENT

1. I have before me a petition to introduce into the church of St Olave York a memorial to Dick Reid who died aged 86 on 16 January 2021.
2. The petitioners are the wife and two sons of the deceased; they are the executors of his estate.
3. The deceased was a carver in wood and stone.
4. There is no doubt that he was a man with a significant reputation nationally and that he made a substantial contribution to the church of St Olave during his lifetime.
5. The proposed memorial has been designed by Donald Buttress, a former surveyor to the fabric of Westminster Abbey. It is a green Cumbrian slate roundel on a creamy Ancaster limestone base. The base measures 26" x 24"; the roundel is 18 inches in diameter. The inscription on the roundel will have a cross at the top beneath which will be the words "REMEMBER DICK REID MASTER CARVER 1934 2021". Each word or date will be on a separate line apart from Dick Reid. It is proposed that the letters will be V cut and will be carved by Lida Kindersley of Cambridge, herself a renowned letter cutter.

6. It is proposed that the memorial be placed under the first window on the south aisle. I note that the petition refers to the north aisle, but the plan and photographs supplied suggest that it is the south aisle. In that position it will not interrupt either the stations of the cross or any other memorials. The roundel will also echo the shape of the stations of the cross.
7. It is, of course, unusual today to allow monuments within a church. The diocesan Churchyard Memorial Regulations 2018 state in para 7.2: "An application for a memorial monument or plaque inside a church should demonstrate that the person in whose memory the memorial is being introduced was a person of distinction who made a contribution to the nation, region, county or locality which is, and is likely to continue to be in years to come, of unique exceptional or historic interest. *In Re St Margaret, Earthem* [1981] 1 W.L.R. 1129, the Court of Arches held that the word "exceptionality" meant "The character of, or outstanding service to church, country or mankind by the person to be commemorated". It is generally accepted that consideration is not normally given to petitions for such memorials until at least five years have elapsed after the death, in order to allow sufficient time to pass so that a measured assessment can be made of the impact of the of the deceased's life and work. It is more likely that such a petition will be allowed if the contribution goes beyond their reputation in the local church in which they are to be commemorated.
8. In this instance less than a year has passed since the death, but I have been presented with material that has persuaded me that not only should I consider the petition at this time but also that I should allow it.
9. First, the petition is supported by the incumbent The Reverend Liz Hassall who says that proposed memorial "seems simple and appropriate". She also says that "there have been no dissenting views expressed to me. Everyone I have spoken with including the whole PCC agree that Dick's contribution merits inclusion within the church building."
10. Second, the PCC on 1 July 2021 having been reminded that "Memorials in the church buildings should only be permitted in the case of those who have made an extraordinary and long-standing contribution to the life of the Church and St Olaves in particular. Individuals should be of national renown in their field and of equivalent stature to those mentioned on existing memorials", recorded that "Dick Reid achieved national renown as a master carver and consultant. The PCC recognises his outstanding merit and the encouragement he gave to others in the craft. He also gave many years of service to St Olave. As such the PCC agrees that it is appropriate for this memorial to be sited in the church. The specific position is suitable, continuing a pattern of existing memorials on the same wall."

11. Thirdly, and setting that local opinion in a wider context, I have a commendation from Christopher Cotton a partner in the architectural firm Purcell. He himself is widely respected as church architect, being amongst other things the Surveyor to Durham Cathedral. He writes: “The contribution that Dick has made to the church in general as well as his wider contribution to the art and craft of York and the region is certainly worthy of a memorial and I agree that the church of St Olave is the most appropriate location. I am pleased to offer my support for this proposal.
12. Fourthly, and most significantly the DAC considered this matter at its meeting on the 20 July 2021. Their minute records: “Dick Reid was an internationally renowned sculptor and stone carver. His work could be seen at York Minster, Westminster Abbey, Windsor Castle, Highgrove, Carlisle Cathedral, Saint Magnus Cathedral Orkney, the Royal Opera House and in churches across the country and York (including St Olave’s). He was made an OBE in recognition of his contribution to the art and craft of masonry and sculpture. The exceptionality requirement was clearly satisfied. This was a very nice, small, discreet and elegant memorial by a significant artist and one of the best letter-cutters in the country (and internationally). It was a perfect example of “less is more”. They recommended to me that I grant a faculty in this case.
13. Having regard to all these matters I am satisfied that notwithstanding that five years have not elapsed since the death of Dick Reid it is appropriate for this proposed memorial to him to be introduced into the church of St Olave as proposed.
14. I understand that public notice has been displayed and that there have been no objections. I therefore direct that a faculty shall pass the seal until further order.

HH Canon Peter Collier QC
Diocesan Chancellor

Michael and All Angels 2021