

WOUGHTON ECUMENICAL PARISH
Procedure for the Introduction of Memorials

St. Mary's Church Woughton on the Green

St. Thomas' Simpson

Permission must be obtained for the introduction of any memorial. Simple upright headstones in respect of burials may be authorised by the incumbent in accordance with the terms and conditions given below, but other types of memorial, including grave markers such as curb stones, sculpture and crosses, must be authorised by the Chancellor under faculty.

Every application to erect a memorial, or place anything whatsoever, or to do any works in the churchyard, must be made in writing to the minister of the church, in the first instance, with a full description of the proposed work. Written permission to erect a memorial must be obtained before accepting an estimate or otherwise entering into a contract with a funeral director, stonemason or craftsman. A minimum period of six months should normally elapse between the interment of a person to be commemorated and the approval of a memorial.

Dimensions of Headstones

Headstones should be no larger than 1200mm (4ft) high, measured from the surface of the ground, 900mm (3ft) wide and 150mm (6in) thick. They should be no less than 75mm (3in) thick (except in the case of slate memorials, which may be thinner but no less than 38mm (1.5in) thick. (The metric equivalents given are slightly less than Imperial dimensions, but are recommended for use by the National Association of Master Masons.

Base and Foundation Slab

A headstone may stand on a stone base, provided that it is an integral part of the design and does not project more than 50 mm (2in) beyond the headstone in any direction. Due regard should be paid to the nature of the ground and the problem of settlement. Ideally, headstones should be long enough to be inserted directly into the ground at sufficient depth to ensure stability, or supported by a pre-cast concrete shoe.

Materials

All memorials should be made of natural stone with non-reflecting finish, or of hardwood. Stones traditionally used in local buildings, or stones closely similar to them in colour and texture, are to be preferred. Black, blue or red igneous rock (e.g. red granite) and marble, synthetic stone or plastic are not permitted.

Designs

Memorials need not be restricted to a rectangular shape, and curved tops are preferable to straight-edged ones. Individually designed memorials are to be encouraged. Memorials in the shape of a heart or book are not permitted other than by faculty. Photographs, porcelain portraits, kerbs, railings, chains, chippings or glass shades are not permitted.

Epitaphs

Inscriptions must be simple and reverent, and may include felicitous quotations from literary sources. Inscriptions should be incised, or in relief, and may be painted. Plastic or other inserted lettering is not permitted. Additions may be made to an inscription at a later date following a subsequent interment in the same grave or for other suitable reason. However, any such alteration must be separately approved. The lettering, layout and wording must be consistent with the original inscription.

Trademarks

No advertisement or trademark should be inscribed on a headstone. The mason's name may be inscribed at the side or on the reverse in unleaded letters, no larger than 13mm (0.5in).

Commemoration after Cremation

The erection of a memorial tablet is not permitted except in areas set aside by faculty, and then only in accordance with the terms of the faculty. However, a suitable addition to an existing memorial relating to a close relative may be permitted. Commemoration in a Book of Remembrance is preferable to commemoration by an individual memorial.

Flowers

Wreaths, plants or cut flowers may be placed either in a removable container, (which must be sunk completely into the ground, or laid on any grave, but they must be removed as soon as they appear to be withered. No artificial flowers are allowed except for Remembrance Day poppies and traditional Christmas wreaths and these should be removed after a period of not more than two months. Bulbs and small annuals may be planted in the soil of any grave.

Churchyard Maintenance

The surface of the churchyard should be kept free from grave mound and as level as possible, so that the grass may be easily cut by a mower. Grave mounds will normally be levelled after twelve months.

Memorials remain the property of the person or persons responsible for their erection, who are also responsible for their maintenance.