



Introduction

The choice of contractor(s) is an important one. There are different types of contractors who all have their own expertise and are appropriate for different types of projects. Whichever contractor you choose they can normally provide you with a portfolio of previous jobs on request, which should give an idea of their levels of expertise. The main types of contractors are outlined below.

Conservation-accredited professional advisor

Professional advisers include **architects, structural engineers and surveyors**. It is recommended that if you use one of these professionals they are **conservation-accredited**. In some cases we will require professional advisers to have conservation –accreditation if they are working on a grant-funded project, but we will let you know if this is the case for your specific project.

- Professional advisers tend to only be required for **larger** or more **complex** projects
- Architects can assess the **condition** of a memorial and produce a report on this which can include **recommendations** for the required works and **likely costs**
- Architects can also produce a more formal and detailed '**specification of works**' which can be used to obtain tenders
- Architects can undertake the **tender process** on your behalf, make **planning applications**, **oversee** the project and **sign off** the works following completion and **inspection**
- The use of an architect can be particularly beneficial in complex or more detailed projects and where planning consents are required. The added benefit of having an architect overseeing your project is that they can deal with any **unforeseen issues** which arise or are uncovered during the project.
- **Surveyors and engineers/structural engineers** can also provide a report on the condition of the memorial if the concern is about the memorial's **structural stability**.

Conservators

If your project involves a **historic memorial**, particularly those in **poorer condition, complex or sensitive projects or listed** memorials then it may be more appropriate to use a **conservator**.

- The ideology of a conservator is to conserve as much of the **original fabric** as possible using methods sensitive to the materials and condition of the memorial.
- Conservators have expert knowledge of the make-up and nature of traditional materials, their deterioration and decay, their appropriate conservation and repair methods.
- Conservators tend to have **specialism** in a particular material such as stone or metal but as these materials tend to feature together on memorials some conservators will be able to work with both.
- Larger conservation companies will sometimes contract out elements of the project if they do not have the in-house expertise.
- Conservators may **charge for quotes**.
- Conservators can also provide **professional condition surveys** or assessments of memorials, but these are also **usually charged for**. Such work can be eligible for **grant funding**.

Memorial masons

Memorial masons have **extensive experience** in the **creation** of memorial headstones and therefore have **many skills** which are applicable to memorial projects.

- The majority of masons' work is creating **new structures** and therefore their experience of working with historic structures **varies greatly**.
- You should ensure that your chosen mason has **experience in conservation** and repair of **historic structures**. This is important because only certain materials and repair methods are appropriate for historic memorials. You should make sure the mason is aware that the project should be of a conservation

approach. Please see War Memorials Trust's 'Conservation principles' helpsheet for more guidance on this.

- Masons are particularly suited to projects involving **stone memorials** such as cleaning, re-pointing, adding/re-cutting names and stone repair.
- Masons usually **quote for free** and may provide a brief written assessment/report of the memorial and/or its condition.

Other specialists

The Trust always **recommends** the use of specialist conservators for conservation and repair projects involving certain materials.

- Specialist materials/objects include, but are not exclusive to: metal; paper/vellum/parchment; stained glass/glass; paint; clocks and organs.
- Some memorials incorporate significant historic elements such as sections of medieval market crosses. In such cases as they pose even greater conservation challenges and are likely to be in more fragile condition it is of particular importance that an expert and experienced conservator is used.

Multiple contractors

Some projects will only need one contractor, such as for simple cleaning, stone repairs and addition of names. However, for **larger** more **complex** projects a **number of contractors** may be required particularly if there are **different materials** present.

For example, one contractor may be required to re-lay foundations and paving, another to undertake re-pointing and stone repairs and another to repair a bronze sculpture.

Traditional skills and materials

The role of a contractor is crucial and their experience and passion can make all the difference to a project and ensure the right works are

undertaken. It is important your chosen contractor knows about **traditional materials** and **methods** and when it is appropriate to use them.

- Although modern methods and materials have their place in conservation, it is often traditional materials and methods that are the **best match** as they will have been what were **originally used**.
- WMT is a **supporter** and promoter of **traditional methods** and materials where appropriate.

For example, often more modern methods of letter cutting involve sand blasting whereas traditionally the inscriptions would have been carved by hand. The Trust supports this traditional method of letter carving on historic stone and monuments because it is in-keeping with the original style, the different methods of carving give a different finished appearance and it also gives longer lasting results. The Trust is happy to pay larger grants towards traditional letter cutting if the cheaper option is for machine or sand blasting.

Contact WMT

Please do not hesitate to contact WMT if you have any questions about the appropriate contractors for your project or for advice on methods and materials.

Please note that this helpsheet is intended to offer informal advice and is a distillation of experience. The information contained in this helpsheet is not exhaustive and other sources of information are available. War Memorials Trust is not responsible for the content of external sources.