

Method Statement for Inspecting Memorials

Sites To Be Inspected

Council-owned cemeteries:

Addlestone
Chertsey
Englefield Green
Thorpe

Closed Burial Grounds

St Peter's Chertsey
St Mary's Thorpe
St John's Church
St Paul's Addlestone & Coronation Gardens
Christchurch Virginia Water

Scope Of Works

Each memorial will be inspected by a trained person and the results of the assessments will be recorded.

For each memorial, the testing staff will record:

- cemetery name
- section
- plot number
- grave number
- any name(s) visible and legible on the memorial

Each memorial will be hand tested and an evaluation of the risk carried out. The results of the inspection and test will be recorded on an inspection record sheet/software on a tablet. The findings of the risk assessment will determine the level of work – if any - required to make the memorial safe.

Part 1 - Visual Inspection

Prior to any physical test, an overall visual inspection of each memorial will be undertaken to assess the physical structure and identify visible signs of instability.

The memorial will be placed in one of three categories according to its height and this will be marked on the inspection record sheet:

- Under 24" (625mm)
- Between 24" – 60" (625mm – 1.5m)
- Over 6' (1.5m)

Testing staff will look for:

- Any deterioration to grave surrounds or rails
- Obvious or severe leaning
- Joints to see whether they appear to be intact
- Signs of weathering and erosion on the memorial
- Signs of soil erosion around memorial base
- Evidence of structural damage or disturbance (e.g. cracks or other faults)
- Undermined or unstable foundations, or foundations that are not intact
- Movement of parts of a memorial from its original position
- Cracks, splits or damage to the memorial, its kerbs and foundation (where applicable)

- Loose vases or pots
- The presence of vegetation, which may cause cracks to widen If a defect or unstable memorial is observed
- Damaged or eroding bonding

Commonwealth War Graves will only undergo a visual check. Any observed defects will be reported immediately to the War Graves Commission.

Part 2 – Hand-Testing

Following the visual inspection:

- Memorials below 24" (625mm) in height should be assessed to establish whether there is any benefit in applying any force to the memorial. If any hazards are identified, immediate action will be taken and the grave owner contacted.
- Memorials between 24" – 60" (625mm – 1.5m) in height will be subject to a hand test to assess any lateral movement
- Memorials more than 6' (1.5m) in height will not be subjected to a physical test by Council staff. Instead, a structural engineer will be appointed to inspect the memorial. The physical testing will only take place when there is no risk to other persons in the vicinity and will be done by pushing by hand, not with a force testing device.

The procedure for carrying out a hand test is:

- The inspection operative will stand on top of the grave facing the memorial
- Use one hand to press the memorial (the side of the memorial that is facing the grave) at the top of the memorial and apply a firm but steady pressure in different directions to determine to what degree - if any - the headstone is loose.

The testing staff will look to see if:

- there is any movement
- if dowels or ground anchors are fitted
- the foundation base appears to be of satisfactory size and material

After inspection and testing, memorials will be categorised by risk, which will inform the action required to be taken:

- Priority 1 (red)
 - Immediate danger - immediate action required
- Priority 2 (amber)
 - not an immediate danger but not fully stable - monitor annually to ensure it is not becoming more dangerous
- Priority 3 (green)
 - fully stable and safe - reinspect in 5 years unless some significant change occurs before then

A memorial that is categorised as Priority 1 is deemed to have failed the inspection process. The testing staff will record on the inspection record sheet where the memorial has failed.

If movement or other instability is noted, a video of the memorial being tested will be recorded as proof of the extent of movement.

Large Memorials, 60" or 1.5m and above

The Council does not have in-house resources that are capable of testing memorials 1.5m and higher, so will use a structural engineer for this.

Some large memorials are attractive for climbing on. Large memorials that do not pass the visual inspection will have Heras fencing erected around them to prevent people from getting close, and appropriate signage attached.

After Inspection and Testing

A photograph will be taken after the hand test so that there is a photographic record of the memorial after testing.

Equipment

- Tablet with Recording software (or paper inspection record sheets, clipboard and pen)
- Mobile phone with ability to take videos as well as photos or the tablet provided.
- Tape Measure
- Angle Finder
- Memorial Make Safe equipment (signage, bands, stakes)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Foot protection - safety footwear
- Hand protection (gloves)
- Head protection (hardhat or safety helmet) when working near larger memorials
- Hi visibility clothing
- Wet weather clothing

Making Safe

Memorials assessed as priority 1 will be made safe immediately and warning signs with the council's contact details displayed.

Temporary fixes include:

- Stake and band
- Cordon off
- Sink in the monolith
- Laying down/laying flat