

To whom it may concern:

Cemeteries are valuable sites of human history. They not only contain social data depicted through headstone inscriptions but offer a deeper glimpse into emotional, cultural, and religious sentiments of our ancestors. Cemeteries ground us and link us to the past. Beyond their historic value, they also provide cities and towns with greenspace. Cemeteries can be parks, wildlife habitats, and sites of peaceful reflection all at once.

Maximizing the benefits of your city's cemetery can only occur if the site is cared for and maintained. A cemetery with many broken and fallen headstones is both dangerous and aesthetically unappealing. Not only will an unrestored site deter visitors, but it also invites vandalism through what sociologists call "The Broken Window Theory". When a cemetery has been restored it becomes a source of civic pride, a location worth promoting, and an educational tool as well.

Critical restoration- the remediation of all hazardous, historically-sensitive, and technically complex hardscape conditions- is best performed by a trained preservationist. Once the items of a critical survey are fixed, volunteer or intern labor can be employed to clean headstones, do simple headstone "re-setting" and maintain the landscape. Having untrained volunteers attempt complex headstone repairs or re-setting large monuments can result in further damage. It also puts those volunteers at risk.

Professional restoration can be costly up-front but a very worthwhile endeavor in the long run. Improper repair of monuments is almost worse than leaving them broken. A well-trained and thoughtful preservationist will care greatly about their work and will be worth the price. Upon receiving this quote, I urge you to divide the work into phases that make sense for your budget. Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Ashley Shares, *Preservation Specialist*