



Northern Ireland War Memorial Design and Re-fit of the Museum Gallery

Invitation to Tender and Statement of Requirement for: Project Management and Design of Internal Capital Works for Re-fit of the Museum Gallery, 21 Talbot Street, Belfast, BT1 2LD

**Client: The Council of the Northern Ireland War Memorial
(Incorporated)**

Date for Submission: Friday 17 April 2026 at 5:00pm

Part 1 – Invitation to Tender

Tenders are invited by the Board of the Northern Ireland War Memorial (NIWM) for the project management and contract administration for the design of the internal capital works regarding the re-fit of the museum gallery at 21 Talbot Street, Belfast. This is part of a project entitled **Home Front Museum: Northern Ireland 1939-1945**, made possible by the award of a Development Grant funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The estimated project value is £15,000 plus VAT. The resulting design will be developed with the aim of submitting an application for a Delivery Grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The Client seeks to engage a Chartered Building Surveyor with extensive project management experience to fulfil supervision of 3 main areas of the brief.

1. The Museum Entrance within the communal Ground Floor area

Carry-out works to include a new internal and secure access point within the communal Ground Floor entrance area, to allow patrons of the public gallery to freely enter from the main external entrance door, whilst retaining access control for other levels of the building. The Northern Ireland War Memorial own 4/5 of the building.

2. Ground Floor BOH areas to the museum

The back of house areas are to retain an existing toilet, allow for an additional standard toilet and a new compliant accessible toilet for public use. The existing staff store room is to be adjusted to omit the current lobby area; integrate a dedicated fire-rated cupboard for existing electrical panels and provide a tea point.

3. Gallery Re-fit

Co-ordinate and collaborate with the lead interpretative design consultant to configure the public space on the ground floor.

The appointed consultant will be expected to assemble a project team that can provide:

- Architectural services in relation to the re-configuration of the building entrance and the facilities adjacent to the gallery; including production of necessary CAD drawings, etc.; prepare the appropriate planning and building control documents; tender and supervise the internal inspections through to completion.
- Mechanical and electrical services;
- Quantity surveyor services.
- Support the submission of a Delivery Stage application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Using money raised by National Lottery players, The National Lottery Heritage Fund supports projects that connect people and communities with the UK's heritage. The Home Front Museum: Northern Ireland 1939-1945 project is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, the NIWM has been able to secure funding to begin the process of redesigning and re-fitting its permanent museum exhibition.



Part 2 – Overview

2.1 Background to the Northern Ireland War Memorial

The Council of the Northern Ireland War Memorial (Incorporated) was established as a charitable company in 1950 to provide an enduring memorial to the men and women of Northern Ireland who died in the two World Wars and to commemorate the American presence in Northern Ireland during the Second World War. The original War Memorial Building opened in Waring Street in Belfast in 1963 and subsequently relocated to Talbot Street in 2007. The museum collection achieved full UK accreditation in 2013.

The **vision** of the NIWM is to be an engaging and welcoming museum that provides a window on Northern Ireland's key role in the Second World War and the impact of the war on its people.

The **mission** of the NIWM is to tell the story of Northern Ireland's role in the Second World War comprehensively and authentically through engaging exhibitions, publications, research, outreach and accessible learning programmes. In addition, we maintain war memorials to the fallen in the First and Second World War and the Belfast Blitz. We organise respectful commemorations, provide office and meeting accommodation to ex-service charities, and award small grants to projects which are in line with our charitable objectives.

Our **values** are:

- *Authenticity* – Our collection is at the heart of everything we do to inspire, research and create unique learning experiences, resources and publications.
- *Striving for excellence* – We are responsible for the professional care and interpretation of the collection. We will share our knowledge by presenting the collection and our research to their full potential.
- *Working together* – By promoting teamwork and exploring collaborative ideas we reflect the whole of Northern Ireland, ensuring our activities are wide-reaching and relevant to our varied audiences, both current and new.

- *Showing respect* – We host fitting commemorations which are inclusive of all. We support diversity and a work culture which values and empowers our team and recognises their achievements. We remember our roots and help towards building a more dynamic future for the organisation.
- *Innovative* – We are ambitious and imaginative about finding better ways to do things, embracing technology and partnerships, to share our stories.

2.2 The Museum

The museum gallery has a floor area of approximately 110 square metres. On entering the gallery, there is a small desk area which accommodates a Visitor Assistant. A supporting pillar is located in the centre of the space.

Linked to the gallery are public toilets, a small kitchen for staff and a store for holding publications, leaflets and other items.

The front of the museum is a glass wall at street level. The building is entered through a secure door which can only be accessed when visitors follow signage to press an intercom button. On entering the building, visitors are welcomed by the Visitor Assistant in an external hallway before being brought into the gallery. This hallway contains an elevator to reach upper floors, a main staircase and a supporting pillar.

The current exhibition tells the story of the Home Front in Northern Ireland during the Second World War using:

- Display cases and artefacts
- Large scale photographs
- Mannequins
- Audio visual installations
- Dressing up area with uniforms and helmets
- Models and facsimiles

The gallery contains memorials which were commissioned in 1963 for the original premises in Waring Street:

- Stained glass memorial window designed by Stanley Murray Scott (1912-1997) of Reed, Millican & Co., Newcastle upon Tyne
- Memorial wall of polished Belgian black marble
- Granite plinth with two leather bound Rolls of Honour listing the names of men and women from Northern Ireland who were killed in the First and Second World Wars

Artworks incorporated into the museum include:

- A two-part copper frieze depicting US forces and local industries by local artist and sculptor James McKendry (b. 1935) which is fixed to the wall of the gallery

- *Blitz Survivors* sculpture by John Sherlock (1933-2020) and *Blitz Memorial* sculpture by Carolyn Mulholland (b. 1944) are on display in the gallery
- *April Showers Bring Forth May Flowers* ceramic piece by Diane McCormick (b. 1966) is displayed on the wall of the hallway before entry into the gallery

Beside the marble wall are three foundation stones which were relocated from the original War Memorial Building in Waring Street.

The current gallery at NIWM was fitted in 2007 and has proved a functional and enduring exhibition space. After almost 20 years, it is proposed that the permanent exhibition should be redeveloped and the content upgraded, revised and modernised.

2.3 Access Audit

The NIWM has already undertaken work in the form of an Access Audit in 2023 which identified several areas for improving accessibility regarding the building entrance and ground floor area. Preliminary sketches have been prepared for the reconfiguration of the Ground Floor Back of House areas to determine initial feasibility and define the brief to improve the public toilet facilities. It is anticipated that this will serve as a necessary starting point for the successful bidder.

2.4 Project Objectives

The primary objectives of the museum re-fit are:

- Utilise the gallery space to reach its full potential and allow an increased number and broader diversity of objects from the collection to be on full display
- Present artefacts to their best advantage by using modern techniques and best practice in artefact mounting
- Create engaging and informative object labels and interpretative panels
- Provide exciting and accessible interactives to enhance the visitor experience
- Use energy efficient technologies in accordance with the NIWM Environmental Sustainability Policy.

In 2008, the current gallery received an award for *Best Example of Integrating Artworks into a Building Project* from the Royal Society of Ulster Architects in recognition of the artworks and memorials which were incorporated into the gallery design. The NIWM intends to continue with this approach. While the three foundation stones will be retained, there is scope for their sympathetic and respectful relocation.

2.5 Museum Project Team

The Museum Project Team consists of four staff (Museum Manager, Finance Manager, Collections Officer, Outreach Officer) and three trustees. Decisions regarding the progress of the project will ultimately be made by the Museum Project Team and they

will be supported by and work closely with five other members of staff (Education Officer, Research Officer, Business Support Coordinator and two Visitor Assistants).

Part 3 – Statement of Requirement

The requirement is for a Chartered Building Surveyor to project manage the capital design of the NIWM museum gallery at 21 Talbot Street, Belfast, BT1 2LD (approximately 110 square metres).

This will include; manage procurement of said consultants and any contractors for physical works; collaboration within a co-design framework to consult with internal and community stakeholders to design a public gallery to align with the charitable objectives; preparation of necessary drawings and plans to RIBA Stage 4; tender; and supervision of the internal preparatory investigations through to completion. The successful candidate must demonstrate experience in a similar role in the last two years.

The estimated project value of this work is circa £15,000 plus VAT. This work must be conducted in close consultation with the internal and community stakeholders and the spatial interpretation design team. Planning Permission and Building Control applications must be prepared and submitted where appropriate. The successful applicant will be required to attend co-design workshops and fully engage with the local community partners to facilitate the design for the building as a space for all. They will provide a constant feedback loop to the architect and structural team, whilst working very closely with the interpretation design team. Should, for example, the architect be required for meetings, the Capital Manager will coordinate diaries, etc. They will also be responsible for tender management for contractors and sub-contractors, and where the value of works is above £50,000, preparation of a tender report for review by the Board. The work includes internal refurbishment; complete mechanical and electrical review and redesign; and services/heating upgrade.

Design proposals shall embed inclusive design principles to ensure the space is welcoming and accessible to all visitors regardless of age, ability or background. Proposals should consider whole-life cost, ease of maintenance, durability of materials and the operational capacity of the museum to sustain installation over its lifecycle.

The NIWM intends to appoint an external agency to undertake a community consultation exercise with stakeholders during the exhibition design process. During this process the consultant will be expected to incorporate contributions and feedback from this ongoing work.

Part 4 – General

The consultant shall maintain Professional Indemnity Insurance appropriate to the nature and value of the services. Services shall be performed with reasonable skill and care in accordance with the standards expected of a competent professional experienced in museum and heritage projects.

The consultant shall provide risk management and advisory services in accordance with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (NI) 2015. Statutory duties relating to construction works, supply of goods and site operations shall rest with the relevant works contractors appointed.

The consultant shall maintain an active project risk register and provide regular cost monitoring reports aligned to approved budget profiles.

The consultant will be expected to understand National Lottery Heritage Fund investment principles and ensure proposals demonstrably support heritage conservation, learning, inclusion, organisational resilience and long-term public benefit.

4.1 Liaison with the NIWM

Close and effective liaison with the Museum Project Team will be essential to the development of the fit-out. The consultant must clearly demonstrate how they would propose to approach the issue of liaison with the client over the course of the design and fit-out process. The consultant will also be expected to cooperate with and support when required the other professional consultants (including architect, quantity surveyor, mechanical and electrical engineer and any other statutory or specialist advisors) who will be appointed.

All matters concerning day-to-day project management will be addressed in the first instance from the consultant to the Museum Manager. The Museum Manager will address them for prompt action to the Museum Project Team and when required to the Board of the NIWM. A clear decision-making and reporting structure will be maintained, with defined gateways for scope approval, budget control and risk review.

The consultant should provide brief reports on the design proposals at agreed stages in the process. The Board of the NIWM shall be kept informed of progress at different stages throughout the process and the consultant may be asked to attend a pre-determined number of Board meetings to make brief reports. This should include graphic representations of the design which the NIWM will be permitted to use as part of a community consultation process.

4.2 Collaborative Approach

The consultant should ensure that the design process involves ongoing opportunities for collaborating with museum staff and other relevant stakeholders. The consultant

shall work within a structured co-design framework enabling community participants and stakeholder groups to actively shape design decisions.

4.2 Timescale

The NIWM seeks a programme of work that will bring this phase of work to completion by early 2027 to align with the Delivery Stage Application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Proposed project stages are as follows:

- April 2026 – Appointment of consultant
- November 2026 – Development Phase Review with The National Lottery Heritage Fund (plans to be completed by this point to RIBA work stage 2 and significant progress made towards RIBA Work Stage 4)
- February 2027 – Submission of Delivery Phase application to The National Lottery Heritage Fund

There may be the option for a contract break which will allow the re-engagement of the supplier should the Delivery Stage application be successful, and previous work be of satisfactory quality. The estimated value of this contract extension is £15,000 of professional fees plus VAT. This Delivery Phase contract will require the successful tender to deliver the agreed capital fit-out. Including:

- Tender management for fit-out contractors, and preparation of tender report/s for work valued at £50,000 or greater;
- Management of fit-out; and delivery to RIBA Work Stage 7.
- Continued collaboration with museum staff, design team, statutory bodies and other stakeholders.

Part 5 – Tender Response

Tenders are invited by the Board of the Northern Ireland War Memorial and are to be submitted to Museum Manager Michael Fryer at manager@niwarmemorial.org by 5:00pm on Friday 17 April 2026. Any clarifications or associated questions should be submitted to the same email before 5:00pm on Monday 13 April 2026. Queries can be submitted in writing, and we are happy to meet in person or via Zoom with potential bidders to explore the requirements in more detail.

5.1 Evaluation Criteria

Tender submissions will be assessed by the panel using the following criteria and weightings and evaluations will be based on:

| | Criteria | Weighting |
|---|---|------------------|
| 1 | Understanding of the NIWM redevelopment project | 10% |
| 2 | Demonstrate expertise and experience of construction project management, including design, tender, contract management and project supervision. | 30% |
| 3 | Experience of key staff working on this project, including CVs | 30% |
| 4 | Outline proposed schedule of costs and cost management approach, demonstrating value for money. | 30% |

The successful bidder will be notified of the procurement decision in late April/early May 2026.