

HISTORIC BUILDINGS 'GRANT AID' SCHEME

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

NI EA Northern Ireland
Environment
Agency
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NORTHERN IRELAND ENVIRONMENT AGENCY HISTORIC BUILDINGS GRANT SCHEME

INTRODUCTION

New arrangements have been introduced for awarding grants for the repair or maintenance of historic listed buildings. These are set out in this application pack.

The arrangements for awarding these grants have been reviewed as part of a wider review of the various grants which Northern Ireland Environment Agency: Historic Buildings Unit (NIEA: HBU) can offer. The review included public consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. The results of the consultation have informed the development of a consolidated programme of Historic Environment Grants to meet the conservation needs of the most important elements of the historic environment in Northern Ireland.

The application pack contains:

- Guidance notes
- An application form
- Enhanced Grant Supplement

The application form, Enhanced Grant Supplement and guidance notes can also be downloaded from our site at www.ni-environment.gov.uk.

Please read the guidance notes thoroughly before you start to fill in the application form.

If you require assistance you may contact the HBU Grants Team on tel. no.

(028) 9054 3072,
(028) 9054 3073 or
(028) 9054 3038.

May 2008

BACKGROUND

Historic Buildings Unit (HBU), as part of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Built Heritage Directorate, is responsible for the protection of the built heritage. In carrying out this function, HBU operates the relevant provisions of the Planning (NI) Order 1991.

The statutory authority to provide grant-aid is detailed in Article 106 of the Planning (NI) Order 1991.

To assist with the protection and retention of the 'special' interest of these historic listed buildings, NIEA: HBU offers financial assistance to owners through a grant-aid scheme designed to help meet the recognised additional costs of repair and maintenance of listed buildings along with some associated reasonable professional fees.

The approach to grant-aid repairs to historic listed buildings should be in accordance with the internationally recognised conservation principles as defined in the Burra Charter (1981). NIEA: HBU has a commitment and a desire to work within and to encourage/facilitate others to work within the four principles of conservation contained within the Burra Charter – and the equally important principle of sustainable development. These conservation principles are:

1. **Minimum Intervention** – only undertaking that intervention which is essential to preserve a structure or building, i.e., the minimum change to a historic building or structure in order to retain, wherever possible, the original fabric and character.
2. **Maximum Retention** – the retention of the maximum amount of historic fabric.
3. **Clarity** – it should be possible to distinguish any new work from historic work.
4. **Reversibility** – ensuring that any intervention to a historic structure can be undone in the future.
5. **Sustainability** – the principle that any change proposed to a building, supports a sustainable future for the structure, or at least does not preclude such a future.

Work we can grant-aid

Generally, we can offer grant-aid assistance towards the repair and maintenance of the original fabric of historic listed buildings, where it can be demonstrated that the works are necessary.

We may also offer assistance with some professional fees and, in certain circumstances, with the costs of some elements of condition reports.

Work we do not grant-aid

As our grant scheme is targeted at the repair and restoration of the original fabric of historic listed buildings, other works to listed buildings will not qualify for grant-aid. The types of work we will not grant-aid include, but are not limited to the following:

- works to historic buildings which are not listed;
- alterations and improvements;
- demolitions;
- reinstatement and reconstruction where there is a lack of historical evidence of design and detail.

Applicants who are not eligible for grant-aid

- Government/Public Bodies;
- Housing Associations funded by public monies;
- Large Commercial Organisations. For grant purposes this will apply to listed buildings owned by Financial Institutions, for example, banks, building societies, insurance companies;
- Multi-national companies.

Before you submit your application

All requests for advice on grant eligibility of buildings should be directed to the NIEA Historic Buildings Grants Team. Contact details are provided on the back page of this document.

The application form and guidance notes can be downloaded from our website at www.ni-environment.gov.uk.

Listed Building and Planning Consents

If it is proposed to carry out repairs, alterations or demolition or to construct an extension which would affect the character of a listed building, then Listed Building Consent must be obtained. Your divisional Planning Office will advise you on whether the proposed works will require Listed Building Consent and can supply you with the appropriate application forms. In many cases a separate application for Planning Permission may also be required. The Divisional Planning Office can give you advice about this too.

You may find contact details for your local planning office on the Planning Service website – www.planningni.gov.uk.

Our priorities for support

We estimate that with the introduction of our new grant scheme there may be a high demand for historic building repair grants. This means that we may not be able to offer a grant to every project that qualifies for support.

In the event of a restricted funding situation NIEA: HBU will give funding priority to: -

- buildings which are on the Buildings at Risk in Northern Ireland Register (BHARNI Register);
- thatched properties;
- those individuals qualifying for enhanced rate of grant.

We will not offer grant funding

- If you are ineligible to apply for grant (see page 3);
- If the work is deemed by us to be unnecessary;
- If the works have already begun.

We will not accept applications for work that has already started.

How we will assess your application

On receipt of a completed application form together with the required supporting information which may include photographs, NIEA: HBU will acknowledge your application. We will normally expect to do this within 5 working days. The checklist appended to the grant application form provides details of the information that must accompany your properly completed application form. Please note that your application will not be accepted and will be returned to you if the application is incomplete.

Once the application has been accepted, a Senior Conservation Architect (SCA) will visit to assess the building and the proposed scheme. Please note that our architects can only provide limited technical input on the grant application. It is your responsibility, together with your technical advisors to draw up satisfactory proposals. These proposals will be reviewed by HBU.

We aim to advise you of the outcome of our initial assessment within 30 working days.

A member of the HBU Grants Administration Team will write to you and enclose a schedule of requirements (SOR). We may request additional information, such as drawings and specification. On receipt of the required documentation, the Department will assess if the proposed scheme is acceptable or to tell you that the application has not been approved.

Once we have approved your grant

For successful applications, we will issue an offer letter detailing the amount of grant available. This will also set out the conditions which will apply to the offer.

You will be required to formally accept an offer of grant within a defined timescale (currently 1 month) before your application is progressed further.

You must not start work until you have received written approval to do so from NIEA: HBU.

How long will a decision take?

As a rule of thumb, small scale repair schemes are likely to be more straightforward to assess and we anticipate that we will be able to process these applications more quickly than larger, more complex schemes.

What grant-aid might I receive?

The new guideline rates introduced by NIEA: HBU are listed on the table overleaf.

Grant is awarded at the discretion of the Department and is not a statutory requirement. In the event that the scheme is oversubscribed, NIEA: HBU may decide to close the scheme to all applicants and/or offer assistance only to those applicants that meet our priority criteria for support. Any information about the operation of the scheme will be provided on our website.

Schedule of Grant Rates

Non ecclesiastical buildings		Grant-aid available for eligible items
Grade A		35%
Grade B+		35%
Grade B1		35%
Grade B2		35%
Ecclesiastical Buildings		Grant-aid available for eligible items
Grade A		35%
Grade B+		35%
Grades B, B1 & B2		NIL
Exceptions which apply		Grant-aid available for eligible items
Thatched buildings		75% for eligible items pertaining to thatch and roof structures only.
Enhanced grant		90%
Reasonable professional fees		75%
Large Commercial Organisations, for example Financial Institutions		NIL
Multi-national Companies		NIL
Public Bodies		NIL
Government Departments		NIL
Schemes which begin prior to issue of a letter of offer		NIL

Monitoring of Works and Payment of Grant

The object of grant-aid is to offer financial assistance to owners to help meet the recognised additional costs of repairing listed buildings to an acceptable standard.

You should note that we will only process full payments once works have been carried out to an appropriate standard and on receipt of original accounts (which need to have been paid in full).

We will inspect the repairs. Grant will not be paid against inappropriate materials or a poor standard of workmanship. Failure to carry out works to an appropriate standard is a breach of planning legislation and may also lead to enforcement action being instigated by the Department.

It is expected that you will receive the payment within 40 working days of receipt of your paid accounts, following a satisfactory inspection of the works.

Upon completion of the works, NIEA: HBU will compile a post scheme review of the benefit of the works. We may seek access for photographs of the works (primarily external), to provide 'before' and 'after' pictures of the benefit of grant-aid. These will be retained by NIEA: HBU and may be published by agreement with the owner. We will seek to tabulate the benefits of Government spend on our historic building stock and to promulgate this information to the wider public in an effort to increase public awareness of our diverse heritage.

The following information gives advice on how to complete each section / question on the application form.

Section 1 - Applicant

Q1 Details of Applicant

Applicants must be organisations or individuals who have a legal responsibility for the repair of a listed building. You will normally need to own the building or hold a lease (which places a responsibility on you to carry out repairs to the property), or a tenancy agreement.

Q2 Details of Agent

We will accept applications prepared on behalf of the owner(s). However, we require full details and a contact telephone number for the owner(s) and they must sign the declaration.

Q3 Enhanced Rate of Grant

Enhanced rate of grant-aid may be available, which is currently at 90% of the costs of eligible works for those applicants in receipt of the following specific means tested benefits for a continuous period of at least 1 year prior to the date of application:

- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income Support
- Guaranteed Pension Credit

Confirmation of entitlement to benefits which are eligible for enhanced grant will be obtained in writing from the relevant Department e.g. Social Security Agency or Income Tax office. NIEA: HBU reserves the right to amend the criteria at any time.

Q4 Property Details

Please provide the full postal address of the property for which you are applying for grant-aid.

Q5 Property Ownership

You may be asked to supply copies of documents to confirm the nature of your interest in the property, e.g. lease.

If you are the tenant, a copy of your tenancy agreement should be provided. You must be responsible for the repairs to the property and the documents provided should support this.

Q6 Additional Legal interests in the Property

We need to know whether any other parties have a legal interest in the property – i.e. spouse, partner, organisation or company. For example the property may be jointly owned, or owned by another individual or organisation.

Q7 Listed Building and Planning Consent

If it is proposed to carry out repairs, alterations or demolition or to construct an extension which would affect the character of a listed building, then Listed Building Consent must be obtained. Your divisional Planning Office will advise you on whether the proposed works will require Listed Building Consent and can supply you with the appropriate application forms. In many cases a separate application for Planning Permission may also be required.

The Divisional Planning Office can give you advice about this too.

Listed Building Consent is not required before carrying out maintenance and repairs which do not affect your building's character.

Churches are currently exempted from Listed Building Consent, but this does not remove the owner's obligation to ensure that the building's character is maintained. Note the residence used by a minister of a church is not regarded as a church building.

Because of the rarity of listed buildings and their great value to our architectural heritage, it is an offence under Article 44 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 to demolish, materially alter or extend a listed building in any manner that would affect its character without first obtaining Listed Building Consent.

Q8 Details of the Proposed Scheme

You will need to provide an accurate description of the proposed repair works and why they are necessary. Historic fabric should always be retained and repaired in the first instance, before consideration is given to replacement.

You should itemise the proposed repairs, e.g. roof structure, roof coverings, walling, windows, doors, ironmongery, internal features such as internal plasterwork, partitions, flooring and fireplaces, and joinery including staircases, doors, and architraves.

Please provide photographs – if possible - to support your application. It would assist to have photographs in printed version. Photos should be clearly labelled.

For more complex projects, you may already have carried out professional reports such as a condition report, feasibility study, conservation or management plan. In order to help us to assess your proposals, please enclose any available reports with your grant application. Grant is not available for these with the exception of some elements relating to a condition report.

Q9 Project Timetable

Normally, we would not expect repair projects to last more than 3 years. Extensive works may best be undertaken in stages. We need to know when you expect the scheme to start and the length of time it will take to complete.

Q10 Details of the Lead Professional Advisor

Depending on the nature and scope of the proposed works; and indeed NIEA: HBU recommends, that in most cases it will normally be necessary to appoint a professional advisor to provide advice on your proposals, draw up scheme designs and most importantly supervise the works. In these instances, fees to cover this work may attract grant-aid. Where minor like for like repairs on a limited scale are proposed (e.g. splice repairs to sash windows), it may not be necessary to appoint a professional advisor, provided that the works are undertaken by a competent craftsman.

Where the extent of proposed works is such that professional advice is required, Northern Ireland Environment Agency requires that this advice is provided by a suitably qualified person(s) or organisation with membership of a recognised body and with expertise in building conservation. Professional membership bodies recognised by Northern Ireland Environment Agency includes RIAI (Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland), RSUA (Royal Society of Ulster Architects), RIBA (Royal Society of British Architects), RICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors), IHBC (Institute of Historic Building Conservation). This list is not exhaustive.

Please provide details of conservation projects undertaken by the lead professional advisor. You should list previous work undertaken on historic/listed buildings to demonstrate your understanding of the aesthetic and technical issues of the conservation of listed buildings.

Please note the Lead Professional Advisor should be retained to oversee and supervise the works in order to ensure that they are carried out to an acceptable standard.

Section 2 – Further information

Q11 Is the building thatched or was it originally thatched?

Thatched buildings are an integral part of our vernacular heritage. Since the 1950s an estimated 15,000 have been lost and today less than 200 remain. As an increasingly scarce feature of our landscape, NIEA is committed to encouraging the retention of traditional thatched buildings through priority grant-aid.

Q12 The BHARNI Register

The Built Heritage at Risk in Northern Ireland Register (BHARNI Register) is an online database compiled by the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society (UAHS) on behalf of NIEA (and paid for by NIEA through an agreement with UAHS), which highlights buildings of special architectural and historical interest, and other scheduled monuments, the survival of which is under threat. Such structures are in need of urgent repair and maintenance.

Details of Built Heritage at Risk in Northern Ireland can be found on the EHS website or by contacting Ulster Architectural Heritage Society. Their website address is www.uahs.org.uk.

Q13 Is the building at risk from disrepair?

Please specify if there are any particular issues that are threatening the historic fabric, such as water ingress, wet and dry rot, structural failure.

Q14 Urgency, i.e. to prevent loss or damage to important historic fabric.

Please specify any urgent defects that require attention to prevent loss or damage to important historic fabric. If available, please enclose a condition report to explain the order of priority of urgent works.

If the urgency of works is not apparent, your application may be rejected.

We may decide that a phased approach to the works, focusing on high priority works, would be more appropriate.

Q15 How will the project enhance the heritage value of your building?

Please explain the ways in which the repairs will enhance the significance of the building. This will vary for each building and for each repairs project. For instance, the works could result in improved aesthetic appearance, restored architectural features, continued use of an otherwise underused building, improved awareness of the building within the community, civic pride etc.

Q16 What is the present use of the property? If it is vacant, please explain why.

We will compile records of buildings brought back to use through grant-aid.

Q17 Does your project involve a change in use or does it bring a redundant derelict or under-used property back into use?

This information helps us assess how useful grant has been in bringing vacant or derelict properties back to use and therefore conserving the historic environment. Note - Change of use may require planning permission.

Q18 Public Access to the property

NIEA: HBU strives to improve awareness of the historic environment among the general public. One of the ways in which we raise awareness is through our co-ordination of the European Heritage Open Days, a Europe wide event held annually in September. Details of this event can be found on the NIEA website at the link:

www.ni-environment.gov.uk/built/built-events/ehd.htm. NIEA: HBU encourages all listed building owners who avail of grant-aid to consider ways of providing enhanced public access to their property and to take part in the annual European Heritage Open Days event. We will however only require access in the case of public listed buildings, as a condition of a grant-aid offer. This access may extend to European Heritage Open Days.

Q19 Maintenance

Regular preventative maintenance is key to the conservation of historic buildings. Guidance on maintenance has been prepared by Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and can be downloaded from: http://www.ihbc.org.uk/stitch_in_time.htm

If you have a maintenance plan for your property, please send us a copy with your application.

Q20 Project Aims

Please summarise why you are planning to undertake the proposed works and what the benefits will be for the longer term.

Section 3 – Cost of Scheme

Q21 Cost Breakdown

NIEA: HBU grant-aid is targeted at repairs to the historic fabric of the listed building. Eligible items may include chimneys, roofs, etc.

Q22 Please give details of the estimated costs of any professional advisors that you consider will need to be employed on your project.

NIEA: HBU will only deem eligible reasonably incurred professional fees.

Procurement Requirements

Applicants/contractors should be aware of the Buildsafe NI Initiative. This initiative was formulated to eliminate deaths and substantially reduce injuries through improvements in the application and management of health and safety within the construction industry.

Applicants must be aware of their duties and responsibilities in relation to CDM (Construction Design and Management Regulations 2007).

These regulations apply if the construction phase involves more than 30 working days or 500 person days of construction and more than four people on site at any one time. They do not apply to domestic clients unless a developer is carrying out the work.

SCHEMES COMPETITIVELY TENDERED

For projects costing up to £5,000

You should obtain 2 quotations based on a brief specification which clearly sets out the extent of the proposed work.

For projects costing between £5,000 and £25,000

You should obtain 3 competitive tenders for the work based on drawings and specifications which clearly set out the precise extent of the proposed works.

For projects costing between £25,000 and £250,000

The project must be put out to tender in accordance with the Code of Procedure for Single Stage Selective Tendering 1996 published by the National Joint Consultative Committee for building. Tender documents must include working drawings, a full specification and a detailed schedule of works or Bills of Quantities.

For projects costing more than £250,000

The project must be put out to tender in accordance with the Code of Procedure for Single Stage Selective Tendering 1996 published by the National Joint Consultative Committee for building. Tender documents must include working drawings, a full specification and Bills of Quantities.

FOLLOW ON PHASES OF WORK

NIEA will not accept 'follow on phases' of work without new tenders being sought, unless prior permission has been obtained, in writing, from NIEA. If this is the case, the applicant's consultant must demonstrate that it is more economical to follow this course of action, than to re-tender.

SCHEMES NOT COMPETITIVELY TENDERED

Whilst it is possible to recommend competitive tendering in every case - applicants, particularly in the small schemes, may choose to carry out works on a different basis. The following are a list of other methods and documentation required.

Builder Developer

With a Builder Developer scheme we do not require competitive tendering. However we require an estimate of cost, prepared by a consultant QS or Architect. The estimate of cost must be based on working drawings.

- Up to £25,000 - Itemised estimates
- £25,000 - £250,000 - Detailed schedule of works and specifications or Bills of Quantities
- Over £250,000 - Bills of Quantities

Direct Labour Scheme

Occasionally, applicants prefer to carry out the work by obtaining separate quotations for different parts of the work, e.g., roof, windows, external rendering.

Initially we require a detailed estimate of all the works.

On completion we require copies of the various quotations, including receipts obtained for each element of the work.

Own Labour

In smaller schemes applicants may wish to physically undertake the work themselves. A detailed record of time spent should be maintained and submitted upon completion of the scheme, along with receipted invoices for material supplied and specialist works.

Q23 Are you VAT registered?

In general, we will offer a grant on VAT where there is documentary evidence that all work is liable to VAT (unless you tell us in your application that you are able to reclaim some or all of the VAT which you will be charged, or that the work will be zero rated). 'Grant aid' is only paid towards the VAT that you are unable to recover. If you are subsequently able to recover the VAT towards which grant has been paid, you will be required to repay the relevant amount of grant.

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) can give you advice about this. You may find contact details and advice on the HMRC website – www.hmrc.gov.uk.

Q24 VAT and zero rating

If some or all of the works are zero rated, we will take this into account in working out the grant.

Churches are eligible for a VAT rebate through the Listed Places of Worship Scheme, details of which can be found on <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk>.

Q25 Previous grant applications to NIEA: HBU and other grant distributors.

This applies to work that may have been carried out while the building was in previous ownership. You should tell us about any grant-aided works that have been carried out on the building at least over the last 10 years.

Q26 Have you applied, or do you intend to apply, to any other organisation(s) for a grant or allowance towards the works proposed in this application?

This includes other funders and organisations such as other Government Departments / Agencies, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Heritage Lottery Fund, Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

Gain share/clawback conditions may be added to NIEA Historic Buildings Unit letters of offer, depending upon the level and nature of the grant assistance. These will be assessed on a case by case basis, with appropriate conditions included in the letter of offer.

GUIDANCE NOTES ON COMPLETING THE ESTIMATED PRICED SCHEDULE

The Estimated Cost of Works details must be completed and submitted along with the application form. The scheme will not be considered for grant until this form is completed.

It is recommended that the priced Schedule of Works form is completed by a competent consultant who is experienced in conservation work.

The priced schedule form is for internal use only and is not a substitute for the required tender documentation. The estimate must be a realistic indication of total scheme cost based on level of information available.

Please provide a brief description of the work under each heading.

Applicants must be aware of their duties and responsibilities in relation to CDM (Construction Design and Management Regulations 2007)

These regulations apply if the construction phase involves more than 30 working days or 500 person days of construction and more than four people on site at any one time. They do not apply to domestic clients unless a developer is carrying out the work.

Applicants/contractors should be aware of the Buildsafe NI Initiative. This initiative was formulated to eliminate deaths and substantially reduce injuries through improvements in the application and management of health and safety within the construction industry.

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www.ni-environment.gov.uk

Our aim is to protect, conserve and promote the natural and built environment for the benefit of present and future generations.



An Agency within the Department of the

Environment

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