



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



NBHS

An tSeirbhís Oidhreachta
Tógtha Náisiúnta
National Built
Heritage Service

Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2025 Guidance Booklet for Applicants



WHAT IS THE BUILT HERITAGE INVESTMENT SCHEME (BHIS)?

The BHIS is a Government grant scheme using funding from the National Built Heritage Service (NBHS) to help the owners and custodians of historical buildings to maintain and conserve these important structures. Applicants can apply to their Local Authority for funding to help them undertake works to their properties.

Funding is available of up to 80% of the cost of doing approved work. Applications open each summer for the following year, and successful applicants will be notified in January each year. You must pay for the works yourself and you will receive the grant funding at the end of the year.

WHAT IS IT FOR?

Ireland's historic buildings contribute to the vitality of our cities, towns, villages and countryside, while instilling a sense of pride of place. The primary custodians of structures protected under the Planning and Development Acts are their owners and occupiers, and they, along with the Local Authorities, are responsible for their protection.

The BHIS is designed to support people in caring for these structures. It runs alongside the Historic Structures Fund (HSF) which enables larger scale conservation works to be carried out on heritage structures.

WHO CAN APPLY?

The BHIS provides funding for repair/conservation works to the following types of buildings (or qualifying structures):

1. **Protected structures** (buildings that are listed on the Record of Protected Structures within their Local Authority area)
2. **Proposed protected structures** (buildings that the Local Authority propose to include on this list)
3. **Structures in Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)** (buildings that are located within areas defined as an ACA by their Local Authority)
4. **Vernacular buildings**
5. **Historic Shopfronts**

If you are unclear whether your structure is eligible under this scheme, you should contact the **Architectural Conservation Officer** in your Local Authority for clarification.

HOW MUCH CAN I APPLY FOR?

The funding awarded for successful projects will be between **€2,500** and a maximum of **€50,000**.

The total value of all public funding provided for individual projects must not exceed 80% of the total project cost and is determined by the Local Authority on a case by case basis. This means that you will have to contribute at least 20% of the cost of the works yourself, but in most instances this figure will be higher. Voluntary work (benefit-in-kind), local authorities' own funds/contributions, or funding from other exchequer sources cannot be used to satisfy the match funding requirement.

Based on the assessment of applications, each Local Authority will allocate funding to the successful applicants within their area. **Given the large number of applicants for a limited pot of funding, it is unlikely that you will be awarded the full amount you request**, as Local Authorities try to spread the funding across eligible projects to help as many people as possible each year.

WHEN & WHERE TO APPLY?

Applications must be made to the relevant local authority (using the application **Form A**). The deadline for applications to the relevant Local Authority is 27 September 2024. As the level of funding for this scheme nationally is only finalised at the end of the year, details of the successful projects will be announced in early January 2025.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Application materials are available on www.buildingsofireland.ie and on your Local Authority's website. Applicants should complete these documents, including the application Form A and a method statement, and return them to the relevant Local Authority to be assessed.

Applications are assessed by an expert panel within the Local Authority under the following criteria:

1. Significance of the Structure
2. Efficacy of the Works
3. Quality of Works Proposed

After their assessment of all the projects in their area, each Local Authority will recommend a list of projects to the Department. The Department will then announce the successful projects and the level of funding each has been awarded.

WHAT IS A METHOD STATEMENT?

A method statement is a summary plan of the works that you intend to carry out. It can be completed by a Contractor, Architect or Conservation Professional that you have engaged, or who has given you a quote to undertake the works. It should briefly describe the current condition of the structure, and give details of how the conservation/repair works will be carried out. It should also include photographs of the current condition of the building.

The length and level of detail needed for the method statement will vary depending on the type of works you are applying for. For example, conserving windows or undertaking a thatch repair may require a summary level of detail, while replacing an existing external render or undertaking larger conservation works will need a longer method statement to accurately describe what you propose to do to the structure. **It is up to the Local Authority to be satisfied with the standard of method statement provided.**

WHAT HAPPENS IF I RECEIVE FUNDING APPROVAL?

Construction works can start upon receipt of the Notice of Approval from your Local Authority.

Progress is monitored throughout the year by the Local Authority. They are required to carry out physical site visits during the course of the project to check the progress of works and keep the Department informed.

Local Authorities are responsible for payment of funds to successful applicants in advance of seeking recoupment from DHLGH. All works must be completed and certified by the local authority before the applicant may seek payment.

Once works have been completed, the applicants inform the Local Authority and commence the recoupment process by submitting all receipts, proof of payments and photos. Finally, having confirmed that the works have been completed to a satisfactory standard, the Local Authority will

pay the appropriate grant to the applicant and draw down the relevant amount from the Department.

WHO DO I CONTACT?

For more information please contact the **Architectural Conservation Officer** or **Heritage Officer** within your Local Authority or **Built Heritage Policy Unit, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage**, Custom House, Dublin 1, D01 W6X0 or email BHIS@housing.gov.ie

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Please note, all grant-approved works must meet all statutory requirements, including planning permission. All documents submitted as part of an application will be subject to FOI. For a full list of terms and conditions, please consult the Built Heritage Investment Scheme Circular, available on all local authority websites.

Proposed works should be carried out in accordance with best practice standards as outlined in the Department's *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2011), and Advice Series publications <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/>. Consideration must also be given to the Archaeological and the Planning Process guidelines issued by the National Monuments Service, and guidance leaflets issued by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in relation to habitats and species where appropriate.