



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

Built Heritage Investment Scheme Guidance Booklet for Applicants



This guide provides *applicants* with information in relation to the application process and operation of the **Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) 2024**.

Background and Purpose of Scheme

The quality of our historic built environment profoundly affects our everyday lives. It contributes to the vitality of our cities, towns, villages and countryside while instilling a sense of pride of place. It also makes a significant contribution to our climate action policies through the retention of the embodied carbon in these existing buildings and helping to maintain them in use into the years ahead.

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 owners and custodians 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.

The BHIS scheme will operate for the duration of 2024, with funding to be claimed within that calendar year. The scheme will be administered by the Local Authorities, who will each be awarded an allocation amount of the total available funding as determined by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (the Department).

Funding awarded through the scheme to applicants can range from €2,500 up to a maximum of €15,000.

The aims of the Built Heritage Investment Scheme are to:

- Provide funding to owners and custodians of historic properties along with leveraging private capital for investment of small-scale, labour-intensive conservation projects throughout the country in the repair of the historic built environment.
- Assist owners with the repair and conservation of structures that are protected under the Planning and Development Acts, thereby helping them to fulfil their obligation to maintain these important heritage buildings into the future.
- Support a traditional skills training element, such as roofing, thatching, lime mortar, dry stone walling, ironworks and masonry. Any such projects must be agreed in advance by the Department and the relevant local authority.
- BHIS 2024 is focused on properties that are on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs).

Scheme overview – who can apply, eligible projects

The Built Heritage Investment Scheme provides capital funding for works to qualifying structure which include the following:

- 1. Protected structures (listed on the Record of Protected Structures)**
- 2. Proposed protected structures (proposed to be listed on the Record of Protected Structures)**
- 3. Structures in Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs), or within the amenity of a National Monument**

If the applicant is in doubt as to the eligibility of a particular structure under this scheme, they are encouraged to contact their local authority with their query.

Note: Only one application will be considered per structure or applicant. Applicants may apply to both the Historic Structures Fund and Built Heritage Investment Scheme, but may not avail of funding from both schemes. In cases where an applicant has been awarded funding under both schemes, they must indicate which scheme they wish to accept.

All works under the BHIS must be approved, completed and paid for before recoupment is sought from the Department. Work can include an associated training element.

Qualifying and Non Qualifying Works

Below is a list of Qualifying and Non-Qualifying Works.

It should be noted that the Department will again be providing a funding stream under this scheme for works of routine maintenance and minor repairs, which were not previously eligible for funding under the scheme. Applicants for this routine maintenance and minor repairs scheme should use the standard application form for BHIS 2024.

Qualifying Works (for greater detail, please contact your Local Authority or consult the BHIS 2024 Circular)

- Structural Stability
- Roofs
- Rainwater Disposal
- External Walls
- External Joinery
- Stained Glass
- External Features
- Interiors
- Machinery
- Historic Ruins
- Energy Efficiency Improvements
- Services
- Temporary Works
- Other Works
- Professional Fees

Non Qualifying Works (for greater detail, please contact your Local Authority or consult the BHIS 2024 Circular)

- Routine Works
- Alterations
- Demolition
- Restoration
- Non-Essential Works
- Pre-existing Works

- External Walls
- External Joinery
- Energy Efficiency
- Public Realm

The full details of the qualifying works can be found on the Built Heritage Investment Scheme Circular, available on all local authority websites.



The Application and Assessment Process

The Application Process for Owners/Occupiers

Applications must be made to the relevant local authority (using **Form A**) by a **deadline set by your local authority**. Please contact the **Architectural Conservation Officer** in your local authority to confirm the deadline for applications.

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.

The Assessment Process

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

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

Funding of Projects

The minimum funding awarded for successful projects will be **€2,500** up to a maximum of **€15,000**. Based on the assessment of applications, the individual local authorities will allocate funding to each of the successful applicants. Priority will be given to small-scale, labour-intensive projects. Projects should demonstrate a range of conservation skills.

The minimum amount does not apply to projects awarded funding under the pilot scheme for works of routine maintenance and minor repairs. The maximum award for such projects is **€2,500**.

Matching Funds

Under BHIS, the **total value of all public funding provided for individual projects must not exceed 50% of the total project cost**, including funding received from other public agencies including the SEAI, the Heritage Council, LEADER and other government departments and local authorities. 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.

Monitoring of Project Progress

Regular Progress Reports

As part of the process of funding under BHIS 2024, the Local Authority is required to carry out physical site inspections during the course of the project, and are required to update the Department at regular intervals on the progress of the projects. The Applicant is required to provide the local authority with relevant information on the works a project is receiving funding for, including completion of works, commencement, progress, and any changes that may occur during the calendar year.

The Recoupment of Funding

Local Authorities are responsible for payment of funds under the scheme to successful applicants in advance of seeking recoupment from DHLGH. All works must be completed and certified by the local authority as being in accordance with the terms of the grant award before the applicant can seek the payment of funding.

The applicant must provide relevant documentation to the Local Authority in relation to invoices, payments, photographic evidence of the completed work, days of employment, days of training etc.

A Guidance Note on Method Statements

The **Method Statement** is completed by the Conservation Professional and must describe the condition of the structure, and give details of how conservation/repair works will be carried out. This document does not need to be unduly long but it must be **appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposed works**, e.g. a Method Statement in relation to re-thatching will not require as much detail as one for structural or masonry repairs. It should not exceed **TEN A4** pages.

The Method Statement **must** include:

1. A concise description of the structure.
2. A description of the works proposed.
3. Impact statement and proposed mitigation measures (if applicable).
4. A cross reference of the Method Statement to the training plan, where relevant.

For additional details on method statements, please consult the Built Heritage Investment Scheme Circular, available on all local authority websites.

Contact Details

For further information regarding this scheme, please contact the **Architectural Conservation or Planning Office of 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.

Grant Terms & Conditions

Please note grant-approved works must meet all statutory requirements, including planning permission and all applications are 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.



Thatched House, Galross, Shannon Harbour, Co Offaly – funded under BHIS 2021