

Guidance Note for Heritage Grant Applications

The Council has three heritage grants schemes. They are:

1. Historic Buildings Grants. The Council may offer grants towards traditional repairs or for works that reinstate lost features on historic buildings. Generally these grants are for 25% of the cost of the eligible works up to a maximum of £2000.
2. Heritage at Risk Grants. These grants are for buildings or structures on the local Heritage at Risk Register to help repair or restore them so that they can come off the register. Generally these grants are for 50% of the cost of the eligible works up to a maximum of £10,000.
3. Improvement Grants for Baldock Street in Ware. These grants relate to the restoration of frontages within this part of the Ware Conservation Area. Generally these grants are for 50% of the cost of the eligible works up to a maximum of £5000.

Who can apply and what is the process?

Anyone who has an interest in a historic building and has sufficient control over it to ensure the works proposed are carried out can apply. Usually this is the owner or occupier.

A grants panel consisting of Council Officers assesses applications on a regular basis. You will normally receive a decision on your application within two months of applying.

For what works can a grant application be made for?

Extensive repairs or rebuilding may require the submission of separate applications for planning permission, listed building consent and approval under the Building Regulations. The District Council has the right of access to and inspection of the building. You should not commence works prior to submitting an application to the Council. Works commenced before an application is submitted would not usually be eligible for funding.

Any grant will be paid towards the cost of repairs, restoration, reinstatement and preservation only. As well as some professional fees and VAT, eligible works may include repairs, restoration, reinstatement and preservation of:

- the structure of an historic building – timber frame repairs, roof structure, brickwork, stonework, pointing, foundations, walling;
- the cladding and external fabric of an historic building – tile, slate or thatched roofs, plaster, render or weatherboarding to walls;
- special historic features such as windows, doors, external decorative detail, pargetting, chimney stacks and fireplaces, staircases, decorative internal plasterwork, wall paintings, panelling, garden walls;
- of other elements of a historic building or structure such as cast iron rainwater goods, lead flashings, or other reasonable repairs at the discretion of the District Council;

We will not fund other works of improvement, including extensions, conversion, alteration or general maintenance or decoration.

All repairs to historic buildings must be carried out in appropriate traditional materials and must respect the character of the building. The District Council reserves the right to withhold payment if it is not satisfied with the quality of work or adequacy of supervision. The repair of historic buildings is a skilled task and the management and implementation of them should be carried out by a person/ persons suitably qualified with such skills and appropriate experience. Any work likely to have a significant effect on the internal or external appearance of a listed building should be under the direct control and supervision of an architect, chartered surveyor or historic building consultant who is experienced in the repair and restoration of historic buildings.

Who will supervise the project?

The District Council does not, and cannot, carry out the role of supervisor or designer of the works. It cannot be held responsible for ensuring that the:

- works are adequate or properly designed.
- standards of workmanship and materials are acceptable.
- contractor properly completes the works.

This responsibility is that of the occupier or owner accepting the grant. Owners and occupiers should consider obtaining any independent professional advice they feel necessary before works are commenced. If the District Council becomes aware of any defects or shortcomings in the work during interim inspections, the applicant receiving the grant will be informed. Whilst the Council may suggest a remedy in such a situation, the decision as to whether to implement this and any costs involved, must be that of the applicant.

How do I make a claim for payment?

Grants are normally payable on completion of work and submission of a receipted copy of the final account. The work in progress and the completed works will be inspected by a duly authorised officer of the District Council and the works must be to their satisfaction before the grant is paid. If work is not carried out in strict accordance with the specification of works and schedule of materials approved by the District Council, the grant may be withheld in part or in whole.

What happens if the project costs are more than proposed?

If the actual cost of eligible works proves to be more than initially proposed, in exceptional cases these extra costs may be taken into consideration and the grant offer may be increased at the District Council's discretion up to stated limits. On the other hand, if the actual cost of eligible works proves to be less than the amount indicated in the estimates, the right is reserved to make a proportional reduction of the grant.

What happens if I sell the building?

The whole of the grant shall be payable in full if the building is sold within 12 months of the payment of the grant, two thirds shall be payable if the building is sold within two years, and one-third shall be repayable if the building is sold within three years. The District Council should be notified immediately in writing of the intended sale within the period specified above, so that the question of recovery of the grant can be considered.

When should the work be undertaken?

The proposed works must be started within six months and completed within 12 months from the date of the award letter. It is essential that the District Council be informed in writing of the commencement and the completion of works. In certain circumstances, the completion period may be extended with the written consent of the District Council.

What supporting material needs to be submitted following the application?

The checklist below states all the necessary supporting material that should be sent to the Council once the application form has been submitted. If any of the requested material is not available, please state the reason why. The necessary supporting material includes:

- 1) A full specification of the work proposed, prepared by an architect, chartered surveyor or other suitably qualified person.
- 2) At least two itemised estimates, quotes or tenders for the cost of the works proposed, properly itemised, showing separately:
 - i) The cost of repairs and other works necessary for the preservation of the building specifically related to the grant application.
 - ii) Cost of other improvement or conversion works, if applicable.
- 3) One estimate may be acceptable in the case of specialist crafts at the discretion of the District Council but this must be accompanied by a statement of justification.
- 4) Where appropriate – for example, extensive repair works – plans clearly showing the building as existing and identifying the proposed works.
- 5) Photographs of the building, clearly showing the areas for which the grant is sought.

What information is required for the application form?

The application form is a web form that is digitally submitted to the Council on our website. Further information on the questions is provided below:

- 1) We need to be assured you have the authority to conduct repairs or improvements to this building or property.
- 2) We need to know what the building is currently used for and the various individuals or organisations that use it. This helps us assess who will benefit.

- 3) Please give us full details of the proposed repairs.
- 4) Please tell us when your project will start and finish. We will not normally fund projects started before we consider your application.
- 5) The amount you write must be based on real costs.
- 6) The Council needs to know that you have initiated the appropriate legal procedures – if required.
- 7) The Council would like to know if you have applied for grants from us in the past.
- 8) The building or structure for which the grant is given shall either be available for inspection by the public or in a position where the public can see the main elevations. Inspection by appointment would be acceptable where the building is hidden from view or where there are special internal features.