



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 2026

Summary Guidance Booklet for Applicants

Applications close 26th September 2025



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.

BHIS is a very competitive grant scheme with a limited budget. Applications will be assessed and funding allocated based on a range of criteria, including the condition of the building and the nature of the works proposed. If approved for funding, applicants do not tend to receive approval for the full amount requested.

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 amount of funding is determined by the Local Authorities based on their total allocation to best suit the needs and urgency of proposed projects, with only a limited number of projects tending to receive funding at the higher levels.

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.

WHAT TYPE OF WORKS ARE ELIGIBLE?

The primary aim of the BHIS is to fund building conservation works such as the following:

- Structural/Stabilisation works to a building at risk
- Roof repairs, including minor and more extensive works
- Repairs to rainwater goods (gutters, downpipes, etc.)
- Repairs to external walls, including pointing and render
- External joinery and external fixtures
- Repairs and conservation of historic shopfronts
- Appropriate interventions to improve energy efficiency
- Works which contribute to the character of an ACA

A full list of Qualifying/Non-Qualifying Works is available at www.buildingsofireland.ie and on your Local Authority's website. This should be consulted in advance of making an application.

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 26 September 2025. 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 2026.

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
4. Public Amenity

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 and is a requirement for your application. 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.

There is space on the application form for a basic method statement, but the length and level of detail needed for the method statement will vary depending on the type of works you are applying for, and additional documentation can be provided as required or as requested by your Local Authority. 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.

Conservation works must be designed, specified and overseen on site by **appropriately qualified and experienced building conservation professional(s)** who will be required to confirm that works have been carried out to a satisfactory standard. See Section 6.2 and 6.3 of the BHIS 2026 Circular for further details.

Where the specific expertise for your project lies with a type of conservation practitioner, such as a thatcher or a stone mason, they can fulfil the role of the conservation building professional rather than a conservation architect. Similarly, where the proposed works entail only the repair or like-for-like replacement of existing fabric, **these works may be overseen by a competent conservation craftsman.**

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 in the first instance. Additional queries can be sent to the National Built Heritage Service (NBHS), Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Custom House, Dublin 1, D01 W6X0, or email BHIS@housing.gov.ie

SUMMARY TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Please note, all grant-approved works must meet all statutory requirements, including planning permission and where works are proposed to sites/monuments protected under the *National Monuments Acts 1930-2004*, the statutory requirements for notification or for Ministerial consent under those Acts must be complied with. Applicants must satisfy the Local Authority that these can be secured prior to the commencement of the works and leaving sufficient time for their completion prior to scheme deadlines. 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.

CHECKLIST FOR BHIS 2026 APPLICANTS

The following lists a range of important information and material that must be included in any application:

1. Have you listed the amount of funding sought in your application?
2. Have you included the name & address of property for funding?
3. Does the property have an Eircode?
4. Have you included a contact number in your application?
5. Is the Total Expenditure of project in your application?
6. Have you listed the amount of Matching Expenditure in your application?
7. Have you applied for HSF or any other Exchequer Funding allocation?
8. Have you spoken to a conservation professional in relation to the project?
9. Is there a Method Statement from a Conservation Professional/Contractor included in your application, including any additional material required from them?
10. Have you photographs of the structure included in your application?
11. Are all Statutory Requirements adhered to?
12. Have you listed the project details in your application?
13. Have you filled in the Application Form A?
14. Have you included all required additional documents in your submission to your Local Authority?

ADDENDUM TO BHIS GUIDE BOOKLET FOR APPLICANTS

- **Other Exchequer Funding**

Projects may be eligible to receive funding from more than one publicly funded scheme. To ensure that matching funding requirements for BHIS are met, information provided by the applicant should be cross-checked by the LA in respect of funding from other schemes, including but not limited to:

(a) Thatching Grant Schemes administered by the Heritage Council or other Government Departments

(b) Conservation grants administered by the Heritage Council

(c) Energy Improvement schemes operated by SEAI (if relevant) Where an applicant has applied for or has received funding from other schemes co-financed by the EU (e.g. LEADER Programme) for works approved under this scheme, the cumulative total of such funding and the funding under this scheme must not exceed the limits as set by such European Funding scheme gov.ie/housing

- **Refunds**

If a protected structure awarded funding is **deleted from the RPS, is sold, or the ownership transferred within a period of 5 years from date of payment of funding under the scheme**, the local authority reserves the right to 'claw-back' some or all of the funds awarded to that project. In the event of transfer of ownership prior to the payment of funds under this scheme, the local authority may make arrangements to transfer the funding to the new owner of the property. Any funding provided to a local authority which is subsequently recovered under Section 70 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, from the owner/occupier of the funded structure, must be refunded to DHLGH.

- **Public Financial Procedures**

It is a matter for the local authority to ensure that proper procedures are followed in respect of planning permission, financial management requirements, tax clearance procedures, and management and accountability for grants from exchequer funds. **Projects in receipt of grant assistance must comply with public procurement guidelines – <http://www.procurement.ie>**

- **Proposed Protected Structures**

Structures proposed for inclusion in the RPS but not yet formally approved. Such structures must be added to the RPS by 31 December 2025. otherwise a clawback of funds received may apply.