



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Frequently Asked Questions

Historic Structures Fund and
Built Heritage Investment Scheme

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Historic Structures Fund

What is the Historic Structures Fund?

The Historic Structures Fund (HSF) is an annual scheme operating on a match-fund basis. The core aims of the HSF are to enable large-scale conservation works where the historic structure is considered especially significant and in need of urgent repair, encourage the regeneration and reuse of historic structures, support employment in the conservation and construction sectors, and build resilience in our historic structures to enable them to withstand the effects of climate change.

How do I apply for funding under the HSF?

The HSF is typically announced in early November, and applications open shortly thereafter, with a deadline in late January. Applications can be made to the Architectural Conservation Officer or other specified official (e.g. the Heritage Officer or similar) at your local authority. Application forms can be found online via the local authority website or the Department website following the announcement that applications have been opened.

Who can apply to the HSF?

The Historic Structures Fund provides capital funding for works to qualifying structures which include the following:

- (i) Protected Structures:** Structures in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) of each Local Authority;
- (ii) Structures proposed for inclusion in the RPS** but not yet formally approved for inclusion.
- (iii) Structures or works within Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs),** or within the amenity of a National Monument, where exceptional circumstances apply;
- (iv) Owners of vernacular structures** that are not listed in a Record of Protected Structures;
- (v) Owners of vernacular structures** within an Architectural Conservation Area, but not otherwise subject to statutory protection.

What are qualifying works/non qualifying works under the HSF?

Please see HSF guidance booklet for a full list of qualifying/non qualifying works.

It is important to note that a qualified conservation specialist must be consulted about the works, and a detailed outline of works to be conducted must be submitted to the Local Authority with the application form.

How much funding can a project be awarded under the HSF?

The HSF has multiple Streams with different funding thresholds. Stream 1 offers grants from €15,000 to €50,000 and is aimed at essential repairs and smaller capital works for the refurbishment and conservation of heritage structures. Stream 1 also has a sub-stream with the same funding parameters for historic shopfronts and Irish-language shopfronts.

Stream 2 offers grants from €50,000 to €200,000 for larger enhancement, refurbishment or reuse projects involving heritage structures where a clear community or public benefit has been demonstrated, or a clear residential benefit has been demonstrated (such projects must be advanced through the planning process as necessary).

The Vernacular Stream offers grants from €5,000 to €10,000 to support conservation repairs and small capital works to vernacular structures that are not listed in their local authority's Record of Protected Structures or otherwise legally protected. Such structures may be located within an Architectural Conservation Area.

In all Streams, match funding is a requirement, ranging from 20% to 50%.

What is a “vernacular structure”?

Vernacular structures are ones that are built to no formal plan. They are generally modest buildings constructed using traditional methods and simple materials that were local to the area or readily available. Previous types of works funded under the Vernacular Stream include masonry repairs as well as repairs to roofs, windows, chimneys and walls, including dry stone walls. Works such as vegetation removal and rendering and repointing have also been funded.

How are applications assessed?

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

1. Significance of the structure.
2. Efficacy of the grant in achieving the aims of the Historic Structures Fund.
3. Quality of the methodology and technical merit of the works proposed.
4. Contribution of the proposed works to keeping the structure in use, or bringing it back into use.
5. Broader public or community benefit (Stream 2 only).

Can I apply for funding over several years?

Projects awarded funding under Stream 2 may receive funding for two years, however the remaining Streams may only fund projects year to year. Repeat applications/projects are however welcome.

Where can I get more information on the HSF?

The Architectural Conservation Officer, Heritage Officer, or other specified official at your local authority can provide further information on the funding scheme, how to apply and deadlines, as well as advise on any queries specific to your structure.

Built Heritage Investment Scheme

What is the Built Heritage Investment Scheme

The Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) is an annual scheme operating on a match-fund basis. In addition to providing much needed financial support for small-scale, labour-intensive projects, it is designed to provide employment for conservation professionals and the construction sector. Each project, no matter how small, fosters and sustains specialised conservation and traditional skillsets including ironmongery, joinery, lime pointing, stained glass repair and thatching.

How do I apply for funding under BHIS?

The BHIS is announced around November, and applications open shortly thereafter, with a deadline around late January. Applications are made to the Architectural Conservation Officer or other specified official (i.e. the Heritage Officer or similar) within the Local Authorities, who will also advertise the scheme. Application forms can be found online via the Local Authority website or the Department website following the announcement for the following year. Applications are open for owners and custodians of Protected Structures, proposed Protected Structures, and Structures in Architectural Conservation Areas, or within the amenity of a National Monument.

How much funding can a project be awarded under BHIS?

Under BHIS projects can be awarded between €2,500 and €15,000 for works to conserve and preserve historic and protected buildings. Under the Routine Maintenance and Minor Repairs scheme funding up to €2,500 can also be granted for smaller works. It is important to note that the applicant must be able to supply 50% in match funding for works to a project, i.e. if the total overall cost of a project is €10,000, a maximum of €5,000 can be awarded to the project, with the remaining €5,000 supplied via private funding.

What types of works are covered under BHIS?

See attached 'Qualifying and non-Qualifying works' list contained within the BHIS Applicant Guidance Booklet.

It is important to note that an appropriately qualified and experienced conservation specialist must be consulted about the works prior to commencing works, and a detailed outline of works to be conducted must be submitted to the Local Authority with the application form.

A conservation specialist must also be present on site to monitor the works in progress, and will have to sign off on completion that works have been done in accordance with good conservation practice.

Can I apply for funding over several years?

Under the BHIS funding is only awarded and paid out for the calendar year that is applied for, i.e. for works completed in 2023 only. However, an applicant can re-apply each year for further funding to continued works.

Assessment of applications

Applications are assessed by the relevant persons in the Local Authority, who will base their assessment on a set of criteria outlined in the main Circular. Any queries in relation to the assessment should be directed to the Local Authority

Where can I get more information on the BHIS?

The Architectural Conservation Officer, Heritage Officer, or other specified official within the Local Authority will be able to provide information on the funding scheme, how to apply and deadlines, as well as advise on the overall running of the scheme.

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