



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Historic Structures Fund

Guidance Booklet for Applicants



Prepared by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
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Contents

Background and Purpose of Scheme.....	1
Scheme Overview – Who Can Apply, Eligible Projects	2
Structure of the Scheme	3
Qualifying Works.....	5
Ineligible Works for Funding	6
Quality of Works.....	6
How to Apply	8
Submitting Your Application	8
Assessment	8
Monitoring of Project Progress.....	9
Regular Progress Reports.....	9
Recoupment of Funding	9
A Guidance Note on Method Statements	10
Contact Details	10
Grant Terms & Conditions.....	10

Background and Purpose of Scheme

This guide provides **applicants** with information in relation to the application process and operation of the **Historic Structures Fund (HSF) 2024**.

Ireland has a unique built environment of extraordinary quality - our historic buildings and structures are a vital part of our heritage. There are almost fifty thousand protected structures around Ireland. Many of these are in great need of investment to ensure their conservation and continued use so that they remain a living part of our history and community life into the future.

While the primary responsibility to care for and maintain a protected structure rests with the owner, the **Historic Structures Fund** will invest essential capital in our valuable built heritage and help the owners and custodians of historic structures to safeguard them into the future for the benefit of communities and the public.

The HSF runs alongside the **Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS)** which invests in smaller scale conservation works. **Applications in respect of an individual structure can be made to both schemes, but funding may only be awarded from one scheme in any one year.**

The core aims of this fund are to:

- enable larger scale conservation works to be carried out on historic structures which are deemed to be significant and in need of urgent support;
- encourage the regeneration and reuse of historic structures and to help to conserve protected structures and other historic buildings;
- support the investment of private capital in labour-intensive projects to conserve historic structures in public and private ownership for community benefit.
- support employment in the conservation and construction industries.
- build resilience in our historic structures to enable them to withstand the effects of climate change.

Scheme Overview – Who Can Apply, Eligible Projects

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 eligible for or 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) **Vernacular structures** - 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.”

If you are in doubt as to the eligibility of a particular structure under the Vernacular Structures Stream, you are encouraged to contact your local authority with your query.

Structure of the Scheme

The Historic Structures Fund 2024 will be structured as follows:

Stream	Available Funding	What will be funded	Maximum Grant
Stream 1	Grants between €15,000 and €50,000	Essential repairs and small capital works for the refurbishment and conservation of historic structures to safeguard the structure and keep it in use	80% of eligible costs max.
Stream 1 - Historic Shopfronts sub-stream	Grants between €15,000 and €50,000	Essential repairs and small capital works for the refurbishment and conservation of historic shop facades, windows, signage and other associated details to safeguard them and keep them in use.	80% of eligible costs max.
Stream 2	Grants between €50,000 and €200,000, or in exceptional circumstances over €200,000. Grants may be phased over two years. Successful applicants should check their Letter of Offer for details of how funding is to be spent over the two years, where applicable.	Larger enhancement or significant refurbishment projects involving historic structures, where a clear benefit to the community and the public has been demonstrated.	50% of eligible costs. In exceptional circumstances a higher percentage may be sought, subject to a max of 80%.

Projects in Partnership	To be determined on a case by case basis.	Works to care for historic structures and buildings in public ownership and improve recreational infrastructure and public access to these heritage assets	Will not generally exceed 50% of the project cost
Vernacular Structures Stream **	Grants between €5,000 and €10,000	Essential repairs and small capital works for the refurbishment and conservation of vernacular structures to safeguard the structure and keep it in use.	80% of eligible costs max.

** Vernacular Structures Stream - The purpose of the stream is to support conservation repairs and small capital works to vernacular structures that are not listed in Local Authority Records of Protected Structures or otherwise legally protected. Such structures may be located within an Architectural Conservation Area.

A grant of over €200,000 may be awarded in exceptional circumstances where a case is made by the applicant in relation to the significance of the project and the works proposed.

Qualifying Works

- **Roofs:**
 - Works to ensure the structural stability and/or weather tightness of a roof using appropriate materials and details.
 - Works to repair thatched roofs using appropriate, compatible traditional materials and details
 - Works to renew damaged or missing metal sheeting, gutter linings and flashings.
- **Rainwater disposal:**
 - Works to repair or, where this is not feasible, replace rainwater goods to ensure efficient disposal of water from the building
- **External walls:**
 - Works to ensure the structural stability and/or weather tightness of the building envelope using appropriate materials and details.
 - Works to remedy defects or problems that have the potential to create serious future damage if left untreated.
- **Windows, doors and associated elements:**
 - Works to prevent water ingress.
 - Works to repair significant elements of external joinery with minimal replacement of decayed timber.
 - Repair of stained glass windows and associated works in accordance with best practice.
- **Interiors:**
 - Works to repair internal structural elements such as floors, walls, staircases and partitions.
 - Works to conserve significant decorative features and artwork such as wall and ceiling plasterwork, interior joinery and fittings and decorative elements as appropriate.
 - Works to conserve significant vernacular elements including ceilings and hearths.

Shopfronts:

- Works to repair elements of a historic shopfront, including appropriate replacement of small elements of missing detail, repair of shutters or awnings, repair of signage; repair of details, removal of unsightly and redundant later additions.

- **Temporary works:**

- Works to reduce the risk to a structure from possible or partial collapse.

- **Historic ruins:**

- Works to stabilise masonry or other elements at risk.

- **Other works:**

- A case may be made by the applicant for other works which they deem to be of exceptional importance for consideration by the Department.

Ineligible Works for Funding

The following will not be eligible for funding:

- i. Projects or elements of projects where works have already commenced prior to grant award
- ii. New build or extensions
- iii. Works not in accordance with sound conservation methodology and practice
- iv. Purchase of lands or buildings
- v. Feasibility studies
- vi. Conservation plans or other non-capital expenditure, except where such is directly ancillary to capital works being funded under HSF.

Quality of Works

Conservation works must be designed, specified and overseen on site by an appropriately qualified and experienced building conservation professional(s) who will be required to confirm on completion that works have been carried out to a satisfactory standard and in accordance with good conservation practice. The building professional should have **conservation accreditation from a relevant**

professional body or a demonstrable competence in the relevant area of building conservation.

Where the specific expertise lies with a practitioner, e.g. a thatcher or stone mason, they may be considered to fulfil the role of the conservation building professional for a particular project.

Please note the requirement for an **appropriately qualified conservation professional** to oversee the works, and for a **comprehensive and sound methodology** to accompany the application.

(See further below **A Guidance Note on Method Statements**).

Your attention is drawn to the fact that the absence of a suitably comprehensive method statement is a frequent cause of projects failing at assessment stage.

How to Apply

Private applicants or community groups who are the owners or custodians of historic structures should:

- complete Form A
- attach a comprehensive Method Statement
- submit to their Local Authority before the closing date. **This date is determined by each Local Authority, applicants are advised to check with their Local Authority for correct date.**

Submitting Your Application

Applications which meet the criteria should be submitted to the Local Authority for consideration by the deadline.

Please check in particular:

- The amount of funding requested does not exceed the maximum grant available
- The amount and source of matching funding is clearly stated
- Details of other exchequer funding have been declared

Information on how to correctly complete an application is provided through the guidance application form, available from your Local Authority as well as on the Department's [website](#).

Assessment

Eligible applications will be assessed for selection 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** of the project (Stream 2 only).

Monitoring of Project Progress

Regular Progress Reports

As part of the process of funding under HSF 2024, the local authority shall monitor the progress of projects to ensure that works will be completed and the claim for funding is submitted by the required deadline. The applicant/conservation professional working on the project 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.

Recoupment of Funding

Works must be completed and verified by the local authority before payment of grant funding can be sought. As the funding aims to support employment in the conservation and construction industries, the applicant will be required to provide details of the employment benefits of the project.

Your attention is drawn to the fact that where works and/or training are not carried out in accordance with the terms of the scheme, in particular where the scope of the works change and the new works do not conform to the required standards of good conservation practice, the Department is under no obligation to award the grant, as this is a material breach of the terms of the grant offer.

A Guidance Note on Method Statements

The **Method Statement**, which is produced by the conservation professional, 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 Historic Structures Fund 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, D01W6X0 or email HSF@housing.gov.ie.

Grant Terms & Conditions

Please note grant-approved works must meet all statutory requirements, including planning permission and, where relevant, the provisions of the National Monuments Acts. All applications are subject to FOI. For a full list of terms and conditions, please consult the Historic Structures Fund Circular, available on all Local Authority websites.

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