

V. BHIS: Qualifying and Non Qualifying Works

Note: The following document should be read in conjunction with the Circular, Application Form and Guide to Applicants for the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) 2026.

The primary aim of the BHIS is to provide financial assistance to owners in carrying out appropriate conservation works to their historic properties which are protected structures and/or located within an Architectural Conservation Area / Area of Special Planning Control. This scheme supports the basic principles of good conservation practice focusing on the repair of historic fabric, the use of traditional materials and the sensitive introduction of new elements that do not compromise the significance and functionality of the building.

To assist owners and occupiers the National Built Heritage Service has an 'Advice Series'¹ on a number of relevant topics relevant to the conservation of historic buildings including; maintenance, roofs, windows, thatch, ironwork, brick and energy efficiency. These are all available online for consultation at the following link: <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/>. It is strongly recommended that owners, occupiers and agents consult with this resource in advance of preparing their grant application.

A local authority may at their discretion seek more information on a grant application as part of the assessment process. They may also, where circumstances warrant, place condition/s precedent on approved grant applications seeking more detailed information or sample panels for the approval of Local Authority in advance of works commencing.

Qualifying works:

		RPS Structures	ACA Structures
Structural stability	<p>Works essential to stabilise a structure or part of a structure Works should involve minimal removal or dismantling of historic fabric and proposals for the reinstatement of fabric should be included</p> <p>The installation of specialist systems to monitor structural movement.</p>	Yes	Yes
Roofs	<p>Repair (or renewal) of roof structures, coverings and features Works to ensure the structural stability and/or weather tightness of a roof using appropriate materials and detailing; the salvage and re-use of existing slate and other materials from the structure should be a priority. Further information is available in the Advice Series A Guide to the Repair of Historic Roofs, available here² for consultation.</p> <p>Repairs to thatched roofs should use appropriate traditional materials and detailing in accordance with the Advice Series A Guide to the Repair of Thatched Roofs available here³. The use of materials and methods appropriate to the region and the evidence from the building itself should always be preferred.</p>	Yes	Yes

¹ <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/>

² <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/>

³ <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/>

	<p>Works to renew damaged or missing metal sheeting, gutter linings and flashings (of materials such as lead, copper or zinc) should be to appropriate detailing. Where there is a risk of theft of metalwork from a roof, the use of suitable substitute materials as an interim solution may be considered acceptable. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to redesign the substrate to the sheeting to comply with current good practice; however the visual and physical implications need to be carefully considered before changes are made.</p> <p>Roof features such as dormer windows, skylights, chimneystacks and pots, cupolas, balustrades, etc. should be retained and appropriately repaired</p> <p>Means of providing permanent access to facilitate inspections and maintenance of a roof.</p>		
Rainwater disposal	<p>Repair or replacement of rainwater goods</p> <p>Lead and cast-iron rainwater goods should be repaired or, where this is not feasible, replaced on a like-for-like basis to ensure efficient disposal of rainwater from the building. However, where there is a risk of theft or vandalism, the use of suitable substitute materials as an interim solution may be considered acceptable.</p> <p>Overflows and weirs to rainwater disposal systems should be provided so that, in the case of a blockage, water is visibly shed clear of the structure</p> <p>Further information is available in the Advice Series <i>A Guide to the Repair of Historic Roofs; Maintenance: A Guide to the Care of Older Buildings; and Iron: The Repair of Wrought and Cast Iron</i>, available here⁴ for consultation.</p>	Yes	Yes
External walls	<p>Works to repair external walls</p> <p>Works to repair walls including repointing; repair of surfaces and decorative elements, wall coverings or claddings; works to remedy defects or problems that have the potential to create serious future damage if left untreated, such as foundation settlement, chimney collapse, fungal attack on timber, or salt migration within the fabric.</p> <p>Works to deal with issues of damp such as the provision of ventilation, and the creation of French drains (subject to the requirements of the National Monuments Service in the case of archaeologically sensitive sites).</p> <p>Works to repair or replace elements set in walls such as panels, ironwork or fixtures.</p> <p>Further information is available in the Advice Series, <i>Maintenance: A Guide to the Care of Older Buildings; and Bricks: A Guide to the Repair of Historic Brickwork</i>, available here⁵ for consultation.</p>	Yes	Yes

⁴ <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/>

⁵ <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/>

External joinery	<p>Repairs to external joinery Works to prevent water ingress.</p> <p>Repairs to significant elements of external joinery such as windows, doors and associated elements, with minimal replacement of decayed timber and appropriate selection and detailing of new sections. Salvage and reuse of historic glass should be prioritised.</p> <p>Draught-proofing works to windows and doors may qualify. Works should be carried out in accordance with the guidance in Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings (DHLGH, 2023).</p> <p>Further information is available in the Advice Series A Guide to the Repair of Historic Windows; Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings; and Maintenance: A Guide to the Care of Older Buildings, available here⁶ for consultation.</p>	Yes	Yes
Stained glass	<p>Repairs to stained glass windows</p> <p>Repair of stained glass panels and associated fittings, and the installation of wire guards, should be carried out in accordance with Chapter 6 of The Conservation of Places of Worship (Advice Series, 2011) available here⁷ for consultation.</p>	Yes	Yes
External Fixtures	<p>Repair and conservation of external fixtures</p> <p>Qualifying fixtures may include for example urns, statues, balconies, canopies, flagpoles, weathervanes and sundials that urgently need conservation.</p> <p>It should be noted that urgent structural repairs should always be given priority over the conservation of fixtures. Fixtures attached to the exterior generally should be prioritised over those protected from the elements.</p> <p>Further information is available in the Advice Series, Maintenance: A Guide to the Care of Older Buildings, available here⁸ for consultation.</p>	Yes	Yes
Interiors	<p>Repair and conservation of internal structure and features</p> <p>This includes repairs to internal structural elements such as floors, walls, staircases, partitions and church organs (see also 'Non-Qualifying works' below).</p> <p>Works to conserve significant decorative historic features 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.</p> <p>Further information is available in the Advice Series, Maintenance: A Guide to the Care of Older Buildings, available here⁹ for consultation.</p>	Yes	No

⁶ <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/>

⁷ <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/>

⁸ <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/>

⁹ <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/>

Historic Shopfronts	<p>Repair and conservation of historic shopfronts Works to repair elements of a historic shopfront in a protected structure or within an ACA, including appropriate replacement of small elements of missing detail such as brackets or moulding.</p> <p>Repair of historic shutters or awnings but not the installation of new security screens.</p> <p>Repair of details such as historic commercial signage, gates, tiled or mosaic threshold panels, hanging signs; removal of unsightly and redundant later additions such as cabling, lighting and signage and making good after.</p>	Yes	Yes
Machinery	<p>Repair of machinery which is an integral part of a structure Machinery which qualifies may include moving parts of buildings of industrial heritage interest or scientific interest, or machinery such as stage machinery for historic theatres or service installations such as early or historic lifts, plumbing mechanisms and heating systems.</p> <p>Examples of machinery may include waterwheels, millstones, sieves, drying kilns, hoists etc.</p> <p>Further information is available in the Advice Series <i>Maintenance: A Guide to the Care of Older Buildings; and Iron: The Repair of Wrought and Cast Iron</i>, available here¹⁰ for consultation.</p>	Yes	No (unless otherwise contributes to the principal street facing elevation or those elevations which are visible from public areas within the ACA.)
Energy efficiency improvements	<p>Works to increase the thermal performance and energy efficiency of the building in line with the guidance in <i>Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings (DHLGH, 2023)</i> In order to qualify the works must be appropriately detailed, using materials appropriate for use in a traditional building, and specified by a qualified conservation professional. The building must be in good repair and well-maintained. Qualifying energy efficiency works may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draught-proofing of windows, doors and other openings ○ Attic/loft insulation to pitched roofs ○ Replacement of outdated services with high-efficiency units and updated controls ○ Repair and upgrading of historic window shutters ○ Installation of appropriately detailed secondary glazing ○ Insulation of suspended timber floors <p>For more detailed information on appropriate energy efficiency works to historic structures please refer to the following publications:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advice Series <i>A Guide to the Repair of Historic Windows; Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings</i>¹¹. 2. Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings. A Guide for Specifiers and Installers.¹² 	Yes	No

¹⁰ <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/>

¹¹ <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/>

¹² [Improving-Energy-Efficiency-in-Traditional-Buildings-2024.pdf \(buildingsofireland.ie\)](https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/Improving-Energy-Efficiency-in-Traditional-Buildings-2024.pdf)

Services	<p>Works to functional services for example electricity, gas, heating and drainage only where they are necessarily disturbed in the course of other funded repairs</p>	Yes	No
Architectural Conservation Areas	<p>Works to structures which contribute to the character of an ACA</p> <p>Repair works to the exterior of a historic building within an ACA or to its main structural elements.</p> <p>Reinstatement of architectural features where appropriately detailed and specified such as sash windows, shopfronts, railings or similar. This should only be where the reinstatement is essential to the design and character of the historic building or street. It should not include works of conjectural reconstruction.</p> <p>Street enhancement works such as repair and/or redecoration schemes for multiple buildings where this is an objective of the planning authority.</p>	Yes	Yes
Temporary works	<p>Works to reduce the risk to a structure from collapse or partial collapse, weather damage, fire, vandalism and unauthorised access. Such works should ensure the maintenance of adequate ventilation of the structure and the protection of significant features of the building from endangerment.</p>	Yes	Yes
Other works	<p>A case may be made by the applicant and/or the LA for other works not listed above which they deem to be of exceptional importance. Written approval from the Department must be obtained to ensure best conservation practice is followed.</p>	Yes	Yes
Professional fees	<p>Professional fees incurred for the portion of capital works funded to include surveys and method statements indicating methods and sequence of works, on site supervision and monitoring, reasonable travel and subsistence costs and sign-off on project.</p> <p>Professional fees would include architect, conservation consultant, structural engineer, archaeologist, ecologist etc.</p>	Yes	Yes

Non-Qualifying Works

Routine works	<p>Routine maintenance and minor repairs Only where carried out under the routine maintenance grant stream of BHIS.</p>
Alterations	<p>Alterations and improvements All new works to a structure, for example the installation or renewal of damp-proofing, loft conversion and extensions do not qualify with the exception of energy efficiency improvement works outlined above.</p> <p>Works to shopfronts that are non-historic or outside the scope of conservation works, for example the installation of new lights, security screens, alarms, cameras, cabling etc.</p> <p>Works associated with new commercial signage and corporate identity.</p>
Demolition	<p>Demolition Works to demolish or remove any part or element of a protected structure do not qualify except where the project involves careful dismantling prior to reinstatement or the removal of later work which alters or obscures the original design of the building.</p>
Restoration	<p>Conjectural Restoration and Reconstruction Works of conjectural reconstruction where there is no sound physical or documentary evidence of the earlier state of the structure or element.</p>
Non-essential	<p>Non-essential works Works that are not essential to secure the conservation of the structure.</p>
Pre-existing	<p>Pre-existing works Works that have commenced before notification of funding approved under the scheme has been received or where works have commenced before the LA has undertaken an inspection of the building for which works are proposed.</p>
External Walls	<p>External walls and damp-proofing The removal of render from a previously rendered exterior and associated repointing are excluded except where these are inappropriate later interventions that are damaging the historic fabric.</p> <p>The application of tanking or waterproof plasters to combat damp problems.</p> <p>Works to install a new damp proof course, whether a physical or a chemical one.</p>

Non-Qualifying works (continued):

External joinery	<p>External joinery</p> <p>The fitting of double-glazed units, including slim-profile double glazed units and vacuum sealed units, into the existing or new sashes or casements</p> <p>The fitting of storm glazing.</p> <p>The replacement of historic glass with energy-efficient glass.</p>
Energy efficiency	<p>Energy efficiency</p> <p>The installation of micro-renewables such as photo-voltaic panels or wind turbines</p> <p>The application of external or internal wall insulation does not qualify</p>
Public realm	<p>Public Realm Works (ACAs)</p> <p>In the case of ACAs, public realm works will be excluded except where these consist of the conservation and repair of historic elements such as paving, kerbstones, street furniture, and the like.</p>
