

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS GRANTS FOR HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Guidance Notes for Applicants

Introduction

There are approximately 2000 buildings in Tower Hamlets, which are **listed** - that is they are nationally recognised as being of special architectural or historic interest. There are 58 **Conservation Areas** - which are areas of special interest, designated by the Council. Additional information about Listed Buildings or buildings in Conservation Areas can be obtained from the Council's Place Shaping Team at Mulberry Place(AH), PO Box 55739, 5 Clove Crescent, Poplar, London E14 2BY.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 enables the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to make grants available towards the cost of the repair or refurbishment of Historic Buildings and enhancement of Conservation Areas within the Borough. The owners of older buildings face considerable expense in repairing, restoring and maintaining their properties, thus provisions have been made by the Council to provide financial assistance to help owners carry out these works.

Grant applications are considered on their own merits, in the light of the importance of the proposed works, the availability of resources, and the contribution of the proposed works to the preservation of the building and townscape. Limited assistance is available from the Historic Buildings Department, subject to eligibility. Grants are discretionary and there is no automatic right to a grant under any circumstances.

The Council is not able to give assistance for the routine repair and maintenance of buildings. Works including the eradication of damp and dry rot, the removal of defective timber, the replacement of decaying stucco or plasterwork, the replacement of windows and re-roofing are not grant eligible regardless of whether or not the building is Listed or in a Conservation Area. Whilst sympathetic to these problems the Council believes that routine maintenance works are the responsibility of the property owner.

Works eligible for Grants

Grants will be considered for specific works of external repair, which the Council considers, are necessary to protect the specific interest of the building and to maintain or restore its structural or architectural integrity. The Council is happy to consider grant aiding for small-scale visible improvements to Listed Buildings or buildings within Conservation Areas including the restoration or replacement of missing architectural / ornamental features, to include shop fronts, doors and door surrounds, balustrades, cornices and railings.

The following criteria are normally applied in considering grant applications, although, exceptions may occasionally be made to meet unusual circumstances.

1. The building must normally be included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, situated within a designated Conservation Area or included in the Local List of Buildings of Historic Interest.
2. Grants will be targeted to achieve the maximum visual benefit to the general community. (Preference will be given towards the reinstatement of architectural features - works which are generally expensive and by their nature are of little practical benefit to the applicant). They are normally available for the repair / refurbishment of the exterior of the building only.
3. Applications may be considered from any person or body provided they are in a position to carry out the works. Applicants may be asked to provide in confidence to the Council financial information relevant to the project and their own circumstances. Preference will be given to offering grant aid to charities and those residents of the Borough who are on low incomes.
4. The Council will consider grant aiding buildings in a defined group where works are carried out simultaneously to more than one building, which would enhance the character of a particular terrace or street. Grants are targeted to achieve the maximum benefit for the community.
5. Grants will be targeted to assist in the regeneration of the urban environment, with preference given to "Buildings at Risk". These buildings blight the local environment and inhibit regeneration.
6. The minimum total cost eligible for grant aiding is £1,000. Where works are eligible, the grant will not exceed 60% of the total cost (including VAT). Commercial properties are not grant eligible with the exception of shop fronts to properties within Conservation Areas.

Applications

The information regarding eligibility provided in the guidance overleaf should be considered carefully before a grant application is made.

To submit a Historic Buildings Grant Application you will need to provide the following information:-

- A professional specification of the proposed works
- 3 alternative detailed quotations, based on the schedule of works and **broken** down into the individual elements of the work identified in the specification. These estimates must be clearly comparable.
- Clear drawings of the proposed works supported by photographs of the property.

It is essential that any new work or repair work to be grant aided is correctly detailed and carried out to match the existing original work. The restoration of historic buildings is a skilled job and applicants are recommended to obtain professional advice. The technical advice of the Council officers will normally be available so far as staff resources permit.

Fees of professional advisors belonging to a recognised institution, e.g. Architects or Chartered Surveyor's may be included within the costs to be grant aided.

The contractor's reliability, standard of workmanship, experience and satisfactory general conduct is the applicant's responsibility. OFFICERS CANNOT SUPERVISE WORKS OR BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY TECHNICAL DECISIONS TAKEN.

All grant applications will be acknowledged. Once a complete and satisfactory grant application is received the building will be inspected by the Council's Conservation Officers with regard to the works proposed. The applicant will be advised of the Council's decision as soon as possible.

Work must not commence until an offer of grant has been made or until the Council has agreed in writing that work may proceed without prejudice to the application. **IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD YOU COMMIT YOURSELF TO WORKS IN EXPECTATION OF A GRANT** unless you are able to undertake the entire expense in the event of a refusal.

The making of a grant does not relieve the applicant of the need to apply for any necessary consent under the Planning Acts or Building Regulations. All consents and permission should be obtained BEFORE WORKS COMMENCE.

Grant Offers

An offer of a grant will normally be based on the lowest of the two estimates, it is not transferable and is offered only to the applicant. The following conditions automatically apply although exceptions may occasionally be agreed in writing.

1. Any offer of a grant will only be valid for six months from the date of the committee at which it was agreed. If funding has been entirely committed within a particular financial year, an applicant will be advised of the fact, and will be eligible to apply in the following year.
2. In the event of the actual cost of the works against which grant is offered being less than the anticipated cost contained in your application, the Council may at its discretion reduce the sum paid in proportion to the costs actually incurred/
3. Should the costs exceed the anticipated costs there is no provision for increase of the grant sum offered.
4. A sign must be displayed on the building during the course of the works, indicating that the Council has made a grant. The sign will be supplied by the Council (in the form of a sticker) but the cost of its erection and display is to be borne by the persons receiving the grant.
5. Payment of a grant will be conditional upon the approved works being carried out to the complete satisfaction of the Council. An offered grant will not be paid or may be reduced if the work is, in the view of the Council, not of a sufficiently high standard.
6. Before making the final payment, the Conservation officer dealing with the application will inspect the work to ensure it has been carried out satisfactorily and to a conservation standard. It is suggested that, the claim is adequately documented and all the paper-works are kept in order so that the payment can be made as quickly as possible. Once it has been approved, it is passed to the Financial Accounts Payments Section for the payment to be made.
7. You are recommended not to apply for a grant unless your application meets the entire criterion outlined in the guidance paper, and you can provide all the information required to enable the authority to fully assess the application. Without this information your application can not be processed.

Historic Buildings Grant Application forms are available from:

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Place Shaping Team

Mulberry Place (AH), PO Box 55739, 5 Clove Crescent, Poplar, London E14 2BY

Telephone: 020 7364 5372/5393

If you have any other conservation queries please do not hesitate to contact us.