

Heritage Buildings Scheme – Historic Buildings Grants

The Borough has in operation a Historic Buildings Grants (HBG) scheme to assist owners and occupiers of listed buildings and buildings in Conservation Areas in meeting their responsibilities for the care and maintenance of the irreplaceable cultural asset, which these buildings represent. With 58 Conservation Areas and approximately 3000 listed buildings, demand in the Borough for grant-aid assistance in meeting the costs of building repair remains high.

Grants are awarded on the basis of criteria established and included in the Grant Application Form. Grants are prioritised focusing firstly on those structures that are included in the Heritage at Risk Register followed by those that are statutorily listed and followed by those that are locally listed. HBG is limited to these three categories and if an application is made for grants where the structure does not fall within these three categories, the Council is unable to consider such applications.

The Borough has a budget of around 50k for HBG in 2015-16. However, this funding has now been reduced to 25k in 2016-17 due to budgetary considerations. The information about HBG is available on the Council's website and at present requests are considered on a first come first serve basis.

Application process for HBG in the next three years

2016-17

In terms of how we administer the grants in 2016-17, it will be useful to consider a bidding process to ensure a fair distribution of grant money across the year than be allocated on a first come first serve basis. As the HBG has a yearly budget, *we could formally announce the process in the first week of April with two deadlines for application. This assumes a virement of the funds early in April. Otherwise some slippage may be expected.*

First Deadline - End of May

This gives applicants two months(April-May) to put their application pack together as this involves them carrying out survey/assessment work involving specialist consultants. We make a decision by end of June and works to commence from July. Invoices to be submitted following completion of works and inspected by the Council's Conservation Officer(as set out in the application pack).

Second Deadline- End of Oct

Decision on grant to be made by end of Nov and works to commence from 1st of Dec. Invoices to be submitted following completion of works and inspected by the Council's Conservation Officer(as set out in the application pack).

Ideally we would like the grant money split equally between the two rounds of application for 12.5k (existing funding of 25k)- 62.5k (125k-increased funding

with additional 100k from Community Faith Building Grant).

If, in round 1, available funds are not allocated, the funds will become available to applications in round 2.

If at the end of round 2, (end Oct) we receive no applications, we can Provisionally have a round 3 by the end of Feb (only in 2016-17). If successful, the grant money will be allocated by the end of March to the relevant application. If more applications are received than what we can fund within that year's budget, those schemes will be taken forward to the next year and be considered as part of the next year's funding.

2017-18 & 2018-19

From 2017-18 onwards, there will be only two rounds for application – Aug and Feb. This way, we can better manage the application process and where necessary, carry forward projects/funding.

Publicity

Historic Buildings Grants have been in existence for many years and the grant has been successfully publicised in the past through the council's website.

In addition to publicising on the council's website, we will explore the possibility of publicising the scheme through Historic England website that provides funding for Historic Buildings in Tower Hamlets.