

GRANT AID FOR ACQUIRING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

TECHNICAL NOTE NO. 58

MAY 2008



GRANT AID IS NOW AVAILABLE FOR CHARITIES TO ACQUIRE HISTORIC BUILDINGS AT RISK IN NORTHERN IRELAND THROUGH A SCHEME ADMINISTERED FOR EHS BY THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE FUND.

1. What assistance is available?

In an agreement with the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) NIEA has set aside money from its historic buildings grant budget to help it fund *'Building Preservation Trusts or other charities in NI, seeking assistance with the acquisition costs of Listed Buildings at Risk'*. Money will also be made available to help *'Groups seeking help and financial assistance in setting up a BPT'*.

The Architectural Heritage Fund is a UK wide organisation which facilitates the work of Building Preservation Trusts in restoring and preserving neglected and redundant historic buildings. It will administer this scheme for NIEA. The staff of AHF will be able to provide detailed guidance on the conditions of this scheme and other potential assistance at the address given later in this document.



St. Patrick's School, Belfast -
Rescued by a Building
Preservation Trust

2. Who is eligible to receive this funding?

Any registered charity can apply to receive this funding but as the emphasis is on the restoration of an historic building at risk, it is aimed particularly at charities such as Building Preservation Trusts which will have this as a principal aim. The assistance is targeted at listed buildings which are considered to be 'at risk' and so the structure should be a listed building included on the Built Heritage at Risk Northern Ireland database (www.ehsni.gov.uk).

3. What is the purpose of this scheme?

Under the Planning Amendment Order 2003 the Department of the Environment can offer grant assistance to *'any body of persons (not being a body carried on for profit) which appears to the Department to have among its principal objectives furthering the preservation, conservation and regeneration of historic buildings'*. The voluntary sector in Northern Ireland has carried out some important work in recent years to bring historic buildings back from a state of severe risk to become structures which make a strong contribution to their surroundings and often become a focus for local pride. This grant scheme aims to support these efforts by extending the availability of assistance for initial acquisition costs. NIEA is also supporting capacity building in the sector by helping the AHF employ full time advisors for this region. This support is additional to the recently extended Historic Grants Scheme (see technical note 57) which is now available for most listed buildings.



Mullycovet Mill, Belcoo. County Fermanagh - Rescued by a Building Preservation Trust

4. How to apply.

Further information on the scheme and an application form can be obtained from the Architectural Heritage Fund at the following address:

The Architectural Heritage Fund
Alhambra House
27-31 Charing Cross Road
London
WC2H 0AU
Tel 02079250199
Fax 02079300295
Email ahf@ahfund.org.uk
www.ahfund.org.uk

5. What is a Building Preservation Trust?

A Building Preservation Trust (BPT) is a charity, the main aim of which includes the preservation and regeneration of historic buildings. There are almost 300 BPTs in the UK, with 21 BPTs currently in existence in Northern Ireland. The majority are rooted in their local communities. Some are formed to save just one building and others, known as 'revolving fund trusts', save a succession of buildings.

Building Preservation Trusts often originate through a few individuals having a strong interest in a dilapidated local historic building in their community. They are widely recognised as a highly practical mechanism for dealing with such historic buildings at risk (generally listed buildings). In many respects a revolving fund BPT operates like a benign/supportive developer - identifying a viable end use, testing the financial assumptions, preparing a detailed scheme, assembling the necessary finance, undertaking the work and disposing of the building, once repaired, for reuse. However, with a revolving fund structure any financial gains are ploughed back (on a not-for-profit basis) for further building restoration projects.

With a Revolving Fund, a reserve of capital is built up which can be used in further building projects. HEARTH is the prime example of a successful BPT operating a '*revolving fund*' here in Northern Ireland. It has been responsible for the rescue and regeneration of 162 important listed historic buildings over a period of more than 20 years.

BPTs are eligible for grants from other charities, statutory bodies and the Heritage Lottery Fund. Many of these sources of funding cannot be used by private individuals or developers. BPTs can thus preserve, for public benefit, threatened buildings of special architectural or historic interest where a commercial solution cannot be found.



Christchurch, Belfast - Rescued by a Building Preservation Trust

6. Where can I get more advice on Building Preservation Trusts?

The Association of Preservation Trusts (APT) is the membership organisation for Building Preservation Trusts in the UK. It provides comprehensive guidance notes for BPTs, including advice on regeneration, accessibility, finance and sustainability. The APT seeks to promote good practice and increase the quality and professionalism of BPTs. It provides an invaluable network of support and advice to over 270 member trusts. APT works closely with other organisations in the historic environment sector, particularly with the Architectural Heritage Fund.

APT has a network of area committees, six in England and one each in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. All area committees meet on a regular basis and are an important source of help and encouragement to APT members. NIEA has made a contribution towards the work of APT UK in Northern Ireland since 1995/1996. This has helped the development of local activities.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Built Heritage Directorate
Waterman House
5-33 Hill Street
Belfast BT1 2LA
T: (028) 9054 3000

Our aim is to protect, conserve and promote the natural and built environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

www.ni-environment.gov.uk



An Agency within the Department of
Environment
www.doeni.gov.uk



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

7. What is the Architectural Heritage Fund?

The Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) was established in 1976 as an independent charity, through government initiative. It is an active umbrella group for the voluntary buildings conservation sector, especially Building Preservation Trusts. The AHF has a UK wide brief to provide low-interest loans to help local BPTs and other charities to repair and breathe new life into historic buildings. It plays an active part in the Association of Preservation Trusts. Their first loan in Northern Ireland was to the Belfast Buildings Preservation Trust for the restoration of St Patrick's School, Donegall Street. This project was also separately grant-aided by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). Not only has the AHF been supporting projects in NI, it also encourages the formation of new Trusts. For further information on the work of The Architectural Heritage fund (AHF) please contact them at the address given overleaf.

8. Other Sources of Funding

'Funds for Historic Buildings' Database. In addition to NIEA's scheme of grant aid for listed buildings (see technical note 57), assistance may also be available from other sources. The Architectural Heritage Fund has compiled an online database with NIEA support which lists 250 separate sources of funding in the UK for historic buildings. It is fully interactive and searchable by location and is free to use. This information is now available at: www.ffhb.org.uk

Contact the Association of Building Preservation Trusts for more information at this address:

The Coordinator
The UK Association of Preservation Trusts
Alhambra House
27-31 Charing Cross Road
London
WC2H 0AU
Tel 02079301629
Fax 02079300295
Email: apt@ahfund.org.uk
www.ahfund.org.uk



restored and maintained by a Building Preservation Trust with NIEA assistance