

Guidance notes for the Dartford Townscape Heritage Initiative

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INTRODUCTION

The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) for Dartford Town Centre is an opportunity to work with traders and residents to enhance the historic character of Dartford, to reinvigorate town centre and improve the potential retail offer.

The THI is funded jointly by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Dartford Borough Council and Department for Communities and Local Government.

The scheme operates in the Town Centre Conservation Area which extends from East Hill to West Hill, but is mainly centred around the High Street, Hythe Street and Spital Street.

It is available to selected property owners within the conservation area who wish to undertake high quality repair and restoration of buildings with architectural, historic or group merit. Decisions on applications will be based on the following criteria:

- Inclusion within the Conservation Area,
- Listed Buildings,
- Critical Projects then Priority Buildings (see THI Project Officer for details)
- Buildings with visible options to restore original/local distinct features,
- Buildings identified as eligible for the scheme;

Routine care and maintenance are not eligible e.g. re-painting of external woodwork or pointing of masonry – unless part of more comprehensive scheme of repair.

General Principles:

All applications to the Townscape Heritage Initiative should adhere to a set of basic principles:

- The scope, cost and timetable of the project should be defined in detail at the outset;
- Work must not begin without a binding contract having been agreed with the THI;
- The grant offer must be accepted within 3 months of the legal offer and work commence within 6 months unless otherwise agreed in writing with the THI Project Officer;
- Grant will only be paid on receipted invoices as forwarded by the applicant and approved by a competent professional;
- Design and specification should aim for highest standards, quality and practice, aiming for use of matching materials and detailing where good evidence exists as to the original construction or aiming for bold new interpretations with a contemporary design integrity where this is not possible or, for specific reasons, not appropriate;
- All relevant statutory obligations- planning permission, building control approval, listed building consent, advertising consent, etc. should be met and all applicants will be expected to have made contact with the local authority Planning Department, Dartford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Home Gardens, Dartford, Kent, DA1 1DR;

- Procurement of contract works should be competitive and seek to include only those contractors with a demonstrated commitment to quality and standards. At least 3 competitive quotes are required for grant aided work;
- The subjects of a THI grant MUST be adequately protected by insurance during the period of the contract and cover all aspects of the works, including protection in the event of fire and special perils. Cover must be adequate to allow reinstatement in materials and techniques which are consistent with the quality and character of the building. The THI team can advise further if requested.
- The applicant will be expected to appoint a design professional with relevant expertise in historic building work, capable of instructing and certifying work at each stage of the project.

Property Ownership:

For works grant aided under the Townscape Heritage Initiative, the applicant must either have full title to the property, or possess an unexpired term of no less than 10 years leasehold, and is able to discharge their obligations under their contract. If this is not the case, then the written permission of the superior leaseholder or owner must also be sought and given regarding adherence to the contractual conditions attaching to the grant. You will be asked to provide documentary evidence of ownership/leasehold terms and conditions as part of the application process.

Clawback:

The THI is set up so that little or no private gain can be made from the scheme, the owner may have to repay part or all of the grant if they sell or lease their property within a specified period. This is known as 'clawback'. The requirement is that the owner must repay a share of any increase in value beyond that which was expected when the grant was worked out.

A land charge will be placed on the property on completion of the grant payments to ensure that public funds can be recovered in the event of change of ownership. For THI grants towards property that is already in use involving up to £25,000 grant, this condition will apply for three years from when the owner accepts the grant. For larger contributions, it will apply for 10 years.

Clawback will apply to all THI grants used to bring vacant floorspace back into use. The clawback must be assessed either when the property is sold or leased, or within two years of the work being completed (whichever is sooner).

There is no liability to repay anything on sale if the property does not increase in value, or falls in value.

FILLING IN THE APPLICATION FORM

Please read through the guidance notes to work out firstly whether the project falls within the Dartford Town Centre THI area and then secondly whether it falls within the eligible categories. If you need any help with this then please do not hesitate to contact the THI office on (01322) 343351 or thi@dartford.gov.uk where we will do our best to help you.

1. Property for which grant is sought:

- 1.1 *Name of Property:* This relates to a name given to the property or properties involved for example the name of a shop. If your property does not have a name then please put 'n/a'.
- 1.2 *Address:* Please put in the postal address of the project and include the postcode if possible so that we can easily identify where it is.
- 1.3 *Listed Building/ Conservation Area:* Please speak to THI Project Officer or Planning Department at Dartford Borough Council if you are unsure of your building's status/inclusion in a Conservation Area or if you are unsure if the building is listed.

2. Details of Applicant:

- 2.1 *Name of Applicant:* If you are part of a larger organisation then please put in the name of the organisation and a relevant contact name. If you are an individual please put your name or the name of someone else who you think we should contact for further information/correspondence.
- 2.2 *Applicant Address:* This relates to the address that we should correspond with. If you are applying on behalf of a larger organisation then you should supply the registered address.
- 2.4 *Applicant Legal/Extent of Interest in the property:* Please indicate whether or not you or your organisation owns the property outright, or if not, who does, and the date that your lease ends. Please note that you will not be able to receive grant from the THI for a property unless you have the written permission of the owner or lease holder.

3. Agent:

Please put down the names and addresses of all the professional advisors that you are using, as well as professional qualifications and experience of working on historic buildings and within Conservation areas.

4. Present Use and Valuation of the Property:

- 4.1 *Present use of the property:* Please put the current property use or its most recent use. If the property is vacant then state that this is the case and if possible what the last use was; if the property has a number of uses please list what they are.
- 4.7 *Will the repairs enable a vacant building to be brought back into use?* Grants are available if the grant brings floorspace into use. Please indicate what use the work would enable the floorspace to be used as and if a potential tenant/user has been identified. If it is to be used for a different 'planning use class' then planning permission must be granted.

5. Proposed Works:

- 5.1 *Description of the Project:* Please outline the full extent of the proposals for the site even if they do not form part of the works that you are making application to the THI for.
- 5.2 *Summary of Eligible Works:* Please include eligible works as detailed in above guidance notes.

6. Future Use of the Building:

- 6.1 *What is proposed use after completion of the project:* The use may not change after works, in which case specify this. If use changes or vacant floorspace is brought back into use please specify.
- 6.4 *For businesses- How many additional employees, if any, will be taken on as a result of the project?:* It could be difficult to put a precise number on this, but may include an estimate of number of people employed during the construction and planning process and the number of jobs created or protected after the development is completed (for example if jobs are to be created in a proposed hotel as a result of the project then indicate how many).

7. Public Benefits of the Project:

- 7.1 *Your project will obviously provide some employment benefits while work is underway. Will your project provide any other social and/or economic regeneration benefits?:* Some examples of benefits are provided on the application form or other benefits may be in line with Dartford Borough Council's Corporate objectives that can be found at www.dartford.gov.uk/council/corpplan.

8. Project Costs:

- 8.1 *Details of quotations.* Three original written quotes must be received along with the application.
- 8.2 *Total of lowest quotations.* The sum of the quotations will be the full cost of the project. If the lowest quotation is not the accepted quotation, reasons must be fully justified.
- 8.3 *Is VAT likely to be recoverable or zero rated on any part of the project.* These may be either your quantity surveyors estimates or the lowest quote forwarded from contact with at least three builders. It may also be that you do not require to pay full VAT on the works – your quantity surveyor or HM Revenue and Customs (0845 010 9000) should be able to advise. If you do not require to pay VAT please also include your VAT Registration No.

9. Non-eligible works:

Work under this section is not eligible for a THI grant but can demonstrate added value of additional work.

10. State Aid Implications:

Through the THI scheme, public funding is being applied for which can constitute state aid. The Commission of the European Communities requires that state aid to businesses is monitored and controlled to ensure that no unfair competitive advantage is gained. Therefore information is required to determine whether you are classed as a "small and medium enterprise" (SME) and fall under the scope of these regulations.

A public body, charitable institution or private individual is likely to fall outside this category and can normally be grant-aided for approved projects without further referral.

Any SME contributing at least 50% of the overall cost of eligible works, can be grant-aided without further referral. This is the "SME block exemption".

Any SME, or larger enterprise, receiving more than 50% grant aid for any element will have a limit placed on the amount of public funding it receives without further referral to the European Commission. This is called the "de minimus exemption". The limit is 100,000 Euros (approximately £60,000), received in any three-year period. The business is required to confirm that it has not received any public funding over the last three years that will total more than £60,000 when added to this grant. The business will also be monitored over the next three years to see if further public grants take you over this limit.

11. Applications and awards of other funding:

Please detail any other funding that has been applied for and/or received.

12. Completion of Applications, enclosures and signatures:

Please include the following documents with the application:

- Specification of the works
- Drawings of the proposed project
- Site Location plan at a minimum scale of 1:1250, showing ownership boundaries
- Photographs of the building and specific locations of proposed repair and restoration work. Also, if you have images of original features of the building to accompany proposals for reinstatement works.
- Minimum of three written original quotes

The application form must be signed by someone with the authority to accept the grant and grant conditions.

Objective

To put into sound repair the structure and external envelope of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Townscape Heritage Initiative area.

General Scope of Grant

Repairs should be comprehensive in scope, using appropriate techniques or methods of construction and high quality natural or traditional materials, normally on a like-for-like basis. Substitute or artificial materials are ineligible and their use is generally unacceptable on grant-aided projects, unless a good case can be made to demonstrate the non-availability/existence of authentic original material or that technological advances have provided a superior alternative, as agreed by the THI Project Officer. In cases where the proposal requires either Listed Building or Conservation Area consent, close adherence to the conditions of the consent in terms of materials and execution will be essential and will set the standards against which the THI grant is offered. Failure to adhere to these conditions and standards will render the application ineligible for THI grant payment. Routine maintenance, including redecoration is ineligible, unless the decoration is needed as a direct result of eligible repair. Internal repairs are eligible only if they result directly from repairs to the structure, or are vital to the building's preservation.

Repairs may include:

- Consolidation or reinforcement of the existing structure, using the most conservative approach that is practicable, although limited reconstruction as existing is eligible if unavoidable; repairs should be undertaken on a like for like basis and with compatible materials;
- Appropriate repairs to internal timber or frames will only be eligible if these form the main structural element of the building or that area being treated. Treatment of non-structural timber elements are unlikely to be eligible. Repairs to roof structures, beams, floor joists and other structural timbers must be based on a careful and comprehensive survey of the existing structure. In-situ reinforced resin repairs to structural timbers are not acceptable unless justified on the grounds of avoiding major disturbance of historic fabric of merit;
- Dry rot eradication and timber preservative treatments, preferably based on an analysis and specification by an independent consultant, and using non-destructive techniques and non-toxic applications wherever possible;
- Damp-proofing by traditional methods, but only where damp is causing structural damage to the building; damp eradication measures, such as improved drainage, or lowering of ground levels are preferable wherever practicable;
- Re-roofing in natural materials traditional to the area, normally to match the historic covering, salvaging and re-using sound existing materials where possible. Repairs to the roof structure and high level external elements should be under taken concurrently, taking care to protect and reinstate any original features such as stone skewes, eaves, parapets and cornices. Original dormers or roof lights should be repaired on a like for like basis and features such as terracotta ridges and finials or cast/wrought iron features repaired/ reinstated as necessary. Re-roofing with artificial or alternative materials, such as concrete tiles, asbestos cement slates, reconstituted slates, etc, is not eligible for a grant, nor is the use of roofing felt for flat roofs or lining gutters;
- Repairs to chimneys, including lining or rebuilding if structurally essential, provided that the chimney is reinstated accurately to the historic height and profile; also replacement of the historic style of chimney pots/ cans. The retention and repair of existing stacks may be a condition of grant offered to other work;
- Repair or renewal of existing leadwork, the provision of weathering, and the reforming of gutters to adequate falls, normally in accordance with the details and weights recommended by the Lead Sheet Association Lead Sheet Manual;
- The repair or replacement of rainwater goods, including hopper heads, downpipes and bracket fixings, to match the original material, sections and decorative pattern. Generally this will be in cast iron or lead. Aluminium, UPVC or GRP rainwater goods are not eligible for grant;
- The repair of external stonework and brickwork, including decorative elements to an appropriate specification, using as near a match for the original masonry or stonework in terms of colour, texture and porosity. Where stone is not structurally defective there is a presumption that this should be retained rather than replaced, and indenting of new stone kept to a minimum. Coursing and tooled surface finish of new stones should match the original. Plastic, cement or in-situ resin based mortar repairs to stone and brick work are not normally acceptable, and the use of specialist masonry mortars built up on a non-ferrous armature may only be eligible for minor, relatively unobtrusive areas; fully marked up, detailed drawings will be essential to allow this work to be monitored on site;
- Selective rebuilding of existing stonework and brickwork, if structurally necessary and to an agreed specification. Generally this will be using salvaged existing materials, and/or new matching materials and should be preceded by a record survey of the existing. Only re-pointing which is structurally necessary, kept to the absolute minimum required and carried out to an appropriate and approved specification is eligible. Comprehensive re-pointing for cosmetic reasons is not eligible;
- The repair (or, if unavoidable, replacement) to the historic pattern and detail, and in the historic material, of windows, external doors and other external joinery which contributes to the character of the building and/or the conservation area;

- Repairs to external render and limited areas of renewal (there should be a presumption against total or substantial renewal, unless this is unavoidable) to an approved specification. If such a coating has been removed in recent years to the detriment of the performance and appearance of the building, its reinstatement may be the most appropriate form of repair. If stripped back areas reveal previously obscured evidence of later alterations, carved masonry, masons marks etc, these should be notified to the THI Project Officer and recorded before re-rendering. Also eligible is the repair of applied details and features such as cornices, string courses, window architraves, columns, pilasters, etc. These should be repaired carefully and accurately to the historic form or profile and using the original material. Generally GRP or similar replacement mouldings are not acceptable for grant, nor are proprietary in-situ resin-based repairs, although small scale, specialist masonry mortar repairs may be appropriate for areas of minor damage to decorative features;
- The external cleaning of stone and brickwork only where there is a build up of masonry paint or built-up resin coatings on the surface where removal is essential to enable accurate assessment of necessary repair, or where the surface build-up is damaging the fabric of the building. Cleaning for cosmetic purposes is not eligible. Any cleaning which is agreed to be eligible must be under taken to an approved specification (advice from THI) and carried out by specialist conservation contractors;
- The repair to the historic pattern and detail of distinctive architectural features, for example decorative ironwork such as balconies, canopies and railings, tiling and other historic finishes and architectural sculpture;
- The repair and reinstatement of retaining walls and/or railings, if they contribute to the stability of the building, enhance its setting, or are of particular interest in the conservation area.

Levels of grant

Maximum grant levels for this category are up to a maximum of 60% of the eligible project costs. The actual percentage level of grant offered will vary from project to project and will be based on the conservation deficit- a calculation made after all eligible costs have been appraised, compared to the existing property value and the District Valuer's advice on the forecast uplift in value in the property after works have been completed.

Example of how grant and grant rate are worked out:

Existing value of the property	£60,000
Cost of roof repairs (including fees, inflation and VAT)	£20,000
Value of the property when work is completed	£70,000
Increase in value	£10,000
THI grant needed (cost minus increase in value)	£10,000
THI grant rate (that is, grant as a percentage of eligible costs)	50%

ELIGIBLE CATEGORIES OF WORK – REINSTATEMENT OF ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL

Objective

To reinstate, in whole or in part, elements of the exterior fabric of the building, whose absence, whilst posing no structural threat to the integrity of the building, are considered essential to their design and character, such as ornamental masonry (including architectural sculpture), stucco and other applied finishes and details, joinery to historic patterns, and ornamental metalwork such as balconies, canopies and finials. It does not include 'conjectural restoration' work (that is, work for which there is no firm historical evidence, either surviving on the building or recorded in photographs or drawings). Nor does it include work that involves reversing alterations that are of quality and interest. Restoring architectural details must only be carried out if the building is otherwise in good repair (or will be repaired as part of the project).

General Scope of Grant

Reinstatement grants may be offered for:

- The reinstatement to the historic pattern, detail and opening mechanisms, and in the historic material, of windows, external doors and other external joinery which contributes to the character of the building and/or the conservation area;
- The reinstatement of applied details and features such as cornices, string courses, window architraves, columns, pilasters, etc. These should be repaired carefully and accurately to the historic form or profile and as nearly as possible to the historic composition. Generally GRP or similar replacement mouldings are not acceptable for grant, nor are proprietary in-situ resin-based repairs;
- The repair to the historic pattern and detail of distinctive architectural features, for example decorative ironwork such as balconies, canopies, cresting and railings, tiling and other historic finishes and architectural sculpture;
- Reinstatement of chimneys, including lining or rebuilding if structurally essential, provided that the chimney is reinstated accurately to the historic height and profile; also replacement of the historic style of chimney pots/cans. The retention and repair of existing stacks may be a condition of grant offered to other work;
- The reinstatement of traditional shopfronts; these should take care not to damage or destroy any original features that may remain under later shop frontage additions, in particular the fascia board, corning, stall riser, and any original window framing or glazing. All schemes should start with careful dismantling of any existing, inappropriate frontage to allow recording and if relevant; the repair and reuse of the existing original or historic framework. Schemes should not be conjectural, however a modern interpretation of a

traditional scheme using appropriate proportions, materials and character relative to the integrity of the building it occupies, will be considered on individual merit. Lighting, signage and security measures appropriate to the Conservation area may also be eligible for grant if forming part of an overall shopfront improvement scheme;

- Installation of canopies is not eligible (and if non-traditional is unlikely to receive consent) however if the proposal involves the reinstatement of a traditional awning or sun blind- usually a length of canvas attached to a folding metal frame and roller- where evidence still exists of its presence (blind box, or photographic proof) this may be considered if part of an overall shopfront improvement scheme;
- Proposals should never involve the extension of a shop frontage across an independent means of access to upper floors and priority will be given to schemes which seek to reinstate such closed or stairwell routes to otherwise inaccessible upper floors above shops.

Reinstatement grants will only be offered where the building fabric as a whole is in sound repair, or will be made so with a concurrent repair grant. Details to be reinstated must be based on sound archival or physical evidence taken from the building itself or similarly detailed neighbours. Conjectural restoration will not be grant eligible and any reinstatement project must not involve the removal of original or later features of interest.

Level of Grant

Grants of up to a maximum of 70% of eligible costs can be offered specifically for assistance in reinstatement of the above listed features. The actual percentage level of grant offered will vary from project to project and will be based on the conservation deficit – a calculation made after all eligible costs have been appraised, compared to the existing property value and the District Valuer's advice on the forecast uplift in value in the property after works have been completed.

Example of how grant and grant rate are worked out:

Existing value of the property	£45,000
Cost of restoring traditional sash windows (including fees, inflation and VAT)	£10,000
Value of the property when work is completed	£49,000
Increase in value	£4,000
THI grant needed (cost minus increase in value)	£6,000
THI grant rate (that is, grant as a percentage of eligible costs)	67%

ELIGIBLE CATEGORIES OF WORK – BRINGING VACANT FLOORSPACE BACK INTO USE

Objective

To bring currently vacant or underused floorspace, within historic buildings, back into use so as to give the building a new role, maximise its potential within the townscape, enliven the street scene, protect against future lack of maintenance and contribute to the local economy. This may involve a change of use and physical alteration to the character of the internal space to secure e.g. residential accommodation from warehouse floors or commercial, office type uses above shops, bars, etc.

Work can be done to totally vacant buildings or vacant space within partly used historic buildings (such as unused upper floors over shops).

General Scope of Grant

Grants may be offered for:

- All aspects of the physical work of conversion will be eligible, including necessary alterations both internal and external, which must be sympathetic to the character and interest of the building concerned.
- Any features of interest which survive within the interior, such as fireplaces, decorative plasterwork, panelling, etc should be retained in all cases where possible and opportunity given for recording/photographing in situ. Grants to bring floorspace into use must only be offered if the building is in sound repair, or will be made so through concurrent repair work.

To be eligible for THI grant, vacant buildings (or vacant space within a partly occupied building) must be vacant because of their poor condition or because they fail to meet the needs of modern users. There may be other reasons for being empty – property may be in excellent condition but lie vacant due to a lack of demand within the local economy. However, this vacancy is not due to conservation issues and so it would not be appropriate to tackle it with THI grant.

Since the objective is to bring vacant floorspace back into use, all aspects of the physical work of conversion will be eligible, including necessary alterations (both internal and external), basic decoration, and providing basic services. However, THI grant cannot be used to support a specific use for the floorspace. As a result, fitting out and furnishing floorspace cannot be included in the costs against which you work out the THI grant needed. Some proposals to bring vacant floorspace back into use may involve an element of new-build. You can include the cost of this work in the costs against which you work out the THI grant needed.

For projects to bring vacant floorspace into use, it will normally be necessary to have a future user in place in order to secure the necessary partnership funding and owner's investment. If there is a clear justification for speculative conversion, you must show that there is a demand for the relevant type of property in the local area.

Level of Grant

A development appraisal must be carried out to ascertain the current property value before and the likely value after completion of the project. Any anticipated increase in value together with estimated project costs will be taken into account when calculating the 'conservation deficit' as the basis for grants of up to 100% of eligible costs available. The actual percentage level of grant offered will vary from project to project and will be based on the conservation deficit- a calculation made after all eligible costs have been appraised, compared to the existing property value and the District Valuer's advice on the forecast uplift in value in the property after works have been completed, or possibly a notional profit value.

Example of how grant and grant rate are worked out:

End value of property	£100,000
Current value	£0
Cost of repair and conversion work (including fees, inflation and VAT)	£120,000
Developer profit at 15% of the end value	£15,000
Total cost	£135,000
THI grant (conservation deficit)	£35,000

ELIGIBLE CATEGORIES OF WORK – ASSOCIATED COSTS

Professional Fees & Planning Fees

Expenditure on fees for professional advisors is eligible for grant provided they belong to one of the recognised institutions; normally architects (ARB/RIBA), (but not architectural technicians), or Chartered Surveyors (RICS) with an appropriate level of specialist experience. It is a condition of grant that all works and invoices are certified by an appointed qualified professional. Full professional fees for architectural services are only eligible if the professional advisor inspects the work in progress and is responsible for its certification on completion. The applicant is required to retain the employment of a professional advisor to certify any certificates for payment of grant from the THI.

Spending on fees associated with planning permission, Building Regulations, and conservation area and listed building consent are all eligible for grant, as long as these fees clearly relate to the building and work the grant is being used for.

You cannot use a THI grant to support the cost of stand-alone condition and structural surveys, technical feasibility studies and other similar work.

Value Added Tax

VAT may be payable on eligible repair costs and fees, and where it cannot be recovered will be eligible for grant.

Publicity

The applicant must display visible signs in public places throughout the life of your grant contract, both during construction and after completion. Temporary signs must go up as soon as work begins on your project. Large signboards must be clearly visible to the public. The THI officer can provide construction boards and self-adhesive banners free of charge. You are able to produce your own signs as long as they meet the requirements for the necessary logos to be displayed. When work is completed the grant must be acknowledged and plaques can be provided free of charge, or your own acknowledgement with relevant logos can be put up. The use of the relevant logos must be approved by the THI Project Officer.

General Notes:

A number of sources for advice and guidance exist which should be consulted prior to embarking on any physical work that will alter or affect an historic building. Liaison with the THI Project Officer, Conservation Officer and Development Control Sections at Dartford Borough Council may be able to provide guidance at the formative stages of the project. The use of professional consultants, (architects, engineers, quantity surveyors, etc) with a background in historic building work and/or work within conservation areas is strongly recommended to facilitate this process and ensure a smooth application procedure. Recording and examination of existing structure and materials, prior to work commencing is also important. Reference should also be made to the photographic collections held by Dartford Borough Council and Kent County Council Local Studies Unit at Central Library as these may provide valuable evidence as to the former appearance of the building, in addition to information that may exist on earlier planning approvals. Access for the THI officer to all properties which are the subject of a THI grant is expected and must be permitted on a regular basis during the project period (including external access via scaffolding).

**For more information contact:
THI Project Officer**

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Dartford, Kent DA1 1DR**

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