



Advice Notes

Introduction

'Rediscover the Underbanks', Townscape Heritage (TH) will transform Stockport's historic high street into a vibrant destination of choice. Investment in its unique built heritage will stimulate specialist businesses and new uses, making people fall in love with the Underbanks again. Works focus on sensitive repair, reinstatement and gap site redevelopment, maximising impact by targeting vacant high risk buildings.

The townscape Heritage scheme is a 5 year programme jointly funded between National Lottery Heritage Fund and Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. The scheme will offer grant funding to aid the repair and restoration of historic buildings in the Underbanks.

The scheme also includes a 5 year Activity Plan, supported by Stockport Heritage Trust and the BID team, which will drive engagement through animating the area, capturing and digitising its stories for new audiences. Investment will be sustained through practical maintenance skills.

The Townscape Heritage area, is reproduced on the map overleaf. Buildings highlighted have been identified as high, medium priority and reserve priority. Owners of targeted priority buildings will be encouraged to apply for grant subject to meeting appropriate conditions. Reserve buildings, will only be considered towards the end of the project if there are funds available. Is you are an owner of a building and interested in applying for grant please read through the advice notes.



Note 1: How to Apply for Grant

Could you be eligible for a Townscape Heritage (TH) Grant?

- Do you own or lease a property within the TH area?
- Is your property identified as a priority in the TH area?
- Would you like to improve it?
- If you are a leaseholder do you hold a lease of 10 years or more?
- Could you make a financial contribution towards a grant?

If you answer yes to all the above questions you could be eligible for a grant of up to:

75% for external repairs or architectural reinstatement such as sash windows and traditional shopfronts.

Or if your property involves bringing floor space back into use you could be eligible for a grant rate of an average of 50%.

First Steps

Familiarise yourself with the background information in the introductory note.

Define your Project.

Identify the works that include one or more of the following headings:

- External structural repair
- Architectural reinstatement
- Bringing vacant floor space back into use.

Also indicate if your project is to include elements of new build.

If you are eligible, please complete an '[Expression of Interest Form](#)' with the assistance of the Townscape Heritage (TH) Manager.

You will then be advised whether or not you could potentially qualify for a grant.

Next Steps

Select an architect/surveyor to oversee a scheme for you, which will include:

- submitting a planning or building notice application
- Detailed design and specification for eligible works.
- assisting you to identify and procure a contractor
- appointing a contractor
- overseeing works
- authorising payments
- managing and ensuring final completion.

The architect must be registered with a professional body such as the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), or the Architects Registration Board (ARB) and must have

conservation experience to prepare drawings and specification of work. You may prefer to appoint a Surveyor who must be registered with Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

Once you have selected an architect, inform the TH Manager with their details of conservation experience and expertise. Once the TH Manager has confirmed the architect is eligible, you should obtain a quote for architectural services. The TH Manager will provide you with an overview of services required to undertake the grant. Once the fee quote has been approved by the TH Manager, you can appoint the architect.

Making an application

When an appropriate scheme has been designed and planning permission has been obtained (if necessary), and the works have been put to tender, you will need to submit a full grant application for approval along with detailed information about the proposed works, including a full set of approved plans, schedule of works and costings. A check list is included in the application form but will generally require;

- A full specification of works which must include details of materials and a method statement.
- Drawings- annotated plans, elevations and cross section at an appropriate scale.
- Photographs of elevations and architectural details.
- A work programme including timescales.
- Expenditure profile and cost plan.
- Three tenders will be required for works over £25,000, and accompanied by a tender summary.
- For works below £25,000 three quotes will be required.

Drawings must be developed in consultation with the Planning Department's conservation officer and the Townscape Heritage Manager, who can give advice on appropriate materials, techniques for repair, window styles and similar matters. Building Regulations and related advice should be sought in accordance with national policies. Refer to note on conservation drawing requirements.

The application for grant will be presented to the Townscape Heritage Partnership Board which consists of senior officers, community and business organisations and Councillors, validated by the Director of Place and Cabinet member. Please allow time for this, the **Partnership Board** meet quarterly but could convene earlier if required.

Grant Agreement

If your application for grant is accepted you will be required to enter a grant agreement with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council which sets out conditions of the grant. This will set out, amongst other matters, the amount of grant you can expect for the project, insurance, key dates for work to start and be completed by, and details of clawback. Please don't hesitate to contact the TH Manager should you wish to discuss the grant conditions. The agreement will need to be signed by the grant applicant and contractor/agent.

A grant offer letter will be sent to the applicant once the agreement has been signed.

Grant payments

The building works can commence once the offer letter has been received, according to the timescales specified in the grant agreement. The TH manager and Conservation Officer will oversee the works and be available for advice throughout the whole process.

On prior agreement with the TH manager, invoices can be submitted in stages to the project. Otherwise, the invoices should be submitted once the works have been completed.

The grant applicant must have the financial resources to pay for the work before the grant can be claimed.

The professional advisor will inspect the work on site and issue an endorsed valuation certificate to the grant applicant, who will make all payments.

The grant applicant will need to provide the TH Manager with the valuation certificate and any relevant invoices endorsed by the professional advisor along with evidence that all payments have been made to contractors.

Once these conditions have been met the TH Manager will make arrangements for the grant payment to be made to the grant applicant.

A sum equal to 10% of the grant will be withheld until the TH Manager is satisfied that all works have been completed to the required standard and has received a copy of the final completion certificate and the contractor's final account has been settled.

Further Information or assistance contact:

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Note 2 Guide to eligible works

This advisory document details what can be covered by grants given to applications in respect to works done to targeted buildings in the Rediscovering the Underbanks Townscape Heritage project.

As an overview, the grants can be used to cover three main areas of work that grant can be applied to. Each category attracts a different amount of grant that can be used for the building works.

- Carrying out structural and external repairs to buildings
- Repairing and reinstating elements of architectural detail, and
- Work to bring vacant buildings back into use.

All work must be undertaken with respect for the character and integrity of the building or structure, and of the area in which it lies, in accordance with the relevant national conservation policies, and following published guidance and advice issued or endorsed by the relevant national heritage organisation.

Tenders should only be invited from contractors known to be able to achieve the standards of quality required.

Grant will not be paid for work that, in the reasonable opinion of the HLF, does not meet generally accepted standards of quality in materials or workmanship appropriate to the circumstances, whether in conservation work or new construction.

Building Repair

This includes the structural and external repair of historic buildings which are in use. It can sometimes include internal repairs, but only if these are necessary for structural stability.

The objective is to put into sound repair the structure and external envelope of buildings (the outside) that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. 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 generally unacceptable on grant-aided projects.

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.
- Appropriate repairs to timber frames, roof structure, beams, floor joists and other structural timbers, 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.

- Dry rot eradication and timber preservative treatments, preferably based on an analysis and specification by an independent consultant (whose fees are also eligible), 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, the introduction of French drains, or the lowering of ground levels, are preferable where practicable.
- Re-roofing in natural materials traditional to the area, normally to match the historic covering, using new materials and/or re-using sound existing materials where possible. Repairs to the roof structure and high level external elements should be undertaken concurrently. Re-roofing with the artificial or alternative materials, such as concrete tiles, asbestos cement slates, reconstructed slates or artificial stone slates is not eligible for 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 or stalks may be a condition of grant offered to other work.
- Repair or renewal of existing leadwork, and the re-forming of gutters to adequate falls, normally in accordance with the details and weights recommended by the Lead Sheet Association in *The Lead Sheet Manual*.
- The repair or replacement of rainwater goods or a rainwater disposal system to a building, to match the historic material and sections. Generally, this will be in cast iron, but occasionally in lead, timber or stone, where appropriate. Aluminium, plastic, PVC or GRP rainwater goods are not eligible.
- The repair of external stonework and brickwork, including decorative elements, to an appropriate specification. Plastic *in situ* resin based mortar repairs to brickwork and stonework are not normally acceptable or eligible, except for minor areas.
- 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 repointing which is structurally necessary, kept to the absolute minimum required and carried out to an appropriate specification, is 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, stucco or harling 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. Also eligible is the repair of applied details and features, such as cornices, string courses, window architraves, columns, pilasters, rusticated rendering. 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 repair techniques.
- The external cleaning of stonework and brickwork is **only** eligible where there is such a build-up of dirt, paint or built-up resin coatings on the surface that it must be removed in order to assess the extent of necessary repair or where the surface build-up is damaging the fabric of the building by chemical action. Cleaning for cosmetic reasons is therefore **never** eligible. Any cleaning which is agreed to be eligible must be undertaken to an approved specification 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 or reinstatement of retaining walls, boundary 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.

What cannot be funded:

- Routine maintenance
- Redecoration
- Internal repairs.
- Aluminium, plastic, PVC or GRP rainwater goods.
- Repointing for cosmetic reasons

Reinstatement of architectural details

This can include the reinstatement of architectural features, but only where the building is otherwise in sound repair, or will be repaired as part of the project. The objective is to reinstate in whole or part elements of the exterior fabric of buildings which are 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.

This can also include other whole elements or parts of the historic fabric which are essential to the design and character of the building such as shopfronts and windows. Please refer to [shop front guide](#).

What cannot be funded?

- ‘Conjectural restoration’ work, which is work that has no firm historical evidence, either surviving on the building or recorded in photographs or drawings
- The reversal of alterations that are themselves of quality and interest

Bringing vacant historic floorspace back into use

This includes vacant space within partly used historic buildings, such as unused upper floors over shops. Proposals for such work must respect the character and interest of the building internally as well as externally.

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. 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. Eligible works may include all aspects of the physical works of conversion, including necessary internal and external alterations, basic provision of heat light and power and basic decoration.

The grant for bringing vacant floorspace back into use may be calculated in some instances using the “conservation deficit”, that is the difference between the cost of conversion and exterior and interior repair work, and the value when converted.

Proposals to bring vacant historic floor space back into use will involve individual assessment by a qualified independent professional. A reasonable developer’s profit may be included.

However, where the value of the property on completion is significantly higher than forecast, we may seek to recover all or part of the grant.

What cannot be funded

- Furnishings and services beyond the basic provision of heat, light and power
- Fittings associated with a specific use

Infilling gap sites in key frontages

It must be clear that buildings of an appropriate quality can be achieved only by subsidy combined with the use of planning powers.

The grant from the common fund should be limited to additional costs which arise directly from the planning and architectural requirements of development in a historic setting, when compared to the cost of comparable local development outside the conservation area.

The objective is to achieve an appropriately high standard of design and materials in an historic context. Normally, the eligible works will be the structural elements whose appearance will affect the character of the conservation area, whose quality the grant is intended to secure.

Other eligible costs

Professional fees

Expenditure on fees for qualified professional advisers is eligible for grant provided they belong to one of the recognised institutions: normally architects (but not architectural technicians) or Chartered Surveyors (members of the RICS) with an appropriate level of specialist experience. The involvement of professional advisers is encouraged. Full professional fees for architectural services are only eligible if the professional adviser inspects the work in progress and is responsible for its certification on completion.

Archaeological work

The cost of archaeological work in accordance with relevant national and local planning policies is eligible, in the following cases:

- Recording and analysing historic buildings of early origin or complex evolution as a basis for devising repair or conversion works, and monitoring during those works.
- Archaeological assessment, evaluation, excavation and monitoring in connection with alteration, extension or new build projects.
- Publication of the results, if necessitated by works which are themselves eligible within the scheme.

Preliminaries

Preliminaries are a fundamental part of the cost of the works and are eligible. These include contractors setting up, site security such as fencing, scaffold and health and safety requirements.

Value Added Tax

VAT may be payable on eligible repair costs and fees and, where it cannot be recovered, it is eligible for grant. Guidance on VAT and listed buildings is contained in the [VAT Notice 708 Buildings and Construction \(August 1997\)](#).