

Blackpool Council

# THI Information and guidance



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BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY FOR ALL

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 What is the Talbot Square Townscape Heritage Initiative?**

The purpose of the Blackpool Town Centre Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is to encourage the economic revitalisation of the historic centre of the town through a programme of conservation led regeneration projects. The scheme is jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Single Regeneration Budget and Blackpool Council and is administered by the Council. Funding has been agreed to support projects for a period of three years starting from April 2006.

Grants will be available for schemes that preserve and enhance the character of the Town Centre Conservation Area through the repair and conservation of buildings, reinstatement of lost architectural features, bringing back into use vacant historic floor space and the enhancement of public spaces.

The THI represents a key partnership initiative in the Council's resort regeneration strategy. The contribution, imagination and enthusiasm of local businesses and property owners will be vital in maximising the potential of the THI to lift the areas trading potential. Together, the THI Partnership will enliven this historic area, making it more attractive for shoppers, businesses, visitors and residents alike.

## **1.2 Which buildings are eligible for grant aid?**

The receipt of this pack indicates that your building is eligible for grant support. Eligible properties within the THI have already been externally assessed visually to establish the capacity of the THI to deliver improvements across the area on an equitable basis. This assessment has been made on the basis of need and the significance of the property to the conservation area and in terms of its role within the street scene.

The THI is concentrated on Talbot Square and takes in parts of Abingdon Street, Talbot Road, Clifton Street and Cedar Square. The map overleaf shows the physical boundaries of the project.

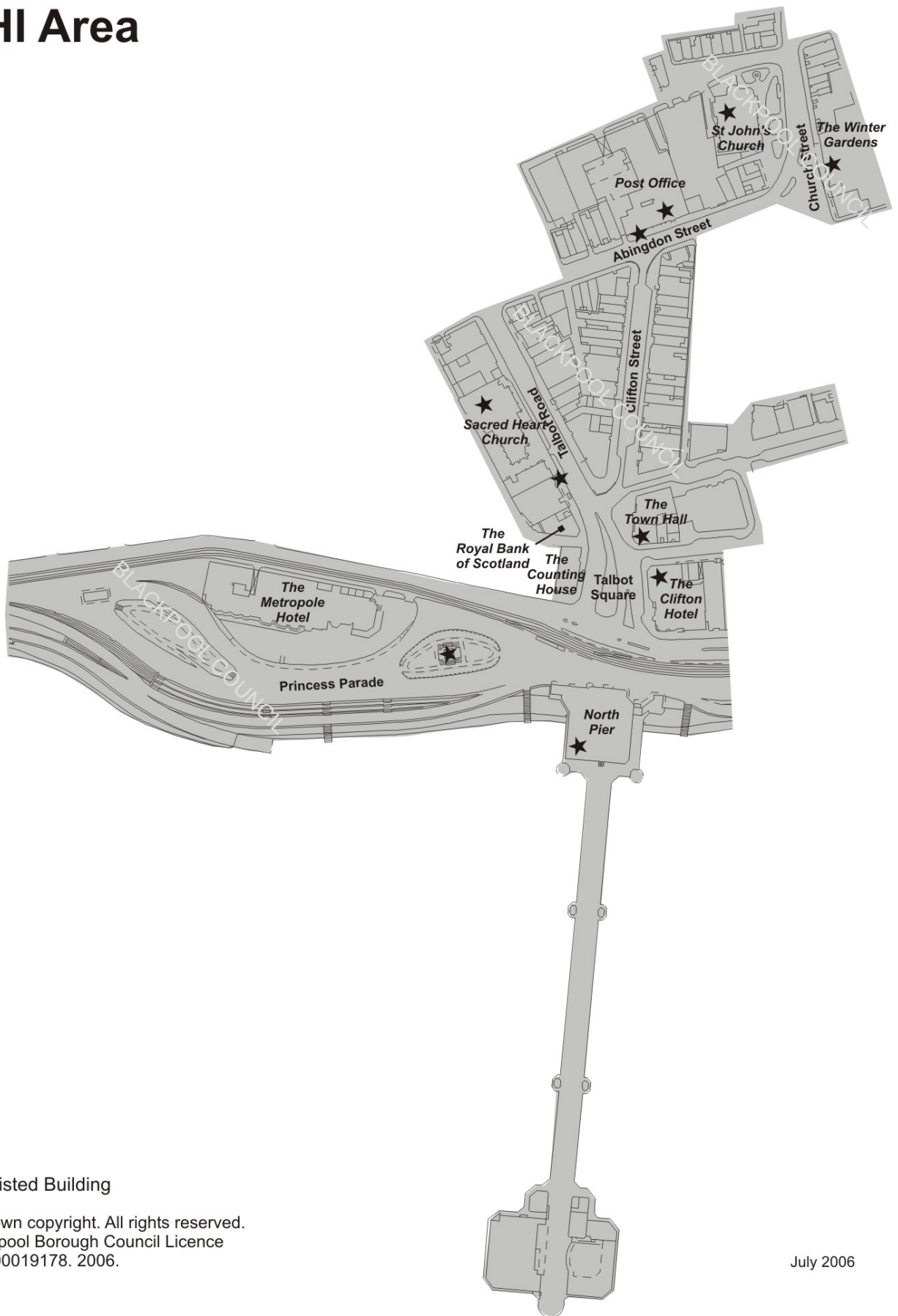
## **1.3 What type of work is eligible?**

In order to qualify for grant assistance, a comprehensive scheme for your building will need to be developed in conjunction with the THI Manager and appointed architects/surveyors. The type of work that will be considered for grant assistance includes the following:

- Shopfront repairs, including signage
- Re-instatement of architectural features
- Structural repairs
- Structural timber repairs
- Re-roofing, including repairs to chimneys, lead-work and rainwater goods.
- Brickwork and Stonework repair and re-pointing.
- Render repairs and re-rendering
- Joinery repairs
- Specialist treatments
- Professional fees
- External specialised cleaning (where appropriate)

*For more detailed information on eligible and non-eligible works, see appendix 1*

# THI Area



★ Listed Building

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## 1.4 How much grant is available?

The precise award will be dependant on the detailed schedule of works and bill of quantities that will need to be prepared as part of a scheme submission. These will enable the eligible works to be assessed in terms of meeting the design and conservation grant award criteria and in delivering value for money for you and the THI. The THI Board will assess individual grant applications and decide in each case how much grant to award. The grants are discretionary and all applications will be decided on their merits.

## 2. Design principles & Project Management

### 2.1 Design Quality & The Historic Built Environment

It is essential that all schemes are of the highest quality in terms of design, materials and methods of repair. This covers matters such as submission requirements, appropriate materials and workmanship as well as architectural, signage and lighting design.

All schemes will require preparation by a professional agent. This will usually be through the THI Group Project Schemes, where a THI Board appointed RIBA approved architect, with specialised experience in the repair of historic buildings, produces an entire scheme for the wholesale improvement of a street. The THI Group Scheme will also provide an experienced main contractor to undertake the work for you with the whole process being overseen by the THI Manager. In the event that you may wish to pursue an independent scheme at your own cost the following sections set out the basic criteria that will need to be followed.

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 and Local Plan conservation policies. In addition, archaeological and building recording conditions must be complied with *where required*. In most cases, a photographic and written record of the building or structure will be made by the THI Manager as work commences.

Incorporating your business ambitions within the scheme will be an important part of creating a scheme that reflects the rich visual culture of Blackpool. The THI Manager will discuss the design with you and advise how your ideas and needs might be incorporated into the project. Stricter criteria governing design and materials will apply if your building is listed. Further details can be obtained from the THI Manager.

### 2.2 Shop fronts

Most buildings within the THI area have shop fronts at ground floor level. Repairs to original shop fronts will form the vast majority of eligible schemes.

In these cases, the new shop front will need to replicate the original shop front as closely as possible in terms of its form and proportions. Where evidence as to the appearance of the original shop front is unavailable, it will be acceptable to install a shop front that is appropriately designed and proportioned to correspond with the period property to which it is attached. This does not mean that individual flair and creativity cannot be incorporated, providing that its would accord with the principles, materials and craftsmanship sympathetic to the period of the host building.

*Detailed advice on shop front design, including advertising and security issues is provided within the Design Guide contained in this information pack entitled 'Design & Conservation Grant Award Criteria'.*

## **2.3 How will my project be managed?**

All projects will be monitored by the THI Manager.

If you elect to appoint your own design/construction team, you will be responsible for appointing and drawing up a contract with an architect and a contractor who meet the quality standards required by the THI Board. You will also be responsible for securing the necessary consents and for ensuring the project is delivered within the timeframe of the funding.

As already described, electing to participate within the THI Group Scheme will enable you to take advantage of the vetted architect and contractors to keep cost to yourself to a minimum. Day to day supervision of the contractor will be undertaken by the appointed architect to ensure that all works are completed satisfactorily and in accordance with the approved plans.

## **3 How do I apply for a grant?**

In order to apply for grant you must have a freehold interest in the property or an un-expired lease of at least ten years (in these cases, evidence of the lease terms and period will be required to be submitted along with the written consent of the landlord for works to be commenced). A simplified chart representation of the grant assessment procedure is provided in appendix 1.

### **3.1 First Point of Contact**

Your first action will be to contact the THI Manager to make an appointment to meet informally with you on site to explain the options for group or individual projects and give you advice about the type of works that are likely to be eligible for grant assistance. For further information contact:

Carl Carrington      Telephone: 01253 476003  
THI Manager  
Planning and Transportation Division  
Blackpool Council  
PO Box 17, Corporation Street  
Blackpool  
FY1 1LZ      Email      [carl.carrington@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:carl.carrington@blackpool.gov.uk)

### **3.2 Appointing a professional agent and builder**

Once you have a clearer idea of the requirements for grant awards and have decided to apply, the THI Manager will brief you on how you need to proceed to the next stage.

In the event that you wish to undertake an individual project you will need to appoint an agent. The agent will need to be a chartered architect or building surveyor with conservation experience. It will be important that any agent/architect you approach has the expertise to develop a proposal in line with the design guidelines, as all schemes will be assessed on the quality of the specification and drawings. You should always ask to see examples of previous work in drawing form and on site.

The agent will design and draw up scale plans of your proposals, potentially obtain quotes from builders, apply for planning permission, listed building consent (if applicable) and building regulations and oversee the construction work whilst on site. Further advice on choosing an agent can be provided by the THI Manager and grant assistance towards the cost of your agents fees is usually available as part of your grant.

The THI also offers the group scheme option through the Council's own architects and appointed framework contractors. This is so that the widest regenerative benefit can be achieved within the THI area with more of the grant being directed towards eligible buildings by keeping the cost of professional services and contractors to the applicant as low as possible. Participation within a group scheme also offers the benefit of having a scheme negotiated that will comply with planning and conservation requirements.

Whichever of the above two options are implemented, it is at this stage that you need to plan the prospective works with the design team. The designer will work with you on plans for the project and will advise you of any further planning and supporting documentation that will be required including the following:

- **Structural Survey**

Depending on your building and the type of work proposed, you might need to have a structural or specialist survey carried out. You will need to submit this with your application in order that a full assessment can be made of the scope of the repair/improvement works required and to ensure that grant money would not be undermined by a serious problem with the building. Grant assistance towards the cost of the survey will usually be available.

- **Schedule of Works**

You will need to submit a fully itemised schedule of works in order that your scheme can be assessed in terms of its value for public money. The schedule will need to be detailed and costed, and will need to identify the nature of any building defects, proposed repair works and a description of any new work to be carried out. Your agent or builder will need to compile this for you. The schedule must include all work being undertaken as part of the scheme. Not all work will be eligible for grant assistance. For example the grant cannot contribute towards any internal work that may be required, unless they are necessary for structural stability, eligible repairs or conversion, but this must still be itemised on your schedule. Your schedule of work must be agreed with the THI Manager before your application is submitted to the THI Board for consideration.

- **Development Appraisals**

For conversion projects that bring vacant historic floor space back into use, it will be necessary to carry out a development appraisal. Development appraisals set out the estimated costs of undertaking the development and its estimated value on completion. This appraisal will form the financial justification for the grant and the THI Manager will be able to provide more detailed guidance on the information required for grant based on development appraisal.

### 3.3 Statutory Consents

The applicant is likely to need at least one or more of the following statutory consents before schemes can be considered for grant approval:

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Planning Permission</b>       | Most building work to commercial properties will require planning approval  |
| <b>Advertisement Consent</b>     | This may be required for any new fascia or hanging sign.  |
| <b>Conservation Area Consent</b> | All of the area covered by the THI scheme is within a Conservation Area. Conservation Area Consent may be required for the demolition of buildings or structures.   |
| <b>Listed Building Consent</b>   | Most alterations to a listed building (including changes to the interior fabric) require Listed Building Consent unless they are exact replicas of the historic structure. It is always advisable to secure written confirmation from the Council that such a consent would not be required. Applications for Listed Building Consent are free. |
| <b>Building Regulations</b>      | You will need to check whether building regulation approval is required for your scheme.  |

#### **Note**

*It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary consents are in place before works commence. You will be required to submit detailed plans of the proposed work with any of the above applications.*

- **Quotes**

Following the agreement of the THI Manager to a design and schedule of works and the successful outcome of any consent applications will need to provide a minimum of three itemised quotes. Careful consideration will need to be given to the form of contract entered into as grant levels will not be increased to cover any un-foreseen cost arising once work commences.

*The level of grant assistance available towards a scheme cannot be confirmed until fully itemised quotes are obtained. The applicant is responsible for paying for any works that have not been approved.*

### 3.4 Additional Work

As part of the comprehensive nature of this project you may be thinking of further internal works that would be outside the scope of the THI Grant Award Criteria. You are welcome to discuss your requirements with the architect and contractor. Any such work must be identified within a separate schedule of works and submitted to ensure that such works would not undermine any grant supported work.

### **3.5 Grant Application Forms**

An offer of grant cannot be made until you have completed and returned the attached THI Grant Application Forms to the THI Manager along with all relevant documentation.

### **3.6 Grant Assessment**

Once the above information has been submitted, the THI Manager will be able to assess your application and if the scheme meets the required standard, recommend to the THI Board the amount of grant funding to be offered to the applicant.

### **3.7 Grant Offer Letter and Contract**

If your grant application is approved, you will be formally offered a grant in the form of a grant offer letter (offering the grant in principle), together with a contract, which you will be required to sign returning a copy to the THI Manager. This then forms an agreement between yourself and the Council. No grant-aided work can start until the THI Manager has received a signed copy of the contract.

### **3.8 Conditions**

A number of conditions will be attached to the grant. Some of these will be standard conditions and some will be special to the individual or group project. The Grant will only be paid as and when all conditions have been certified as having been fully complied with.

### **3.9 Work on site**

The THI Manager will monitor work on site as it progresses, but the appointed architect will be responsible for day to day project management. You will need to ensure that your contractor provides access to the site for monitoring and inspection by Council officers as required.

### **3.10 Health and Safety**

Depending on the type of work proposed you might need to obtain a Health and Safety statement. This should be submitted along with your application and include details of the approximate dates when the difficult elements of the work are programmed, any scaffolding required or disruption/closure to the highway which will result etc. This requirement will be managed for you by the architect and contractor as part of a group scheme.

### **3.11 Payment**

Once completed, the grant-aided work will be checked by the THI Manager for compliance with the design guidelines and approved purposes. If all work has been completed to the agreed standard and all conditions met then you will be paid according to the terms laid out in the offer letter. You may submit copy invoices certified as paid to the THI Manager. No grant will be paid out until invoices have been received and validated. No other form of evidence of payment is acceptable. It may be possible to make interim payments at agreed stages of work for larger scale projects on the recommendation of the THI Manager.

### **3.12 Clawback**

All grants will be subject to clawback, which may require payment of a share of the proceeds if the property is sold within a specified period. For grants up to £25,000 from HLF, this condition will apply for three years from the acceptance of grant. For grants involving over £25,000 contribution from HLF, this condition will apply for ten years. This means that, based on the value of the grant awarded, you may be required to sign a ten-year covenant (attached to the deeds of the property) for the retention of grant-aided fittings/features to the building.

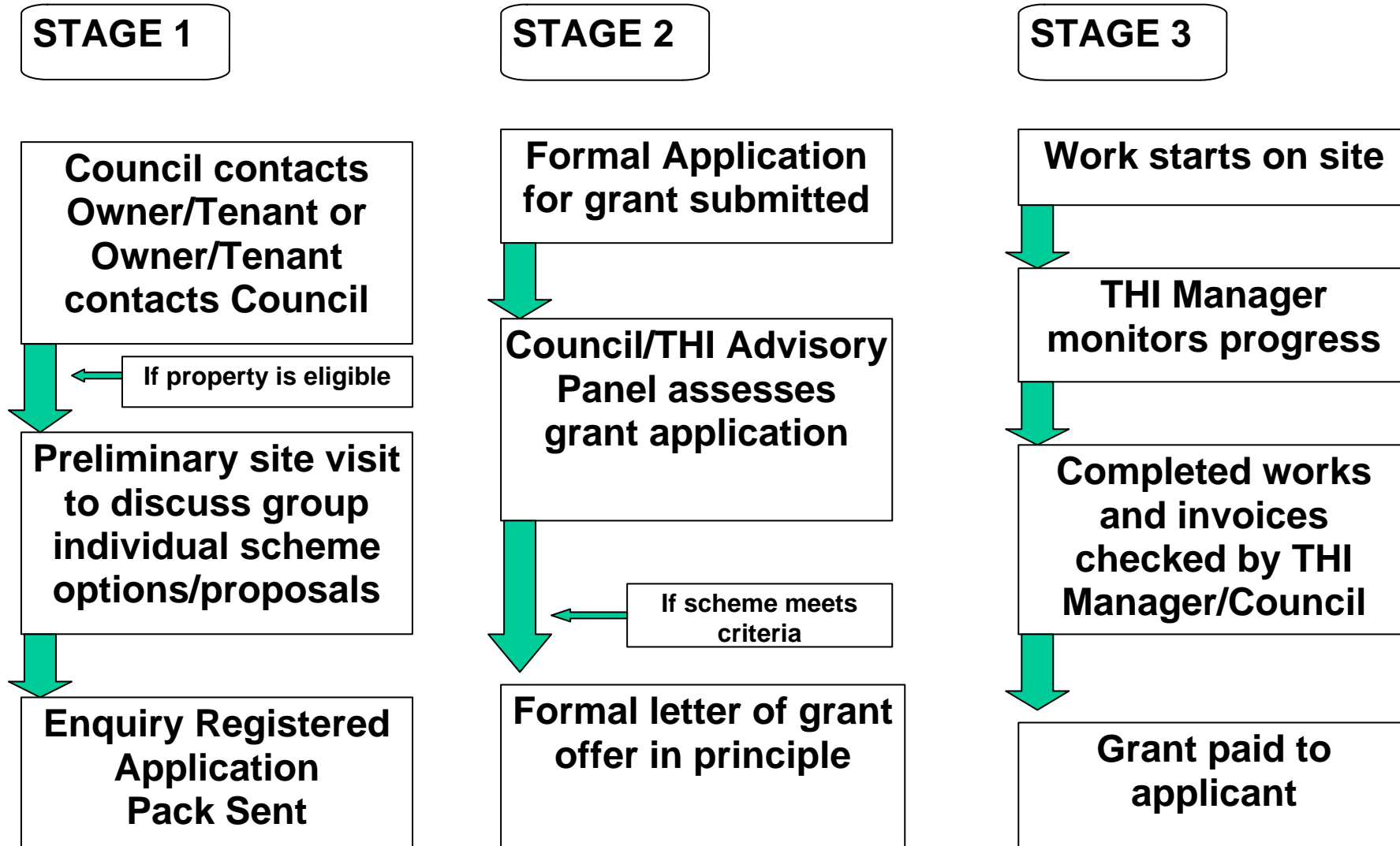
The grant funding is only available for a limited period of time and works not completed within the life of the THI project will cease to be eligible. Please ask the THI Manager for further details.

**Note**

*THI Grants are awarded to an individual property rather than a business or owner. The grant offer will be conditioned so that you cannot take any of the grant funded building fixtures with you if you move.*

Appendix 1

Grant Application Process Chart



## **Appendix 2**

# **Eligibility of works**

## **Eligible Categories of Work and Costs**

### **GENERAL PRINCIPALS**

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 funding 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.

The following categories of work and costs will attract grant assistance under the THI grant scheme.

### **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, and redecoration only of the public has access to the building by virtue of its use.

It does not include routine maintenance, redecoration, or internal repairs alone unless the decoration is needed as a direct result of eligible repair.

The level of grant from the common fund should reflect the difference between the cost of repair and the financial value added to the property as a result of repair.

The objective is to put into sound repair the structure and external envelope of buildings 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. The survival of vernacular building techniques such as clay wall wattle and daub, etc (often found in town buildings behind later finishes) is very important, and repair should be in compatible materials.
- 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, the provision of weatherings, and the reforming 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 re-pointing which is structurally necessary, kept to the absolute minimum required and carried out to an appropriate 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, 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.

### **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.

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 works involving the reversal of alterations that are themselves of quality and interest.

The level of grant from the common fund should reflect the financial value (usually modest) added to the property as a result of such work.

### **Bringing vacant historic floor space 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 floor space back into use, all aspects of the physical work of conversion will be eligible, including necessary alterations both internal and external. Internal work will normally involve decoration, but furnishings, and services beyond the basic provision of heat, light and power, are not eligible. Grants to bring floor space into use must only be offered if the building is in sound repair, or will be made so through concurrent repair work. The grant from the common fund should cover the "conservation deficit", that is the difference between the cost of conversion and exterior and interior repair work, and the value when converted. Grants cannot contribute to the cost of fitting out space for a specific use.

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.

### **Infilling gap sites in key frontages**

New build will not be supported where it might adversely affect the use or occupation of historic buildings in the area. 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.

Public Realm Works This includes urban green spaces, historic surfaces and other townscape features, such as old walls and railings that define historic public spaces, using appropriate natural materials. This may include external works associated with a grant-aided repair project which enhance the setting of a building and the removal of unsightly clutter on buildings and other eyesores which are detrimental to the appearance of the conservation area. Repair work should involve the use of natural materials and traditional techniques so as to match the historic work as nearly as possible.

It does not include routine maintenance, conjectural restoration, the recreation of wholly lost features, modern layouts generated by traffic management or pedestrianisation schemes, the replacement of street furniture, or burying overhead cables.

The grant from the common fund for public realm projects should be limited to the difference between the cost of repair or renewal to normal standards, and the conservation option.

We will need to see formal assurances about the maintenance of public realm works from the responsible authorities, and you must make routine maintenance a condition of grants to third parties.

### **Professional services**

- **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.

## **Non-eligible Categories of Work and Costs**

### **Non-eligible Work**

The following works will not attract grant assistance under the THI grant scheme they are referred to as "non-eligible works". Examples of works that are non-eligible under the terms of the grant scheme are:

- Minor repairs such as replacing broken window panes
- Routine maintenance such as fixing a loose slate on a roof, clearing debris out of gutters -re-decoration (unless required as a direct result of eligible repair or conversion)
- Internal repairs (unless they are necessary for structural stability, eligible repairs or conversion)
- External cleaning of stonework and brickwork for cosmetic reasons
- The use of substitute or artificial materials

### **Non-eligible Costs**

The following project costs will not attract grant assistance under the THI scheme:

- Statutory Fees - e.g. planning applications, advertisement consent, building regulations.
- Insurance-this remains the owners or tenants responsibility.
- Contingencies-for unseen extra costs are not covered.
- Interest on any loans taken out to fund your building project prior to receiving grant payment.

## Appendix 3

### Further useful contacts

#### **Blackpool Council**

Development Control (for planning applications) 01253 476194

Building Control (for building regulation applications) 01253 476219

Conservation advice 01253 476003

**Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)** 020 7307 3700

**Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)** 020 7222 7000

**The Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE)** 020 7222 7722

020 7235 4535

#### **The Institution of Structural Engineers**

For more information or to discuss any proposals you may have, please contact Carl Carrington on 01253 476003 or email [carl.carrington@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:carl.carrington@blackpool.gov.uk) or write to THI Manager, Department of Planning and Transportation, PO Box 17, Corporation Street, Blackpool, FY1 1LZ.