

Liverpool World Heritage Site

Townscape Heritage Initiative

Introduction

A Townscape Heritage Initiative Grant has been set up to provide financial assistance to owners of historic properties to help protect and enhance the architectural heritage of this important part of the World Heritage Site.

What is Townscape Heritage Initiative?

The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is a grant scheme to fund areas of towns and cities where historic buildings are under threat or where there is a need to bring historic floor space back into use.

Grants are discretionary and dependant on schemes being prepared that are to the satisfaction of the City Council and its partners. It is strongly advised that appropriate professional advice is secured to assist in making an application for grant assistance.

Conservation areas and THI

Only areas of high architectural quality and historic significance are awarded THI grants. A conservation area is a designated area of a town that has special architectural interest. In planning terms it carries an obligation to preserve and enhance its character or appearance.

The new initiative relates to areas within the **Castle Street Conservation Area** and the **Duke Street Conservation Area**; it has been named as the **Liverpool World Heritage Site THI** because much of the THI Area lies within the WHS.

How much money is available and where does it come from?

The Council has been successful in attracting £4.5m towards the Townscape Heritage Initiative.

Supporters are the Heritage Lottery Fund, North West Development Agency, Single Regeneration Budget, English Heritage as well as the City Council itself.

Who can apply for a grant?

Applicants for THI grant may be either leaseholders or freeholders. Leaseholders must have an unexpired term of 10 years at the date of the application. Leases with a 'break' clause are not acceptable.

Eligible projects

To be eligible for grant aid, a property must be within the **defined boundaries** of the areas forming the THI. Properties outside these areas are not eligible for THI grant. Almost 180 individual properties are being targeted within this scheme and the expectation is that a quarter of these will be the subject of grant offers leading to completion of successful schemes.

Eligible properties that have not been targeted at the outset will be considered if the circumstances are appropriate. For example, some buildings in Bold Street with known proposals for refurbishment without grant may be recommended for grant aid for improving access to upper floors (for example to allow office or residential use above ground floor retail uses), or improving the quality and design of shop fronts.

Critical projects

Some buildings have been identified as being of particularly high priority for the scheme. These buildings include two clusters of buildings on the west side of Berry Street. These are buildings that the Heritage Lottery Fund has identified as being at particular risk and some of the grant is ring fenced for these.

What can a grant be spent on?

Eligible works fall into the following categories:

- Building Repair
- Bringing vacant Historic Floorspace into use

The grants are **discretionary** not mandatory; they will be awarded at the entire discretion of the funding partners who have the duty to apply the funds in a manner that is expected to achieve the agreed aims of the Initiative at reasonable cost.

The grant cannot be spent on

1. Fixtures and fittings
2. Internal decoration
3. Routine maintenance.

This money will only be available for a limited period and will be in great demand. All THI schemes need to be completed by March 2010 while money has been reserved for Critical Projects (see above) until March 2008.

Amount of grant

Grant offers will be based on funding the gap where the cost of repairing the building exceeds its end value. The grant is generally the amount needed to fill the deficit in the costs of repairing eligible buildings and bringing them back into economic use.

Grant will normally be calculated on the basis of residual valuations and the lowest of at least **three bona fide competitive tenders** obtained from contractors having a demonstrable acceptable track record of working on Listed Buildings or on buildings within a Conservation Area. Some tenders will be subjected to assessment by independent Chartered Quantity Surveyors.

What do I need to consider when applying for a grant?

Planning controls are stricter in conservation areas and for listed buildings than elsewhere. Listed Buildings bring a responsibility to respect the character of the building and listed building consent may be required. The work has to be done to a high conservation standard. Applicants are strongly advised to obtain appropriate professional advice. The council can advise you of where to find such advice.

Further information

Further information is available from Liverpool City Council (see below).

Applying for a grant

If you have property in the THI area you should contact the following to **arrange a meeting or for an informal discussion:**

Peter Hoey, THI Project Manager,

Planning and Building Control, Liverpool City Council, 4th Floor Millennium House, 60, Victoria Street, Liverpool L1 6JF. E-mail: peter.hoey@liverpool.gov.uk. Direct line: 0151 233 4299. Fax: 0151 233 4290