

Consultation Document

## Proposals to amend the Historic Buildings Grant-aid scheme and new proposals for funding non-government organisations



An Agency within the Department of the  
**Environment**  
[www.doeni.gov.uk](http://www.doeni.gov.uk)



**Environment &  
Heritage Service**  
[www.ehsni.gov.uk](http://www.ehsni.gov.uk)



## Consultation Document on proposals to amend the Historic Buildings Grant-aid scheme and new proposals for funding non-government organisations

### HISTORIC BUILDINGS GRANT-AID

#### FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR OF BUILT HERITAGE

EHS offers financial assistance to owners of eligible buildings, through our historic buildings grant-aid scheme, for works of repair and maintenance of the historic fabric of the building. The scheme is designed to help off-set part of the recognised additional costs of repair and maintenance, to an appropriate conservation related standard, along with the associated professional fees. We would like to extend this assistance to the vast majority of listed buildings, and to increase the percentage rate available of the costs incurred for such works. I am delighted that we are now in a position to seek your comments as part of our public consultation on our proposals.

The policies are in accordance with internationally recognised conservation principles and are designed to help secure the conservation of listed buildings throughout Northern Ireland.

The proposals are in two strands – the first deals with changes to the existing historic buildings grant-aid policy, and the second introduces new proposals for funding Building Preservation Trusts, to help them rescue listed buildings at risk.

We will value your comments on the proposals and I look forward to hearing from you.



MICHAEL D A COULTER  
Director of Built Heritage

## Amendments to Historic Buildings Grants Programme Northern Ireland

### Contents

Foreword	Page 1
Consultation Process	Page 3
Introduction	Page 3
Handling your response	Page 3
Background	Page 4
Historic Buildings Grant-aid	Page 4
Current Grant-aid Policy	Page 6
Part1	Page 8
Part2	Page 25
Glossary	Page 30
Response form	Pull out pages 13 - 20



## THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

### INTRODUCTION

This document invites views on Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) operational policies and plans for providing its historic buildings grant-aid, including an additional proposal to provide new funding support to the voluntary sector, and support for Building Preservation Trusts (BPTs).

Part One contains policy proposals 1-10 which deal with the revised historic buildings grant-aid policy.

Part Two contains proposals 11-15 which deal specifically with the new proposal to provide funding to the Voluntary Sector and in particular, Building Preservation Trusts. Your views/comments on one or both parts are welcome.

### RESPONSES TO THIS CONSULTATION PAPER

We are inviting written responses to this consultation paper by 21st April 2008.

### Please send your response to:

Brian McKervey - Principal Conservation Architect  
Built Heritage Directorate  
Environment and Heritage Service  
Waterman House  
5-33 Hill Street  
Belfast  
BT1 2LA  
Or [brian.mckervey@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:brian.mckervey@doeni.gov.uk)

If you have any queries please contact Brian McKervey on 028 905 43157.

This consultation can be viewed on and downloaded from the web pages of the Department of the Environment (DOE) Environment and Heritage Service at [www.ehsni.gov.uk](http://www.ehsni.gov.uk) and [www.doeni.gov.uk](http://www.doeni.gov.uk)

### Handling your response;

Your comments on the following policy proposals are invited and will be welcomed. Please note that some of these proposals may require an amendment to our existing legislation. We need to know how you wish your response to be handled, and in particular whether you are happy for your response to be made public. Please complete and return the Respondent Information Form enclosed with this consultation paper, as this will ensure that we treat your response appropriately.

All respondents should be aware that EHS, as an agency of the DOE, is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (NI) Order and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Order, for information relating to responses made to this consultation.



## BACKGROUND

### HISTORIC BUILDINGS GRANT-AID

The Built Heritage Directorate, as part of the Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) - an Agency within the Department of the Environment - is responsible for the protection of the built heritage. In carrying out this function EHS operates under a range of legislation, including relevant sections of the Planning (NI) Order 1991, the Planning Amendment Order 2003 and the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995.

The statutory authority to provide grant-aid is detailed in Article 106 of the Planning (NI) Order 1991, and authority to provide funding to 'not-for profit' organisations is found in Article 120 (1A).

Over the years EHS has embarked on a large-scale programme to identify buildings of 'special architectural or historic interest' and offer protection to the historic fabric of these buildings through statutory listing and as a consultee on Listed Building Consent (LBC) and planning requirements. Buildings are assessed for inclusion on the 'List' against a range of criteria including style, proportion, scarcity, historic interest, etc.

Currently less than 2% of all the stock of buildings in Northern Ireland meets the criteria necessary for inclusion on the List. Listed buildings range from the grand mansion to the humble cottage, each equally important within our historic environment. The First Survey of buildings was completed in 1995 and is currently being quality assured through the Second Survey.

To assist with the protection and retention of the 'special' character of these listed buildings, EHS offers financial assistance to owners through a grant-aid scheme designed to help meet the recognised additional costs of repair and maintenance of listed buildings along with associated professional fees. Currently, however, less than 50% of the c.8 200 listed buildings in Northern Ireland are eligible for our historic buildings grant-aid.

The overall aim of the revised grant-aid proposals is to provide as much assistance as possible to listed buildings, working within available budgets, financial delegations, procedures and guidance. The new grant-aid scheme will also include a provision to apply clawback and gainshare in certain circumstances.

The proposals aim to be in accordance with the internationally recognised conservation principles as defined in the Burra Charter (1981), which

has been adopted by the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and is frequently utilised by Governments as a measure of 'best-practice' conservation. In addition, the proposals facilitate our desire and commitment to work within, and to encourage/facilitate others to work within - the four principles of conservation contained within the Burra Charter - and the (equally) important principle of sustainable development. These principles are:

- I. Minimum Intervention – Only undertaking that intervention which is essential to preserve a structure or building, ie, the minimum change to a historic building or structure in order to retain, whenever possible, the original fabric and character;
- II. Maximum Retention - The retention of the maximum amount of historic fabric;
- III. Clarity - It should be possible to distinguish any new work from historic work;
- IV. Reversibility – Ensuring that any interventions to a historic structure can be undone in the future.
- V. Sustainability - The principle that any change proposed to a building, supports a sustainable future for the structure, or at least does not preclude such a future.

It is hoped that the new proposals will provide for much needed assistance to both listed building owners and voluntary organisations here in Northern Ireland, some of which have a long history of supporting the conservation and protection of our historic environment.

## CURRENT GRANT-AID POLICY POSITION

### Grading of listed buildings

Due to the allocated grant budgets in the mid 1980s, the Department devised a means of targeting resources, based on a system of “non statutory internal grading”. Formerly all listed buildings were grant eligible. The grading system indicates the extent to which a listed building meets the various criteria used to determine special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded into four distinct categories (A, B+, B1 and B2) with grant-aid calculated for eligible costs and administered as follows:

<b>Secular Buildings</b>	
Grade A	35% Grant on eligible costs
Grade B+	20% Grant on eligible costs
Grade B1	20% Grant on eligible costs
Grade B2	Nil
<b>Ecclesiastical Buildings</b>	
Grade A	33.3% Grant on eligible costs
Grade B+	33.3% Grant on eligible costs
Grade B1 and B2	Nil
<b>Buildings in large commercial ownership</b>	
Grades A, B+ and B1	5% grant on eligible costs, capped at £5,000.
<b>Other Categories</b>	
Thatch work (roofs)	75% Grant on eligible costs
National Trust	50% grant on eligible costs
Professional Fees	75% of the eligible cost of various reasonable professional fees.
Enhanced level of grant	90% for owners in receipt of certain types of benefits.



## Exclusion from Grant-Aid

Government Departments/Agencies;  
Secular buildings – Grade B2 Category;  
Ecclesiastical buildings – lower than Grade B+.

The exclusion of certain listed buildings from grant-aid was formally introduced in 1987, and was undertaken because of the level of demand on the resources available. As a result, grade B1 and B2 ecclesiastical buildings and grade B2 secular buildings became ineligible for grant-aid, and the grading system became an important tool within EHS for financial management of grant monies. A 'capping' of annual payments at £50K per annum, introduced for churches in 1995 and secular buildings in 1997, was brought in for similar reasons, but this has subsequently been discontinued.

## Targeting of grant-aid

The majority of listed buildings are privately owned dwellings and thus are excluded from Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF), and other sources of funding. In respect of private houses, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) can be an alternative source of support, but this may be means tested. There are some alternative funding sources, not directly targeted however, at listed buildings.

## **PART ONE – POLICY PROPOSALS FOR THE REVISED HISTORIC BUILDINGS GRANT-AID SCHEME**

### **Policy Proposal 1**

Secular buildings - the provision of grant-aid to B2 grade listed buildings. This proposal is designed to ensure that all grades of secular buildings are well maintained and that equity is achieved in the distribution of the finances available.

**PP1.** Do you agree with the proposal to extend grant-aid to the B2 category for secular buildings?

If not, please explain.

This proposal will not require a change to legislation.

## Policy Proposal 2

The introduction of a single rate of grant-aid of 35 % towards eligible costs for listed secular buildings of all grades. (See also - Policy Proposal 10 - Ecclesiastical buildings).

Good conservation practice would seek to maintain a building on a regular basis, as opposed to waiting until there is significant failure of the building and undertaking a substantial repair project. For example, it is considered more appropriate to regularly maintain a roof by fixing a few slates rather than wait until a significant portion of the roof needs to be replaced. It should be noted that funding is discretionary and is always subject to available funding. If necessary, applications will be prioritised.

**PP2.** The proposal is that a single rate of 35% grant-aid on eligible costs would be beneficial to assisting with the cost of the repair and maintenance of listed properties.

Is this rate appropriate? If not, please explain.

This proposal will not require a change to legislation.

## Policy Proposal 3

Grant-aid of 75% for eligible reasonable professional fees, dependent upon the appointment of a suitably qualified and/or appropriately experienced professional.

The current policy allows for the payment of 75% grant-aid for the eligible cost of reasonable professional fees. At the moment, there is no requirement for the appointment of a suitably qualified and/or appropriately experienced professional to undertake repair work to listed buildings.

The intention to introduce increased grant for building work (to a rate of 35% to most listed buildings) and the inclusion of secular B2 grade listed buildings in the overall scheme, will inevitably lead to a greater involvement of architects, designers etc. The proposal that the engagement of a suitably qualified and/or appropriately experienced professional will bring Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

**PP3.** The proposal is that all professional agents or designers engaged on grant applications should be suitably qualified and/or experienced as defined by EHS, or an independent professional selection body. Do you agree? If not, please explain.

This proposal will not require a change to legislation.

## Policy Proposal 4

### Ineligibility for 'Façade-ism'.

It is proposed that applications for works resulting in the removal of any original character of the building will not be grant-aided. It is proposed that ALL grant-aided conservation projects would result in a conservation 'gain'.

**PP4.** The proposal is that works resulting in the removal of any original character will not be grant aided.

Please provide comments.

This proposal will not require a change to legislation.

## Policy Proposal 5

### To target grant-aid on preventative maintenance works in future years.

It is proposed that preventative maintenance is the most sustainable and cost effective method of conserving listed buildings in the long term. A three-year pilot scheme, designed to help inform this strategy, has been undertaken with EHS and the National Trust. The pilot involves 50 listed buildings owned by the National Trust. It is anticipated that the project will lead to the evolution of a targeted maintenance policy that will have a wider application in future years.

**PP5.** Do you agree with the principle of extending grant-aid to preventative maintenance works in future years?

If not, please explain.

This proposal will not require a change to legislation.

## Policy Proposal 6

Thatch work to retain grant-aid funding at 75%.  
Irrespective of their grading, thatched buildings currently receive grant-aid at 75% for work to the thatch and historic roof structure.

The retention of 75% grant-aid towards the cost of eligible repairs to roofs of thatched buildings is considered by EHS to be essential for an effective overall conservation strategy. EHS encourages wherever possible, the use of local materials to ensure the retention of the original, local character and ensure any maintenance and repair works are as authentic as possible.

**PP6.** Do you agree that the existing grant policy relating to thatch work should remain unchanged?

If not, what are your proposals?

This proposal will not require a change to legislation.

## Policy Proposal 7

Additional elements/components which could be grant-aided.

The setting of a listed building is essential to the character of the building. Curtilage features and certain internal components can be especially important with regard to the overall special architectural or historic interest, and can be significant with regard to the listed status of the building.

**PP7.** Do you agree that the following elements/components should be grant eligible? For example:-

Organs, in churches, etc.  
Setting elements, such as cobbled courtyards.  
Clocks, in bell towers, cupolas, etc.  
Other elements within the curtilage of a Listed Building.

This proposal will not require a change to legislation.



# Respondent Information Form

**Please fill out your responses to the policy proposals in this form and then pull out and post to:**

Brian McKervey - Principal Conservation Architect  
Built Heritage Directorate  
Environment and Heritage Service  
Waterman House  
5-33 Hill Street  
Belfast  
BT1 2LA  
Or [brian.mckervey@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:brian.mckervey@doeni.gov.uk)

**All responses to be received by 21st April 2008**





**PP5.** Do you agree with the principle of extending grant-aid to preventative maintenance works in future years? If not, please explain.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**PP6.** Do you agree that the existing grant policy relating to thatch work should remain unchanged? If not, what are your proposals?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**PP7.** Do you agree that the following elements / components should be grant eligible? For example:-

- Organs, in churches, etc.
- Setting elements, such as cobbled courtyards.
- Clocks, in bell towers, cupolas, etc.
- Other elements within the curtilage of a Listed Building.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**PP8.** Should a condition of grant-aid be to provide access to the building on particular occasions, for example public access could be made available on two European Heritage Open days in a five year period?

If you do not agree, please explain.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**PP9.** Do you agree that the existing grant policy relating to eligible individuals should remain unaltered? If not, what are your proposals?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....





**PP11.** Are the above proposals, to provide funding to Building Preservation Trusts, appropriate?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**PP12.** £500K represents a significant proportion of the Historic Buildings grant-aid budget. (a) Is this figure appropriate, and (b) is a revolving fund structure appropriate?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**PP13.** Is this the most appropriate method of providing funding?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



## Policy Proposal 8

### Public Accessibility to our Built Heritage.

Where grant-aid is provided, it could be advantageous to the enjoyment and appreciation of our Built Heritage, if there was some public access to such buildings on such occasions as European Heritage Open days. In effect, this would ensure the public would be able to enjoy the benefits resulting from the investment of public money.

**PP8.** Should a condition of grant-aid be to provide access to the building on particular occasions, for example public access could be made available on two European Heritage Open days in a five year period?

This proposal will not require a change to legislation.

If you do not agree, please explain.

## Policy Proposal 9

### Retention of the 'enhanced' level of grant-aid, at 90%, for owners in receipt of certain qualifying benefits.

Without enhanced funding, this category of owners is less likely, or not able to undertake remedial works to the required standard. To qualify for funding the applicant must be receiving one of the eligible benefits above for a continuous period of at least 12 months, at the time of the grant-aid application. A check is made with the appropriate benefit office. Proof of ownership of the building is required, either through the production of the original title deeds or certification letter from a solicitor.

**PP9.** Do you agree that the existing grant policy relating to eligible individuals should remain unaltered? If not, what are your proposals?

This proposal will not require a change to legislation.

## Policy Proposal 10 (Alternatives apply)

Ecclesiastical buildings – provide grant-aid for eligible works to the currently grant eligible grades of listed churches, ie, Grade A and B+ only, but at the slightly enhanced rate of 35% rather than the current 33.3%.

This is considered necessary due to the fact that (a) in the Planning (NI) Order 1991 Article 44 (8) (a), listed church buildings, currently used for the purposes of worship, are exempt from Listed Building Consent controls. As a result of this lack of control, the use of public funds, through grant-aid, cannot be adequately protected to ensure that the required conservation standards are achieved and the investment retained thereafter and (b) churches have the potential to use a very large proportion of the grant-aid budget, to the detriment of other categories, yet other sources of funding are available for the repair of churches. It is proposed to keep this issue under review and to be revisited at a later stage.

Alternatively one or more of the following options could be considered which may enable EHS to extend eligibility to all grades of ecclesiastical listed buildings.

The three key alternatives under this policy proposal are -

- i. Amend the existing legislation to remove Ecclesiastical Exemption. (Note, however, that this would take some time to introduce.)
- ii. Include a condition within our letter of offer, to listed churches, stating that all works to be carried out will be to the required conservation standard and must not be altered for a period of 10 years following the completion of the works.
- iii. Grant-aid will be paid at a uniform rate of 35% rather than current rate of 33.3%. This option may impact on the available budget.

**PP10.** The proposal is that the existing grant policy relating to ecclesiastical buildings should remain unchanged. If you disagree, what are your proposals?

Should 'Ecclesiastical Exemption' be reconsidered with regard to grant-aid?

This will involve changes to legislation.

Should grant-aid for listed churches be offered with conditions, as stated in alternative ii?

Should Grant-aid be made available to all listed churches? This may impact on available grant-aid budget.

These proposals will not require a change to legislation.

## **PART TWO – PROPOSED FUNDING FOR BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUSTS**

### **The role of the voluntary sector in the historic environment**

Voluntary organisations have a long history of supporting the conservation and protection of the historic environment in Northern Ireland. HEARTH is an example of a Building Preservation Trust with a 'revolving fund' that operates here in Northern Ireland. It has been responsible for the rescue and regeneration of listed historic buildings over a 20+ year period. The Belfast Buildings Preservation Trust was one of the first building preservation trusts to be established in Northern Ireland. It has rescued two key buildings; St Patrick's School and Christ Church, with EHS grant-aid and other sources of funding.

## Policy proposal 11

To provide funding to Building Preservation Trusts.

It is proposed to provide additional funding to Building Preservation Trusts (BPTs) and other 'not-for-profit' organisations, whose main aims include the preservation and restoration of historic buildings and to help reduce the number of buildings on the Built Heritage at Risk NI (BHARNI) Register. It is further proposed that this new strand of funding to the built heritage sector in Northern Ireland, would be administered by a third party, and that the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) will be that third party.

EHS has an established partnership with the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) and has benefited in recent years from input by its Chief Executive, here in Northern Ireland.

A target has been set to remove 200 buildings from the BHARNI Register over the next 10 years. This is a very challenging target for EHS and action is sought on the role of key stakeholders within the Voluntary Sector and Non-government organisations, in order that this target may be achieved. This funding will contribute to partnerships between Government and the Voluntary Sector to help to achieve the target.

It is proposed that our investment in the voluntary sector will be targeted at projects that can help us meet our objectives, including those in the recently published document 'A Positive Step – NI – A Sustainable Development Implementation Plan'. One of the strategic objectives is 'To conserve, protect, enhance and sustainably re-use our historic environment', and one of the 'important steps' associated with this objective is to 'Support the Voluntary Sector in developing Building Preservation Trusts'.



Taking all of the above into account, we propose to make available up to £500,000 per annum for listed buildings at risk. This money could be accessed by:-

- Established BPTs in NI, seeking assistance with the acquisition costs of listed Buildings at Risk, and, in circumstances where sufficient funding is not available for the building at risk's restoration, additional working capital to assist with the restoration project. This will not involve 'double funding' as both of these strands will form separate elements – with separate qualifying criteria, checks/crosschecks and procedures – ie, our historic buildings grant-aid budget, and this proposed NGO funding stream. It is proposed that this would be administered by AHF.
- Groups/individuals seeking help and financial assistance in setting up a BPT. It is proposed that this would be also be undertaken by AHF, with APT NI (Association of Building Trusts, Northern Ireland) in a mentoring role. It would also provide help in funding two full time posts within the AHF, to assist with capacity building for the Voluntary Sector, and provide advice to owners of listed buildings, with both posts based in NI. One post would have an administrative role to help administer the 'grant', and to provide administrative support for APT NI, with regard to individuals/groups seeking to establish a BPT. The second post would be for a historic buildings surveyor, or similar building professional, working mainly with BPTs, and also private owners and developers, to make the best use of listed assets which are at risk. They will help to identify opportunities, by preparing business plans, feasibility studies, etc, and establishing long term sustainable futures for such buildings. The aim of this post would also be to encourage consideration of historic buildings, rather than 'new build' projects, by assessing and identifying potential projects. In addition the intention is to assist community groups in establishing new building preservation trusts, as well as helping to deal with buildings at risk, through advice to private and commercial owners.

**PP11.** Are the above proposals, to provide funding to Building Preservation Trusts, appropriate?

These proposals will not require a change to legislation.

## Policy Proposal 12

To provide up to £500K from the Grant-aid budget, to fund Building Preservation Trusts, to rescue listed buildings at risk, on a revolving fund structure.

It is proposed that the money would be provided on a 'revolving fund' basis, where the funding could either be returned to the AHF once a building had been rescued and sold on, or alternatively, consideration may be given for the charity to keep the funding on the understanding that it would be used for other similar projects in the future, subject, of course, to a suitably robust business case, in order to provide a clear audit trail.

**PP12.** £500K represents a significant proportion of the Historic Buildings grant-aid budget.

(a) Is this figure appropriate, and

(b) is a revolving fund structure appropriate?

This proposal will not require a change to legislation.

## Policy Proposal 13

To provide further, additional funding to the same organisation.

Any applications for further funding from the same organisation – to rescue other buildings at risk – would be considered, taking account of the cost of the new project and funding already awarded.

**PP13.** Is this the most appropriate method of providing funding?

This proposal will not require a change to legislation.

## Policy Proposal 14

Administration of the fund by a third party; the Architectural Heritage Fund. It is proposed that;

The Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF), or a similar body, could administer an agreed system on behalf of EHS, with audit validation and will be dependant on approved business plans and economic appraisals. One of the key advantages of the AHF administering the fund would be that funding, when repaid, could revert to the fund for reuse, with EHS approval. The AHF has 30 years experience of managing a 'revolving fund', and has worked in Northern Ireland throughout some of that time. Its Chief Executive chairs the NI Built Heritage Forum and one of its trustees is based in Northern Ireland.

**PP14.** What are your views on a third party, specifically AHF, managing this funding for EHS?

This proposal will not require a change to legislation.



## Policy Proposal 15

The following conditions would apply to offers of funding.

- Organisations must operate on a 'not for profit' basis.
- Projects must be consistent with the aims and objectives of EHS.
- Funding is discretionary.
- The maximum period of funding that EHS can consider committing to is three years.
- Funding should be secured in advance of any expenditure for the project.
- The applicant is responsible for meeting all legal requirements associated with the project and for obtaining all required permissions and statutory consents.
- A maximum of agreed costs may be offered up to a ceiling of £125,000, for any one project in a financial year.
- It is hoped that the funding will be available in 2008-09, with up to £45,000.00 specifically targeted to fund posts.
- The funding must be used to generate additional investment in projects from other funders – in principle, this could include other DOE sources and other AHF funds as well as 'outside' funders such as the HLF.
- An element of 'gainshare' will be applied as appropriate.

**PP15.** Are the above conditions for an offer for funding appropriate? Are there any other conditions you believe should be included?

This proposal will not require a change to legislation.

## Way forward

Many of the above proposals will have significant implications for owners of listed buildings as potential applicants for grant-aid, together with architects and other designers.

To assist EHS in producing a revised policy which is both equitable and workable, you are asked to provide comments and views on the above proposals and any other relevant issues by 21st April 2008.









## GLOSSARY

### **Building Preservation Trusts (BPTs)**

A Building Preservation Trust (BPT) is a charity, the main aim of which includes the preservation and regeneration of historic buildings through not-for-profit organisations. There are almost 300 BPTs in the UK, including 21 BPTs 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; (the AHF maintains a register of revolving fund trusts).

Building Preservation Trusts often originate through a few individuals having a strong interest in a dilapidated local historic building in their community. BPTs 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, a BPT uses much voluntary effort and any financial gains are ploughed back (on a 'not-for-profit' basis) for further building restoration projects.

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 - (the statutory definition of a listed building) - where a commercial solution cannot be found.

### **Built Heritage At Risk Northern Ireland (BHARNI) Database**

The Built Heritage At Risk Northern Ireland (BHARNI) is an on-line database, compiled by the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society (UAHS) on behalf of EHS (and paid for by EHS through an agreement with UAHS), which highlights buildings of special architectural and historic interest, and other scheduled monuments, the survival of which is under threat. Such structures are in need of urgent repair and maintenance. There are currently 465 buildings and 9 scheduled monuments) on the Built Heritage at Risk NI Register (out of a total of c8, 200 listed buildings.)

The Register is a relatively recent development from the Buildings at Risk (BAR) project (and strategy), developed through a long-standing partnership between UAHS and EHS. This project focused initially on raising awareness of this issue through publication of BAR catalogues, the focus of which we have now 'moved on' to saving buildings and other structures at risk. The project has heightened public awareness of structures that appear to be 'at risk'; provided help and advice for existing owners who may wish to embark upon a suitable scheme of repair; and offered assistance to potential new restoring owners who are looking for suitable properties.

### **APT (Association of 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. 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. EHS has made a contribution towards the work of APT UK in Northern Ireland since 1995/1996, to ensure its development of local activities, offering advice on all aspects of conservation to groups seeking to regenerate historic buildings for the benefit of the community. In 2006/2007, EHS gave a grant of £6818 to APT UK.

### **Gain Share**

With regard to the NGO/BPT funding component, financial gain derived from the new enhanced building/project, would be put back into a revolving fund to help with future projects – subject to a new application/business case or returned to EHS if not revolved. This strategy/process is already undertaken by AHF in GB. Thereafter, through our new historic buildings grant-aid programme we would seek to ensure that such buildings are maintained in a good state of repair. In the event that a building is sold and profits are not put back into a revolving fund, it is proposed to introduce a mechanism to re-coup public funds in a “windfall” situation when a listed building’s market value has been significantly increased, following payment of grant-aid, a proportion of the profit would be repaid following a sale or transfer of the property, especially in circumstances where the property had increased substantially in value as a result of the payment of grant-aid.

### **Revolving Fund**

With a Revolving Fund structure, a BPT builds up a reserve of capital which can be used in a building project. When the building is repaired and sold on, any surplus capital thus amassed, is ploughed back into the revolving fund for use on the next project or projects. HEARTH is the prime example of a successful BPT operating a ‘revolving fund’ here in Northern Ireland. It (HEARTH) is of significance in a UK context and has been responsible for the rescue and regeneration of 162 important listed historic buildings over a 20+ year period.





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

Built Heritage Directorate  
Waterman House  
5-33 Hill Street  
Belfast  
BT1 2LA  
Tel: 028 90543000  
Email: hb@doeni.gov.uk

**[www.ehsni.gov.uk](http://www.ehsni.gov.uk)**

ISBN No. 978-1-905127-79-5

Printed on 100% post-consumer waste