

Darley Abbey Mills Repair Grant Scheme

Guidance Note to Applicants



This grant scheme is funded by Derby City Council as part of its £10M Regeneration Fund and is based around the standard English Heritage template for area grant schemes. The terms of the Grant Scheme are non-negotiable.

The Building Repair Grant Scheme is funded from the City Council's Regeneration Fund and is intended to assist in bringing the historic mill buildings at the historic Boars Head mill complex into a good standard of repair and to encourage their re-use. The notes apply principally to schemes of full repair/restoration however the general conservation approach and philosophy should be followed even in undertaking simple, basic repairs to historic buildings.

Following an initial visit by the Grants Scheme Project Officer, the applicant will have been advised as to the likely eligibility of proposed works for grant aid. This advice is given in good faith on the basis of the eligibility criteria as set out in the grant scheme literature however it cannot be regarded as being binding on the Council. A formal decision as to eligibility and level of grant, appropriate to a particular proposal can/will only be made following the submission of written details and their consideration by the Grants Panel. Such decisions will be conveyed to the applicant in writing. The Grants Scheme Project Officer has no executive authority to commit the award of grant aid – all applications for grant aid are formally determined by a Grants Panel comprising senior Council Officers.

Only those specified categories of work are eligible for grant aid at the appropriate rate of 50%, 60% or 70% (see Eligible Works leaflet). Additional, non grant-eligible works may be undertaken within the same building contract but the costs of these will be excluded from the all grant calculations. Appropriate professional fees (usually up to a max of 12.5% of the cost of eligible works) and associated application fees, are also grant eligible.

Since the historic mill buildings are of national significance and of World Heritage Site status, it is important that an appropriate professional is engaged. The Council would expect a fully qualified conservation accredited building surveyor or architect (a list of which can be obtained from the RICS in the case of surveyors and the AABC or the local craft register for architects) to be engaged by the applicant. PLEASE NOTE: If the grant value is £25,000 or more then the selection of the above professional will have to follow strict procurement procedures. The grant officer will be happy to explain the procedures in detail with applicants.

As the grant scheme is financed with public money, the Council requires that a formal design/specification/tender procedure is followed. This will involve the applicant engaging the necessary professional advice at the outset. Subject to the proposed scheme of repair being approved for grant purposes, these professional costs are grant-eligible. In those schemes of comprehensive repair and in order to minimise the financial risk to applicants in engaging professional advice at the initial stage, it is recommended that advice be sought initially to prepare a feasibility proposal upon which the Council will be prepared to consider a formal “approval in principle” which will then enable a full commission to be arranged with greater certainty that a grant approval will be forthcoming at the end of the process. The costs of a feasibility study exercise will usually be based on an hourly rate or fixed sum but it could be expected that these costs would later be subsumed as part of a percentage fee should the proposal proceed to the full design/implementation stages. Applicants are advised to agree these details with their Architect/Surveyor as part of their commissioning arrangements.

The feasibility study should technically scope the extent of necessary repair works and offer robust budget costings. Schemes involving the reinstatement of historic details should be accompanied with a sketch design based on historic records or other physical evidence, together with a budget cost for the proposals. Whatever evidence has been found will need to be submitted as part of the feasibility study. The Grant Scheme Project Officer should be fully consulted at the feasibility stage to help guide the feasibility scheme towards a successful conclusion.

Should the feasibility study not result in an “approval in principle”, then the costs of that work will be borne entirely by the applicant. This therefore, is the highest risk that the applicant faces in bearing the full professional costs of a grant proposal.

Any award of “approval in principle” is likely to be conditioned re the timescale for submission of a detailed application and the subsequent implementation of the approved works. This is to ensure that the grant budget can be properly managed to secure the maximum level of repairs throughout the life of the scheme. There may also be additional conditions but the principle of these will usually be discussed with the applicant/his agent prior to consideration by the Grants Panel.

Once an approval in principle has been issued, we would expect to see the proposal progress to a full application as soon as possible. The Grants Scheme Project Officer will work closely with the applicant/his agent throughout the detailed specification/tender stage and it is strongly advised that the scheme is not put out to tender without the Grant Scheme Project Officer being satisfied with both the level of specification and the structure of the tender documentation. The ongoing involvement/assistance of the Grant Scheme Project Officer will ensure that the resultant grant application is presented in the most appropriate manner to enable the eligible works (at both rates of grant) to be properly identified. Grant applications cannot be entertained without proper evidence that the full scheme has been subject to competitive tendering and any grant application/award will normally be based on the lowest tendered price.

Following the tender exercise, a Summary of Tender Returns (normally at least 3) should be prepared and the successful priced tender documents/specification

should be called in by the Architect/Surveyor. This detailed breakdown of costs should form part of the grant application since it is needed for establishing the value of grant-eligible works (at the relevant intervention rate) and for the subsequent monitoring of contractors costs once the works are underway.

For schemes of comprehensive repair, the Council will be looking for the selected contractor to expand the range of traditional heritage skills in it's workforce through the repair scheme and/or provide appropriate training opportunities in these skills. Grant applicants will need to ensure that all contractors being asked to tender for works, are required to identify their projected recruitment and training requirements at the time of tender. A specific form will be provided by the Project Officer for this purpose. These completed forms should be submitted as part of the application for grant assistance.

The preparation of a full specification and formal tender documentation may seem an onerous task to some applicants however it is an essential and proper approach to the successful procurement of construction works. A detailed specification will enable all tendering contractors to base their prices on exactly the same basis and will provide the applicant with a definitive schedule of what he can expect. Such detailed specifications can also help to avoid disputes on site over the extent/quality of works and to minimise opportunities for requests from contractors for additional payments. From the Council's point of view, a detailed specification is necessary to identify the appropriate levels of grant aid, to help ensure value for money from the public purse and to properly monitor the execution of works on site.

Schemes involving alterations to external elevations or extensive repairs to listed buildings may also require planning permission and listed building consent. It is for the applicant and his advisor to determine whether these consents should be obtained prior to the scheme being put out to tender or whether the scheme can be tendered in parallel with the consent process. The close involvement of the Grants Scheme Project Officer (who will ensure that planning colleagues are fully consulted) throughout the design process should minimise the need for late amendments being necessary to schemes submitted to the Council for statutory consents.

A formal offer of grant aid would be issued by the Council and this will be likely to contain technical conditions relating to the finer details of the proposal. No grant-aided works should commence until the formal offer of grant aid has been made and the relevant conditions complied with. The offer letter will be accompanied by a formal acceptance form for the applicant to complete/return, a blank monitoring form for use later and a request for details of the grant recipient in order that prior arrangements can be put in place within the Council's financial system to facilitate the speedy payment of grant by BACS at the appropriate time. Interim payment of grant aid can be arranged by prior request.

The applicant is responsible for formally engaging the successful contractor, usually through his Architect/Surveyor. Although the level of grant award will normally be based on the lowest tender price, the applicant could if he so chooses, appoint a higher-priced contractor although the grant payable would be limited to the lesser figure. The detailed breakdown of costs against the tender documentation will be required from whichever contractor undertakes the works.

The Council will provide site signage for display at the site/premises during the course of the building works which will acknowledge the grant-support of the City Council towards the works.

The overall timescale from initial enquiry to the issue of an offer letter of grant is likely to be around 2 months subject to the other work commitments of your Architect/Surveyor.

The Grants Scheme Project Officer will attend pre-contract meetings and should be provided with site contact details although, ordinarily, all communications would be channelled through the Architect/Surveyor. The Grant Scheme Project Officer will need to be provided with a program of work so that they will be able to periodically inspect the ongoing works although it is not their role/responsibility to provide a clerk of works function. It is the responsibility of the applicant and their agent to ensure that the approved plans/specification details are being followed. It is expected that ANY on-site variation to the tendered specification will be the subject of a written Architects Instruction, a copy of which should be provided to the Council. This written instruction should identify the cost of that particular element of work as set out in the original tender specification together with the cost of the revised works such that the difference (greater or lesser) is clearly identified. Any on-site variation should be agreed beforehand with the Grant Scheme Project Officer who will be able to advise on the grant implications. Failure to do so could prejudice the payment of approved grant.

On completion of the works, it is expected that the applicant's Architect/Surveyor will issue a formal completion certificate at which point the Grant Scheme Project Officer will undertake a final inspection of the completed works.

The applicant is responsible for the payment of contractors' invoices in the first instance but the approved grant will be paid by the Council upon receipt of the receipted contractors invoice(s). Interim claims for the payment of approved grant can be arranged although the valuation of completed works would need to be certified by the applicant's Architect/Surveyor. The full payment of grant aid will not be made unless the applicant has first completed/returned the necessary monitoring form which will provide the monitoring information required by the Council and our funding partners.

All correspondence directly with the applicant, including the grant offer, will be copied to the applicant's Architect/Surveyor to ensure that they are kept informed of progress.

The Grant Scheme Project Officer will help as much as possible throughout the grant process. If you have any questions, please call the Grant Scheme Project Officer on 01332 641 636.

Please pass a copy of this guidance note to your Architect/Surveyor.