



Kent Building Preservation Trust
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KBPT factsheet 2

Grants for Repair & Maintenance of Historic Buildings in Kent

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Grants are sometimes available for repairing and maintaining historic buildings in Kent, from three main sources:

English Heritage
District Councils/Unitary Authority
The Heritage Lottery Fund

This Factsheet describes the sort of grants that are available, and how to go about getting them. The availability of these grants depends on factors such as:

- * How important your building is
- * whether it is in a Conservation Area Partnership scheme
- * what you want to do to the building
- * how recently you bought the building; and
- * the size of your local authority's grant budget, if it has one.

One preliminary point: although grants are, strictly speaking, available for maintenance, in practice, they are only given for repairs. You should not however be discouraged from asking for a grant for preventative maintenance, particularly if you are in charge of a community-owned building.

Grants Available for Repair and Maintenance

English Heritage gives grants for repairs in two ways: by giving outstanding building grants direct to owners, and by putting money into Conservation Area Partnerships with local authorities.

EH confines its direct grants to "outstanding" buildings. Most, but not all those listed Grade I or Grade II* are eligible for this grant, which is sometimes called a "section3A" grant after section of the Act of Parliament

empowering EH to make these grants. The grant is likely to be up to 40% of "eligible" repair work. Not all work is "eligible": it will be the repair work and not, for example, any associated conversion or upgrading work. Other factors likely to determine whether you are likely to succeed include the state of EH's budgets in the year you apply.

The grants are effectively "means-tested" and highly competitive. They are designed to encourage repairs to be made which would otherwise not take place. New purchasers of a listed building in need of repair are discouraged from applying, since they are assumed to have paid a price which takes into account the cost of the repairs.

Grants are subject to a large number of conditions requiring professional standards of work, and are usually repayable if the person given the grant sells the building within 5 years. There can also be public access requirements.

Some District Councils also have grant schemes. These vary in availability, amount and in the conditions attached, from one district to the next, so there is no substitute for approaching the district in which your house stands. Start with the Conservation Officer, (see the Factsheet) but there may also be other "improvement" grants available from other departments.

Kent County Council also has a grant budget, which will generally be used for building it regards as being of County-wide importance, and for larger repair schemes. It also part-funds the "Impact" scheme which concentrates on one town at a time.

Each body has its own procedure for applying. Generally, you have to obtain a form, and submit full details, including two contractor's quotes for the cost of the work. English Heritage will normally insist on the involvement of a building professional.

In all cases, additional information on the architectural or historic value of your house will help your application, so if you have any more information other than the text to be found in the official "list" entry for the building (drawn up by the Secretary of State for the Environment), then it will be a good idea to support your application with this. This is because the information on this list is not intended strictly as a historical record, but rather for the purposes of identifying the building concerned. Your building professional will be able to help here.

Charities and other non-profit making bodies can apply to a variety of grant-making charities which will help fund repairs to historic buildings. These can be found listed in the Directory of Grant-making Trusts published by the Charities Aid Foundation: see the KBPT Factsheet 3 in Part 4 for how to get in touch.

The Heritage Lottery Fund

The HLF is empowered to make grants for the repair and maintenance of buildings of historic interest. Its criteria for this are being widened to make a much larger range of people and projects eligible for its help, and new guidelines were published in April 1998.

It seems likely that HLF will not use its new powers to make grants for private owners, at least in the short term, although it actively supports schemes such as Conservation Area Partnerships, which benefit private owners. This means that other organisations – notably Churches, charities, museums, community groups, local authorities and other non-profit organisations – will probably still be the focus for HLF funding.

The projects it will support will be widening from acquisition and repair of historic buildings to include interpretation and access schemes.

A "Small Grants" scheme is also likely. Further details should be sought from HLF at the address in the KBPT Factsheet 3.

List of Conservation Area partnerships in Kent

The following partnerships are in operation in Kent, for the periods shown. For details, contact the Conservation Officer of the relevant district (names and contract details in Factsheet 4).

| District | Schemes |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Ashford Borough Council | None |
| Canterbury City Council | Whitstable (until April 1999) Canterbury (until April 2001) |
| Dartford | None |
| Dover | None |
| Gravesham | Town Centre & Landslow Square April 1998 – 2001 |
| Maidstone Borough Council | None |
| Medway Council | Star Hill to Sun Pier/ New Road Conservation Area (likely to be extended until April 2001) |
| Sevenoaks District Council | None |
| Shepway District Council | Folkestone (until April 2001) |
| Swale Borough Council | None |
| Thanet District Council | Broadstairs, Margate & Ramsgate (decision on renewal to 2001 pending as at June 1998) |
| Tonbridge & Malling District Council | None |
| Tunbridge Wells | None |