



# BUILDING REPAIR GRANT SCHEME

## Advice on Appointing Consultants and Contractors

**A good contractor working to a clear instruction** is the key to a successful project, whether it is a simple window repair or a more complicated job involving several different types of work. For all projects we strongly encourage the use of contractors who have attended traditional skills training or who employ traditional skills apprentices. For grants over £25,000, contractors who employ apprentices must be included on the tender list. Fife Council and Fife Historic Buildings Trust **cannot recommend** contractors, however we will provide a list of contractors who have undertaken traditional skills training and/ or who employ apprentices through the Cupar CARS/THI scheme.

The following information and advice is given to help you make appointments that will work for you and your project.

### Your responsibilities

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM2015) place a number of specific duties on you as a construction Client, even if you are a Domestic Client (i.e. someone who has construction work done on their own home, or the home of a family member which is not in connection with a business). More information about your legal responsibilities under CDM2015 can be found on the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg411.htm>

### Communication

Clear and precise communication is essential in establishing an unambiguous contract between you and your builder.

**Specifications** and drawn information are the best way to communicate your requirements to your potential contractors. A specification is a detailed description of the work which you want to have carried out down to the smallest detail. It should include a general description of the work, the type and quality of the materials, the way in which they are to be built, and all relevant details of size, shape, colour and texture. In some instances drawings or sketches will be necessary to communicate clearly your requirements. A programme with identified start and finish dates is also essential. This information will be required by us when you apply for a grant.

Simply providing a specification will indicate to potential contractors that you expect a competent and professional service.

#### How do I prepare a specification?

Any specification should be guided by the detailed notes on **Eligible Works** in the guidance notes for the building repair grant scheme and Historic Environment Scotland's **Advisory Standards of Repair** guidance. Further advice on specification and about the conservation and restoration of historic properties can be obtained from Historic Environment Scotland. They produce free publications, which contain helpful check lists for property owners. Of particular interest are:

**Maintaining your Home** – a free short guide for homeowners on how to maintain houses of traditional construction.

**Sash and Case Windows** - a free short guide on sash and case windows; how to maintain, repair and upgrade, plus information on contractors and grants available.

**INFORM Guides** – a series of free leaflets giving short practical guidance on common repair and maintenance needs, e.g. damp, energy efficiency, roof repair, stone repair, rainwater goods repair.

**Most of these are available free on-line at [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk) – follow the links to Free Publications – or via Historic Environment Scotland’s publications team on 0131 668 8638.** We also carry supplies of the most popular titles and can make these available and discuss them with you.

These should be used to inform your specification, in discussion with contractors and consultants. The level of detail required will depend on the complexity of the work proposed – note the information requested on the **application form**. All firms quoting should see the guidance and application form for the CARS/THI grant scheme, as well as advice such as this from Historic Environment Scotland. This will ensure that they know the quality of design and level of detail we will require in due course to assess a grant application.

### **Professional help: finding a consultant**

If your project is sufficiently large or complex, perhaps involving several different trades, you may be advised to employ a **professional architect or surveyor** who will prepare the necessary documentation for you and can oversee the work on your behalf. For small projects, an experienced conservation architect/surveyor can be helpful to an applicant with less experience of this type of work. A conservation architect with experience of working on **historic shop fronts** will be required for grants towards shop front enhancement.

Professional fees are grant eligible - the normal standard grant eligible percentage for fee costs is 16% of the cost of grant eligible works. We may in exceptional circumstances vary this depending on the number of professionals in the team; however it should not exceed 20%.

The services provided by the professional advisor would typically include:

- Preparing a thorough survey of the structure and condition of the building, including survey drawings and plans.
- Research and analysis of the fabric of the building, and its development over time.
- Preparing detailed specification and drawings for the urgent and necessary repairs or recording of the fabric.
- Getting competitive tenders / providing a tender report.
- Obtaining all statutory consents for the repair.
- Arranging a contract for the works.
- Regular inspections and valuations of the work on site.

All advisers must be professionally qualified and should have specific experience in the restoration and repair of historic properties. You should consider using local consultants who are familiar with traditional construction methods, local building types, techniques and materials. It is always advisable to speak to more than one adviser to get a comparison, before making your choice.

In order to practice, **architects** must be registered with the Architects Registration Board (ARB) and are likely to be members of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) or the Royal Institute of British Architects, both of whom retain registers of members specialising in conservation works. **Surveyors** should be members of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, who maintain a similar list (*contact details are given at the end of this note*).

You should ask to see details of recent projects, ideally of the same type and size of your own. You might also ask for a list of other clients that you can speak to for references; visit some examples of

their recent work; and find out if the consultant has worked on other projects that have been successful in receiving grant aid for historic buildings.

### **Going it alone: finding a contractor**

Building contractors are usually of two types, those specialising in a single trade (joiners, masons or bricklayers etc.) or “all trades” contractors who provide a range of skills and who will often manage or co-ordinate projects requiring several disciplines. In either case they should be members of the appropriate trade associations or registration body such as CITB, the National Federation of Roofing Contractors, Stone Federation Great Britain, the Federation of Master Builders, and Lead Sheet Association. These organisations should be able to provide lists of members local to your area.

Once you have identified a few names, contact the tradesmen or builders that suit the size and type of work you want carried out. Again, get confirmation that they have experience in the type of work involved, emphasising the need for tradesmen with the traditional skills needed to conserve and maintain older buildings. Not all tradesmen will have the skills necessary for this kind of work.

Ask for information about recent jobs that they have done so that you can check the quality and talk to previous customers about the work that has been completed. When asking for quotations, make sure the builder wants to do the work and will be available when you want it done.

### **Additional checks**

- ✓ Do the builders have headed notepaper (showing a legitimate contact address and telephone number, not just a mobile)?
- ✓ How long have they been in business?
- ✓ Do they have full and current insurance cover?
- ✓ Are they VAT registered? Only very small firms can avoid registration. Unregistered builders still have to pay VAT on materials, tools, transport etc and will pass these costs on to you. VAT free is a myth.
- ✓ Can they demonstrate that they have the correct training and qualifications for the type of work they will be carrying out?
- ✓ Written confirmation that health and safety regulations will be respected.

### **Quotations and tenders**

Make up a list of builders who are prepared to price your job and with whom you would be happy to work. You need three firm prices to apply for a CARS/THI grant. Go to more than three companies, since some will inevitably drop out. For all projects we strongly encourage the use of contractors who have attended traditional skills training or who employ traditional skills apprentices. For grants over £25,000, contractors who employ apprentices must be included on the tender list.

It is important to give each builder exactly the same information about the job so that you can compare prices fairly. Ask for detailed, written quotations clearly identifying the cost of the different parts of the job and directly based on an agreed specification for grant eligible works, and giving a programme with firm start and completion dates.

Three quotes are also required for any goods, works or services worth £10,000 or more.

Refer to the application form checklist for further details.

## Signing a contract

You should not sign a contract with the preferred contractor until you have received a formal offer of grant from Fife Council and have written permission from Fife Council to proceed with the project. Before signing a contract you should agree in writing with the contractor:

- The named site supervisor
- Your contact details for instructions
- The person to whom complaints should be made
- That health and safety regulations will be respected
- That the contractor will obtain all consents such as skip licenses and so on
- Any areas of the site that are off limits to the contractor
- Arrangements for access to water, toilets and electricity
- Levels of cleanliness and reinstatement of damage expected at the end of the works

## Payment

Never pay in advance. Reputable builders should be able to cover the initial outlay on labour and materials. Payments should only be made when the work is satisfactorily completed as described in your quotation or tender. If you have employed an architect or surveyor, they will tell you when to pay your builder.

## Useful contacts

### ARCHITECTS

Architects Registration Board  
(ARB)  
8 Weymouth Street  
London, W1W 5BU  
Tel: 020 7580 5861  
<http://www.arb.org.uk>

Royal Incorporation of  
Architects in Scotland (RIAS)  
15 Rutland Square  
Edinburgh, EH1 2BR  
Tel: 0131 229 7545  
<http://www.rias.org.uk>

Royal Institute of British  
Architects (RIBA)  
66 Portland Place  
London, W1B 1AD  
Tel: 020 7580 5533  
[www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)

RIAS offers a Client Advisory Service with on-line advice for appointing an architect; and maintains a list of Conservation Accredited Architects.

### SURVEYORS

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors in Scotland (RICS)  
9 Manor Place  
Edinburgh, EH3 7DN  
Tel: 0131 225 7078  
<http://www.rics.org/>

RICS maintains a database of surveying firms and a list of Conservation Accredited Surveyors.

### CONSERVATION ADVICE

Historic Environment Scotland  
Longmore House  
Salisbury Place  
Edinburgh, EH9 1SH  
Tel: 0131 668 8600/ 0131 668 8638 (Publications)  
[www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)