

REPORT OF BUILDING CONSERVATION OFFICER

SUBJECT: CONSERVATION AREA GRANTS ADMINISTRATION

Introduction

This Report recommends several changes to the administration of the allocation of the Conservation Areas Grants including a scheme of delegation.

Background

There are 14 Conservation Areas in the National Park: Angle, Caerfarchell, Caldey Island, Little Haven, Manorbier, Newport, Newport Parrog, Portclew, Porthgain, Saundersfoot, St Davids, Solva, Tenby, and Trevine

The Conservation Areas Grant Scheme has been in operation since 1988, aimed at conserving the exterior fabric of historic buildings within the National Park's Conservation Areas. It was set up to address the problem of physical degradation, resulting from economic change, lack of awareness and skills and the use of inappropriate materials and techniques. The grants are aimed at improving the amenity of our Conservation Areas regardless of ownership and means.

The Conservation Area grants provide the opportunity to promote conservation as a positive driver, contributing to employment, the local economy and the tourism industry. There are important 'secondary' benefits including the raising of awareness of good conservation, the improvement of local skills and the perception of the Authority complementing regulatory work with proactive work. The grant scheme forms a positive element of the range of tools available for conserving historic buildings, including guidance, policy, development control and enforcement.

Take up

To date 402 (21%) of the historic buildings within the Conservation Areas have received grants totalling £9.7 million. The annual budget has been £100,000 with demand far exceeding supply every year. The £100,000 is made up by a 50/50 contribution from CADW and PCNPA.

Current criteria of the Conservation Area Grant Scheme

- Listed and unlisted buildings predating 1939 are eligible.
- All properties are eligible (commercial, residential and other)
- The grants are not means-tested.
- The grants are not capped.

- The grants are subject to a three-year clawback provision, which is registered with the Land Registry.
- Application is not limited and owners of properties may apply for grants for further works in subsequent years..

Allocation of funds

Since 1988, the grants have been allocated jointly by the Authority's Building Conservation Officer and Cadw's Senior Architect. The selection of successful applications was largely dependent on the criteria above and the influence of other external funders eg the former Wales Tourist Board which favoured projects which promoted tourism.

For several years, the grant intervention rate has been 40%, with the ability to offer 50% for certain key buildings or features. These are more generous rates than for example Cadw's own scheme, which typically operate at 25%.

In the current economic climate, with a possible reduction in budget and the need to demonstrate value for money it would be opportune to revisit the intervention rate and the need to cap the total grant.

The selection process

With demand outstripping the budget; there needs to be a clear, transparent selection process. Since 2008 the selection process has been formalised in the form of a 'scored' matrix, although all historic properties (those predating 1939) remain eligible. The matrix takes into account information from the Conservation Area Proposals Documents and includes buildings on the Authority's 'Listed Buildings at Risk Register'. Members on the Conservation and Planning Review Committee will be aware of the dire state of some of these buildings and how the grant system has secure the survival of these valuable and historic buildings.

The 'scoring' criteria gave weight to the following:-

1. Listed buildings at risk
2. Buildings of historic/architectural/social importance (as identified in the Conservation Proposals Document)
3. Buildings in poor condition (as identified in the Conservation Proposals Document)
4. Buildings requiring aesthetic improvement/replacement of lost features.

The Conservation Area grants matrix for 2012-13 is appended, illustrating how the simple scoring system works. See appendix 1. Generally, those applications scoring the highest number of points succeed, with low scorer applications mopping any later slippage.

Reporting Mechanism

The reporting mechanism is that the Authority's Building Conservation Officer has reported back on an information-only basis to the former Conservation Areas Grants

Panel and latterly to the Conservation and Planning Review Committee. This means that members have no involvement in consideration of appropriate criteria or directing in influencing decisions. This is considered to be a shortcoming in the decision making process.

The future operation of the Conservation Area Grants Scheme

The options would appear to range from all grant applications being decided by a committee through to the present system of officers making the selection.

It would seem appropriate that there is some merit in mirroring a criteria based delegation procedure similarly to that currently used with planning applications with a delegation process which allows for the smooth running of the scheme.

Consideration should also be given to revising the intervention rate with a capping of grant aid too. The combination of a lower intervention rate and capping will enable a more controlled spend of the budget available, have the potential for a greater spread of grants across the Conservation Areas, and will avoid raising public expectations unrealistically. Cadw has indicated its support in principle for this option.

The CADW contribution is an important element to the scheme. Currently standing at £50,000 per annum. If this element is to be reduced or withdrawn entirely then it brings into question the effectiveness of PCNPA administering a smaller allocation as it would have limited impact and be more costly pound for pound to administer.

Legal Considerations

There are no additional legal considerations.

Financial considerations

The proposed changes are to make more efficient and transparent use of grant funding.

Equality and Diversity

The Conservation Area grants are available to all, the criteria based solely on the quality of the building subject to an application.

RECOMMENDATION

(a) Subject to CADW's agreement, the PCNPA Conservation Area Grants be administered in the following way:

1. The grant is discretionary
2. The NPA grant will only be available if there is match funding by CADW (or a similar body).
3. Only Listed and unlisted buildings predating 1939 are eligible.

4. Only available to properties falling within conservation areas
5. Limited to owners with freehold or more than 7 years leasehold interest in the property
6. All types of properties are eligible.
7. The grants are not means-tested
8. The grants are capped at no more than 25% of the eligible conservation works or to a maximum of £20,000 excluding VAT.
9. No property can benefit from more than 3 grants in any 10 year period
10. The grants are subject to a three-year claw-back provision, which is registered with the Land Registry.

(b) That priority is given to:

1. Listed buildings on the 'at risk' register
2. Buildings of historic/architectural/social importance (as identified in the Conservation Proposals Document)
3. Buildings in poor condition (as identified in the Conservation Proposals Document)
4. Buildings requiring aesthetic improvement/replacement of lost features.

(c) That the Chief Executive, Director of Park Direction and Planning and Head of Planning are delegated authority to process and determine all grant applications which are less than £10,000. (Grants over this amount are to be determined by NPA Committee).

(d) That the Conservation and Planning Review Committee receive an annual report on the previous year's achievements and the properties benefiting from the new year's allocation.

(e) That the scheme is advertised on the PCNPA website and with community councils and through CADW.

Project Manager

Rob Scourfield – Building Conservation Officer

Officers Consulted

Jane Gibson – Director of Park Direction and Planning.
Vicki Hirst – Head of Development Management

CONSERVATION AREA GRANTS 2012/13

Signed Cadw :

Signed NPA:

Update: 03/10/12

 High Priority

 Medium Priority

 Low Priority

Conservation Area	Works	Buildings at Risk - Score 1	Hist/Arch/Social Importance (Proposals Feature Map) - Score 1	Condition (Opportunities Map) - Score 1	Aesthetic enhancement /replacement of features - Score 1	Costs	Grant	Listed Building - non-scoring	Commercial - non-scoring	Total Score	Grant Awarded
Angle								N	N	1	
66 Angle	Render	0	1	0	0	12,750.00	5,100.00				27/09/2012
Caerfarchell								N	N	1	
Greenhill buildings	Renovation	0	0	1	1	38,180.17	15,272.08				
Caldey											
No Apps											
Little Haven											
No Apps											
Manorbier								N	N	1	
Tenby House	Overhaul windows/porch	0	0	0	1	4,602.08	1,840.63	Y	N	3	27/09/2012
Dovecote	Repairs	1	1	1	£0.00	8,880.00	3,552.00				27/09/2012
Newport								N	N	2	
Gwenfro, East Street	Refurb	0	0	1	1	49,666.46	19,866.58	Y	N	1	
Ebenezer Chapel	Ohaul windows	0	1	0	0	10,381.10	4,152.44				27/09/2012

Conservation Area	Works	Buildings at Risk - Score 1	Hist/Arch/Social Importance (Proposals Feature Map) - Score 1	Condition (Opportunities Map) - Score 1	Aesthetic enhancement /replacement of features - Score 1	Costs	Grant				Grant Awarded
Newport Parrog								N	N	1	
Westfield, Parrog Road	Chimney	0	1	0	O	4,149.60	1,659.64	Y	N	2	27/09/2012
Old Maroon Store	Roof/joinery	1	1	0	£0.00	16,252.60	6,501.12				27/09/2012
Portclew											
No apps											
Porthgain											
No apps											
Saundersfoot											
No apps											
Solva								N	N	2	
27, High Street	windows	0	1	0	I	25,102.00	10,040.80	N	N	2	27/09/2012
Haroldston House, High Street	Paving	0	1	0	I	1,536.00	614.00	N	N	2	
Ditto	Door	0	1	0	I	2,965.20	1,186.08	N	N	1	27/09/2012
31 High Street	Render	0	0	0	I	7,152.00	2,860.80	N	N	1	27/09/2012
Ditto	windows	0	0	0	I	6,326.00	2,530.40				27/09/2012
St Davids								Y	N	1	
Fossil House, Nun Street	5 windows/rwg	0	0	0	I	12,209.00	4,883.60	Y	N	0	27/09/2012
10, Nun Street	Windows	0	0	0	O	3,096.10	1,238.44	Y	N	1	
6, Nun Street	Stack, pointing	0	0	0	I	11,040.00	4,416.00	Y	N	0	
Seion Vestry	Window	0	0	0	O	709.20	283.68	N	N	2	
26, New Street	Render	0	0	1	I	50,979.60	20,391.84	Y	N	0	
35, Goat Street	Render	0	0	0	O	5,442.00	2,176.80	Y	Y	1	
The Bishops, Cross Square	Refurb	0	0	0	I	86,049.28	29,224.00				*27/09/2012
Tenby								Y	N	0	
Bellevue Court, Crackwell St	windows	0	0	0	O	40,325.00	16,130.00	Y	N	0	27/09/2012

Conservation Area	Works	Buildings at Risk - Score 1	Hist/Arch/Social Importance (Proposals Feature Map) - Score 1	Condition (Opportunities Map) - Score 1	Aesthetic enhancement /replacement of features - Score 1	Costs	Grant				Grant Awarded
8, Norton	Render/windows	0	□	0	O	12,788.26	5,115.30	Y	N	0	30/10/2012
7, Norton	Render, windows	0	□	0	O	74,979.47	29,991.78	Y	N	0	
St Stephens, Croft	Repair balcony	0	□	0	O	7,750.00	3,110.00	Y	N	2	
Bideawee, Bridge Street	Refurb	1	□	0	I	325,218.67	130,087.46	N	N	1	30/10/2012
Mayville, Norton	windows	0	□	0	I	9,113.00	3,645.20	Y	Y	1	30/10/2012
Seafront Pharmacy	Shopfront	0	□	0	I	18,825.00	7,530.00	Y	N	1	
Former Ocean Hotel	Render	0	I	0	O	189,175.00	75,670.00				30/10/2012
Trevine											
No apps											
						1,035,642.79	409,070.67				

*= provisional offer
 ** TBC with Cadw