

Traditional Homes Pilot

Homeowners Guide

Version 1.0



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

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Terms and Conditions

The Traditional Homes Pilot 2024 which operates under the National Home Energy Upgrade Scheme, is funded by the Department of Environment, Climate, and Communications through SEAI.

All applications are subject to the following conditions which are available on our website: [National Home Energy Upgrade Scheme - Terms and Conditions](#)

About this pilot

The Traditional homes pilot is funded under the government's National Home Energy Upgrade Scheme. It allows homeowners to avail of One Stop Shop grant supports using products suitable for traditionally constructed homes.



What is Traditional home?

There are a wide variety of traditional buildings throughout the country. These mainly include those built with solid masonry walls of brick, stone, or clay, using lime-based mortars, often with a lime or earthen-based render finish, single-glazed timber or metal-framed windows and a timber-framed roof usually clad with slate but often with tiles, copper, lead or, less commonly, corrugated iron or thatch.

These types of buildings perform differently from more modern, post-1940s homes. They manage moisture differently because they are semi-permeable, allowing moisture to move in a controlled way into and back out of the walls. External lime render was sometimes applied as a weathering layer to protect the wall from getting damp but still allowing the wall to breath. They also rely on nature in the form of the wind and sunshine, as well as the buildings heating and ventilation to stay dry. They act like a balanced system which when in good condition and with regular maintenance perform well. However, the use of inappropriate materials, such as some modern non-breathable insulation or renders, can cause problems such as overheating or mould growth. Therefore, it is

critical that any finishes or materials used on traditional walls be vapour-permeable to prevent condensation being formed within the walls.

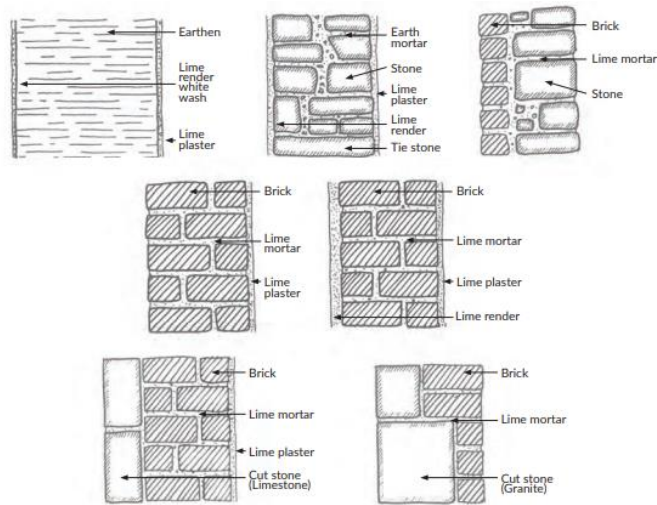


Figure 1: Selection of typical traditional wall build-ups

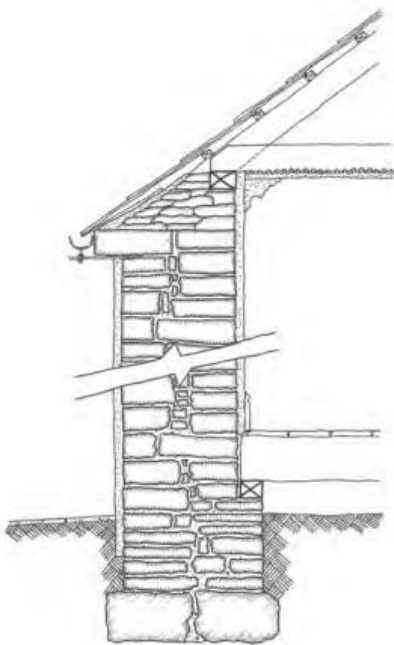


Figure 2: Typical solid masonry wall

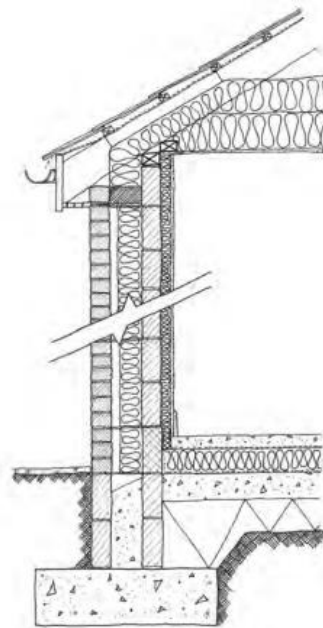


Figure 3: Typical modern cavity wall

Figures 1 – 3 above illustrate typical traditional wall build ups and highlight the difference between traditional construction and a typical modern cavity wall.

This pilot will be delivered for homeowners through SEAI's panel of [One Stop Shops \(providing traditional home services\)](#). The One Stop Shop (OSS) will work with your Traditional Building Professional (TBP), to deliver an appropriate energy retrofit solution for your home.

Your grant application will be made by your selected One Stop Shop directly to SEAI and the OSS will manage the grant process for you.

Home energy upgrade works in traditional homes must be completed in accordance with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage guidance document [Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings: Guidance for Specifiers and Installers \(DHLHG\)](#) and the [SEAI Domestic-Technical-Standards-and-Specifications](#), where applicable. Speak to your Traditional Building Professional and One Stop Shop for further guidance on these requirements.

[Need help or more information?](#)

If you need any help with the information in this guide, please call us on (01) 808 20 04 or email: onestopshop@seai.ie

Eligibility and Grant Amount

Who can apply for this Pilot?

You **can** contact a One Stop Shop to participate if:

- ✓ You own a traditionally constructed home (typically pre-1940's)
- ✓ You engage a Traditional Building Professional to oversee the works.
- ✓ You are seeking to carry out a whole house energy upgrade *.
- ✓ Your home has not previously received SEAI grant support for the same measures.
- ✓ Your house currently has a BER of B3 or lower.

**Energy upgrade works achieve must a post works BER of B2 or better and a Primary energy uplift of at least 100kWh/m²/year (projects delivering a significant energy upgrade but falling just below the required B2 level can be discussed with the SEAI in advance to review eligibility) Contact your One Stop Shop for further guidance.*

You **cannot** apply for this Pilot if:

- ✗ Your works have already commenced.
- ✗ You are completing a single home energy upgrade measure (e.g. wall insulation only). The pilot is focused on whole house energy upgrades which typically require multiple home energy upgrade measures.

What grants are available?

This pilot will offer the same measures and grant amounts as available for all homeowners under the OSS service.

See link below for further information:

[One Stop Shop Services | Home Energy Grants | SEAI](#)

Note: In buildings where historic windows and doors are to be retained, secondary glazing systems can be supported by the windows grant providing it meets the scheme's requirements.

Getting Started

What are the steps to apply for and receive this grant?



1. Engage a Traditional Building Professional.
2. Engage a [One Stop Shop \(providing traditional home services\)](#).
3. Work with your Traditional Building Professional and One Stop Shop to agree a whole house retrofit strategy.
4. Carry out the works.
5. Case Study participation (optional).

Step 1. Engage a Traditional Building Professional

You will need to appoint a Traditional Building Professional to support you in your energy upgrade works.

A Traditional Building Professional is an

- ✓ Architect,
- ✓ Engineer, or,
- ✓ Surveyor

with **a relevant conservation accreditation and traditional home energy upgrade experience.**

Why do I need to appoint a Traditional Building Professional

- ✓ It is essential to consult a specialist in traditional buildings to ensure that the thermal upgrades and products are suitable for your home. They will design a tailored plan for your home upgrade and work with the OSS to deliver it.
- ✓ In the absence of Irish Agrément certification or equivalent for specified materials, a Traditional Building Professional must confirm the materials they have specified are 'proper materials' suitable for their intended use under Irish site conditions, and in accordance with the Building Regulations.

Key Question to ask your Traditional Building Professional

It is important to ask your Traditional Building Professional if they hold the relevant level of qualifications / experience to meet the requirements of Table 3 of DHLGH guidance document [Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings: Guidance for Specifiers and Installers \(DHLHG\)](#).

See links to professional bodies websites below for further guidance:

- [RIAI - List of Conservation accredited architects](#)
- [SCSI - List of Conservation accredited surveyors](#)
- [Engineers Ireland - List of Conservation accredited surveyors](#)

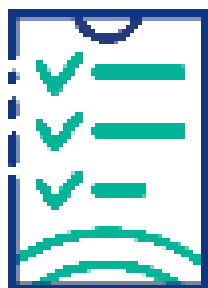
Step 2. Engage a One Stop Shop

How do I apply for SEAI grant funding?

Contact a [One Stop Shop \(providing traditional home services\)](#) to start your energy upgrade journey. They will guide you through the process and manage the grant application.

Why do I need to appoint a One Stop Shop (OSS)

- ✓ By using a One Stop Shop you have access to the **widest range of grant measures** available.
- ✓ The One stop shop provides an **end-to-end service** guiding homeowners through the entire process of energy upgrades. They will **ensure the works are in compliance** with the scheme and **ensure grant funding**.
- ✓ The experience the One Stop Shop has in the SEAI grant application process will **simplify and streamline the process** for you including completing the application on your behalf and gathering the appropriate document required for approval.
- ✓ The One Stop shop will ensure you (the homeowner) **maximise the grant opportunities and energy improvements available to you** and working with your Traditional Building Professional will ensure the proposed works are suitable for your home.
- ✓ The One Stop Shop will deduct the grant value directly from the cost of the works, reducing your initial financial outlay.
- ✓ To benefit from specialist energy efficiency upgrades and expertise in the latest sustainable technologies available.



What is my One Stop Shop responsible for?

OSSs can submit grant applications and receive grant monies on your (the homeowner's) behalf as this grant amount has been deducted from your quote upfront. OSSs also undertake additional administrative tasks related to the processing of grant applications on behalf of homeowners. Their responsibilities include the following:

- ✓ working with the Traditional Building Professional in achieving a successful home energy upgrade solution for the homeowner.
- ✓ offering and, if applicable, providing full energy upgrades to homes to achieve energy savings.
- ✓ explaining to the homeowner about the energy upgrade works and the complete OSS process, including the terms and conditions of the relevant grant scheme, and to obtain the informed consent of the homeowner.
- ✓ applying for and obtaining grant approval on behalf of the homeowner, with their consent (note: the homeowner only pays net of the grant).
- ✓ entering into a fully transparent contract with the homeowner in advance of works,
- ✓ **providing a streamlined process offering grant management, quality assurance, project co-ordination, project management and aftercare.**
- ✓ submitting grant payment requests to SEAI
- ✓ ensuring pre- and post-works BER assessments are properly performed, and that the relevant BER certificates are published and issued to homeowners.
- ✓ ensuring that all other terms and conditions of the scheme are fulfilled.

The whole house energy upgrade strategies delivered through One Stop Shops will help build a more detailed understanding of the solutions required for traditional homes. Data and insights from the pilot will provide SEAI with valuable information, helping to inform long term retrofit programme development to support the energy upgrades of this cohort of homes nationwide.

Step 3. Work with your Traditional Building Professional and One Stop Shop to agree a whole house retrofit Strategy.

The DHLGH guidance document [Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings: Guidance for Specifiers and Installers \(DHLHG\)](#) outlines the recommended procedure for developing a **retrofit plan (Table 5)**. This is an important step to help define the best home energy upgrade solution for your home.

Key steps include: (full list in guidance document)

Step 1: Initiate the process.

- Define the brief, what is the overarching objective – eg reduce energy usage, carbon emissions etc.
- Engage with Local authority conservation officer to discuss the merits of the scheme if applicable.

Step 2: Assess the building.

- Assess the heritage significance of the building.
- Assess the existing condition of the building.

Step 3: Specify objectives and targets.

- Set targets based on key criteria such as heritage significance, suitability of materials and cost.
- Consider if additional expertise is required eg hygrothermal assessment.

Step 4: Assess and select measures for improved energy performance.

- Develop a list of potential measures and assess any risk.
- Determine risks relating to condensation, ventilation, thermal bridging and impact of the measures on the building's heritage significance.

Step 5: Undertake risk mitigation measures.

- Appoint specialist consultants as necessary.

Step 6: Create a short list of measures and review their impact.

- Determine whether the proposed measures will meet the retrofit and energy saving objectives and targets,
- Consider alternative retrofit measures or materials appropriate to the specific traditional building.

Step 7: Revise objectives and energy-efficiency targets

- Revised objectives and targets, if necessary, based on the findings of the risk assessment.

Step 8: Review with the statutory authority (as required)

- Consult with the local authority's architectural conservation officer at the early stage of the design process, particularly if the building is protected or is located in an ACA (Architectural Conservation Area).
- Consult with the local authority building control officer if the works would deviate from the building regulations.

Step 9: Appoint suitably qualified contractors/specialists.

- Appoint contractors, who should have the required skills and an understanding of, and experience working on, traditional buildings.
- Note; your One Stop shop will support you in ensuring contractors are appropriately skilled and registered to carry out the works.

Step 10: Implement, document, and evaluate.

- Be aware that, when working with older buildings, unexpected conditions will often emerge during the construction phase that can affect the scope of work, the choice of technical measures, costs and timeframe.

Your Traditional Building Professional will work with your One Stop Shop to prepare a retrofit plan in accordance with EN 16883:2017.

Step 4. Carry out the works.

- Prior to works commencing:
 - ✓ A **pre works BER** must be completed. (OSS will assist)
 - ✓ OSS will complete your grant application.
 - ✓ A **Letter of offer** must have been received from SEAI confirming the grant measures supported.
- Your One Stop Shop will guide you through this process.
- The One Stop Shop in conjunction with the Traditional Building Professional will ensure the works are carried out in compliance with the SEAI scheme requirements.
- The One Stop Shop will clearly discount the grants from the overall cost of works invoiced to you, and the grant will be paid directly to the One Stop Shop.
- On Completion of the works:
 - ✓ **A post works BER** must be completed. (OSS will assist)
 - ✓ OSS will gather necessary documentation on your behalf e.g., insulation data sheets, Heat Pump commissioning certificates.
 - ✓ The homeowner, One Stop Shop and Traditional Building Professional signs a **Declaration of works** to confirm:
 - **The Homeowner:** The works have been completed by their contracted One Stop Shop and they will facilitate any reasonable request to conduct an inspection / audit process.
 - **The One Stop Shop:** The SEAI grant aided works have been completed in accordance with the required technical standards and specification.
 - **The Traditional Building Professional:** The SEAI grant aided works have been completed in accordance with the DHLGH guidance document [Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings: Guidance for Specifiers and Installers \(DHLHG\)](#)

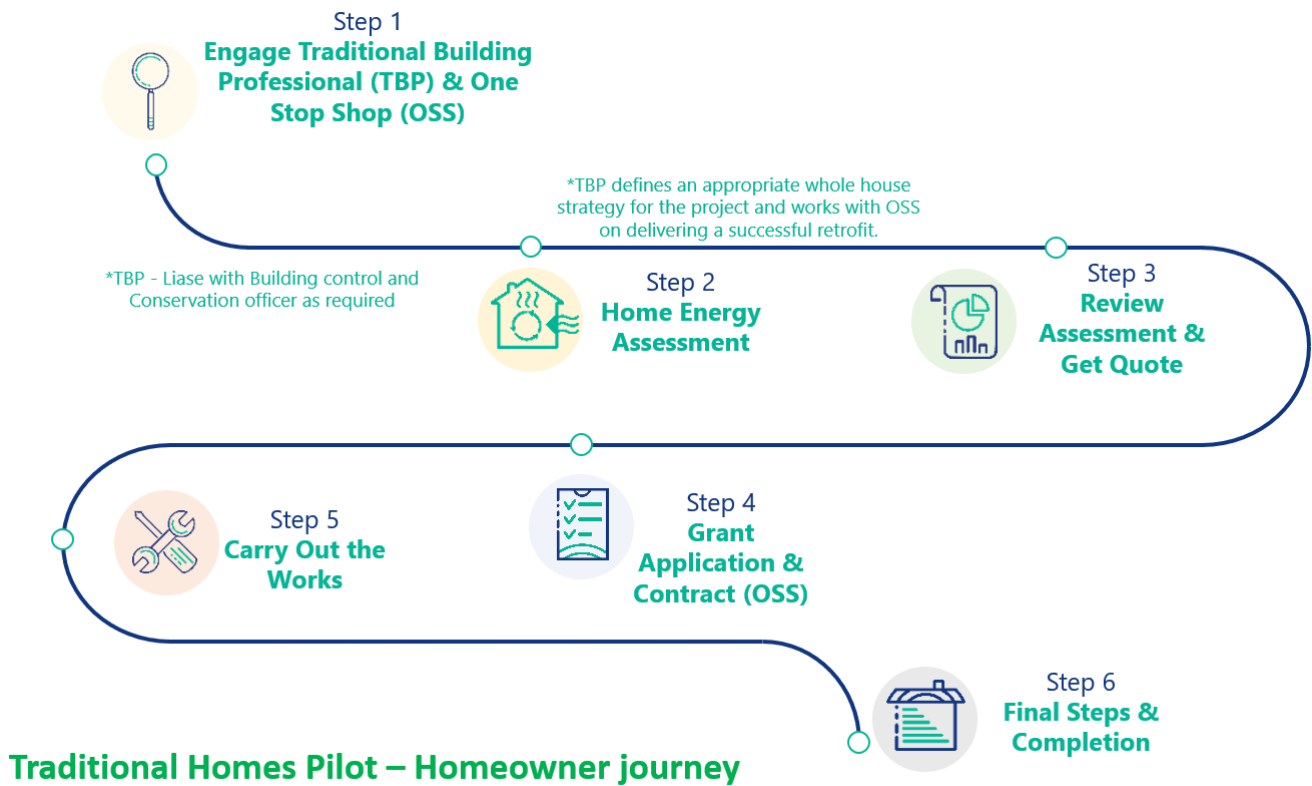
Step 5. Case Studies

At the completion of the home energy upgrades, SEAI will engage with the applicant with a view to developing a short case study which sets out the main elements of the project, critical success factors / learnings. These may be used for further analysis or inclusion in reports from SEAI and will provide more information for the wider industry in relation to retrofit of traditional buildings.

Also, SEAI will contact homeowners and participants to request their participation in surveys (telephone or questionnaire) to determine the impact and achievements of the project and may develop and publish case studies (protecting as appropriate all personal, confidential, or commercially sensitive information/data).

Participation is not mandatory, and non-participation will not affect your application in any way. Where homeowners are willing to participate, SEAI will seek consent in accordance with the data protection requirements and will work in partnership with participating homeowners.

Homeowners journey map



Vacant Property Refurbishment Scheme

- ✓ Homeowners eligible for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Scheme or Croí Cónaithe may also be eligible for home energy upgrade grants from SEAI but they cannot receive funding for the same works from both schemes e.g. if supply and fit of external wall insulation and associated works are supported by SEAI, no part of this work is eligible for support under the Vacant Property Grant scheme.
- ✓ If homeowners are applying to the Vacant Property Refurbishment grant scheme and SEAI for home energy upgrade grants they must inform their local authority grant officer.
- ✓ See the [Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Scheme](#) page on the SEAI website for further information.

Home Energy Upgrade Loan Scheme

The Home Energy Upgrade Loan Scheme provides low-cost, flexible loans to help make your home more energy efficient.

- ✓ The purpose of the loan must be to carry out home energy upgrade works that are also grant-aided through the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).
- ✓ You can borrow from €5,000 to €75,000 for a term of up to 10 years. Loans are available through participating finance providers, including banks and some credit unions.
- ✓ The interest rates will be significantly lower than those generally available in the market but will differ among the finance providers.
- ✓ Refer to the [Home Energy Upgrade Loan Scheme](#) page on the SEAI website for further information on the scheme.

References in Document

Figure 1: Selection of typical traditional wall build-ups; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2023), Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings: Guidance for Specifiers and Installers.

Figure 2: Typical solid masonry wall; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2023), Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings: Guidance for Specifiers and Installers.

Figure 3: Typical modern cavity wall; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2023), Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings: Guidance for Specifiers and Installers.