

Traditional Farm Buildings Grant through the Heritage Council and GLAS

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1

Long before Dermot Bannon (whose father, we should add, worked for Teagasc) picked up an architect's pencil, farmers were restoring farm buildings out of respect for their forebearers, to enhance their surroundings and to give something back.

Joseph and Margaret McCarthy run a traditional suckler farm in Lisgoold, east Cork. As current GLAS participants, they were delighted to receive funding from the Heritage Council under the Traditional Farm Buildings Grant for an old stone building on the farm.

The building was constructed prior to 1846 and is present on the Ordnance Survey map from that period. It originally housed cows and pigs, and the lofted section stored grain. The farm itself is located close to the Owennacurra River, which flows into the protected Owennacurra Estuary outside of Midleton.

The building was in a dangerous condition, with a large crack along the south-east gable end of the building, which was being held upright using large ESB poles.

Picture 1: Building prior to restoration work

"We applied for the grant for restoration of old farm buildings, which is only available to farmers in the GLAS scheme and got through the first stage of the grant application process," says Joseph. "Once we had secured full grant approval, the next step was to carry out a bat and bird survey. No bats were present in the building, which allowed work to commence during the summer months."

With the expertise of Chris Southgate, a local conservation consultant based in Midleton, a method statement was prepared and local conservation builders Queenstown Restoration Ltd were secured to carry out structural repairs.

"An imperative part of the Heritage Council grant is to promote repair, rather than replacement," says Anna Meenan, project manager, GLAS



Joseph and Margaret McCarthy outside their restored stone building



Traditional Farm Buildings Grant Scheme at the Heritage Council. "So, whenever possible, building materials are reused." For the McCarthy's shed, original stone was reused and a lime mortar mix was used for repointing.

Picture 2: General view of site while restoration work was underway

The Heritage Council administers the GLAS Traditional Farm Buildings Grant Scheme for the conservation and repair of traditional farm buildings and other related structures on behalf of the DAFM.

Grants awarded will not exceed 75% of the cost of the project, with a maximum grant of €25,000 and a minimum

of €4,000. The aim is to restore these buildings to be structurally sound with minimum intervention. Grants will also be available for other related structures, such as historic yard surfaces and landscape features like walls, gate pillars and gates.

To be eligible for the scheme, buildings and other related structures (constructed before 1960) must have architectural or vernacular heritage character, make a contribution to their setting and not be overwhelmed by large-scale modern buildings.

The scheme has closed for the year, but all building projects move slowly, so perhaps it's worth thinking about entering a project for next year.