

### 1.0 Why accreditation?

1.1 AABC is a Register of architects whose skills in building conservation have been assessed and accredited by peer review. The purpose is to protect the historic built environment from unnecessary and damaging interventions which can arise from an absence of adequate skills and competence in architects undertaking work in this field. Accreditation also assists clients to identify architects who have demonstrated their skills and competence. Accreditation benefits architects who have benchmarked their skills in a way which clients can readily understand.

### 2.0 What do we mean by skills and competence?

2.1 There are several international charters which set out the principles behind the proper conservation and management of the historic built environment including the process of change. Inter-professional discussion has established a common understanding of core skills and competence – go to

[www.understandingconservation.org](http://www.understandingconservation.org) - for full details. AABC has produced its own more detailed Guide to Conservation Skills which is provided with these notes.

2.2 The general competences which AABC applicants are required to demonstrate are:

- a) Understanding conservation philosophy, conservation legislation and the significance of subject buildings in whole and in their constituent parts.
- b) Identifying defects, their causes and, in the case of adaptive works, functional deficiencies.
- c) Formulating proposals for repair, remediation and, where appropriate, adaptation which are philosophically and technically sound, explaining the impacts of any changes.
- d) Documenting investigations and proposals using reports, drawings, specifications, schedules and photographs.
- e) Managing conservation works including procurement, cost and quality control both on and off site.

### 3.0 How do I demonstrate these skills and competences?

3.1 Accreditation is vested in an individual, and so we need information about you and your work.

3.2 About you – we require basic information outlining your qualifications, experience and your CPD record.

3.3 About your CPD – we require information on your conservation-related Continuing Professional Development activities undertaken during the last five years which describe your regular commitment to structured skills enhancement and development of professional competence. These activities will be in addition to your day-to-day fee-earning work and may include participation in courses and seminars, visits, reading and research.

3.4 About your work – we require information describing five examples of your work (three for re-accreditation), either individual projects or specific elements of projects, which you have completed during the last five years (earlier work may be considered in special circumstances). The examples must collectively demonstrate your skills in understanding, identifying, formulating, documenting and managing conservation works. At least three of the five examples (or two of the three), must be of actual repair work; the remaining example(s) can comprise extracts from conservation plans, condition surveys, research reports and similar work.

3.5 Each example should include a summary giving the project title and location, its' listing status if any, the nature of the project, key dates in the commission, approximate cost and your role both in the overall project and in the authorship of the submitted material. This should be followed by extracts from the project documentation. A maximum of ten sides of A4 or five sides of A3 folded is allowed for each example – many successful applications use less. The limit applies to both PDF uploads and hard copies.

- 3.6 Across all examples we need to see evidence of how you identified and assessed problems, the conservation philosophy you followed and the repair or adaptation works you devised. The material must collectively include extracts from drawn construction details, specification clauses, descriptive text and captioned photographs clearly legible at A4 or A3 folded. The application form sets out further details including a checklist of requirements.
- 3.7 This information will be assessed by a team of two accredited or senior architects and one lay person suitably experienced in building conservation representing the interest of the client. There are twenty such assessment teams across the UK, and your application will be assessed by a team distant from your locality. The teams submit their reports to the AABC Supervisory Panel, made up of board members, for moderation and confirmation. If your application meets the required standard you will be registered as an Architect Accredited in Building Conservation. You may use the suffix AABC and your contact details will be posted on the Register's website.

#### **4.0 Are there other categories of accreditation?**

- 4.1 Architects acting in more of an advisory or managerial capacity, perhaps leading several projects or acting as conservation officers but not personally producing detailed documentation or carrying out contract supervision, may apply for accreditation as a consultant architect. Similarly, specialist architects practising as conservators or researchers and having only a limited involvement in projects may also be accredited as a consultant architect. In such cases the requirement for examples of repair works is waived provided that the submitted examples of work demonstrate relevant building conservation competence. Successful applicants are registered as Consultant Architect Accredited in Building Conservation. They may use the suffix CAABC and their contact details will be posted on the Register's website.
- 4.2 We are now offering Retired (Rtd) status to the Register, for those architects who have previously been accredited, but who wish to have associate membership with AABC. It is very important to note that this status does **not** imply accreditation. The fee is £25 and the status is available immediately.

#### **5.0 How long does accreditation last?**

- 5.1 Accreditation lasts for a period of five years, following which re-accreditation is required in order to ensure that active practice and competence have been maintained. Applications for re-accreditation differ only in the requirement for three rather than five examples of your work; and two of the three examples must be of repair work.

#### **6.0 What if I need advice?**

- 6.1 The AABC Register offers annual seminars to prospective applicants to explain how they can develop the necessary skills and experience and how they can efficiently complete an application. More detailed information on conservation competence is available at these seminars and also on request. The AABC Administrator is contactable by phone, e-mail or letter to answer questions and give advice. If necessary we will offer an accredited architect in your locality to act as a mentor as you develop your application.

#### **7.0 How much will it cost and how long will it take?**

- 7.1 The application fee for an initial accreditation is £250 and for five year re-accreditation it is £200. An annual registration fee of £85 is also charged. Applications are accepted on a four-monthly cycle ending on 31 March, 31 July, 30 November respectively. Applications are normally processed in the following four months. In the case of non-compliant submissions or those requiring further evidence the period will run into the subsequent cycles subject to the timely receipt of the required information. Do check your application carefully to ensure that you have included all necessary information and do not exceed the permitted maximum number of A4 or folded A3 sheets.

### ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Accreditation requires a framework of reference shared by applicants and assessors alike for guiding applications and justifying acceptance or deferral. Applicants and assessors are already encouraged to refer to the ICOMOS Education and Training Guidelines. These provide a general foundation, but their very universality embodies a level of generalization that is not always sufficiently precise for more specific circumstances. For that reason AABC has assembled a list of conservation skills based upon those Guidelines for which it expects to see evidence in applications for accreditation.
- 1.2 A candidate is not expected to offer direct evidence of all the skills outlined below but examples of work should be selected to provide a good range with each group represented. It should be stressed that this is not a check-list for ticking boxes or underpinning any arithmetical calculation. The absence of evidence would only count against a candidate if it related to a clear deficiency in the example or if there were too many absences in the submission overall. It is important to concentrate upon sound principles and practice as demonstrated by the examples of work.

#### 2.0 Philosophy and Methodology

- 2.1 Understanding the requirements of **conservation legislation**.
- 2.2 Understanding the **philosophical and practical differences** between maintenance, repair, renovation, intervention, conversion, restoration and reconstruction.
- 2.3 Understanding the **precautionary principle** in conservation, avoiding any adverse change before less damaging alternatives have been properly considered.
- 2.4 Understanding the principles and practicalities of **reversibility**.

#### 3.0 Cultural Significance

- 3.1 Awareness about the principal **local and national sources of information** about a building.
- 3.2 Understanding **the overall historical, archaeological and architectural significance** of a building and being able to place the significance of part of a building within the context of the whole.
- 3.3 Ability to identify **historic architects and builders**, and locate a building in its **architectural/ vernacular tradition**.

#### 4.0 Investigation, Materials and Technology

- 4.1 Ability to **diagnose structural and fabric problems** and to judge when technical advice should be sought.

- 4.2 Ability to **assess the capacity of an historic asset** to receive interventions or alternative uses without unacceptable impacts upon its significance.
- 4.3 Awareness that **documented history and records of previous investigation and management** should be sought and, where available, critically used in a project.
- 4.4 Ability to scope **options for repair** and identify those which are most likely to conserve the historic fabric, character and appearance of a building.
- 4.5 Awareness of **available scientific techniques** such as paint analysis and dendrochronology and how to use them in appropriate situations.
- 4.6 Understanding **the performance characteristics of historic materials**, and of a consistent and balanced approach to the diagnosis of failure and the selection of replacements that are appropriate for the type of building and the scope of the required works.

## 5.0 Social and Financial Issues

- 5.1 Awareness of the range of **cultural, social and economic values** that might be associated with an historic building or area and the extent to which there may be conflicts between them.
- 5.2 **Regard for the interests of stakeholders** in developing public projects, and good communication with interested communities.
- 5.3 Ability to promote **physical and intellectual access** through publicity and interpretation in appropriate projects.
- 5.4 Application of a **conservation-led approach** to regeneration schemes in historic areas.
- 5.5 Ability to assess and design **disability access arrangements** that are reasonable in the context of historic buildings.
- 5.6 Ability to identify and secure potential **sources of grant-aid**.

## 6.0 Implementation and Management of Works

- 6.1 Ability to scope and carry out appropriate **preliminary investigations and research**.
- 6.2 Ability to identify and agree **project objectives**.
- 6.3 Understanding **survey and recording needs** at the appropriate stages of a project.
- 6.4 Ability to prepare a **specification for repairs** that is comprehensive, accurate and clear.
- 6.5 Ability to convey information and illustrate instructions through the targeted use of **drawings and photographs**.
- 6.6 Involvement of relevant **specialist advisers and contractors** at appropriate stages of a project and a **successfully integrated team-based approach** to a complex project.
- 6.7 Demonstration of a **flexible approach to managing repairs** that cannot be fully diagnosed until opening up works have been completed.
- 6.8 **Monitoring schemes of works** to ensure objectives are being met, standards of performance maintained, and contingencies properly handled.
- 6.9 Production of properly ordered **project documentation** securely deposited and reasonable accessible for future projects of repair, alteration or research.
- 6.10 Design and execution of **sensitive works of alteration to meet current needs**, successfully balancing respect for setting and impact on significance with the creation of value and contemporary cultural expression.