

## **GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS**

### **1. 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. 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 <http://www.understandingconservation.org>. 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 impact on the historic fabric and its significance that any changes bring.
- 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. 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 that describes 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, specific visits and research. Site visits as part of a project, or potential project, is not considered CPD. Only *relevant* CPD relating to conservation should be included.

- 3.4 ABOUT YOUR WORK – We require you to describe and illustrate examples of your work carried out in the last five years, touching upon the competencies listed above and as can be seen in the ICOMOS Guidelines. The examples should be presented as case studies, see item 3.5 below.

**i) Initial accreditation**

We require information describing **five** examples of your work in the form of a case study, either individual projects or specific elements of a larger project. Together, the five case studies must collectively demonstrate your skills in understanding, identifying, formulating, documenting and managing conservation works. At least three of the five case studies must be of actual repair work carried out on site; the remaining case studies can comprise extracts from conservation plans, condition surveys, research reports and similar work.

**ii) Re-accreditation**

Every five years you will be required to re-accredit. This is to ensure that all our listed accredited architects are up to speed with current thinking, philosophy and methods of conservation works and repair, and that they are still practicing competently. **One** full case study should be provided, which must be of works carried out on site and comply with the outlines set out for Case Studies in 3.5 and 3.6. **Two** further examples of work carried out in the last five years are also required in the form of two sides of A4 per example (including any illustrations) to cover a specific technical issue. The two examples should clearly set out for each; the project title and location, its listing status if any, key dates in the commission, approximate cost and your role in the project. This should be followed by a description of the technical issue encountered and how it was overcome, accompanied by illustrations.

- 3.5 CASE STUDIES - Each 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, (see item 3.7). This should be followed by a narrative, describing and explaining the project example in a case study format. Each case study should be set out in a maximum of 10 sides of A4 or five sides of A3 – many successful applications use less.
- 3.6 CASE STUDY REQUIREMENTS - Across all case studies we need to see evidence of how you understood the historic nature and significance of the building, identified and assessed problems, the conservation philosophy you followed, the difficulties/options considered and the repair or adaptation works you devised. The material must collectively include extracts from drawn construction details (hand drawn

sketches/site sketches are particularly welcome), non-generic specification clauses, and captioned photographs clearly legible at A4. The application form sets out further details including a checklist of requirements.

- 3.7 **YOUR ROLE** - It is acknowledged that there are a variety of roles that the applicant may take on a project, including; an over-seeing project architect/Director, project architect, and assistant project architect – all are acceptable, but it must be made clear which role you play yourself. Drawings/information produced by others is also acceptable so long as it is made clear that these were carried out under your direction, giving a description of your methods of working and direction given.
- 3.8 **ASSESSMENT** – Your application will be assessed by a team of two accredited or senior architects and one lay person suitably experienced in building conservation. 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. 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 (CA). 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 at least three of the examples to be on-site repair works is waived provided that the five 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 now list retired former members of the Register, who wish to maintain an affiliation with the AABC, on the website for a one-off fee of £25. This enables former members to maintain contact with the AABC and the information it provides to members.

#### **5. 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 differs in that the requirement is for one case study plus a list of other projects worked on within the last five years. See details in section 3.4(ii) above.

## **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.
- 6.2 We also offer an Apprenticeship Scheme, which sets potential applicants up with a local mentor, who help, advise and guide them forward with the aim of applying for full accreditation. This may be useful for potential applicants who struggle to get the exposure to conservation in their existing office, or who do not necessarily have an accredited architect that they can talk to. It is also useful for those who would benefit from structured guidance before they submit their full application. The application fee is £25 per year. More details can be found in our Guidance Notes for AABC Apprenticeship Applicants, which is available to download from our website.

## **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 £80 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 sheets.