



ENGLISH HERITAGE

## Criteria used in the evaluation of suggestions for commemorative blue plaques in London

Public nominations are the lifeblood of the London Blue Plaques scheme and English Heritage welcomes suggestions for plaques in London from private individuals and organisations alike. However, it asks proposers to note that many more such suggestions are received than can be approved, given the resources available, and that the evaluation process is therefore highly selective. For this reason, proposers (whether individuals or organisations) are limited to the submission of one proposal per calendar year for a single subject or for multiple subjects and buildings meeting the criteria outlined in clauses (e) and (g) below.

The following criteria will be used by English Heritage to assess proposals for the installation of permanent commemorative blue plaques in London. They are based on those originally adopted by the London County Council in the 1950s.

All plaque suggestions meeting the following basic conditions of acceptance will be considered by the Blue Plaques Panel: figures should have been deceased for twenty years, and have a demonstrable association with a surviving London home or workplace. Owing to the limited resources available English Heritage reserves the right to determine priorities among the subjects suggested.

- (a) For proposals concerning famous or important people, the following requirements must – in the judgement of the Blue Plaques Panel – be met:
- i. They should be of significant public standing in a London-wide, national or international context; and
  - ii. They should be understood to have made some important positive contribution to human welfare or happiness; and
  - iii. Their achievements should have made an exceptional impact in terms of public recognition; or

- iv. There shall be strong grounds for believing that they are regarded as eminent and distinguished by a majority of members of their own profession or calling.
- (b) Without exception, proposals for such commemoration will not be considered until the subject has been dead for twenty years.
- (c) A person's residence in London should have been a significant period, in length of time or in importance, within their life and work. Where this association totalled less than five years, far greater stringency will be applied in assessing the case.
- (d) No figure will be either shortlisted or not shortlisted on the basis of gender, race or sexuality. The Blue Plaques Panel will, however, pay due regard to the overall gender and ethnic balance of cases being shortlisted, and to the imbalances in representation that presently exist.
- (e) Proposals will be considered for plaques commemorating more than one person. In such instances, each of the figures to be commemorated must be of significance in their own right and, in the judgement of the Panel, meet criterion (a).
- (f) Animals and fictitious characters will not be considered for commemoration.
- (g) Proposals can be considered for the commemoration of buildings that have a historical significance worthy of public notice – other than a particular personal association – either because:
  - (i) a historical event of particular importance occurred there, or
  - (ii) the building had an important historical significance that is not obvious from its present appearance, use or any existing commemoration.

However, proposals in this category can be accepted and assessed only as resources permit, and at the discretion of English Heritage.

- (h) Although most plaques are erected on houses, flats and places of work associated with famous people, other types of building are not excluded. However, plaques shall not be erected to commemorate short term associations with educational or ecclesiastical buildings, military establishments, hospitals, hotels, private clubs, Inns of Court or royal palaces – or on any other building that is associated with so many well-known figures as to make the selection of an individual for commemoration inappropriate or invidious.
- (i) A plaque will only be placed on building fabric that is contemporary with or pre-dates the association being commemorated unless the circumstances are exceptional, and never on the site of a former residence or on buildings that have since been radically altered.
- (j) A plaque must be clearly visible from the public highway and will normally only be erected on a building and not on a boundary wall or gate pier.
- (k) Proposals will not be considered where a person's association with the relevant building is already clearly and permanently marked or commemorated in some way, by local authorities, privately, or under some other initiative.
- (l) Proposals will also not be considered where a person has already been

commemorated by a plaque previously erected elsewhere by English Heritage or its predecessors in running the official London-wide scheme: the Royal Society of Arts, the London County Council and the Greater London Council. Exceptionally, and at the discretion of English Heritage, figures commemorated in inner London (the former LCC area) may be considered for a second plaque in an outer London borough (outside the former LCC area).

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