

## Celebrating People and Places

Aberdeen's commemorative plaques celebrate people and places which have shaped the city, Scotland or beyond – people who have made outstanding achievements in their field, or buildings or events of historic significance.

Since 1978, Aberdeen City Council has overseen the erection of these plaques to ensure a consistent, recognisable scheme and make sure they are in line with relevant planning procedures. We publish further details about the people and places on our website and have regularly distributed a trail leaflet for those interested in exploring on foot.

Aberdeen City Council has two types of plaque:

- People Plaques – a blue circular plaque commemorating individuals and their connection to a particular building;
- Place Plaques - black rectangular plaques that mark historical sites and events.

## Criteria

The criteria for the scheme were revised in 2021.

### People Plaques

Plaques commemorating an individual should meet the following criteria.

The person should have:

- died at least 20 years ago AND have been born more than 100 years ago. This is to ensure that the decision whether to erect a plaque is made with a sufficient degree of hindsight.
- contributed to the rich social, political and cultural heritage of Aberdeen or have been an Aberdonian who impacted the world through their achievements, words or deeds.
- made a major contribution to their field within a Scottish context as a minimum. This could be as judged by their peers, such as an established award or prize; as judged by the public, where their achievements generate commercial success or popular acclaim; or based on informed assessment of the impact and legacy of their work to their field, by suitably qualified peers.

The site of the plaque should normally also be somewhere the individual(s):

- lived or worked for at least five years;

or

- was born;

or

- made their discovery or achieved their accomplishment.

Collective applications for groups of individuals will be considered against the same criteria.

### **Place Plaques**

Plaques commemorating an event, site or building should meet the following criteria.

The event should:

- have occurred at least 50 years ago. This is to ensure that the decision whether to erect a plaque is made with a sufficient degree of hindsight.
- have impacted on a significant number of Aberdeen residents.
- reflect the rich social, political or cultural heritage of Aberdeen.
- be specifically associated with the location at which the plaque is to be erected.

The building or site should either:

- be of particular architectural importance.
- be historically important as a survival of a particular period.
- have a connection with a series of historic events; or
- have a connection with a significant business or industry.

The location should be such that the event or site is focussed near or at the vicinity of the proposed plaque

### **Applying for a plaque**

1. If you are interested in erecting a new plaque, please get in touch with us as soon as possible. We can talk you through the process and can often share existing research on the person or place you are interested in. Contact us at [plaques@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:plaques@aberdeencity.gov.uk) or 01224 337719.
2. The costs of manufacturing and erecting the plaque will need to be covered by you or your organisation, so please consider how you will fund this. Recently this has been in the region of £1000 but specific costs will be confirmed at the time. No notice of sponsorship will appear on the plaque itself but can be added to the website entry.
3. Doing the research is often the most interesting aspect of any plaque application, and there is plenty of help available across Aberdeen City Council if you want it. The teams across Aberdeen Archives, Gallery & Museums and Local Studies will be happy to guide you towards local resources and provide advice. You'll also find some useful links at the end of this guide.
4. Complete the application form, making sure to provide the following information:



- a. Why you think the individual(s), place or event should be commemorated – explain how the individual(s), place or event meets the criteria above.
- b. The street address of where you would like the plaque to go – again, explain how it meets the criteria above.
  - i. Please note you should not approach the building owner until we've checked your application, as the Council will determine the final location of the plaque.
  - ii. It's useful if you're able to take a photo and mark where you'd like the plaque to go but this is not essential.
- c. Include copies of any research you've done, such as birth/death certificates, census records or other proof of address as separate pdf documents where possible.

## What happens next?

1. We review your application to make sure it meets the scheme's criteria and then work with you to agree where the plaque would go.
2. It's then up to you to apply for any listed building consent required and get written permission from the building's owner(s), stating that they are happy for the plaque to be erected.
3. The application is then put before the Council's City Growth and Resources Committee for a formal decision.
4. Once the committee has approved the plaque, we agree final wording and costs with you before ordering and arranging for the plaque to be erected. You will be invoiced at this point.
  - a. We will confirm a date for erecting the plaque with the building owner and make every effort to let you know too.
  - b. We will work with you on any opportunities for promotion and publicity
5. All newly erected plaques are added to our database and website, crediting any sponsor(s), with images of the plaque in situ as soon as reasonably practical. We'll send you a specific link to the webpage.
6. We will retain your application details in line with data protection legislation.

## What if my application is unsuccessful?

We will work with you to make sure your application is as strong as it can be. If we still feel the application does not meet the criteria, we pass the application details to the Chief Officer of City Growth for a decision, after consultation with the Convener of the City Growth and Resources Committee.

In practice, applications are most likely to fail because the building owner(s) either do not reply or do not consent to requests to erect plaques. In these cases, we will retain your application and research notes (although not your personal details) in case there is another opportunity in the future.

## Funding sources

- [Aberdeen City Council Common Good Fund](#)
- [National Lottery Heritage Fund Community Grants](#)
- [Aberdeen City Council Creative Funding Awards](#)
- [Memorial Grants Scheme](#) administered by the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sports- currently has funding available until 31/03/22.
- [Gerry Holdsworth Special Forces Charitable Trust](#) - this fund is for plaques at historic sites and buildings associated with Special Operations Executive (SOE) and special forces, and contributions towards the cost of memorials relating to SOE and special forces.

## Useful Research Resources

- [Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums Collections](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives](#)
- [Aberdeen City Local Studies](#) and their [Silver City Vault](#)
- Historic Environment Scotland's [Canmore](#)
- National Library of Scotland's [Digitised Historic Post Office Directories](#)
- [British Newspaper Archive](#) (subscription service, free access at Aberdeen City Libraries)
- [Scotland's People](#) (census and birth, marriage and death records)
- [Oxford Dictionary of National Biography](#) (sign in with City Library card)
- [University of Aberdeen's Special Collections Centre](#)

## Definitions

We: Aberdeen City Council, and more specifically staff working in the Archives, Gallery & Museums service. A single curator or archivist is assigned to each new enquiry or application, to help the nominator through the process and then make recommendations to the City Growth and Resources committee. We try to make sure you always talk to the same individual but may share work behind the scenes, or provide cover for staff absence.

Nominator: The individual or group nominating an individual, event or building for recognition with a plaque.

People Plaques: commemorating the lives of outstanding individuals who have contributed to the development of the city, the history of the region or who are of international standing. Previously referred to as a Commemorative Plaques.

Place Plaques: commemorate a significant historic event that took place in that building or site; or to highlight the part played by such a building or site in the history of the city. Previously known as Court Plaques.

