

# GREEN HERITAGE PLAQUES

**Showcasing Sustainable Buildings  
for a Climate-Resilient Future**

**Build Better, Use Less [White Paper 3]  
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# Green Heritage Plaques:

## Introduction

Sustainability and decarbonisation of the built environment has become a critical consideration in the construction and design industry as the sector grapples with its significant contribution to the climate and biodiversity crisis.

As a forward-thinking and responsible real estate development company, Grenadier Estates recognises the urgent need for a paradigm shift in the way we develop. Our experiences tell us that we need to showcase the best green buildings, to inspire others and share knowledge: **Green Heritage Plaques** is our answer.

This abridged white paper discusses how our green building heritage should be celebrated for impact and proposes the UK Green Building Council create a system of nominating, issuing, and mapping Green Heritage Plaques. By creating emblems of responsible construction and providing enhanced status to green buildings Grenadier believes we can all achieve **Sustainability by Design**.

### Acknowledgements:

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### SCOPE

This paper is not designed to be holistic or solve all the problems, it is designed to be a tool for action, to inspire further conversation and collaboration. It will be naïve to some and antagonistic to others. It reflects our experience, not advice. It is not a critique of the suppliers and professionals we have used.

We are happy for others to use and share this document and the ideas within it provided they acknowledge Grenadier Estates.

## Current Context

Blue plaques are a recognised symbol in the United Kingdom - permanent signs mounted on buildings across the United Kingdom and elsewhere - which serve as historical markers that connect a famous person, event or former building to a specific location. They tell stories, give significance and generate a sense of pride in our history and achievements. There are many issuers of plaques but the most recognised are the blue plaques issued by English Heritage.

But in an era where environmental consciousness must take centre stage, it feels like a missed opportunity that the concept of 'Green Plaques' has not yet been established as a historical marker to celebrate sustainable building design and construction practices.

This whitepaper delves into the significance, and potential impact of Green Plaques, and urges the UK Green Buildings Council to adopt the Green Plaques initiative and develop a 'sustainable buildings network' as a means to inspire others to build better for a greener future.

## Grenadier's Green Plaques

The notion of Green Plaques emerged from Grenadier's need to tangibly showcase and celebrate buildings that champion sustainability. As concerns about climate change, resource depletion, and urbanisation intensify, the construction industry needs to embrace greener alternatives and trial green building innovations to build for a greener future. Green Plaques provide an opportunity to recognise and reward these responsible efforts, serving as visible emblems of responsible urban development.

To launch this initiative, Grenadier Estates will be erecting 3 Green Plaques on its developments to recognise and celebrate their buildings' unique green features, for example the first grade II\* listed building in the UK to achieve an EPC A rating. However, there is no regulation of this activity or criteria that needs to be met. Moreover, there is no industry or public awareness of this.

## The Positive Impact of Green Plaques

1. **Encouraging Innovation** - The award of Green Plaques encourages innovation in architectural design, construction methods, and material sourcing. Architects, developers and contractors will want a Green Plaque as a badge of honour and if the criteria are set correctly will be compelled to explore novel solutions that align with sustainability criteria, thus fostering a culture of creativity in the industry.
2. **Setting Industry Standards** - Green Plaques could establish a minimum benchmark for sustainable construction, encouraging industry-wide adoption of eco-friendly practices. Or alternatively only buildings that are either EPC A or BREEAM Excellent can apply so the minimum criteria is already high.
3. **Informing Others** - Green Plaques would serve as educational tools, not only celebrating sustainable structures that designers and developers could visit for inspiration but also raising awareness among the public about the importance of environmentally conscious construction. These will spark wider conversations about sustainable practices.
4. **Fostering Community and Resident Engagement** Green Plaques will promote community engagement by showcasing a building's commitment to the local environment. This encourages community participation in sustainable initiatives. It will also foster a sense of pride for residents in knowing that their buildings are part of the Net Zero journey, or their city has the most number of plaques.
5. **Purpose Driven Marketing and Selling** - Green Plaques allow a genuine value driven marketing narrative to be established by developers and landowners. There is already a strong correlation between house prices and energy efficiency.
6. **Enhancing Urban Aesthetics** - Beyond their environmental impact, Green Plaques enhance urban aesthetics by introducing a visual representation of sustainability to the cityscape. These markers symbolise progress and inspire a sense of pride among residents and tenants, fostering a stronger connection between communities and their built environment.

## Our Suggested Solution

We believe that working within existing frameworks and processes is an important principle that allows change to happen within traditional systems.

Accordingly, to make the potential impacts a reality we believe that a trusted and credible body such as the UK Green Building Council should develop the processes and guidance for a national Green Plaque network in the same way that Heritage England do for Blue Plaques. These processes could include:

1. **Nomination process** - a dedicated process with appropriate application criteria to ensure that only the best applications are submitted.
2. **Convening an Issuing Board** - a board of experts to consider applications and issue plaques to ensure credibility of the Green Plaques.
3. **Interactive Online Map** - creating a searchable map to show where Green Plaques have been issued, to encourage others to visit and learn more.
4. **QR Codes** - embedding QR codes on plaques which link to a case study providing more information on why the plaque was issued.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Grenadier Estates believes that the creation of a Green Plaque network is crucial to drive meaningful change in the construction and design industry. By highlighting best practice buildings can be a beacon of hope to inspire others to adopt sustainable practices and to create a more climate-resilient and sustainable future. That can be our legacy as an industry, and this is **Sustainability by Design**.

