

LONDON ASSEMBLY

Tony Arbour AM, Chairman of the London Assembly

Kate Mavor
Chief Executive Officer
English Heritage
The Engine House
Fire Fly Avenue
Swindon
SN2 2EH



City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA
United Kingdom

14 November 2018

Dear Kate,

Thank you for your letter of 3 October.

The London Assembly commends English Heritage on ensuring that 50 per cent of all plaques installed since 2016 honour women, but the fact that women still only make up 14 per cent of plaques in London must be addressed urgently.

The Assembly is concerned that the archaic rules inherited by English Heritage that govern the scheme are hindering any real progress in increasing the number of women commemorated. Placing plaques only on surviving buildings is a disservice to the ideas and historical achievements of all Londoners, and the communities they lived in. Celebrating the relationship between people and place is worthy and integral to the scheme, however recognition of the contributions to society by Londoners should not be frustrated by a lack of bricks and mortar.

The London Assembly recognises that English Heritage has called for suitable names for women to be commemorated, and we are keen to support your calls for additional nominations. We are therefore inviting Londoners to submit nominees of female Londoners who they think deserve to be honoured with a Blue Plaque. We hope that this will be greeted with the spirit in which it is delivered, in order to boost your bid to increase the number of women being commemorated.

We do however urge you to take this opportunity to review the rules by which the Blue Plaque scheme is governed. When we present you with our nominations, resulting from this public campaign, we will, on behalf of Londoners, be looking for swift action by English Heritage rather than excuses. It is time for change.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Arbour". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tony Arbour AM
Chairman of the London Assembly