

# **Design & Access Statement**

## **Application for Listed Building Consent for Midsomer Plaques to be installed on Listed Buildings in Thame**

by Helen Johns, Agent for Thame  
Town Council, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018

# **Design & Access Statement**

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## **Design and Access Statement**

### **Application for Listed Building Consent for Midsomer Plaques to be installed on Listed Buildings in Thame**

**Compiled by Helen Johns, Agent for Thame Town Council, 18.07.18**

## **Part One: Setting the Scene**

### **i) About Midsomer tourism in Thame**

Midsomer is a major visitor attraction. Thousands come to 'Midsomer County' and the numbers are growing. People around the world see *Midsomer Murders* on their TV screens and want to visit the towns and villages they see on television. The show is watched by 6.5m in the UK and is one of our biggest TV exports: Sweden has audiences of 1.65m and it's rated in the Top 3 in Denmark and Top 20 in Australia. The fact that filming began over 2 decades ago doesn't affect market demand. The series is still going strong, with re-runs in many countries and a new series being televised in 2018.

Thame is one of the most frequently used filming locations and regularly features either as Causton or as any one of the many villages in Midsomer County. The fact that some countries are now seeing the earlier episodes for the first time ensures Thame is regularly on screen.

Thame landmarks such as Thame Town Hall, the Market House, Rumsey's Chocolaterie, the historic Swan and Spread Eagle Hotels, the Black Horse Pub Brasserie, have been featured in different episodes, as well as other locations.

When people come to Thame, they want to *arrive in Midsomer*.

### **ii) Three Midsomer objectives**

A Midsomer Workshop was held in Thame in June 2016, attended by 50 representatives of local businesses, supported partly by Thame Town Council and partly by Thame's Great British High Street Competition prize fund. At this workshop, it was recognised that businesses engaging directly with the concept of Midsomer experienced quantifiable growth as a result, as other Midsomer destinations such as Henley-on-Thames and Watlington have found. To maximise the opportunities, it was agreed that visitors should have as enjoyable a Midsomer experience as possible, and three specific actions were agreed:

- Develop a new Midsomer walking trails leaflet for Thame
- Initiate regular Midsomer tours of Thame
- Propose Midsomer plaques on buildings used as filming locations

Two of these projects have been delivered -

- Regular weekly one-hour tours from April to October, led by specially trained volunteers - now in their second successful year
- New Midsomer walking trail leaflet for Thame produced, jointly funded by SODC and Thame Town Council. Reprinted for 2018 with 10,000 copies being distributed in hotels, B & Bs, pubs, cafes as well as elsewhere in Thame and the surrounding area

The third project is the Midsomer plaques, the subject of the present planning application. In 2017, an application for 12 plaques was made to SODC's Planning Department. However, after much deliberation, this application was not approved. Taking on board the reasons given for non-approval, it was decided to submit a revised application for six plaques on selected listed buildings used as filming locations. This revised submission forms the present application.

### **iii) A focal point for historic buildings**

Midsomer is one of the top tourist attractions across the Chilterns and south Oxfordshire. Thame is a hub for visitors to Midsomer County, with many buildings featured in the TV series.

The plaques highlight historic buildings in the town, because they act as a focal point for the buildings themselves, and people viewing the plaques will also be interested to learn about the buildings. They aren't 'integral' to the heritage of the buildings but they help to develop interest in those buildings, generating public support for our heritage. The Midsomer plaques provide a highly effective conduit to showcase Thame and its historic buildings, just as Thame's blue plaques have done.

Thame's blue plaques commemorate famous figures such as W B Yeats and Robin Gibb of the Bee Gees. Although they lived in historic listed buildings they could not be said to be 'integral' to the history of the buildings any more than the Midsomer plaques are. When submitted to SODC for listed building consent over ten years ago, the blue plaques were approved without issue. In addition, a (non-historic) plaque to commemorate the Rotary Club of Thame was approved and installed on the exterior of the Grade 2\* listed Spread Eagle Hotel in 2004/5 without objection (see illustration on page 10).

The plaques would provide a constant presence, attracting Midsomer fans and acting as a magnet for visitors throughout the year. Although Thame's Midsomer association is commemorated through the guided tours and the walking trail leaflets, these may not be seen by all visitors 100% of the time: the tours are held once a week during the summer months, and the leaflets may not be as actively displayed in the winter. The Causton Town Hall sign, brought out from the Town Hall for tourist photography when requested, is unavailable when it's closed.

Thame has gained a reputation for innovation, and was the first town in the country to have developed a neighbourhood plan. This has done the town much good - it won an RTPI Award. Midsomer plaques offer another opportunity to be innovative. We believe this is something that can be achieved in a way that –

- integrates well within Thame's historic environment
- is unhampered by an over-cautious approach
- stands up to robust scrutiny.

#### **iv) Economic benefits**

As well as generating public interest in the buildings on which the Midsomer plaques would be installed, the economic benefits for Thame are clear and can be supported with evidence of increased tourist numbers and spending to strengthen local businesses.

At a time when the High Street needs as much support as it can get, increased tourism will help Thame's independent retailers and related businesses to prosper and survive. Visitors will spend money in Thame's pubs, restaurants, cafes, specialist retailers and delicatessens. Visitors spending more time in the area will stay in local hotels, guest houses and inns.

*'Rumsey's enjoys a number of customers visiting due to our Midsomer links, however there are also a large number of people who aren't aware (both tourists and locals) and we really think the plaque will help us deliver this message in a tasteful way.'* **Kate Rumsey, Rumsey's Chocolaterie**

- Impact of Midsomer tours in Thame – nearly 200 attendees in first 6 months of 2017, compared to c.50 in Henley in their first year. Income goes to support local good causes (over £300 to the Mayor's Charities), and Midsomer promotion.
- Success of Midsomer trail leaflet – 4000 distributed in just 6 months last year, 10,000 reprinted for 2018.
- Thame Museum, a treasure house for local history and artefacts, benefits financially from 'the Midsomer effect' as a booking facility and start point for the weekly tours. One third of revenues received goes to support its work.
- Coaches arrive in Thame throughout the tourist season, bringing Midsomer visitors.
- The Spread Eagle is taking part in a new Midsomer-themed package for 2019 with a local travel firm, based on coach plus walking tour with lunch.
- The Midsomer team are working with Visit Buckinghamshire to develop Midsomer tourism for 2018/19.
- The Midsomer team are developing a combined Thame walking tour/ steam trip/cream tea offering with Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway which will be trialled during September & October this year.
- SODC invested £000s in *Visit Midsomer* website because they saw the economic benefits. It gets over 200,000 visits a year and is now managed by the Thame, Henley and Watlington town coordinators.

#### **v) Support of local councils**

Both SODC and Thame Town Council have contributed to the funding of Midsomer tourism projects. SODC owns the Market House building in Thame, one of the filming locations, and SODC's property department has approved the installation of a Midsomer plaque on the building. In addition, SODC's economic development team has approved the plaque artwork and proposed location (see Appendix 2) and agreed to contribute to the cost of plaque production and installation, as other building owners have done.

Thame Town Council are fully supportive of the Midsomer plans, including installation on properties they own (the Town Hall and the Museum). At a full meeting of Thame Town Council in April 2017 the Midsomer plaques project was 100% endorsed as a means of contributing to the heritage and tourism appeal of the town as a popular destination for visitors from the UK and overseas, as well as contributing to the town's economy and continuing prosperity (see Appendix 3).

The application also has 100% approval from Thame Town Council's planning and environment committee. The council's support for the application is matched by support from other parties, including local businesses and figures in the tourism industry.

## **Part Two: Plaque Specifications and Installation**

#### **i) Composition and fixing method**

Signs of the Times has been selected to produce the plaques as designers, manufacturers and suppliers of signs and decorative panels for 30 years (<https://www.signsofthetimes.co.uk/>), located at Tebworth, near Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. They have acquired a vast wealth of knowledge concerning the placement of signs, and have valuable insight into the ways that clients' needs can best be met. Signs are hand-made using a flexible variety of materials and methods. They have specified the Midsomer plaques -

- Produced in encapsulated aluminium. The artwork is digitally printed onto aluminium which is then coated with a 10-year tough clear plastic coating
- Size - 254mm, 300mm or 350mm diameter x 3mm aluminium circle (and see comments under iii) *Sizing and Location*, page 7)
- Digitally printed to face
- Tough clear coating
- Drilled for wall mounting and supplied with brass dome-headed screws painted to match. Drilling would consist of just two holes on the centre line, horizontal or vertical
- To avoid plaques being fitted flush to the wall, so they stand off from ancient and uneven stonework, 'spacers' would be supplied. This is a small piece of aluminium tube that fits over the screw between the wall and the plaque, thus leaving breathing space (see illustration (A) on page 9, showing method of plaque fixing and installation).

- To deter unauthorised removal of the plaques, security screws which can only be removed using a special tool would be supplied. The security fixings are steel/silver colour with pan heads. They can be inset a little so they are not obvious.

The guidelines laid down in English Heritage's *Celebrating People and Places: guidance on commemorative plaques and plaque schemes* will be scrupulously followed (see Appendix 4 for excerpts) -

- Surface-mounting preferable to inset, and easily removable for cleaning or refurbishment. (By comparison, see illustration (B) on page 10, showing John Fothergill inset plaque on Spread Eagle, which is more invasive / damaging to the building than the surface-mounted option, and not easily removed)
- Cathy Power, English Heritage blue plaques business manager, commented on the choice of encapsulated aluminium as material, enclosed within tough clear plastic coating: she said the advantages included being lightweight, flexible, having little intervention with the fabric of a building, and lifespan can be between 35-50 years
- Method of fixing – solid brass dome-headed screws with plastic insulation washer to minimise possible corrosion between metal-on-metal
- Horizontal rather than vertical access has more aesthetic appeal and makes it easier to screw into mortar course rather than brickwork, without leaving a permanent hole. Horizontal access combined with smaller size of plaques means only two screws required. (By comparison, see illustration (B) on page 10 showing Colombs hanging sign on Swan Hotel, which has two of four screws drilled into brickwork)

By way of illustration, can we instance two precedents –

- Newbury blue plaque scheme – currently 7 plaques installed, with listed building consent given for 6 of the plaques on listed buildings, based on screws drilled into mortar joints rather than into brickwork. Where buildings are rendered, consent given for plaques affixed with matching screws.
- Petersfield blue plaque scheme: encapsulated aluminium plaques installed in 17 listed building locations using two fixings into mortar course – David Jeffery, organiser, says they've lasted well since installation in 2008.

## **ii) Colour**

The colour proposed for the Midsomer plaques is a muted shade of red already used as the 'brand' colour for Visit Midsomer tourism. It is our view that this is tasteful and in keeping with the mostly red brickwork of the buildings, and that it's preferable to the bright blue of the blue plaques, which are highly visible as well as considerably larger than the proposed Midsomer plaques.

## **iii) Sizing and location**

Photographs showing suggested locations for the plaques are provided (see Appendix 1). All locations have been approved by building owners and tenants.

The size of the plaques is being sensitively varied to suit each location and look tasteful. Two would be larger (350mm diameter) to increase visibility/legibility at first-floor height, while the other four would be smaller (254 or 300mm, subject to tests in situ) at ground-floor level, mostly adjacent to entranceways. The differences in location contribute to the diversity of the project, so that no single location is duplicated, and the plaques aren't all at eye-level.

We are happy to work with SODC's planning department regarding the exact positioning of the plaques.

Six plaques on a small number of the 200-plus listed buildings in Thame, well-spaced along the High Street and Upper High Street, cannot be considered excessive. They will add interest to the town centre landscape and to the buildings on which they appear, overcoming heritage concerns that Thame might become 'over-plaques'. By way of comparison, Petersfield installed 17 plaques in a market town of similar size to Thame in 2008, and they are very popular, increasing tourism to the town.

The Spread Eagle Hotel

300mm plaque, below existing Rotary plaque, to right of main Cornmarket entrance

The Swan Hotel

350mm plaque, above 'Come in for ...' sign to left of main entrance

Rumsey's Chocolaterie

300mm plaque, at eye level, to left of smaller shop window (giving on to chocolate kitchen)

Thame Museum

350mm plaque, on High Street frontage, at 2 o'clock above (unused) green front door, as per plan supplied by trustees

Thame Town Hall

300mm plaque, just above head height, to right of disabled toilet window on right of main entrance

Market House

300mm plaque, at eye level, on frontage to North Street, to left of unused Citizens' Advice 'front door' (greater visibility than main entrance to Citizens' Advice building, facing Montesson Square)

**iv) Installation and maintenance**

The utmost care will be taken with the method of fixing and installation, which would be carried out by Colin Cummins, a local builder, who has previously installed blue plaques on listed buildings in Thame. Colin has been in the building trade since 1972, and has worked on various school and hospital projects in conjunction with SODC and Bucks County Council. He has also worked on domestic projects, complying with building control regulations at all times. Colin confirms, 'We have looked at all the proposed Midsomer plaque installations in Thame. I cannot see any problems with any of the proposed positions of the wall



plaques or with the mounting of the plaques in these places. The project should be straightforward.'

Because the plaques would be fitted in accordance with English Heritage guidelines, any impact would be low and damage to the historic fabric of the buildings minimal. Should a plaque need to be removed for any reason, an invisible repair would be simple to achieve.

Responsibility for long-term maintenance and repair rests with the building owners, who have all given permission for the plaques to be installed. They are meticulous in their care of these buildings, and the plaques will become part of their ongoing maintenance routines.

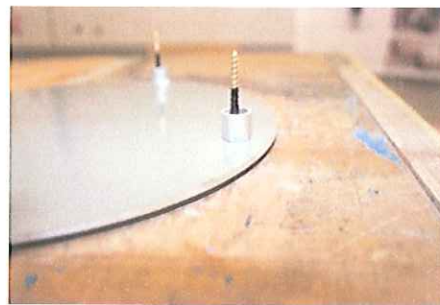
Over the years, care has been taken to ensure that buildings bearing blue plaques in Thame are well maintained and unharmed by the plaques. (However, in some cases, the blue plaques appear to have been cemented to the walls.) Statements can be obtained from other places (e.g. Newbury, Petersfield) where plaques have been installed on listed buildings, to demonstrate that harm has been minimal over time.

Some of the proposed buildings already display plaques and commercial signage (at the Spread Eagle - a Rotary sign as well as the Fothergill plaque; at the Swan - various brewery and welcome signs). While it's not clear how commercial signs could have been approved on listed buildings, the buildings appear to have suffered no harm from their presence.

**(A) Images to Show Method of Plaque Fixing and Installation**



Image showing screws from plaques to building



Close-up showing screws used for plaques



Image showing fixing and spacers

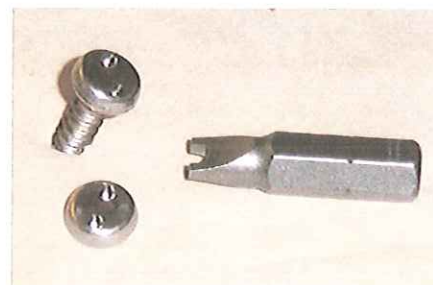


Image of security screws

**(B) Samples of Wall Fixings on Listed Buildings in Thame Town Centre for which Planning Permission was Granted**



Planning permission was granted for this fixing on part of the Swan Hotel building. The present application on the same building requires just 2 screws per plaque and is therefore less damaging to the building than the fixing above.



Two plaques on The Spread Eagle Hotel for which planning permission was granted. The Rotary plaque is of a similar size and fixing to those in this application. The blue plaque is cemented into the wall, much larger and significantly more damaging to the building than those in this application.



This Blue Plaque, which was granted planning permission, is screwed to the wall in a similar fashion to the plaques in this application, but is much larger than them.

## **Part Three: Cultural and Historic Benefits**

### **i) Cultural contribution**

Thame is a major hub for those wishing to visit Midsomer County. The economic benefits are clear, but so are the cultural benefits. People who come to Thame because of its Midsomer connections will also learn about a town they may not otherwise have visited, and discover facts about buildings of historic significance. The Midsomer plaques will enhance the historic buildings where they are installed, rather than detract from their heritage value. When people take Midsomer tours of Thame, they learn about the history of the buildings as well as the Midsomer aspects.

We believe TV fiction is as worthy of commemoration as other cultural achievements - TV has been the most influential medium of modern times, as stated by Melvyn Bragg in his programme *TV: The Box that Changed the World*.

DCI Barnaby of *Midsomer Murders* was created by the novelist Caroline Graham, who wrote the five books on which the TV series is based. The first, *The Killings at Badgers Drift*, was selected by the Crime Writers Association as one of the top crime novels of all time. Graham's creation spawned one of the most successful TV series of the last two decades, currently in its 21st year with an estimated global audience of one billion.

As a high-quality contemporary TV series with an excellent literary pedigree *Midsomer Murders* therefore merits recognition through plaques commemorating 'singular appearances' (or scenes). Tourists who come to 'Midsomer County' delight in visiting different locations they have seen on TV.

The *Midsomer Murders* plaques would be in good company - there are other examples of plaques commemorating crime writing and detective fiction. A plaque has been installed at St Aldates Police Station, Oxford, commemorating Inspector Morse of the highly successful *Inspector Morse* TV series. Blue plaques have been installed to commemorate crime writers such as Agatha Christie, Arthur Conan Doyle (creator of Sherlock Holmes), Dorothy L Sayers, and Graham Greene (most of whose novels have been screened).

### **ii) Historic value**

When does history stop? We contend it is a living process from the past to the present day. What should be judged as 'historically significant'? Fiction has played a major role in our history down the centuries, from Chaucer to contemporary writers such as J K Rowling and Hilary Mantel (both of whose works have been successfully translated to screen) and it's therefore appropriate to commemorate it on buildings through links to authors and the characters they created.

It's been said that some plaque subjects, perceived to be lacking a 'high level of historic interest', *devalue* the buildings on which they appear. But plaques devoted to literary characters and their authors also celebrate their contribution to our social and cultural history, whether contemporary or older.

Plaques commemorating inhabitants of buildings aren't always 'compatible' with the buildings' history, but they encourage interest both in the theme of the plaques and the buildings which bear them. Robin Gibb of the Bee Gees, who died in 2012 and whose blue plaque appears on Thame's Prebendal, has no connection with its Anglo-Saxon origins or history as the 'ancient heart of Thame', home to a community of monks over 4 centuries. At the Spread Eagle Hotel, John Fothergill is commemorated on a blue plaque as its colourful inn-keeper for a dozen or so years until 1934 – but the building dates back to the sixteenth century.

English Heritage have launched a new diversification initiative to commemorate wider parts of society with blue plaques, e.g. Laurie Cunningham (footballer, 2016), Stella Lady Reading (volunteering advocate, 2017), Mary MacArthur (women's rights campaigner, 2017), and an Anglo-Sikh heritage trail.

Plaques enhance buildings – they draw attention to historical and architectural features that may otherwise be missed by the visitor. People visiting Thame may be interested both in older and more recent history – ranging from a Midsomer filming location, the house where W B Yeats stayed for a while, or the pub that marks the first English bare-knuckle boxing champion in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Part Four: Screen Tourism**

### **i) Examples of screen tourism**

*Midsomer Murders* belongs to the cultural category of screen tourism, which dates back nearly 60 years. As stated earlier, TV is part of our heritage and perhaps the most significant cultural development of the twentieth century. *Midsomer Murders* has already lasted over 20 years and shows no sign of diminishing in popularity, either in Thame or globally. Other successful examples of screen tourism include –

#### James Herriot

His books about a country vet's practice became a highly successful TV series, *All Creatures Great and Small* (1975). 'The World of James Herriot' <http://www.worldofjamesherriot.com/group-visits/> is a major visitor attraction in Thirsk, North Yorkshire, winning the 2014 White Rose Tourism Awards. At the heart of 'Herriot Country' is the village of Askrigg, the location of Skeldale House, used as the practice location. Today, as a B & B it's 75% full all year round and 60% come from the UK, Germany, Holland and the USA because of the Herriot connection. See <http://www.worldofjamesherriot.com/tv-locations/>.

#### Dr Finlay's Casebook

A TV series of worldwide renown, first televised between 1962-71, based on A J Cronin's short stories. It had 12 million viewers, and was televised again in 2012, see <http://www.reelscotland.com/bbc-alba-to-reopen-dr-finlays-casebook/>. Thousands of visitors go to see Arden House in the fictional town of Tannochbrae - actually Callander in Perthshire - where the series was filmed.

Callander Enterprise report that today, over 50 years on, they still get a stream of visitors from places such as Australia and New Zealand, where the series still runs on TV.

### Dad's Army

A statue of Captain Mainwaring from the BBC series *Dad's Army* (first shown 1968-77) was unveiled in 2010 in Thetford, Norfolk, where many scenes were filmed. The life-size bronze of Arthur Lowe's character is seated on a bench between the Old Anchor Hotel, used in the first episode, and the Bell Hotel, where the actors stayed. 80 limited edition miniature Captains were also sold to raise funds for the Dad's Army Museum, which, during the 2016 season, received an amazing 10,000 visitors.

## **ii) Maximising economic benefit from screen tourism**

A report on screen tourism, *Quantifying Film and Television Tourism in England*, was produced by Olsberg SPI and released under the auspices of Creative England and Visit England in 2015

<http://applications.creativeengland.co.uk/assets/public/resource/140.pdf>.

Amongst its findings, it states that screen tourism generated between £100 - £140 million for the UK economy in 2014 – these figures will doubtless be higher today. It states that locations should carefully consider how to cater for screen tourists alongside their existing tourism offer. Close links should be developed between tourism agencies and others to produce and distribute high quality information.

The survey also found that heritage buildings were popular with screen tourists, and that the dramatic portrayal of 'traditional' England, evoking heritage, serves as a very powerful driver for inbound tourists.

The contribution of heritage tourism to the UK economy is vital, and there are impressive statistics to back this up. *The Impact of Heritage Tourism for the UK Economy*, published by Oxford Economics (2016), states -

- There were 192 million heritage-motivated trips in the UK in 2015
- £17.5 billion was spent on heritage-motivated trips in 2015
- The contribution of heritage tourism to GDP was £20.2 billion in 2015

## **iii) Effects of TV and film on historic properties**

Here are just a few examples that show the massive (largely beneficial) effects of TV and film on historic properties and sites. Conversations have been held with owners and managers, which demonstrate their positive views on the introduction of Midsomer plaques.

- Chavenage House and Poldark

A historic property dating back to the ninth century, lived in by the same family since 1874. It's been used as the setting for *Lark Rise to Candleford*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Wolf Hall*, *Poirot* and many others. Today it's famous as the filming location for *Poldark*, which has

transformed visitor numbers by over 200% in two years - parties of 30 have become parties of 200. There's a *Poldark* page on their website. The income that filming has brought is essential for the upkeep of the house – almost all proceeds go into this. As the family say, 'It's the house that made the money so it's the house that should get the money'.

Caroline Lowsley-Williams, office manager and family member, thought the *Midsomer* plaques are a great idea, as Thame is a filming hub for the Midsomer area. She felt the knock-on effect in terms of economic benefit would be overwhelming, as visitors would spend money while they were there. At Chavenage, as a single destination, they don't need 'props' like plaques (though they have *Poldark* photos on the walls), but she thought plaques were a very nice way of drawing people to Thame and could not see why anyone would object.

- Scotland, *Outlander* and *James Bond*

Ruth Miller, cultural and screen tourism marketing manager with Visit Scotland, knows Thame. She felt the Midsomer plaques would provide a 'point of inspiration', and that people would get so much more out of their visit besides seeing the plaques. She thinks there's an 'immersion' aspect - Midsomer portrays a 'quintessential England' which is timeless and can be enjoyed all year round.

She spoke about 'the *Outlander* effect' - the dramatic explosion in visitor numbers at historic sites used as filming locations for the hit historical time-travel drama series *Outlander* (based on Diana Gabaldon's books), which had its UK terrestrial TV debut in June 2017 (previously on Amazon Prime). Dramatic increases in visitor numbers have been recorded at Blackness Castle (up 72%), Doune Castle (up 50%), Aberdour Castle (up 58%), Linlithgow Palace (up 43%). *Outlander* is seen as the new 'Braveheart' of tourism, for its ability to attract international visitors to locations across Scotland.

Stephen Duncan, director of commercial and tourism, Historic Environment Scotland, said, 'Featuring in *Outlander* has opened up our sites to a whole new audience, inspiring more and more visitors to come and discover the history behind these places, *further demonstrating the enduring value and significance of heritage attractions in Scotland*'.

Anna Rathband, filming manager, National Trust for Scotland, also mentioned the impact of *Skyfall* (James Bond), filmed in Glencoe and released in 2011. People still visit to see where it was filmed. The impact on the local economy has been very positive – life-saving in some cases. There is also a major benefit because properties can be renovated thanks to income generated from visitor traffic.

#### iv) Plaques with fictional themes

There are many precedents for plaques with fictional themes, and we believe it's likely that these will increase in the future, given the beneficial effects on local economies and visitor numbers. Some examples -

##### David Bowie, Ziggy Stardust

A plaque commemorating Ziggy Stardust, the fictional character created by David Bowie, was installed by the Crown Estate in Heddon St, London W1 in 1972. It marks the spot where Bowie was first photographed as Ziggy.

##### Lara Croft

A blue plaque (erected 2007) commemorating Lara's 1996 'birthplace' at the former offices of Core Design (her creators) in Ashbourne Road, Derby. Lara Croft, archaeologist and raider of antiquities, is heroine of the video game *Tomb Raider*, also appearing in sequels, printed adaptations, animated short films, feature films (portrayed by Angelina Jolie), and related merchandise.

##### James Herriot

A blue plaque on the building in Kirkgate, Thirsk, where James Alfred Wight, the real-life veterinary surgeon and author who wrote the James Herriot books lived, with the wording 'His stories and characters were portrayed in film and television as *All Creatures Great and Small*'.

##### Sherlock Holmes

A blue plaque commemorating the famous detective at '221b Baker Street' was placed on the wall of the Sherlock Homes Museum in 1990, even though the Museum isn't at 221b Baker Street, and the numbering of Baker Street didn't extend that far when the stories were written!

##### Robin Hood

Four green wall plaques outside Castle Gate House in Nottingham, illustrating stories of *Robin Hood and His Merry Men*, erected in 2006. A blue plaque commemorating Robin Hood also exists at Wentbridge (a place name mentioned in *A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode*). A wall plaque marking the start of the 106-mile Robin Hood Way, supported by Nottingham County Council and the Countryside Commission, was erected in 1985.

##### Bram Stoker - Dracula

Stoker had the idea for *Dracula* (1897) in Whitby - the backdrop for many scenes. A blue plaque, 'Bram Stoker (1847-1912) author of *Dracula* stayed here 1890-1896', was placed by Whitby Civic Society on the building where he stayed. *Dracula* tourism is huge in Whitby, with two Gothic weekends a year. Thousands of people come dressed up in Gothic style for happenings and events, including Gothic shops, in the town and at Whitby Abbey. A black plaque was installed there in 1980 with the wording, 'The view from this spot inspired Bram Stoker to use Whitby as the setting of part of his world-famous novel *Dracula*'.

## Graham Greene – Centenary of Cinema

A film cell plaque to Graham Greene, 'screenwriter, film critic and writer', was placed in Nottingham, in association with the British Film Institute, commemorating the centenary of cinema in 1996. Greene spent time in Nottingham and it's mentioned in several of his books, which were also filmed.

## North Wales Movie Trail

The North Wales Film & Television Trail began with a series of plaques to commemorate film and television locations across North Wales. 13 plaques were installed in various locations by 2004, with a further 20 or so planned, funded through the Welsh Development Agency and Gwynedd Council, and administered by Wales Screen. There was a website and other support. When the Welsh Government took over in 2007, changing priorities meant the previous partnerships and models were dissolved. The website statistics and data on visitor numbers are no longer available, but a list of future plaques planned is. This includes a plaque to commemorate *Death and Dust*, an episode of *Midsomer Murders* filmed in North Wales, first screened in 2007.

Wales Screen approached the owners of private buildings on which the plaques would be placed (hotels, a museum, a holiday camp, a retail premises etc) and got their agreement, as well as the permission of the planning authorities for the plaques to be installed. Launch ceremonies were held at the 13 plaque locations and they are still in place -

- *Carry on Up the Khyber*, 1968, at Electric Mountain Visitor Centre, Llanberis
- *The Forsyte Saga*, 2002, at Grand Hotel, Llandudno
- *Hedd Wyn*, 1992, at Llys Ednowain Heritage Centre, Trawsfynydd
- *Hilary and Jackie*, 1998, at White Horse Inn, Cilcain
- *Holiday on the Buses*, 1974, on front gate, Pontins, Prestatyn
- *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, 1958, at Woodcraft Shop, Beddgelert
- *Labrats*, 2001, outside Yale's Wine Bar, Hill Street, Wrexham
- *Life & Times of David Lloyd George*, 1981, outside Lloyd George Museum, Llanystumdwy
- *The Prisoner*, 1966-68, Prisoner Shop, Portmeirion
- *Tomb Raider 2 – Lara Croft and the Cradle of Life*, 2003, Seiont Manor Hotel, Llanrug near Caernarfon
- *Wales v Ireland Football International (1906)*, The Racecourse, Wrexham AFC (oldest surviving footage of a football international)
- *Y Chwarelwr (The Quarryman)*, 1935, Llechwedd Visitor Centre
- *Western Approaches*, 1944, outside Air Raid Shelter next to Holyhead Maritime Museum, Holyhead, Anglesey

## Other plaques commemorating fictional themes or characters

- *The Wicker Man* (British Lion, 1973), grey plaque on Whithorn Public Library, Dumfries & Galloway
- Diana Rigg, *The Avengers*, ABC TV, April 1963, blue plaque, Birmingham



- 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Coronation Street*, black plaque, celebrating visit of HRH Prince of Wales to Granada Studios, 2000
- '21 Years of *The Bill*, the nation's favourite police drama 1983-2004', grey plaque above Merton Studios, erected by the Heritage Foundation, 2004

## **Part Five: Alternatives**

### **i) Other promotional routes**

#### Window stickers

We investigated window stickers as an alternative, which would not affect the fabric of the buildings at all. None of the owners / managers of the proposed locations were keen on the window sticker option because –

- It would look cheap and transient, devaluing the Midsomer association
- It would interfere with the marketing messages they are seeking to put across regarding their own products / services, confusing the public
- It isn't practical – windows have to be cleaned, and cleaning means the sticker may become torn or lose its adhesive properties
- Some locations are unable to take a window sticker or do not have window apertures large enough (Town Hall)
- Some locations would not take window stickers as a matter of principle, unless legally obliged (Thame Museum)
- Because of these differences, consistency would be impossible
- The cost would be exorbitant for a mere handful of stickers, each with an individual message relating to that building; plaques are far more cost-effective because they are more durable over time
- Owners of buildings, in some cases with a long decision-making chain which was completed over several months (e.g. family trusts, distant owners etc), would have to be re-approached, taking up much time
- A specialist supplier would have to be researched, taking more time

#### A Statue

- We believe a statue would not be appropriate, as there are a number of Midsomer locations in Thame, and the plaques would pinpoint these perfectly, as well as highlighting the cultural and historic interest of the buildings generally. Where would the statue be appropriately sited?

#### Pavement Plaques

- Pavement plaques have been suggested as a possible option. However, these already exist as a Heritage Trail in Thame, and to add further plaques to the pavements would risk confusion as well as 'over-plaqueing'.

### **ii) Precedent - limiting other TV-related applications**

Should the risk of 'opening the flood gates' to other TV-related applications be considered a possibility, we suggest there are ways of managing this.

Very few TV shows have similar longevity and audience reach as *Midsomer Murders*. It should be possible to limit attempts by candidates with 'lesser' credentials to gain plaque status. The way to do this would be by establishing new rules and guidelines, set by SODC for its own use, governing applications from the world of TV fiction. These could include specifying shows with a longevity of xyz years, audience reach in excess of xyz millions, xyz international recognition etc. By any such measure *Midsomer Murders* qualifies, having had 20 years' continuous production, achieving over 6 million viewers for each new episode, and reaching global audiences of one billion in 100 countries.

We suggest that applications should only be eligible if fully endorsed by the appropriate local authority – in this case, Thame Town Council.

## **Part Six: Conclusion**

- The method of fixing is in line with English Heritage guidelines and ensures buildings remain breathable. The economic benefits far outweigh any possibility of physical damage to the properties. There is **no technical harm** to the buildings, as the method of plaque installation means the fabric of the buildings remains breathable. The installation is also **fully reversible**, should the plaques need to be removed for any reason - whether one or 100 years hence. Any possible 'visual harm' is minimal because the plaques will be tasteful and their size and location on the buildings carefully chosen.
- The owners of the six buildings where plaques are proposed have given their permission for plaques to be placed and support the project as a whole. Great care will be taken by the owners to ensure that the fabric of their buildings is not harmed by installation of the plaques. Their maintenance will be as thorough as it has always been.
- We believe the plaques secure 'optimum viable use' of the buildings, and that public benefit substantially outweighs any harm that might be occasioned by the installation of the plaques. Not only will they increase footfall and Midsomer tourism in Thame to the benefit of the town and its prosperity, they will help to stimulate interest in historic and listed buildings. Section 12 of the **National Planning Policy Framework** (March 2012), number 134, states that, '*Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use*'.
- Cultural accessibility is an important consideration. It counts in grant submissions when funding decisions are being made for capital projects and repairs. Promoting Midsomer and the plaques in Thame helps to increase the **cultural accessibility** of the town and its buildings. The

Midsomer tours cover general history as well as filming interest. The plaques act as a focal point, attracting visitors to sites of cultural and historic interest.

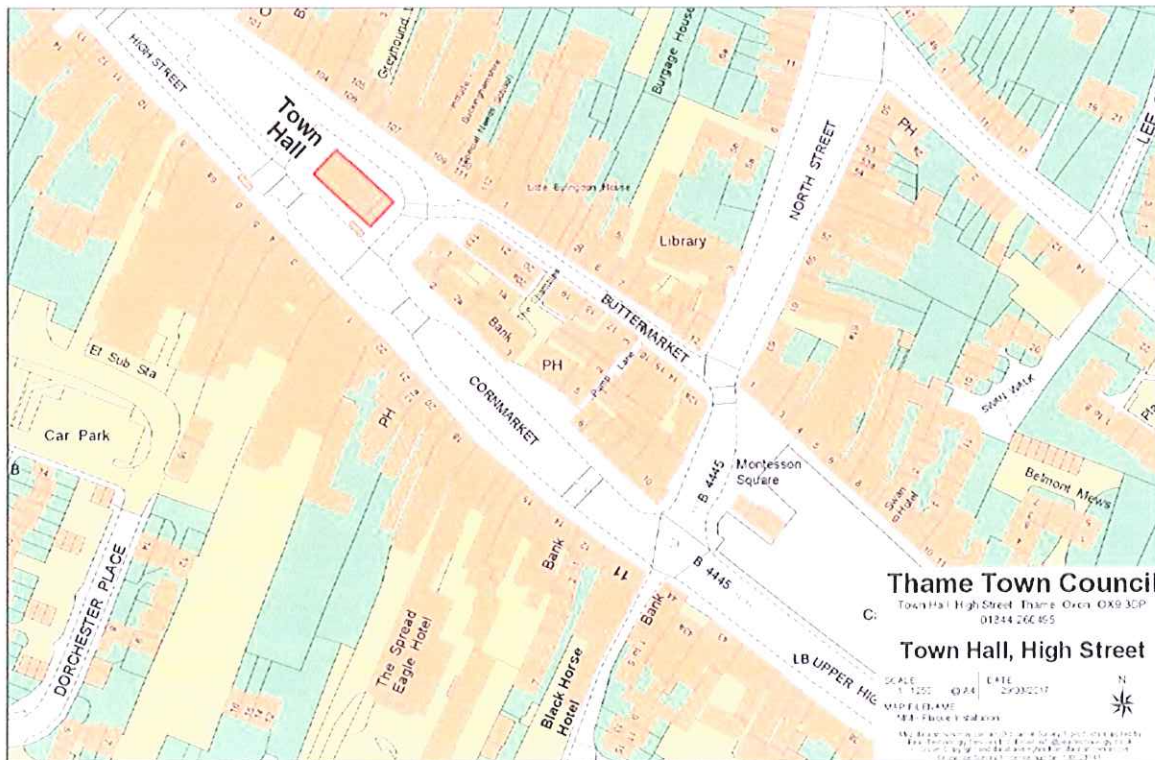
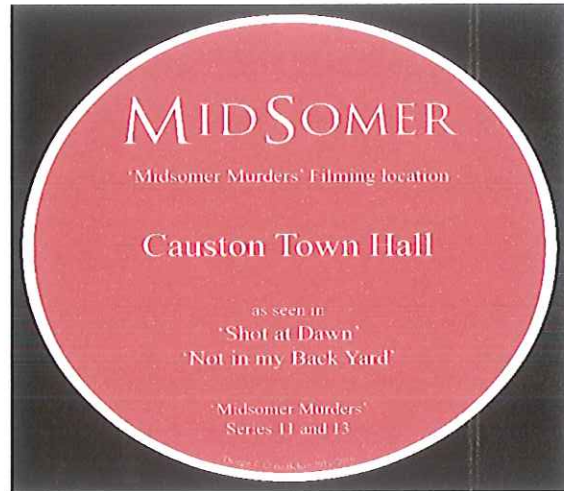
- The past should not dictate the future – the history and culture of societies run from the past to the present as a continuous stream, and the evaluation of our heritage changes over time. We should take account of modern developments as well as ancient ones. We believe that works of fiction, including contemporary works and those made for TV, are as worthy of commemoration as other persons, events or moments in history. There are many UK precedents for plaques which address fictional themes and characters, from Robin Hood to Sherlock Holmes and Ziggy Stardust, and this is likely to increase in future years.
- Screen tourism doesn't in any way downgrade buildings. In fact, they're **enhanced, culturally and economically**. The **economic benefit** is clear, because screen tourism brings footfall and consumer spend to the local economy at a time when 'bricks and mortar' retailers are under increasing pressure. In 2014, screen tourism generated between £100 million and £140 million for the UK economy (*Quantifying Film and Television Tourism in England*, 2015). There are many very significant historic buildings in the UK whose owners /managers do not feel their properties suffer 'reputational harm' from screen tourism. There are **cultural advantages**, because screen tourism brings visitors to historic buildings they might otherwise have been unaware of or not considered visiting. These buildings are being appreciated for their historic interest not just the screen link. There were 192 million heritage-motivated trips in the UK in 2015, with a total spend of £17.5 billion (*The Impact of Heritage Tourism for the UK Economy*, 2016).

*'Midsomer is now seen in over one hundred countries around the world and, as a result, draws in visitors to Thame and the surrounding areas from many of those places. Having a clear and professionally presented trail will encourage visitors to stay longer. Over the last eighteen months, I have personally talked to visitors from Denmark, Norway, New Zealand, Australia, Poland, Russia. Most recently I met with a group of people from Germany who told me that several groups from there had travelled specifically into the area because of Midsomer but were having problems tracking down some of the locations. I fail to see what valid objection SODC could have to the placing of the plaques. To decline permission would be a disservice to the town of Thame. The design of the plaques is tasteful and in character with the buildings of the town - I am aware some are Grade 2 listed. The plaques are designed to inform without being intrusive. Should Midsomer at some point become less valuable to the town from a tourism perspective (which I believe is unlikely for many years), the greatest damage to a listed property would be filling in two small screw holes – a very small, low-risk price to pay.'*

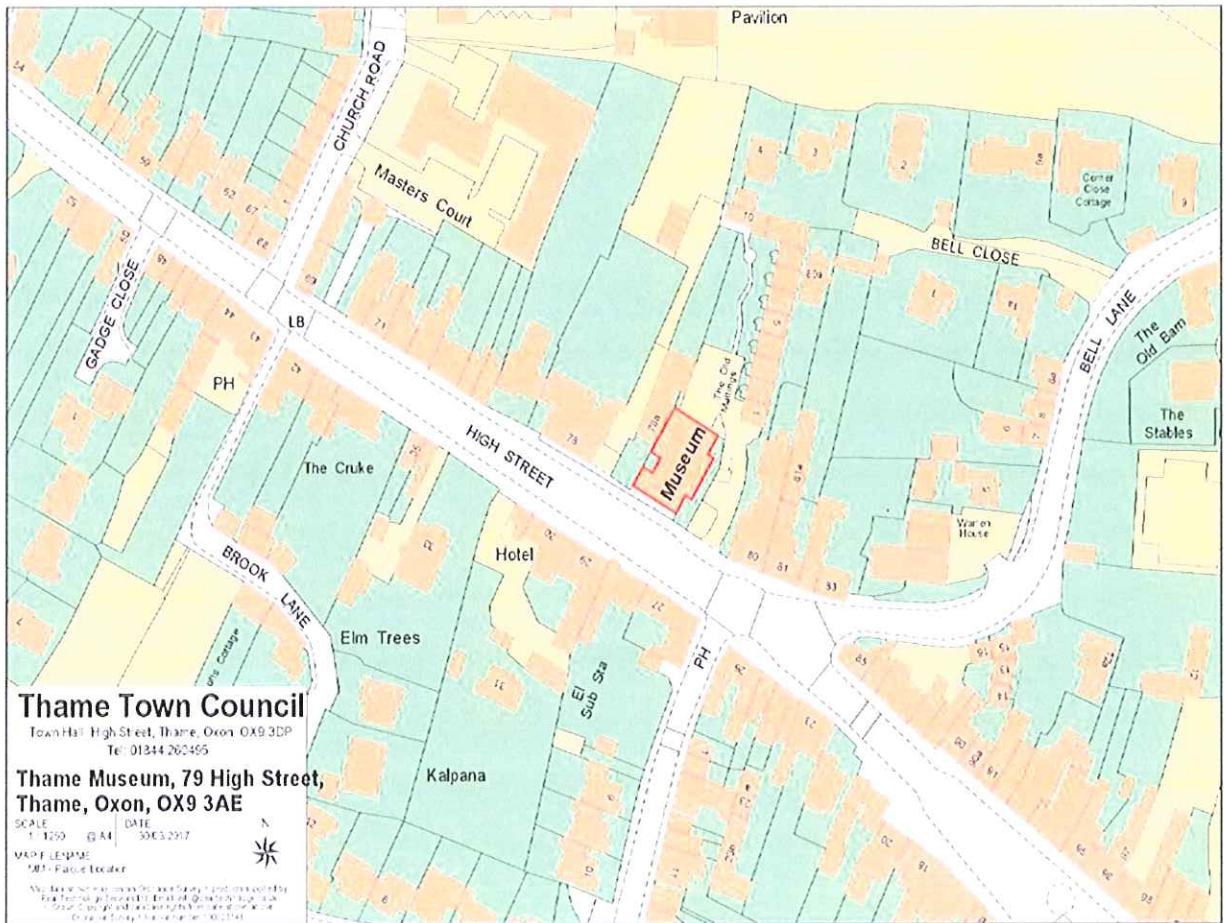
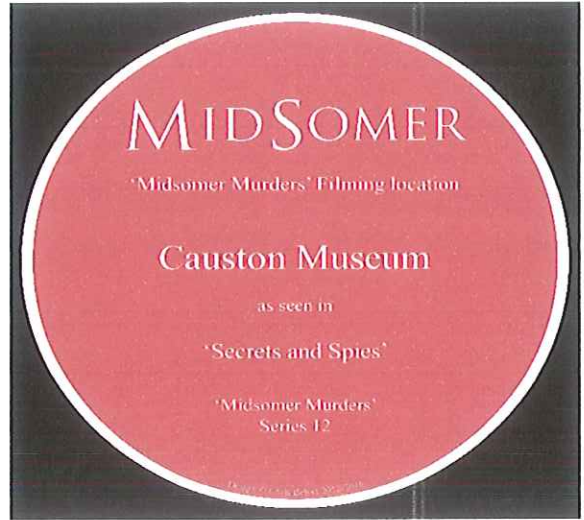
**Tyrell Gillman, Marketing Consultant**

# Appendix 1: Midsomer Plaque Positions on Buildings, Plaque Artwork

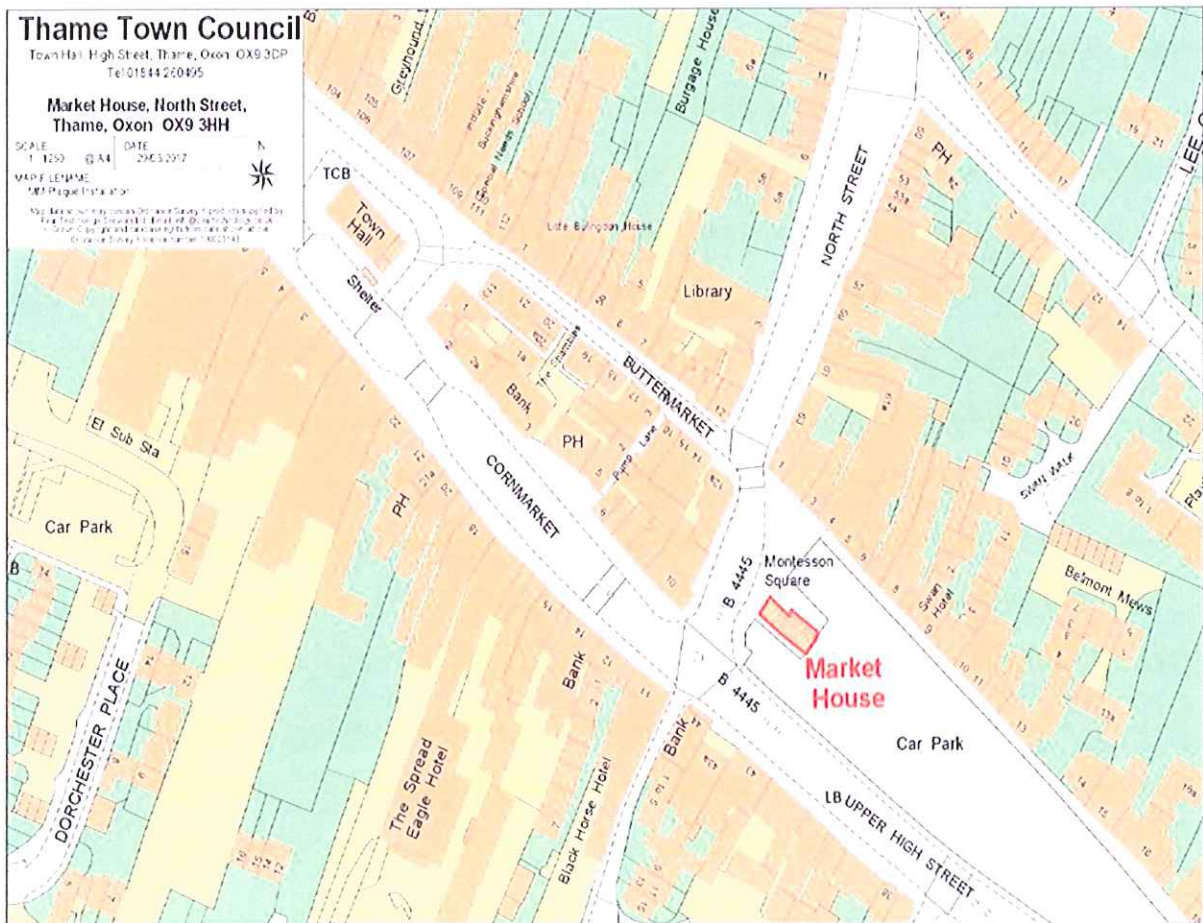
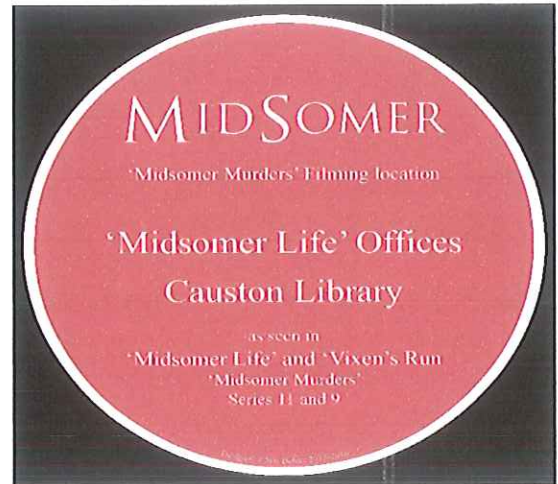
## Thame Town Hall



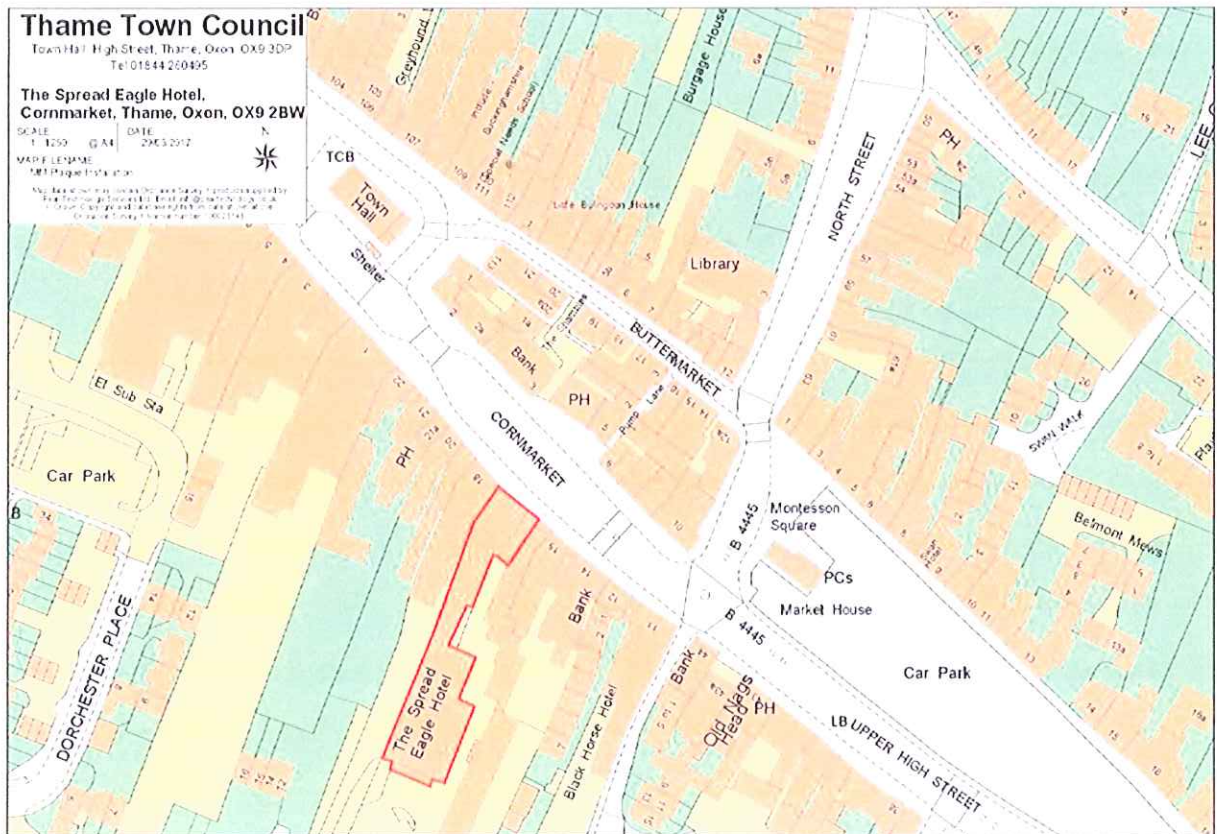
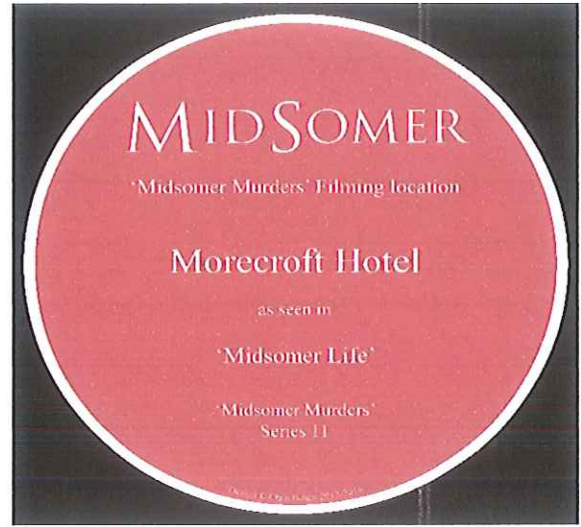
# Thame Museum



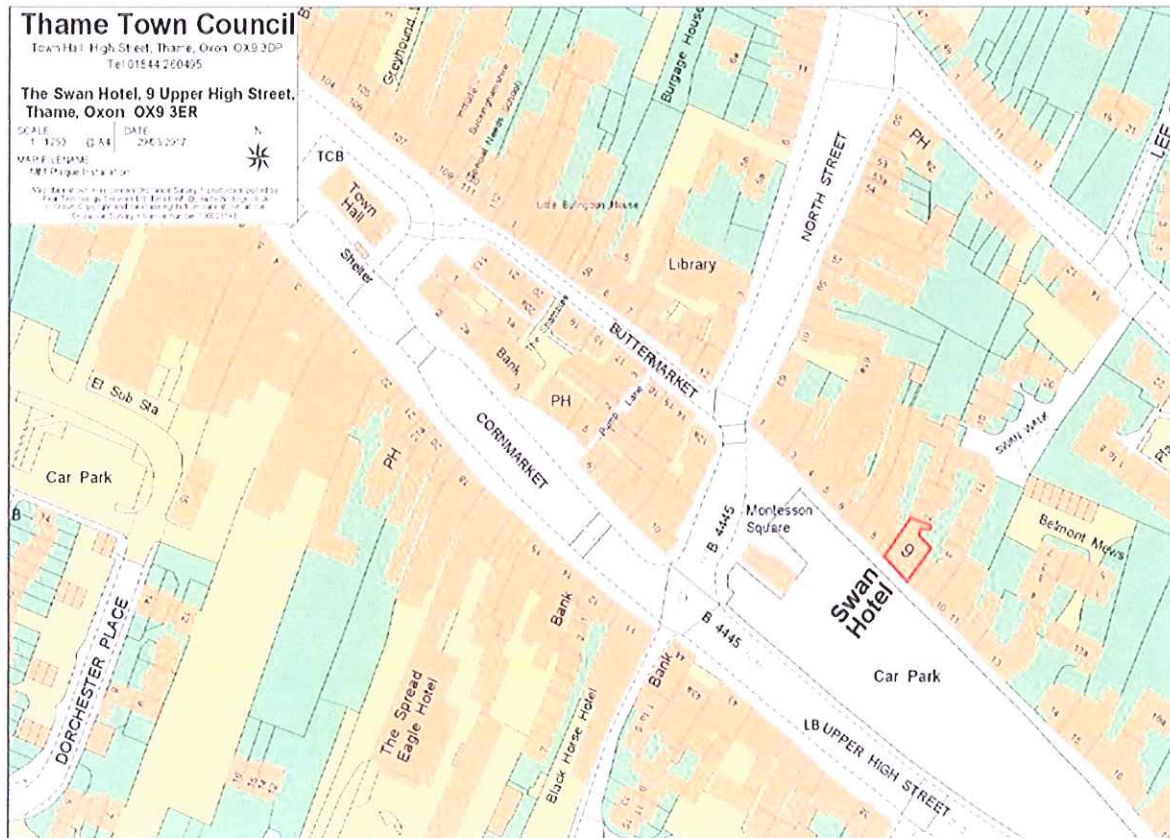
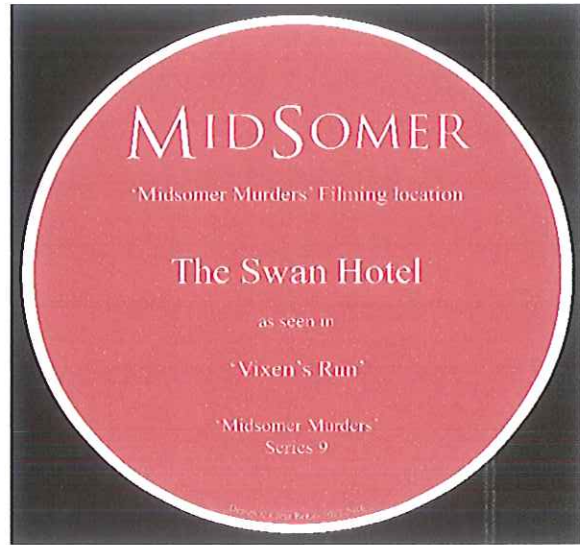
## Market House



# Spread Eagle Hotel

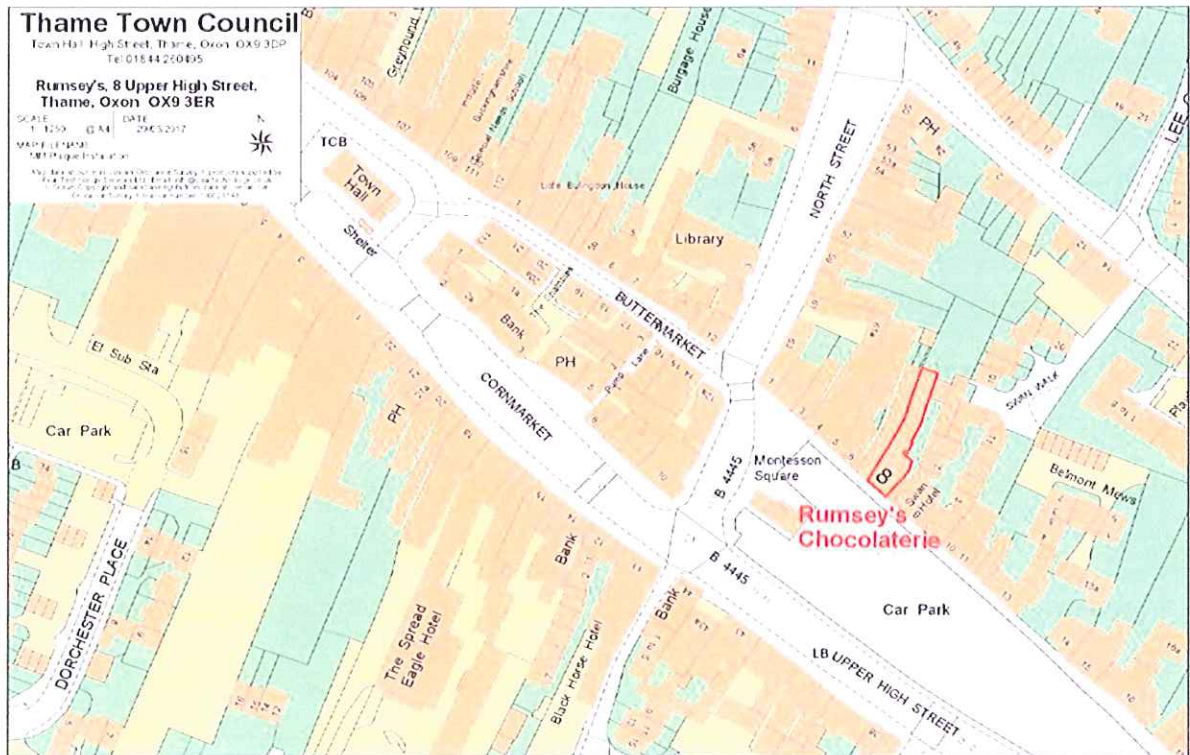
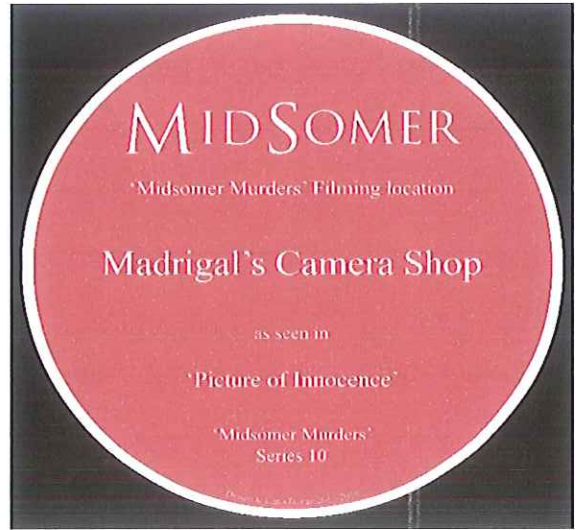


**Swan Hotel**





# Rumsey's Chocolaterie



## **Appendix 2 : Letter from SODC HR, IT and Technical Services**

### **HR, IT and Technical Services**

HEAD OF SERVICE: ANDREW DOWN



Listening Learning Leading

Marc Pullen  
Planning Officer  
Planning

Contact officer: Melanie Smans  
melanie.smans@southoxon.gov.uk  
Tel: 01235 422201

Textphone users add 18001 before you dial

Your reference: P17/S1978/LB  
Our reference: Midsomer Murder plaques, Thame

27 June 2017

Dear Marc,

**P17/S1978/LB, Various Listed Buildings, Thame Town Centre, Thame.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the application to install commemorative plaques denoting the use of 12 listed buildings in Thame as filming locations for the Midsomer Murders ITV series.

The work of the economic development team is informed by South Oxfordshire District Council's strategic objective to, "create the right conditions for economic growth, so that businesses, residents and workers can prosper", alongside the corporate priorities to "support the market towns as places to visit and places to live" and to "champion our small and medium sized businesses in South Oxfordshire".

The District Council supports Thame through the provision of funding for the delivery of an action plan that stimulates the local economy. The 2017-2018 plan includes the action to 'support the development, installation and celebration of new (Midsomer Murder) plaques'. I am supportive of this initiative as it will diversify and strengthen the local economy by encouraging visitors to explore the town centre. The plaques form part of a larger project to capitalise the economic benefits of the Midsomer Murder filming in town. Coupled with the new tours and walking trails, the project has the potential to increase footfall and spending in the High Street and wider the town centre.

I confirm that having consulted me, the council's estate manager has endorsed the proposed artwork for the plaque on the Market House, the proposed location of the plaque on the Market House, and the proposed cost contribution towards to plaque. I trust that these observations are helpful, if you require any clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Dr Melanie Smans  
Economic Development Team Leader

## **Appendix 3: Letter of Approval, Thame Town Council**



**THAME**  
Town Council

Town Hall, High Street, Thame, OX9 3DP  
W: [www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk)  
E: [info@thametowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:info@thametowncouncil.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01844 212833 Fax: 01844 216094  
Graham Hunt, Town Clerk & RFO

To Whom it May Concern

24 May 2017

### **Midsomer Murders Plaques**

I write to confirm that Thame Town Council is in full support of the plans to implement Midsomer Murders Plaques throughout the town, in further support of Thame's increasing "Visitor Economy".

This position was resolved at the Full Council meeting on 24 May 2016 and further ratified by the Full Council on 25 April 2017, where further funding was also allocated.

I can also confirm that the Town Council has authorised Helen Johns of 11 Swan Gardens, Tetsworth, OX9 7BN to act as the Town Council's agent on this exciting project.

Yours faithfully

**Graham Hunt**  
Town Clerk

**Appendix 4: English Heritage – Celebrating People & Place:  
Guidance on commemorative plaques and plaque schemes  
(EXCERPTS)**

There are two methods of installing commemorative plaques: they can be superficially affixed to a façade (surface-mounted) or they can be inset or embedded into the face of a wall. Both approaches require a high level of skill, and care should always be taken that an appropriate contractor is engaged.

With regard to the former method, *it is generally best, where possible, to fix the plaque into a building's mortar joints. The material and form of the screws – set into plastic plugs in the wall – should be appropriate to the plaque itself and the building on which it is placed. Usually, they will be made of stainless steel or brass; it should be noted that screws made of mild steel have not proved successful and should be avoided, as they tend to rust and cause rusty streaks. Where stainless steel or brass screws are used, it is desirable to use a plastic insulation washer, especially where the plaque is made of a form of metal; direct contact between metals is known to lead to corrosion.*

On the whole, however, *an advantage of surface-mounting is that the process is easily reversible and that such plaques can be readily removed for cleaning or refurbishment, should this prove necessary. However, care will need to be taken that such plaques are appropriately and securely attached, especially where they are close to a pavement or pathway. Not only may they be hazardous to passers-by if not properly fixed, but surface-mounted plaques are more exposed to damage, vandalism or theft, emphasising the need for regular checks, something which should be considered when budgets are set.*

Where plaques are inset – an approach often adopted for ceramic and bronze plaques – installation will involve the careful removal of a piece of the building's fabric. Typically, the plaque will then be set flush with the face of the wall using a mortar mix, which may also be used to seal and waterproof the perimeter. Although such plaques can be removed, it is generally inadvisable to attempt this unless absolutely necessary; to do so could damage the structure into which they have been set, as well as the plaques themselves.

On account of this degree of permanence – and of the loss of a building's fabric necessitated by the installation of an inset plaque – it is important to give very careful consideration as to the appropriateness of this method of fixing, and – through careful historical research – to ensure that the inscription and the building chosen are correct.

In terms of plaques existing throughout the UK at the present time, *the vast majority are undoubtedly of metal (notably, enamelled steel and cast aluminium). Such plaques are comparatively cheap and easy to produce, manufacture generally costing under £500 and taking no more than a few weeks. Most forms of the material have enormous flexibility, in that they can be used for plaques of almost any shape, colour and size. Also, they are lightweight and can be fixed to the surface of a building, requiring little intervention with the fabric.*

Where metal is selected as the plaque material, it will be important to take time and care in exploring the various options and related costs. For instance, a coating of vitreous enamel, whilst more expensive, is likely to be much more durable than a plaque which is painted; it will therefore be longer lasting, and money will be saved on future maintenance. Where paint is used, the correct choice is of the utmost importance; two-part epoxy systems have been found to be especially high quality and hard-wearing. Where such a finish is desired, it is worth noting that painted aluminium tends to out-last painted steel by about a decade (requiring refurbishment in about 30-35 years).

### **Size and Shape**

As with plaque material, there are numerous options in terms of plaque size and shape, although the roundel has proved particularly popular and can be found on buildings of all types and dates.

As with form and colour, the size of a plaque should be made appropriate to the architectural context in which it will be placed. Typically, towns and cities will call for plaques of a larger size, reflecting the scale of the buildings and streets and ensuring ease of visibility and legibility.

### **Colour**

Blue is just one of the many colours which may be appropriate for plaques. Certainly, it should never be viewed as the only option. The final choice is, in particular, likely to reflect the materials of the building or area concerned, though other factors may be of influence; for instance, the colour of existing plaques or interpretative signs in an area. *As with other elements of a plaque's design, colour can be a powerful means of achieving distinctiveness, and may have particular meaning to the area in question. For instance, the City of Nottingham's plaques are a rich green in colour, referencing the Lincoln green clothes supposedly worn by Robin Hood and his Merry Men.* Like shape, colour can also be used to differentiate between plaques of different sorts. This raises an important point: plaques which are blue in colour tend to be associated with the commemoration of buildings which served as the residences or workplaces of notable people. *For plaques which are to serve other purposes – for instance, those which explain the history of a particular building or are more like memorials – blue is unlikely to be the best option.*

*Colour may also be used to identify a particular theme or association.* Over the years, there have been various suggestions with regard to a scheme of pink plaques honouring notable members of the gay community, while black coloured plaques can be associated with the darker areas of history, such as sorcery.

### **Positioning a Plaque on a Building**

It has already been stated that the needs of a particular building should, ideally, dictate plaque material, colour, size, and the length of the inscription. This is perhaps even more the case with plaque positioning. A poorly placed plaque can prove surprisingly detrimental to the appearance of a building – an effect out of all proportion to its size. On the other hand, *a well-placed plaque can be an*

*object of beauty, highlighting the strengths of a building's design or providing interest which was not there before.*

With this in mind, it is important to avoid choosing a position simply because it is the easiest spot on which to install a plaque, or because it is next to a doorway. The design of the building as a whole – and how a plaque will affect that design – should always be assessed, and the longer-term appearance of the property should be taken into account. For instance, while a plaque may remain for many decades, a burglar alarm may be replaced in five to ten years, and so should not in itself govern the position chosen. *In all instances – and especially where a plaque is to be inset into the face of the wall – a suitable position should be selected in consultation with the local conservation officer, a chartered building surveyor or an architect.*

It is a notable feature of all plaque schemes that they include and recognise buildings of many different dates, styles and types. All should be treated with care, though it goes without saying that buildings of notable architectural and historic interest – particularly those which are listed or scheduled – require even greater levels of sensitivity. This is not only good practice, but will help to ensure that consents from the local planning authority and the building owners are granted, and that the plaque process therefore runs as smoothly as possible.

It is important to visit a site in person, rather than to rely upon photographs, in order to decide where a plaque would best be situated and the form of plaque that is appropriate. Even where one particular plaque design is generally used under a scheme, differentiation should always be considered where required (such as a smaller roundel, or a plaque of a different material or colour).

When making such a visit, the following factors should be considered:

- Is there space for a plaque?
- Will a plaque in that position be legible from the public right of way?
- How tall is the building, and how far back does it stand from the pavement?
- What is the building made of, and when does it date from?
- Does the construction or material of the building require that a certain type of plaque is used? (for instance, a surface-mounted tablet rather than one that is inset into the wall)
- Is the building listed, and if so, at what grade?
- Is the building symmetrical, and how will a plaque affect that symmetry?
- Does the building have notable or prominent architectural features, such as quoins or pilasters?
- Are there other plaques on the same building or in the same street, and where are they positioned?

Plaques should never be forced into spaces where they will not fit, and will ideally be placed at least 6 inches (152 mm) from doorways and windows.

Legibility is another vital consideration; if a plaque cannot be read from the public right of way, it has failed in its purpose, and may provoke criticism from the public. If they cannot be seen, let alone read, their function is very limited.

Throughout the country, the most common position for plaques is at ground-floor level. This aids visibility and legibility, and has the advantage of ensuring that the plaque is as easy and affordable as possible to install. However, following a consideration of the building in question, it may be found that a ground-floor position is impossible or inappropriate. A plaque may be set at first-floor level if there is no space for it lower down on the building's façade; the erection of plaques at a level higher than the second storey is not recommended in any situation.

Potential damage to a plaque will also be a consideration; in places where a building fronts directly onto a public right of way, it is certainly wise to install a plaque beyond the reach of passers-by or passing vehicles. In selecting a location, a mock-up of a plaque may prove useful, this will enable various options to be tried and will provide the opportunity to include the building owner(s) and other interested parties in the discussion. The position, once decided, should be recorded on a drawing or photographic image; this can be produced by hand or digitally using a computer. Later on, the agreed document can be passed to the contractor responsible for installing the plaque, so that it is erected in precisely the right position.

### **Promotion**

*One of the most notable features of commemorative plaques is their power to surprise and, through this, to educate. They serve to draw out historical associations which would not otherwise be evident, bringing aspects of history before people who may not otherwise have sought or found it out. For English Heritage, this is a key consideration.* The chief aim should be the commemoration of a particular subject, rather than the erection of a particular plaque, and the means by which this is best done should be carefully explored.

Publications – whether in the form of leaflets, booklets, books or online guides – are perhaps the most common method of promoting commemorative plaques. These can range from a one-page leaflet to a large book, and it is important to judge what is most appropriate for the plaques in question. Likewise, the cost of producing a guide needs to be weighed against the likely lifespan of the publication, its audience and demand, and its potential to generate income. Where the guide is produced by a volunteer with experience of research and writing – or where it is based on earlier historical research undertaken to inform one or more plaques – costs may be comparatively low, comprising design and printing, together with any copyright fees which might be applicable for the use of images. Where an appropriate selling price is fixed, it may be that the publication is able to recover its costs or even generate a profit.

*Plaque schemes are well suited to a published guide, which could be arranged alphabetically (by plaque subject), thematically, or geographically (by address), perhaps informing or linking in with a walk or trail. Such guides are especially effective where the plaques have been installed in a burst of activity, as the*

publication can describe each plaque under the scheme and can remain current until the next bout of activity. Information given can include not only details regarding the subject commemorated, but the building marked, the nature of the connection between the two, and any interesting facts about the plaque itself (such as its proposer, unveiler, design and inscription).

It may be possible for even relatively limited plaque initiatives to generate income by producing a leaflet or pamphlet which provides further information about the plaques in the area. *Petersfield Heritage – which oversaw the erection of 17 plaques in the Hampshire town of Petersfield during 2008 – published a 12-page illustrated colour leaflet, containing a map and a trail around the town’s plaques, which sells for £1. The cost of printing 1,000 copies was under £400, and this initial outlay will be recouped once about 400 leaflets have been sold. The income from any further sales of the leaflet will be added to a contingency fund, which may be used for maintenance and repair of existing plaques or to fund new plaques in the town.*

### **Walks and Trails**

While a published guide allows the reader to find out more about the subject and building commemorated by a plaque, there is no substitute for going out and looking at the plaques in situ. *Many plaque schemes have produced leaflets (perhaps including maps) that enable people to follow a trail or guided walk around the plaques and buildings in a particular locality. Such self-guided walks work extremely well as an introduction to a town, village or area, and offer locals, visitors and tourists a fascinating insight into the historical associations of the place.*

*Depending on the context, the walk may take in buildings additional to those bearing plaques, and will thereby broaden its coverage, interest and appeal. In addition, it may be thought desirable to offer guided walks of the plaques in a given area. These can often be run by volunteers – especially those individuals who undertook the historical research behind the plaques – and can be a good opportunity for fundraising. Guided tours also enable the organisers of a plaque scheme to discuss the plaques within the context of the historic environment, to engage their audience with issues concerning the relationship of a plaque with a building, to answer specific questions, and to learn from the views and experiences of others.*

*For a guided walk to be successful, it needs to take place within a fairly small geographical area – ideally a town centre, village or district of a city – so that the audience is able to see a range of plaques without spending too much time walking between locations. Typically, such a walk should last no longer than two hours and, for logistical and health and safety reasons, it is best to limit numbers to about 25. An opportunity may be taken to begin or end the walk at a site of significance which also provides a pleasant place for rest and refreshment; for instance, a commemorated building which is also open to the public, a museum which houses an exhibition or display on a subject of relevance, or a historic public house.*

**END OF DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**