



Decision Maker:	Cabinet Member for Sports, Culture and Community
Date:	29 May 2019
Classification:	For general release
Title:	Commemorative Green Plaque for department store retailer and entrepreneur William Whiteley at 2 Kildare Terrace, W2 5LX
Wards Affected:	Bayswater
Key Decision:	No
Financial Summary:	The Green Plaque Scheme is funded by sponsorship, which has been secured for this plaque
Report of:	Richie Gibson, Head of City Events, Promotions and Filming

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 William Whiteley, (29 September 1831 – 24 January 1907), was an English entrepreneur of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He was the founder of William Whiteley Limited Retail Company, famous for the Bayswater department store which became Whiteleys shopping centre in the late 1980s.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the nomination for a commemorative Green Plaque for William Whiteley at his former home at 2 Kildare Terrace, W2 5LX, is approved.

3. Reasons for decision

- 3.1 Whiteleys is a well-known London store which has gone through many transformations in its long history. The department store was founded by Victorian entrepreneur William Whiteley, a larger than life character who, despite opposition, transformed the shopping habits of 1000s of Londoners. His

residency in Bayswater would be commemorated at the second of his London homes.

4. Policy context

- 4.1 The Green Plaques scheme aims to highlight and improve awareness of Westminster's diverse cultural heritage and social history, provide information for visitors and to create a sense of pride in neighbourhoods.

5. Background

- 5.1 William Whiteley was born in Purston, Yorkshire, to a prosperous corn merchant who took little interest in his son, and was consequently raised by his uncle. Leaving school at 14, William worked on his uncle's farm and had hopes of becoming a vet. His family had other ideas and in 1848 he started a seven-year apprenticeship with Harnew & Glover the largest drapers in Wakefield.

- 5.2 In 1851 he visited London to see the Great Exhibition with its magnificent displays of manufactured goods. It fired William's imagination to create a store where all these goods would be for sale under one roof and, on completion of his apprenticeship, he left Wakefield and arrived in London with £10 in his pocket. He took a job with R. Willey & Co in Ludgate Hill and then Morrison & Dillons, to learn all aspects of their trade.

5.3 Westbourne Grove

- 5.3.1 Whiteley lived frugally and with his savings of £700 opened a drapery at 31 Westbourne Grove in Bayswater. He employed three staff, one of whom, Harriet Sarah Hall, would become his wife.
- 5.3.2 He began buying shops in Westbourne Grove and by 1867 the business had expanded into an unbroken row of them. He turned them into 17 separate departments, including dress making, a house agency and a refreshment room. By 1872, Whiteley employed 622 workers on his premises and another 1,000 in outside ancillary occupations.
- 5.3.3 By 1875 Whiteley was selling food and in 1876 he launched a building and decorating department. This proved to be particularly profitable as the many large stuccoed houses of Bayswater needed regular maintenance and painting. He opened an oriental department with cheap imported goods from Japan and China.
- 5.3.4 By 1890 over 6,000 staff were employed in the business, most of them living in the company's male and female dormitories. Staff had to abide by 176 rules and work from 7am to 11pm, six days a week. Whiteley also bought extensive farmland and erected food processing plants to provide the produce for the store and staff catering. William claimed he could provide anything from a pin to an

elephant and described himself as 'The Universal Provider'. In 1896, the company earned a Royal Warrant from Queen Victoria, an unprecedented achievement.

5.4 Opposition to expansion

5.4.1 From 1882, Whiteleys department store in Westbourne Grove was damaged by four fires including one of the largest first in London's history in 1887. Whiteley's store expansion was met with strong opposition from smaller tradesmen and from the local authority, the Paddington Vestry. Rival retailers demonstrated in the streets by burning a guy doll dressed in the traditional costume of a draper. Despite this the department store was rebuilt on the same site.

5.5 2 Kildare Terrace

5.5.1 The arrival of four Whiteley children, together with the expansion of the business, had made it impracticable for them to continue living in Westbourne Grove. In 1868 the family took up residence in a quiet neighbouring street, 2 Kildare Terrace, surrounded by the firm's employees, housed in their various lodgings on the then prevalent living in system.

5.5.2 Eventually the house became too small for the family and in 1885 Whiteley purchased one of the larger mansions in Bayswater at 31 Porchester Terrace, which has since been demolished.

5.6 Murder and Whiteley Village

5.6.1 On 24 January 1907, Whiteley was shot dead at his shop by Horace George Rayner, aged 29, who claimed that he was Whiteley's illegitimate son. In his will, William Whiteley left £1 million some of which was used to create Whiteley Village, a retirement village near Walton-on-Thames in Surrey.

5.6.2 He bequeathed "as nearly as may be whole but not exceeding the sum of £1,000,000 sterling" for the purchase of land and the erection thereon "of buildings to be used and occupied by aged poor persons of either sex as homes in their old age". This bequest became available sooner than expected due to his murder.

5.6.3 Building began in 1914 with Elizabeth Palmer, Whiteley Village's first resident, moving into her cottage on 10 October 1917. The architectural and social ambition of Whiteley's vision made Whiteley Village outstanding for its time and it remains unique today. It is thought that this development was the first purpose-built retirement village in the UK. Over the last 100 years Whiteley Village has survived two World Wars, hosted two royal visits and undergone two refurbishment programmes. There is also a Whiteley Village Museum.

5.7 The Queensway Store

- 5.7.1 Following his death, Whiteley's two sons carried on operating the business. They allowed the leases on the Westbourne Grove properties to lapse and moved into a new purpose-built store on Queen's Road, now called Queensway. It was claimed to be the largest store in the world.
- 5.7.2 The building was designed by John Belcher and John James Joass, and was opened by the Lord Mayor of London in 1911. It was the height of luxury at the time, including both a theatre and a golf-course on the roof. It appears in a number of early 20th-century novels, including Shaw's 1913 play Pygmalion, where Eliza Doolittle is sent "to Whiteleys to be attired."
- 5.7.3 In the late 1920s, Dr A J Cronin, the novelist, was appointed the medical officer of Whiteleys, and in 1927 rival store Selfridges purchased the business. The building, which was extended between 1925 and 1927 to incorporate the present frontage, was designated a Grade II listed building in 1970.

5.8 Redevelopment

- 5.8.1 Whiteleys was damaged by bombs in 1940, and in 1981 the then owners, United Drapers, closed the store. It remained empty until purchased in 1986 by the Whiteleys Partnership. Extensive reconstruction followed with the façade and interior features such as stairs and railings, remaining. Whiteleys reopened as a shopping centre in 1989. In 2016 a £1bn redevelopment plan was approved to include 100 new homes and a hotel.

6. **Financial implications**

- 6.1 The cost of production, installation and administration will be covered by the sponsors Meyer Bergman & Finchatton, the developers of the new Whiteleys. There is no cost to Westminster City Council.

7. **Legal implications**

- 7.1 Listed Building Consent application is not required for 2 Kildare Terrace.

8. **Consultation**

- 8.1 The building owner supports the nomination. Ward councillors have been consulted and no objections have been raised.

If you have any queries about this report please contact Claire Appleby on 020 7641 3388 or cappleby@westminster.gov.uk.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Location plan of 2 Kildare Terrace at 1:1250 scale.

Appendix 2

Photo montage showing the proposed location of the William Whiteley Green Plaque at 2 Kildare Terrace.

Appendix 3

Wording and layout of the proposed William Whiteley Green Plaque.

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Sports, Culture and Community**

Declaration of Interest

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NAME: **Councillor Iain Bott** _____

State nature of interest if any

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(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **Commemorative Green Plaque for department store retailer and entrepreneur William Whiteley at 2 Kildare Terrace, W2 5LX**

Signed

Cabinet Member for Sports, Culture and Community

Date

If you have any additional comments which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:

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If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Strategic Director Finance and Performance and, if there are resources implications, the Strategic Director of Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.