



Site  Web

[Search](#)

Tuesday, 7th July 2009

## Georgian ruin set for starring role

**Published Date:** 09 May 2003

By BY CHRIS MOONEY

A RUINED Georgian mansion is set to be transformed into a multi-million pound film studio with the aim of attracting blockbuster period drama productions to the Lothians.

Blackburn House is on the verge of becoming Scotland's premier location for filming box office hits under a £3 million project which will see the mansion completely refurbished.

The move to renovate the West Lothian stately home, which has been l

ADVERTISEMENT

eft to rot since 1972, is being driven by the Cockburn Conservation Trust, and will be run by art company Caledonian Art House when it's completed in 2006.

The project, believed to be the only one of its kind in the world, hinges on funding support of £2.5m from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland, but project bosses are hopeful of a favourable decision in the near future.

West Lothian Council has also been approached for help in securing money from the European Regional Development Fund.

Caledonian Art House, which already runs a similar project in the west end of Glasgow called Arts House Glasgow, will sub-let the building's 13 rooms to creative arts-based companies, but it is its innovative approach to film and TV production which is key to the project's success.

Matthew Rooke, a former Scottish Arts Council director and now chairman and co-founder of Caledonian Art House, said: "Where everyone else has been getting excited about talk of £100m film studios in Scotland, here is something that can sneak along in the knowledge there's a guaranteed demand for this sort of property, that it is a unique and innovative project, can definitely work and doesn't cost tens of millions.

"As well as film production, Blackburn House should be the first port of call for productions like *Servants and Tipping the Velvet*.

The A-listed house was built in the 1760s by local laird George Moncrieff, but after more than 200 years of use, in the 1970s the private owners could no longer afford to keep up the house and abandoned it.

The Blackburn House Preservation Trust was formed to save the house in the 1990s by restoring it to its original glory while at the same time training unemployed people in building and conservation skills. Unfortunately, the scheme ran into difficulties and the house was repossessed by the Bank of Scotland, which still owns it and is willing to hand it over to the Cockburn Conservation Trust for free as well as sponsor the project.

George McNeill, project organiser with the trust, said: " There is something in this project for everyone and it will be huge fillip for the people in the area. It will be great for production companies because it is a historic house without all the encumbent problems associated with a historic building."

As part of the tenancy agreement, firms taking up space in the building will also have to give up time for work in the community, and school trips are planned .

Owen Roffe, communications accounts manager for Scotland for the Heritage Lottery Fund, said he could not comment on a case which was pending.

But he added: "The basic criteria we look at in all applications is that they have to have heritage merits, public benefits and be viable."

A spokesman for Historic Scotland added: "Historic Scotland actively promotes the regeneration of historic buildings and welcomes any proposal which offers the extended use and retains the integrity of the building."

Page 1 of 1

- **Last Updated:** 09 May 2003 11:50 AM
- **Source:** Edinburgh Evening News
- **Location:** Edinburgh

**Ads by Google**

**[Conservatory Designers](#)**

Conservatories Add Value To A Home Get A Hassle Free Online Quote Now!  
[www.CRSmith.co.uk](http://www.CRSmith.co.uk)

**[Cheapest Granite Scotland](#)**

Worktops, No Deposit, 1 Day fit Free Delivery throughout Scotland  
[GlasgowGraniteMasters.co.uk](http://GlasgowGraniteMasters.co.uk)

**[Gastric Band Glasgow](#)**

The Gastric Band: Safe, Effective Weightloss Procedure In Glasgow  
[www.ObesitySurgeryCentre.com](http://www.ObesitySurgeryCentre.com)



clicking [here](#).

This website and its associated newspaper adheres to the Press Complaints Commission's Code of Practice. If you have a complaint about editorial content which relates to inaccuracy or intrusion, then contact the Editor by

If you remain dissatisfied with the response provided then you can contact the PCC by clicking [here](#).

**[CPS Ltd CDM Co-ordinators](#)**

CDM & Safety Consultants Specialists in Historic Buildings  
[www.constructionps.co.uk](http://www.constructionps.co.uk)