

Location Guidelines: Your Property as a Potential Film Location

What is 'Wales Screen'?

Formerly the 'Wales Screen Commission', and launched in October 2002, the all-Wales production support service, is now part of the Welsh Government's Creative Wales team. We offer a free and professional service to anyone filming throughout Wales. We have assisted thousands of productions in the past, from popular television shows such as *Sex Education*, *Doctor Who* and *Sherlock* to major feature films such as *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* and *Snow White and the Huntsman*.

How do television programmes and films find a location?

Location Managers are usually employed by production companies to 'scout' and find locations for commercials, TV dramas or feature films. We provide access to our extensive online locations database in order for them to see what types of locations are available here in Wales. Most location searches start with a library search which makes location finding quicker and easier for everyone involved. We're constantly building on our database and are always looking for new properties to register.

What are locations?

Anything and anywhere can be used as a location; the enquiries we receive are as varied as our landscape. Production companies ask for all sorts of things, from small, remote cottages to splendid castles and sprawling factories.

Is my property suitable?

Obviously there are practicalities to consider; even small crews need space to work in so the larger your rooms the better. However don't be put off if you have a smaller property, often these can still work for stills photography or commercials. Parking can be a key issue. The production will need space nearby to park their vehicles in order to access equipment (lights or generators etc.) and you don't want to annoy your neighbours!

What happens if I register?

If you register on our database, you decide whether or not you'd like a production company to use the interior, exterior or the whole of your property. Once we have your details, your property can be considered if it matches an enquiry. If your property is suitable, we will send photographs of it and some basic information to the enquirer. If they like what they see, we will then pass your details on to the production company (or the Location Manager working on their behalf) for them to contact you directly and you can then find out more about the proposal and see if you are interested.

Why should I consider registering?

The use of your home or business premises can be an exciting and profitable experience, once the scope of the production and the process involved is understood. If selected, it is a great opportunity to see your property on screen and you never know, you could end up with a celebrity in your home!

Also, when a production company films at a location they will normally pay a facility fee. The amount depends on several factors, such as the overall budget of the production, the length of time they will be using the property and the amount of disruption the filming will cause. If, for example, they want to use the whole house, discuss how you and your family will be accommodated during filming and the living expenses that might incur. Some lower budget productions or short films are only able to pay nominal amounts while commercials or feature films with larger budgets could offer much more.

How do I register?

You can register directly on our website and also add your own images. Alternatively you can contact Wales Screen to express your interest, and we can talk you through the process. It is a completely free service. Rest assured that we never publish the contact details of property owners or the exact location of private properties on our website.

Location Photographs

Ideally we would like a good selection of clear, digital images taken inside and outside of your property which give a general overview to location managers. If it's next to a main road for example, it would be useful to show this in one of the pictures. If you have any interesting features such as a large cellar or garden, images of this would also be of benefit. It is useful to have wide shots of the main reception rooms (taken from the corner of the room to get as much in shot as possible). Please don't submit any family shots as we're not able to include images featuring people. We will also try to blur any car registrations that might be visible in exterior images.

If you are unable to take photographs, please let us know and we might be able to arrange a convenient time to visit in order to take our own.

Who makes the decision about filming on my property?

YOU! Everything depends on how you feel about the idea, the scale and the timing of it. Once a production company is interested in your property we will put them in contact with you directly to discuss it further. A proper contract and suitable fees should then be negotiated between yourself and the production company. It may be appropriate for you to check with your home insurance provider.

How often am I likely to be contacted?

This is a difficult question to answer. In the past we have responded to hundreds of enquiries and have matched production companies with many local premises. Film and television companies are on location throughout the year throughout Wales. Whilst we cannot guarantee that your property will be used; once we have your details, we can maximise your chances. Don't worry if you don't hear from us for a long time, your details are with us waiting to be "discovered"!

What to expect

Depending on the type of production, they can vary greatly in size – from a crew of 3 people to over a 100. Similarly, fees paid by a production vary according to the size of the production, the type of property and the extent the property will be used.

Although Wales Screen can offer advice about location fees, we cannot enter into any of the legal negotiations. A location owner should expect a fee that is adequate for the level of disruption caused due to the filming. Production companies will often look for alternative locations if they feel an owner is asking too much. In some cases a production might want to re-decorate or change furnishings within your property. It's normal for productions to carry out several visits (or 'recces') possibly with additional people each time, as different crew members will need to view the location (Production Designer, Director of Photography etc).

As a location owner it's important for you to come to an agreement with the production about what you are happy for them to do and to have a contract in place outlining this. Locations should always be returned to their original state after filming and any damage or accidents paid for by the production company.

A production can be disruptive but ultimately it's a positive experience for a location owner, nothing beats the feeling of seeing your property on screen.

Summary

- Once you have registered on our database the next step is your contact with the Location Manager. They usually work freelance and are hired by the production company for a specific production. They are sometimes visitors to the area and may be unfamiliar with the territory
- Discuss the nature of the project in detail with them. Find out how exactly the location will be used and ask to see the relevant part of the script in which your property will appear
- Determine the exact number of days required for the shoot including 'prep'/set up days, filming days and 'de-rig' days when they clear up
- Arrange for a walk-through with the Director or Production/Location Manager to determine the exact interiors or exteriors they wish to film
- Discuss any areas you wish to be "off-limits" to the crew, i.e. bedrooms
- Arrange where equipment and vehicles can be stored and parked
- Determine who exactly will be allowed to access the location and how this will be enforced
- Agree the clean-up requirements, that the property is to be left as it was found and agree on a completion time
- It is advisable to go through anything that may come under health and safety guidelines (COVID protocols etc.) and ensure the company has public liability insurance
- Most professional production companies carry insurance that cover third-party rentals for property damage and liability. You can enquire about this and ask to be given a copy before any crew member arrives at your property
- It is a good idea to negotiate a formal contract which incorporates some or all of the above guidelines as well as the fee / check with home insurance provider
- The fee is usually negotiable and depends on the size of the film and the production company's budget. You should feel happy with the amount agreed upon

Above all, it's important to enjoy the experience!

If you have any additional queries please don't hesitate to contact Wales Screen, we're always happy to guide you through the process if you have any doubts or concerns.