

Dumfries House saved

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Dumfries House, one of the UK's most important 18th century classical houses, has been saved for the nation by a group of organisations and individuals brought together by The Prince of Wales.

Image



Dumfries House

They have agreed to fund the acquisition of the house, its contents and adjoining land for the public benefit.

Its location on the edge of Cumnock in East Ayrshire means that the House and Estate will act as an engine for social and economic regeneration.

The organisations involved include The Prince's Charities Foundation, the Scottish government, The Art Fund, the Garfield Weston Foundation, The Monument Trust, the National Heritage Memorial Fund and SAVE Britain's Heritage.

The House, in East Ayrshire, was designed by the Adam brothers and is internationally renowned for its unique collection of furniture originally bought for the house and made by Thomas Chippendale and the contemporary Edinburgh furniture makers William Mathie, Alexander Peter and Francis Brodie. This Scottish group has no comparison anywhere in the world.

It is hoped to open the house to the public next year. An independent trust, The Great Steward's Dumfries House Trust, is being established to organise the presentation and maintenance of the house. It is believed that the public opening of the house, together with a related development in the nearby town of

Cumnock, will be powerful agents for regeneration.

The Prince's Charities Foundation has borrowed a considerable proportion of the £45million total cost of the project. Fundraising continues to repay this loan. The offer to buy also included land in the Cumnock area with development potential which will be acquired from John Bute by the Prince's Charities Foundation. It is hoped that the redevelopment of this land, which will be planned by The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment, will not only help repay the loan taken out to acquire Dumfries House but will also make an important contribution to the regeneration of the area.

Christie's has announced that the sale of the House's contents, due to be held on 12th and 13th July, will not proceed.

The Prince of Wales has said that he is very relieved that this wonderful house and its contents have been saved for the nation and is very grateful to all those who have worked so hard to make this possible.

John Bute said: "The formation of the Great Steward's Dumfries House Trust which will open Dumfries House and the estate for public access is not only an important addition to Scotland's cultural heritage but will also enhance the local economies of both Cumnock and Auchinleck.

"In parallel to this, the property development to be undertaken by the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment, should add substantially to the local economy as well as to the general regeneration of East Ayrshire. I would like to acknowledge the considerable contributions of time, effort and money applied to this project by all interested parties – especially to Prince Charles."

Alex Salmond, First Minister for Scotland said: "I am delighted that the Scottish government has been able to support the Duke of Rothesay's excellent initiative and save Dumfries House and its contents for the Scottish Nation. When His Royal Highness told me of his plans I was determined to do what we could to help. The house and its exquisite furniture collection are internationally acclaimed – a world class product of the Scottish Enlightenment. I want them to become a show-case for a newly confident Scotland; and a catalyst for increased tourism and imaginative regeneration in the South-West of Scotland. Historic Scotland will now work with the other partners to ensure this joint venture succeeds."

David Verey, Chairman of The Art Fund, said: "This has been possibly the most extraordinary campaign in The Art Fund's long history and I am thrilled Dumfries House and its magnificent furniture and contents are now secured for public

enjoyment. The Art Fund was first to the table with its largest ever grant of £2million in May – now increased to £2.25million. Since then we've worked tirelessly behind-the-scenes to put together this unique funding package and are delighted to act as the formal body through which this irreplaceable collection can be acquired on behalf of the nation."

Fiona Hare, administrator of The Garfield Weston Foundation, said: "The Weston family is delighted to be part of this rescue package, which will enable an exceptional house and its contents to be accessed by the public for the first time. The contribution this important treasure will make towards the regeneration of this area of Scotland has been a key factor in the decision to participate and the successful outcome therefore gives added satisfaction."

Stewart Grimshaw, Trustee of The Monument Trust, said: "Preventing the separation of the house from its fabulous contents, and ensuring that the public will be able to visit and enjoy them both, is a wonderful achievement."

Dame Liz Forgan, Chair of NHMF, said: "At the eleventh hour a determined partnership of public and private contributors has found a way to save Dumfries House and its unique Collection of furniture to be enjoyed by the public for the first time in its history. Thirty years after the disastrous sale of Mentmore and its contents, this is exactly what the National Heritage Memorial Fund was set up to do and we are delighted to have been able to respond quickly with a grant of £7m to help purchase this beautiful and important heritage treasure for the nation."

Marcus Binney, President of SAVE Britain's Heritage said: "Dumfries House has been saved against the toughest of deadlines by the decisive intervention of the Prince of Wales. The dispersal of one of the finest collections of great furniture in the United Kingdom has been averted at the last moment, ensuring that a wonderfully intact Adam house, which very few people have ever seen, will now be open for all to enjoy. More than £1250 has been raised locally by people contributing £1 or more to the fighting fund. This is a most encouraging demonstration of grass roots support in Cumnock."

Michael Hitchon, Kyle & Carrick Civic Society said: "Local support for saving Dumfries House has been incredible. Over a thousand donations have poured in. I am absolutely delighted that that this wonderful house has been secured for the local community and for Scotland."

In reaching his decision to sell Dumfries House, John Bute has relied on the professional advice of his advisers Christie's, Savills and Anderson Strathern.

Charles Cator, Deputy Chairman, Christie's International: "Over the last four years, Christie's has supported John Bute's hope of finding a negotiated private treaty sale solution for Dumfries House and its contents. It has long been part of Christie's history to secure sales of works of art to the nation and we are delighted to have played a key role in saving this magnificent house and its exceptional contents.

"Dumfries House is one of the finest and most original collections of British furniture and contains the only fully documented works of art dating from Chippendale's illustrious Director Period, as well as the finest private collection of documented Scottish 18th century furniture. We look forward to supporting the future of Dumfries House and hope that it will be admired and appreciated by the public long into the future."

Anna Thomas of Savills Edinburgh office said: "The sale of the Dumfries Estate generated a great deal of interest from buyers in UK, Ireland and internationally, resulting in strong competition at the closing date. Savills is proud to have been instructed with the sale of this truly exceptional property and delighted that the winning bid will enable the house and estate to be saved for the nation".

Notes to editors

In Scotland, HRH The Prince of Wales is known as HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay.

Dumfries House is one of the most architecturally significant houses in the UK. It was built between 1754 and 1759 by the Adam brothers, with furniture made specifically for the house by Thomas Chippendale and the contemporary Edinburgh furniture makers William Mathie, Alexander Peter and Francis Brodie.

Breakdown of contributions from individual bodies:

- The Monument Trust - £9million
- The National Heritage Memorial Fund - £7million
- The Scottish government - £5million
- The Art Fund - £2.25million
- The Garfield Weston Foundation - £1million
- Sir Siegmund Warburg's Voluntary Settlement - £250,000
- The Dunard Fund - \$250,000

SAVE Britain's Heritage worked on the initial phase of this scheme. The first tranche of the funding came from The Art Fund, together with the Monument Trust and the Garfield Weston Foundation. The project went on to secure the support of the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

The Art Fund is the UK's leading independent art charity. It offers grants to help UK museums and galleries enrich their collections and campaigns widely on behalf of museums and their visitors. It is entirely funded from public donations and has 80,000 members. It was at the forefront of the campaign for free admission in 2001 and led the public appeal to secure JMW Turner's *The Blue Rigi* for Tate Britain in January 2007. Visit the charity's website at www.artfund.org

The Garfield Weston Foundation is a general grant making trust established in 1958 by the late W Garfield Weston and members of his family. It supports a wide range of charitable activity throughout the United Kingdom.

Historic Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Executive and is directly accountable to Scottish Ministers and through them to the Scottish Parliament. The agency is charged with safeguarding the nation's historic environment through statutory protection, research and investment. Since the agency was created in 1991 it has issued over £170million for the care and maintenance of the historic environment and this has generated well over £400million in match funding. For more information go to: www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

The Monument Trust is a charitable trust established in 1965 by the late Simon Sainsbury. It has a special interest in helping keep alive the artistic and cultural heritage of the UK.

Christie's Private Treaty Sales: Since 1956 on the introduction of tax incentives encouraging sales to the nation, Christie's has been at the forefront of private treaty sale negotiations on behalf of our clients. As a consequence, Christie's leads the field in both private treaty sales and negotiated sales to the British nation. Christie's Heritage and Taxation department has been responsible for a number of important sales including Tyntesfield to the National Trust in 2003 as well as numerous sales of individual works of art from Whistlejacket by Stubbs to the National Gallery in London to the 2003 sale of Titian's *The Birth of Venus* to the National Gallery of Scotland. Over the last four years, Christie's have supported John Bute's hope of finding a negotiated private treaty sale solution for Dumfries House.

Savills - Sales & Management - Savills is one the leading international property advisors. The company employs rural agency and management surveyors to meet the needs of owners and occupiers of country houses, estates, farms and agricultural land. Specialist advice is provided to clients on the appraisal, valuation, acquisition and sales of heritage property. Savills advise many of the country's leading landowners and manages over 2 million acres of rural land. Recent sales of heritage property include Tyntesfield to the National Trust in 2003. The company is a sponsor of the Georgian Group Architectural Awards.

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