



Location Owners' Guide to Filming

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Regional Screen Agency for the East of England

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About Screen East

Screen East is the regional screen agency for the East of England dedicated to developing a vibrant and flourishing film, TV and digital media industry in the counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk and the unitary areas of Luton, Peterborough, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. We do this through the activities of our four departments: Locations, Production, Enterprise and Skills, and Audiences and Education.

Screen East is funded by the UK Film Council and the East of England Development Agency (EEDA). We are a non-profit making organisation and delegated Lottery distributor on behalf of the UK Film Council through the Regional Investment Fund (RIFE).

The Locations team is based in Hertfordshire at Leavesden Studios and provides information on the region's locations, facilities, services and crew to productions interested in filming in the East of England. There are two over-arching aims:

1. To promote the East of England as the ideal location for film and television production and attract inward investment.
2. To encourage a film friendly approach to filmmakers by highlighting the economic and social benefits filming can bring through location fees, offering local services and maximising tourism potential, where appropriate.

We have good contacts with each Local Authority, Highways and the region's police forces enabling us to assist productions with permits, traffic management and other requirements in relation to location filming.

The East offers a stunning array of diverse locations. It is well known for its uninterrupted skylines, untouched coastline, pretty villages, open spaces and variety of residential dwellings. This, combined with its proximity to London, international airports, major transport routes and greater south east's studio network, makes the East of England extremely popular with filmmakers.

How Your Property is Selected for Filming

Screen East receive an average of 200 enquiries a month from production companies looking for a wide range of locations. We are usually approached by Location Managers with a location brief who are employed on a freelance basis for each filming project. We have established strong relationships with a large number of production personnel who use our services regularly.

Once a location enquiry has been received we look to source locations to match their requirements. This involves searching our comprehensive bespoke database to see which locations best match the criteria. This is why it is important to list all the distinguishing features of a property on the Location Registration form. Good building and/or landscape photographs are vital as it is almost impossible for us, as well as the location manager, to visualise a property from the description alone. We then use the reference photographs and description to show the production company the possible options for consideration. Registration of your property does not mean an owner is obligated to accept the filming.

Our Location Library is available to search on the Screen East website www.screeneast.co.uk, a facility which is proving increasingly popular with Location Managers. Please be assured that address and contact details for our locations are not available on the website.

If the production company is interested in finding out more about the suitability of a location for their project, we put them in touch with the location owner/manager, unless the owner has asked us to contact them in advance of the production company.

Security Issues

If a production visits your home to assess its potential for a shoot, you naturally may have concerns about security. There are a few simple steps that can help ease any worry:

1. Always ask for photographic identification when someone asks to visit your property. You can ask the Location Manager if they are a member of the Guild of Location Managers and if they have a membership card. If not, they should still be able to provide you with some form of identification, such as a driving licence or credit card, proving who they are.
2. You can also check the validity of a Location Manager or production company with us at Screen East.
3. Lock away valuable items so they are unseen and unlikely to get damaged.
4. If your property is chosen, take detailed photographs of your property before the production arrives to help with reinstatement. This will enable the crew to return the property to the condition it was in prior to their arrival and to your satisfaction.
5. Speak to the Location Manager, or directly to the production company, if you are unsure of anything. It is the Location Manager's job to liaise between yourself and the company.

As the location owner, you are ultimately responsible for who you allow into your property, but you should always check and be happy with the validity of anyone you don't know before giving them access.

Location Visits and Fee Negotiations

The Location Manager will usually arrange a time with you to come and look around the property to assess its suitability for the project. This is called a 'recce', and at this initial stage, the Location Manager will invariably visit alone.

If the location is deemed as potentially suitable, there will be a second visit where the Designer or Director will come to see the location and assess its artistic and technical suitability for what they have in mind. If they do not think the property will work for that particular production, the Location Manager will usually telephone to let you know, but sometimes you may not hear anything. You can therefore assume they will not be using your property on that occasion.

If the Designer or Director believe the property could be suitable, the Location Manager will organise a date for a 'technical recce' with you. This could involve up to 20 people and enables departments such as Camera and Lighting to see how they can use the space and assess the best places to position equipment.

It is at this point that the details regarding the location fee and dates / times for filming are discussed as they will have a better idea of the costs involved. Fees are negotiated directly between the location owner and Location Manager – guidance can be sort from Screen East. There are no set rates for filming fees as each shoot varies depending on the production budget, the location, the duration and the nature of disruption that could arise if the filming goes ahead. As a general rule, preparation and reinstatement (strike) days are charged at half the rate of a shooting day. We advise that location owners should calculate how much it will cost them to host the film crew ahead of negotiating the filming fee to ensure you make a profit from the experience (e.g. will you take a day off work? If so what is the cost to you for loss of earnings? Will areas of the property be closed which would usually be open to the public? Will they be using any utilities?) If your property is open to the public, please see page 10 of this guide for further considerations.

The Contract

Once the negotiations complete the contract will be drawn up and sent to you to read and sign. You should make sure that the production company has adequate public liability insurance – minimum of £5 million. Ask for a copy of the insurance certificate.

The contract should state whether or not the company require furniture to be removed or if they are providing accommodation for you and/or your family in the event you are asked to temporarily relocate. You should ensure it includes details of any areas they wish to dress (i.e. decorate, add features, etc.) ahead of the filming that could leave marks or potentially cause damage.

There should also be a section on 'reinstatement' that details what the production company are required to do when shooting has completed. This should include putting the furniture back and redecorating any walls, floors, ceilings, etc to your agreed specification if things have been altered by the production during their time at your property. The crew should leave the property in a condition that is to your satisfaction. This should all be contained within the contract, giving you written details of how the property will be left after filming. If the location is not reinstated to your satisfaction, contact the Location Manager. It is their job to liaise with the crew on your behalf to ensure both the crew and the location owner are happy throughout and after the shoot.

Most importantly, read the contract carefully. If you are unsure of anything or cannot read it, DO NOT SIGN IT. Speak to the Location Manager to resolve any issues or answer questions. Alternatively call Screen East's locations team.

Filming at your Property

Filming may take place at your property for only a few hours, or for many days or even weeks. The number of crew members present will vary depending upon the length of time the company intend to film at your property, what they are filming, whether there are any special requirements for the filming (e.g. special effects, night shoots, stunts, child actors etc), and how large their budget is.

As a general rule, most companies like to get on with 'the job in hand' with minimum disruption. If you are at the property and are concerned about anything that is happening, you should voice your concerns with the Location Manager, but most potential problems are usually dealt with in the initial planning stages. If you are in any doubt about the filming at your property, speak to the Location Manager as soon as possible. He/She will be able to liaise with the crew on your behalf to avoid any problems. If you remain dissatisfied, call Screen East.

Any experienced crew will have drawn up risk assessments and will know how important health & safety is. They should cover cables to ensure that trip hazards are minimised and have marked, coned or masked off areas that could be dangerous such as generators, lighting towers or areas used for storage.

You should contact your insurance provider to ensure that you have adequate building and contents cover for the period of filming, as your standard insurance may not cover this. Your insurer should be notified anyway whenever filming takes place at, or on, your property. Your home insurance should contain a section on occupiers liability in the 'contents insurance' section. This will cover you in the event of injury or accident by any persons not connected with the production. Please ensure you check your insurance documentation, and if you are unsure, speak to your insurance provider.

The Location Manager or a member of the production staff should have notified your neighbours, the police and the local council of the shooting arrangements but check before filming begins.

Any Problems

Most people find having filming at their property a fun, enjoyable experience, not to mention the money that can be made from having a film crew at your house! Many Location Managers often go back to the same locations for different projects, as they get to know the properties well and have a good relationship with the location owner.

If however you have any concerns before, during or after filming, you should contact the Location Manager as soon as possible to sort out any problems. Alternatively, call Screen East Locations and we will do our best to assist.

Open to the Public

If your property is not open to the public, for data protection reasons Screen East will not disclose the location details nor will we promote a property's connection with a film or television programme.

However, when a property that is open to the public has been used for a film or television programme which has proven popular, there can be an opportunity to help boost visitor numbers or membership through film/TV tourism if the location owner wishes to make the connection. In order to take advantage of the marketing potential here are a number of initiatives worth considering:

- At the contract stage ask for consideration to be given to granting you access to production stills or clips featuring your property or other related promotional materials; ensure this is written into the contract. Whilst it is not always possible to grant every wish as it is often the distributor rather than the filmmaker that will make the decision, there is a better chance of success if the request is made early in the relationship.
- If any of the cast is a well known actor or actress, consider ways they might be encouraged to appear in promotional materials or your next campaign.
- Collaborate with your local tourism bodies to ensure they are promoting your relationship to the film or television programme to maximise the marketing potential and help boost visitor numbers to the area as well as to your property.
- Consider incorporating your connection with the production into your own promotional materials, i.e. website, printed documents, advertising, etc.
- Anticipate visitors and put infrastructure in place to ensure they have a good experience during their visit and spend as much money as possible to enable the location to receive the maximum return; if they have a good visit they will make recommendations to friends and family and perhaps return themselves in the future.
- Ask visitors what inspired their visit to monitor the impact if they are visiting as a result of seeing the location on the big or small screen.
- Ask the production to give the location a credit and request that this be written into the contract.
- Screen East is always pleased to hear about good filming experiences had by location owners. We can also help to publicise your location, placing your property and its popular filming connections onto the www.sceneonscreen.co.uk website or by producing case studies and issuing press releases, so please do give us a call to let us know.

Whether your property is open to the public or not we are sure you will find filming an enjoyable experience. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to call Screen East Locations for help and/or advice. Our contact details can be found on the front page of this handbook.